

# Oyster River Cooperative School Board

## Regular Meeting Minutes

May 1, 2024

DRAFT

**SCHOOL BOARD PRESENT:** Matt Bacon, Heather Smith, Denise Day, Brian Cisneros, Giana Gelsey, Kelly Ickes, Renee Bennett

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE:** Maeve Hickock

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:** Dr. Morse, Suzanne Filippone, Catherine Plourde, David Totty, Rebecca Noe, Bill Sullivan, David Goldsmith, Misty Lowe

**STAFF PRESENT:** Kara Sullivan

**GUEST PRESENT:** ORHS Debate Team Members

**ABSENT:** Amy Ransom

### **o. MANIFEST REVIEW/APPROVAL AT EACH SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

#### **I. CALLED TO ORDER at 7:00 PM by Chair Matt Bacon.**

Matt thanked David Goldsmith and the Moharimet staff for hosting tonight's meeting and welcomed newest member Renee Benett.

#### **II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Denise Day made a motion to approve the agenda as written, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Heather Smith. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

#### **III. PUBLIC COMMENTS –None provided.**

#### **IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Denise Day made a motion to approve the April 10, 2024 Interview Minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Giana Gelsey.**

Denise Day made the following revision:

On page 1 under Jessica Rodriguez Boudreau change "Brentwood" to Northwood".

Giana Gelsey made the following revision:

On page 1, in the last sentence change "it's" to "its".

**Motion passed with correction 6-0 with Renee Bennett abstaining and the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

**Brian Cisneros made a motion to approve the April 17, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day.**

Heather Smith made the following revision:

On page 1 under District Announcements in paragraph 3 change "May 29 – April 3<sup>rd</sup>" to "April 29<sup>th</sup> – May 3<sup>rd</sup>".

On page 2 Under Board Announcements in paragraph 2 change "a conclude" to "conclude" so it reads, "She also thanked Gab Anderson for inviting the board back to conclude the sociology discussion."

Giana Gelsey made the following revisions:

On page 1 expand the last sentence so it reads "Brian Cisneros publicly thanked Rachael, especially for her work in assisting the development of the DEIJ program at ConVal school district, Brian's place of employment."

On page 5 add to the last paragraph "Giana Gelsey reiterated that she has suggested establishing a legislative subcommittee multiple times for this exact reason. Heather acknowledged the idea and suggested it appear in July goal setting."

**Motion passed with correction 6-0 with Renee Bennett abstaining and the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

## V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

### A. District

Misty Lowe of Mast Way announced next week is Teacher Appreciation Week. She publicly thanked all the employees stating they are genuinely a team at Mast Way. Upcoming visits in May include ORHS students from the Child & Development Class (CDC) on 5/8 and ORMS students on 5/17 to read to K-1<sup>st</sup> graders for Service Palooza. Class of 2037 kindergarten screening and family orientation will begin late May. If you haven't registered an incoming kindergartner, please do so. The annual Mast Way Art Show will take place on 5/30 with drop-in hours of 5:30-7:30 pm. Fourth grade transition work with Principal Sullivan, counselors, and administrators has begun. Students can look forward to a Q&A session and a visit to ORMS. Save the date for the annual May Fair on 5/31 from 5:30-7:00 pm.

David Goldsmith of Moharimet welcomed the newest board members, Kelly Ickes & Renee Bennett. Moharimet will also host visits by CDC and ORMS students, as well honor the entire staff's incredible work during Teacher Appreciation Week. Collaboration with Principal Sullivan for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade transition is underway and kindergarten screening will begin in June. David thanked all the community members involved in the recent *Finding Nemo Jr* production. He gave special thanks to music teacher Beth Struthers for directing, art teacher Trisha Hall for designing the set, and Alexander Taylor for providing sound & lights. The play wouldn't have happened without the parent volunteers who helped with learning lines, building the set, and creating costumes. The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Pancake Breakfast was a huge success bringing in 800 community members. It included music, commemorative t-shirts, and sold-out maple syrup. David thanked Jim Davis, who has been sugaring since the beginning of the program. He also thanked the 4<sup>th</sup> grade leaders from a new student committee who wrote donation letters, advertised around the building, and served pancakes that morning. Save the date for Day of Water on 5/31. It is the culminating event to this year's theme Year of Water in which students will choose from a variety of water activities ran by teachers, parents, and community members.

Bill Sullivan of ORMS announced the school is looking forward to a lot of great activities next week to celebrate their staff. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade had a very successful trip to Nature's Classroom, and over April break 130 8<sup>th</sup> graders spent 3 nights in Washington D.C. They had an amazing tour of the nation's capital and created memories for a lifetime. The 5<sup>th</sup> graders are looking forward to their Merrowvista trip coming up soon. Robotics sent 3 teams to the World's Competition in Dallas, TX this week. Bill thanked John Silverio for his leadership and the board for their support. ORMS students have been partnered with teams from Utah, Indiana, and Saudia Arabia for a collaborative task, and a closing ceremony will take place on Friday. The Southeast District Festival will be hosted by Sarah Kuhn and Jacob Boulay in the ORMS Recital Hall on 5/4. Schools from all over the seacoast will attend. Other upcoming music performances include a Strings Orchestra Concert on 5/14 at 6 pm in the Concert Hall, Band-a-Palooza on 5/29 at 6 pm on the Turf Field, and a Chorus Concert on 6/3 at 6 pm in the Concert Hall. Service Palooza will take place in May with a variety of service projects around the school and community. The end of the year art show has expanded to a Humanities Night on 5/23 from 6-7:30 pm. It will showcase student work from art, world language, STEM, PE, and language arts. In honor of Service Month, proceeds from the last dance and social will go to 68 Hours of Hunger. The 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade dance is on 5/10 from 6-8 pm and the 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade social is on 5/31 from 5:30-7 pm. The Student Leadership Committee has a goal to collect 5,000 items this month for local food pantries. Regarding the 4<sup>th</sup> grade transition, middle school students will talk to 4<sup>th</sup> graders at Moharimet on 5/29 and Mast Way on 5/31, and a Parent Night will be held on June 4<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm. Teacher Michele Vizzo collaborated with UNH colleagues to provide science presentations during every other Friday's FLEX for "Sci-Fri".

Rebecca Noe of ORHS announced new OR flair has been hung up outside the high school. She encouraged everyone to check out the new flags and designs. In honor of Mental Health Week, students have been busy organizing events. Friday afternoon will feature 20+ activities for students to choose from for a healthy break. Class elections for officer positions are coming up and paperwork can be found on Schoology. A lot of fun planning has gone into next week's Teacher Appreciation week, and Rebecca looks forward to acknowledging the

amazing staff. She gave special thanks to the PTO for organizing a luncheon for teachers. Jon Bromley has coordinated a community problem solving event on 5/10 at UNH, and sign-ups are online. Seniors can look forward to Senior Week events June 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>: Mon. – Carnival, Tues. –Cruise, Wed. – Canobie Lake, Thurs. – Awards, and Fri. – Graduation. Other important dates include Underclassmen Awards on 5/16, Prom on 5/23, and TW Day on 5/24.

## **B. Board**

Brian Cisneros announced that tonight's NH Chronicle will recognize alum Jack Edwards, a longtime Boston Bruins broadcaster who is retiring. A recording will be available on the MUR website.

Heather Smith shared that Moharimet's Pancake Breakfast was awesome and she gave a shout out to David for keeping the music going in Ms. Struthers's absence.

Giana Gelsey invited everyone to attend DEIJ's community event tomorrow night at ORMS from 6-8 pm. The evening will feature speakers and breakout sessions around the theme of belonging.

## **VI. DISTRICT REPORTS**

### **A. Assistant Superintendent/Curriculum & Instruction Report(s)**

Suzanne Filippone updated the board on the June TW days. Two in-person days and two virtual days will focus on district-wide curriculum work for counseling, health, social studies, and library media. Grade level work will take place with special attention to math alignment and Eureka Math. CPR training will also be provided. Suzanne thanked principals and members of the Leadership Team for planning the professional development, and the digital learning specialists for doing the virtual side of the work.

Suzanne recognized ORHS teacher Kara Sullivan for being an incredibly dedicated educational professional that inspires students. She has been the debate coach since 2017. Kara said she appreciates the past support she received from former Principal Filippone and the current support she receives from Principal Noe. Rebecca has helped host and fund tournaments and has been a debate judge. Kara helped form the NH Debate League (NHDL) 6 years ago with Portsmouth, and today it includes 10 schools competing annually.

Dr. Morse said he is proud of Kara's dedication and recognized all the work she does outside of school.

#### Student Presentation – ORHS Debate Team

Kara Sullivan introduced Chase Poirer-McClain, Emmy Higginbotham, Lucy Milutinovich, Stella Pillet-Shore, Shreya Joglekar, and Anika Pant to present on the Debate Team. Students shared that the Debate Team membership has over doubled since the beginning of the year. It consists of a mix of upper and lower classman, which they said is great for knowledge to be passed down. They attended 7 school tournaments that required extensive preparation work. Students said they did a lot of research, wrote informative and persuading speeches for pro and con sides, and practiced effective delivery and rebuttal. In addition to gaining writing, public speaking, quick thinking, and teamwork skills for school and life, they have learned how to look objectively at a controversial topic and see both sides. In fact, they told the board they have gained a larger view of the world, and it has made them better rounded people overall. Several awards can be earned at tournaments including team, speaker, highest score, and novice (top three first year debaters). Awards can also qualify students for larger tournaments. Collaborating with other teams, specifically Portsmouth, has benefitted the students. They said they have learned more strategies, techniques, and resources, as well as insight from different student backgrounds. This year three team members qualified for the Coolidge Cup, which is a huge accomplishment. In an effort to attend tournaments outside of the NHDL, two members paid out of pocket to attend the National Forensics Debate Tournament. This international tournament included 4,000 students and 100 judges, and the sheer amount of diversity of people and speakers was astounding. Next year, the Debate Team hopes to expand membership at all grades and recruit students at ORMS to get kids interested in debate. Funding will be an area of focus moving forward. They plan on fundraising and seeking financial support to host more events; provide trophies, awards, and higher quality set ups; and send more members to tournaments outside NHDL. Being on debate team has several advantages both personally and academically, and it looks great on college applications.

Dr. Morse told students they are awesome, and they've done a terrific job building the organization.

Denise Day suggested seeking out PTO to see if they have funding set aside for specific activities.

### **B. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Morse recognized David Totty's first day on the job as the new Facilities Director. The district is excited to have him on board. Gen Brown, the district's Director of Communications, has been elected as the NH Representative of Public-School Communication. She will be nationally recognized at a Seattle presentation this July and the district is very fortunate to have her. In honor of last week being Principals Week, Dr. Morse commended the principals and thanked them for being creative, open-minded, and supportive. He appreciates how engaged they are in the hiring process and their focus on hiring student-centered staff. Dr. Morse told the board the hiring process is going very well.

### **C. Business Administrator – (Absent)**

### **D. Student Representative Report {Maeve Hickok}**

Student Rep. Maeve Hickok announced she will not be re-running for student rep since she is graduating. Maeve recapped the Sustainability Club's Earth Week events that took place prior to April break, and she discussed this week's Mental Health and Wellness activities. On Monday students hung up motivational messages they created in advisory and on Tuesday they attended a Resource Fair in the MPR. Students can look forward to fun and relaxing activities for Friday afternoon's mental health break.

### **E. Finance Committee Report – None provided.**

### **F. Other – None provided.**

**VII. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA** – Chair Matt Bacon asked if any items needed to be discussed separately, and there were no concerns from the board.

- Accept two letters of resignation one District Wide, and one high school position.

**Matt Bacon made a motion to approve the Unanimous Consent Agenda, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Heather Smith. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

### **VIII. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS**

#### 2024-25 Board Meeting Schedule

**Brian Cisneros made a motion to approve the 2024-25 Board Meeting Schedule, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Renee Bennett.**

Denise Day wondered about having only one meeting in July, and the board agreed to tentatively hold a workshop with Dr. Shaps after the regular board meeting.

Brian Cisneros pointed out it is Oyster River's turn to host the Barrington meeting for 2024-25.

**Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

#### Consideration of Hiring an Additional Kindergarten Teacher for 2024-25

Dr. Morse met with leadership and concluded that adding another kindergarten teacher and paraeducator is critical due to the higher enrollment for fall. Also, to stay in compliance with school board policy on class size, an additional 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher is necessary. Since Mast Way has the available space, Dr. Morse asked the board to consider adding two new teachers, and designating new kindergarten families to Mast Way even if it is not the school for their town. He informed the board that savings from both hiring and health insurance would cover the cost of the new positions.

Brian Cisneros suggested that future budgets include the costs of an extra teacher and paraeducator as a place holder. It's a practice he uses at the district he works for, so funding is available for these situations, whether they use it or not.

Denise Day wondered if a family starts at Mast Way would they stay and how to fix the imbalance moving forward. Dr. Morse confirmed the family would stay in the building they start at. He suggested the board look at

long-term planning options, such as a primary and intermediate school. Although it was discussed years ago, today's enrollment issues may justify using this model to avoid imbalance at the two buildings. The board agreed to add it to their discussion of district goals.

Giana Gelsey said she is glad to look at this option for future contemplation. She felt that not only could it solve the imbalance problem, but everyone could benefit from the different resources offered at each building. She said it could be a great thing for students to experience.

**Brian Cisneros made a motion to approve the hiring of an Additional Kindergarten and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher for 2024-25, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Heather Smith. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

The board defined that the hiring of a kindergarten teacher includes a paraeducator.

**Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

#### ORMS Enrollment and Staff update

Dr. Morse stated it is the district's first time seeing the middle school numbers as low as they are, and he invited Principal Sullivan to share the plan that was addressed with teachers.

Bill reviewed the projected enrollment numbers for the current year to 2028, noting the decline each year. The plan is for no one to lose their job and for changes to be made through attrition and retirements. Bill and Alida are being flexible, creative, and openminded as they look at structuring options and certification opportunities for teachers. For example, retirement in the building opened positions and instead of hiring new, current teachers are gaining certification to fulfill them. The Mast Way PE opening allowed for an ORMS teacher to move within district. Other changes include contracting out a .5 World Language position, which reduces the positions from 5 to 4.5, and hiring a 1-year 6<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies position so they can reassess structuring after a year. Models of 4-person and 3-person teams are being considered as student numbers shift down. Future planning includes reassigning staff to open positions whenever possible, matching staff to enrollment with flexible planning, and investigating the recruitment of out of district students for tuition.

Dr. Morse acknowledged teachers for working with Suzanne to get certified, stating it is a student-focused approach. He commended Bill, Alida, and faculty for working through this issue and the approach that has been taken. He feels it has been handled extremely well.

Board suggestions included budgeting for marketing in the fall budget to attract out of district families and using the current One World teacher for the .5 position to maintain stability. Board concerns included consistency of the .5 position around fundamentals, scope and sequence, expectations, and grading since the contracted position will not include professional development time. Bill and Suzanne will look at scheduling team meetings and collaboration within the position's contracted day.

### **IX. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES**

The Manifest Committee met and completed the following manifests.

Payroll Manifest # 20 Total is \$788,563.95

Payroll Manifest # 21 Total is \$722,719.33

Payroll Manifest # 22 Total is \$764,341.10

Vendor Manifest #21 Total is \$921,802.17

Vendor Manifest #22 Total is \$187,528.14

Vendor Manifest #23 Total is \$795,874.17

Denise Day announced Policy Committee will meet at the SAU building on May 9<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 pm.

**X. PUBLIC COMMENTS** – None provided.

## **XI. CLOSING ACTIONS**

**A. Future Meeting Dates:** May 15, 2024 – Regular School Board Meeting @ 7:00 PM – ORMS Recital Hall  
June 5, 2024 – Regular School Board Meeting @ 7:00 PM – ORMS Recital Hall  
**June 19<sup>th</sup> Rescheduled to:** June 20, 2024 – Regular School Board Meeting @ 7:00 PM – ORMS Recital Hall

**XII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION:** RSA 91-A:3 II {If Needed}

**NON-MEETING SESSION:** RSA 91-A2 I {If Needed}

## **XIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

Principal Noe updated the board with the Science Showcase date, which will be on June 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6 pm in the high school library.

Chair Matt Bacon thanked Principal Goldsmith for hosting tonight's meeting and Alexander Taylor for setting it up.

**Heather Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

**The School Board reserves the right to take action on any item on the agenda.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Karyn Laird, Records Keeper