

Oyster River Cooperative School District

Regular Meeting Minutes

September 16, 2020

DRAFT

SCHOOL BOARD PRESENT: Brian Cisneros, Dan Klein, Tom Newkirk, Denise Day, Michael Williams, Al Howland

Student Representative:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: James Morse, Todd Allen, Sue Caswell, Suzanne Filippone, Andy Lathrop, William Sullivan

STAFF PRESENT: None

GUEST PRESENT: Ron Lamarre, Lavallo Bresinger Architects, Andre Kloetz, Bauen Corp. Ned Reynolds, Dan Klapp – Revision Energy

GUEST'S PRESENT VIA REMOTE ACCESS: None

There were 11 members of the public present.

I. CALL TO ORDER at 7:02 PM by Tom Newkirk

Tom Newkirk stated that he had no additions to the agenda, however he stated that one of the candidates, Brendan Jorgensen, due to a prior commitment, would be late to the public comments and Tom asked the Board Members if they would be okay with Mr. Jorgensen introducing himself when he arrived. All agreed. Tom then went on to welcome everyone that joined this meeting in a public setting since March.

There were no additional changes suggested.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Denise Day moved to approve the agenda as presented, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed with a vote of 6-0.

At this time Tom introduced public comment.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Matthew Bacon of Madbury introduce himself as one of the candidates and stated that he has 5 children, one at the middle school and four at Moharimet. His family is heavily invested in the future of the District and appreciates the opportunity of running and thanked the Board.

Alyson Jumper of Durham and has 3 children in schools. Thanked the Board for getting the Hybrid model at the elementary level and getting the children back to school. She also thanked the teachers and paraeducators. She wants to advocate for in person learning for all students in the District and would also like to see a hybrid model for 5th grade and the K-4 model go to five days a week. Also, would like to see easy access to curriculum change and what that impact would be. She thanked everyone who was working hard to keep the children engaged.

Greg Poitras of Lee stated that he has a junior in the high school who is involved in golf, hockey, and tennis team. He had three concerns pertaining to the recent rules concerning participation in non-OR sports, student athletic transportation and the COVID liability release that parents needed to sign.

Yusi Turell of Durham explained her UNH experience, her behind the scenes work on the past superintendent search, and also with the superintendent's plan to retire in the near future, would like to be a part of the search for a replacement. She explained her work surrounding the afterschool mandarin program and all that she hopes to bring to the Board if elected. She is eager to join the Board and thanked the Board for their consideration.

Heather Smith of Durham has two children in the OR schools. She has a lot of activity with the PTO in Moharimet and served 4 years as the Chair. She believes in service and community building engagement. Deeply committed to diversity. She thanked everyone for their service and the opportunity to serve on the Board.

Rebecca Throop of Lee has two sons, one that graduated and a freshman. She is proud of our community and the amazing talent represented in this room now. She shared her background of experience. She felt that whoever was chosen would need the skill set to wear many different hats to serve and support the OR District. She applauded all for the work being done and thanked the Board for their service.

Debbie Harmon of Lee stated that she has three children with her youngest being a freshman. Shared her experience of first planning on moving to the district 20 years ago. She explained that she has been on the middle school PTO, was asked to join the "Go Vote" committee and her experience on that committee. Stated that she understands the difficult decisions that need to be made and will do her homework, attend all meetings and that it would be an honor to serve on the Board and thanked everyone.

Jessica Lewis of Lee has two children in the district schools and that she is a professional pediatric occupational therapist working in Manchester. Felt that the situation has been unique and that the Board has acted admirable and would love to contribute to that. She thanked the Board for their consideration.

Marie O'Neil of Madbury has three children in OR schools. She wanted to speak of families experience to the start of the school year and started by commending the sixth-grade teachers on the explorer team for the program that they rolled out. Explained that she hoped for a full day in learning at the elementary level, so chose the best possible option of Hybrid, and that this is not working. She is appealing to the Board to convert this model into a more in-person model. She thanked the Board for their time.

Adam Gilsdorf of Durham with two sons at the high school. He explained that his children are not having a product start with this model. Concerned about their mental health of being home alone during this time. They need the interaction of being in a school, classroom and with their peers. Understand the risks involved in this type of model but felt it was a risk worth taking to get students back in the classroom. He thanked the Board.

There were no additional public comments.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to approve the September 2, 2020 meeting minutes: Revisions: None
Michael Williams moved to approve the September 2, 2020 meeting minutes, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed with a vote of 6-0.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS:

A. District: None

B. Board:

Denise Day thanked everyone who spoke during public comment and for those who have taken the time to write letters to the Board, your input is very helpful.

Brian Cisneros thanked Tom for his speech on behalf of the Board during Kenny's ceremony it was a great service.

Tom Newkirk thanked Al and the team from the Town of Durham for all of their help in making Kenny's service such a special event.

Al Howland stated that the ceremony for Kenny was truly amazing and they were able to keep everyone safe.

Dan Klein also echoed Brian's thoughts and thanked Tom. He also thanked Al for all the time he dedicated during Kenny's suffering. He thanked everyone that submitted their information for the open seat and that it will be a difficult decision for the Board with so many great choices to choose from.

VI. DISTRICT REPORTS:

A. Assistant Superintendent Reports:

Todd Allen reported out to the Board on the NHSAS testing. This did not happen last spring due to the COVID shut down. He stated that there will be an interim assessment portal tool for school use that he is working with Josh Olstad to implement, and that it will be available to students October 1 – 31.

Todd reiterated on the two Sabbatical Leave from last year that two teachers took part in and the topics that were undertaken and reported out to the Board. He stated that this year Jon Bromley, a high school science teacher, is taking a ½ year sabbatical and his topic is a capstone project at the high school. He will be reporting out on this project to the Board in an upcoming meeting.

Al Howland asked a question to Todd about the distribution of computers to the 11th and 12th graders and the timeframe for delivery.

Denise Day asked about the update on the agenda surrounding SAT testing.

Todd thanked Denise for the reminder and stated that a pencil/paper test will be given to the seniors on September 23rd. He did not expect 100% participation as some students exercises other means for taking this test.

Tom Newkirk clarified that a Board member would be needed for the Sabbatical Committee and asked when that was needed by and also asked the Board to be thinking about that.

Todd stated in January.

Tom Newkirk interrupted the meeting at 7:49 PM to ask if Brendan Jorgensen was in the audience and if he wished to come up to the podium to introduce himself as another candidate for the vacancy.

Brendan Jorgensen thanked the Board for allowing him to speak at this time. He stated that he has three children and lives in Durham near the campus. He applied for the vacancy as a way to serve the community and also for his children and their future in the OR schools. He would come in as a learner to look for ways to be helpful. He has no agenda or projects in mind. He thanked the Board for their consideration.

B. Superintendent's Report:

Jim stated that before they move onto the presentation by Revision. He wanted to take a moment to express his thanks to the Durham Evangelical Church for their donation of 2,500 reusable face masks for the District. A thank you to the Lee Congregational Church for allowing the District to use their driveway for parent pick up at the Mast Way School. A thank you to the Town of Madbury for allowing the District to use their athletic field lot for parent pick up at the Moharimet School. These are three examples of great community support.

At this time, he also read the following statement from the Guild for Kenny Rotner.

On behalf of the Oyster River Teachers' Guild, we would like to take a moment to express our gratitude for Kenny Rotner's contributions as an integral ORCSD school board member. His humane voice and consistent compassion will be deeply missed. Several of us have served on district committees in collaboration with Kenny. He could be counted on to champion marginalized students, and to ask difficult questions that only improved the outcome of our work together. Kenny was admired by many as a perpetually kind person who was willing to listen, integrate new perspectives, and change his opinion after considering new data. He modeled a healthy process for deliberating on weighty topics. It is difficult to fill the void left by someone like Kenny in our school district and community. We are grateful for all he did to support students, teachers, and our community!

Oyster River Teachers also wish to express our deepest condolences to Tracy, Kenny's wife and a long-time nurse in the District and his daughter Emma an Oyster River High School graduate. May knowing that others are thinking of you at this time help to provide you comfort.

Tom asked Revision Energy to come up to the podium and start their presentation.

Ned Reynolds began by thanking the committee for the opportunity for him and his associate, Dan Klapp, to present at this meeting.

He continued by stating that he has worked with the District before on the facilities building and also with the Town of Durham. Ned went on to explain about their company and also showed pictures of other schools and businesses that they have done in the past, and also what they are currently working on.

He continued his presentation by reviewing slides that showed the NH Grid Electricity Rates from 1970-2018, a slide pertaining to the cost of solar PV from 2009 to 2025. He explained the current status of the updated designs for the new middle school rooftop and busport arrays which total 638 kW DC (483 AC) with a total of 1,450 panels. He further explained that those panels would produce

684,555 kWh projected annual production and that they recently are able to upgrade panels to 440W from 375s.

Ned explained the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) which is a low risk way to get solar built with no up-front capital outlay and, there is immediate energy cost savings with significant long-term savings especially with a buyout. He further stated that it encompasses three parties: host/site owner, Revision Energy, and a third-party investor. There is a buyout option at a significant discount starting in year 6 and there is an option to remain on the PPA for the term which is 25-35 years. He also reported out that the PPA rate changed from his presentation to the Finance Committee to a lower amount of 9.2 cents per Kw rate.

The Board clarified that it would be more advantageous to the District to exercise the buyout. There were questions asked pertaining to the panels used in the past and their decrease in efficiency over time, and the comparison of efficiency and life span of the newer panels that would be utilized for the middle school.

There was additional Board discussion pertaining to the possible credit that the District could receive by using solar and how that would be paid to the District, and the possibility of the excessive usage for another location. There was discussion surrounding the busport not being a part of the PPA and having an additional cost of \$352,820 and should it be included in this year's budget or next years. If it goes into FY22 it needs to be a priority for the CIP and move to the top. Questions pertaining to the obtaining and delivery and storage of materials needed for the work.

Dan Klapp from Revision spoke about the possibility of adding the Busport to the PPA so that Revision can "Safe Harbor" this project in 2020 for the 2021 construction and secure the 26% Investment Tax Credit for the investor for the lowest possible PPA rate. They can put in a clause that protects both parties and also stated that this does not need to be decided by tonight.

There was a discussion surrounding the timeline that the Board is following for budget development.

Tom Newkirk asked what happens next and how do we move forward with this. Jim stated that the Finance Committee is meeting again on September 30th and asked Dan Klapp if that gives them enough time to present a proposal to the Finance Committee. The committee will then review the options presented and come back to the Board with their recommendation for approval at the October 7th meeting.

Additional discussion ensued pertaining to the Solar Array.

Tom Newkirk asked that since it was 8:48 PM would the Board mind moving up the voting for the selection of the vacant seat and then take a 5-minute break. There was no objection.

Tom took a moment to update the Board on Giana Gelsey the one candidate that could not attend the meeting and provide her background. He also clarified that this position was to finish out the current year term until March of 2021 and then they would need to express their intent to run again to fulfill the three-year term or until March of 2022. He then asked the Board if they wished to make any comments before opening up the voting and explained the process. He stated that he was impressed with all 8 candidates and how difficult it will be to choose one.

Michael Williams agreed with Tom and that it is great we have the interest that we have. The qualifications are outstanding, and it is nice to be able to make a positive choice. He appreciates everyone's willingness to serve.

Brian Cisneros agrees that everyone's qualifications are exceptional, but he would ask the Board to look at a representative from Lee, as he is the only one and that this would provide a broader view of what is going on in the town, and also asked to look for a candidate that has the time to contribute.

Al Howland stated that he is thinking the same thing about a representative from Lee to balance out the Board and agrees that the candidates are phenomenal.

Denise Day echo's the sentiments shared and would be thrilled with any candidate that is chosen. Thinking of the District Strategic Plan and the skill sets in relation to that, she is leaning toward Yusi Turell, and asked the Board to consider her candidacy.

Dan Klein agrees that Lee is under represented, but also raised the gender issue that Denise is the only woman on the Board and the talk surrounding diversity are the two factors that have led him to Yusi Turell as the leading candidate.

Michael Williams stated that he is in favor of Matthew Bacon. He has known him for a number of years of working in the community, his temperament and experience in crisis management. He would be an asset to the Board, schools, and community.

Brian Cisneros would recommend Deb Harmon of Lee as she has a great temperament for dealing with people in a professional manner, she is a PTO member and was an active middle school supporter. She would be an asset to this Board.

Tom Newkirk stated that he worked with Deb on the MS committee and if a good idea was presented, she was always willing to step up. With Yusi Turell she was an advocate and active supporter for the World Language program. This will be a very difficult choice.

Al Howland wanted to add that he agrees with Dan is regards to the gender. It would be great to have diversity and additionally to bring the elementary perspective into it but for him, Jessica Lewis met all of his criteria and has a strong science background.

There were no additional comments and the voting proceeded. Tom explained that everyone has one vote and we will eliminate the zero vote and proceed until we get a candidate.

Vote 1 resulted in the following show of hands:

Matthew Bacon: 1 vote – Michael Williams
Giana Gelsey: 0 votes
Debra Harmon: 2 votes – Brian Cisneros and Tom Newkirk
Jessica Lewis: 1 vote: Al Howland
Heather Smith: 0 votes
Rebecca Throop: 0 votes
Yusi Turell: 2 votes: Dan Klein, Denise Day

Vote 2 and Vote 3 resulted in the following show of hands:

Debra Harmon: 3 votes – Brian Cisneros, Tom Newkirk, Al Howland
Yusi Turell: 3 votes: Dan Klein, Denise Day, Michael Williams

Tom Newkirk proposed that these two candidates will be the finalist and that we will have an additional meeting for interviews on September 30th following the Finance Committee.

Tom thanked all the candidates and called a 5-minute break at 9:15PM.

Meeting resumed at 9:20

Update on MS/HS Sports

Andy Lathrop reported out that athletics has been running since September 8th and doing really well. We have been able to come up with a schedule and are playing games in the Southeast Region. We are proud of the kids and coaches who are following the COVID protocols put in place.

Jim asked Andy to speak about the end of the season and winter sports timeframe for Board support.

Andy hoped that there would be an interdivisional championship tournament that could start local and as you advance it would move further out. In terms of Winter sports, they usually start after thanksgiving with discussions beginning in October, but he believes that the NHIAA will probably delay. These are different sports with different guidelines.

The Board asked how participation has been, did that number include middle school and was it determined based on the final forms or participants.

Andy stated that there is currently 260 compared to 290 last year and Bill confirmed approximately 200 in middle school which is similar to last year.

There was a discussion surrounding clarifying, understanding, and relaying of the rules surrounding non-district and district sports choices, the difference between the MS and HS sports participation.

Andy hoped that the email that he sent would clarify these questions.

Questions asked about the difference between sports, clubs and participation in activities and the guidelines surrounding this.

A discussion ensued.

C. Business Administrator:

FY22 Budget Calendar

Sue Caswell shared the proposed dates for all of the upcoming meetings pertaining to the budget.

Al Howland asked about the November 18 & 19 dates on the calendar, should they be reversed.

Michael Williams reminded the Board that that is about the time that the Finance Committee suggested a second meeting with the three towns.

Denise Day made a motion to approve the FY22 Budget Calendar, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed with a vote of 6-0.

D. Finance Committee Update:

Budget Goal Update

Al Howland explained the process he used for the proposed budget goal and explained everything that he included in the language.

Michael Williams asked why the goal excluded Funds 21,22 and 23, these should be included for consistency.

Jim asked Sue what the three numbers would be that are based on \$48,791,231.
Sue relayed the following: 2.5% - \$1,219,781. 3% - \$1,463,767 and 3.5% - \$1,707,693.

Al Howland made a motion to approve the FY22 Budget Goal as revised below, 2nd by Michael Williams. Motion passed with a vote of 6-0.

The 21-22 School Board budget goal will include three options. 2.5% (1,219,781), 3% (1,463,737), and 3.5% (1,707,693) net increases from the approved fiscal 20-21 budget (48,791,231). The total increases will include funds 10, 21, 22/23, and all School Board recommended warrant articles. Revenue and reserve accounts can be used to offset expenses.

Additional discussion ensued pertaining to the budget goal with clarifications made and questioned answered.

~~**E. Student Senate Report:**~~

~~**F. Other:**~~

VII. DISCUSSION ITEM:

Retirement Incentive

Jim began by saying that the budget goal that Al just articulated, and the Board supported will be part of the structural changes made within the budget. If the Board approves this list it will reasonably come close to about ½ a million dollars in savings.

Denise Day asked where the money for this is coming from? There are more people on the list than originally presented.

Jim explained the right now we are running a lean budget, overall, there are about 20 positions that we are not filling this year due to the model we are using. We received an unexpected Heath trust holiday of approximately ¼ million dollars. We are in a good position to pay out the accumulated sick leave and also part of the retirement incentive in this budget.

Dan Klein stated that this is the right think to do, there are amazing teachers on this list with unique talents. This is a big sacrifice.

Additional discussion surrounding the reason behind this incentive and the enrollment decline, positions that will not be recommended for replacement and will this incentive be built into the FY22 budget.

Brian Cisneros made a motion to approve the list of retirement incentives, 2nd by Michael Williams. Motion passed with a vote of 5-1 with Denise Day voting against.

Questions the Board Needs Answers to Regarding Increasing Student Participation in Schools

Jim explained that he wanted to ask the Board to submit questions to him that they wanted answers to before the meeting on October 21st. This would allow everyone to have a clearer understanding of where we are now and where we want to move to. He stated that he would also have the recommendations from the administrators to add to this discussion.

Denise Day asked:

A list of dates of the different groups brought in and the amount traffic coming into the building for orientation, testing, etc.

The number of students and staff sent home that developed symptoms during the day? How many are under precautionary quarantine

Tom Newkirk asked:

What are we moving towards and the criteria to reach that? Are there metrics that we can use to move to a more inclusive model?

What is the next step: K-1 full days? K-4 Full days?

Use the elementary model at the middle school? Middle school 2 days?

Would the model be to have bigger targeted groups but still remain primarily remote?

With the number of staff at the middle school who cannot go in, is the middle school limited by that or are you going to have to find ways to have an inclusive middle school? How are you going to accommodate that?

Al Howland asked:

What is the criteria for expansion? This needs to be clearly articulated.

Given the current staffing at the elementary level, what could we accommodate under our current model for reentry?

What are expanded targeted groups and what could they be given the current staffing limitations?

Who is the next priority and what can we accommodate?

Michael Williams asked:

How is the elementary level doing with the mask protocol?

How is the meal service working in school?

Utilization of classroom space, transportation, and school nutrition program at all 4 schools?

Competitive intelligence – what are you hearing from other school districts about making changes and what direction are other superintendents intending on going?

Do we plan on sending out another survey to parents before we discuss on October 21st?

Brian Cisneros asked:

How many more spots per grade levels can we fit in with what we have now?

What worked well?

What have we learned, is there something more efficient that we have not seen?

A brief discussion ensued pertaining to how this information will help to define the scope of the next steps that the District will need to take.

VIII. ACTIONS

A. Superintendent Actions: None

B. Board Action Items:

ORHS Department Heads and Advisors

Motion for Department Heads and Advisors

Discussion: None

Denise Day made a motion to approve the list of ORHS Department Heads and Advisors, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed with a vote of 6-0.

List of Policies

Tom Newkirk asked Denise to review the policies ready for a vote. Denise explained that there is one policy for first read that had a slight language change and one policy that the committee decided was optional and vague and not needed that they recommend for deletion. She also noted that a School Board procedure was on the list as a first read, and that it really is not a first read it is a requested change from the Board to the agenda format that will be used at the next Board meeting on October 7th.

Motion for List of Policies:

Discussion:

Al Howland expressed his concern for having unanimous consent on the agenda and suggested it be moved up above the discussion and explained his reasoning why.

Jim stated that our intent is to use this at the October 7th meeting, and stated that this is a Board document that does not require a first read.

Dan Klein stated that it is approved at every meeting, so at that time any item that a Board member wished to pull, can happen then.

Brian Cisneros asked for clarification of policy FF and the procedure that would be followed for the naming of a facility.

Denise Day made a motion to approve for a first read Policy FF- Naming of Facilities and as a deletion of policy and procedure FL – FL-R – Retirement of Facility, 2nd by Brian Cisneros.

Motion passed with a vote of 6-0

Al Howland stated that in reading the policy minutes he questioned the paragraph pertaining to the process of possible feedback by the Board before a first read happens. If it is a controversial policy, he likes the idea of having it come to the Board before the policy committee reviews and gets before the Board.

Dan stated that providing a window of opportunity that any member of the Board can flag a policy for discussion by the full Board before the Policy Committee reviews. He asked if this is more process oriented and how would that be determined?

Denise Day stated that we discussed this at the last policy meeting and the agenda is an announcement of what the policy intends to review at their next meeting and if there were concerns with any policy on the list that the Board member could notify Jim with their concerns.

It was determined that moving forward the Policy Agenda and back up will be provided to the full Board for their feedback, if any to Jim before the policy committee meets.

Brian asked if the policy committee could review, if we have one, a policy on the manifest and that it be added to a board meeting as an agenda item.

Dan agreed that this should be an agenda items as he is hoping that there is an efficient way that the full Board can review the manifest.

Tom stated that currently the policy committee has two members and hope that the new member might be interested but asked if the policy committee was okay with two members right now.

IX. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:

A. Manifests Reviewed and Approved by Manifest Committee:

Denise Day and Dan Klein reviewed the manifests.

Payroll Manifest #

Vendor Manifest total \$806,432.43

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

XI. CLOSING ACTIONS:

- A. Future Meeting Date: 9/30/20 – Finance Committee/Manifest/Regular Meeting – 7:00 PM
10/7/20 – Joint Board w. Barrington and Regular Meeting – 7:00 PM

There was a brief discussion to determine the September 30 meeting schedule and process.

XII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91-A:3 {If needed}

NON-MEETING SESSION: RSA 91-A:2 {If needed}

XIII. ADJOURNMENT:

**Michael Williams made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:38 p.m., 2nd by Dan Klein.
Motion passed with a vote of 6-0.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Wendy L. DiFruscio
Executive Assistant to
Superintendent of Schools