

**Oyster River Cooperative School Board  
Regular Meeting Minutes**

**November 17, 2021**

**DRAFT**

**SCHOOL BOARD PRESENT:** Michael Williams, Denise Day, Tom Newkirk, Dan Klein, Al Howland, Yusi Turell, Brian Cisneros (arrived late)

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE:** Oliva Gass 7:23 Arrival

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:** Jim Morse, Suzanne Filippone, Sue Caswell, Catherine Plourde, Jay Richard, Rebecca Noe

**STAFF PRESENT:**

**GUEST PRESENT:**

**ABSENT:**

**I. CALLED TO ORDER at 7:00 PM by Michael Williams**

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Michael Williams requested the following changes to the agenda: a special recognition to occur before public comment, the student representative's report to be given upon Olivia's arrival, and the business and finance reports to be given together at the end upon Brian Cisneros's arrival.

**Tom Newkirk moved to approve the agenda as presented to the board, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Yusi Turell. Motion passed 6-0.**

Special Recognition

Lisa Huppe announced that NHSTA (NH School Transportation Association) along with NH DOT recognized 8 ORCSD bus drivers with the Safe Driving Award, which is awarded in 5-year increments. She was proud to say a total of 44 district bus drivers were nominated, making up 18% of the state's drivers. On behalf of Lisa Huppe and Dr. Morse, the 8 recipients were congratulated for their dedication to safety and professional service to our community. Our district proudly recognized the following bus drivers and their dedicated years of service: Marion Henry – 40 years, Thomasina Baxter – 40 years, Barbara Evans – 30 years, Janet Deon – 30 years, Lisa Huppe – 30 years, Joseph Pauline – 15 years, William Harless – 15 years, and Sarah Brooks – 5 years.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Haley Wicklein of Durham thanked the board for their positive conversations around a K-4 language program. She commented that conversations and literature choices in grades K and 1 have been inclusive and diverse, and thanked the teachers, staff, and administration for including this work.

Jana Petrikova of Lee thanked the board for working on sustainability initiatives and gave a special thanks to Yusi Turell for her involvement. She spoke about the need for worldwide sustainability, as well as her support for a DEIJ coordinator to give children a better future.

Alexander Fenton of Durham and an ORHS student asked the board to revoke the mask mandate. He spoke about the importance of personal choice and health, and he stated his opinion that mask wearing has negative effects on mental health and learning. He urged the board to let mask wearing be a choice of parents and students.

Shelly Mitchell of Durham, a founding member of the sustainability committee and serving as Durham rep, gave her full support of a DEIJ coordinator. She encouraged the board to incorporate the United Nations' goals in the work of the DEIJ coordinator.

Shannon Brown of Durham thanked the staff and teachers for their efforts to mitigate negative COVID experiences. She expressed her support for DEIJ work and for adding a coordinator position that moves inclusion forward. She would like to see the position serve each student and cautioned against it being one that creates further division, particularly in politics.

Kate Zimar of Lee emailed her public comment in support of the One World language proposal. She stressed the importance of early language learning to lay the foundation for future proficiency and to create a culture of respect.

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

**Denise Day moved to approve the November 11, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes as written, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Newkirk. Motion passed 6-0.**

#### **V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS**

##### **A. District**

Rebecca Noe of ORHS commended the entire *Rumors* cast for their recent performances. Not only did they do an extraordinary job acting, but within 24hrs the play was moved from outdoors to indoors. She said the cast had to learn new choreography and put in a lot of extra work the last two days.

##### **Board**

Denise Day shared that the play was awesome, and it was wonderful to be back at the first ORHS coffee house. She encouraged everyone to read the Mouth of the River magazine.

Yusi Turell shared that she observed Jon Bromley's capstone class as they were identifying problems to tackle, as well as the efforts of Celeste Best in guiding students to be change makers. She said it was impressive and a benefit to the high school.

Tom Newkirk recognized the boys' soccer team. He stated in their defeat they supported and comforted each other, exemplifying class act behavior.

#### **VI. DISTRICT REPORTS**

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

Suzanne Filippone spoke about the Saturday, November 20<sup>th</sup> vaccination clinic for ages 5-11 being held with Barrington at Oyster River High School. She instructed families to enter through the gym entrance to access the clinic in the gymnasium. She told the listening audience that an email would be sent home that night with information about when to attend according to age. She told families with multiple children to attend at a time convenient for them. Suzanne thanked McGregor, Barrington School District, and all the nurses and volunteer

teachers involved with the clinic. She reminded everyone that the clinic was only for ages 5-11 and it would not be offering boosters to other ages.

#### COVID Metric

Catherine Plourde referred to the COVID metric stating that Strafford County is reporting positive cases in the moderate range, close to substantial. She reported the transmission rate is up causing hospitals to be extremely stretched. She encouraged families to use urgent care due to a lack of space in the ER from the recent spike.

Catherine reported that staff compacity continues to be a district wide issue compounded by a lack of substitutes. She said every day continues to be tricky as schools navigate finding enough coverage.

#### SASS/Adult COVID Testing

Catherine stated that contract tracing is still occurring locally, and that Dr. Megan Harvey recommends not only using good masks, but always wearing a mask. With holidays approaching it is encouraged that families get a COVID test prior to travel and/or entering large gatherings.

Catherine reported that the SASS testing is going very well with over 500 participants. She stated there is no testing next Wednesday due to the holiday, with no reschedule date. She said that nurses are doing a high level of symptomatic testing and that parents are thankful this opportunity. There are times parents cannot find a testing site or are charged a large amount for testing at urgent care. She reminded the listening audience that Fox Run Mall has a testing site that may be quicker than the school. Catherine also reminded parents to be very patient when contacting our district nurses. Extra phone calls and emails slows down the process since the nurses' priority is to attend to sick students prior to answering calls and emails.

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

Dr. Morse told the board that the ORMS move in date is approaching and the staff will need to pack, move, unpack, and set up classrooms, which is an exciting process but also a big process. He asked Jay Richard how many days left.

#### Middle School Transition Dates

Jay Richard told the board he is down to 103 days before the big move. He has been preparing since summer with the goal of students to not have to miss school. Jay stated that February 28th is the first day students can get into the new ORMS and requested approval from the board to hold 3 professional development days to prepare. He asked the board to consider the cafeteria staff needing to learn new equipment and staff needing to orientate, all while being respectful to the construction crew that will continue to perform testing. Jay asked the board to approve February 16, 17, and 18 as professional development days.

**Denise Day made a motion to approve February 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> as professional development days for ORMS staff to move into the new middle school. Dan Klein 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion.**

Dan Klein asked if additional volunteers were needed to which Jay responded he is not sure yet.

Jay stated the three days will extend the student's vacation time with no remote instruction. Dr. Morse pointed out the three days will not affect the school calendar nor the district's required school days.

**Motion passed with a vote of 6-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

#### Update Community Survey

Dr. Morse reported that the community survey has been going very well. Next, the survey will go out to students and staff, followed by the broader community. He is excited about this comprehensive outreach across three towns, which includes every home receiving a postcard with a QR code and link to the survey.

**C. Business Administrator** – moved to the end of the meeting2022/23 Budget Revenue Overview**D. Student Representative Report**

Olivia Gass shared that she attended the Mouth of the River Coffee House and the performers, art & magazine were all amazing. She also attended the fall play. She said it went really well and it was great to see a performance live. She reported that Unified Soccer won state championship and Boys' Soccer were runners up. She informed the board that both student government and senate are planning projects, and NHS is planning a food drive with proceeds to go to the cancer society. Olivia felt quarter one went very well overall.

**E. Finance Committee Report** – moved to the end of the meetingFY23 Budget Discussion

**F. Other:** Nothing reported.

**VII. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA**

Dan Klein asked for the policy of approving coaches to remove board level discussion. He stated the policy requires approval of coaches by administration and felt a school board approval was overcomplicating the process and slowing it down. Dan was in favor of allowing administration to hire coaches in a timelier fashion and asked the policy committee to revisit and eliminate the school board approval.

Michael Williams agreed stating that approval was occurring after the fact in some cases.

Rebecca Noe clarified that alpine skiing would start the 22nd and ball other sports officially begin the 29th. Dan Klein pointed out that the official basketball season had not started but skills and drills practices had begun.

**Tom Newkirk moved to approve ORHS/ORMS Winter Sports Coach and Volunteer Nominations, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed 4-0-2 with the student representative voting in the affirmative and Michael Williams and Dan Klein abstaining.**

**Dan Klein made a motion to instruct the policy committee to revisit GEA and explore the removal of the school board from the process, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Michael Williams. Motion passed 5-0-1 with the student representative voting in the affirmative and Denise Day abstaining.**

**VIII. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS**ORESPA & ORAA Negotiated Agreements

Dr. Morse updated the board with the agreed upon ORESPA contract changes, some of which include an increase in the custodial probationary period and a 5% pay increase which keeps it in line with inflation and provides an attractive employment opportunity.

**Michael Williams moved to approve the ORESPA contract for four years as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed 6-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

Michael Williams thanked Dr. Morse, Sue Caswell, Al Howland & Brian Cisneros for their work on the budget.

Dr. Morse spoke about positive dialogue back and forth with ORAA to reach their contract changes, some of which include a 4% pay increase and additional contributions to their 403b.

**Al Howland moved to approve the ORAA contract for four years, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed 6-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

Schedule Public Hearing on Policy BHE – School Board Use of Email for December 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

Denise Day told the board the policy committee would be reviewing the BHE policy at tomorrow night's meeting and it would be ready for public hearing on December 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Denise Day moved to schedule a public hearing on December 1, 2021 regarding changes to Policy BHE – School Board Use of Email, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Newkirk. Motion passed 6-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

**IX. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES**

The Manifest Committee met and completed the following manifests.

Payroll Manifest #10 Total is \$1,064,234.28

Vendor Manifest #11 Total is \$171,263.17

Denise Day announced that thanks to Heather Smith the Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC) has been resurrected to provide projected student enrollment data. A pandemic baby boom predicts increasing future enrollment at the elementary school, and next year's largest class is projected to be the first grade. The committee will be working on projections for middle school and high school, which will be part of a presentation to the board in the early spring.

Yusi Turell asked for a Sustainability Committee update. Al Howland stated the meeting was pushed out to November 30<sup>th</sup> and noted that contrary to some public belief, the board is not stepping back in sustainability. He pointed out that the transferring of boilers was a thought-out plan in terms of improving efficiency.

Brian Cisneros arrived.

**VI. DISTRICT REPORTS – moved here****C. Business Administrator**2022/23 Budget Revenue Overview

Michael Williams outlined the budget timeline as follows: the board would hold a workshop tomorrow night, adopt the budget on Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup>, hold a public hearing in January, have deliberations in February and hold a vote in March for public approval. Sue & Michael explained the recent state released information which included state grant money for Durham, Lee & Madbury, the cost of adequate education according to the state and district, as well as the property tax rates, all of which translate to the amount of money towns get one year but may not get the next year. They explained that these special factors are ones that cannot be controlled and that is why they do their best to be conservative with the budget.

**E. Finance Committee Report**FY 23 Budget Discussion

Al Howland stated that after last night's finance meeting, they determined that the budget is coming in at the targeted 4.1% cap, however, it is facing a loss of \$515,867 from the 20-21 MS24 fund balance, and a loss of \$140,000 in projected state revenue resulting in an overall budget revenue decline of \$534,867. Another factor affecting the budget was the increasing cost of wages of hourly employees. The finance committee suggested the use of emergency, capital improvement, and benefits stabilization funds to offset this and reduce the potential tax impact. Al reminded the board of the positions that had already been included in the budget, including the middle and high school Mandarin teachers, an elementary teaching position, two custodians for the middle school, as well money for tennis courts. Al explained that the finance committee looked at the current and proposed budgets and discussed possible budget shifts to open funding for yellow sheet additions. The result was \$165,000 in possible budget shifts that were identified and \$37,000 was added to the Fund 10 balance to provide \$202,000 for new spending. The finance committee's yellow sheet recommendations for the board were

based on direct impact of students and included the MTSS positions in the form of two tutors and an elementary math/science specialist.

The board discussed concerns over using fund balance money, using any remaining health trust rebate from this year to offset next year, and examined other ways of moving money around, such as using the current budget for financial software, and cutting money from next year's budget for a speech assistant or cafeteria furniture. Al Howland stated the most conservative route would be no budget shifts, no yellow sheets, and waiting until spring. He reminded the board that they asked the committee to identify how much money could be freed up and the bottom-line amount, without exceeding the 4.1% cap, is \$202,000.

Yusi Turell felt grateful for the finance committee managing the money so conservatively, boldly, and strategically.

The board members discussed their feelings of which yellow sheet items were priority, some of which included a DEIJ coordinator and the One World K-4 language program.

Michael Williams stated that tomorrow night a budget workshop would be held to discuss proposals for additions and cuts. Although workshops are not normally recorded and streamed to the public, this one would be an exception and available tomorrow night. He stated there would be no public comment or actions, but any materials presented would be available online for the public to view.

**X. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None given.

**XI. CLOSING ACTIONS**

**A. Future Meeting Dates:** November 18, 2021 Budget Workshop – ORHS Library {If Needed}  
December 1, 2021 Regular Board Meeting – ORHS Library  
December 15, 2021 Regular Board Meeting – ORHS Library

**XII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION:** RSA 91-A:3 II {Not Needed}

**NON-MEETING SESSION:** RSA 91-A2 I {Moved to beginning of meeting}

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

**AL Howland moved to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:52pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Karyn Laird  
Records Keeper