

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

**January 18, 2023**

**DRAFT**

**SCHOOL BOARD PRESENT:** Michael Williams, Denise Day, Brian Cisneros, Dan Klein, Yusi Turell, Heather Smith, Matt Bacon

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE:** Paige Burt

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:** Dr. Morse, Suzanne Filippone, Catherine Plourde, Sue Caswell, Rachael Blansett, Rebecca Noe, Shannon Caron

**STAFF PRESENT:**

**GUEST PRESENT:**

**ABSENT:**

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

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Brian Cisneros moved to approve the agenda, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Matt Bacon.**

Denise Day made the following addition:

Under Discussion & Action Items include Policy BGAR along with BGA for first read and motion.

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

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS** – A member of the community spoke during District Reports.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Denise Day moved to approve the January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros.**

Heather Smith made the following correction:

In the adjournment, remove “with the student rep voting in the affirmative” since Paige had left prior to the end of the meeting.

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

**Denise Day moved to approve the January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Non-Public Meeting Minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros.**

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

**Denise Day moved to approve the December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022 Workshop Notes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

**Brian Cisneros moved to approve the January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Budget Hearing Minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

**V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS**

**A. District**

Rebecca Noe of ORHS announced the Indoor Track Team competed this past weekend and she’s very proud of their accomplishments. She acknowledged distance runners Haley Kavanagh and Mackenzie Cook; high jumper Daniel Dorehty; and sprint medley relay runners Avery Bavingardt, Talia Banafato, Erin Carty, and Haley Kavanagh all of whom have qualified for Nationals. On February 2<sup>nd</sup> there will be two events at ORHS: our first Community Dinner from 5:00-6:30 pm and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Night from 6:00-7:30 pm.

Rachael Blansett announced the reconvening of the community DEIJ group. A meeting will be held on Tues., Jan. 31<sup>st</sup> at 6 pm with more information to be available soon.

## **B. Board**

Heather Smith shared that over the weekend the middle school performed Seussical Jr. six times, and all showings were fabulous! The cast and crew consisted of 70+ 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders and she acknowledged Sarah Kuhn, Juliann Woodbury, and Alexander Taylor for all their hard work during the performance and leading up to it.

Chair Michael Williams followed up on policy pertaining to board officer removal. Current policy is clear about electing officers for term length, but not for removal. He reviewed other schools' policies in which removal requires two-thirds majority vote or a public hearing. He felt it would be worthwhile to have a policy that clarifies the process.

## **VI. DISTRICT REPORTS**

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

Suzanne Filippone let the board and community know that they are in the process of updating competencies for the website.

A gentleman from the public entered for comment and Michael invited him to speak.

William Hall of Durham said he recently attended a NH Energy Conference and the new ORMS building was talked about in glowing terms, specifically about its efficiency. He shared how fortunate we are to have gotten the vote before the COVID outbreak and the construction prices before the shutdown. He provided the board with the conference handout, which included photos of ORMS.

#### DEIJ Goals Spring Semester – Rachael Blansett

DEIJ Coordinator Rachael Blansett presented part 2 of her presentation that first aired in December. In the “New Semester Overview” she recapped the fall semester which focused on building connections, learning about the district, and identifying needed professional development. She announced the second semester will be based on five new spring goals some of which include a visit with Tona Brown, developing DEIJ competencies, and updating transgender and gender expression policy procedure. A big focus has been the creation of professional development for teachers, which consists of 16 total sessions covering 6 different topics. Workshops will be held primarily on a monthly basis after-school. A tentative timeline is as follows:

**January:** Demystifying Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

**February:** Let’s Talk about Race (in the Classroom)!

**March:** LGBTQ+ Cultural Competency Training 101

**April:** The Power of Accessibility: Universal Design for Learning 101

**May:** Putting the “Class” in Classroom: Income-based Inequities in Learning

**June:** Bias Bootcamp

When asked about faculty participation, Rachael said the PD is optional to teachers, but attendance is strongly encouraged. Denise Day asked if board members could attend, and Dr. Morse highly encouraged it remarking it would be great to have board insight. Rachael agreed with Dr. Morse and told members they are welcome to attend, but to be mindful the content is designed to fit a “teacher focus” lens.

Yusi Turell thanked Rachael for all her work and appreciated that teachers' needs were represented in the professional development plans. She was interested in knowing if there were DEIJ indicators for the school and community at large to evaluate the work. Dr. Morse said that an evaluation for the district would be separate from Rachael's evaluation since her work focuses largely on teacher professional development. However, he will work with Rachael on developing what district wide DEIJ indicators might look like.

It was asked if the professional development series was designed as a sequence and Rachael said while there is some build and succession, the sessions are not completely synchronized, and you can attend based on topic of need or interest.

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

### Evaluation Instrument for DEIJ Coordinator

Dr. Morse discussed the DEIJ Coordinator Evaluation Instrument with the board emphasizing the "other" performances that are not articulated in the job description and goals. He stated that Rachael has done a phenomenal job testifying before legislature on two occasions and being part of regional and state-wide panels. She continues to have a presence that is growing outside of her hired role.

Dr. Morse shared an updated color-coded Emergency Plan with the board. It provides protocols for various emergencies and how teachers react. He thanked SRO Mike Nicolosi and administrators for their work.

Dr. Morse commended members of the board for their participation in school events, for example most recently Heather and Matt attended the Seussical Jr performances. He said it is great for board members to have a presence and show active support around parents and the community.

### ORHS Youth Risk Behavior Survey – Rebecca Noe & Shannon Caron

Counseling Director Shannon Caron and Principal Rebecca Noe presented the Preliminary November 2021 results of the ORHS Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The student data is very important in driving school and district programming and interventions. It allows for reflection to see what is working and what needs to be introduced moving forward. Post COVID the counseling department has witnessed a shift toward addressing more students with mental health needs, which has stemmed from the long period of isolation. Shannon thanked the board for all their support and for creating the new LADC position at the high school, which has been utilized by many students.

For their presentation of data, Shannon and Rebecca focused on mental health, substance abuse, bullying and sexual behaviors. The number of students reported feeling sad or hopeless every day for 2 or more weeks with impact to their activities was up more than 11% from 2019. Furthermore, 45.5% of the students who participated in the survey reported they never or rarely got mental health help. It was noted that suicidal ideation and attempts have increased, with females representing the larger percentage. ORHS is addressing mental health through several avenues, including an on-call counselor, community-building activities, programming, suicide prevention training with staff and referrals to outside therapists.

In the area of substance abuse, vaping, marijuana, and alcohol use has trended down since 2019 and 2017, and methamphetamines, heroine, ecstasy, and prescription medication were extremely low, but not zero. The LADC officer plays a very important role in helping any student experimenting or showing signs of addiction, as well as supporting those students who live with someone who struggles with substance use. At ORHS students can access our LADC, Britta Bartlett, confidentially and receive 1:1 counseling. She conducts presentations to classes and faculty and helps teachers with the referral process. Other ways substance use is being addressed is through health classes and evening parent presentations by Breathe NH, the SRO and the LADC.

Regarding bullying, the statistics have not changed dramatically, up or down, with the exception of the number of students who had been bullied on school property declined. ORHS addresses bullying through presentations about social media, a review of the bullying law by all advisories and addressing administration as soon as the report is received.

In terms of sexual behaviors, dating violence has risen across the board, notably among females. Data shows there is an increased number of emotional control, forced sexual activity, and physical aggression in relationships, with juniors and seniors being impacted the most. The district has brought in the "Bringing in the Bystander program", has trained staff to have conversations around consent, and has utilized health classes to

address issues. In February, the Granite State Respect Week focuses on addressing, responding to, and preventing harassment in relationships.

Board members raised a variety of questions and concerns in response to the data provided. It was noted that outside therapists have long waiting lists in terms of new referrals. There was discussion about programs across buildings being consistent, especially from middle to high school, and there was concern for the higher numbers of dating violence. Dr. Morse asked Shannon what her greatest need would be if more resources were available. She felt the biggest need was in mental health. Having a licensed mental health counselor on staff would allow counselors to have better availability to all students. At the moment, students in crisis becomes the priority over those with other needs, such as academic counseling. Shannon and Rebecca once again showed appreciation for the board and all their support.

**C. Business Administrator** - None provided

#### **D. Student Representative Report**

Paige Burt reminded the community of the Jan. 26<sup>th</sup> MOR Coffee House being held from 6:30-8:30 pm. The cost is \$5 at the door. She reported the Paint Night fundraiser went well, and she gave a shout out to art teacher Maria Rosi. Paige also announced the first annual staff-student Bobcat Battle: Lip Sync competition of the Ages taking place on Thurs., Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>. All proceeds will benefit the Nurse's Fund which helps families in need in our community. Students can sign up individually, in a pair or as a group by Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> and song selection is on a first serve basis. She advised students to see your class advisor if you have any questions.

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

**F. Other** – None provided

#### **VII. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA – Michael Williams asked if any items needed to be discussed separately and the board had no concerns.**

- Extension of ORMS previously approved Maternity Leave of Absence to the end of January 2023 to March 31, 2023.

**Michael Williams made a motion to approve the extension of ORMS previously approved Maternity Leave of Absence to the end of January 2023 to March 31, 2023, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Matt Bacon. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

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

##### Business Administrator's Letter of Retirement

With deep sadness, Dr. Morse presented Sue Caswell's letter of retirement to the board. He remarked she has been an amazing partner over the 11 years, and they've done phenomenal work together tackling several budgets.

**Heather Smith made a motion to accept the Business Administrator's Letter of Retirement, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros.**

Brian Cisneros stated that losing someone with Sue's knowledge is a loss for the district. He shared the personal impact she has had on his path to becoming a business administrator too. Brian said Sue's the best and she leaves tough shoes to fill.

Chair Michael Williams commented that when the role is done really well it's easy to overlook. Sue has been instrumental to the district.

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

##### 2023 Warrant Article

**Brian Cisneros made a motion to approve and sign the 2023 Warrant Article as presented at the Public Hearing for the Deliberative Session, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Matt Bacon.**

Michael Williams provided instructions to the board.

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

Motion to adopt the FY24 budget and sign the MS26 for the Deliberative Session

**Brian Cisneros made a motion to adopt the FY24 Budget and sign the MS26 for the Deliberative Session, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Matt Bacon. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

Retirement Incentive Recipients

Dr. Morse made the recommendation for the List of participants to receive the retirement incentive. The List of Participants will be recognized by the district at a future meeting.

**Brian Cisneros made a motion to accept the recipients that participated in the Retirement Incentive Opportunity, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Matt Bacon.**

Brian Cisneros wanted the audience to be clear that the incentive was voluntary, and it was a teacher's choice to participate.

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

Policy for first read: BGA – Policy Development System and BGA-R – Board Policy Procedure, and Policy for Deletion: BGC – Policy Review and Evaluation. Consolidated BGC with BGB to create procedure BGA-R and delete BGC.

**Denise Day made a motion to approve for first read Policy BGA – Policy Development System and procedure BGA-R Policy Review/Evaluation/Adoption and Policy for Deletion: Policy BGC – Policy Review and Evaluation, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Matt Bacon. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

Michael Williams made the following revision to Policy BGA to line (A) under Policy Adoption, Dissemination and Review:

“The board may adopt, amend, or repeal written policies at any meeting by a majority vote of full Board, provided that notice of the proposed action was given.”

**Michael Williams moved to amend policy BGA- Policy Development System motion, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Amended motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

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

The Manifest Committee met and completed the following manifests.

Payroll Manifest #12 Total is \$1,044,690.47  
 Payroll Manifest #13 Total is \$1,591,003.63  
 Vendor Manifest #14 Total is \$1,396,562.65  
 Vendor Manifest #15 Total is \$ 694,508.06

Heather Smith shared that the Sustainability Committee discussed goals at their recent meeting. There has been progress with composting in most of the schools while the middle school is still working out the details of their plan. She reported there is, however, consistent unusable amounts of composting due to contamination, so they are working on campaigns for addressing the issue. Heather shared details of the Community Dinner, which will be held on Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> from 5:00-6:30 pm at ORHS. The dinner will include spaghetti, a locally sourced salad, and dessert at a cost of \$8 per adult or \$20 per family. Representatives of local sustainability groups will also be in attendance. The next sustainability meeting will be held on Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm at ORMS.

**X. PUBLIC COMMENTS** - None provided

## **XI. CLOSING ACTIONS**

**A. Future Meeting Dates:** January 23, 2023 – Superintendent Lee Selectman Budget Update @ 6:00 PM  
 February 1, 2023 – Regular School Board Meeting @ 7:00 PM MS Recital Hall  
 February 7, 2023 – Deliberative Session – 7:00 PM MS Recital Hall

February 15, 2023 – Regular School Board Meeting @ 7:00 PM MS Recital Hall

**XII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3 II (c)**

- Superintendent Evaluation

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

**Michael Williams made a motion to enter Non-Public Session at 8:36 pm under RSA 91-A:3II(c), 2<sup>nd</sup> by Matt Bacon. Motion passed 7-0 by roll call vote.**

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

**Heather Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:01pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.**

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

Respectfully Submitted,  
Karyn Laird, Records Keeper