

Oyster River Cooperative School District

Remote Emergency Meeting

April 15, 2020

DRAFT

SCHOOL BOARD PRESENT VIA ROLL CALL VOTE: Brian Cisneros, Dan Klein, Tom Newkirk, Denise Day, Michael Williams, Kenny Rotner, Al Howland

Student Representative:

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT VIA REMOTE ACCESS: James Morse, Todd Allen, Sue Caswell, Suzanne Filippone, Jay Richard, Jim Rozycki.

STAFF PRESENT:

There were no members of the public present or anyone present with the Board Members at their remote locations.

Tom Newkirk read the following statement:

As Chair of the Oyster River Cooperative School Board, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

We are utilizing Microsoft Teams for this electronic meeting.¹ All members of the School Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone # 1-603-766-5646 and ID Code 461362#, or by clicking on the following website address: <http://www.orcsd.org/stream>

b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Microsoft Team or telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the website of the ORCSD Board Agenda for 04/15/20.

c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access:

If anybody has a problem, please call 603-280-4202 or email at: orcsd-video@orcsd.org.

d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting:

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that **all votes** that are taken during this meeting shall be done by **roll call vote**.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

I. CALL TO ORDER at 7:00 PM by Tom Newkirk

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Denise Day moved to approve the agenda, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed via roll call vote 7-0.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Jim Morse stated that we did receive 5 public comments that he will read into the minutes.

Dean Rubine of Lee: Thank you board members and district administration for the leadership you've shown in this difficult time.

I'm especially thankful for the meal distribution program. It occurs to me if children need meals on school days, there's probably a need for additional meals for other household members, and on non-school days. I was wondering if it was possible to go beyond the federal subsidies and use local resources to provide additional meals? I personally would be willing to donate, as I'm sure would others.

Perhaps there's some unspent money in the budget due to the empty, dark buildings. Perhaps End 68 Hours of Hunger Oyster River could be involved as well.

I'm also still interested in the new middle school bond rate, and any middle school updates.

Brenda Worden: I would like to publicly commend Doris Demers and her associated staff for their tireless and incredible work over the last four weeks. They are behind-the-scenes miracle workers, providing a service to our community that has proven invaluable during this time. We are all facing considerable uncertainty while navigating the unknown. The work they are doing – delivering meals to hundreds in our District – provides an unspoken stability that far exceeds mere food.

I ask that the Superintendent and Board strongly consider providing a one-time bonus to Doris, as well as the support staff who work incredibly hard to provide this important service to those in our District. This would show our sincere appreciation for their hard work, their dedication, and their willingness to steadily provide an essential service at a time where the risk is high, and they soldier on.

Additionally, I would ask that you consider a temporary increase in their hourly pay that would recognize their sustained efforts and compensate them for their risk; a hazard pay if you will, until such time as the stay-at-home order is lifted.

Karen Niland: I responded to the Grading Survey and shared my comments with Ms. Filippone. I wanted to forward this to you in advance of tonight's School Board meeting.

I read a summary of the grading plan (on FB) and it was mentioned the students will have a choice to receive a grade or Pass/Fail. Is this being considered? I agree it is a better option than forcing all students to receive Pass/Fail. Please see my forwarded email below and feel free to respond here or call my cell if you have questions.

Allison Juniper: Our family wants to thank you for all that you have done to help our children continue to learn and progress in their curricula during very difficult educational circumstances. The teachers of this district have been working tirelessly to keep our children both learning and happy under the limitations of remote learning - two very critical components to maintain for young and developing brains. For this, we are endlessly thankful.

We have three kids in the ORCSD, a kindergartener, a 2nd grader, and a 4th grader. We can personally attest to the extraordinary efforts of Jessica Raspa, Molly Jones, and Matthew VanLedtje, who have been delivering to us on a daily basis both wonderful and thorough content. Our family is so appreciative that our children have access to these consummate professionals in our school district, professionals who clearly understand the critical nature of both continuing to deliver strong content and continuing new learning with our children. We are

grateful for this because our children won't get this developmental time frame back in their lives. We feel extremely fortunate to be in this school district, as we understand that this scenario is not the case for many other children across the United States at this time.

In regards to tonight's discussion on the finalizing the date of the last day of school, we would like you to contribute the following commentary:

Our kindergartners are among the most vulnerable to negative impact from missing school and the switch to remote learning. Research shows that kindergarten kids are at high risk for falling behind when they miss long periods of school.

Here is an excerpt from page 3 of "Present, Engaged, and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades," by Hedy Chang and Mariajose Romero http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_837.pdf, that illustrates our reason for concern:

"Common sense and research suggest that being in school consistently is important to ensuring children gain a strong foundation for subsequent learning. Research shows that children, regardless of gender, socioeconomic status or ethnicity, lose out when they are chronically absent (that is, they miss nearly a month of school or more over the course of a year). Children chronically absent in kindergarten show lower levels of achievement in math, reading and general knowledge during first grade.

Going to school regularly in the early years is especially critical for children from families living in poverty, who are less likely to have the resources to help children make up for lost time in the classroom. Among poor children, chronic absence in kindergarten predicts the lowest levels of educational achievement at the end of fifth grade."

Please allow our youngest students the time on learning that was previously planned for this year by not cutting ten days off the end of our ORCSD school calendar. While our family appreciates the chance to make up missed time on learning by working through April vacation, the 4 days of time on learning during that week do not make up for all other time on learning days lost during this current school closure. Please keep the date of the last day of school at June 22nd, in an effort to maximize time on learning for all the students of ORCSD, but most especially for our youngest students who are most at risk of negative impact from the COVID-19 school closure. Thank you for your consideration.

Anna Sargent: I am a junior at ORHS. I have some really strong feelings about the pass/fail grading system. As someone who didn't do very well freshman year but has improved magnificently throughout high school, I was really counting on that extra time to get my GPA up just a little higher before putting in college applications. The college I am most interested in at this moment is a medical school that has not started pass/fail and will likely take students with regular grades over pass/fail on a transcript. I understand that some students are really struggling with this online learning setup so I believe that each individual student should get to choose which grading system to go by so that they can do their own personal best.

My family is also hosting a foreign exchange student from Spain and his organization won't accept pass/fail so he would have to redo part of the school year back in Spain next year to make up for it. Thank you for listening to my input.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to approve April 1st regular meeting minutes:

Revisions:

Michael Williams asked for the following changes to the minutes:

Page 2 fifth paragraph second sentence correct the vote to read 2-4-1.

Page 2 paragraph ten first sentence under Public Comments, add an “e” to the end of Rubin making it “Rubine”.

Page 5 add a new last paragraph to read, “At this point 8:11 pm the meeting was stopped for 6 minutes due to a remote technology problem. The meeting resumed at 8:17 pm.”

Page 6 second paragraph, first sentence add “Thomas Bus” to the motion.

Denise Day asked for clarification of the vote on page 2, “What was changed?”

Tom Newkirk explained the error was in the order of the vote.

Denise Day moved to approve the April 1st meeting minutes with the above revisions, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed with roll call vote 7-0.

~~V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS:~~

~~A. District:~~

~~B. Board:~~

VI. DISTRICT REPORTS:

~~A. Assistant Superintendent Reports:~~

B. Superintendent’s Report:

New Middle School Update:

Jim explained that there has been a lot of activity by the Architects as they have met remotely with Jay, Todd and a host of professional staff to discuss the layout of their classrooms. Jim listed the LEED Guidelines: Location and Transportation, Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy and Atmosphere, Materials and Resources, Indoor Environment Quality, Innovation and Regional Priority and explained that they are doing a great job providing background information.

No Board discussion.

Remote Learning Update:

Jim stated that they are continuing to do a great job providing quality education to our students. He explained that at the latest ATeam meeting they discussed how staff is making sure that we are accounting for student participation and that there are very

few students that we need to chase. We are working hard to make sure that no student falls through the cracks. Jim commended the four principals for putting this criteria in place.

No Board Discussion.

Spring Coach Stipend:

Jim referred to the memo that Andy Lathrop had provided to the Board asking that the Spring Varsity Coaches receive at least 30% pay regardless if the season is played or not. Andy's memo explained that they are organizing and running out of season conditioning/skill sessions multiple days a week on their own dime without thought of any remuneration. A listing of coaches and their proposed pay out are also included in the back up. Jim is recommending this pay out.

Denise Day believes that there is an error on the coaching list for Nick Ricciardi, it should read \$1,572.30.

Kenny Rotner asked if there were other people in a similar situation that we should be considering, other organizations or clubs.

Jim explained that he has already spoken with Suzanne and the clubs at the high school, like yearbook, Mouth of the River are continuing to work during remote learning.

It was determined that the Board is in agreement with this recommendation but also wanted to add the HS Musical Staff also be compensated at 30% of their stipend amount.

Denise Day moved to approve the payment of Varsity Coaching Stipends as presented with the correction to Nick Ricciardi's amount, along with High School Musical Stipend positions at 30% of the actual stipend amount, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed with roll call vote 7-0.

Calendar- Snow Day Decision:

Jim began by stating that the surrounding communities of Barrington, Dover, and Rochester have already determined an end date to the current school year, with Rochester being the earliest of May 15th and Dover and Barrington being the first week of June. Jim is recommending that we should coordinate with Barrington and Dover and determine June 5th as the last day of school.

Tom Newkirk confirmed that Jim is recommending June 5th as the last day and asked him to explain his reasoning.

Jim stated that with the onset of Remote Learning, the teachers are putting in longer days than a regular school day helping students. The expectations on the teachers and students is hard. Other concerns are the inequity for students, the varying levels of teaching skills for the parents, this is an exhausting process for all.

Michael Williams asked if a decision was needed tonight.

Jim stated that it is not imperative to make the decision this evening, but he felt that parents, staff and students would like to know, especially since the surrounding communities have publicized their end of school closing dates.

Denise Day stated that she has seen the parent letters, but is also following the Governor's television updates and the possibility that remote learning will probably continue for the rest of the school year, June 5th is a reasonable compromise and we should make this decision tonight.

Tom Newkirk shared that maintaining students' interest, especially in June is helped by a lot of outside activities like field day.

Michael Williams questioned that with the addition of re-learning days in April and May, and the Monday non-school days in May added in we could go longer in June he expressed concern for the impact on hourly staff.

Jim thanked Michael and explained that he understands the concern for hourly people if we close earlier, but we have built work into the calendar for those couple of weeks. The District is very supportive of the hourly staff and have also recently developed a professional development guide from which hourly staff could use to reach their intents. Topics included technology, special education, and webinars put on by our psychologists.

Special credit goes to Kristen Hughes, Felicia Sperry, and Brian Ryan who helped make this guide happen as it continues to grow with new opportunities added regularly.

There was no further discussion.

Brian Cisneros made a motion to approve Friday, June 5th as the last day of school for the 2019-20 school year, 2nd by Denise Day. Motion passed with a roll call vote of 6-1 with Michael Williams voting no.

Grading Decision (Suzanne Filippone):

Suzanne joined the meeting and began by stating she included in the Board back up a new memo and also included the previous memo from the last Board meeting as well. Her current memo shows the results of her surveys for both parents and facility.

The results for parents Q4 Grading Structure came out as 1/3 keep the same, 1/3 move to Pass/Fail and 1/3 either. For the HS Staff results for the 66 participants there was a much different response with a higher result for Move to Pass/Fail, followed by Either and then a smaller amount for Keep the Same. Suzanne included language from College and Universities, language pertaining to the HS Transcripts which include all quarter grades and the final course grade.

Suzanne also provided some considerations regarding offering students choice which included:

- Could we offer options for students to choose between pass/fail or earning the numeric grade/letter grade?
- Couldn't we just use the model that colleges have with choice, like UNH?
- Does offering choice pose other concerns or considerations?
- How does ORHS's conversation compare with other schools?

The Board had a lengthy discussion asking questions about current grading options, timeframe for student decisions, if each course selected can be a different option for grading and is the decisions that is made final.

Suzanne answered all of the questions and stated that the final decisions will be signed off on by the parents so that it will be documented for this year only.

Al Howland stated that maintaining structure and motivation is important and likes grades for kids.

Tom Newkirk asked what the passing grade was. Suzanne informed us it was D-.

Kenny Rotner stated that he was not sure about this. Going by some of the parent correspondences there are so many aspects that come into play. Equity, parent support, place to do work. He is leaning more toward the Pass/Fail option.

Jim articulated the conversation that he has had with both Suzanne and Todd and agrees that equity is situational and that families/students need to decide what works for them.

Michael Williams asked if there would be a default option if you do not get an answer from families.

Suzanne made the following recommendation for a Hybrid Model:

Grading and Reporting for COVID 19 ORHS Quarter 4:

Students will earn a Pass/Fail for Q4 and final course grade is the Q3 grade for semester classes and the average of Q1, Q2 and Q3 for yearlong classes.

Upon request students can earn a numeric grade for Q4 and the final course grade is the average of all quarters.

Denise Day moved to approve the Hybrid Model for Quarter 4 Grading, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed with roll call vote 7-0.

ORHS Parking Bid:

Jim Rozycki asked the Board to consider awarding the Bid for the Parking lot construction in place of the existing tennis courts at Oyster River High School to - Jason McKenna & Sons Construction for a grand total of \$285,352.85, to be completed this summer.

We are recommending them because they were the low bidder. Since all of the bids were above the CIP budgeted amount, we asked the lowest bidder to reevaluate this project to bring the costs down. The areas that were modified were a reduction in porous pavement, instead of 4 parking lanes – we reduced to 1 lane. And we reduced the thickness of asphalt from 4” to 3”. Our Engineer (Haight Civil Engineering) supported this approach and stated that 3” is perfectly fine for a parking lot of our needs and won’t reduce the longevity.

Tom Newkirk asked if we used McKenna in the past.

Jim stated – No, we haven’t done a project of this nature in many years and these are all companies that haven’t done any work in ORCSD in the past. However, they come highly recommended by our engineer and have done many successful projects in the area.

Michael Williams asked what updrainage meant.

Jim stated that underdrainage is like a perimeter French drainpipe around a house foundation, its designed to channel sub-grade moisture and water away so it doesn’t sit there to frost and heave thus prolonging the life of the parking lot.

Al Howland asked about the pedestrian crosswalk light and if it was similar to the one in Newmarket.

Jim stated yes. Its only active when someone presses the button. It is solar powered and has LED lights.

Denise Day moved to award the high school parking lot bid to Jason McKenna & Sons Construction for \$285,352.85, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed with roll call vote 7-0.

At this point Tom Newkirk noted that he skipped over Jay Richard and the middle school progress report update and asked Jay to proceed.

MS Progress report (Jay Richard):

Jay joined the meeting and spoke about his MS plan for grading and how remote learning has significantly impacted assessment and progress reporting at all levels. He stated that many of the competency assessments that were planned for the spring were performance based which forced teachers to make significant changes to the planned curriculum. Due to this the middle school plan is to adjust its progress reporting schedule in order to be fair to all students and staff.

In terms of Specials, Unified Arts and Physical Education, the 3rd quarter courses will receive a summative progress report based on assessments completed by March 13th. A narrative report will be provided for the work completed during the 4th quarter.

For Special Education, progress will be reported as usual for Q3 & Q4 based on goals established in the student's Individual Education Plan.

For the Core Content Classes, Core classes include World Language, Science, Math, Social Studies, and ELA. This group will not give summative 3rd quarter progress reports as the PowerSchool gradebook will remain active in order to provide competency progress for individual assessments. At the end of the 4th quarter all core classes will provide summative progress reports and narrative feedback to reflect growth for the entire year.

eRate Bid: (Josh Olstad):

Jim explained that he would be reporting out on the eRate Bid as Josh was back up for Alexander during this meeting. He explained that UNH is right at our fingertips and even thought they were not the lowest bidder; they are the favorite. They have been an awesome provider and don't want to lose them.

The Board asked what the One time build-out cost was and if that was part of the requested bid amount that we are seeing.

Jim explained that we will be looking at separate eRate financing for the \$10,000 and that the Board will be approving the \$1,100 bid amount.

There was no additional Board discussion.

Brian Cisneros moved to award the eRate bid to UNH for \$1,100, 2nd by Denise Day. Motion passed with roll call vote 7-0.

Finance Planning Committee:

Tom explained that the upcoming budget preparation was going to be complex and that we will need to start working on it right away. He asked the Board to review the enclosed memo and possible charge for this committee. If established, he would like three members of the Board to be on it. And asked if there was any questions or thoughts about this new committee and subsequent proposed charge.

Denise would like to add a third bullet that states: "In order to support transparency in the process, the committee will keep detailed minutes and provide those minutes to the full Board."

Tom thought this was a good suggestion and also stated that this what happens with the policy committee.

Michael Williams felt that this is not a bullet point, but actually could be added to the end of the second last sentence in the first paragraph.

Tom asked if there was any discussion.

Board members asked if the time frame of this new committee should be a longer commitment than just one year. What the impact of the state revenues and local tax

collection will be on future budgets. How will this affect the Capital Improvement plans. The impact on the whole Board if only three people are on the committee and will this cause an inside/outside group dynamic.

Brian Cisneros moved to approve the establishment of a finance committee of three Board members and the proposed charge with Denise Day's revision, 2nd by Michael Williams. Motion passed with roll call vote 7-0.

Retirement Incentive:

Jim began by stating that he knows that a decision was already made at a past Board meeting to not offer a retirement incentive this year, but respectfully asked if we could bring the option of offering a retirement incentive to 3 people this year.

Tom Newkirk asked why this would be useful to the District.

Jim explained that he is extremely nervous about the revenues at the state level and the tax collection at the local level, and this could provide a little bit of wiggle room and prove beneficial. The Guild did a survey of their staff and reported out that 17 people would be interested if any type of incentive was offered.

The Board asked what the amount would equal out to? Would it be able to be paid out through this year's budget? Whether this is the right time to offer this with the possibility of remote learning carrying over to the fall and their thoughts of this tool being used every year, and the challenges of hiring during this time.

There was no further discussion.

Tom Newkirk made a motion to approve the retirement incentive, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion failed with a roll call vote of 3-4 with Al Howland, Dan Klein, Kenny Rotner, and Michael Williams voting no.

~~C. Business Administrator:~~

~~D. Student Senate Report:~~

~~E. Other:~~

F. VII. DISCUSSION ITEM:

Committee Assignments

Tom Newkirk asked if everyone received the information that was sent to them this morning and if they had a chance to review his proposal for committee assignments.

There was a brief discussion for a Wellness committee representative.

Jim explained that this is a school committee and not a Board committee.

There was no additional discussion.

The committee assignments would be:

Policy: Dan Klein, Kenny Rotner, Denise Day

Finance: Brian Cisneros, Al Howland, Michael Williams

Agenda: Tom Newkirk, Michael Williams

Negotiations: Tom Newkirk, Al Howland

District Tech: Brian Cisneros

NHSBA Delegate: Dan Klein

Wellness:

Sustainability: Al Howland

Long Range Planning: Denise Day

Middle School Planning: Brian Cisneros, Tom Newkirk

Sabbatical Committee: Kenny Rotner

Denise Day made a motion to approve the proposed committee assignment list adding the Finance Committee and without a Wellness Committee representative, 2nd by Michael Williams. Motion passed with roll call vote 7-0.

VIII. ACTIONS

A. Superintendent Action Items: None

B. Board Action Items:

Approve Administrator Contracts

Denise Day made a motion to approve the Administrator contracts as submitted by the Superintendent, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed roll call vote of 7-0.

No Discussion.

Approve Superintendent Contract

Jim explained that for his 2020-21 contract and with Board Approval was calculated at a 3% increase. This year he would like to split his 3% increase with Todd Allen so as to bring Todd up closer in salary to the salaries of the Assistant Superintendent from Portsmouth and Exeter, and bring his increase up to a 4.5% over his 2019-20 contract.

Brian Cisneros made a motion approve the Superintendent contracts, 2nd by Denise Day.

Tom asked if there was any discussion.

Al stated that he wished that this was discussed prior to voting on the administrator contracts and would like to make a motion to reconsider the previous vote.

Al Howland made a motion to reconsider the previous motion on the administrator contracts, 2nd by Dan Klein. Motion passed with roll call vote 7-0.

Further Discussion ensued.

Dan Klein thanked Dr. Morse for thinking of this, but felt that there was a better way to approach this with discussion with the bargaining unit, and that when he reviewed the state listing, ORCSD was in the top ten possibly 6th, if he was reading the information correctly.

Jim explained that Todd and his position are not part of any bargaining unit.

Al also felt that this was very generous of Dr. Morse, but this is not a good time to do this.

Denise Day felt that Dr. Morse sharing his increase is already a budgeted amount and if Jim is willing to do that than she can support this.

Brian Cisneros also agrees that this is already budgeted and if the Superintendent chooses to take a smaller raise it is not hurting the District.

Jim suggested that the Board move forward with approving the ORAA and Director contracts as presented for approval and hold off and bring both his and Todd's contracts back at the May 6th Board meeting.

Dan asked if this would also include the Business Administrators contract as well.

Denise Day made a motion to approve the ORAA/Directors/Business Administrator contracts as submitted by the Superintendent, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed roll call vote of 7-0.

Tom Newkirk asked how the Board wished to proceed with the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent contracts for the May 6th meeting.

Dan Klein suggested that Dr. Morse research the area salaries and provide this information as back up for the suggested increase in the assistant superintendent's salary.

Jim stated that he would work on that.

~~X. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:~~

~~A. Manifests Reviewed and Approved by Manifest Committee:~~

~~Denise Day and Dan Klein reviewed the manifests.~~

~~Payroll Manifest #~~

~~Vendor Manifest #~~

~~X. PUBLIC COMMENTS:~~

XI. CLOSING ACTIONS:

- A. Future Meeting Dates: 5/6/20 Regular Board Meeting –Remote Meeting 7:00 PM

~~XII. NON PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91 A:3 II {If Needed}~~
~~NON MEETING SESSION: RSA 91 A:2 I {If Needed}~~

XIII. ADJOURNMENT:

Brian Cisneros made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m., 2nd by Michael Williams. Motion passed with a roll call vote of 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Wendy L. DiFruscio
Executive Assistant to
Superintendent of Schools