

# Oyster River Cooperative School District

## Remote Emergency Meeting

May 6, 2020

DRAFT

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

**Student Representative:**

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT VIA REMOTE ACCESS:** James Morse, Catherine Plourde.

**STAFF PRESENT:**

**GUEST'S PRESENT VIA REMOTE ACCESS: Andre Kloetz, Construction Manager ~ Bauen Corporation, Ron Lamarre, Anne Ketterer, and Ryan Tirrell ~ Lavallee/Brensinger Architects.**

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.<sup>1</sup> 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 05/06/20.

*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](mailto: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**

Tom Newkirk asked that the addition of School Board Committee Update be re-added so that Denise Day could update the Board on the Long-Range Planning Committee.

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

**Denise Day moved to approve the agenda as amended, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed via roll call vote 6-0.**

Tom Newkirk wanted to take a moment during Teacher Appreciation Week to recognize and acknowledge all of the efforts and motivation that the OR teachers have committed to during this difficult time, and praises their passion to continue providing such a quality education to our students. He went on to say that he understands that we are ending without celebration but knows that the community has a deeper appreciation for all of our teachers. Thank you all.

## **III. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Jim Morse stated that there were no public comments submitted.

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

**Motion to approve April 15<sup>th</sup> regular meeting minutes:**

**Revisions:**

**Tom Newkirk asked for the following changes to the minutes:**

**Page 7 fifth paragraph, at the end of the first sentence add “Suzanne informed us it was D-.”**

**Denise Day moved to approve the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes with the above revisions, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed with roll call vote 6-0.**

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

**~~A. District:~~**

**~~B. Board:~~**

## **VI. DISTRICT REPORTS:**

**~~A. Assistant Superintendent Reports:~~**

**B. Superintendent’s Report:**

New Middle School Presentation by Architect & Construction Manager:

Jim Morse introduced Andre Kloetz, Construction Manager from Bauen Corporation to update the Board on the status of the progress made so far.

Andre began by stating that we have begun construction one week ahead of schedule. The tree removal along Coe Drive was completed today. The stumps will be grounded and removed. With the Town of Durham’s support, we have new parking spaces along Coe Drive. We have also installed for safety reasons chain link fencing along the edge of the sidewalk to separate the construction site from the road. Later in the summer fencing will be added to separate the school from the construction site, as this is not

needed at this point. We have also put up full snow fencing on the north side of the property along the trail system for added protection for individuals walking in that area from the construction site.

We are beginning to prepare the Geothermal well field and we will start drilling in two weeks, which at that time we will put up retaining walls.

This Friday there is a pre-construction on-site meeting to discuss technicalities, one being water management. Our first delivery of rebar for concrete will be May 14<sup>th</sup>. The following week we will put in the footings. Steel delivery will be mid-August.

The staff on site are Adam Downs the Super on site, Jessie Phan the Assistant Production Manager and Bob Sullivan the mechanical/electrical supervisor. Andre stated that he will be on and off the site continually. He informed the Board that the driveway permit has been filed with the Town of Durham. We are off to a great start. He asked the Board if there were any questions. There were none.

At this point Anne Ketterer from Lavalley/Brensinger Architects briefly explained what was coming up and introduced Ryan Tirrell from their firm who would be presenting a power point presentation with the latest updates and information.

Ryan started by stating he was a student at the middle school 21 year ago and an Oyster River graduate. He was proud to be a part of this unique experience and has insight to bring to the team.

Ryan began by stating that the design concept is broken out into 4 categories: Forest, Mountain, Ocean, Rivers with a complimentary color scheme associated with each category.

The main colors for each quadrant are green for forest, purple for mountain, deep blue for ocean, light blue for river. He explained that these color combinations will also allow for three additional subsequent color schemes that are intertwined throughout the entire school, so that each quadrant will have their primary color but will also share colors from the three other teams, allowing for continuity throughout.

He went on to explain that a flooring design that depicts a river will run through the learning commons and connect to all four quadrants to provide unity to the school.

Ryan move through the rest of the power point showing the color designs of each quadrant stating that the colors provide a dynamic pallet. He asked the Board if there were any questions.

Denise Day stated that this is very exciting and pretty cool for the kids, however she questioned the use of the green being a strong color and asked if this could cause overstimulation for some students.

Anne Ketterer explained to Denise that they have a Behavioral Specialist on staff that is given the plans and color schemes that are being suggested for use for her expertise and guidance before we present anything to a client.

Tom Newkirk did not have a question but stated that this was a stunning presentation and that they did a terrific job.

Jim Morse expressed to Ryan that this must be rewarding for him to work on a school design that he graduated from. He stated that they did a fabulous job utilizing teams and colors and thanked Ryan for his presentation.

#### List of “B” Policies for annual review

Jim Morse began by stating that prior to his becoming the Superintendent, the prior Board was taken to court for Right-to-Know issues, which the Board lost. To date the injunctions set for Board communications is still in place and this has resulted in the yearly review of the list of “B” policies. He briefly explained that we need to be scrupulous and careful when we go into non-public and non-meetings. We are careful with the minutes that we are correcting conversations and not adding to them. The District has provided School Board emails to everyone so that they can be separate from personal emails. Texting should be assumed a form of email. The RTK law’s intent is that all conversations by the Board are public. Emails and Texts related to Board issues are public. Please do not use emails or texts to discuss Board issues. When Board Members are asked to provide information, I request it be sent to me for disbursement to the Board as a whole. We are one of the few school districts that provide for two public comments during a Board meeting.

Jim asked the Board if they had any questions or comments. There were none.

#### Remote Learning Update:

Jim wanted to begin this update with a story that happened today to Doris while she was shopping for End68Hours of Hunger. The gentleman behind her in line stated that she had a large shopping order. Doris went on to explain who she was and about the End68Hours of Hunger program that the school district has in place, and the help that it provides to our families. The gentleman then proceeded to hand his credit card to the cashier to pay for the \$268 food bill. Doris thanked the gentleman. Jim continued by stating that the community has been very generous, and if anyone would like to donate to this program, he explained what you needed to do.

Jim also relayed to the Board a publication in USAToday Money section entitled “Making the grade: Students are most likely to succeed in these school districts across US.” Oyster River was rated number 1. Jim explained the criteria that was used to reach their conclusion and encouraged the Board to read the article.

In terms of remote learning, the administrative team met remotely and worked through Short term, interim and long-term goals for the school district. Suzanne and Jay will be reaching out to parents of 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders to set up small group meetings for expectations of the students starting in a new school. Jay will be reaching out now and Suzanne in next couple of weeks due to completing graduation planning.

The seniors, their advisors and Suzanne have met and determined that they want to go with a graduation ceremony at the high school and that future plans are in the work and they will finalize and let everyone know.

Jim explained the summer plans will be Reach-in-a-Box which will have weekly themes and families will be able sign up for camps a week at a time. For a small materials fee, each family will be provided a one-week themed camp in a box for each session they register for. The box will contain directions and materials to do multiple family activities connected to that week's theme. There will be craft projects, games, scavenger hunts, STEM type activities, etc. all aimed at encouraging outdoor activity. There will also be social media opportunities coordinated by Durham Parks and Rec to share the fun with others.

Jim explained that they also started discussions pertaining to the fall planning and that right now there are five options that we are looking at. 1. Remote over and kids back in traditional setting. 2. Start school, COVID resurges and return to remote learning. 3. Not allowed to return. 4. Hybrid remote learning and kids in school. 5. What if a significant number of parents choose not to send their children to school next fall. What if, due to health concerns, a significant number of staff cannot return?

We have been having conversations with the Portsmouth School District to see how they are handling remote learning and plans for the fall. They are similar in size to us for comparison. We need to have plans in place for all of these options to be prepared and not be surprised.

Denise Day asked if the graduation date was remaining the same. Jim replied that he believed that it was, and that the goal was to keep graduation on June 12<sup>th</sup>, but he would keep the Board informed of any changes.

Denise Day asked Jim to talk about the Groundbreaking ceremony that is being planned. Jim explained that due to the Governors ruling of gatherings having no more than 10 people, we are going to downsize the original ceremony to include the three town leaders, Julie Reece, Brian, Tom, Jay and himself. We will plan something larger later on if the 10-person limit is lifted and then do something additional with the kids after that.

Brian Cisneros went back to the remote learning discussion and asked if the 1:1 for next year was still part of the plan. Jim explained that we need to order laptops for grades 5, 9, 11 & 12 and that Dell will have them to us by the beginning of summer. We need to prepare, but keep the old machines until the new ones come in. There are machines throughout the community, and we need to develop a plan for return right away or wait. The goal is 1:1 for grades 5 – 12.

No additional Board discussion.

#### Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent Contracts

Jim apologized to the Board that his memo did not go out to them until Monday and apologized to Tom that the wording of the memo was not well done. He stated that he

reverted back to the 3% increase for both of them and that this is unresolved and requires action by the Board.

Tom Newkirk stated that this means there are two options, the original proposal and the 3% proposal. Tom asked what the Boards feelings were about this?

Denise Day stated that she supported the original proposal of Dr. Morse sharing his increase for bringing Todd's salary up.

Al Howland stated that he felt that there was a failure of the process. The Board has a negotiation committee and we skipped that step. He felt the best practice was to reconvene the negotiation committee with the administrators, get a sense of what they are looking for and then come back to the Board.

Brian Cisneros stated that he didn't agree that we turned down someone's generosity. We don't need to go through bargaining process. He continued to discuss work performance which at this time Tom intervened and asked that if we were going to continue to talk about performance than we would need to do that in non-public. Brian agreed to end it there.

Dan Klein agreed with Brian's thoughts on the superintendent's generosity, but also agreed with Al and felt more comfortable in terms of following a process.

Tom Newkirk felt that we should stay with the 3%. In the past we set aside equity money early on and then looked at salaries and made equity adjustments from there. Agreed that it was a generous act on the part of the superintendent.

Jim explained that the Board negotiation team did meet with ORAA and at that time thought they were an association and not a union. He also stated that he, Todd and Sue are not part of this union or any other union.

Tom asked where we would go from here.

Jim stated that Al's idea of meeting with the three of us to negotiate is a good idea.

**Al Howland made a motion for the Board's negotiation team to speak with Jim, Todd, and Sue to discuss salaries and bring recommendations back to the full Board, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dan Klein.**

**Discussion:**

Denise asked if there was enough time to meet and have this discussion?

Jim stated that we have until July 1<sup>st</sup> and asked the Board if they wanted any additional information.

Al asked if there were any other issues that the three of them wanted to bring to the table.

Jim stated that he did not think so, only the salaries.

Tom suggested that the difference between the principal's salaries and the assistant superintendent's salaries be available for review,

Michael Williams clarified that the Business Administrators salary was already approved at the last meeting.

There was no additional discussion.

Tom called for a roll call vote.

**Motion passed with roll call vote of 4-2, with Denise Day and Brian Cisneros voting no.**

**~~C. Business Administrator:~~**

**~~D. Student Senate Report:~~**

**~~E. Other:~~**

**F. VII. DISCUSSION ITEM:**

Finance Planning Committee:

Jim spoke about the upcoming finance committee meeting that will be next Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM and it will be a remote meeting at this time. He asked Board members to send him questions for the committee. He stated that he has five questions that Michael sent to him.

Tom asked if anyone else had questions and if they were ready now?

Denise felt that she needed a starting point as she was used to the procedure that was followed last year.

Jim explained that he requested this committee be formed to work with both him and Sue as he felt the 21/22 budget was going to be very hard and now with the complications of COVID -19, and the state revenues 20% below normal this was going to compound the issues.

Tom stated that he has 6 questions that he would like to send to the finance committee.

There was a lengthy discussion surrounding this coming year and the 21/22 budgets. Some ideas of possible freezing of the budget, increase the fund balance and retention of staff.

Tom asked if this committee was meeting on alternate weeks of the Board meetings and also asked that we include the topic of “Finance Committee Updates” as a regular agenda item.

Tom went back to ask about the policies if they required a motion.

Jim stated that they were part of the yearly review and that the minutes would reflect that the Board reviewed for this year.

## **VIII. ACTIONS**

**A. Superintendent Action Items:** None

**B. Board Action Items:**

ORHS Maternity Leave of Absence

**Denise Day moved to approve the ORHS Maternity Leave of Absence from May 2020 through September 25, 2020, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed with roll call vote 6-0.**

Nomination of the ORHS Assistant Special Education Director:

Jim asked Tom if Catherine could speak on this matter.

Catherine Plourde remotely joined the meeting and gave a brief summary of Melissa Jean and that she was the interim assistant last year covering Misty Lowe’s leave. She is highly qualified and fits well within Catherine’s team.

**Denise Day moved to approve the nomination of the ORHS Assistant Special Education Director, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed with roll call vote 6-0.**

Michael Williams to write proclamation

Michael spoke of the tremendous efforts that the District staff, teachers, paraeducators, school nutrition, transportation, custodians, IT, and administrators have undertaken and wants to thank everyone by writing this proclamation.

**Brian Cisneros moved to authorize Michael Williams to write a proclamation to our employees, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed with roll call vote 6-0.**

## **X. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

Denise Day updated the Board on the Long-Range Planning Committee openings that have been filled by Ashish Pant and Erik Ickes.

**Denise Day nominated Ashish Pant & Erik Ickes to fill the vacant positions on the LRPC, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed with roll call vote 6-0.**

~~**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: 5/20/20 Regular Board Meeting –Remote Meeting 7:00 PM  
6/3/20 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 8:45 p.m., 2<sup>nd</sup> by Michael Williams. Motion passed with a roll call vote of 6-0.**

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