

Oyster River Cooperative School Board
Regular Meeting Minutes

June 16, 2021

DRAFT

SCHOOL BOARD PRESENT: Denise Day (acting chair), Tom Newkirk, Brian Cisneros, Dan Klein, Al Howland, Yusi Turell **Absent:** Michael Williams. **Student Representative:** None

SCHOOL BOARD ABSENT: Michael Williams

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Jim Morse, Sue Caswell, Misty Lowe, Catherine Plourde, Suzanne Filippone, Rebecca Noe, Todd Allen

STAFF PRESENT: Jonathan Bromley, Francesca Kennedy, Jim Rozycki

GUEST PRESENT:

I. CALLED TO ORDER at 7:00 PM by Denise Day

Denise Day announced that she will be sitting as chair for the meeting due to the absence of Chair Michael Williams.

MANIFEST REVIEW / APPROVAL AT EACH SCHOOL BOARD MEETING.

1a. PUBLIC HEARING: ESSER III Grant Funding

Brian Cisneros moved to open a public hearing, 2nd by Tom Newkirk. Motion passed 6-0.

Sue Caswell gave an overview of the ESSER III grant funding, which is expected to be \$313,432, and what expenditures the district would like to use the money for. Sue is also seeking approval from the Board for Dr. Morse to sign the program assurances corresponding to the grant.

Al Howland moved to close the public hearing, 2nd by Dan Klein. Motion passed 6-0.

Brian Cisneros moved to authorize the superintendent to sign the ESSER III Funding Grant assurances, 2nd by Tom Newkirk. Motion passed 6-0.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Brian Cisneros moved to approve the agenda as written, 2nd by Dan Klein. Motion passed 6-0.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Haley Wickline and Rebecca Blake spoke on behalf of a group of Mast Way Remote Kindergarten parents to thank Francesca Kennedy, Tyler Patria, Misty Lowe, and all of the unified arts teachers and support staff at Mast Way for their dedication to making their remote learning experiences with their children successful. Haley cited the emotional and cognitive growth of the students. Rebecca cited what the children were able to do while virtually learning.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Brian Cisneros moved to approve the June 2, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes, 2nd by Yusi Turell.

Dr. Morse presented the following correction on behalf of Michael Williams: After the approval of the previous minutes, it was stated by Chair Williams that the Board would not be approving the non-public meeting minutes from June 2, 2021 at this time because they have been sealed until July 1, 2021. The reason for sealing is that "disclosure would render action taken ineffective."

Vote on motion to approve the June 2, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes with correction passed 6-0.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

A. District

Misty Lowe updated the Board and the community on the end of year wrap up. Mast Way celebrated with a BBQ and the fourth-grade field day. Misty thanked the PTO for providing the students and staff to ice cream treats and also for their support. The fourth graders had their end of year parade to celebrate the students as they move to the middle school, and the high school lent them the bobcat suit for the night. Misty listed the summer programs that will be hosted at Mast Way, which include the REACH program, the Durham Parks & Recreation program, MTSS, and K-4 extended school year program, as well as two new programs: FIT Together with Kathy Baker & Catherine Moore, and in August there will be a “boot camp” for a targeted group of incoming first graders.

Suzanne Filippone congratulated the newly elected School Board Student Representative, Olivia, that will join the Board in the fall. Suzanne described the events that took place during Senior Week, including the students visiting the elementary schools, and their ice cream social, and thanked everyone who helped with graduation making it a wonderful ceremony. Suzanne continued by describing Step Up Day for the incoming high school freshman and thanked the faculty and staff of the high school for all that they have done for the students during such a challenging year.

Dr. Morse thanked Suzanne Filippone for her leadership of counselors, faculty, and staff and for their organization of the high school celebration this year. Dr. Morse cited conversations with members of the community regarding how well the event was put together and how much they enjoyed watching it.

B. Board

Brian Cisneros stated how great it was to see his daughter graduate, and especially being outside and able to utilize the bleachers, but joked the highlight was the bagpipes. Brian also extended a personal thank you to Catherine Plourde and her staff for the work they do with students throughout their education to ensure their success.

Tom Newkirk congratulated Dr. Morse on his excellent editorial piece, placing the importance of him addressing critical race theory.

Yusi Turell had the opportunity to attend the final presentation for the Chinese after school program, led by Ms. Ding and Ms. Wong. Yusi stated how incredible it was to see how they engaged their students online throughout the year, and how impressed she was by the tones, accents, and inflections possessed by the students. Yusi acknowledged the work that was done by Ms. Wong, the Confucius Institute and Chung Du partners, Anita Mathers and Sarah Schafer for keeping the after school program alive and well, as well as the high school and middle school administrators, and world language teachers for their guidance and mentorship. Yusi continued by thanking previous teachers from the Confucius Institute, and Dr. Morse and Todd Allen for believing in the partnership and allowing it to grow over the years.

Denise Day added how wonderful it was to see the kids in the after-school program read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* in Mandarin, and how she gained an even greater appreciation for teaching via Zoom and keeping the children focused.

VI. DISTRICT REPORTS

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

Todd thanked the Board for the naming of the track after him and stated how great it has been to work with Dr. Morse, as he is a great leader. Todd also extended a thank you to the community for tolerating him for so long, as well as to parents that support the district, and the students for their eagerness to learn.

Sabbatical Presentation from Jon Bromley

Jon discussed the background of his sabbatical, and the possibility of the district adopting a more integrated 9-12 education that would culminate in a capstone program for students prior to graduation. Jon stated the goal of the program would be to develop a more student-centered curriculum and encourage students to use their creativity and critical thinking skills to focus on their passions.

Dr. Morse then requested the Board move up Francesca Kennedy in the agenda, as her presentation coincides with Jonathan's presentation.

Francesca Kennedy thanked the families of her students and the team effort that made the year possible and covered the things she would like to keep in motion even after the pandemic when students are in the classrooms again. Francesca covered what the year looked like for the kindergarten students and how they completed activities at home that they would usually do at school. Francesca shared with the Board that 37.5% of kindergarten students are reading at their grade level, and 43.75% are reading above their grade level, and the students read 1,564 books read on RazKids, plus the physical books that have been sent home with the students.

Denise Day asked Francesca what she will you take with her from this experience.

Francesca answered how important it is to involve families in the kids' education, as well as how to incorporate technology more into the classroom.

Yusi Turell asked if Francesca noticed any disparities between families that were able to be involved and others that were working, or single parents that were working, and what she did to lift them up.

Francesca stated there were grandparents, extended family members, and brothers and sisters, that all got involved, and every student had people involved in helping them.

Tom Newkirk stated he thought this would be a great opportunity for parents to learn about education and how to teach their kids too.

Francesca stated she wished she had had an opportunity like this as a parent as well.

B. Superintendent's Report

High School Principal Nomination

Dr. Morse announced his nomination for the high principal position as Rebecca Noe. Dr. Morse stated the search included 18 applicants, four of which were invited to the screening process to be interviewed by parents, teachers, students, Board members, and administrators. Two finalists were chosen to visit the high school and meet with students and faculty, and then a sub-group visited the finalists' high school. Dr. Morse spoke to the enthusiasm the Bedford high school community had for Rebecca, and how highly they spoke to her qualifications.

Brian Cisneros moved to approve the Superintendent's nomination of Rebecca Noe for high school principal, 2nd by Yusi Turell.

Tom Newkirk added that as a member of the search committee he feels Rebecca is a great match for the school and is very impressed by how positive she is, and that he is very excited about the nomination.

Brian Cisneros moved to approve the Superintendent's nomination of Rebecca Noe for high school principal, 2nd by Yusi Turell.

Vote on motion to approve the Superintendent's nomination of Rebecca Noe for high school principal passed 6-0.

Rebecca Noe thanked the Board and expressed her excitement and honor to be chosen as the new principal. Rebecca stated every interaction with the community has shown an immense amount of pride and energy for what Oyster River does for the students and she is thrilled to be involved.

Mandarin Chinese Program

Dr. Morse provided updates to the Mandarin Chinese program and the difficulty they are facing in finding qualified candidates. He will be meeting with more candidates for the middle school in the upcoming week. Dr. Morse stated the non-profit grant source for the program did not work out, and the district will continue working with Chan Du University to see if they will provide grant funding,

Communications Report

Dr. Morse will continue reaching out to the UNH Survey Center and will update the Board when Andy comes back from vacation.

Heat Days

Dr. Morse discussed his decision last week to provide the program remotely due to the high temperatures that were measured at the middle school and in the tower prior to the students being in the building, and that the feedback he received from the parents was mostly positive. Dr. Morse stated that the problem with the excessive heat may need to be addressed sooner rather than later and that Al Howland will be discussing this more in the Finance Committee Report.

Right To Know Request

Dr. Morse stated that HB545 is now part of the state budget and it is not yet clear if the governor will sign the budget now that it is embedded. Dr. Morse also made the Board aware that the district received a Right-to-Know Request from a group outside of New Hampshire asking if critical race theory is currently being taught in the schools, which it is not.

Dress Code Update

Suzanne Filippone stated she, Mark Milliken, and Mike McCann met with the Student Senate regarding the high school dress code, and they decided as a group to wait until the Fall and work with the new principal.

C. Business Administrator: None

D. Student Representative Report: None

E. Finance Committee Report

Al discussed the audit and compliance check with the budget, and that there was not a management letter from the auditor, which is quite unprecedented. Dr. Morse thanked Sue Caswell for her hard work over the last decade in managing the report. Al Howland will provide the report to the Board to read. Al also discussed the timeline for presenting and approving the budget in the fall to the Board and that the goal will be to include the high school air system in the CIP to help with the temperature issues in classrooms.

Jim Rozycki spoke to what options were available to solve the temperature problem and why they were not selected, and he will be meeting with HVAC vendors in the upcoming weeks to get quotes to bring back to the Board. Jim stated he would like to get the work completed before students return in the fall.

Tom Newkirk stated he supports this project, as most public buildings are air conditioned, and it is very needed and the faster it can be done, the better.

Dan Klein stated he agrees that the project needs to happen and questioned if the money for the piano is still available for reallocation as this project is much more important.

Dr. Morse stated the money had been committed after the Board voted to approve it.

Dan Klein stated he feels the Board needs to be a little more serious about things like the piano during the normal budget process and not the end of the school year, so that the Board can inform their thinking along the way and important projects aren't continuously being put off.

Al Howland stated the Finance Committee will go through the CIP again, numerous times, and it will be updated as they are accomplished, and anything left in the fund balance will be addressed as well.

F. Other:

Report out from Mast Way Kindergarten Teacher Remote experience and perspective was moved under the Assistant Superintendent's report following Jon Bromley's Sabbatical Presentation.

VII. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Morse explained to newer Board members that the Board is voting to allow him to offer contracts over the summer, as the meetings are more spread out during the Summer.

Brian Cisneros moved to approve the Unanimous Consent Agenda as written, 2nd by Dan Klein. Motion passed 6-0.

VIII. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

Denise Day suggested that the Board address each policy individually, as there may be more discussion for some of them.

FF & R – Naming of Facilities & Procedure

Brian Cisneros moved to approve FF & R – Naming of Facilities & Procedure for first read, 2nd by Tom Newkirk.

Yusi Turell stated that other schools and universities have longer and more explicit policies in what they are trying to honor, and asked at what point does the policy committee flush this out? First or second read?

Denise stated the committee's understanding was that there weren't many K-12 school districts with a policy like this and that it is more common in higher education.

Dr. Morse stated there is no model like this for K-12 in New Hampshire or Maine, and the committee wanted to keep it simple as the guiding policies aren't available.

Brian Cisneros stated the biggest difference he sees between K-12 and higher education naming would be the large financial contributions made to the project.

Yusi stated she sees sometimes the naming comes with a donation, or it could be someone that has served the community or society in exceptional ways and it speaks to their character. Yusi questioned what the line meant regarding the recommendation and what is being named.

Denise Day explained that this line is meant that there should be some rationale and connection between the two.

Yusi questioned then if the naming of a cafeteria would have to do with food service.

Denise clarified it doesn't need to necessarily, and reclarified that the committee was trying to keep the policy broad with some basis, but not too strict.

Dan Klein stated he is torn between not wanting to create a policy that is overly prescriptive for a future Boards and feels increasingly uncomfortable with the lack of guidance around the naming process and its permanence.

Yusi stated that in order to keep the policy sparse, she suggests the removal of the "connection between the recommendation and what is being named," and instead adopt language along the lines of "named for a person who has shown exemplary service or contribution to the institution or to society"

Dr. Morse asked that Yusi send it to him to bring up in the second read.

Dan Klein stated that the Board can also develop their own guidance document to the Board that a future Board could use, but not be required to use.

Dr. Morse stated the difference is that this particular policy is still a Board policy about how they would name something.

Vote on motion to approve FF & R – Naming of Facilities & Procedure for first read passed 6-0.

Denise Day moved to approve GBGA – Staff Health, and GCF – Professional Staff Hiring for first read, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 6-0.

IX. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES

Yusi Turell stated the Equity and Anti-Racism Committee had its final meeting of the year, and the general feeling was a combination between tired, hopeful, and optimistic that they are building a strong foundation in the community. Yusi encouraged everyone to follow the committee's Facebook page for open dialogue and events for learning and listening.

Denise Day stated the Manifest Committee met and completed the manifest.

Payroll Manifest #26 Total is \$1,158,703.20

Manifest #27 Total is \$2,649,736.25

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

XI. CLOSING ACTIONS

A. Future Meeting Dates: June 30, & July 7 Manifest Review Meetings.
July 21, 2021 in ORHS Auditorium

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

NON-MEETING SESSION: RSA 91-A2 I {if needed}

XIII. ADJOURNMENT:

Brian Cisneros motions to adjourn, 2nd by Dan Klein. Motion passed 6-0.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:58 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alexa Fusilier
Recording Secretary