

Oyster River Cooperative School Board
Regular Meeting Minutes

August 4, 2021

DRAFT

SCHOOL BOARD PRESENT: Michael Williams, Al Howland, Brian Cisneros, Yusi Turell, Dan Klein, Tom Newkirk, Denise Day

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE: None

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Jim Morse, Sue Caswell, Jay Richard, Misty Lowe, Rebecca Noe, Suzanne Filippone, Catherine Plourde, David Goldsmith

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Rozycki, Lisa Huppe, Doris Demers

GUEST PRESENT:

I. CALL TO ORDER at 7:02 PM by Michael Williams

Michael Williams informed the Board that there was a revision to the posted agenda that added a one-year unpaid leave of absence, he asked if there were any other changes. Hearing none he moved forward with the approval of the revised agenda.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Tom Newkirk moved to approve the agenda as revised, 2nd by Denise Day. Motion passed, 7-0.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Michael Williams outlined the process that he would use for public comment as there were numerous people wishing to speak, he explained that each person would have 90 seconds to speak.

Bruce MacKenzie of Durham – Spoke against mandated masks for students, would like for it to be the decision of a child’s parent.

Eric Turcotte of Lee – Read a petition from the community asking the School Board to mandate masks in schools.

Sylvia Rua of Durham – Continued to read from the petition in favor of masks, as well as shared her personal experience.

Jill Piparo of Lee – Asked for the school district to allow masks to be optional. She was also worried that there was no plan to flex out of mask wearing

Giana Gelsey of Madbury – Continued to read the petition from the community in favor for mask mandates for students.

Samantha Piparo of Lee – an incoming 5th grader spoke in favor of optional masks for students and does not want the Board making a decision.

James Lonano of Lee – Continued to read from the petition in favor of mask mandate for students.

Kathleen Hopkins of Madbury – Spoke in favor of optional masks stating that it was a parental choice and went on to state that zero children in NH have died and there were under 20 children in the hospital.

Stephanie Johnson of Lee – Spoke in favor of a mask mandate when school resumes, we are in a global pandemic and this is serious and that it is about the community at large. Prefers going to school rather than a remote setting.

Kathy Collins of Durham – Thanked the district for DEI curriculum, spoke in favor of divisive topics curriculum.

Tiffany Caudle of Lee – Spoke in favor of mandated masks for students we need to stand with the science.

Christine Conlon of Durham – Spoke in favor of optional masks.

Angela Sarni of Durham – Is not in favor of masks optional. Questioned who will be responsible of keeping track of kids whose parents want them to wear masks if they are made optional. This is adding another job to the teachers.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Brian Cisneros moved to approve the regular meeting and the non-public meeting minutes from July 21, 2021, 2nd by Denise Day. Motion passed, 5-0-2 with Dan Klein and Yusi Turell abstaining from the vote.

Brian Cisneros moved to unseal the May 19, 2021 non-public meeting minutes, 2nd by Denise Day.

Tom Newkirk questioned the time of the non-public session beginning. Dr. Morse will have the video checked for the timestamps to clarify the time.

Vote on motion to unseal the May 19, 2021 non-public meeting minutes. Motion passed 7-0, pending correction of time stamp by Dr. Morse.

Dan Klein clarified that the July 21, 2021 regular and non-public minutes were both approved.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

A. District: None

B. Board

Yusi thanked everyone in the community who completed the survey. She stated that in the future it is important that we strengthen the survey design.

VI. DISTRICT REPORTS

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

Suzanne thanked all the teachers involved with REACH; it was a huge success. She also referred to the Strategic Plan Board Approval schedule that is in their packets for the next several upcoming meetings. She noted that tonight we are focusing on the Directors to present, however Josh Olstad is not here this evening and he will report out at a later meeting.

B. Superintendent's Report

Architect's Report

Dr. Morse asked if Ryan Tirrell was in the building? He was not so the report out on the furnishing at the new middle school will be moved to the August 18th meeting.

Chinese After School Program

We were able to hire two teachers locally and this allowed us to stay within the budgeted amount. We are still looking to solve the issue of the afterschool program for elementary students, however; he will be presenting an option from One World Language that would outline their proposal to provide an afterschool Chinese program. The Board asked some clarifying questions to Dr. Morse.

Al: Are we charging people in the district for this?

Jim: My opinion is that the district should pay for it.

Yusi explained that for the grant program with the Confucius Institute the charge was to determine the commitment of the family.

Denise is in favor of charging families some type of fee for the program. She was concerned that only a Chinese option was being suggested, what about offering a Spanish program.

Yusi stated that there is also a financial aid option families can apply for if needed.

Al asked if in a remote option, how do we harness that type of energy from parents?

Jim explained that the parents were incredibly supportive when we had to go remote last year, I think it is possible.

Yusi agreed that it is not ideal for sure, the presentations were impressive, and students and parents were very engaged. A lot is up in the air right now.

Michael stated that it is important to move forward with this as part of the continuity with the Chinese program, we will still be within the allocated budget we decided on in June. He also took a moment to thank Anita Mathurs for her help and for providing additional information that will allow the Board to make an informative decision.

Al stated that looking at the strategic plan, we are already moving forward with what they want the foreign language program to look like.

Tom asked about the cost for the program.

Tom Newkirk moved to approve the Chinese After School Program and charge families \$100 and then \$150 for two or more siblings, and requested the recommended amount as \$17,000, 2nd by Brian Cisneros.

Discussion:

Al stated that he really does not want to charge for the program, we are fortunate enough to have the money and I would prefer to provide as a district service.

Denise worried that there would be too many children signed up.

Vote on motion to approve the Chinese After School Program. Motion passed, 7-0.

Elementary Enrollment/Request for Kindergarten Teacher

Jim referred to the enrollment information in the packet, and with the increased number of kindergarten enrollments, 15 for Mast Way, in order to maintain the class size guidelines, we are requesting the additional hiring of Kindergarten teacher and two aides. We would be able to acquire these positions from the savings for those that have retired.

Tom clarified that his is absolutely necessary to keep our class sizes within our guidelines.

Denise asked where the reassignment is happening at Mast Way?

Misty explained that the reassignment is a first-grade teacher going to kindergarten, as the first-grade classes are only at 15 students and the reassigned teacher has kindergarten classroom experience.

Michael asked if there was classroom space available.

Denise Day moved to approve the hiring of a Kindergarten Teacher and two aides, 2nd by Yusi Turell. Motion passed 7-0.

Strategic Plan Review:

Jim explained that over the next three Board meetings we will be doing updates on the strategic plan. We will begin with Jim Rozycki.

Facilities

Jim Rozycki referred to the first goal, the new middle school and he stated that we are making headway with that. Jay Richard, Dr. Morse, and I are starting to plan for the transition over to the new school. Based on our current numbers, we will need both a 1.0 fte and .07 fte custodian for the new school.

Denise stated she know we have quite the labor shortage, and asked if he has been able to fully staff Facilities?

Jim R explained that we only have one part-time position still open, which we did not hire for the summer and can use those savings.

Yusi asked if they can we have a general on track update?

Jim R apologized that he did not have the entire plan in front of him, but the middle school is on track.

Michael asked if he would be updating the CIP?

Jim R continued his update and stated that we are on track with enhanced security features, heating and cooling improvements are in progress. Expanding parking – removing the tennis courts has been working well, been collecting quotes for new tennis courts to be put in after the middle school is completed.

School Nutrition

Doris began her updated and stated that a lot was thrown off with the pandemic. She explained that some of the equipment at the other schools are failing and that the plan is to transfer some of the newer kitchen equipment from the old middle school to those schools. She stated that she needs to revisit the list, and at this time it is unknown what the budget impact will be. She updated the Board on the status of her Servesafe certified staff and explained the training that she has been able to provide. She ended by stating how amazing her staff was and that the Summer REACH program was a great success.

Transportation

Lisa began by thanking the bus drivers who have been operating short-staffed throughout the pandemic and they are doing a great job. She went on to explain the process of getting kids to school and getting meals to families. She is still investigating fuel efficient (hybrid, electric) vehicles and the pandemic did not halt that. She is still continuing with the rotation of bus replacements. She explained that there is a national bus driver shortage and we are currently operating at 22 filled positions out of 31 positions. She also has 4 drivers in training at this time.

C. Business Administrator: None

D. Student Representative Report: None

E. Finance Committee Report

Al Howland began by stating that the Finance Committee met last evening, and they plan to begin meeting regularly. He reviewed the \$900K that is slated to return to the towns, the audit, Chinese program that we are able to fund, the hiring of a teacher and two aides for the elementary school, the status of the high school air conditioning with a cost of \$255K per floor with a priority for the 3rd floor tower, the science wing. The Moharimet project is on budget and on time. The past proposal for electric buses was originally for a 10-year lease, now it is a 5-year lease option, and the remarkable results from the school nutrition program.

Denise asked if there was any money in the infrastructure fund.

Al concluded that the Strategic Plan would guide the Board and moved forward with a motion for a Public Hearing at the next meeting.

Al Howland moved to have a Public Hearing for the purpose to discuss expenditure of the Capital Reserve Fund at the beginning of the August 18, 2021 meeting, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.

The next Finance Committee meeting will be September 21, 2021 and more information will be forthcoming in mid-September.

F. Other: None

VII. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA

Michael Williams asked the Board if there was any changes they wanted before they voted on the unanimous consent agenda.

Yusi asked to pull the Policy FF- Naming of Facilities so she could have more time to review.

Michael moved it to the beginning of the Discussion & Action Items for further discussion.

Michael Williams moved to approve the unanimous consent agenda as follows: Motion to nominate ORMS Activity Stipends for the 2021-22 school year. Motion to approve the ORHS Department Heads and Activity Stipends for the 2021-22 school year. Motion to approve Mast Way Activity Stipends for the 2021-22 school year. Motion to approve ORHS Fall Coaches for the 2021-22 school year. Motion to approve ORMS Maternity Leave of Absence from 10/30/2021 through January 28, 2022. Motion to affirm hiring of Mast Way Grade 4 Teacher. Motion to approve list of policies for second read/adoption: GBGA – Staff Health, GCF – Professional Staff Hiring with the exception of Policy FF – Naming of Facilities, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.

VIII. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

FF – Naming of Facilities was pulled and moved to the first item for discussion.

Denise Day explained that the Policy was reviewed by the committee as well as a procedure that was developed. It was determined that the procedure was the document that required additional work, so the policy alone would be moved forward for adoption.

Yusi stated that makes sense.

Michael Williams clarified that the policy alone was for a second read adoption and asked if the cross reference to the procedure should be removed.

Denise Day made a motion to approve FF – Naming of Facilities, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motions passed 7-0.

Moharimet Unpaid one-year Leave of Absence

Dr. Morse explained the this was a personal issue and very credible for individual to ask for this leave.

Denise Day moved to approve the requested 1-year unpaid Leave of Absence, 2nd by Yusi Turell. Motion passed 7-0.

2021-2022 Athletic Fall Protocol

Jim explained that Andy was unavailable, and that Suzanne will be going through this protocol.

Suzanne explained that it is consistent with what occurred last Spring, this is a starting point and changes to this protocols can be discussed.

Denise asked if spectators indoors are required to wear masks?

Suzanne stated that this would be requested for unvaccinated spectators.

Denise thinks that all spectators should wear a mask since we do not know who is vaccinated.

Tom asked if we could approve this athletic plan with exception for masks on spectators viewing indoor sports?

Catherine explained that this is the same as in the spring, we have enough space outdoors for no masks.

Denise's only suggesting is they wear masks if they are indoors.

Tom Newkirk moved to approve the Fall 2021 Athletic Protocols with exception of masking of spectators for indoor sports, 2nd by Al Howland.

Yusi asked if this include quarantine?

Catherine explained that we are waiting for August 11th for the update from the CDC, so now we are still functioning on the past Spring guidelines.

Vote on motion to approve Fall 2021 Athletic Protocols with exception of masking of spectators for indoor sports. Motion passed 7-0.

Fall Re-opening District Plan Revisited

Jim discussed the changes over the past few weeks with COVID guidelines and the risk levels of counties. Discussed the surveys sent to families, 1,925 students are represented in survey, thanked parents for their participation. We cannot isolate ourselves from the Delta variant or be put in a bubble, 200% more contagious. Not the safest decision to make masks optional. The safest decision for the children is to keep masks mandated. Recommendation of Jim is for K-12 everyone, even adults to wear masks.

Tom Newkirk moved to approve Fall 2021 reopening protocol plan as presented with exception of high school lunchroom spacing, which is to be determined, 2nd by Denise Day. Motion passed 6-1, with Brian Cisneros voting in the negative.

Michael Williams called a 6-minute recess at 9:30 pm, returning to session at 9:36 pm.

Regional K-8 Virtual School Plan

Jim explained to the Board the make-up of this group with area superintendents and the districts that are looking into offering this program to their school. At this point he is not looking for the Board to make a decision. He went on to state that timing and funding is to be discussed further, he also questioned how the children will be supported if they have an IEP. The State may provide some funds, but not sure how significant it will be, or if there are enough districts with ESSER funds available. He will have a more definitive answer regarding funding and special education so that the Board will have additional information at the next meeting to make a decision.

IX. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES: None

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jill Piparo asked that the Capital reserve funds be used for the tennis courts instead of air conditioning. That an action item for next meeting be to exclude the PEP program from the mask mandate and once again put dates or numbers on deliverables for non-masking.

Alyssa O'Brien expressed gratitude for the School Board and the work they have been doing. She wanted to clarify that the guidelines listed by CDC are not in any specific order of importance.

Christine Conlon asked that the Board to get a date down to figure out what the next steps are to moving away from the mask mandate.

XI. CLOSING ACTIONS

- A. Future Meeting Dates:** August 18, 2021 Regular Meeting – ORHS Auditorium
September 1, 2021 Regular Meeting – ORHS Library
September 15, 2021 Regular Meeting – ORHS Library

XII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3 II {If Needed}

NON-MEETING SESSION: RSA 91-A2 I (b) 6:00pm

- Consultation with Legal Counsel

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Michael Williams motioned to adjourn at 9:53 pm, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alexa Fusilier
Recording Secretary