

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

**November 3, 2021**

**DRAFT**

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

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE:** Oliva Gass

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:** Jim Morse, Suzanne Filippone, Sue Caswell, Catherine Plourde, Jay Richard, Rebecca Noe

**STAFF PRESENT:**

**GUEST PRESENT:** Brigitte Herz- One World Language

**ABSENT:**

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

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Brian Cisneros moved to approve the agenda as written, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Dr. Morse reminded the listening audience that residents of Oyster River and Barrington school districts are welcome to provide comment for up to three minutes per speaker. Remote comments can also be provided via email.

Shawna Coppola of Madbury stated her full support for a DEIJ coordinator. She felt a coordinator will positively impact students, staff & faculty in many ways, including the development of a critical consciousness. Shawna shared that learning about underrepresented identities can awaken feelings of guilt and shame in a person, which can in turn lead to new activism.

Alexander Fenton, 9<sup>th</sup> grade ORHS student, shared his personal experiences undergoing three brain surgeries. He stated that his headaches are worsened by wearing a mask and asked the school board to stop forcing him to wear one.

Bruce Fenton of Durham stated his case against wearing masks, which included his opinions about science and politics. He asked the school board to voluntarily pledge to wear masks while in the community or resign.

Janet Perkins Howland of Durham spoke in favor of a DEIJ coordinator position. She encouraged the board to look at a coordinator as a means of providing training to staff and community members. Janet believed there is no quality education without equity and hopes the board will consider funding a coordinator as a top priority.

Dennis Harrington, former long-time educator and principal of Moharimet, stated his support for the One World proposal. He recalled a personal time in which he didn't understand his Polish friends, and this gave him new concern for the future of children around language and communication. He advocated for schools to provide an early start to learning a second language.

Dr. Morse read the electronic comment provided by Anita Mathur of Durham. She spoke about her involvement in helping to coordinate the afterschool Mandarin offering at the elementary school. She hoped the district can implement a proficiency-based language program and provide students with three choices of languages. Anita would like to see Mandarin offered during the school day, but if it is not, she'd like it to continue to be offered after school.

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

##### **Denise Day moved to approve the October 20, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Yusi Turell.**

Denise Day submitted the following revision:

On page 2 Brenda and Brittany should be Carina Dolcino and Brittany Prendergrast.

Yusi Turell submitted the following revisions to a paragraph on page 4:

On line 1 add "she believes" in front of "talking to model". One line 2 add the phrase "at first" in front of "is not the best fit" and remove the phrase "they believe". In line 2 replace the word "lend" with "lead". In line 3 add the phrase "While the events still need to be planned" at the beginning of the sentence and replace both "will" with "could". In line 4 remove the phrase "all to which" and add the word "both events" to the end of the sentence.

**Vote on motion to approve the October 20, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes with corrections passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

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

##### **A. District**

Jay Richard of ORMS announced there are 117 days left until the new middle school opens. He stated that last Friday staff and students toured the new building, and he witnessed a lot of eagerness and anticipation from everyone. He thanked the board for providing this exciting new opportunity to them.

Rebecca Noe of ORHS announced important dates coming up at the high school including a Coffee House in the courtyard on the 4<sup>th</sup>, Q1 closing on the 5<sup>th</sup>, and report cards being released on the 15<sup>th</sup>. She shared about her recent advisory visits where a lot of strong relationships are being built and her interaction with the DEIJ club where students are sharing ideas for how to celebrate the approaching holidays.

##### **B. Board**

Denise Day told the board she toured the new middle school and described it as a proud moment for our district.

#### **VI. DISTRICT REPORTS**

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

Suzanne Filippone spoke about the two-day Restorative Practices Conference that she is attending along with Catherine Plourde, Mark Milliken, Mike McCann, Kim Felch, and John Webb. They have learned more about how to leverage their resources and how to implement restorative practices. Suzanne reported they've had rich conversations about school culture and climate and felt the conference is meshing well with district goals around MTSS, ESOL and building a positive climate with the community.

##### COVID Metric

Catherine Plourde referred to the COVID metric stating that Strafford County is still in a substantial transmission rate for new cases, which includes a 7.3% rate of new positive cases. She explained there is an issue with the

state data not updating so reliable transmission data for the state is not available at the time. Catherine reported that hospitalization is down from 89% to 85.5%. As far as staffing capacity, she stated all schools are struggling to fill absences which is compounded by a lack of substitutes. Catherine stated that staff and administrators continue to cover classes and she appreciates everyone chipping in to make this work.

#### SASS/Adult COVID Testing

Catherine reported a small increase in surveillance testing. Within the district there are over 500 students and staff being tested weekly on Wednesdays, which continues to demonstrate a lot of success in this program. Catherine stated there have been a couple positive cases detected in both the surveillance testing and the symptomatic testing.

#### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Morse told the listening audience that he is committed to providing the vaccination to the elementary age students for parents who are interested. He is waiting for guidance, and he will update parents in a letter tomorrow.

Dr. Morse reported that negotiations finished with the ORESPA Guild, and he will bring the contract to the next meeting. He felt that having one major contract out of the way was good news.

#### Communication Survey by UNH Update

Dr. Morse announced that the parent communication survey went out today. He asked Michael Williams if it was their intent for it to go to the broader community, which Michael confirmed yes. Dr. Morse stated he will look into it and get back to them with a memo.

#### Elementary World Language Update

Dr. Morse spoke about the long journey it has been in creating and expanding a foreign language program. He introduced the One World program, that he suspects the Guild will support, explaining it will be part of a rotation that won't interrupt the school day nor lengthen the day. The K-4 cost is estimated at \$80,920, however, there is an option of breaking the cost up over two years by introducing K-2 one year and 3-4 the following year. Dr. Morse shared that while he dreamed of a 3-day program, this 1-day approach is still highly effective. One World representative Brigitte Herz affirmed that the program is an invaluable opportunity that builds that bridge to the future.

The board raised questions about language options, whether students and families would have the option to choose the language, and how many languages would be offered over a year and what spaces would be used.

Dr. Morse stated a multi-day program poses lots of structural pieces. The One World model will allow the gift of time to research Tom Newkirk's questions and evaluate whether they want another proposal or to continue with One World. Dr. Morse believed that for the time, it provides a quality option that is not just doing something.

Bridget stated that choosing one language and sticking to that language for the year yields the best results. She explained the One World focus areas by grade span:

K-2: communication, no reading and writing since students are still learning English and phonetics

3-5: full communication phrases and learning the written word

Middle school: adding grammar instruction

Bridget explained that the district can look at their goal for a graduate and work backwards to write a curriculum that can be adjusted as needed.

Tom Newkirk commented that it is extraordinary accomplishment to have K-12 language whether it's in its final stage or not, and it feels good to take a step forward and put value in our education.

Dr. Morse's recommended teaching Spanish, as well as Mandarin either in or after school.

Yusi Turell felt a language can permeate through the school in assemblies and on the walls to reinforce learning. She encouraged offering two languages, Spanish and Mandarin.

Oliva Gass wondered if over time fewer languages were offered if some of the current HS language choices would go away. She felt Spanish, French, and Mandarin are important languages for students to learn.

## **B. Business Administrator:**

### Budget Update FY22

Sue Caswell did not have any concerns for the budget, stating that everything is in align similar to other years.

## **C. Student Representative Report**

Olivia Gass shared that they've had an Amazing Fall sports season. To wrap it up the boys and unified soccer teams will have their championship games this weekend, and since the CC girls won states and the boys received 4<sup>th</sup>, both teams will be going to the World of Champions. Oliva stated the Barrington Tour night went well and she felt honored to speak at it. She provided a dress code committee update stating that students are currently reviewing other school's guidelines to look at the language they use.

Dan Klein commended Olivia and the girls' soccer team for putting their best into the season, expressing how proud they should feel for giving it their all.

## **D. Finance Committee Report**

None

## **E. Other:**

None

## **VII. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA**

Michael Williams pulled out EEAEA for a separate motion.

**Michael Williams moved to approve GBCD – Background Investigation & Criminal History Record Check, EEAE – School Bus Safety Program for second read/adoption, ORHS Activity Stipend Replacement Nomination, ORHS Teacher Letter of Resignation, and ORHS Maternity Leave of Absence March 2022 – End of School Year, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

Michael Williams affirmed the change of the EEAEA title to School Bus Driver Requirements.

**Michael Williams moved to approve Policy EEAEA - School Bus Driver Requirements, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

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

### 360° Process for Superintendent Evaluation

Denise Day began the discussion stating she liked all the questions but showed concern for future boards in terms of work, time to distribute surveys and get all the responses back, and the process to get anonymity to names.

Michael Williams replied that the intention is to use an online survey that will hopefully cut down on manual data and work.

A concern was raised about having other schools' superintendents judge the internal job of our superintendent and if this would be complicated. Dr. Morse stated he'd like to have feedback from his peers.

Michael Williams credited Brian Cisneros, Tom Newkirk and Dr. Morse with the work that was accomplished. He acknowledged some documents say, "over last year" and some don't, he clarified that they all should have been the same by removing "over the last year".

The board and Dr. Morse discussed whether to include the phrase "over the last year" for rating the superintendent.

**Tom Newkirk moved to approve the 360° Process for Superintendent Evaluation as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dan Klein. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

#### FY23 Budget Discussion

Michael Williams had the board review the summary of requested positions sheet. He provided time for Dr. Morse and Sue Caldwell to share any changes, for the board to ask clarification and for the members to share their thoughts about prioritizing the requested positions. Members spoke and shared opinions.

Brian Cisneros asked for the budget to be discussed at the end of the next meeting during the discussion and action items.

Al Howland asked Dr. Morse if the prioritized spending list changes regarding the suggestion of the One World program. Dr. Morse confirmed the change asking that One World Language program, whether it's K-2 or K-4, be placed after the DEIJ position.

The board discussed sticking to or going above the 4.1% increase goal and how that would translate to tax increases. The consensus was the board feels they should be true to their word, especially following the town's past approval of the bond

Yusi Turell and Tom Newkirk discussed holding a workshop to clarify the different demands and expectations of a DEIJ coordinator. They talked about the job description being complex and if they should devise some norms to rationalize the need and spending. Al agreed pointing out that it's the biggest position as far as spending, but the least defined.

The requested licensed drug and alcohol position was discussed with clarification regarding both the \$80,000 cost and contracting vs hiring. It was mentioned that the position could be shared among the schools.

Brian Cisneros wanted the board and the listening audience to be clear that everything on the list can't be afforded and tough decisions will need to be made.

Michael Williams pointed out that it could be a lot worse, and they've accomplished a lot already in one year. The list of requests doesn't include what's already been done, which includes a K teacher, 2 language teachers, 2 custodians and an increase in substitute pay. He also reminded the board they are not making any dire decisions, such as cuts to positions in academics or sports.

Al Howland said the Finance Committee will meet to create a packet that outlines what is realistic sticking to the 4.1% increase. He will report back at the November 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

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

The Manifest Committee met and completed the following manifests.

Payroll Manifest #9 Total is \$1,681,692.96

Vendor Manifest #10 Total is \$2,461,269.73

Denise Day announced the Policy Committee will be meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup> to address email communication, which will be ready for discussion at the December meeting.

Yusi Turell announced that the timeline for the two DEIJ events has changed with a goal of February to hold the first event.

Al Howland announced the Sustainability Committee met and the faculty hasn't said what they'll do for semester two. Maggie will be finishing her building level role at the end of this semester and it's uncertain who will step up in her role. In the meeting they discussed the waste audit, transportation, and the possibility of using the \$5-7K left over to hire a slightly paid volunteer to help. They are looking toward next year regarding facilities and the educational component. The next meeting will be November 9<sup>th</sup>.

Tom Newkirk announced that the first Sabbatical Committee meeting with Suzanne Filippone will be held in December.

## **X. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

## **XI. CLOSING ACTIONS**

- A. Future Meeting Dates:** November 16, 2021 Finance Committee – SAU Conference Room  
November 17, 2021 Regular Meeting – ORHS Library  
November 18, 2021 Budget Workshop – ORHS Library {If Needed}

**XII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION:** RSA 91-A:3 II {Not Needed}

**NON-MEETING SESSION:** RSA 91-A2 I {Moved to beginning of meeting at 6:30}

## **XIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

**Brian Cisneros moved to adjourn the regular meeting at 9:07pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> Michael Williams. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Karyn Laird  
Records Keeper