

# Oyster River Cooperative School Board

## Regular Meeting Minutes

November 15, 2023

DRAFT

**SCHOOL BOARD PRESENT:** Denise Day, Brian Cisneros, Dan Klein, Heather Smith, Matt Bacon, Tom Newkirk, Giana Gelsey

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE:** Maeve Hickok

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:** Dr. Morse, Suzanne Filippone, Catherine Plourde, Amy Ransom, David Goldsmith, Misty Lowe, Bill Sullivan, Rebecca Noe, Josh Olstad

**STAFF PRESENT:**

**GUEST PRESENT:**

**ABSENT:**

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

Denise gave a big thank you to everyone on the Superintendent Search Committee and for all the hours they've put in.

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

**Brian Cisneros made a motion to approve the agenda as written, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Newkirk. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS** – Individuals were given 3 minutes to speak per public comment policy.

Julie Kelley of Durham, member of the Integrated Waste Management Advisory Committee (IWMAC), facilitator of the OR Sustainability Scholarship, and parent of OR graduates, shared her sustainability initiative which aligns with policy ECF and ECFA-R. She is working to make the on-site school events sustainable and has started with sports banquets. A letter sent to sports boosters requesting the use of reusable linens, large jugs of water in place of single use bottles, and bins for composting and recycling was supported by Athletic Director Andy Lathrop and Child Nutrition Director Meredith St Onge. The soccer team was in favor of a sustainable banquet, which was held at the middle school with 250 attendees. However, the compost and recycling bins were not available at the event and all compostable goods went in the trash. Julie asked the board for their help to make the initiative work and be more effective.

Nell Neal of Durham, Chair of IWMAC and retired teacher, works closely with Public Works to reduce trash in our community. She said signs have been placed around town to deliver sustainability messages, such as "Eliminate Single Use Plastics," and she invited the listening audience to attend the movie screening *Microplastics Madness* at the Durham Public Library on November 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. The film depicts how fifth graders researched the effects of harmful microplastics and took action to eliminate all single-use plastic in their cafeteria. Nell supports Julie's proposed initiative for school sustainability. She said it will help educate students and hopefully lead to sustainability practice as standard practice.

Brian Turnbull of Durham stated his support for a full-time music teacher for the strings program. He felt the number of students exceeded the workload for a single teacher. In lieu of repeated comments from other community members, he asked for anyone in support of a full-time strings teacher to raise their hand. Approximately twenty audience members raised their hand.

Lyndsay Boysen of Durham thanked the board for being supportive of music education. Speaking as a parent and college music teacher, she felt strongly that an additional full-time position would allow continued growth, more ability to differentiate, and ensure the vision and growth of the program.

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

**Heather Smith made a motion to approve the November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Newkirk. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

**Heather Smith made a motion to approve the November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, Non-Public Meeting Minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative abstaining.**

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

**~~A. District~~**

**~~B. Board~~**

**VI. DISTRICT REPORTS**

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

**~~B. Superintendent's Report~~**

**C. Business Administrator**

FY24 Current Budget Update

Amy Ransom informed the board that the FY24 budget report is as expected, and an updated report of positives and negatives across the district will be provided at the next meeting.

**D. Student Representative Report {Maeve Hickok}**

Maeve Hickok announced that Volleyball won States and the Girls XC earned 2<sup>nd</sup> place at the New England's Championship. On Friday, 11/19 the undefeated Portsmouth ClipperCats will play Bedford who is also undefeated. The fall play *Arsenic & Old Lace* will hold performances on Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm with an additional 2 pm matinee on Saturday. The Mental Health Matters Panel will take place on 11/20 at 6:00 pm and a Parent Forum on Hate Crime will take place on 11/27 at 6:30 pm, both events will be held in the high school auditorium.

**~~E. Finance Committee Report~~**

**F. Superintendent Search Committee**

Heather Smith provided an update to the Superintendent Search Committee. To date it has created a screening profile based on remote and in person focus groups, established a screening committee, and conducted candidate interviews. She is very pleased with the outcome of the process so far. The Screening Committee has selected finalists, whose names have not been made public yet, and in December there will be "Meet the Candidate" opportunities. Information about the candidates, campus visits, and public forums will be publicized later this month. Heather reviewed dates for the search timeline, noting that a new superintendent will be appointed by the end of December. She thanked all the members of the Superintendent Search Committee including Brian Cisneros, Tom Newkirk, Catherine Plourde, Wendy DiFruscio, Rebecca Noe, Rachael Blansett, Carina Dolcino, Kristen Hughs, Shawn Kelly, Tyler Patria, Elise Bacon, Debby Curran, Kelly Ickes, and Todd Selig. She acknowledged the committee for being trusting, candid, thoughtful, and curious during the screening process. She said they reflected the district very well and did the district a huge service. Heather also acknowledged Pam Purser for greeting the candidates and Tim Kenaley for providing food.

**~~G. Other:~~**

**VII. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA** – There were no requests to discuss items separately.

- Mast Way Maternity Leave of Absence from November 2023 through March 4, 2024.
- ORHS Maternity Leave of Absence from approximately May 20, 2024, through End of Year.

**Denise Day made a motion to approve the Unanimous Consent Agenda as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Heather Smith. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

**VIII. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS**

FY25 Draft Budget

Dr. Morse credited Amy Ransom for laying out several options for the FY25 budget. He let the board know they are intended to be conversation starters and other options can still be created and considered.

Amy said she was just notified of the state adequacy funding, which will be in the amount of \$33K. Based on meetings with administration and the finance committee, seven options were read aloud. Giana Gelsey made a request for the numbers to be projected on the screen for the audience to see. A slideshow was not available but will be at future meetings.

Board members discussed the budget options, and the following key points were made:

- Giana pointed out that none of the options excluded the Mast Way cafeteria expansion. She visited the space and said there are non-functioning circular tables in a section of the cafeteria and wondered about utilizing the space better with rectangular tables. She pointed out that an expansion would reduce the size of the parking lot and would require constructing a new fire lane. Denise Day felt the project was important and personally thought it should remain. Dan Klein agreed with Giana that there could be options without the Mast Way expansion. Dr. Morse will get rough numbers for redirection of the parking lot and suggested that future budgets include bigger parking lots.
- Denise asked if any item came out of the budget should it be the AC in the high school Multi-Purpose Room (MPR). Giana said she favored the AC installation since the MPR is where the strings students practice, and their instruments are sensitive to heat.
- Denise suggested reducing options based on board and community comment. Tom Newkirk suggested removing options that didn't include a full-time strings teacher and behavior health counselor. Brian Cisneros agreed and said the \$33K in state funding makes a huge difference. The board removed options that didn't include both positions.

Concluding the discussion, Chair Denise Day requested new budget options that include the following: \$500k from the trust fund, the strings teacher, and the behavioral health counselor with and without the Mast Way cafeteria expansion and the high school MPR air conditioning. Further discussion will continue at the November 29<sup>th</sup> budget meeting.

## ~~IX. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES~~

**X. PUBLIC COMMENTS** – None provided.

## **XI. CLOSING ACTIONS**

**A. Future Meeting Dates:** November 29, 2023 – Budget School Board Meeting @ 6:00 PM – ORMS Recital Hall  
December 6, 2023 – Regular School Board Meeting @ 7:00 PM – ORHS Library  
December 20, 2023 – Regular School Board Meeting @ 7:00 PM – ORMS Recital Hall  
January 3, 2023 – Regular School Board Meeting @ 7:00 PM – ORHS Recital Hall

**XII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION:** RSA 91-A:3 II {If needed}  
**NON-MEETING SESSION:** RSA 91-A2 I {If Needed}

## **XIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

**Heather Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

- Superintendent Search ~ NESDEC Workshop [8:00 PM]

**The School Board reserves the right to take action on any item on the agenda.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Karyn Laird, Records Keeper