

**Oyster River Cooperative School District**  
**November 18, 2021 WORKSHOP MEETING**

**School Board Present:** Al Howland, Tom Newkirk, Yusi Turell, Michael Williams, Dan Klein, Denise Day, Brian Cisneros.

**Administrators Present:** Dr. James Morse, Suzanne Filippone, Sue Caswell, Catherine Plourde, Misty Lowe, David Goldsmith

**Staff Present:** Vivian Jablonski

**Guest Present:**

**Called to Order at 7:00 PM by Michael Williams**

Michael Williams began by thanking the Board and the administrators that were present for this Board Workshop to discuss the FY23 Budget and referred to the posted agenda and the backup information that was provided in the packet and in the Board folders. Michael turned the meeting over to Dr. Morse to speak about the first agenda item.

**DEIJ Discussion**

Dr. Morse began by referring to the backup information, namely the graphic that he created to assist in outlining what DEIJ is.

He explained that the graphic is broken out into quadrants and reviewed them with the Board. Diversity – engaging people of different backgrounds such as race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, poverty. Equity – feeling of belonging and multiple perspectives represented. Inclusion – equal access, equal opportunities, and meeting people where they are. Justice – just behavior – living up to our laws and ideals and critical thinking skills. He went on to state that there are four major areas of responsibility: staff, students, administration, and community. He then introduced Vivian Jablonski a high school math teacher for the district who is an integral part of the current DEIJ Committee who will speak in favor of the Board supporting this position.

Vivian briefly gave a review of her position in the district and how she became interested in this endeavor, and that she fully supports adding this position in the district. She gave examples of different incidents that teachers, students and parents had come to her for guidance. Having a dedicated DEIJ Director would be able to address these concerns and also concerns surrounding curriculum.

The Board asked how she would feel if there was a complaint logged against her. Vivian relayed that as a Math teacher she is not too concerned about a complaint logged against her for what she is teaching, but knows that the concern is high for some of her coworkers, especially anyone teaching social studies and English.

The Board thanked Vivian for sharing her thoughts and experiences with them.

Dr. Morse continued discussion surrounding DEIJ by referencing and pointing out the different headings and subsequent details the memo provided. The following headings were reviewed and discussed: What could a DEJI Leader do to Support Curriculum & Instruction? How would the DEIJ person support Professional Development? What could a DEIJ do to facilitate District Communication? How could a DEIJ leader be a support for students? How could the DEIJ leader support the District?

Dr. Morse went on to state that he put in 4 options that could possibly be considered by the Board. He also spoke about the Proposed Job Description that was developed to support this request.

The Board mentioned that this position is broad in the sense that a wide range of skills are incorporated into this position. Creativity may be needed in advertising for this position. Recommendation suggested that they would like to see someone with classroom experience be considered. Additional thoughts for refining the job description be done and that this is not the year to hire for this position. Question raised as what means would be used and how we would measure this position. Research what other school districts are doing. Others felt that this is a very important position and that we should move forward with hiring and also spoke of recruiting candidates and weigh the urgency of the position if a candidate is not found right away.

Dr. Morse spoke with NH Listens and they think they can help us find a person to fill this position.

The Board discussed the list of monies that could possibly be used for funding and asked what the various undefined accounts were. If the interview process would be the same as when the Assistant Superintendent was hired. Additional discussion ensued with the Board thanking Dr. Morse for all of the work that went into this presentation.

#### **World Language K-4**

Dr. Morse introduced the next agenda item of World Language K-4 and asked David and Misty to come to the podium to begin their presentation.

Misty Lowe began the presentation by directing the Board's attention to the memo included in their back up and went on to explain the differences and similarities that would happen at both elementary schools. David went on to outline the 2 choices of putting one language into the curriculum with either a 5-day rotation or replace a current rotation subject with language. David stated that placing two or three languages in the rotation would cause large disruptions to the school day including the lack of space and learning equipment.

The Board asked clarifying questions, and some felt that this is not the right time to add world language to the elementary schools, there are too many variable, and too many decisions that need to be made. We have done well to keep the Mandarin Program which is now 5 -12. There was a mention of \$17K as a placeholder and also the proposal from One World Language to see what a one-day implication would look like. The Board had no additional questions for David and Misty.

Michael Williams asked the Board if they had any questions for the administrators pertaining to the budget. There were none and most of the administrators left the meeting at 8:19 PM.

Michael moved to the next agenda item and asked Sue Caswell to update the Board on the details of the revenue sources and adjustments.

Sue Caswell began by informing the Board that she updated the ORESPA figures in the budget and on the Warrant Article. She also stated that she added the ORAA figures to the budget as well.

Sue reviewed the change to the ADM to recalculate the apportionment which changed the percentage. She also clarified that this is the final apportionment and that the only change was to the revenue.

Michael Williams clarified that on the colored location sheet that was included in the back up, that the Green Box has not changed.

Tom Newkirk asked if we need to hold at 4.1% and possibly go up to 4.5% and put some of the new positions into the 2022-23 budget and not have to rely on trust funds.

Denise Day stated that she is nervous to use 900K from the trust funds, maybe we can find a compromise for using less trust funds.

Yusi Turell asked what the impact on taxes would be for the 3 towns on a 400K and 600K house. Sue provided the amounts for this request.

The Board asked Sue for different scenarios for reducing the Districts use of Trust Funds and what those numbers would look like.

Dan Klein stated that legitimate expenditures brought to us through out the year, think about ways to better track those expenditures.

Al Howland stated that we need to attack the spending.

Brian Cisneros concerned that we are not holding the line and that raising taxes will violate the trust that we have developed since the approval of the new middle school.

Al Howland felt that this was the most unusual and boldest budget we have ever done.

Michael Williams referred to the memo done by Al, for the \$165K cuts, moving the accounting software to this year, reduction is furniture.

Michael asked Catherine Plourde if she could identify which special education accounts the \$110K could be pulled from, and if so, could she have that by the 12/1 meeting. He went on to state that he hopes to get a sense of some options which might be presented to the Board, possibly 2 or 3 options.

Michael Williams closed the meeting and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Workshop adjourned 9:17 pm.