

## OUUSD Board Meeting

Via Zoom

May 5, 2020

Board Members: Angela Colbeth, Danielle Corti, Melissa Gordon, Timm Judas

Administration: Emilie Knisley, Bruce Williams, Kate Paxton, Morgan Moore, Brian Emerson, Jean Wheeler, Lori Blood

Members of the Public: Judith Slack, Ted Pogacar, Alex Nuti-de Biasi, Amy Hayward, Wanda Vaughan, Robin Amber, Kathy Roberts, Heidi Allen, Carol Owen, Susie Tann, Edith Fogarty, Lance Mills

- I. The meeting was called to order at 5:04 PM by Danielle Corti, Chair
  - A. Those present were welcomed, and the Chair reviewed rules for a Zoom meeting.
- II. Board Business
  - A. The agenda was reviewed
  - B. Motion by Melissa Gordon, seconded by Timm Judas to approve the Board minutes of March 11, 2020. Motion voted on and approved unanimously
  - C. Contracts—None
  - D. Correspondence
    1. Letter of resignation from NES School Nurse Carla Horniak. Motion by Timm Judas, seconded by Angela Colbeth to accept Carla's resignation with regret and sincere appreciation for all she has done for our community. Motion voted on and approved unanimously
    2. Letter from Cathy Roberts, notifying the Board of her decision to retire from BES at the end of this school year. Motion by Timm Judas, seconded by Melissa Gordon to accept her decision to retire with great regret and appreciation for all her years of service. Motion voted on and approved unanimously.
    3. Bids were received for flooring projects at NES.
    4. Letter addressed to Emilie Knisley and Danielle Corti with concerns and questions around OUUSD budget.
    5. Letter from Paul Pellegrino asking for consideration of increased pay to NES custodial staff using COVID 19 CARES funding
    6. Letter from Andrea Dennis sharing a request for more discussion around behavioral concerns
- III. Public Comments
  - A. Susie Tann—Shared letter from BES staff, asking that the Board reconsider and retain the Social Service position as a full-time position at BES next year, and not a shared position.
  - B. Lance Mills—Does the district have a COVID 19 task force? Answer: a team of folks is working on that topic. It will be also addressed later in the meeting.
  - C. Robin Amber—Previous budget was made with some changes in positions. Clearly our needs have changed with COVID 19. She feels we should hold the status quo until we see what our needs are.
- IV. Superintendent/Principal Reports

A. Kate Paxton: BES current enrollment is 252. Remote learning plan is going well, as reported by team of teachers. Kindergarten and PreK registration continuing. The Food hub is serving 750 students daily in Bradford, Newbury, and Thetford community. Each bag provides 4 meals. BES is hiring for 2 elementary openings in 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades. There are openings for a Prek teacher and school librarian (.6 position). This is Teacher Appreciation Week. A Banner of Appreciation on Main Street is from the teachers for families that have taken over working at home with students. The School mascot, the lynx, has been sighted. It is not a danger, but is a fun and loving spirit. The work that the staff has done in the past month, totally transforming learning, is such an outstanding example of the dedication of the staff. We appreciate the work being done every day. Thank you to the staff at BES, as well as at our Sister Schools.

1. Timm Judas urged administrators to also reach out to families of our students. Ms. Paxton mentioned maybe putting together a newsletter.

T. Judas asked if the learning plans were being collected each week from the teachers? The answer was "yes".

B. Morgan Moore: Remote learning plans have been amazing with work that the teachers are putting in. Differentiation is stronger than ever. All teachers are doing a daily morning meeting, which has helped the attendance, staying consistently at 90%. Teachers are doing a daily slide show. There is one learning intention per subject per week. Most teachers are also hosting office hours and meeting with small groups throughout the day. Counseling and social groups have continued. Some families still are not able to access internet. Packets are mailed to them. Some are able to join morning meetings by phone. The Nurse and 4 paras are taking shifts distributing meals. Cate Beaton is doing PD on behavior management. Grade level teams are meeting. The downstairs flooring project will be going forward. A bid was accepted from Valley Floors. Some bids have been received for drainage project work.

1. Timm Judas: How many families are not able to connect to internet? Answer: currently five families. Some other families have been able to get access to hot spots. T. Judas: Who is doing the survey of internet access in Newbury? D.

Corti: That is a state agency. Edith Fogarty: three families in Bradford without internet access have been referred to Charter, but that service has not happened yet. T. Judas: Have you been calling families? M. Moore: the EST team has split up names of families to contact. T. Judas: feels it is important that administrators should reach out to families to check in to see how things are going. A survey is being developed for families and teachers.

2. Melissa Gordon: Does the Board have to make authorization to accept bids? Bruce Williams: This project is the continuation of one that was started last year.

C. Jean Wheeler: Expressed extreme appreciation of staff at Oxbow, as well as across OESU. Thanks to teachers and paras, who go to help out with meals. They have started reaching out to families, so each staff has about 15 families to contact twice a week. They have asked who has good internet access. 172 Learning packets have been sent out. Attendance of students checking in is 80-85%. Sending out report cards this week. A number of chrome books have been distributed to students. She is seeing a shift of

grading based on learning instead of based on work. If a student receives an Incomplete, he/she will have the opportunity to make it up over the summer.

D. Brian Emerson: weekly check-ins with families. Over April break, instructors provided names that they would like Brian to contact. LNA and Health Science cannot finish requirements because Grafton Co. and Cottage Hospital have shut down. Summer—on line classes will go forward. Summer Tech Camp will be held by kits being given to students to work on at their homes. The jobs in the trades are going to be there, and more students with those skills are needed. Appreciation was extended to the RBCTC Staff. Recruitment has been going well despite the situation. Cosmetology instructor has accepted the job. Timm Judas: Awards and scholarships? Jean Wheeler: All scholarships will still be awarded.

E. Bruce Williams: 2600-2700 meals are made and delivered across the SU. In summer, typically there have been grab and go sites, which serves fewer students. Administrators are investigating the possibility of continuing current food program through summer.

F. Emilie Knisley: waiting for word from Commissioner Dan French as to what we're allowed to do for end of year ceremonies. Building leaders will be meeting later this week. Same holds true for extended school year services. Anticipate it will be distance learning format. Waiting for guidance on Special Education and reimbursement for remainder of this year and going into next year. Participated in a call yesterday with Congressman Welch regarding the Education Fund. A significant deficit is anticipated in the VT Ed Fund this year and next year. Legislators will have to come up with creative solutions to bridge that gap. Recommendation that we be conservative in spending any CARES money that we receive. Next fall will probably not look like business as usual. Timm Judas: Wants to encourage Administrators and Board members to encourage the Feds to target some of those funds to help cover health insurance increases. Concerns were shared about what FY 22 will look like. E. Knisley: how can we bank any money to help remain stable in FY 22?

#### V. Financial

A. Lori Blood: had submitted financial statement showing where we are right now. Salaries will be taking 3% increase. Ms. Blood recalculated and came up with new numbers, with a savings of \$92,000 in teacher and staff salaries for NES, BES, and Oxbow. Redid summaries as well—the warned summaries as well as revised one.

1. Timm Judas: Have all the points in the communication from the Newbury residents been addressed? E. Knisley: Many can be addressed easily. Some are the result of forming the OUUSD District.

2. Melissa Gordon: Is this the right time to be adding more staff? E. Knisley: some financial additions are result of Title funds going down. Thinks these positions are important to keep. Tech position at Oxbow, given what we're up against right now, this position is very important. J. Wheeler: Addition did not come from additional .5 position. Several computers are at end of their lease and need to be replaced. This is bare bones. D. Corti: Are there facilities projects that we will not be able to accomplish and maybe can put off until next year? B. Williams: State mandates that we have E-911 system. Many of the NES

projects will come from a fund balance. T. Judas: In the letter, residents asked for a breakdown of salaries under direct instruction. Needs to be put on the appropriate line. M. Gordon: What are you looking for tonight on our part? E. Knisley: We need some direction from the Board. Should there be a budget and election before June 30? M. Gordon: does not think this budget is appropriate to present to the voters at this time. T. Judas: Are federal funds coming that will supplement food for summer program? Debt service? Can we plead to those debt services for a moratorium for a year? B. Williams: Money for summer food program is more robust, and there may be some additional money we may be able to roll into food service next year.

3. Discussion on bringing the budget down. Eliminate Provision 2 (Universal lunch)? T. Judas said he was not prepared to vote on this tonight. M. Gordon: when would we meet again to finalize the budget number? D. Corti: would need to meet at the beginning of next week. D. Corti: currently both Town Clerks are recommending normal Australian ballot, normal polling places open, enforcing social distancing, encouraging absentee ballots. T. Judas: Both Newbury and Bradford? Yes. Ballots—T. Judas and A. Colbeth would need their names placed on the ballots. M. Gordon: Can we put the extra School Board members on the ballot? E. Knisley: We are asking the Secretary of State that question. D. Corti: an informational meeting is important. We can vote to Increase membership of the Board from 4 to 6, with an election to happen later. E. Knisley recommends June 23<sup>rd</sup> as a date for the budget vote to give more time. How will the revised budget be distributed to voters? It would be money well spent to send this revised information out to voters.

- VI. Items for Next Agenda—May 18<sup>th</sup> at 5:00
  - A. Approve budget and sign warning
  - B. Newbury’s drainage project possibly
  - C. Informational meeting the day before the vote
- VII. Items for Future Agendas
  - A. Action Steps Going Forward--Response to Newbury Parents following last meeting
    - 1. Communicate with a letter that we’re still concerned. The landscape has shifted dramatically with remote learning
  - B. Financial Steps
    - 1. Authorization for Chair to sign Tax Anticipation Note and Current Expense note for current year
  - C. Audit for 2019 approved by Board
- VIII. Public Comment
  - A. Amy Hayward: It is discouraging to BES staff that they are not being heard in asking for a full time Social Service position at BES. E. Knisley: We are trying to determine what is best for students
  - B. Edith Fogarty: Splitting support services between buildings doesn’t always work. Some of the neediest students have been home for 6 months. Bringing them back into the building will be challenging.

C. Wanda Vaughan: sharing a social worker between buildings doesn't work that well. The needs in the community are great.

D. BES Staff member: A part-time position can perhaps be hard to fill, or the person might leave when they can move to a full-time position elsewhere.

IX. Executive Session

A. Motion by Timm Judas, seconded by Angela Colbeth to enter Executive Session at 8:07 PM to discuss negotiations. Motion voted on and approved unanimously.

B. The Board exited Executive Session at 8:25 PM

X. Action—None taken.

XI. The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Nancy Perkins, Minutes Clerk

**The minutes are in draft format and are unofficial until formally approved by the Board at a subsequent meeting.**