

OUUSD Board Meeting

Via Zoom

August 19, 2020

Present:

Board Members: Angela Colbeth, Danielle Corti, Carol Cottrell, Melissa Gordon, Timm Judas, Chelsey Perry

Administration: Emilie Knisley, Bruce Williams, Lori Blood

Others: Monique Priestly, Bud Haas, Marvin Harrison, and other members of the public

- I. The meeting was called to order at 5:33 PM by Danielle Corti, Chair. Those present were welcomed, and the protocols of Zoom meetings were reviewed.
- II. The agenda was reviewed. By consensus, it was agreed to add a policy read regarding high school transportation to athletic events and spectator size. Executive Sessions were also added for personnel and negotiations
- III. Board Minutes of July 22, 2020.
 - A. Motion by Melissa Gordon, seconded by Timm Judas to approve the Board minutes of July 22, 2020 as submitted. Motion voted on and approved unanimously
- IV. Correspondence
 - A. Letters from voters
 1. E-mail received from Mary Collins regarding lighting at Newbury Elementary School. Everyone involved has been contacted, and they are moving forward on this.
 2. Letter from Newbury parents regarding discipline policies at NES in light of COVID procedures. Emilie Knisley and Morgan Moore have reached out to the parents
 3. Letter from several voters in the district. Asking follow-up questions about budget revisions, in particular about funds that may be coming from the State. A response has been sent to the voters from the Chair, with the advice of the administration.
 - a. Timm Judas: concerned that responses of this type should go through an official Board meeting.
 - b. Melissa Gordon: suggested considering meeting twice monthly in case matters need to be considered in a more timely manner.
 4. Letter from Kate Paxton, BES Principal: request for her son to continue in kindergarten at BES. The request will be dealt with in Executive Session
- V. Public Comment
 - A. Marvin Harrison: Likes the idea of two Board meetings.
 - B. Bud Haas: Happy that Skip Barrett has been willing to step in to help at BES. What process was used to hire him?

1. Danielle Corti: it was posted as an interim position. Mr. Barrett applied and has been hired to help out as interim until a full-time interim is hired or Ms. Paxton is able to return.

VI. Informational

A. OESU report—did not meet for lack of quorum. Danielle Corti, Chair, met on Monday with Chairs from other Boards. They agreed to reinforce commitment for attendance at OESU meetings so a quorum is present. They discussed moving forward on the Superintendent's evaluation. They had contracted with VSBA for an evaluation tool, but only 5 Board members had completed the evaluation tool. The Chairs will stress to their Board members the importance of completing tools like that. They agreed to restart the policy committee.

VII. Financial Update (Lori Blood)

A. Balance sheet in the packet. Not much change since last meeting. Have filed the annual special education report with the State with adjustments. There is a deficit of \$10,000, but that is very preliminary, and a snapshot as of June 30th. They have moved three old balance sheets into one for the OUUSD. The Auditor is keeping an eye on this. There is no firm date for the preliminary audit. Danielle Corti has signed the current expense note from the bank. The SU took \$400,000 in July. We need to take \$600,000, and will take more as needed on August 30th. Because we don't have a budget, the State isn't willing to send the full allotment from the Education budget. We are still being sent guidance from the State on ESSA funds and CARES money. There are applications to file from each school. Timm Judas: Will we have access to any CARES reimbursement until next year? Lori Blood: need to claim 2020 costs first, then move to 2021 items. CARES money needs to fully claimed by December 30th.

VIII. Supt. Report--Reopening

A. Susie Tann: COVID coordinator. Received updated information on Safe and Healthy Start. Nurses are getting ready to do a lot of training of their staff. Consistency among the schools and building specifics. Met with Little Rivers to extend partnership. Providing dedicated staff at each of their clinics to provide guidance if a student doesn't pass health check. Upper Valley Pediatrics extended the same courtesy. It is important that a family sticks with their home base.

B. Concerns around reopening and staffing levels. As a whole, feeling quite good. Do have concerns about October and November when typical childhood illnesses show up. Always short of subs. Grateful that Skip Barrett has agreed to step in on a temporary basis. Have hired a nurse for Newbury and things are looking positive at Oxbow. Information was received today on Reserve Medical Corps of people who are available to help schools. We are talking with local providers about offering COVID testing. Timm Judas: very proud of administration and how Morgan Moore is handling things at NES with a lot of flexibility. Very prepared. Danielle Corti echoed the same about Oxbow.

C. Bruce Williams: echoed what Timm Judas said. There has been a huge amount of help from school nurses, and Susie Tann in particular. The huge preparedness in all the schools is a result of their work. Transportation—have had multiple meetings with the bus company. Adequate seating, health checks with bus monitors, set tone on buses for

healthy opening. OUUSD principals have worked hard to work out every detail. Danielle Corti thanked all the administrators.

IX. Discussion

A. Buildings and Grounds—NES nurse's office situation coming together

A. Newbury drainage project: meeting with Select board tonight. Hope to start on Monday and be finished before start of school

B. Boltonville sale: have to wait for voter approval for the sale, and it's on the warning.

C. Confident that buildings will be safe and sound for return of students and faculty

D. Just finishing up water testing for any lead pipes.

B. Model Policies from VSBA for Decision Making during COVID-19

1. First reading. VSBA has vetted them

2. Delegation of Authority during State of Emergency due to COVID-19 Pandemic

3. Modes of Instruction During State of Emergency Due to COVID-19 Pandemic

a. The Board will develop policies for the school using the model policies above

4. Suggested setting up a policy committee together, take some time, and think about them carefully.

a. Bruce Williams: thinks these policies should first be vetted at the OESU level.

C. Jean Wheeler: Shared a proposed policy regarding students being transported to and from athletic events by parents. She explained Oxbow's eligibility requirements for athletics. State guidance states we can have no more than 150 spectators at sporting events.

D. VSBA can do trainings virtually. We can let them know what dates are available. This will be training on the roles and responsibilities of Board members. Danielle Corti will contact them with some suggested dates

X. Action Items

A. Danielle Corti signed off on the CEN, as authorized at a previous meeting

B. Because Skip Barrett is doing a short-term interim position, it does not require a Board contract

XI. Information Meeting

A. Bruce Williams welcomed those present. Changes to the budget were adopted at a Board meeting and warned.

B. Jean Wheeler: Oxbow. No significant changes since the vote. Employment changes were reflected in the budget

C. Skip Barrett: BES. Will wait for Emilie Knisley to cover this information

D. Morgan Moore: NES. Reduced art and music back to .8 from 1.0. They will wait on a consultant until next year. The only increased instructional supplies are for the math program, so the supplies budget was reduced by \$10,000

E. OESU Board. Reduced their budget by \$50,000, which will result in some savings to OUUSD, bringing a savings to taxpayers of just over 1%

F. Negotiations:

1. Melissa Gordon: ESP contract. The goal is to get paras and support staff to reach a minimum wage in 3 years that makes it competitive and makes teachers and support staff want to come to this district. Another goal is to unify language between all of the schools.

2. Timm Judas and Angela Colbeth: came to agreement with the professional staff of 3.5% increase and 3-year contract. They expressed appreciation for educators' concern around stability.

G. Brian Emerson: RBCTC. Tech Center budget effected by 5 high schools.

H. Decided as a Board to keep Provision II in the budget to help provide food security to students in this community. Encouraging every family to apply for free and reduced lunch, even if you don't think you'll qualify. If we have as many people as we can, we don't have to complete the forms for another four years, and it sets the bar for that building. If 40% of the community as a whole qualify, we will be eligible for Provision I. Please help spread the word that the free and reduced forms are important to fill out. We are trying to get fresh fruit and vegetables into more families' hands.

I. Danielle Corti thanked all the administrators for all their hard work, creativity, and grit that has been happening getting the school year ready to start. She stressed how much she supports the budget and being able to work in extra supports for students.

XII. Public questions

A. Marvin Harrison: question on Provision II.

1. Bruce Williams: every free and reduced lunch reduces the amount of taxes we have to pay. The odds are very low that we will qualify for Provision I this year. Mr. Williams sits on a committee regarding food insecurity.

2. Danielle Corti: if any moneys are left and are verified by an audit, those moneys are available two years down the road. This matter will be put on a future agenda.

3. Bruce Williams: \$195,000 is the best estimate for Provision II expenses. Federal reimbursement for the summer lunch program has been a huge benefit to families of district and also a great financial benefit to the district.

C. Danielle Corti: Town Clerks have recommended that ballots not be sent home to each individual home. They asked that voters be able to request absentee ballots. If you want an absentee ballot, contact your Town Clerk. You can mail it back or drop it off at their office.

D. Bud Haas: Are items in the folder public information? Danielle Corti responded that they are.

E. The Chair thanked everyone who attended the Info meeting

XIII. Executive Session—Personnel

A. Motion by Timm Judas, seconded by Angela Colbeth to enter Executive Session at 7:52 PM pursuant to VSA 313, (a), (1) to discuss Personnel, after making a specific finding that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body, or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage. Motion voted on and approved

unanimously. Superintendent Knisley and Vice-Superintendent Williams were also invited.

B. The Board exited Executive Session at 8:10 PM

XIV. Action

A. Motion by Melissa Gordon, seconded by Angela Colbeth to deny the personnel request from Employee A. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

XV. Executive Session—Negotiations

A. Motion by Timm Judas, seconded by Melissa Gordon to enter Executive Session at 7:58 PM pursuant to VSA 313 (a) (1) Negotiations after making a specific finding that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body, or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

B. The Board exited Executive Session at 9:00 PM

XVI. Action

A. The Board decided that, prior to the vote, a letter will be issued to the voters.

XVII. Motion by Melissa Gordon, seconded by Angela Colbeth to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 PM. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

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.