

OUUSD BOARD MEETING

Via Zoom

September 16, 2020

Present:

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

Administration: Emilie Knisley, Bruce Williams, Brian Emerson, Jean Wheeler, Skip Barrett

Others: Heidi Allen, Bud Haas, Tim Ross, Monique Priestly, and others

- I. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Danielle Corti, Chair. Those present were welcomed, and the protocols of Zoom meetings were reviewed.
- II. Board Business
 - A. The agenda was reviewed. The minutes from September 9th will be approved at a subsequent meeting.
 - B. Motion by Melissa Gordon, seconded by Angela Colbeth to approve the Board minutes of August 19, 2020. Motion voted on and approved unanimously
 - C. Correspondence
 1. Correspondence from Bobette Scribner giving some concerns about the budget.
 2. Correspondence from Real Estate Agent Paul Kidder, who has been helping with the Boltonville building. The building was been approved to be used as a residence.
- III. Public Comment
 - A. Bud Haas: Personal recommendations:
 1. Hold a town meeting style vote, preferably by Zoom.
 2. Make a firm commitment to assure people of Bradford and Newbury that, prior to next annual meeting, there will be Articles of Agreement made that will require a vote of a super majority of that town before closing a town's school.
 3. Rename OUUSD immediately.
 4. The Board makes a statement that moving into the Copeland Building was a mistake.
 5. Request that the State Board of Education approve dissolution of the district.
- IV. OESU Report
 - A. Released a calendar of meetings so all Boards know when the others are meeting
 - B. Have a fiscal calendar to schedule reports to the Board.
 - C. Update on employees needing to take COVID leaves.
 - D. Thetford has not finalized agreement with their teachers, so OESU voted to not ratify their contracts with teachers until Thetford had settled.
- V. Superintendent's Report
 - A. Supt. Knisley explained the process of looking for an interim principal for BES. Skip Barrett has been filling this position temporarily. The position has been advertised.

1. A candidate has been interviewed, and she has visited a BES staff meeting. The feedback from the BES staff on Marla Ianello was very good.
2. The Supt. will be bringing a proposal to the Board tonight to hire Ms. Ianello for the rest of the year. Skip Barrett will work with her as a mentor throughout the rest of the year.
3. She has 30 years of experience in many areas, and she has worked for the SU in recent years.
4. Heidi Allen: feels Ms. Ianello could be a strong leader for Bradford.

VI. B. Principals reporting out on reopening.

1. Jean Wheeler: Oxbow has a slight increase in enrollment. About 10% are remote learners.
 - a. They are being very cautious as far as cold-like symptoms.
 - b. They are at capacity for supervision. Secretaries and administration are helping out. There is a wonderful atmosphere with everyone working together.
 - c. They're having technology frustrations, but people are being patient.
 - d. Danielle Corti: How is the connectivity with Chrome books? J. Wheeler: They have prioritized 4-day slots for students without good connectivity or who struggled with remote learning in the spring. They have adjusted attendance so students can do the work they need to do on Wednesdays when everyone is remote.
2. Brian Emerson: They are on par with last year with attendance at RBCTC. They are not taking in any sophomores this year.
 - a. There will be a RAB meeting on Tuesday.
 - b. There has been an increase in home school students.
 - c. B. Emerson has been working with the 5 principals and 4 superintendents.
 - d. Tech centers will be receiving \$4 million to help with COVID related expenses. It is a challenge as to how to do hands-on with distance learning.
 - e. B. Emerson expressed appreciation for the support of Supt. Knisley and Asst. Supt. Bruce Williams.
 - f. Carol Cottrell: What is the number of enrolled students? B. Emerson: 168 full time students.
3. Morgan Moore: It's been a great first week and a half. Everyone is happy to have students back in the building. Students are doing well with masks and distancing.
 - a. Enrollment is down 14 students. There is a small kindergarten class. 22% of the students are learning fully remotely.
 - b. There has been a lot of outside time so far, with yoga mats, clip boards, and buckets to sit on.
 - c. A monthly session will be starting with restorative justice practices via Zoom.
 - d. It is challenging to do both remote and in-person instruction.

e. Donna Waelter and Allison Kidder from OESU have been very helpful setting up plans for students on IEP's, who are doing remote learning. It's been great to have the Social Worker on staff.

4. Skip Barrett: Numbers are down a little to 218. Home Schooling is up to 9 students. Everyone is so excited to have children back in the building.

a. The office staff is very helpful. They are still working on bussing.

b. As a new principal comes in, S. Barrett is offering to stay in the office while the new principal meets with teachers and is in the classrooms with kids and gets a feel of what BES is all about.

c. Timm Judas: Are buses being used for meals as they are picking up students? S. Barrett: No, meals are prepared for 7 days, so when they pick up the materials on Monday AM, they pick up meals with materials.

d. T. Judas: Last spring because of connectivity, perhaps, it seems to be some students didn't follow through. Emilie Knisley: We put a plan together in the spring. We will work to update that as needed. The Leadership team will be finalizing that plan. There will be more accountability if we need to go back to remote learning. The plan is still in the finalizing stages.

e. T. Judas: Are there any gaps between March and where we are now?

E. Knisley: We are administering the typical fall assessments such POA and PNOA to see where kids are. We don't have a data set yet to share with the Board.

f. T. Judas: Graduation requirements? Will there be Freshmen at colleges next year that will have gaps? E. Knisley: A lot of schools aren't requiring the SAT and ACT. Jean Wheeler: We looked at work from the spring and have created some interventions. We will need to be a little lenient with graduation requirements regarding electives.

g. T. Judas: Did the state make any improvements regarding connectivity? B. Williams: I am not aware of anything specific. T. Judas: I am befuddled as to why the State didn't have companies out there improving the wifi connectivity. E. Knisley: Grants are available for some of those addresses with poor connectivity to get connected. B. Williams: We will try to bring data on connectivity to the October OUUSD meeting. Newbury and Bradford have both signed onto EC Fiber. If all goes well, every household will be on the way to getting fiber starting in 2022. The Board indicated that they are interested in learning more data regarding connectivity in Newbury and Bradford.

C. Curriculum. Supt. Knisley suggested having a work plan set up regarding curriculum so different topics could be covered at particular meetings. Upbeat data is all coded. If Melanie Elliott is coming to the meeting, that would be a good meeting to do that, in either October or November. The Upbeat data would be specific to the OUUSD schools.

D. Candidate for BES Interim Position—will be voted on during new business

VII. Budget

A. D. Corti and M. Gordon went to an open conversation on Monday afternoon on the Newbury Common with community members. Concerns centered around the tax rate and the Copeland budget.

1. They were much more honest about Provision II. Should we wait until next year? The Board members shed some light on some of the misconceptions.

2. M. Gordon: Feedback has been much more cost centered with voters feeling the budget is too high. Board members had an opportunity to explain why the Board supported the move of the OESU offices.

3. Voters feel there is a need for better communication.

4. T. Judas: Thinks the Board was feeling overwhelmed this first year. We have added the two new Board members. We have a strategic plan in place, we need to get committees in place, and we need to have a vision.

B. Danielle Corti: Feels a need to take a look at Provision II. Will be having some help with food services through December. Trying to look for reductions where possible.

1. In answer to a question from a member of the public, D. Corti explained what Provision II is (free breakfast and lunch for all students).

C. E. Knisley: The amount to add Provision II to the budget is \$195,000. During the summer, lunches were provided to any child up through age 18. That summer food program has been extended until December 31, or whenever funding runs out. This results in savings of high \$70,000. Schools normally put money into their budgets to cover deficit in the lunch programs. Because we're going further into the school year, we have a clearer picture of what is needed. Given this, the business office recommends \$37,070.40 to cover deficits in food service. Provision II would cost about \$79,800.00. E. Knisley: Therefore, to provide Provision II would result in a cost of about \$55,000.

1. T. Judas: Can we put Provision II into the public's hands and make it a second article? E. Knisley: Yes, we can, but we can't pass it and not pass the school budget. We would need to word the Article in a way that funding Provision II is contingent upon the school budget passing.

2. B. Williams: It is an estimate, and there is no way to nail the exact number. If we leave Provision II there, the savings would be \$78,000 from meals continuing and an additional savings of \$61,567, for a total of \$140,000. Just over 1% savings.

3. Monique Priestly: Will recording of meetings be available going forward? The public seemed to really like that. You can stream it on You Tube and it can be saved there or on Facebook.

4. Bud Haas: Wants a Board member to make a motion regarding Provision II.

M. Gordon: We don't need a motion to include Provision II because it's already there.

5. Tim Ross: Is Provision II the major cut you're considering? D. Corti: Other savings--The after-school program at BES will not be held for at least the first half of the year (\$20K), an independent contractor (\$10K) whose services might be able to be offered in a different way, and a construction project at Oxbow

(\$20K). E. Knisley: Looking at some salary savings at OESU, but need to know if someone is leaving and that spot might be left vacant.

D. Warning: T. Judas and A. Colbeth would like to leave Provision II in rather than as a separate article. M. Gordon doesn't have mixed feelings about Provision II. However, she has had people tell her this budget is too high. We have little choice in what will impact our budget other than Provision II.

VIII. Recess for 10 minutes and called back to order at 7:43 PM

A. E. Knisley: Scenario A: keeping Provision II.

1. Scenario B: without Provision II:

IX. Motion by Melissa Gordon, seconded by Timm Judas to warn the new budget to include Provision II and the other savings changes as presented. Motion voted on and approved unanimously. Motion by Timm Judas, seconded by Angela Colbeth to warn a budget in the amount of \$16,896,683, with per pupil spending of \$17,914, which is a 6.54% increase in per pupil spending. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

X. Discussion about voting method and the timing of the budget. Supt. Knisley: concern expressed by the Town Clerks, who want to avoid having the budget vote too close to the general election if mail in ballots are being used for both.

A. Motion by M. Gordon, seconded by T. Judas to have another Australian ballot, with voting sites in both Bradford and Newbury, and mail a ballot to every voter.

1. Monique Priestly: Unless the Board does a ton of outreach, she's afraid we won't get a budget passed. She thinks we have to do an in-person meeting to get the budget passed.

2. B. Williams: The Town Meeting style lets you amend the budget in real time.

D. Corti: If we have an in-person meeting, we are limited to 150 people. If we warn it tomorrow, the window is October 19-23. M. Gordon: if everyone is in their personal vehicle, does that number change? E. Knisley: her understanding is "no, it still is 150".

3. Monique Priestly: Is it possible to do a hybridized event? E. Knisley: It's a little hard right now to get answers from the Secretary of State because of the general election.

4. M. Gordon called the question. The motion was passed unanimously.

5. M. Gordon: The Board's plan is to do an intensive reach out to the community. Supt. Knisley and the Board Chair will reach out to the Town Clerks in the morning to set the date for the vote.

6. M. Priestly has been trying to help get volunteers to help the Town Clerks with folding, stuffing envelopes, etc. She suggested maybe some teachers or staff might be willing to volunteer.

XI. Board Training Dates

A. D. Corti has reached out to the VSBA. The only available date is October 14 or not until November. It was decided to go with November dates. D. Corti will contact the VSBA again.

XII. Committees:

1. OESU reps: M. Gordon, T. Judas, and D. Corti, with C. Perry as alternate,

2. RAB Board—T. Judas

3. Sick Bank—C. Perry.
4. Policy—T. Judas and C. Cottrell
5. Budget/Finance—A. Colbeth and D. Corti and possibly C. Cottrell
6. Facilities—A. Colbeth
7. Articles of Agreement—M. Gordon and D. Corti
8. Communications—T. Judas, C. Cottrell, and A. Colbeth
9. School Community engagement—T. Judas, C. Cottrell, and perhaps others TBD.
10. Negotiations—stays the same

XIII. Action

- A. Motion by M. Gordon, seconded by T. Judas to approve the contract of Marla Ianello for the BES interim principal position. Motion voted on and approved unanimously
- B. Motion by M. Gordon, seconded by A. Colbeth to ratify the Support Staff contracts and authorize the Board Chair to sign. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

XIV. Public Comments

- A. Carol Royce Owen: Having Skip Barrett step in has been a God-send. She really appreciates him being there and working under him.
- B. Bud Haas: He made suggestions at the beginning of the meeting and is sorry to see the Board didn't take up any of them. He is sad to predict another budget defeat.
- C. Monique Priestly: thanked the Board for making the committees. There are community members who would like to help out with those.
- D. Tim Ross: Teacher contracts are done for Bradford and Newbury but are not ratifying them because of Thetford? D. Corti explained that it was decided as an SU Board, that no district would sign their teacher contracts until Thetford had settled. T. Ross: Doesn't think that Thetford's issues should affect Newbury's and Bradford's teachers' contracts. He thinks teachers could use the support. M. Gordon noted that other districts in the OESU supported OUUSD by reducing the OESU budget.

- XV. Motion by T. Judas, seconded by A. Colbeth to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 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.