

OUUSD BOARD MEETING

Via Zoom

November 18, 2020

Present:

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

Administration: Emilie Knisley, Bruce Williams, Jean Wheeler, Brian Emerson, Morgan Moore, Marla Ianello

Others: Bud Haas, Molly Sargent, Claude Phipps, Marvin Harrison, Monique Priestly, and other members of the public

- I. The meeting was called to order at 5:31 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 and approved
 - B. Motion by Melissa Gordon, seconded by Angela Colbeth to approve the Board minutes of November 5, 2020. Addition to the minutes under Correspondence II, C: "A letter had been received from Bud Haas regarding proposed changes to Article 3, but it wasn't acted upon as it had not been received in time to be on the agenda". Motion voted on and approved as corrected with one abstention (Melissa Gordon).
 - C. Correspondence
 1. Letter from Bud Haas with proposed changes to Article 3 of the Articles of Agreement. It was agreed by consensus that the proposed changes be referred to the Articles of Agreement Committee, then returned to the Board, then sent to the attorney for vetting.
 2. Letter from Bud Haas urging that wording on the Budget/Finance Committee Draft not include the word "taxpayer", but use "citizen", "member of the community", or "resident."
- III. Public Comment
 - A. Molly Sargent: A group from the Student Council has talked with Mrs. Wheeler, Mrs. Wozny, and Mr. Pogacar regarding changing the dress code. Is there a quicker route to making these changes? Emilie Knisley: Is the current dress code a procedure? Jean Wheeler: Yes. E. Knisley: Policy is governed by the School Board. Procedures can be adjusted by the Supt. and the Principal. She suggested a group from the Student Council speak with E. Knisley and J. Wheeler explaining what their thoughts are. J. Wheeler: Molly has done a wonderful job collecting information from other schools. She suggested sitting down with the Student Council right after Thanksgiving.
 - B. Bud Haas: "Taxpayer" may be fine for those who own property, but it has a feeling of exclusion. The word "taxpayer" is also used in Board Operating Policy on the website.
 1. OESU budget: Mr. Haas suggested is that the OUUSD review the OESU budget and give direction to the reps serving on the OESU Board. He would like to see the OUUSD Board have a copy of that budget at a future meeting, giving

the public a chance to see it, and give direction to the reps when the budget is voted on.

C. Claude Phipps: A handout at the meeting at the gazebo states that the goal of the district is to bring teachers' salaries up to the state average. M. Gordon: the goal is to bring the salaries more in line with other districts in our local area. C. Phipps: He encouraged that when this is talked about, that it be explained that it is talking about this area.

1. Second point: Concern about the increase in insurance. D. Corti: Doesn't have the number off the top of her head.

2. C. Phipps: In Article 4, it looks like Part A will just be a statement that no building will be closed before '24-'25. D. Corti: yes. C. Phipps: in Part B, he finds "just one grade" offensive. If there is only one grade, it amounts to closure.

a. Bud Haas: agrees with C. Phipps. We can't change the grade structure without a super majority of the town.

D. Marvin Harrison: Really thinks it's important that the Finance Committee is a 12-month committee and that it meet monthly, getting figures together for Board meetings. If M. Harrison were to serve on the committee, that is what he would like to see.

IV. Information

A. Principal Reports

1. Brian Emerson, RBCTC: RAB Meeting. The RAB approved the 5-year strategic plan at last night's meeting. RBCTC is down about 6 NH students, probably due to COVID. Everyone is working hard.

2. Marla Ianello, Bradford Elementary School: Pandemic management influences everything, every day. It impacts families and teachers greatly. Dress-up day gave a boost to all.

3. Morgan Moore, Newbury Elementary School: Teachers and staff are working hard and doing double duty. Staff is focusing on students, who need intervention. They are working with BES to share resources around remote learning. They have been figuring out a safe way to do Turkey Trot, winter activities, and other creative ways to bring joy.

4. Jean Wheeler, Oxbow High School: The staff are our heroes. They are essential workers at the top of the list. Lots of staff have been out. Because of operational issues and typical cold and flu season, they will be going back into cohort model, which will include 7th and 8th graders. Students will be able to move around the building more safely. It will cut class size from an average of 15 students down to 7 or 8. They had a great fall sports season, which is included in her report. OHS will be including some more intramural outdoor winter activities, such as cross-country skiing. They are hoping to make drama available. Danielle Corti: It is nice to see the cooperation between elementary schools, supporting remote learning. She extended thanks to all teachers and staff for all they do every day.

B. Strategic Planning Update (Monique Priestly)

1. The committee met today and will meet again Monday. They are going through additions and edits, and the style of the questions. The next step is to recruit an initial focus group made up of representatives of a large and varied number of groups within the OUUSD communities.

C. COVID-19 Update

1. Emilie Knisley: 171 staff tested voluntarily today throughout the SU. There were some problems with the registration tool. Turnaround time is 3-4 days. The individual staff members get their own results. If there is a positive result, the Supt. and Susie Tann are informed also. If there is a positive result of a staff member, that school will go remote next Monday and Tuesday, so people, who may need to quarantine, can do so right away. E. Knisley and B. Williams thanked all the principals, teachers, and staff for going above and beyond. We are doing everything we can to keep folks safe. Waits River School is going remote until after Thanksgiving because of a case at their school.

a. Melissa Gordon: Who is paying for the costs of the testing? E.

Knisley: All testing costs, with the exception of mileage, etc., are being borne by the State.

b. M. Gordon: If a child stays home from school one day, can they be counted as present? J. Wheeler: We are putting together a form that will go out to parents tomorrow. This absence would be marked as a highlighted excused absence. E. Knisley: Great question. We want to be encouraging to parents to keep students home if there is a question.

People have been wonderfully open, which helps keep people safe.

V. Discussion

A. Budget/Finance Committee: Danielle heard from 3 interested volunteers for the Budget Finance Committee: Tim Ross, Marcy Carver, and Marvin Harrison. Emmy Hausman has volunteered to serve on the Community/School Engagement Committee. E. Knisley offered to send a communication out asking for volunteers. By consensus, the Board agreed that it was a good idea. D. Corti will put something together for E. Knisley to send out. The Finance committee can meet at the end of December prior to preparation of the budget to come up with recommendations. M. Priestly: Suggested waiting until there is a larger pool of people before the committee is put together.

1. M. Gordon: Questioned the wording about the committee members needing to be free of conflict of interest. D. Corti: We need to be sure there is no perception of influence that could be for personal gain. E. Knisley: It would wise to have that wording for everyone. D. Corti: Will move it so it applies to Board members and community members alike.

2. M. Gordon: Asked about a term limit of 3 consecutive years? Does this apply to community and Board members alike? D. Corti: If terms can roll over for three years, it would provide consistency. M. Gordon: Suggested it should be a one-year term, but doesn't think there should be a term limit. D. Corti made the change.

3. Should the word "taxpayer" be removed? E. Knisley concurs with B. Haas that "residents" would be best. D. Corti made the changes.

B. Community/School Engagement: Angela Colbeth: Suggested changing the wording to “appointed annually” and to change to include more representation, including students.

C. Motion by Melissa Gordon, seconded by Angela Colbeth to approve the Committee Roles and Responsibilities of the Budget/Finance Committee and of the School/Community Engagement Committee. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

D. Confirm meeting schedule and expectations

1. OUUSD Board Meetings will be scheduled for the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. The first meeting of the month (on the second Wednesday) is going to focus on business and financial information, the Superintendent report, and the Budget/Finance committee report. The second meeting of the month, which will be the 4th Wednesday of the month, will be educationally focused, and the Principals will provide their reports, as well as the School/Community Engagement Committee and the Strategic Planning Committee Report.

a. Reports and communications need to be sent in so they can be included as part of the Board packet that is distributed five days before the meeting with the agenda and minutes.

VI. Action Items

A. Motion by Melissa Gordon, seconded by Angela Colbeth to approve Policy B8: Electronic Communications Between Staff/Students. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

VII. Claude Phipps: press release coming out that EC Fiber is working on the Upper Plain, collecting physical data. Come winter and spring, they will be able to do the design for high speed internet access.

INFORMATIONAL MEETING—7:00 pm

I. Article 4. School Closure. Amendments

A. This needs to be approved by Australian Ballot. It has been vetted by an attorney. Any closure would have to be approved by the town where the school is located and passed by 60% of those who are voting.

II. Supt. Knisley:

A. On October 5th the OUUSD board met and approved a new budget in the amount of \$16,780,183, with per pupil spending of \$17,741, which is a 5.51% increase in per pupil spending.

1. Bradford increase—4.58%. The tax rate is \$1.6477.

2. Newbury increase—1.94%. The tax rate is \$1.5873.

3. Therefore, if you use \$100,000 property value,

a. The numbers for Bradford: Last year their tax was \$1,576.00. In the upcoming vote, their tax would be \$1,648.00

b. The numbers for Newbury: Last year their tax was \$1,557.00. In the upcoming vote, their tax would be \$1,587.00

III. Danielle Corti:

A. **Total decrease in the proposed budget: \$306,500.00**

B. What was changed:

1. Provision 2 removed & State COVID relief program to cover meal cost= \$195,000.00
2. Food service deficits paid off by revenue from summer meals program = \$61,500.00
3. Afterschool program at Bradford only running half year (Jan. 1) savings = \$20,000.00
4. River Bend Bathroom Renovation on hold = \$20,000.00
5. Independent Contractor = \$10,000.00

IV. Motion by Melissa Gordon, seconded by Angela Colbeth to adjourn at 7:26 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.