

OUUSD BOARD MEETING

Via Zoom

February 10, 2021

Present:

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

Administration: Bruce Williams, Alison Kidder, Brian Emerson, Cate Beaton, Jean Wheeler, Linda Metcalf, Marla Ianello, Robin Wozny, Morgan Moore

Others: Emmy Hausman, Bud Haas, Skip Barrett, Lance Mills, Amy Hayward, and other members of the public

- I. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Danielle Corti, Chair. The protocols of Zoom meetings were reviewed, and those present were welcomed. The agenda was reviewed. An Executive Session will be added for Personnel. It was noted that the Articles of Agreement Committee had not met yet.
- II. Executive Session
 - A. Motion by Timm Judas, seconded by Melissa Gordon to move into Executive Session at 5:36 PM, pursuant to VSA 313 (a) (1) to discuss a Personnel issue, of which premature general public knowledge would clearly put the Board or person involved at a substantial disadvantage. Accompanying the Board were Bruce Williams, Jean Wheeler, and Robin Wozny. Motion voted on and approved unanimously
 - B. The Board exited Executive Session at 5:53 PM.
 - C. No Action was taken
- III. Motion by Melissa Gordon, seconded by Angela Colbeth to approve the Board minutes of January 27, 2021. Motion voted on and approved unanimously.
- IV. Correspondence
 - A. Skip Barrett: Request that there should be a report from the Low Forest Committee in the Annual Report Booklet, and that the report should be more than just a budget report
 - B. Dated Jan. 31st, correspondence from Dr. Kate Paxton, saying that she will not be returning to Bradford Elementary School next year.
 - C. Letters from Emmy Hausman and Catherine Kidder regarding the School/Community Committee.
 - D. Letter from Tom Kidder regarding the Scholarship Committee
- V. Public Comment
 - A. Bud Haas:
 1. First concern: Will you be acting on Article 3 as it was placed on the agenda?
Danielle Corti: We did not have a chance to meet, so we will move it to the next agenda. B. Haas: Is afraid the Board will run out of time. It also appears the Scholarship Committee is left over from Oxbow. It Seems to be made up totally of Newbury folks.

2. Second concern: Thinks the two preschools should be equalized and that Newbury should have certified staff, being paid the same salary as Bradford.
3. Third: requested setting the time, date, etc. of Annual meeting. If voting is to be by Australian ballot, there is a filing deadline for those who would like to be a candidate. He sees that some other towns in the area are having outdoor meetings. He recommends having the meeting in May, outside, and that the Board should call for public input on this. There should be a call for candidates for the positions that are open and to make a decision what to do about ballots.

B. Skip Barrett: pointed out that on the website, there are minutes, policies, etc., some from Newbury and Bradford, before OUUSD was formed. The website should point folks back to the current OUUSD policies, etc. D. Corti: Work is going to be done on that.

VI. Information

A. Superintendent's Report: Bruce Williams: does not have a COVID-19 report, but commended the perseverance of the staff and administration. It is not simple or easy.

1. Budgets are a year-round operation, but more intense at this time of year. B. Williams thanked Linda Metcalf and the principals for putting together budgets.

2. OUUSD will be meeting with VPA on the possibility of a search consultant to assist in a process for selecting a new principal. There will be a strong and robust selection process.

3. Danielle Corti: We are also in the process of the Asst. Supt. search. There are four candidates. There will be a forum on February 17th from 5:00-7:00 PM to meet the four candidates individually and to ask them questions. All interested community members are encouraged to attend via Zoom.

B. Financial Update

1. Recommended Tuition rate for Kindergarten-Grade 6 = \$10,943

2. For Grades 7-12=\$16,900

3. For River Bend = \$16,500

C. Motion by Melissa Gordon, seconded by Angela Colbeth to approve the tuition rates as presented. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

D. COVID-19 Update: Jean Wheeler reported on a recent case at Oxbow. Because of so many staff, who needed to quarantine until they could be tested, Oxbow went remote Monday-Wednesday. They will be back in session Thursday. There was also a positive case at the Day Care Center at RBCTC

VII. Discussion

A. OESU Budget—OESU Board did not meet

B. OUUSD Budget first draft. Linda Metcalf went over it line by line. Budget expense shows a 3.2% increase. She did not put Provision II in the budget. However, Bruce Williams hopes the Board and community will take a close look at this. B. Williams thinks there is some chance the Federal Government might continue the summer meal program into next year.

C. Jean Wheeler, Oxbow: shared Oxbow Budget changes 2021-2022. Increase in some staffing: 1 FTE English and 1 FTE Social Studies. Went over other proposed changes, line by line. The goal is to maintain the strong comprehensive program that Oxbow has

been able to offer for years, maintaining the electives. They plan to start a new club next year called e-sports.

D. Marla Ianello: Bradford Elementary: Went over the proposed changes.

E. Morgan Moore: Newbury Elementary: Shared NES Summary Budget Changes

1. D. Corti: asked about facilities and maintenance

F. Brian Emerson: RBCTC: Explained that with COVID-19, RBCTC has taken a hit on their enrollment, so revenue is down. Good news: State of VT responded with some relief directly to Tech Centers, which helped some. Will not be cutting people or programs, and are trusting that they will come out of this. They want to increase adult education and student intervention. Timm Judas: asked about salaries and benefits. B. Emerson: net difference = \$51,850.00.

G. Feedback from the Board: Danielle Corti: spoke of the need to keep things pretty tight. Hoping the budget increase might be less than 2% increase.

1, Timm Judas: has heard conversations about the hard decisions that are being made. Feels we need to keep increase between 0% and 2%. Should look very hard at facilities projects.

2. Chelsey Perry: should limit increase as much as possible. No more than 2%, and hopefully closer to 1%. Make the information easy to understand, and break down why there is an increase.

3. Carol Cottrell: look carefully at the number of teachers and paraprofessionals based on the number of students. Suggested having Provision II as a separate article.

4. Angela Colbeth: would like to have it stay low to show we're listening to the community. Look at facilities and the tech needs.

5. Melissa Gordon: be sure whatever decisions are made that we're not reacting to the trauma of our last budget. Also, we do have a large population that does support our schools. We should not go backwards. We need the investment of our community to move our school forward.

6. Bruce Williams: pupil count is up 1.5%.

7. Timm Judas: we need to be sure any changes in the budget do not impact the students. We need a great explanation as to why the numbers can't be where they would like.

8. Danielle Corti: We already have four articles on the ballot. We would need to be very clear regarding a Provision II article.

9. Timm Judas: believes the community does feel that food insecurity is an important thing to address

H. Strategic Planning Committee

1. Carol Cottrell: Regarding the survey, 1500 cards will be sent out to voters. The committee will be purchasing the cards and having them printed, mailing them using bulk mail, will place an ad in the *Bridge Weekly*, and printing out a few copies of the survey to put in the Bliss Store and Newbury General Store. The committee feels \$1000 will cover all these expenses.

A. Motion by Timm Judas, seconded by Angela Colbeth to authorize up to \$1200 for postage, printing, and mailing information about the strategic plan. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

I. School/Community Committee Structure

1. Melissa Gordon: This should be a tool for members of this group to share all the good things that are happening in all the schools.
2. Bruce Williams: thinks the committees work best when there is quality principal time involved. They are already stretched very thin.
3. Timm Judas: Are we doing this for the right reasons? Suggested that a charge be given to a group of people to work out the details. What does community engagement mean?
4. Jean Wheeler: OHS already has a PTO and a Booster Club.
5. Angela Colbeth: some schools have things in place, and we don't want to duplicate these.
6. Marla Ianello: BES has started to develop a community communication plan. How are we pushing info out, and how are we inviting info from the community in?
7. Carol Cottrell: thinks the original idea was to be a liaison between the school and community.
8. Morgan Moore: We have a group working to communicate with the community. Feels it might be better to grow that rather than have another meeting/group.
9. Carol Cottrell: if something is already in place, perhaps we can invite Board members in to work with them.
10. Brian Emerson: RBCTC has a RAB committee and a business advisor for each of their programs. The close connection to your community is vital. When you go through a rough time, you have support, and you are not just explaining it at budget time.
11. Danielle Corti: would like to do a hybrid. Find out what organizations already exist. Get some of those people together to facilitate what is already happening on the ground.
12. Timm Judas: feels the symposium is the place where the principals can come and present. Rather than putting more on the principals, invite them to the symposium.
13. Danielle Corti: at a later date, have a conversation with the principals and other stakeholders from the schools. Explain the support that would be helpful. We will have a symposium in April or May to see what are the needs of schools and community for outreach. Have parents and students involved.
14. Melissa Gordon: There is a group in most of the schools in which Board members and community members can become involved.
15. Jean Wheeler: appreciates pulling this together. Anything we can do to enhance and expand to bringing in more participation. Monique Priestly is an important cog in this.

16. Danielle Corti: we need to do this thoughtfully and well. She expressed her appreciation for all the suggestions.

17. Timm Judas: as much as we can reach out, we can try to repair and rebuild trust.

18. Carol Cottrell: timeline?

19. Danielle Corti: At the second meeting in April or May, administrators can bring details of what they have in their schools to involve parents and community members. Keep the structures as they are, and supplement them with community and Board presence.

20. Carol Cottrell: doesn't want the idea to die.

21. Danielle Corti: suggested putting future meeting plans on the agendas.

22. Amy Hayward: suggesting keeping public librarians involved, as they are definitely stakeholders in the community.

VIII. Public Comment—None

IX. Motion by Timm Judas, seconded by Angela Colbeth to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 PM.
Motion voted on and approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted:

Nancy Perkins, Minutes Clerk

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