

OUUSD BOARD MEETING

Via Zoom

February 24, 2021

Present:

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

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

Others: Marvin Harrison, Rick & Emmy Hausman, and other members of the public

- 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. The agenda was reviewed, and time slots were added, as well as future items for upcoming agendas and upcoming meeting schedules
- II. Board Business
 - A. Motion by Angela Colbeth, seconded by Chelsey Perry to approve the Board minutes of February 10, 2021. Motion voted on and approved unanimously.
 - B. Correspondence: a letter from Emmy Hausman regarding delaying the formation of Community School Engagement Committees and a letter from Marvin Harrison with questions to the Board regarding the budget. The latter is a work in progress.
 - C. Committee Reports
 1. Strategic Plan: post cards are printed, and they are deciding how they will be sent out. About 260 responses to the survey have been received thus far.
- III. Public Comment—None
- IV. Information:
 - A. Principal Reports
 1. Jean Wheeler: Shared a couple alumni congratulations: Isabella Giesing, who graduated in 2018, is a member of her University of Massachusetts-Lowell women's cross-country team and led her college team to a 5th place finish. Jon Puffer, 2017 Oxbow grad, recently graduated from Great Lakes Navy Recruit Training Command. He will be training to become a Nuclear Electronics Technician in South Carolina for the next 18 months.
 - a. Oxbow is in the process of looking at senior graduation plans. They are looking at the possibility of creating 3-4 options, depending on the condition of the community and the state, and will make the decision on May 12th.
 - i. Danielle Corti: How is the vacation winter session? Robin Wozny: 12 students signed up, with a total of ten students in 10th, 11th, and 12th grade in attendance. They are progressing nicely recovering credits.

B. Assistant Superintendent Search Update: Emilie Knisley and Danielle Corti reported that there was a community forum last Wednesday, and the community was able to ask questions. The process went very smoothly with a lot of feedback. Randall Gawel will be joining OESU on July 1st as the new Asst. Superintendent. There will be some overlap between B. Williams and R. Gawel in the late summer, and B. Williams will stay on for a bit to help with the transition.

1. Principal Search for BES will be done in a similar fashion. The position is posted, and the hiring committee is in place, with a OUUSD Board member to be added tonight. Motion by Timm Judas, seconded by Carol Cottrell that Angela Colbeth be the Board representative on the search committee for the BES Principal. Motion voted on and approved unanimously.

C. OESU Update: The Board met February 16th. The Board approved the SU budget unanimously. CARES and ESSER funds were explained as to how those funds will be used in the required timeframe. Additional funds are expected, and a more detailed plan will need to be put together. D. Corti made the suggestion that at a future meeting a facilities plan/committee be addressed. There may be a need to have an alternate for the OESU Board meetings so a quorum will be present. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

D. Financial Update: Linda Metcalf: We have some funds coming in. We are, however, having to borrow. Towns can start to give us some money they have collected, but we are still waiting for about \$4 million from the State. OESU will probably not be “whole” from the State of VT until April. All the info from the SU is in to the State.

E. COVID Update: LRHC has partnered with the SU to try to get vaccines to staff, if there happens to be vaccine available on certain days, left from someone who cancels, or if there is a snowstorm, etc. They are talking about doing vaccination clinics at school-based sites. These would be a follow-up to the flu clinics held in the fall. The goal is to get as much into the community as possible.

V. Discussion

A. OUUSD Budget 2nd Draft. They now have the revenue side to incorporate into the budget, along with the expenses. Expense increase = 2.38%. Revenue increase = .31%. Education Spending increase = 3.20%. Equalized pupils increase = 1.55 %. Education spending per equalized pupil up 1.63%. Property yield \$11,385. Tax rate for Bradford = \$1.6541 (up .39%). Tax rate for Newbury = \$1.5786. (down .55%)

B. Went over Draft Budget, showing percentage of increase or decrease by line item. RBCTC enrollment has decreased this year due to COVID. The State is trying to help out all Tech Centers.

1. Timm Judas: Provision II? Bruce Williams predicts that legislatively, it's 1-2 years away. T. Judas: Should we do it as a separate article? D. Corti: when we know whether or not we have a surplus, it may help this conversation. Roughly adding \$200,000 would be adding 2% increase to the budget. C. Cottrell: Suggested that whether it's incorporated into the budget or as a separate article, that it be deferred to the budget committee. Emilie Knisley: Depending what direction the Board wants to go, they could maybe have a portion of the surplus go into a fund designated to food insecurity. Similar to a capital fund.

2. D. Corti: Asked for a detailed version of the budget.

3. T. Judas: Any more discussion about the counselor position? Jean Wheeler: Shifts in personnel are not definite, but is hopeful that they can bring in the staff needed at very little increase in cost. D. Corti: May be other creative ways to use funding sources for the Social-emotional health of our students.

4. Marvin Harrison: Tuition money? How much is guess work and how much is definite? E. Knisley: Tuition is based on what we know right now. A conservative estimate.

B. Motion by Timm Judas, seconded by Carol Cottrell for Danielle Corti and Melissa Gordon to start drafting the letter for the Annual Report. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

C. Budget Finance Committee: met last week and discussed keeping the budget at less than 2% and as level-funded as possible. Drew up questions for Linda Metcalf.

1. Recommendations to the Board:

a. Close to level funding,

b. Explain and justify significant increases (notes that explain and can carry over to annual report),

c. Watch projects/facilities and use of capital funds.

d. Don't just look at year to year comparison; go back two years or more, include line-item notes with items that meet the % and \$ amount threshold that can be included in the report to voters.

e. Side note: solar panels were supposed to have provided an educational kiosk or some type of educational information. Also, a screen of trees was to be planted to block the view from the houses.

2. Marvin Harrison: Disappointed that nothing is in the budget regarding pre-school program and after-school program. D. Corti: This would have to be a conversation for the Board. E. Knisley: Part of the rationale for an after-school program: there is a possibility that some ESSER funds might be able to be used for a more robust after-school program that would offer more opportunities. D. Corti: Minutes of the October 7th meeting indicated that a deeper look would be done as to what is offered at Newbury and Bradford.

a. E. Knisley: Asked for clarification on what the concern is. D. Corti: The equity piece.

b. Marla Ianello: If she could have a clear set of questions, she would be happy to answer them at a future meeting.

c. E. Knisley: We should have clarity on what currently exists for after-school programs and what is needed to meet the needs of the children/families. D. Corti: We will put it on the agenda for March or April—the needs and possible enhancements.

D. Article of Agreement committee: Motion by Carol Cottrell, seconded by Timm Judas to move Article 3 forward to the Attorney to be vetted. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

VI. Public Comments

A. Jean Wheeler: Supports the School/Community Engagement Committee. Rather than create another committee, Oxbow could blend it with an already existing committee, for instance the Booster Club. D. Corti: Use what's already there, but create another layer. J. Wheeler: Feels it's an optimum time, because the groups are reforming. T. Judas: Encourage any existing groups at any of the schools to start thinking how the group may be able to evolve, thinking about community engagement. Not trying to put anything off.

1. C. Cottrell: Feels like we are hearing what people want. They want the school/community engagement committees to be school specific, and there is no reason to have the symposium. She doesn't see why we need to wait. We can just tell folks to go ahead. Each school's committee may be very different, because they will be tailored to their specific school's needs. M. Harrison: Wondered if any action were going to be taken on Emmy Hausman's letter, and the Board is doing so.

2. J. Wheeler: This keeps it school specific and allows communities to be involved. We would not create a separate entity, but layer on an existing committee.

3. E. Knisley: It still needs to be clear what is being asked. Do we wait two weeks? She hates to see frustration on both sides.

4. D. Corti: We need committee parameters. She offered to create a document, present it at the next meeting, and decide where the starting point is. Morgan Moore: That would be helpful. She would like to think about how that would strengthen the FONES group. We need to know what we are doing and do it properly. D. Corti: Will distribute the parameters before the next meeting. M. Gordon: Can we say that people can join existing groups? D. Corti: Yes.

5. Emmy Hausman: Expressed appreciation to C. Cottrell and T. Judas for hearing her concern. She was hoping this committee could be established sooner rather than later and before the budget vote. She hopes it might be helpful in passing the budget on the first try.

6. T. Judas: How can we not duplicate services? A. Colbeth: The committees could be building specific, but have 2-3 goals that are the same so we can achieve consistency.

7. D. Corti: Will re-distribute the document with the original charge for this committee. We will add it to the agenda of the next meeting. T. Judas: Ask the principals to let the Board know when the next time FONES, etc. are meeting so maybe a Board member can attend.

VII. Future Agenda Items

A. Strategic Plan Survey

B. School/community engagement symposium

C. Pre-K and After-School Program

D. Possibly renaming the district

1. E. Knisley: This process is very complex. We would have to change everything with the Federal Government

VIII. Next Meeting—the second Wednesday in March (March 10th)

- IX. Motion by Timm Judas, seconded by Angela Colbeth to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 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.