

OUUSD BOARD MEETING

Via Zoom

March 10, 2021

Present:

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

Administration: Emilie Knisley, Bruce Williams, Linda Metcalf, Jean Wheeler, Morgan Moore, Marla Ianello, Allison Kidder

Others: Ted Pogacar, Wayne Darling, and other members of the public

- I. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Danielle Corti, Chair. Those present were welcomed, and the protocols for Zoom meetings were reviewed. The agenda was reviewed. Article 3 is not ready to be warned for the April vote. It was agreed to table approving the minutes of the February 24th Board meeting until the next meeting.
- II. Board Business
 - A. Correspondence—None
 - B. Budget/Finance and Strategic Plan Report
 1. Carol Cottrell: Information has been received from Monique Priestly with data on demographics of survey responses. 370 responses have been received thus far. The first 100 postcards have been mailed. The next committee meeting is set for 11:00 AM on March 16th. Danielle Corti will be interviewed by Stephen Puffer on WYKR this week.
 2. Budget committee report.
 - a. The Committee got detailed information on enrollment. The committee recommends that the Board hold off on warning a separate article for Provision 2
 - b. The audited budget numbers have not been received yet.
 - c. The budget committee recommends that the budget is acceptable to move forward, and the committee will be writing a letter of support that will be included in the annual report.
- III. Public Comment—None
- IV. Information
 - A. Supt. Report
 1. Bruce Williams was in a meeting with Hunger Free VT. The latest word is that there is a bill that would mandate that public schools go to Provision 2 over a 5-year period of time. Funding for that is uncertain as yet, but the Ways and Means Committee hasn't met on it yet. There is going to be some significant grant funding to allow schools to support infrastructure to meet the needs of the Provision 2 program. There is more optimism about this than at any time during the past 2 years. The question is the financing. The Federal Summer meals program has been extended through September 30. This could allow us

to do a program just like last summer, using Butler Bus system to distribute food out into the community. This would also give us a little boost in September.

2. Emilie Knisley: She and the principal search committee spent today doing interviews. They are selecting those, who will move on to the next round. The second round of interviews will be March 23rd afternoon and evening. They would like lots of folks to take part in those. There will be time in the evening for parents, community members, and Board members to hear from the candidates in the evening. The Committee will meet on March 24th to make a recommendation to the Supt, who will make a recommendation to the Board.

3. Emilie Knisley: COVID -19 Update: teachers and support staff are now eligible to receive the vaccine. A lot of staff are able to get in through the state site, Walgreens, and Kinney Drug. Starting March 27th and every Saturday until mid-August, a partnership with LRHC will use two sites—BMU and Oxbow—to offer vaccine to community members. The SU is also working with LRHC to apply for Federal grant money to hire student care coordinators, who would work in each of our buildings. The coordinators would be helping students with access to food, mental health, housing, and health care. This will help students in a recovery period as they transition back into a more normal school routine.

4. Financial Update: Linda Metcalf: We have currently borrowed \$4.4 million. Notes are coming due April 10th. This will be difficult unless we get funding from the State earlier than April 30th. The SU will be reaching out to the banks to make them aware of this.

a. There were no big surprises in the second quarter. New hires for COVID purposes were covered by COVID funds. Schools have been very frugal in their spending.

V. Discussion

A. Budget—Final Draft

1. School District Budget= \$17,171,968, which is up 2.33% from last year

2. Estimated Education Spending = \$12,378,025, which is up 3.28% from last year

3. Estimated Education Spending per Equalized Pupil = \$18,044, which is up 1.71% from last year

4. Property Yield = \$11,385, which gives an estimated Total Homestead Base Tax Rate, Equalized \$1.5849

5. Estimated FY2022 Rates per town:

a. Bradford: \$1.6554, which is up .47% from last year

b. Newbury: \$1.5798, which is down .47% from last year

B. Voting Date of April 13, 2021. Informational meeting April 5th at 6:00. Additional info meeting on March 24th, precede by a Board meeting

C. School and Community Engagement Committee

1. Danielle Corti reviewed the way the Board should try to make decisions and be comfortable with the decision-making process that they have. Board members need to feel comfortable explaining why the Board made a particular

decision. She reviewed the original goal for the School and Community Engagement Committees, one for each school, the configuration, and the role.

a. Melissa Gordon: feels the goals are completely fine. We should have the committee working with existing committees in the schools and have a liaison from the Board.

b. D. Corti: should we go forward now, reach out to committees currently there, or wait until April, which would give more time to reach out to stakeholders in the community.

c. M. Gordon: feels we should wait until April. It is worth taking the time to do it right. It is better to combine committees, making the product more positive.

d. Angela Colbeth: Wait until April. We need to know what is already out there.

e. Carol Cottrell: She will do whatever the majority wants. She thought the committee would be the Board's way to support the committees already in place in a unique way. There needs to be a discussion as to what this committee could do so we don't duplicate, but we complement.

f. Chelsey Perry: She is all for this committee. She wants to do it the right way so it will be successful, so waiting another month is a good idea.

g. D. Corti: while we're waiting, if we have the people that have been nominated to be on these committees, let them begin meeting to try to recruit more people onto these committees. No responses have been received yet from pleas she's been putting out.

h. C. Cottrell: Feels that seven people on the committee is cumbersome. We should have fewer.

i. D. Corti: it would be important to have a parent/community member, and also a student. We should get some work done prior to acting on this in April.

j. C. Cottrell: Each of the committees has a Board member. The Board member could start that process, getting detail, and maybe engage the administrator as to what they see as the role of this committee.

k. Danielle: Report back on April 14th.

VI. Emilie Knisley: Article 5 needs to be added to the Warning: Shall the voters authorize the School Board to borrow money in anticipation of tax receipts for the 2021-2022 school year?

A. Information meetings on April 5th at 6:00 and March 24th at 6:30.

March 24th meeting agenda: Melissa Gordon encouraged moving preschool and after school program discussion until after the new Board member is elected. It was suggested that the Pre-K program be on the agenda. The Board can learn what we already have, what is the landscape, and what is the structure in each school. We can go into it deeper later in the season when there will be a better knowledge of funding. The Board will meet at 5:30, followed by the Informational meeting at 6:30. Principals will highlight programs in their schools with lots of pictures of happy kids.

- VII. Upcoming Agendas
 - A. April 14th Board Meeting Agenda Items: Finance Report.
 - B. April 28th Board Meeting Agenda: Dress Code for Oxbow
- VIII. Warning of the budget:
 - A. Motion by Angela Colbeth, seconded by Carol Cottrell to approve the school budget in the amount of \$17,171,968, which results in education spending of \$18,044 per equalized pupil. The projected spending per equalized pupil is 1.71% higher than spending for the current year. Motion voted on and approved unanimously
- IX. Alternate to the OESU Board
 - A. Motion by Carol Cottrell, seconded by Chelsey Perry to elect Angela Colbeth to serve as alternate to the OESU Board. Motion voted on and approved unanimously
- X. Public Comment
 - A. Wayne Darling: Brought a concern regarding health education program starting at NES on Monday. His concern was that he considered communication to parents inadequate and that some of the content is inappropriate for the age group. He feels it should be postponed until all families are aware of what is happening and feels there should be an opt out option.
 - 1. Emilie Knisley: Noted that the curriculum is part of the State's early grade health curriculum standards and that sexual abuse training is mandated in all VT schools. The program is used in other schools, as well. Parents were given the option of opting out for their children.
 - 2. NES Principal Morgan Moore will be meeting with the family tomorrow.
 - 3. Danielle Corti reminded everyone of the protocol and chain of communication.
- XI. Motion by Angela Colbeth, seconded by Chelsey Perry to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 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.