

OUUSD BOARD MEETING

Oxbow High School Library and via Zoom

October 27, 2021

Present:

Board Members: Maegan Ballou, Angela Colbeth, Danielle Corti, Carol Cottrell, Chelsey Perry, Tim Ross

Administration: Emilie Knisley, Jean Wheeler, Robin Wozny, Marla Ianello, Brian Emerson, Loretta Cruz

Others: Lillian Gahagan, Riley Harness, Marcy Carver, and others

I. The meeting was called to order at 5:33 PM by Danielle Corti, Chair. Those present were welcomed, and the protocols of meetings with some participating via Zoom were reviewed

II. Board Business

A. The agenda was reviewed. Guests from the Teen Center were moved earlier in the meeting. An Executive Session will be added at the end of the meeting.

B. A moment of silence was observed in memory of Corinna Magalhaes. Marla Ianello spoke a few words of tribute to her. In the coming weeks it is hoped to be able to celebrate her life.

C. Motion by Maegan Ballou, seconded by Chelsey Perry to approve the minutes of October 13, 2021. A correction was made to the spelling of Tim Woodward. Motion voted on and approved with the correction.

D. Communications

1. Sukie Knight: displeasure with someone using right of way to Checkerberry. The Board also heard from David Tansey, the individual involved. Additional signage will be put up.

2. McKenzie Ball: letter in reference to inappropriate language on the school grounds.

3. Connor Mazzarella: letter in regard to the mask mandate.

4. Niauna Roberts: letter in regard to health information at Oxbow and incorporating more information from and about Planned Parenthood.

E. Contracts: none

F. Committee Reports:

1. Strategic Planning: (Carol Cottrell): had its first presentation yesterday at NES on the results of the survey. The Staff asked good questions and understood the purpose of the strategic plan and the survey

2. Budget/Finance: (Tim Ross): discussed change in how special education is funded. Everyone in the state is dealing with this. They reviewed end of year financial numbers and discussed how gifts, etc. will be handled. The Board will appoint another member from Newbury to sit on that committee.

3. Community and School Engagement: Angela Colbeth: met with Jean Wheeler. They tossed around a lot of ideas and talked about creating a community of care. They talked about having a student forum and will be meeting again tomorrow. They discussed doing shout-outs from each department and about

needing a PR person. There is talk of combining Booster Club, Parent/Teachers, and the Strategic Planning Committee

III. Public Comment

IV. Teen Center

A. New Director Riley Harness shared information on the Teen Center. They have an open house coming up on November 3rd. A. Colbeth would like to see it flourish. It is open for students from Grades 7-12 from surrounding communities. Inclusiveness is very important. They are cooking on Friday nights, will be having a magic club, and are looking for more teens to be involved and to let them know what things can help them. They are trying to get the word out that it's a safe place to be.

V. Principals' Report

A. Marla Ianello: A great photo of their hike up Tucker Mountain. Screen-free play was happening. The newsletter included an article about Corrina Magalhaes. A literacy grant was received. 4th Grade will be fundraising to benefit a local animal shelter. Angeline Alley came in a couple Tuesdays to help with surveillance testing. A custodian left, and interviews are happening. It is a frustration by teachers and parents when students can't be in school, but they are understanding that everyone is doing their best.

B. Loretta Cruz: Have an art teacher, who hopefully will start just after Thanksgiving. Thanks to BMU for letting Roxanna Zampieri stay to teach both art and music. They will be having a land blessing by a member of the Abnaki tribe on November 16th and an opening of the Checkerberry land. There is a need for more wood chips on the playground, and they are searching for more at an economical price. In October, Ali Thomas from Fish and Wildlife gave PD on Project Wild. One Bradford teacher joined them. Staff members are looking forward to a week-long training this summer. Ms. Cruz attended the Rowland Foundation training. NES will be having a special Veteran's program and meal. On Nov. 17th at 9:00, the snowplow will be arriving, since NES was one of the schools winning the "Name the Plow" contest.

C. River Bend: Brian Emerson: If you want some nice pictures to see what is happening, go to the River Bend website, which is updated weekly. River Bend was working with BMU and NES afterschool program. They brought up the sawmill and sawed out some lumber, which will be used for building projects. The Scholarships Corporation met. RBCTC plans on doing an outdoor celebration for end of marking period successes. D. Corti: asked if they could use heavy equipment to make an obstacle course for the cross country team. B. Emerson said yes and also offered to help out with wood chips at NES. D. Oxbow: will be having a Halloween celebration. Robin Wozny: On Nov. 11th there will be a Veterans' Day Assembly. On Nov. 11th there will also P/T conferences via Zoom. PTO and Booster Club are looking for parents and community members to join. They have been meeting with student council on various topics. Report cards are coming out the week of Nov. 8th. The Boys' soccer team lost yesterday, and the girls lost 2-1 today. The Cross-country team goes to State's on Saturday. The Football team also plays on Saturday. After Thanksgiving, basketball starts. College and career counseling is going on. Oxbow has started their recruiting season and is going to Chelsea, Tunbridge, Waits River, Piermont, and Barnet, recruiting students for next year.

VI. COVID-19 update: (Emilie Knisley): The SU is in the initial stages of talking about “test to stay” program vs., or in company with, other programs, such as rapid testing. Cases are up in the region. We are awaiting approval of the pediatric vaccine. The SU is making arrangements with Little Rivers for vaccine clinics for ages 5-12. We are seeing 3-4 schools with cases in a day. It is a struggle to keep up the proactive communication. Tim Ross: How is this affecting staff morale? E. Knisley: There is an undercurrent of anxiety and a lot of stress. This is the third school year, and it’s tiring. How long can you stand a surge capacity? People are under a lot of pressure and stress.

VII. Discussion

A. Wetland property in Bradford. E. Knisley: Liability insurance would be handled under a big umbrella policy. A bigger consideration is long-term care and maintenance and how to share burden of those costs long-term. There are conservation groups that maybe we could partner with. We will have our attorney look to see if there are any restrictions on the gift or the deed.

1. C. Cottrell: Are there restrictions about protected species and the wetlands?

D. Corti: She understands they have spoken with a consultant. C. Cottrell: We need to check on Act 250. She would be willing to get it sold.

2. M. Ballou: What’s the purpose? Will the school use it? Will it bring people to the community? D. Corti: We need to talk to Bradford and Newbury to ask if they might use it. People interested in putting trails together are hoping the entire system will bring in people to the community, in particular the piece along the river.

3. Tim Ross: thinks the Town would like the property to be given as a gift. He thinks the idea is fantastic but worries about the upkeep. D. Corti: should we see what the process would be to sell it? Get property assessed, get voters’ approval.

4. Marcy Carver: The boardwalk idea is in the Parks and Rec committee and has not risen to Select Board level. Would the Board consider leasing it to the Town for a nominal amount instead of contemplating selling it? Any town forest is open to anyone. D. Corti: should we confirm the process for selling the land? E. Knisley: Should we wait and see where it goes with the Select Board? D. Corti: will get back to Michael Wright and see where he is in the process.

B. Newbury Property: Important for there to be signage with clear information as to expectations (ex: follow leash laws, clean up after yourselves, etc.) E. Knisley: We will use a sign-maker we have used before for outdoor signage. The SU applied for a portion of ESSER 2 funds to be used for outdoor classrooms at Checkerberry and to use for building a structure. We couldn’t bring large equipment up there. Once we have approval of that money from State and Federal, we can begin to talk about a possible structure. We also applied for a portion of ESSER money to upgrade technology equipment (cameras, speakers, microphones).

VIII. Action Items

A. Annual Report

1. Motion by Tim Ross, seconded by Angela Colbeth to authorize Supt. Knisley to reach out to the new company to prepare the annual report. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

IX. Policy Approval

A. Motion by Angela Colbeth, seconded by Chelsey Perry to Update Policy A20: Board Meetings, Agenda Prep and Distribution. This will be updated with the Board meeting schedule as the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of every month at 5:30 PM. The designated spaces where the agenda will be posted are the Bradford and Newbury post offices. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

X. Other Business

A. Monique Priestly sent information on a grant that is available to towns for enrichment activities and outdoor activities. D. Corti will forward this to the OUUSD Board and hopes that it can be brought to both Select Boards

B. VSBA Annual Meeting will be held remotely next Thursday, November 4th.

Nomination by Maegan Ballou, seconded by Chelsey Perry to elect Angela Colbeth to serve as voting representative from OUUSD. Nomination voted on and approved unanimously

C. Motion by Maegan Ballou, seconded by Tim Ross to charge D. Corti, A. Ballou, and a representative from Oxbow to respond to the letters from the Oxbow students. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

D. The Board set December 8th at 5:30 (unless Monique Priestly has another idea) as the date for presenting the Strategic Plan to the OUUSD Board and community. It was suggested to meet in the Oxbow auditorium. The Strategic Plan committee will come up with the agenda. Following the presentation, the OUUSD Board will meet.

A. There was suggestion that the November 24th meeting be cancelled. If a second meeting is needed in November, that will be determined.

XI. Public Comment—None

XII. Executive Session

A. Motion by Angela Colbeth, seconded by Maegan Ballou to move into Executive Session at 6:55 PM pursuant to VSA 313. (a) (7) to discuss a student issue, after making a specific finding that premature general knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage. Motion voted on and approved unanimously. Accompanying the Board were the Supt. and Principal.

B. Board exited Executive Session at 7:01 PM. No action taken

XIII. The Meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM

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.