

RYE SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Administrative Unit 50
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To be approved by the Rye School Board at the December 16, 2020 meeting.

RYE SCHOOL DISTRICT
RYE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

A special meeting of the School Board of the Rye School District was held through Google Meets on Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

School Board Members: Margaret Honda, Jeanne Moynahan,
Matt Curtin, Scott Marion, Heather Reed

Administrators: Salvatore Petralia, Superintendent
Kelli Killen, Assistant Superintendent
Brian Grattan, Director of Technology
Mindy Ryan, Business Administrator
Sarah Reinhardt, Special Education Director
Maria Soucy, Principal, RJH
Suzanne Lull, Principal, RES

Visitors: Andrea Papoutsy, Anne Gilbert, Julie Struble, Kim Piela, Kristy H.,
Elizabeth Figliulo, Jacqueline DeFreze, Laura Brown, Lori Arsenault,
Meagan Facella, Stephanie Tabit, Laura Flynn, Jeff Conway

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Honda called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

Ms. Honda announced that due to the State of Emergency, declared by the Governor as a result of COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with Emergency Order 12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body was authorized to meet electronically. Ms. Honda noted that there was no physical location for the public to attend, however there was public access provided through telephone and video electronic means.

Ms. Honda noted that this Board meeting was being conducted on Google Meets with a phone in option.

Ms. Honda explained that the information was provided to the public through the website and added that there was a mechanism for the public to communicate issues accessing the meeting through e-mailing Kelli Killen. Ms. Honda said in the event the public was unable to attend the meeting would adjourn and rescheduled.

Ms. Honda explained that votes would be taken through roll call voting. Ms. Honda took a roll call attendance of the Board, including whether others were present in the room with the Board Member.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Moynahan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Curtin, to approve the public minutes of October 21, 2020, October 27, 2020 and November 2, 2020. Discussion. Roll Call Vote: 4-0

Ms. Honda made a motion to approve the non-public minutes of November 2, 2020. Discussion. Roll Call Vote: 4-0

Communications

Mr. Petralia said he received a letter of resignation from Ann Hoyt, Technology Coordinator, and asked the Board to consider a motion to accept the resignation with regret, under Personnel.

Mr. Petralia said he was withdrawing a second communication from a Rye Parent, which was in the Board packet, as the issue had been resolved.

Superintendent Report

Mr. Petralia acknowledged that there was a positive COVID Case at Rye Junior High and he recognized the work of Ms. Soucy and staff during the incident. Mr. Petralia noted that all protocols were followed and per DHHS there was no threat of exposure or need for additional quarantining.

Mr. Petralia explained that there would be some changes to the Re-Entry Plan later in the meeting, due to recommendations and updates. Mr. Petralia noted that the State Agencies were inundated with contract tracing

Mr. Petralia noted the decision for the District to not participate in the State testing. Mr. Petralia said he had not received any communications from the Commissioner regarding the choice and he noted that the Rye District was not alone in that decision.

Mr. Petralia explained that there was an update from the Commissioner in the packet regarding contact tracing and added that its prioritized tracing for ages 18 and under.

Mr. Petralia said they would need to discuss the new guidelines allowing a 7-day quarantine under certain circumstances.

Mr. Petralia mentioned that the Rye District received \$109,600.00 as part of the Governor's supplemental fund and he said Ms. Ryan would be reviewing how to allocate the funds.

Mr. Petralia noted the Governor's support of suspending Youth Hockey.

Mr. Petralia mentioned the upcoming Parent University presentation scheduled for Thursday, December 3, 2020, called *Uncharted Territory: The Challenge and Hope of Parenting in the Age of Covid* regarding parenting during COVID to be presented by Ms. Daniels, an expert on Social and Emotional Learning.

Mr. Petralia reviewed upcoming meetings including: The Joint Board Meeting at 6:30 p.m., Secondary Advisory on December 1, 2020, the next Board Meeting on December 16, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. and Joint Board on December 16, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

Assistant Superintendent Report

Ms. Killen explained that there were many informational items in her report.

Ms. Killen highlighted the Suicide Prevention Plan and training. Ms. Killen said that the guidance counselors across the SAU helped to develop the plan. Ms. Killen explained that a signs of suicide program was needed, and an addition was needed for the Crisis Safety Plan regarding deaths due to suicide.

Ms. Killen noted 2 hours of training was required. Ms. Killen said the staff reviewed the plan, reviewed the risk factors and how to make referrals. She suggested the Board watch the video link she provided and participant manual. She explained that they requested that the staff complete a quiz after the training.

Dr. Marion mentioned that iReady results should be presented to the Board. Ms. Killen said the Principals were reviewing the results and would provide information in December.

Financial Report

Ms. Ryan explained that the October ending balance was \$1,951,475, a 13 % remaining fund balance and she noted that there was a transfer request needing approval.

Ms. Ryan said that the \$109,000 funds would appear as revenue and could cover expenses incurred between March and December. Ms. Ryan explained that there were plenty of expenses where these funds could be applied, including additional staff cost and sanitizing equipment.

Ms. Honda asked the Board to consider the transfer to cover asbestos abatement. The Board reviewed the details and reasons for the work.

Dr. Marion made a motion, seconded by Mr. Curtin, to approve a transfer of \$58,000 for asbestos abatement. Discussion. Roll Call Vote: 5-0

Principals Reports

Ms. Soucy explained that the first quarter ended, and the teachers had remote parent conferences.

Ms. Soucy said the Unified Arts shifted into the second quarter and noted that the focus on one UA at a time seemed to be working well.

Ms. Soucy said she was working with Paula Tsetilas to create a new Wedgewood committee.

Ms. Soucy noted that they had been adding more virtual clubs and reviewed some of the clubs and the staff leading activities.

Ms. Honda asked if there would be a re-entry discussion and Mr. Petralia said it would be addressed later.

Ms. Lull noted that they had the suicide training and Google Suite training.

Ms. Lull said she was working with the PTA to provide parent training on Google classroom on December 8, 2020.

Ms. Lull mentioned that Mr. Grattan had helped to set up workstations so teachers could log into stations in the classrooms. Ms. Lull said they were addressing other technology issues that they discovered.

Ms. Lull explained that there was a new Principal Advisory Committee and announced the parent and staff members on the committee.

Ms. Lull mentioned that she and Ms. Reed visited Dondero's outdoor classroom and woods to see how the school developed and used the space.

Ms. Lull welcomed Ms. Wheeler back.

Mr. Petralia recognized the Rye Educational Foundation for awarding several grants to staff at both schools. Mr. Petralia thanked REF for their support and briefly noted some of the projects.

Dr. Marion asked about the Math Program. Ms. Lull expressed liking how the students were discussing strategies for solving problems which she liked hearing.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Solar Panel Update

Dr. Marion said the Attorney suggested some changes to the contract. Dr. Marion asked the Board if he could forward the redline changes and the Board supported that action.

Technology Integrator

Ms. Honda explained that during the Budget Planning they decided to revise/create a job description.

Mr. Petralia explained that Mr. Grattan reviewed the current job description and needs with each Principal and created job descriptions for the Board to review.

Mr. Grattan voiced that he reviewed the needs closely with the Principals to ensure the level of support and addressed their needs.

Mr. Grattan asked if the Board had questions regarding the suggested job descriptions.

Mr. Curtin asked if Google Certification or Google Platform needed to be specifically noted on the description.

Mr. Grattan explained that he did not add Google specifically to keep the description more general and since platforms could change.

Dr. Marion noted that it would be good to add platform knowledge to the description, even if it was a general description. Mr. Grattan explained that he could add something general regarding platforms.

Dr. Marion mentioned the importance of being clear on the primary responsibility.

Mr. Grattan noted the need to create a prioritized outline of responsibilities.

Ms. Reed asked if this person would have teaching responsibilities. Ms. Lull explained that they would assist and instruct teachers at times but not students.

Ms. Honda asked if there was general support for the changes to the job descriptions.

Mr. Curtin voiced concern over how many people the technology position would report to and suggested increase the position hours.

Mr. Grattan reviewed the reporting hierarchy for the technology coordinator and agreed that additional hours in the summer would be helpful but deferred to the principals.

Ms. Reed asked if there was discussion about this position providing virtual instruction. Ms. Lull explained it was a possibility for them to do that.

Ms. Lull said some hours were added to the position.

Ms. Reed asked if there would be some overlap of responsibilities between the Technology Coordinator and Integrator positions. Mr. Grattan said there would be some since the goal would be not to overwhelm either.

Dr. Marion made a motion, seconded by Ms. Moynahan to approve the revised job descriptions for Technology Coordinator and Integrator Positions. Discussion. Roll Call Vote 5-0

Public Comment

Ms. Honda read Caroline Kepka's comments regarding remote learning during the holiday season.

Ms. Honda reviewed Aaron Scogin's suggested of going remote for at least a week after the holiday break.

Ms. Honda read Amy's suggestion of going into two weeks of remote learning after the Christmas break for health, safety and to allow time to control and minimize risk.

Ms. Honda reviewed the concerns of Dr. Elwood regarding the number of families traveling over the holidays as well as the college students returning. Dr. Elwood advocated going into remote from Thanksgiving to mid-January.

Ms. Honda read Ann Gilbert's suggestion to instruct remotely from January 4-19, 2021 to allow time for all to quarantine.

Ms. Honda reviewed Ms. Fleming's concern over hearing students discuss traveling out of state and the safety risk that may cause for students and staff.

Ms. Honda said Ms. Alison Dunn thanked the Board for their work, mentioned that in person learning was important for all, but expressed concerns over the upcoming holidays, given the rise in cases and the potential for travel over the break. Ms. Dunn asked the Board to consider a brief remote period to give families time to see if anyone develops symptoms.

Ms. Honda explained that Ms. Fryburg suggested a short period of remote learning as the infection risk was heightened after holiday gatherings.

Ms. Honda said Ms. Brown and Ms. Adams voiced concerns about being in the building after the holiday breaks based on all the student discussions regarding traveling.

Ms. Honda read Ms. Eve's question regarding creating a remote buffer following breaks to reduce exposure.

Dr. Marion asked if all the comments came from Rye Junior High. Ms. Honda confirmed that they had.

Dr. Marion expressed that the Board did not need to decide at this meeting. Dr. Marion voiced disappointment in hearing that so many were potentially traveling. Dr. Marion voiced that they did not have to follow the same protocol for both schools.

Ms. Honda explained that they were not prepared to discuss or determine options, but discussion needed to occur quickly. Ms. Honda noted that they did not have time to consider a post-Thanksgiving remote option but could consider other options including a remote period prior to and/or after the Holiday Break.

Mr. Petralia mentioned that this came up as a topic during a staff meeting at Rye Junior High. Mr. Petralia noted that the Greenland Board voted to have a remote learning period in January 4-16, 2021 following the Holiday Break.

Ms. Honda explained that she wanted to hear the opinions of the Board, staff and parents.

Ms. Moynahan reviewed personal experience with other Districts choosing to close from Thanksgiving through the holidays. Ms. Moynahan expressed the desire to keep the students in school, if possible, but maintaining health and safety.

Ms. Honda asked for some recommendations based on concrete information. Dr. Marion said that it should be evidence-based recommendations.

Ms. Honda said the Board has heard the staff's concerns and would discuss more.

Mr. Petralia suggested reviewing the metrics in the community and base the choices on those factors. Mr. Petralia expressed that if the metrics remained as they were that they should continue with in person learning.

Mr. Petralia said he was not in support of a quarantine/remote post-Thanksgiving but supported further discussion regarding a remote period in January.

Ms. Honda suggested calling a Special Meeting to review further.

Mr. Petralia explained that additional work might be needed on the Budget so this topic could be reviewed during any additional budget meetings.

Mr. Curtin explained that the Board and school communications had been clear regarding recommendations and expectations regarding travel and remote learning if you were traveling.

Ms. Reed expressed that the Board made it clear that those wishing to travel should select remote learning for this quarter.

Ms. Honda echoed Ms. Reed and explained that they relied on the public to follow the honor system regarding traveling and quarantining.

Dr. Marion made a motion, seconded by Mr. Curtin, to suspend the School Board Meeting in order to allow for the SAU 50 Joint School Board meeting to begin. The Rye School Board meeting will resume after the SAU 50 Joint Board meeting. Discussion. Roll Call Vote 5-0

Wedgewood Fund

Ms. Reed asked about the specifics regarding the Wedgewood Fund.

Ms. Moynahan reviewed the fund, and it is use for any project relating to Wedgewood.

Ms. Honda and Ms. Moynahan discussed the approval process for using the funds.

Ms. Honda explained that the five-year plan for Wedgewood was ignored for a few years and needed to be revitalized.

Ms. Moynahan proposed tabling the policies and Ms. Honda agreed.

Ms. Honda suggested tabling committee reports as well.

Personnel

Mr. Petralia asked the Board to accept the resignation of Ann Hoyt with regret.

Ms. Moynahan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Curtin, to accept with regret the resignation of Ms. Ann Hoyt, Technology Coordinator, effective November 30, 2020. Discussion. Roll Call Vote. 5-0

Ms. Honda thanked Ms. Hoyt for all her work over the years.

State Testing

Dr. Marion said that he received a call from the Commissioner regarding the District not participating in the state assessments. Dr. Marion explained that the Commissioner said he had the authority to require the schools to test. Dr. Marion expressed that the Commissioner would most likely pursue further action regarding the Board's decision to not test.

Mr. Petralia noted that Exeter was not testing, and Oyster River gave parents the option to not test. Mr. Petralia supported the Board's decision to not test and voiced the reasons supporting that.

Ms. Moynahan asked what the penalty would be if they did not test. Dr. Marion and Mr. Petralia suggested waiting for the letter from the Commissioner.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Honda asked for additional public comment and there was none.

Budget

Ms. Ryan highlighted the budget increases for additional positions, Principal PD money, Technology and Special Education and reductions to contract services which resulted in an increase of \$219,364, which would be a .56% increase to the Budget.

Ms. Ryan noted that the tuition billing was in the packet and explained that the amount budgeted would remain as is.

Dr. Marion explained that the School Budget session with the Budget Committee would be 6:30 p.m. on December 8, 2020 and he suggested that any updates should be done before that meeting.

The Board added a meeting on Monday, November 30, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. to review the Budget.

Mr. Curtin clarified that e-mail communications did not go to those withdrawing from the SAU but did go to those still in the SAU attending Portsmouth High School. Ms. Honda confirmed.

Ms. Moynahan voiced frustration with not having enough time to review the packet before the Board meeting.

Manifests

Ms. Moynahan made a motion, seconded by Dr. Marion, to approve the Manifest of October 20, 2020 to November 4, 2020 for \$818,882.13. Discussion. Roll Call Vote: 5-0

Ms. Moynahan made a motion, seconded by Dr. Marion, to approve the Manifest of November 5, 2020 to November 17, 2020 for \$532,827.17. Discussion. Roll Call Vote: 5-0

Mr. Jeff Conway thanked the Board for their work. Mr. Conway asked about rumors that the schools were going into remote over the next week or two. Ms. Honda said no.

Ms. Flynn asked if there was the possibility of a remote session over the holidays and would there be another meeting planned to discuss a remote session.

Ms. Honda explained that during Public Comment, there had been several suggestions to go into some form of remote learning.

Ms. Flynn voiced that as this was not an agenda item the Public was not aware and able to hear the suggestions or make comment.

Dr. Marion explained that the suggestions came up during Public Comment and the Board had just scheduled a meeting to discuss the topic.

Ms. Honda said she had requested more information and the subject would be discussed on November 30, 2020.

Ms. Moynahan asked if the meeting would be at Rye Junior High or remotely.

Mr. Curtin explained that there was a link for public comment as well.

Ms. Struble said there were many comments regarding remote learning options but as it was not on the agenda the public did not have the opportunity to prepare comments.

Ms. Honda explained that the issue was not on the agenda and that was why a new meeting was scheduled to discuss.

Mr. Petralia reviewed the requirements for the Right to Know, which does allow the Board to add agenda items at the meeting.

Ms. Honda and Mr. Petralia discussed a survey regarding possible remote options. Ms. Honda explained that she wanted to know what the professionals recommended but cautioned having a survey since the decision should be based on the best educational options and science.

Dr. Marion asked if they could specifically survey people regarding any plans to travel or visit with family from other states.

Ms. Honda felt that could be too personal.

Mr. Curtin said they should follow the protocols they set.

The Board decided to forgo a survey but publicize the November 30, 2020 meeting as a time to discuss Remote Learning

NON-PUBLIC SESSION – None

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Curtin made a motion, seconded by Dr. Marion, to adjourn. Discussion. Roll Call Vote: 5-0

*Respectfully Submitted,
Samantha Panek
November 30, 2020*

Matt Curtin, Secretary

Date

DRAFT