

**Lyme School District
School Board Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 26, 2021
At Lyme School and Electronic Meeting Via Zoom**

approved as is, 2/23/21

Board Members Present: Vince Berk, Yolanda Bujarski, Hayes Greenway, Matthew Hayden. Jonathan Voegele, Phil Barta, Barbara Wilson. District Administrator Jeff Valence, Coordinator of Business Services Janet Mitchell, Academic Director Elise Foxall, Special Education Director Miki McGee; Public including Phil McCormack and 21 other public attendees via Zoom. Recorded by Roger Lohr

1. Call to Order

Chair Jonathan Voegele called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM and welcomed the attendees, with the Board in person and the public via Zoom.

2. Public Comment

Chair Jonathan Voegele opened public comment and there were no comments so public comment was closed by Chair Voegele at 7:12 PM. An item added to the agenda was an update about the requested enrollment at Lyme School.

Two pre-hearings have been held with the state board and the hearing is scheduled for February. A determination is expected within 45 days after the hearing. The district is not using counsel and Chair Voegele received a notice to attend the hearing. The Board had sent a letter to the state board regarding the matter and the issue details will be discussed by the Board in nonpublic session.

3. Reports

3A. Finance Update

Coordinator of Business Services Janet Mitchell stated that the revenue and expenditure reports had been sent to the Board. There are some additional grants that had been received and unanticipated revenue is now at \$94,987.70. Considering the deficit, open purchase orders, prefunded expenses, and transfers, a surplus in the amount of \$123,674 is currently projected. The contract cleaner (used for disinfection) amount is uncertain and two \$10,000 invoiced increments have been paid. It is expected that the frequency of the disinfection efforts will decline.

4. Business Requiring Action or Discussion

4A. Update on Budget Meeting

Superintendent Valence explained state Executive Order #83 regarding the scheduling of the town and school district election and business meetings, which gives the decision about the school district election and meeting to the school board. There have been discussions with the town regarding collaboration on those dates.

A motion was made (Greenway, Berk) to authorize the superintendent to finalize the date of the election and business meeting portion of the School District meeting on behalf of the school board in coordination with the select board and Town Moderators.

Discussion: Currently the discussion has been for the election to be held on March 9 date and the meeting date on May 15. It was suggested that the dates could be closer to accommodate the election

of the new board members. The Board discussed various options for the participation at the meeting of the existing Board and the new Board members. The school district will not want the meeting later in the spring (June) because it impacts contracts and hiring. Holding the meeting and election on a Saturday in the Lyme School gymnasium was also an idea supported by the School Board to avoid interfering with a school day.

4B. Lyme Board Governance Consultant Report

The report regarding the Lyme School Board governance was presented and it will be attached to the meeting minutes. Twelve hours of interviews were conducted by McCormack with Board members and administrators. The key findings included impacts of the district operation related to roles, confidence and trust. There is a lack of specific goals or an appeal process for administrators. Key aspects of the challenges to the Lyme School District include the work load and expectations of the administrative and Board positions. Job descriptions and expectations should be delineated and autonomy of positions would help to decrease the workload. A new Board member orientation would be very useful. It was suggested that the current dynamic should not continue and that goals should be developed that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely. Another recommendation was a mentor program or peer group for the administration. The Board discussed the stress related to the pandemic this year and about ways to develop trust.

4C. NHSBA Assembly

Board member Bujarski reported on the NHSBA Delegate Assembly that she attended and the resolutions that were discussed and passed.

5. Minutes Approval

The agenda incorrectly had that there was a document for a January 12 nonpublic meeting, which had not been held.

A motion was made and seconded (Wilson, Berk) to approve the Public meeting minutes of January 12, 2021 as submitted and amended.

Discussion: that change was in the numbering for the document outline in item 4.

VOTE: The motion was unanimously approved with Barta, Berk, Bujarski, Greenway, Hayden, Voegelé and Wilson in favor.

A motion was made and seconded (Wilson, Berk) to approve the Public meeting minutes of January 19, 2021 as submitted and amended.

Discussion: The document date in the heading should replace January 12 with January 19.

VOTE: The motion was unanimously approved with Barta, Berk, Bujarski, Greenway, Hayden, Voegelé and Wilson in favor.

6. Other Business

A motion to authorize the Executive Committee to negotiate decisions regarding COVID-related employee absences was made and seconded (Wilson, Berk).

Discussion: The issue was explained.

VOTE: The motion was unanimously approved with Barta, Berk, Bujarski, Greenway, Hayden, Voegelé and Wilson in favor.

7. Non Public Session

A motion was made and seconded (Berk, Bujarski) to enter nonpublic session in accordance with NH RSA 91-A:3 II (c) to address employee matters. The motion was unanimously approved with Barta, Berk, Bujarski, Greenway, Hayden, Voegelé and Wilson in favor.
The roll call was conducted and the Board entered nonpublic session at 9:25 PM.

A motion to reconvene the public meeting was made and seconded (Hayden, Berk). The motion was unanimously approved with Barta, Berk, Bujarski, Greenway, Hayden, Voegelé and Wilson in favor.
The public session reconvened at 11:22 PM.

8. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded (Hayden, Berk). VOTE: The motion was unanimously approved with Barta, Berk, Bujarski, Greenway, Hayden, Voegelé and Wilson in favor.
The meeting was adjourned at 11:22 PM.

Lyme School District
Presentation to the Lyme School Board
Review of the Organizational Structure – Summary of Findings and Recommendations

January 26, 2021

Overview: The administrative model or organizational structure, i.e., District Administrator, that is currently in place can be inherently difficult to maintain and to effectively and efficiently work within. I believe this is one reason why there are relatively few administrative models like this in the state.

Variables that can and, to some extent based on my observations, do impact the efficiency and effectiveness of the district operations include:

- the district administrator's work load;
- the different role expectations of the district administrator can cause conflict;
- the nature of the work can be hindered due to a mismatch of skills (e.g., administrative operations vs. educational leadership);
- the level of confidence and trust held between those working within the system;
- the level of school board involvement in the operational matters of the district;
- the lack of an administrative appeal process; and
- the working relationship between the district administrator and the school board.

Based on my observations I believe there is, at the very least, an unproductive, somewhat unhealthy and at times dysfunctional dynamic in place. I also believe a lack of confidence and trust between the school board and district administrators has contributed to a level of dysfunctionality as witnessed by:

- considerable tension and stress among and between the administrative team and school board;
- perceived voids or gaps in tasks needed to be completed;
- school board involvement which results in micromanagement of school operations;
- inordinately high demands on board members time;

- exceptionally long board meetings;
- a decision making process that sometimes results in delays in the resolution of issues and inhibits continuous improvement;
- considerably high board member turnover;
- loss of institutional history.

I do not believe that the current dynamic can continue if you are committed to continuous improvement. Therefore, I suggest that you consider the following:

- develop and communicate goals that address areas of need. These should be (S.M.A.R.T) goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely;
- develop and implement an evaluation instrument/process for district administrators. This should be developed collaboratively and in a timely fashion;
- review and, if necessary, revise job descriptions;
- review school board member and administrative roles and responsibilities;
- establish an appropriate level of autonomy among administrative team members;
- implement a "mentor" program for the district administrator; and
- develop a positive and productive level of confidence and trust between the district administrators and school board.

I realize that my observations and suggestions are focused on the structure and/or dynamic currently in place as opposed to a focus on other organizational/administrative models or structures. I did so because, as explained to me, this is what the Lyme community has supported in the past.

I also realize that all of these suggestions will require considerable time and energy. I believe that all of you involved are committed to the welfare of Lyme's youth and the quality of educational opportunities available to them and therefore encourage you to continue your work towards continuous improvement.

I sincerely wish you well as you work through your issues.