

REVISED

RSU 56 Board of Directors Minutes

Amended Board Agenda

August 24, 2021- 6:30pm

(This meeting will be held at Dirigo High School. The board meeting will also be available via zoom and livestream on the RSU 56 Facebook page.)

School Board Members Present: Barbara Chow, Natalie Sneller, Angela Varnum, Carl Lueders, Tim Kelly, Angela Cushman, Don Whittemore, Larry Whittington, Brad Dyer, Bruce Ross (6:35pm)

School Board Members Absent: Konstantin Aslanidi

Staff Attending: Libby Irish, Brianne Johnston, Kaitlyn Woods, Andrea Palmer, Charlie Swan, Jason Long, Patricia Fletcher, Gena Cloutier, Nick Karavas, Pam Doyen, Cathy Arsenault, Brian Keene, Mary Dailey, Heidi Broomhall, Lisa Sanborn, Michele Araujo, Aaron Arsenault, Thomas Kelly, Brandy Bordeau, Judy Horne, Paul Kedzierski, Jodi Minion, Peggy Morse, Jay Nicholson, Nathan Schultz, Rebecca Fletcher, Rebecca Richards, Heather Gray, Sarah Johnson, Kelly Porter, Brian Berry, Nicole Witas, Beth Edwards, Gretchen Curtis, Erin Wainwright, Tasha Chapman, Dianna Dority, Stacey Gilbert, Laney Randolph, Amanda Blood

Also Attending (in-person & on line): Justeen LaPointe, Marianne Hutchinson, Crystal Smith, Sara Thurston, Heather Bishop, Alan Dolloff, Adam Hanna, Tom Leclerc, Amy Hodgson, Will Shurtleff, Michael Herrera, Ann Gauvin, Brianna Palmer, Heather Bradeen, Brenna Parent, Ambyr St. Germain, Melissa Littlehale, Matt Desroches, Bethany Meehan-Poulin, Trisha Benson, Abby Waleik, Mary Kaubris, Angela Woods, Shira Waite, Christine Bouchard, Renee Spear, Tanya McKenna, Paige Woods, Joe Brissette, Miranda Shurtleff, Mark Tripp, Reinette Chenard, Ryan Palmer, Angel Clifford, Jamie Luczynski, Chris Thibeault, Sylvia H., Tanya Perreault, Michelle Blouin, Tina Courtway, Michelle Larrivee, Travis Ryerson, Lynda Hebert, Tracy Wilson, Courtney Flagg, Shay Sayer, Arthur Clifford, Samantha Yahn, Cody St. Germain, Amanda Richard, Katie Nolette, Tanya McPherson, a few others online

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Barbara Chow, Board Chair, opened the meeting at 6:31pm with the Pledge of Allegiance. Audience introductions were made and everyone on zoom and Facebook live were welcomed.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

1. Motion to adjust the agenda to include:

Introduce new hires at start of New Business (verbally asked to introduce before Public Comments)

Executive session will occur at 7pm

Motion: N. Sneller

Seconded: Larry Whittington

Passed

CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

1. Minutes of the June 22, 2021 Board Meeting

Motion: N. Sneller

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Passed

2. Minutes of the July 13, 2021 Special Board Meeting

Motion: L. Whittington

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Abstain: B. Dyer

Passed

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Many parents spoke during the public comments both in person and on-line. The biggest consensus seemed to be to allow parents to make the decisions about children wearing masks at school.

There was much discussion on this topic

COMMUNICATIONS

1. Notice from Maine Child Nutrition Program indicating that the nutrition program at TWKDMS will be reviewed this year. That is like an audit for the nutrition program
2. MDOE has provided an updated SOP for COVID 19 cases. It was shared with the school board.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Approval of job description for School Nurse

Motion: N. Sneller

Seconded: D. Whittemore

There had not been a clearly defined job description for a school nurse. The school nurses did a lot of the leg work in developing this job description. There was a question regarding needing three years experience as a professional registered nurse. Pam replied that through the Maine Department of Education, they have to have at least 3 years of experience as a registered nurse.

Passed Unanimously

2. Approval of job description for Health Office Aide

Motion: A. Cushman

Seconded: T. Kelly

A position that RSU 56 did not have prior to COVID. It was a position created in light of a lot of the challenges that faced our two school nurses trying to handle all of the reporting and

everything that was required over the last year and a half. To have this position we needed to have a job description that clearly outlined job qualifications, responsibilities, etc. This was developed using a consultation from our existing school nurses as well as our building administrators. Personnel committee reviewed it and bringing it to the full board for approval. Passed Unanimously

3. Elect a delegate for MSBA

This is virtual this year. There was some discussion about what the MSBA meeting is about. Barbara commented that it is good to have a representative there. They do listen to the smaller schools. No one from the Board agreed to go to the meeting. There was no motion as no one offered to go. If anyone from the Board changes their mind let us know.

4. Motion to move that the School Board/Committee authorize the Superintendent to purchase Remote Academy Program services from the Western Maine Regional Service Center for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 on such terms as the Superintendent deems appropriate.

Motion: N. Sneller

Seconded: A. Cushman

For any students that go to Remote Academy RSU 56 still gets the state subsidy for them. It won't cost us any more for students to go to Remote Academy. Sue Pratt out of Andover schools is the Superintendent of the Remote Academy. The finances will be done through an outside accounting firm. The state standards will be taught through Remote Academy. They are still our students so they can come to Dirigo to do co and extra curricular.

1 Opposed

Passed

5. Additional state subsidy update (Pam Doyen)

There was additional money put into the ED279 from the state. An additional \$287,637.34 will be added. Per the warrant article #21 voted by towns at budget meeting on May 11, 2021:

50% to be used to decrease local cost share expectation: \$143,818.66

25% to be transferred to the Capital Reserve Fund: \$71,909.34

25% to increase expenditures for school purposes in cost center categories approved by the School Board: \$71,909.34

Pam is bringing forward how to spend the additional expenditures for school purposes. She went through the spreadsheet of the expenses.

There was some discussion regarding the math teacher with the extra experience and the extra expense. Very fortunate to have someone so qualified. Not that it would have made a difference in our decision for the math teacher, however it would have been good to know the extra expense prior.

There was then some discussion around the cafe tables for DES.

6. Motion to authorize spending of the 25% to be used in the current budget year as outlined by the superintendent.

Motion: N. Sneller
Passed

Seconded: A. Cushman

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7. Motion to Approve Assessment Warrants and Installment Schedules (Mary Dailey)

Motion: B. Ross made the motion that the Warrant for Assessment of Tax and the Assessment Schedule and Notice of Installments for each member municipality prepared by the Treasurer for fiscal year **July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022** be approved and be issued in form presented to this meeting; and that the Treasurer be authorized and directed to deliver to each member municipality its Warrant for Assessment of Tax and its Assessment Schedule and Notice of Installments.

Note: For each member municipality, the School Board should sign the Assessment Warrant and the completed Assessment Schedule and Notice of Installments; the Treasurer should copy documents and deliver attested copies to respective municipalities. For each municipality, it may be advisable for the School Board to sign two copies of each document; keep one signed original for the Regional School Unit No 56 records and deliver one signed original to the municipality.

Whittemore

This

Assessment Warrants and Installment Schedules is something that the lawyers sent to RSU 56 that was previously missing. This is a legal document that has to go to the towns.

8. Bus Garage lease update (Pam Doyen)

Pam was invited to go to the Dixfield Select Board meeting to discuss the increase from the town for the bus garage lease. Pam went to the meeting in August and was able to discuss the substantial increase. She, Barbara and Bruce will be on the agenda for the next Select board meeting. The cost was previously \$16,000 and was increased to \$24,000. This was given to the district after the budget was finalized.

OLD BUSINESS

_____The Collaborative Team met to review MDOE/CDC guidance and to consider recommendations for the RSU 56 Return to Classroom Instruction Framework. The goal of the Framework is to get students back to in-person learning and to keep students in in-person learning as much as possible. Student safety and learning time is critical. As a microcosm of the larger community/society, we had people on the team who represented the wide spread of thoughts/ideas about masking vs. not masking. I commend the Collaborative Team as they remained absolutely respectful and civil towards each other as opinions were shared. The team ended up with three options: 1. Follow CDC guidance (“strongly recommended”) 2. Universal masking PreK-12 and 3. Universal masking PreK-12 (when students are present) using the county metrics of masking when substantial or high transmission rates and “strongly recommended” when low or moderate rates of transmission are noted in Oxford county. The Collaborate Team eventually voted on the three options. There were people who voted for each option so it was not a unanimous decision; however, the majority of the group voted for option 3, PreK-12 universal masking using county metrics. That is the recommendation being brought forward by the Collaborate Team for the board to consider. The decision was based on the quarantine requirements outlined in the SOP. From the updated SOP:

A Guideline to Quarantine Exceptions

Close Contacts who meet the following exceptions experience modified quarantine:	Community Quarantine	Classroom Quarantine	Quarantine from school-related sports, buses, and activities	School notification
Exception 1: Vaccination complete	No	No	No	Letter
Exception 2: Within 90 days of a positive molecular or antigen test	No	No	No	Letter
Exception 3: Pooled testing participant	Yes	No	No	Letter
Exception 4: School enforces masking & distancing policy				
Students	Yes	No	Yes	Letter + contact tracing
Staff	Yes	Yes	Yes	Letter + contact tracing
No exceptions or symptomatic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Letter + contact tracing

For students who are identified as a close contact or test positive, their corresponding absences will be handled as regular absences. Work can be accessed on SeeSaw or Google Classroom, the student (or parent) can reach out to teachers to ask for support. Teachers can opt to meet with students via zoom or support the student upon return to school to catch up.

Pam explained some of what this chart shows. Outlines that are being worked with. Quarantine time is 10 days.

There was much discussion regarding whether to universally mask or allow parents to decide about masks for their child.

The county will update the transmission numbers weekly.

1. Update and approve the Return to Classroom Instruction Framework

After changing the wording on the motion and how it should be stated a motion was made.

Motion: B. Dyer made a motion to follow CDC and MDOE guidance as stated in Option 1- to advise parents that masks are strongly recommended but not required. Seconded: N. Sneller

Yes: 549 No: 270 Names : Yes: B. Chow, N. Sneller, D. Whittemore, Carl Lueders, Angela

Cushman, Bruce Ross, Brad Dyer

Names: No: Angela Varnum, Tim Kelly, Larry Whittington

This should be revisited often. Pam said it has to be looked at every 6 months at a minimum and can be more frequent if the board would like. It was also discussed about having a parent on the Collaborate team.

B. Ross asked what neighboring schools are doing? Bruce would also like this revisited at every board meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

Superintendent's Report:

Our buildings are in good shape for opening day. I want to publicly acknowledge the work of our BGT staff as they worked hard to complete everything over the summer. Although the high school gym

will not be completed for opening day, it is looking excellent and the floor company has started work on replacing the floor.

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We had many staff members who worked summer school this year. We offered summer school for all three levels. Another huge thank you to those who drove buses, prepared breakfast/lunches and for those who provided instruction and oversight for academic work.

RSU 56 will offer a vaccination clinic in conjunction with Rumford Hospital on September 9 with the second shot on September 30. Interested high school students, middle school students, staff and/or community members will be eligible to participate if so desired. Being vaccinated reduces the need for quarantining if identified as a close contact.

Administrator's Report: Mary Dailey

The auditors did their usual preliminary work for the 2020-2021 audit in May. The audit work was in-person for the first time since the pandemic started. The rest of the audit is scheduled for the last week in October. As we get closer to the date, a decision will be made as to whether the auditors will be onsite or if I will be uploading documents to the firm's secure portal.

The district has applied for and been approved for more COVID funding since the last time I reported to you. The total available to RSU 56 under ESSERF 2 is \$1,195,246.34. The district also has \$2,685,176 available under ESSERF3. ESSERF3 is also known as ARP ESSER and is part of the American Recovery Plan. The applications are due at the end of September. That application has not been submitted yet.

As you know, a new district secretary was hired using some of the ESSER funds. Shiloh will be helping me with the paperwork for the different types of COVID money. She has been a huge help already in the month that she has been here.

With all the additional work with the COVID funds have generated, the accounting software conversion had to be put on the back burner. It still has to take place and I will be scheduling our conversion date for some time in 2023. The date has to be scheduled more than a year in advance as Tyler Technologies only has the capacity to perform a certain number of conversions each quarter.

New Hires:

Michael Herrera, DHS Math Teacher

Motion: A. Cushman

Seconded: N. Sneller

Passed Unanimously

Devan Melcher, DHS School Nurse (ESSER position) 3 year position

Motion: A. Cushman

Seconded: N. Sneller

Passed

Brianne Johnston, Special Education Teacher (DES)

Motion: N. Sneller

Seconded: A. Cushman

Passed

Sara Thurston, Classroom Teacher, DES (ESSER position) 3 yr position

Motion: L. Whittington

Seconded: N. Sneller

Passed

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Reporting of New Hires:

Christine Lothrop, 4 hour/day nutrition worker

Stipended and Coaching Position:

Dave Buck- Girls V Soccer, DHS

Richard "Butch" McKenna- DHS Golf

DHS Football Assistants- ~~Justin Lowe &~~ Alex Gilbert

Stacey Gilbert- TWKDMS Field Hockey

James Hamalainen- TWKDMS Soccer

Alan Tacheny- TWKDMS Cross Country

Bethany Meehan-Poulin, Co Advisor for 4-12 Drama Club

Resignations/Retirements:

Bethany Meehan-Poulin, Special Education teacher at DES

Ernie Cloutier, Bus Driver/Custodian

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Student Representative Report- N/A
2. Policy Committee- Nothing to report
3. Finance Committee- Need warrants signed
4. Curriculum Committee- Nothing to report
5. Buildings & Grounds Committee- Nothing to report
6. Negotiations Committee- Nothing to report
7. Personnel Committee- Nothing to report

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

N. Sneller- Just want to clarify that we have voted that masks are not mandated in school but kiddos that take the bus will still need to wear masks as they are mandated on buses.

B. Dyer- Thank everyone for their patience. I know I get passionate about this. I think Larry & I get very passionate about this. Thank everyone for listening to the parents.

B. Chow- Thank all the parents and students for hearing their point of view

L. Whittington- I hope it's as easy as everyone thinks. I don't see it. I think the board by not having masks full time are setting our kids up as political pawns.

A. Cushman- Could you give a clarification on sports? Pam D. replied that right now fall sports are outside. They do not need to wear masks outside. With what the board just voted on it would be strongly recommended but not required.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (To be held at 7:00 pm)

1. Enter into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. subsection 405 (6)(E) for legal consultation with an attorney

Motion: B. Dyer

Seconded: D. Whittemore

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Passed

Entered into Executive Session at 7:01pm

Executive Session ended at 7:09pm

ADJOURNMENT

1. Motion to adjourn

Motion: N. Sneller

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Passed

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm