

WINCHESTER SCHOOL BOARD
JANUARY 5, 2023
WINCHESTER SCHOOL LIBRARY

Board Members Present: L. Hildreth, J. Blake, L. Picard, J. Rokes, J. Hadler

Administration Present: L. Carey, T. Taylor, M. Pouliot

The meeting was called to order at 6:32pm. by Board Chair, L. Hildreth.

MINUTES:

L. Picard MOVED to approve the Public Minutes of 11/29/22; SECONDED by: L. Hildreth, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

L. Picard advised they will want to add the Budget Committee Minutes for the School Board when they are approved. J. Rokes will get those for the Board.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT – M. Pouliot:

*M. Pouliot and Jen Weisenberger went to the Keene High Scheduling Meeting. The 8th Grade class will be ready to schedule their classes at KHS for next year.

L. Picard thinks maybe there could be some consideration when scheduling. Keene is always saying that no one knows which students are from which schools, but often there is only one Winchester student in a class. Everyone knows who is from Winchester.

BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT – T. Taylor:

L. Hildreth MOVED to approve the Payroll Manifests dated: 11/11/22 in the amount of \$220,246.38; 12/9/22 in the amount of \$212,821.09; 12/22/22 in the amount of \$216,129.22; 12/23/22 in the amount of \$10,985.71 and 1/6/23 in the amount of \$203,232.37; SECONDED by: L. Picard, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

L. Hildreth MOVED to approve the Accounts Payable Manifests dated: 12/2/22 in the amount of \$2,465.23 and 12/2/22 in the amount of \$207,699.88; 12/16/22 in the amount of \$430.66 and 12/16/22 in the amount of \$1,640,597.72; 12/30/22 in the amount of \$181,792.83 and 12/30/22 in the amount of \$2,531.65; SECONDED by: L. Picard, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

*Warrant Article Five - Need Board signatures to deposit funds into the Special Education Expendable Trust Fund.

*Warrant Article Six – Signatures are needed to deposit funds.

*Winchester has applied for and was awarded a \$33,000 SAFE Grant which has to do with our Key Card Access System. Need the Chair's signature to accept it.

L. Picard MOVED to accept and expend \$33,000 for the Grant that Winchester School was awarded for our Key Card System upgrade - 100% Grant, no matching funds are required; SECONDED by: J. Hadler, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

*The Default Budget was sent to the DRA and approved; needs Board signatures.

*The Board reviewed the expenditure report and asked questions.

L. Picard asked what kind of conversation is being held in the Administration/Superintendent groups regarding staffing? We have a lot of paraprofessional positions open. Asked for feedback on that.

L. Carey advised at the Superintendent level meetings, it is a well-known fact that it is very hard to find paras and/or teachers, specifically Special Ed teachers, who will take on our most challenging students. There has been support through ESSER to provide us with Board Certified Behavior Analysts. We have a number of students on a waiting list for alternative placements, the problem with alternative placements is they are very expensive and they don't have the staff. So, we are not able to provide that for our students. L. Carey gives great credit to the staff; they give 100%. She doesn't know why they are not getting candidates to apply. Not just us, across the State, across the Country. Not sure what else can be done to get people in. Advised in this school everything humanly possible is being done to make sure kids get a great education.

M. Pouliot advised on the school-level they have discussed a lot about investing in the team they have and finding ways to pay them for their extra work, their hard work. Paras are low paid, but they are also not paid for enough to give them hours to get the proper training. So, they are put in these positions, that are some of the most challenging. Explained they are confident in what they have the ability to do, but we don't have the time to let them fully do it. We have Summers, we have workshop days, etc., we just need to find the funds to be able to support the training that staff need. We need to invest in the team we have and need longevity. We spend a lot of time training people and then they go somewhere else. She has talked with Jen Heise about what they can do and looking for ways to pay extra days during the Summer to get people training. One of the biggest school-wide goals is to have the school be a happy place. Want people to want to come to work after COVID even though it is an incredibly tough job. Need to invest in the people we have.

J. Blake asked if there is a common reason that paras are leaving.

M. Pouliot advised it is the pay; hard to survive on a para salary. A lot of people have families; the para schedule is a perfect family schedule, but with inflation right now it is really hard to survive with two or three kids on a para salary.

L. Picard advised as they are coming to the end of some of these budgets and not able to fill in some of these positions, our alternative is we need to invest in the people we have. She personally, would be interested in hearing salary opportunities for Summer training. We can't fill positions, but people still are doing the work and deserve something, but it gets a little tricky.

L. Carey explained the School received the SB240 Extraordinary Needs Grant. They are in the planning phase, but a lot of it involves asking teachers if they would spend time collaborating over the Summer to engage in working with vertical alignment. Also looking at enhancing and getting more funding for the UDL initiative. Can also use ESSER funds to bring in trainers and to bring paras and teachers in and pay them to receive the training. They are looking forward to enhancing practices through teacher collaboration and development and staff would be paid above and beyond the school day. There is just no time to get through things even with teacher workshop days. Explained they are in the middle of making plans; the money is there.

FACILITIES DIRECTOR – M. Hill:

*Facilities meeting was scheduled for tonight. It was the third meeting in a row that has not been attended. Need to know if it is needed anymore.

L. Picard's opinion is yes. She will come and join the next meeting on the first Thursday of the month. She thinks especially through the Deliberative session and the vote, it is helpful to be on the same page about the Capital Plan.

*M. Hill explained the HB1421 Amendment - Lead in Drinking Water Program that they are doing. Need to do three tests by June, 2024. He hopes the kits will be in by February break; there are a lot to do. Faucets and testing are provided by the State.

*Hood installation was completed in August. The project was completely done at the end of October. It is working very nicely.

*Completed LED Emergency project in December. Had an energy audit done; still waiting on the results of that. He was told that there are several incentive plans and options they can get through the State; ways to save money. He is hoping to change the rest of the lights to LED's.

*Music Room ERV was delivered. Waiting on humidifier that should be here in a week or two. Hoping by the end of January will have the project started. It will take approximately a week to be done.

L. Picard advised the Selectboard voted to have the Deliberative Session at the School. They will meet February 4th at 9:00am and the School Board at 12:15pm. There was discussion about protecting the gym floor and the noise issue at the Deliberative Session. After discussion, the Board agreed to eliminate the back microphone and have a wireless/cordless one available. M. Hill will check to see if they are able to turn down the speed on the fans to bring down the noise.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – L. Carey:

*L. Carey explained they have procured and are planning for an SB240 Grant in the amount of \$157,000; to include Summer work for teachers if they are so inclined to collaborate and by using ESSER funds to include paras. They are also meeting on the District's Five-year Strategic Plan. Will meet again next week. Excited about the work on that. Received \$100,000 carryover from Title One and are purchasing new large teaching screens; more advanced than Smart Boards they have now. Looking at bringing in a couple of models for teachers to try and see which ones they would like to use in their classrooms. Would buy one for at least every classroom teacher. Right now, focusing on taking advantage of the funding we do have. Currently, Planning Summer School and STEM Programs. Looking at different activities for that. They are in the planning stages of a lot of things right now and getting that information out for everyone to see. Would also like to see more representation at the Strategic Planning Committee meetings.

L. Picard asked is that the Community, the Board?

L. Carey explained they would definitely love to have teachers, members of the community and the Board. They are refining what they have done so far and will be sending it out to the staff tomorrow. After discussion, L. Carey advised maybe they could meet with people at the school at 2:30 and have a 4:00 meeting for those who couldn't come earlier. The idea is they work on their plan and bring it forward to Board and staff and they can give input; then they will adjust it and everyone will be invested

in it. What they engage in now will be a five-year plan. Feels they can definitely look at having different meeting times so more people can attend.

L. Picard MOVED to recommend Article Two with an Operating Budget in the amount of \$13,089,941 and a Default Budget of \$13,250,829; SECONDED by: L. Hildreth, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

J. Rokes MOVED to recommend Articles Three, Four, Five - and Six; SECONDED by: L. Picard, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

L. Picard MOVED to recommend Article Seven: To see if the Winchester School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,200.00 for the purpose of School Board Stipends. This special article is a special warrant article per RSA 32:3 VI (d) and RSA 32:7 V and will be in place until rescinded; SECONDED by: L. Hildreth, L. Picard feels the Chair should get extra as they do extra work. Feels there are people who don't run for the School Board because they don't have the financial stability to potentially walk away from another part-time job or they need to be home. She thinks it is kind of inappropriate to assume that everybody should give their time to the community for free just because the next person does. She feels there are ways that the stipend could be donated back if people chose to; VOTED: 4-1 (J. Rokes – no), MOTION PASSED.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS:

Amber May came to the Board with a request for her children to remain at Winchester School. They have had to move to Rindge, but she works in Town and her babysitter is here – would like them to be in Winchester, too. Advised she has no way to get them to school if they are not in Winchester.

L. Picard advised the Board does not typically respond at a Board meeting. Will need to be sure that there was protocol that was gone through and then they will follow-up.

Amber May advised she had sent a letter and her daughter's doctor sent a letter to the Board.

L. Hildreth advised she didn't receive it that she knew of but would double-check.

L. Carey explained she was bringing it to the last meeting, but the meeting was cancelled as there was no quorum.

Amy Hill advised on behalf of the WTA and as advised by their Council, the Executive Board for the Union would like to be put on the next agenda for non-public session to meet with the School Board members; and that would be under 91A3... probably going to be under (c) possibly (a), she didn't know.

Amy Hill advised as a taxpayer, speaking for her husband, she is really bothered by the fact that Matt Hill wasn't sitting up with the School Board. Feels it would be one thing if the Facilities Director hadn't always sat there, but they have. Feels the building is an important part of this Town and that there are many people in Town who vote who don't care about education but do care about the building and how the upkeep of the building affects their taxes in the end; because it does affect the budget. Advised it is so hard for her to watch him have to go up with all of his paperwork. She wanted to verbalize that.

Elizabeth Lounder echoed what Amy Hill said. Doesn't know why Matt Hill isn't at the table anymore, but feels it is important that he be at the table, especially at the Deliberative Session. Feels there are a lot of people that have questions for our Facilities Manager, he plays an important role in our school. Feels he should be up there.

Elizabeth Louder is wondering how closely we are looking at programs and things; seems things are being cut at KHS. Are we still paying the same tuition? It seems things at The Cheshire Career Center are not up to par as they were in past years. Advised she is not blaming them she knows they are dealing with the same shortages that we are, but it seems that there should be someone looking at what we are paying and what we are getting versus what we were getting five years ago. Wants to be sure we are not paying for services at Cheshire Career Center that we aren't getting.

Wanted to echo the significance of the stipend for the Board. She knows a phenomenal amount of time is put in from Board member's personal lives. Thinks \$1,000 after taxes is piddling. Feels if that isn't something that we can do for people who have stepped up and helped for multiple years, then she thinks that's a shame. She is glad they are moving forward on it.

L. Hildreth MOVED to go into non-public session at 7:46pm. under RSA91-A:3 (a); SECONDED BY: L. Picard, VOTED: J. Blake – yes, J. Rokes – yes, L. Hildreth – yes, L. Picard – yes, J. Hadler – yes, MOTION PASSED.

L. Hildreth MOVED to leave non-public session at 8:16pm; SECONDED by: L. Picard, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

L. Picard MOVED to seal the minutes regarding a maternity leave request for two months; everything else will be sealed until reviewed; SECONDED by: L. Hildreth, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

L. Hildreth MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:21pm. SECONDED by: L. Picard, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

Respectfully submitted:

Peggy Higgins
School Board Secretary