

MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT #37
December 15, 2021

The Regular Meeting of the School Directors of RSU #37/MSAD #37 was held at Narraguagus Jr./Sr. High School on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. to consider and act upon the following items of business:

Board Members present: Jeffery Beal, Chris Chartrand, Stephen Dunham, Everett Grant, Grace Kennedy, Ronald Kennedy, Debra Murphy, David Perham, Tiffany Strout, and Mark Wright

Board Members absent: Shelby Greene and Bethany Hartford

Other persons present: Ronald Ramsay, Denise Vose, Susan Meserve, Lorna Greene, Mary Ellen Day, Todd Emerson, Lori Mathews, David Mathews, Ron Green, Dawn Fickett, Anna Emerson, Leann Beal, Elizabeth Chipman, Kandi Robertson, and other citizens.

MINUTES

A. INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS

1. **The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Debra Murphy.** She noted that Directors Shelby Greene and Bethany Hartford were excused from the meeting tonight due to other obligations. Chairman Murphy extended condolences on behalf of the board to the family of Maria White, as well as to the staff and students in the district.
2. **RE: APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 17, 2021**
ACTION: Motion by David Perham, second by Grace Kennedy, and voted (702-yes, 142-abstentions) to approve the minutes of the November meeting as printed. (Chartrand and Wright abstained as they were absent from that meeting.)
3. **RE: REPORT—SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (Including Legislative Updates)**
INFORMATION: Supt. Ramsay noted that we are all grieving the loss of a colleague and friend. He received a call from Maria's brother shortly after her passing. She went quickly and without warning. The district's Crisis Plan was implemented, and a team was lined up to work with the staff and students in Milbridge for as long as needed. To maintain the learning and operations of the school, he has appointed Carol Ann Lisee as acting principal. She is familiar with the school, its culture, and the community. He is thankful for her willingness to step into this difficult role as we move on from such a tremendous loss.
4. **RE: REVIEW OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**
INFORMATION: Supt. Ramsay noted that we are doing well financially and are where he would expect us to be with revenues and expenditures for this time of year.
5. **RE: ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS (Including Professional Development, ESEA, and G/T)**
INFORMATION: None
6. **RE: SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**
 - a. **Athletics/Student Activities-none**
 - b. **Curriculum & Instruction-none**
 - c. **Negotiations & Grievance-none**
 - d. **Policy & By-laws-none**
 - e. **Facilities, Maintenance, Safety & Transportation-This committee met to discuss heat pumps and a solar project both of which will be discussed later the agenda.**
7. **RE: PUBLIC COMMENTS**
INFORMATION: None
8. **RE: AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS -None**

B. OLD BUSINESS--none

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. RE: HIRING TRAVEL TEAM COACHES FOR JR. HIGH

ACTION: Motion by Everett Grant, second by Grace Kennedy, and voted (unanimously) to ratify the hiring of John Batson for the Boys' Travel Team coach and Jeffery Chick as the Girls' Travel Team coach as recommended by the Superintendent.

2. RE: HIRING GRADE 3 & 4 SKILLS & DRILLS COACHES

ACTION: Motion by Everett Grant, second by Mark Wright, and voted (unanimously) to ratify the hiring of Sally MacLean (DW Merritt), Jeffery Chick (Harrington), and Donald and Richard Parker (Milbridge) as coaches for grades 3 & 4 Skills and Drills as recommended by the Superintendent.

3. RE: HIRING SUBSTITUTE VAN/SPECIAL ED DRIVER

ACTION: Motion by Everett Grant, second by Mark Wright, and voted (unanimously) to approve Sherry Dixon as a substitute van/special ed driver as recommended by the Superintendent.

4. RE: HIRING SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

ACTION: Motion by Grace Kennedy, second by Everett Grant, and voted (unanimously) to approve Ripley King and Lanie Perry as substitute teachers as recommended by the Superintendent.

5. RE: CONSIDERATION OF POOL TESTING

ACTION: Supt. Ramsay noted that we have surveyed parents to see if any are interested in having their children participate in pool testing. We did not have a high response, but most that came back were in favor of participating. We are pursuing this to try to reduce the ridiculous amount of quarantining that we are having to do with students and staff. We have had about 92 positive cases in the schools this fall, but we've had to quarantine hundreds of close contacts for as much as 20 days at a time. We also have some students who've had to quarantine multiple times, and none of these close contacts have turned positive.

In a recent conversation with the commissioner, she indicated that changes might be coming from the CDC that would help with this as it might do away with contact tracing. If so, we could drop the idea of pool testing. However, yesterday's notice from the DOE only said that we no longer have to report to them who the close contacts are, but we still must quarantine them. It just takes the state out of the equation but does not lessen the burdens on schools. We are still hopeful that they may drop the quarantine for close contacts when the new SOP comes out. In the meantime, we want to pursue pool testing to help keep our students in school. Parents will have to sign a consent for their child(ren) to participate.

Pools can be from 5 to 25 students/staff in each one. Participants swab the inside of the nostrils and then drop their swabs into a container all together. That pool is sent out. Results usually come back within 48 hours. So, if we test on Tuesdays, results should be back by Thursday. If any positive pools, then all in that pool will be administered a rapid test to find the positive person. Only the positive person must quarantine in the pool. The others just have to monitor for symptoms. Anyone not participating in pool testing and deemed to be a close contact will still have to quarantine.

David Perham noted that the board should vote and choose the path that keeps kids in school, whichever path that may be.

Leann Beal asked if parents could change their mind and have their kids join or unjoin at any time and Mr. Ramsay said they absolutely can. She asked what happens when a positive student is found while they wait for someone to pick the child up. Mr. Ramsay noted that each school has an isolation room that the student is taken to until a parent picks them up. A staff member stays with them until they are picked up.

Motion by Everett Grant, second by Mark Wright, and voted (736-yes, 108-no) to accept the Superintendent's proposal to adopt voluntary pool testing in our schools. If the SOP changes, the Superintendent has the discretion to drop pool testing. (R. Kennedy voted no.)

6. RE: CONSIDERATION OF SOLAR PROJECT

ACTION: Superintendent Ramsay shared information from Revision Energy on a proposal to purchase energy credits to help us save on electrical costs in the district. The company estimates an annual savings of about \$14,000 if we opt in. There is no up-front cost. If the solar array doesn't produce as much power as anticipated, we may not gain as much savings. We would need to sign a 20-year contract. (This was concerning to some board members as they noted how rapidly technology is changing. Would we be tying ourselves to a project that may be obsolete in a few years, and we are stuck?)

After much discussion, it was voted by Mark Wright, seconded by Tiffany Strout, and voted (unanimously) to table this article and not consider the project at this time.

7. RE: CONSIDERATION OF HEAT PUMP PROJECT

ACTION: Supt. Ramsay noted he is asking the board to award a heat pump project to Eastern Plumbing for the three elementary schools using ESSER III funds. The total for these three is not to exceed \$356,804, and we have \$250,000 earmarked for heat pumps in the grant. There are other funds that we can use to make up the difference without affecting the local budget. He is concerned that if we take the time to bid it out now it won't get done. It has taken some time just to get the project specs completed by Eastern Plumbing and Heating, and vendors working on such projects are all overbooked.

Motion by Everett Grant, second by Mark Wright, and voted (unanimously) to waive the district's bid policy relative to this project only and authorize the Superintendent to enter a contract with Eastern Plumbing and Heating not to exceed \$356,804 for heat pumps at DW Merritt, Harrington, and Narraguagus.

8. RE: ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Motion by Tiffany Strout, and voted (unanimously) to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Ronald C. Ramsay
Secretary to the Board

DECEMBER 15, 2021 MEETING SUMMARY

A. INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS

1. APPROVED Minutes of the November 17, 2021 regular meeting as presented;
8. TABLED agenda adjustments;

B. OLD BUSINESS-none

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. HIRED travel team coaches: John Batson and Jeffery Chick;
2. HIRED grade 3 & 4 Skills and Drills coaches: Sally MacLean (DWM), Jeffery Chick (HN), and Donald and Richard Parker (ML);
3. HIRED Sherry Dixon as sub van/special ed driver;
4. HIRED Ripley King and Lanie Perry as substitute teachers;
5. APPROVED pursuing pool testing;
6. TABLED solar project;
7. APPROVED heat pump project for the three elementary schools.