

RSU #38 Board of Directors  
Maranacook Community Middle School & via Zoom  
February 2, 2022  
Minutes of Meeting

Members Present: Chair Cathy Jacobs, Vice Chair David Twitchell, Keltie Beaudoin, Tyler Dunn (remote), Patty Gordon (remote), David Guillemette, Rebecca Lambert (remote), Betty Morrell, Jade Parker, Shawn Roderick, Melissa Tobin, Dane Wing (remote, arrived 7:30)

Member Absent: Kim Bowie

Students Present: Carter Bennett, Joseph Couture, Celia Bergdahl, Rocco Scott

Administration Present: Superintendent Jay Charette, Principals Jeff Boston, Tina Brackley, Janet Delmar, and Abbie Hartford, Special Education Director Ryan Meserve, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Karen Smith, Technology Director Diane MacGregor, Adult and Community Director Steve Vose, Finance Director Mandy Fitzgerald, Student Services Director Brant Remington

1. Call to Order: Chair Jacobs called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.  
Chair Jacobs reported, this business meeting is being held both in person and virtually, through zoom in compliance with RSU #38 policy BED Remote Participation in School Board Meetings. The meeting is being recorded and will be posted on the maranacook.org YouTube channel.  
The “microphones” of the viewing audience will be muted except during the identified portions of public comments at this meeting. If you would like to speak during any public comment section of the agenda, please use the chat feature to signal to Mrs. MacGregor and she will communicate with the Board Chair. In-person speakers please sign up on the clipboard by the door. All individuals that wish to speak, whether in person or virtual, please identify yourself with first and last name and the town you live in. Please note that individuals that do not live in our member communities may or may not be granted permission to speak at the discretion of the Board Chair. Speakers are asked to limit individual comments to 2 minutes and if someone speaks ahead of you that has a similar view please reference the comment. All votes will be taken by Roll Call.
2. Pledge of Allegiance:
3. Student Representatives’ Reports:  
MS Representatives – Carter Bennett and Joseph Couture reported on Team projects and activities, including today’s ice harvesting project on Maranacook Lake.  
HS Representatives Celia Bergdahl and Rocco Scott reported on events at the High School including work being done by Student Council, the new lunch schedule, sporting events and the upcoming theater production, “The Little Mermaid”.
4. Citizens’ Comments:  
Manchester resident, Laurel Parker, expressed concern with the district allowing non vaccinated close contact students to continue to go to school; asking the Board to change this to make a more stringent policy.  
Mt. Vernon resident, John Harker, reiterated his request for the district to look at alternative options to keep kids in school, stating there are no requirements to follow guidelines or lose funds. He asked the Board to consider providing educational information and supplements, using local funds if necessary. Consider removing the mandate to wear masks, and asked the Board to establish a policy when taking pictures that are publicly posted so the students do not have to wear masks.  
Mt. Vernon resident Ethan Buuck, stated his children have been out of school longer due to precautionary measures than sickness. He asked that the Board reconsider mask wearing.
5. Additions/adjustments:  
Superintendent Charette requested the addition of 8c, review of early release days.

6. Reports/Committees

Dr. Levesque reported on the ice harvest project that was held today.

Mr. Roderick thanked Mr. Williams for his 31 years of service to our children.

Committee Reports: First readings on Policy IHBA, Individualized Education Programs; BCB, Conflict of Interest; and BCC (also GBCA), Nepotism. Superintendent Charette requested feedback on these policies to be sent to him or any of the policy committee members. Questions and comments on these policies will be reviewed at the February 8th meeting.

7. Action Items:

a. Approval of Minutes of January 19, 2022 Meeting

**MOTION** Twitchell, second by Beaudoin to approve the Minutes of January 19, 2022 as presented. **Motion Carried:** 11 in favor, 0 opposed.

b. Acceptance of Donations

**MOTION** by Morrell, second by Beaudoin to accept the donations as presented.

**Motion Carried:** 11 in favor, 0 opposed

c. Acceptance of resignation due to retirement, effective 06/30/22, MS Teacher Mary Ellen Tracy

**MOTION** by Morrell, second by Beaudoin to accept the resignation of Mary Ellen Tracy with regret. **Motion Carried:** 11 in favor, 0 opposed.

d. Acceptance of resignation due to retirement, effective 06/30/22, HS Teacher Steve DeAngelis

**MOTION** by Guillemette, second by Beaudoin to accept the resignation of Steve DeAngelis with regret. **Motion Carried:** 11 in favor, 0 opposed.

e. Legislative Update:

Chair Jacobs reported that she is serving on the MSBA Board of Directors for Kennebec County and that she is on the Legislative Committee within that Board. She reported on some of the legislative bills they have started to review.

f. Health and Safety Procedures and Protocols

Superintendent Charette reviewed his report on health and safety procedures and protocols. He recommends that no changes be made at this time, stating that if we continue doing what we are doing that number will continue to come down. (Mr. Wing joined the meeting during this discussion.)

Discussion ensued. Concerns were raised about the social emotion health of students as well as the affect mask wearing is having on students.

**MOTION** by Roderick to allow kids to not wear masks if they want to, and if unvaccinated and close contact, they will need to show a negative test. **Motion Withdrawn.**

Mr. Dunn noted that the last time the Board voted to not require masks there was a lot of anger from the community and the board does not know how the staff will react. This may not be the best time to remove the mask mandate. Superintendent Charette added that it makes him uncomfortable to state this, there have been up to 5 people leave in the last 6 months, and a lot of it had to do with managing teaching and learning while dealing with Covid. If the Board makes masking optional we will lose teachers; adding that he can think of 6 teachers who will be telling him they are going to leave. Life will get tougher if we go with optional masking; there may be unintended consequences.

Mr. Guillemette stated he has to listen to his constituents and he sees the light at the end of the tunnel coming this spring. He would like to hear more from the parents who may have changed their minds since September.

Discussion ensued about what would happen if the mask mandate is removed. Mr. Wing reported that it would remove a layer of protection and there would be more quarantining.

It was reiterated that Mr. Charette has brought a recommendation forward that was made in consultation with the nurses. If masking is made optional we are telling staff we don't care about their recommendation.

Mrs. Lambert thanked Mr. Charette for making the statement on staffing. She would like to get rid of the masks, but it is cold and flu season. Also, one of the Board's goal is to retain teachers; this would not be a good step in honoring that goal.

**MOTION** by Beaudoin, to remove the mask mandate and retain the remaining health and safety protocols recommended by the Superintendent. The motion was seconded by Jacobs.

Further discussion ensued. Mr. Roderick reminded everyone that parents have the right to put their kids in pool testing.

**Motion Failed:** 4 in favor, 7 opposed (Dunn, Gordon, Guillemette, Lambert, Morrell, Parker, Twitchell), 1 abstained (Tobin)

**MOTION** by Dunn to Support the Superintendent's recommendation to keep the RSU #38 health and safety protocols the same. The motion was seconded by Parker.

**Motion Carried:** 9 in favor, 3 opposed (Beaudoin, Jacobs, Roderick)

8. Discussion Items:

a. Nutrition/Dietary Health

Superintendent Charette reported that he spoke with Nutrition Director Jen Hall about questions from the Board regarding the school menus. He reported that RSU 38 is part of the State's School Farm to School Program and nutritional guidelines must be met to receive reimbursement from the state. He asked that questions about the program be forwarded to him and he would get the answers from Mrs. Hall. Questions asked:

- How are nutritional meals determined; how are they planned?
- Another piece for nutrition is having health bodies. What does our health curriculum look like to help keep bodies safe and healthy? Will there be budgetary implications?
- Perhaps a report to the Board.
- What is being served at our lunches, for example, what is included on a salad bar.
- Where are we getting our food from?

b. Survey

Chair Jacobs reported this question was brought forward by Keltie Beaudoin. Mrs. Beaudoin noted that as a board we make decisions that affect a lot of people, asking why a survey hasn't be done. Discussion ensued. Chair Jacobs asked for volunteers to serve on a small group sub-committee to make recommendations to the Board. Keltie Beaudoin, Patty Gordon, Tyler Dunn and Shawn Roderick offered to meet as a sub-committee and bring recommendations forward to the Board.

c. Early Release Days

Superintendent Charette requested to add this item to the agenda so he could inform the Board on where the district is with the early release days. The new early release days recently adopted by the Board are for building level SEL work as well as nuts and bolts things within the building. The original half-day workshop days were already planned for district level activities such as math and subject area committee work. A brief anonymous survey has also been compiled that staff is asked to complete after each workshop day. The data will be provided to the Board at the end of the year. Superintendent Charette asked that if board members are getting calls, they should divert the calls to the building principal. The principals will address issues and concerns. Chair Jacobs added the importance of following the chain of command, if it's a staff member and they don't want to go to their principal it is the Board member's responsibility to go to the Superintendent; it is not for a board member to solve.

9. Budget Workshop:

a. Board Budget Goal:

A draft was provided to the board members earlier in the week, "To balance the needs of ALL members of the RSU #38 community while maintaining fiscal responsibility." Everyone present supported the goal.

b. Elementary, Middle & High Schools

Superintendent Charette reviewed the slide show that depicted enrollment numbers, staffing, the superintendent directives to the administrators and managers, and the time line for the budget.

Elementary, Middle and High School Budget Requests – Principal Delmar reported on the requests included in the first draft budget for the elementary schools. Dr. Levesque presented on the middle school requests, and Superintendent Charette presented on the requests for the high school. Staffing requests for teachers are contingent on expected enrollment. Other staffing requests are to provide supports for students with complex social/emotional needs.

Superintendent Charette added that once all the departments have presented their requests for the FY23 budget, the Board will be provided with a first draft budget on March 9<sup>th</sup>, as well as the expected subsidy from the State (ED279).

c. Board questions:

Superintendent Charette responded to questions. The \$715,187 is the amount requested if all items listed on the Summary of Principal Budget Changes dated 2/2/22 are approved.

Discussion ensued about the high school request for textbooks and whether digital textbooks would be better. Mr. Charette will find out the rationale behind the request for textbooks instead of digital textbooks. With digital textbooks, would it include a subscription that can be updated and downloaded onto computers?

What is the reasoning for the social worker, and what is the difference between the roles for guidance counselors and social workers. Principal Delmar added that school guidance counselors work at a different level than what a licensed social worker can with students. Principal Boston added that this has been in the original budget requests for 4 years, before the pandemic. The district does have a social worker but it is for students receiving special education services. Mr. Dunn added that he would like to see it expanded to the middle and high school levels.

d. Citizen Comments regarding the budget: none

e. Board discussion – see above

10. Adjournment: **MOTION** and second to adjourn at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
James Charette, Superintendent of Schools  
D. Foster, Recorder