

Newport School Board Meeting

July 14, 2022; 5 PM

Lou Thompson Room (LTR), Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Center
243 North Main Street, Newport New Hampshire 03773

School Board Members in Attendance: (LTR) Jenna Darling, Chair; Steve Morris, Vice Chair; William Wilkinson, Bert Spaulding, Sr.

School Board Members Absent: none

Administration and Staff Present: (LTR) Donna Magoon, Interim Superintendent of Schools; Diane Mulholland, Business Administrator; Kerry Finnegan, Director of Student Services; Brynn Kane, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Shannon Martin, High School Principal; Eric Perry, Interim Director, Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Center; Ed Oberhofer, Lisa Ferrigno; (via zoom) Ed Emond

Public Present: Kurt Minich, Ken Dugas, Tim Beard and Ed Karr

Videographer: Newport Community Television (NCTV)

Call to Order

Chairman Darling called the meeting of the Newport School Board (NSB) to order at 5:04 p.m. followed by a roll call of School Board members and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adjustments to the Agenda: (for full meeting go to: www.nctv-nh.org)

Mr. Morris made a motion to *move Public Comment to after Adjustments to the Agenda per the School Board policy*. Chairman Darling called for a roll call vote. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

Public Comment: none

Approval of School Board Minutes: Public: June 9, 2022

Mr. Wilkinson stated on page three, last paragraph of the page under Board Chair Removal the minutes state: *Chairman Darling addressed Mr. Morris...* it should read... *Chairman Darling addressed Mr. Spaulding, Sr.*

With that change, Mr. Wilkinson was prepared to *approve the minutes of the June 9, 2022 School Board minutes as amended*. It was seconded by Mr. Morris. In further discussion, Mr. Spaulding, Sr. stated that his quote about raising the issue of Board Chair Removal had not been included in the minutes. He did not think it was necessary to change the minutes; but he noted that it is absent. He was okay the way the minutes were. Chairman Darling called for a roll call vote to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2022 School Board minutes as amended. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

Information/Action Items

Introduction SAU Staff

Interim Superintendent Magoon addressed the Board members and explained that previously the Board packet information they received was not made available to the public; only the agenda was provided. In the future, for transparency, the packet the Board receives (excluding confidential information) will be available online and hard copies will be at the meetings. She then introduced the three new SAU Staff hires (at the meeting):

1. Diane Mulholland, Business Administrator
2. Kerry Finnegan, Director of Student Services
3. Brynn Kane, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

She stated they have visited the schools and are developing short and long term goals for the District.

Board Member Application Chairman Darling stated that currently there was a vacant Board seat. Under RSA 671-32 II (b) the School Board will appoint a person to the position. She explained the process of getting candidates for the position. Three candidates had applied. They were asked to speak to the Board; after which time the Board would vote. Chairman Darling asked them to introduce themselves and answer Board questions. Mr. Ken Dugas introduced himself to the Board and gave a synopsis of his involvement with the school district and reasons he wanted the position. He answered all Board questions. Mr. Kurt Minich introduced himself to the Board and gave a synopsis of his involvement with the School Board, district and reasons he wanted the position. He answered all Board questions. Mr. Tim Beard introduced himself to the Board and gave a synopsis of his involvement with the school district and reasons he wanted the position. He answered all Board questions.

The Board members deliberated the merits of each applicant and stated all were excellent candidates. Mr. Wilkinson made a motion *to fill the vacancy with Kenneth Dugas*. It was seconded by Mr. Morris. There was a lengthy discussion. Mr. Morris stated for transparency that he knew both Mr. Dugas and Mr. Beard very well. He did not know whether to abstain from voting or not. Mr. Morris and Mr. Wilkinson both stressed that all three candidates were good choices.

Mr. Wilkinson addressed his concern of the appearance of the Board due to the friendship between Mr. Morris and Mr. Beard. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. stressed that he would not be part of any concern of the appearance of the Board if Mr. Beard were elected. After more discussion, Mr. Wilkinson asked for a Board vote. Chairman Darling called for a vote. *The motion failed 2-2-0 (Wilkinson and Darling yes, Spaulding and Morris no)*. Chairman Darling asked for another nomination or a motion to table the vote to the August 25, 2022 meeting.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. made a motion *to fill the vacancy with Tim Beard*. It was seconded by Mr. Morris. Chairman Darling called for a vote. *The motion passed 3-0-1 (Spaulding, Darling and Wilkinson yes; Morris abstained)*. Chairman Darling congratulated Mr. Beard. She informed the other candidates that there will be two Board vacancies in March 2023 voting. She hoped they consider running.

Snack Shack Renovations

Interim Superintendent Magoon stated there will be renovations to the football snack shack. Mr. Page is in favor of the renovations and will be working with the crew. Ms. Martin addressed the Board with the changes:

- The school facility staff will tear down the snack shack
- LaValley's Building Supply has offered to donate the supplies to rebuild the shack
- It will be the same size, although it will be moved back so as not to obstruct the view of the entire field
- There will be a freestanding tower
- The coaches are donating their labor to build it
- There will be a cost to pour a new concrete slab (\$5,000- \$7,000). It is already budgeted.
- The signs will be replaced with aluminum ones

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. stated for clarification that the money was already in the budget. Interim Superintendent Magoon stated yes. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked if she needed a vote from the Board in order to spend the money. He was told yes.

Ms. Ferrigno asked if the floor of the snack shack was going to be lifted. It was not possible to see the field at its present height (too low). The administration would look into it.

Mr. Wilkinson asked if the work was projected to be done this summer. He was told yes. He asked if the custodial staff have the time to tear down the existing snack shack with their primary responsibilities to the schools.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked for the footprint of the new building. Ms. Martin said it was her understanding it would be the same. He asked for the size. Ms. Martin did not know. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked for the answer in an email.

Mr. Beard asked that the new building be painted in the school colors. He also offered his services to tear it down if Mr. Page is not able to.

Ms. Ferrigno asked if it would still be dedicated to the Shepherds. She was told yes.

Chairman Darling asked for a motion. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. made a motion ***to build a sport's three story structure on a similar footprint as it has now.*** It was seconded by Mr. Wilkinson. ***The motion passed 4-0-0.***

Ms. Martin also informed the Board that the field needed a new sound system. Donations would be welcome.

Student Representative

Interim Superintendent Magoon addressed the Board and presented the idea of a student representative(s) on the Board. The student would not have voting rights or go into nonpublic meetings. They would be a liaison between the students and the Board. It would be an elected (by students), one year position. If the Board agreed, the Policy Committee would meet and decide the role of the students. The Board was asked to approve the student representative position at the July 14, 2022 meeting (in January 2023 it will be the law to have a student representative on all School Boards). Mr. Spaulding, Sr. moved ***that the School Board approve a student representative as expressed to us tonight.*** It was seconded by Mr. Wilkinson. In discussion, Chairman Darling requested that they try to get two students if possible; one to be an alternate. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. stated it was a good idea. There aren't enough people who are involved in government. It is the premise of us, the more involved, the better off we are. ***The motion passed 4-0-0.***

Preschool Program

Interim Superintendent Magoon addressed the Board with the request to transition the preschool program back to Richards School.

1. Space: Program was originally at Richards. She spoke to the building principal. He said there is space available: two rooms; the same ones they used when they were located there before
2. Access: to lunch room, library, PE and other developmental areas.
3. Sense of Belonging: currently students and staff are segregated in their own space; this way they are in a group for a sense of belonging. They will participate in all Richards's activities
4. Staff: Same as currently have. Access to special education services and nurse.
5. Safety: issue for students and staff.

Mr. Wilkinson agreed with the benefits of moving the program. His concern is that the two rooms are currently occupied. Where are they going? Kerry Finnegan stated their original choice was not suitable to the preschool. They changed it to the currently proposed ones. There was a lot of care put into the choice of rooms.

Additional concerns were:

6. Drop off/Pick up
7. Playground equipment (have new)

Ms. Ferrigno, Richards's teacher, expressed the following concerns:

- 1) There are currently teachers teaching in the hallways
- 2) If Richards has extra space, why aren't the current teachers using it
 - a. Special Education teachers are working in the hall
 - b. Title One teachers are in the hall
- 3) Ms. Ferrigno said the district spends a lot of money building walls and then tearing them down.
- 4) Outside playground equipment has been removed for a space for an outdoor classroom. Where will the new preschool equipment go?
- 5) Things need to be thought through; things need to be done strategically. She stressed that the teachers, classrooms and students are cramped at Richards now.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked if it was fatal if the School Board delayed the decision to the next meeting. Interim Superintendent Magoon said yes, there were a lot of moving parts. Chairman Darling asked her to speak to the concerns of Ms. Ferrigno.

- ❖ Space. The building principal assured her there was space.
- ❖ She understood about the cost. The SAU was looking into grants for the cost.
- ❖ They are looking into accommodating an outdoor classroom, it is very important.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. addressed Interim Superintendent Magoon and asked if the Board accepted the proposal there will be accommodations for everyone at Richards. Interim Superintendent Magoon said it will be worked out. She told the Board that teaching Special Ed in the hallway is very common. The school will be creative in working the logistics.

After a lengthy discussion, Mr. Spaulding, Sr. made a motion *to move the Preschool Program to Richards*. It was seconded by Chairman Darling. In further discussion, Chairman Darling asked Interim Superintendent Magoon if she had spoken to the teachers (at Richards). She was told that Mr. Clark spoke to the teachers at Richards. A preschool teacher had been informally asked about the move as well.

Mr. Morris said that his concern was the same as Mr. Wilkinson's in providing adequate space for students to learn. He was hesitant to vote for the proposal. With a new superintendent, did Mr. Clark say yes because of Interim Superintendent Magoon's position (as in the military)? Therefore, does Richards have the space? If they don't, he didn't like the idea without the ability to move the program back over to Towle and to look into security for the classrooms.

Chairman Darling expressed her concerns of the repeated moving of the preschool classes over the last four years. She also wasn't happy about teachers having to teach in the hallways.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked if it would be better to add to his motion that everything will stay status quo at Towle School. After additional discussion, Mr. Wilkinson stated he wanted to tour Richards in the near future.

Mr. Wilkinson addressed Interim Superintendent Magoon and stated he was not averse to bringing the proposal back to the School Board as an agenda item.

Chairman Darling called for the motion. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. reviewed the amendment to the original motion.

Chairman Darling withdrew her second. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. withdrew his first. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. then made a motion *to move the Preschool Program from Towle to Richards but have retention of all the educational facilities at Towle School (for the preschool classes). The space is not to be used for anything else. The motion passed 4-0-0.*

It will be an agenda item at a future meeting.

Critical Shortage Staff Position

Interim Superintendent Magoon explained the Critical Shortage Staff Position and how it was utilized. She explained the employee was hired as unlicensed (statement of eligibility); they had three years to obtain their

license by the state; all studies and necessary criteria are specified by the NH DOE. In Newport there was a Critical Shortage Staff Position in the district; it is not on the state list. Newport has a candidate for the position of Digital Media Specialist. The candidate is not certified in this field. Interim Superintendent Magoon asked the School Board to identify the position of Digital Media Specialist as a local critical staffing shortage in Newport. It will give Interim Superintendent Magoon permission to hire the candidate. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked if the salary was covered. He was told yes.

Chairman Darling asked for a motion to make the Digital Media Specialist a Critical Shortage Staff Position in Newport. Mr. Wilkinson made a motion *to make the Digital Media Specialist a Critical Shortage Staff Position in Newport*. It was seconded by Mr. Morris. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

Security Action for Education (SAFE) Grant

Interim Superintendent Magoon explained that on July 6, 2022 the state Security Action for Education (SAFE) Grant was made available to apply. She stated the three criterion of the grant and informed the Board she has already applied.

End of Year Financial Update

Ms. Diane Mulholland, Business Administrator gave a review of the end of year financial report of the school district. She also said the audit for 2021 passed. She answered all questions from the Board members.

New Hires

Moved all summer hires to August 25, 2022 School Board meeting.

Resignation

Mr. Wilkinson moved *to accept the resignation of Bonnie Basher*. It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

Policies

First Reads (None)

The Policy Committee will meet in August.

Mr. Karr addressed the Chairman Darling and asked for an opportunity to speak for Public Comment. He had arrived late and was not aware that the order in the agenda had been changed. Chairman Darling called for a motion to allow a community member to speak for public comment. Mr. Wilkinson made a motion *to allow a community member to speak for public comment at this time*. Chairman Darling called for a vote. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

Mr. Karr addressed the Board and expressed his concern on the new complexes being constructed in Newport for workforce and affordable housing. He asked if the school had been asked if they could handle the number of potential students that might move into Newport. He asked if they could participate in the meetings. He thanked the Board for their time. Chairman Darling stated for clarification that the meeting would be held on Thursday, July 21, 2022.

Communication:

Administration:

Interim Superintendent Magoon gave information on the school buildings and summer programs.

Board

Mr. Wilkinson welcomed the new administrative team. He spoke positively on the future of the District and his research based information on school ratings.

Mr. Morris thanked Mr. Perry for all his hard work with the CTE and building committees for the renovation. He also thanked math and English teachers for their excellent jobs in preparing his daughter for her college level courses.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. spoke to the yardstick in which to measure the progress in academics.

Chairman Darling stated that she has been impressed with the new administration and she is happy they all are here. She spoke about the Board having better communications with the parents. She suggested a short blurb from what happened at the Board meetings for the principals to include in their newsletters. Mr. Wilkinson agreed, saying that Mr. Tim Beard has mentioned the need at every School Board meeting. The Board members brainstormed about Chairman Darling's idea.

Non-Public meeting RSA 91-A:3II (k)

Chairman Darling stated the Board would be going into nonpublic *under RSA 91-A:3 II(k) Consideration by a school board of entering into a student or pupil tuition contract authorized by RSA 194 or RSA 195-A, which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general public or the school district that is considering a contract, including any meeting between the school boards, or committees thereof, involved in the negotiations.* She called for a roll call vote to go into nonpublic session.

The motion passed by roll call 4-0-0. The public meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

The Board will return to public session for an action item.

Respectfully submitted,

Maura Stetson, Recording Secretary

Approved on: August XX, 2022

The next School Board meeting will be August XX, 2022