

# Newport School Board Meeting

August 11, 2022; 5 PM

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

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

**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; Ed Oberhofer, Lisa Ferrigno, Kelley Merritt

**Public Present:** Kurt Minich, Lucy Wells, Kathy Hubert

**Videographer:** Newport Community Television (NCTV)

## Call to Order

Chairman Darling called the meeting of the Newport School Board (NSB) to order at 5:00 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](http://www.nctv-nh.org) )

Chairman Darling made a motion to **ADD a nonpublic session RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Matters which may affect the reputation of another and to add negotiations as a nonmeeting.** It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr.

Chairman Darling called for a roll call vote. **The motion passed 5-0-0.**

**Public Comment** (the School Board now allows six minutes for public comment):

Lucy Wells addressed the Board members and stated she has submitted a request to the Interim Superintendent to have a memorial service held in the Auto Tech Shop for her deceased husband, Brad Sears. Mr. Sears was a past auto shop teacher and loved his work. Ms. Wells asked if the School Board members would support this request. When asked, Interim Superintendent Magoon stated she did not know if the Board would like to discuss the matter in nonpublic session or in the public meeting. She had information from Ms. Wells and had discussed the possibility prior to the meeting. Interim Superintendent Magoon supported Ms. Wells and her request. Chairman Darling made a motion **to add a vote on the proposal as the first item of business under Information/Action Items.** She asked for a second. It was seconded by Mr. Beard. **The vote passed by roll call vote 5-0-0.**

Ed Oberhofer discussed the daunting issue of teacher, staff and administrative turnover in the Newport School District. He stated one of his goals for this coming year is to be able to inform the Board next year that Newport has zero turnover. He also talked about the need to have a positive culture in the workplace.

Kurt Minich addressed the Board spoke on the history of the SAU and stated his displeasure on their voting in the newest School Board member. He gave his opinion of the responsibilities of the School Board; everyone should be working for the children of Newport.

Kathy Hubert introduced herself to the Board. (For full public statement go to: [www.nctv-nh.org](http://www.nctv-nh.org) ). She said she was the Director of the NH School Fair Funding Project. Part of the project is to educate the public on funding of public education in NH. Mrs. Hubert thanked the Board for joining the adequacy lawsuit (ConVal Suit). She was before the Board to inform them there was a new lawsuit on behalf of taxpayers in which the State of New Hampshire is being sued for its local schools funding practices. She spoke on the inequities of funding school systems in the State of New Hampshire (for more information, to join the class action suit or donate go to: [www.fairfundingnh.org](http://www.fairfundingnh.org)). Board members thanked Mrs. Hubert for speaking; they appreciated all that she was doing on the state level.

### Approval of School Board Minutes: Public: July 14, 2022

Chairman Darling made a motion *to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2022 School Board minutes as presented*. It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. *The motion passed 4-0-1 (Beard abstained)*.

### Information/Action Items

#### Lucy Wells request to use School facilities

Chairman Darling asked for specifics. Interim Superintendent Magoon stated it would be:

- 1) In September in the evening (school not in session).
- 2) The proposal asks to be in the automotive section of the CTE
- 3) Ms. Wells would like people to have the opportunity of a tour of the CTE
- 4) Possibly catered
- 5) It is proposed as a Celebration of Life

Mr. Beard fully supported it. Mr. Sears was a great teacher to his family and many others at NHS. Interim Superintendent Magoon said she would be happy to support Ms. Wells in the event. Mr. Beard made a motion *to support the use of the Auto Shop in the CTE for a Celebration of Life for Mr. Brad Sears*. It was seconded by Mr. Wilkinson. Chairman Darling called for a vote. *The motion passed 5-0-0*. Ms. Wells thanked the Board.

#### Snack Shack Renovations Update

Interim Superintendent Magoon gave an update on the renovations to the football snack shack.

- ❖ The concrete slab has been poured and has been waiting (for continued construction) for weeks.
- ❖ She has been informed the Snack Shack will not be ready for the first game.
- ❖ LaValley's Building Supply has stated they just received the request for the materials earlier in the week.
- ❖ There are volunteers doing the work; timeframes go with that
- ❖ For the first game there will be no announcers, score board, speakers or power. The school was looking at ways to 'make it work'.

Chairman Darling stated she had seen items outside next to the concrete slab. She was concerned because they weren't covered from the elements.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. stated for clarification that the school has a tent. He was told yes. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked if the tent could work in place of the building. Interim Superintendent Magoon stated she would have a conversation with the custodial staff.

Mr. Wilkinson asked if the work was projected to be done for the second game. Interim Superintendent Magoon stated she would get the answer and relay it to the Board.

Mr. Beard asked if the delay was due to LaValley's or the supplier. Interim Superintendent Magoon believed it was the process of time.

#### Critical Shortage Staff Position Request

Chairman Darling stated that the Board needed to redo the motion for a Critical Shortage request. Interim Superintendent Magoon explained she had asked July 14, 2022 that the School Board identify the position of Digital Media Specialist as a local critical staffing shortage in Newport. She had given the incorrect title; it is actually Library Media Specialist. She needs the minutes to show the correct title of Library Media Specialist. Chairman Darling made a motion *to make the Library Media Specialist a Critical Shortage Staff Position in Newport*. It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. *The motion passed 5-0-0*.

### Department of Revenue Letter

Interim Superintendent Magoon stated there was a copy of a letter from the State of New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration. It was an informational letter that went out to all school districts. She then said the SAU 43 audit for 2021 passed. Any fines noted in the letter did not apply to SAU 43 and Newport School District. There were no questions. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. commented on not knowing what the amended RSA referenced in the revenue letter said. He spoke about Newport's history with school finances and what fines and fees the letter informed school districts of (if they were not able to comply). He gave his opinion of what the Revenue Administration and the Department of Education should have done to assist all districts with any audit problems.

### Revenue Review

Ms. Diane Mulholland, Business Administrator gave a review of the school district's financial report over the course of four years. She answered all questions from the Board members.

### Goals for 2022-2023

Interim Superintendent Magoon stated a strategic plan would be completed set by her administrative team. She listed the following goals

- 1) Core Values: student achievement and growth
- 2) School culture, staff innovation and resources
- 3) Community Engagement

When asked, she said there would be regular updates at Board meetings.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked if wording could be in there for a 'joy of testing'. He then asked Ms. Mulholland if 2721 was account 390 (transportation). They would discuss it at a later time.

### Hiring

Interim Superintendent Magoon informed the Board of the summer hiring process.

### Preschool Program Update

Interim Superintendent Magoon addressed the Board and gave an update on the transition of the preschool program back to Richards School. Chairman Darling and Mr. Wilkinson had toured the program area and expressed their thoughts. Mr. Wilkinson has requested an additional tour after school has started. Mr. Morris stated Ms. Ferrigno had expressed concern about space at Richards. He hoped that the teachers were being asked for their input during the transition.

### Goshen Contract

Interim Superintendent Magoon stated the Goshen contract was before the School Board members for their approval. When the Newport School Board approved and signed the contract she would bring it to the Goshen superintendent who would in turn bring it to the Goshen School Board for approval. She had relayed to Goshen the request to do future contracts earlier in the year. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked about the two appendixes to the contract. They were explained. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked about section six of the contract. It was clarified for him.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked about paragraph seven. The date written is May 1; his notes say April 1. He asked about this discrepancy. The May 1<sup>st</sup> date was explained to him.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. read aloud from parts of RSA 91-A:3 II (j) consideration of confidential, commercial or financial information that is exempt from public disclosure and RSA 91-A:3 II (k). He asked if the Goshen contract qualifies under the law. Chairman Darling stated she had never had the contracts made public until after they were approved (by the Board). Mr. Spaulding, Sr. agreed with that procedure. He then asked if the people knew the content of the contract now. Procedurally, since it is on the agenda (and the agenda was made public) is that sufficient. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. said he did not want the School Board to fail on procedure. Chairman Darling

stated she understood his concern and believed the School Board is in compliance. There was a brief discussion about future procedure. Chairman Darling asked for a motion to approve the contract with the Goshen School District. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. made a motion *to approve the Goshen School District contract as presented*. It was seconded by Mr. Beard. *The motion passed 5-0-0.*

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Newport School District and the Town of Newport Safety Resource Officer (SRO)

Interim Superintendent Magoon explained she had received a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from Police Chief Brent Wilmot. He stated it had not been signed. She brought it to Mr. Upton and he gave requests on some wording he wanted changed in the MOU. Interim Superintendent Magoon complied and gave the MOU to Interim Police Chief Hunter, who looked at it and got back to her on Thursday, August 11, 2022. Interim Superintendent Magoon took the new wording and had made the School Board members a clean copy of the MOU.

Interim Superintendent Magoon also received information from Town Manager Rieseberg on Thursday, August 11, 2022. She gave the School Board members copies of that correspondence. It stipulates some of the wording that he would like in the MOU. Town Manager Rieseberg (Town's proposal to the School) would include five additional caveats to the MOU:

1. The School will reimburse the town time and a half for the services of the SRO (150%). Their reasoning is because they are short staffed and taking their SRO out of the rotation would mean they would have to backfill with personnel at time and a half.

Hopefully, when Newport officers return from the academy and can be (independently) on the road; the school would not be paying the time and a half. Town Manager Rieseberg stated the 150% payment was only for the time they are short staffed. No timeframe was given. Interim Superintendent Magoon addressed the Board and stated his entire email correspondence was in their Board packets.

2. The Town will reserve the right to call the SRO back to (town) duty as needed (emergency reasons).
3. If the School breaks the contract, it needed to do it around December for the prior year (budget reasons).
4. The Town wants the School to cover wages, benefits, at 75% because the School would have the SRO for nine months out of the year.
5. In other words, the School will pay for wages, benefits, training time, sick leave, vacation leave and anything that occurs when the SRO is assigned to the school.

Mr. Morris asked if the proposal was standard (practice). He was told not time and a half (#1). Interim Superintendent Magoon contacted Mr. Matthew Upton, Esq. School Counsel about the proposal. Because the Town's lawyer and the School's lawyer are in the same law firm, the School had to waive proprietary with the lawyer. Attorney Upton said that numbers 2, 3 and 5 are not unusual; time and a half is unusual (for a MOU for SRO). If we want a SRO full time in September in the district schools that is what the Town is proposing the School pay.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked if the School Board members had time to review the MOU information before the next School Board meeting. Interim Superintendent Magoon stated that the next School Board meeting is in September; it will be after school starts. Chairman Darling corrected her, stating there was a second meeting in August not listed on the calendar. The next meeting is August 25, 2022. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked if Town Manager Rieseberg realized he was breaking the law because he is "holding the school hostage in this illegally..." Interim Superintendent Magoon stated they had a meeting in his office. Student and staff safety are very important to her. She feels as though the schools hands are tied. It seems as though the School has to do this if we want a SRO in the building. She was saddened at the option presented to the school district.

Interim Superintendent Magoon said she found out that most of the police dispatcher calls during the day are at the school. Chairman Darling asked if the school still paid if the SRO was called away from the school. She was told no. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. expressed his opinion; their job is public safety. If the Town of Newport had a large incident (MCI) it might make the Eagle Times (newspaper). If there is a firearm incident inside the school the Newport schools will be publicized nationally. Continuing, he said that public safety begins at the school because of the aura we are in. If Newport missed it, it would be tragic. Someone needs to go and argue public safety to the Town; their job is not only the streets, but also the schools. He asked that any action on the item be postponed to the August 25, 2022 meeting. When acknowledged by the Chair,

Mr. Minick asked for clarification:

The School is being asked to pay time and a half as well as the police officers benefits and training (75%).

Mr. Minich asked for an explanation: the School pays time and a half and all the benefits, etc. These are included when they are working for the police department. Why does the school have to pay extra? Interim Superintendent Magoon explained it to Mr. Minick, stating the time and a half only covered salary. There was further questioning about how the police officers received their benefits.

Chairman Darling expressed her frustration in the financial and proprietary aspect of the SRO in the proposed contract. The other Board members expressed their frustration and concerns at the premium price with the additional caveats proposed by the Town. The staff shortage in Newport is not new; it is a nationwide problem. The Board members questioned what the community wanted. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. suggested a special meeting to discuss the SRO question. He would not consent to the proposal. There was a discussion on the proposal and its unfairness.

Mr. Beard stated he believed the members should go to the Selectboard meeting (August 15, 2022) as the School Board and discuss the proposal. He believed it is a political decision that has been made by Town Manager Rieseberg. The SRO had been set up by Police Chief Brent Wilmot before he left Newport. The School was told they would have a SRO starting in September. Now there is an issue with monetary consequences for the School. He wanted explanations from Town Manager Rieseberg. An SRO has been in the school since Mr. Jim Burroughs (current Selectman) was employed in the police department. Mr. Beard gave additional opinions on the proposal and Selectmen.

After a discussion on the positive aspects of having a SRO and the safety of the staff and students, it was decided a group would attend the meeting. It would constitute a joint meeting because a quorum of School Board members would be in attendance.

Mrs. Sandra Flint, Newport resident and retired teacher, asked if any aspects of the proposal were negotiable.

Town Manager Rieseberg stated his proposal. Teachers come to the SAU (in contract negotiations) and state what they would like. Interim Superintendent Magoon stated the proposal was firm. It was what the School had to do. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. stated that one week ago he had attended a meeting (with Interim Superintendent Magoon) and there had not been time and a half mentioned then. Therefore the proposal is negotiable. A quorum of the School Board in attendance at the BOS meeting needed to be posted with notation: Action Needed. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. suggested requesting a meeting place at which the School Board would negotiate and go to the Board of Selectmen's Room. There needed to be a meaningful discussion.

Chairman Darling acknowledged citizens to speak:

Lucy Wells

Ms. Wells expressed the importance of the SRO and establishment of mental health assistance. She didn't like hearing of the double dipping that is being proposed by the Town. Ms. Kerry Finnegan, Director of Student Services explained the support and resources (mental health) available to students.

David Driver, Newport resident, asked:

- 1) If a full duty officer goes into the School (as SRO), will the Town bill the School for extra overtime they have to use to police the street. He was told yes. Interim Superintendent Magoon told Mr. Driver the proposed SRO has been in the schools as the SRO for years. Over the last two years he has not been in the schools. The School wants to reestablish his presence).
- 2) When will the Town be able to staff a SRO? Town Manager Rieseberg had relayed it was 'hopeful' they would be able to staff the SRO position in January 2023.
- 3) What is the number of calls from the school to the police department? Interim Superintendent Magoon said she did not have the number, she was told there were more calls from the school than any other location.
- 4) When was the last time the Newport police department was fully staffed? It has been an ongoing problem.

Mr. Beard stated there had been a SRO in the school for approximately 20 years. He explained the pulling of the SRO was the police's decision. Right now it is a political decision by the town manager.

- 5) Did the School previously pay for the SRO? He was told the breakup was 49% and 51%. The School paid 49%; the Town paid 51%. That way, if they needed to pull the SRO they could.

Concluding discussion, Mr. Spaulding, Sr. said that doing nothing is not a solution. It is unfathomable that the School should be in this position. The BOS has to understand the dilemma; has to understand the importance of the SRO. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. stated the division in the BOS and with the town manager on the subject. If the Board was willing to go to the August 15, 2022 meeting, he would attend, too. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked Interim Superintendent Magoon to request that the School Board be on the agenda. She agreed. Chairman Darling addressed the Board and asked for agreement to be put on the BOS agenda. The Board concurred to be put on the agenda.

Mr. Wilkinson stated that the town was asking for the 150% salary. Did that include school vacations and PE days? The school has 180 school days. That equals 6 months (1/2 year) not 3/4 of a year. The School is not using the SRO for a full nine months. Mr. Beard asked they be put on the agenda; see how the meeting goes. Afterwards, possible publicity in the newspaper stating the Newport Town Manager feels it is okay to put the safety of the Newport school children at risk (might be an option). He stressed to the Newport townspeople viewing the meeting that it is not the police department; it is the Newport town manager Hunter Rieseberg's decision. The police chiefs have had it worked out without the town manager's input. When confronted by a large group of townspeople (constituents), the BOS tend to listen.

Interim Superintendent Magoon stated that she wanted to have a positive relationship with the town. She would never propose: Not to use the gym for future voting or charging the town for using the School gym for voting for elections (utilities, etc.). She stated that this year it is more (cost) than in the past (because of the primary elections). She repeated that she would never come to the School Board and ask that the town pay (for the use of the gym) because we all have to work together as one community.

She was therefore saddened when Town Manager Rieseberg gave the SRO proposal.

Ms. Diane Mulholland, Business Administrator; made the suggestion to break the proposed request down to an hourly wage and pay the SRO for the number of hours he is in the school. He would be paid his hourly rate including his benefits.

Chairman Darling said the School Board would not be taking action on the proposal. A quorum of Board members will attend the August 15, 2022 BOS meeting. It will therefore be posted as a joint meeting.

### Security Action for Education(SAFE) Grant

Nothing new to report, the application is in; we are waiting for a response.

### School Board & Selectboard Joint Meeting

After a brief discussion on the topics to cover, the date School Board members were available and the location of the meeting; Chairman Darling stated that with a School Board quorum at the BOS meeting on August 15, 2022 they could decide on a date, time and place for the meeting.

A Public Comment question on Busing of children was asked (sent via email). Chairman Darling deferred the question to the next meeting.

### New Hires

Chairman Darling reminded the Board of their decision to allow the Superintendent to make hires over the summer. They had been given a list of hires they needed to formally move and approve. Chairman Darling made a motion *to approve the hiring of:*

1. *Mr. Thomas Ciglar, MA Step 17 at \$58,526*
2. *Ms. Eva Johnson, MA Step 9 at \$48,606*
3. *Ms. Linda Goudreault, MA Step 4 at \$42,406*
4. *Ms. Laura Botelho, BA Step 1 at \$36,467*
5. *Ms. Christine Ball, at \$48,668*
6. *Ms. Jill Beaman, MA Step 9 at \$48,606*
7. *Mr. Michael Copp, BA+15, Step 2 at \$38,816*
8. *Eliza Brodeur-Fossa, MA, Step 4 at \$42,406*
9. *Mr. Zachary Burrows, MA, Step 4 at \$42,406*
10. *Ms. Patricia Nix, MA Step 13 at \$53,566*
11. *Ms. Karen Espinoza, BA Step 12 at \$50,107*
12. *Ms. Elizabeth Hall, BA Step 1 at \$36,467*
13. *Ms. Greta Smith, BA Step 14 at \$52,587*
14. *Ms. Kelley Bousquet, BA Step 11 at \$48,867*

It was seconded by Mr. Wilkinson. *The motion passed 5-0-0.*

### Resignation

Interim Superintendent Magoon explained there were five employees who she would like the Board to release from their contracts. They will be following the stipulations in their contracts. New hires have to pay district fees. She read the four aloud:

1. Ms. Karen Carlson. Mr. Beard made a motion *to accept the resignation of Ms. Karen Carlson.* It was seconded by Mr. Wilkinson. *The motion passed 5-0-0.*
2. Ms. Kelly Reilly. Request the Board release her from her contract. Her last day will be August 26, 2022. Her contract states she is required to give a thirty day written notice and pay fees of prepaid insurance.
3. Jenna Brown. Request she be released from her contract after paying 1% of salary and fees as stated in her contract as well as any other fees owed to the district.
4. Ryan Osborne. Request he be released from his contract after paying 1% of salary and fees as stated in his contract as well as any other fees owed to the district.

5. Tom Ronning. Request he be released from his contract after contractual 90 days (November 3, 2022) or when a suitable replacement is found (whichever comes first).

Mr. Beard moved **to accept the above resignations**. It was seconded by Mr. Wilkinson. **The motion passed 5-0-0.**

### **Policies**

First Reads (None)

### **Communication:**

#### **Administration:**

Interim Superintendent Magoon told the Board that she had a School Board booklet (ordered) and links for School Board member Tim Beard. She will send the links via email. The School will be participating in the Apple Pie Crafts Fair August 27<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 3 pm. She explained their location will be in front of the SAU office building. A schedule for Board members to participate will be created.

#### **Board**

##### **Mr. Wilkinson**

Said he liked the refurbished tables, setup of the room and growing positive relations among the Board members.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. concurred with Mr. Wilkinson's statement.

Mr. Beard thanked the Board for their confidence in having him as a Board member. He also wanted to relay the aviation career education academy (ACE) camp at Parlin Field has been great for the students who have attended. He told them of some of the guest aircraft that had landed at the field for the campers.

Mr. Morris had nothing to share at this time.

Chairman Darling had nothing to share at this time.

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

Chairman Darling called for a roll call vote to go into nonpublic ***under RSA 91-A:3 (c) Matters which may affect the reputation of another and (k) Negotiations. 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. The motion passed by roll call 5-0-0.*** The public meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maura Stetson, Recording Secretary

Approved on: August XX, 2022

The next School Board meeting will be August 25, 2022