

Newport School Board
Meeting Minutes of December 22, 2022
Municipal Building
15 Sunapee Street, Newport, NH 03773

School Board Members in Attendance: Jenna Darling, Chair; Steve Morris, Vice Chair; Bert Spaulding, Sr.

School Board Members Absent: Tim Beard, Bill Wilkinson, Stephen Emery, Student Representative

School Administration and staff present: Donna Magoon, Interim Superintendent; Diane Mulholland, Business Administrator; Kerry Finnegan, Student Support Services; Brynn Kane, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Lisa Ferrigno, Ed Oberhofer

Public Present: Austin Davis

Videographer: Newport Community Television (NCTV) (for full meeting go to: www.nctv-nh.org)

Call to Order

Chairman Darling called the meeting of the Newport School Board (NSB) to order at 5:01 p.m. followed by a roll call of School Board members and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adjustments to the Agenda: was accepted as presented

Public Comment to include input for School District Budget (the School Board now allows six minutes for public comment):

Austin Davis (community member, taxpayer, father of three children in the middle and high school) addressed the School Board. He told the Board that at the December 8, 2022 School Board meeting he had asked for the following documents through a RSA 91-A (Right to Know) request:

- 1) Contract of the virtual health teacher at the middle and high school
- 2) Copies of all related correspondence related to this contract

As of December 22, 2022 he had not received the requested documents; therefore he had a second Right to Know request for the documents in hard copy for the Board.

The school board officials say they want to be transparent; he wondered whether they are trying to hide something. Money is being wasted in the school budget. It does not meet the needs of many special education students.

Mr. Davis said he reached out to the virtual health teacher.

- The virtual teacher is in Florida (he did not believe she understood the needs of the Newport children)
- According to the teacher, there are no lessons being taught during his children's class time. Instead, there is a long term substitute present during the class. The substitute is supposed to help the students with the (health) material that the virtual teacher is not able to teach
- His children said that the class behavior is a circus
- The virtual teacher was not aware that some of the students she taught were special ed. students with IEPs or 504s; the material was not modified to accommodate those students
- The virtual teacher did not have emails for parents or guardians in order to send progress reports on how students were doing.
- When asked if the students needed to be independent and self-directed learners, she said that the class was an entry level college class.

Mr. Davis said that in order for the students to be successful, they needed to be highly supported. He did not believe they were (in this atmosphere). He said the classroom management was poor, they were falling behind (in their studies), and that he and his wife pulled their son and daughter out of the class.

Mr. Davis asked the level of the other virtual class at the middle school. Concluding, he said as a parent, taxpayer and community member; the school is losing teachers, paraprofessionals, educators and administrative personnel. He questioned who is making or micromanaging the decisions. He believed it is time to reflect on what is wrong

at the “top”. He wanted to see transparency. Parents want to be involved; when the schools are not informing them about what is happening in the school system; the schools will not have the support they need from the parents.

Interim Superintendent Magoon said:

- ❖ All the documents Mr. Davis requested (December 8, 2022) had been mailed.
- ❖ The health teacher in the high school is no longer a virtual teacher. There is an in person teacher.

She explained that the original teacher had left the district for another position; they had acquired a virtual teacher. Then:

- ❖ The (certified) health teacher came back to the Newport School District and is again teaching.
- ❖ The middle school currently has a virtual teacher. The school has to have a certified teacher to have the class; thus the virtual teacher. There currently are candidates (and scheduled interviews) for the middle school position.
- ❖ It is not that the district does not want an in person teacher in the position, but the district is required by law to have a certified teacher (in the health field) in the classroom.
- ❖ The virtual teacher program is provided to the local schools by the State of New Hampshire (Department of Education). She explained the standards for teachers, programs and standards that the state requires; Newport has to be in compliance with everything or they lose their special ed. funding (through the state).

Mr. Davis thanked her for the explanation.

Ms. Kane, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment administrator; addressed Mr. Davis and explained the virtual teacher that will be in charge of the middle school class until an in person teacher can be hired. Mr. Morris asked if there was a Newport teacher in the classroom while the virtual teacher is instructing. He was told in the middle school it is a paraprofessional (it was explained). Chairman Darling asked Mr. Davis to contact her or the Interim Superintendent after Christmas if he did not get the Right to Know documents.

Interim Superintendent Magoon said if he had other questions, to contact her and they would meet or talk on the phone. She has an open door policy.

Lisa Ferrigno

Addressed the Board and said that November and December were rough months for Richards’s School. They lost four paraprofessionals in November; they are down a Case manager, Technology instructor and a guidance counselor. Illnesses that plagued the School were bronchitis, RSV (respiratory virus), pink eye, pneumonia, flu, and Covid. She said that although there were 17 staff members out the week before, school was still in session and the children were educated due to the collaboration of everyone at Richards.

Ms. Ferrigno stated the school had a winter concert at the Opera House (first in years and in the evening). The teachers volunteered to help (she listed their names) set up, put on and pitched in to clean up because the entire Town maintenance department was out with Covid. It showed another way that people (from Richards) stepped up. Concluding, she thanked the entire Richards staff, because every day they step up and help wherever it is needed. She is proud and appreciative of them.

Approval of School Board Minutes: Public: November 20, 2022; December 8, 2022; December 11, 2022
November 20, 2022

Chairman Darling made a motion, *to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2022 School Board meeting*. It was seconded by Mr. Morris. *The motion passed 3-0-0.*

Public December 8, 2022

Chairman Darling made a motion *to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2022 School Board meeting*. It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. *The motion passed 3-0-0.*

December 11, 2022

Chairman Darling made a motion, *to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2022 School Board meeting*. It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. Chairman Darling called for a vote. *The motion passed 3-0-0.*

Student Representative Report -none

Information/Action Items

Budget Review/Update (Informational)

Interim Superintendent Magoon stated there is now an agreement between the Administration and the School Board for the 2023-2024 fiscal school year. The tax impact is down to \$1.85/1000. Interim Superintendent Magoon said that the proposed budget is on the Sau 43 website. When acknowledged, Mr. Spaulding, Sr. spoke to the possibility of the proposed budget going to default. He asked what the Board was doing to keep tabs on how the lawsuits were proceeding against the State of NH.

When acknowledged, Mr. Lunn said that he was a plaintiff in one of the lawsuits against the state. He said the case was not going to be heard until August 2023. He explained the cases that have been heard and how there hasn't been an answer to the funding issue. Interim Superintendent Magoon said that now it's a time to wait. There was a brief discussion on the right to an equalization of funds for (public) education. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. said they should not wait. He said that the School Board should write a letter to the Supreme Court advocating action. When asked why not to contact the representatives for Newport, it was stated that the legislature was the problem. The court had made decisions twice and the legislature had not followed through with their decisions. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. ***moved that the School Board write a letter to the Supreme Court.*** He asked Mr. Lunn what issues were in front of the Supreme Court concerning fair funding. Mr. Lunn explained that the Court has to set an amount; they said adequate education in the initial cases; it was up to the legislature to decide on an amount. What the case is now is that the court needs to decide on a realistic amount and then the legislature has to find a way to pay for it.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. also stated that the state should be asked to change wages for teachers across the board to be the same pay scale. He explained how it could help the recruiting of teachers. There was a lengthy discussion on the economics in education among the Board. Chairman Darling asked if there was a second to the motion (she repeated the motion as: ***that the School Board/District to draft a letter to the Supreme Court, representatives, senators and governor***). It was seconded by Mr. Morris. ***The motion passed 3-0-0.*** Chairman Darling will write a letter to go to the Supreme Court.

Budget Hearing-Scheduled January 12, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

The School Budget Public Hearing will be held on January 12, 2023 at 5 p.m. in the Lou Thompson Room a regular School Board meeting will follow it.

Budget Adjustments (Action Needed)

Ms. Mulholland stated that there had been several line items adjustments to meet the needs of the District. There will be budget adjustments from now until the end of the school year. Chairman Darling asked for a motion to accept the budget adjustments. Chairman Darling made a motion ***to accept the budget adjustments.*** It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. ***The motion passed 3-0-0.***

Future Business Leaders of America Overnight (Action Needed)

Interim Superintendent Magoon stated that the Future Business Leaders of America were scheduled to go on an overnight trip to attend the annual NH FBLA convention in Manchester, NH on March 23rd and 24th. Students will be able to attend workshops and other professional development classes as well as participate in Business and Marketing competitions. The school is anticipating participation by 12 students and 2-3 adult chaperones. Their attendance requires an overnight stay (at the Double Tree Hotel in Manchester). Interim superintendent Magoon is in support of the opportunity; she asked for the Board members to vote on the request. Chairman Darling made a motion ***to approve the overnight trip for the Future Business Leaders of America to Manchester (on March 23-24, 2023).***

It was seconded by Mr. Morris. ***The motion passed 3-0-0.***

Robotic Grant, Amount of \$14,015.00 (Action Needed)

After an explanation by Interim Superintendent Magoon, Mr. Spaulding, Sr. made a motion *to accept the Robotic grant in the amount of \$14,015.00*. It was seconded by Chairman Darling. Chairman Darling asked that the Board be given updates on the Robotic Program. ***The motion passed 3-0-0.***

The Board was reminded that the school had also received a \$3,000 grant from Hypertherm last year for a robotic program/team.

Future Agenda Item Update – Bullying (Informational)

Mr. Beard had asked that Bullying be an agenda item. Interim Superintendent Magoon stated that surveys will be sent out in 2023 and a round table discussion will be held on January 9, 2023. The administrative team will be in attendance to listen to parents and communities concerns. They will compile the survey and round table information and will present it to the Board. Mr. Beard was volunteered to sit on the roundtable discussion. The agenda item will be put on a January meeting agenda.

Mr. Morris and Interim Superintendent Magoon stated that cell phones, cyber bullying and Tic Tok will all be discussed individually at a later time.

Program Approval (Action Needed)

SOAR program

Interim Superintendent Magoon stated the draft handbook in the Board packets had been drawn up because they needed one to send to the state. She explained the program to the Board members, explaining it was a therapeutic approach to education for grades 6-12. The program, located in the Towle building will also house suspended students. Interim Superintendent Magoon asked for the approval of the Board for the program. Ms. Finnegan, Student Support Services; said the program was in its initial stage. Key items were for the students struggling in the mainstream environment. She explained how the students in SOAR will be served (social/ emotional/ behavioral approach). They were awaiting permission from the Department of Education and Special Education. One major thing needed for the state is School Board approval so the SAU can officially sent everything in to the state. Mr. Morris asked about the instructor. There was a certified instructor for the program. He asked about the money for the program. They had the money. As the program grew, they were anticipating tuition students that would help defray costs. Chairman Darling questioned the grade levels (5-12 is on the handbook). She stressed the need of the program to start small and grow slowly. Ms. Finnegan answered all questions, explaining the needs and that the District has to stay within the state guidelines. On a motion by Chairman Darling, seconded by Mr. Morris; ***the Board voted to approve the implementation of the SOAR program. The motion passed 3-0-0.***

New Hire

Chairman Darling made a motion *to approve the hire of Special Education teacher Sarah Crooks, BA Step 3 at \$38,947.00 pro rated to \$22,315.58*. It was seconded by Mr. Morris. ***The motion passed 3-0-0.***

Chairman Darling welcomed Sarah Crooks to Newport.

Resignation-Lori Fosdick; Special Education teacher

Interim Superintendent Magoon recommended that the District accept Ms. Fosdick's resignation pending any fees she has incurred. Chairman Darling made a motion *to accept the resignation of Ms. Lori Fosdick*. It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. ***The motion passed 3-0-0.***

Chairman Darling thanked Ms. Fosdick for her service to the District.

Committee Report Outs: CTE

Mr. Morris said the CTE is moving along. The construction management team selected BMI. The team will be getting some bids for the construction work. There are opportunities for naming rights (programs), buying a brick (student fundraiser), and donations of equipment. There are opportunities for the community to donate money to the school.

Chairman Darling asked if the district has heard more about additional funding for the CTE renovation. She was told no.

Policies: none

Communication

Administration:

Interim Superintendent Magoon wished everyone a safe and happy new year. The concerts (all levels) were amazing.

Board:

Mr. Morris said that he had attended the CSI (Comprehensive Support and Improvement) meeting. He thanked all the teachers for their help and their time. He really appreciated all that the teachers and support staff do (volunteering) to make Newport great.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. had nothing to share at this time.

Chairman Darling also thanked all the teachers and staff. She reminded people it was election season again.

There will be two school board seats: 1 one year term; 1 three year term

School District Clerk (1 year term)

School District Moderator (1 year term)

School District Treasurer (1 year term)

January 18-January 27 are the filing dates

Chairman Darling wished everyone a peaceful and restful holiday.

Chairman Darling made a motion *to adjourn at 6:17 p.m.* It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. *The motion passed 3-0-0.*

Respectfully submitted,

Maura Stetson, Recording Secretary

Approved on: January XX, 2023

The next meeting of the Newport School Board is scheduled after the Budget Public Hearing on January 12, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. in the Lou Thompson Room.