

**Newport School Board**  
**Public Hearing and Regular Meeting**

Minutes of February 23, 2023

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:** Jenna Darling, Chair; Steve Morris, Vice Chair; Bert Spaulding, Sr.; Tim Beard

**School Board Members Absent:** Stephen Emery, Student Representative

**School Administration and staff present:** Donna Magoon, Interim Superintendent; Kerry Finnegan, Student Support Services; Brynn Kane, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Ed Oberhofer Co-President NTA; Lisa Ferrigno, Co-President NTA

**Public Present:** Kathy Hubert

**Videographer:** Newport Community Television (NCTV) (for full meeting go to: [www.nctv-nh.org](http://www.nctv-nh.org))

**Public Hearings**

Chairman Darling called the Public Hearing of the Newport School Board (NSB) to order at 5:02 p.m. followed by a roll call of School Board members present and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Hearing One**

**Gift of “Spunky” Dodge Memorial Scholarship**

Interim Superintendent Magoon told the Board she was looking for approval of the Spunky” Dodge Memorial Scholarship. Mr. Arnold Dodge’s family had created a \$50,000 Memorial Scholarship in his name. It will be an annual scholarship of \$5,000. Stipulations for the scholarship:

- 1) Annual, no more than \$5,000

The student must have been an active member of the Newport football team during their senior year

- 2) The recipient must attend college or trade school upon graduation

Preference to be given to a technical college; a program to become a barber would also qualify

- 3) Input to be given from the then acting coach or athletic director
- 4) An individual who exhibits exceptional character

- 5) If there are numerous candidates; the scholarship committee is to look at financial need, community service and involvement in the Newport area

The scholarship will be available over the course of ten years (\$5,000/year). It will be known as the “Spunky Dodge Memorial Scholarship”. During a brief discussion, Mr. Spaulding, Sr. expressed his appreciation; it was to go to a well-rounded individual; giving a helping hand. Chairman Darling made a motion *to accept the “Spunky Dodge Memorial Scholarship Fund” in the amount of \$50,000*. It was seconded by Mr. Beard. *The motion passed 4-0-0*. Chairman Darling thanked the Dodge family; it was a great gift to the district.

**Public Hearing Two**

**Grant of Beyond School Enrichment-Richards School and Grant of Beyond School Enrichment-Middle School**

- 1) \$21,081.00 for Richards Elementary School
- 2) \$21,081.00 for Newport Middle School

Interim Superintendent Magoon told the Board that the School District had applied and been awarded a grant of \$21,081.00 for Richards Elementary School and \$21, 081.00 for the Newport Middle School. The purpose of the grant is for a summer camp program for students that qualify through Title I or Special Ed. The program would be: academics in the morning and camp in the afternoon. Chairman Darling asked for public comments on the grant of Beyond School Enrichment.

- ❖ Ms. Ferrigno asked if the Richards School grant money be available to any student that applies.

Interim Superintendent Magoon said no, only certain students would qualify. Students would have to qualify for Title I Services or Special Ed. Services. The program would be for summer school.

- ❖ When asked, she said it was a one year grant.
- ❖ Chairman Darling asked if it would be incorporated into the summer school. She was told yes; it will be an additional part to summer school (academics AM/camp program PM) for elementary and middle school students
- ❖ Chairman Darling asked if the school would collect data from the program. She was told yes, and gave information on what would be collected.

After making sure she could make one motion for both grants: Chairman Darling made a motion *to accept the grant money of \$21,081.00 for a Beyond School Enrichment Program for Richards Elementary School and grant money of \$21,081.00 for a Beyond School Enrichment Program at Newport Middle School* It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

Public Comment (was held during public hearings)

Chairman Darling closed the Public Hearings at 5:09 pm.

### **Newport School Board Regular Meeting**

Chairman Darling asked for any Adjustments to the Agenda:

**Remove** Student Representative Report (Magoon);

**Remove:** High School Discipline Presentation (Magoon);

**Add** Joint Meeting with Croydon School District (Magoon and Darling);

**Remove** the acceptance of the scholarship and grants: done in public hearings (Darling);

**Add** additional nonpublic meeting to agenda: RSA 91-A:3 II (a) (Darling)

On a motion by Chairman Darling, seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. *the Board approved the adjustments to the agenda. The motion passed by roll call vote 4-0-0.*

#### **Public Comment**

Mrs. Kathy Hubert, Board member of the School Funding Fairness nonprofit addressed the Board and viewing audience and gave a synopsis of what School Funding Fairness did and the progress they have made to get the state legislature to change its way of funding state sponsored (public) education. She said there was a lot of work still left to do, and convincing Newport's own state legislators to support educational House Bills that will benefit Newport was one of them. She distributed a letter to the School Board members and asked them to sign it to support the School Funding Fairness and their School District's needs.

Mr. Morris told Mrs. Hubert that the School Board had voted to send a letter last October or November 2022. They had also asked for things specifically for Newport. He asked if other schools who have signed the letter are worried about Newport's'. Mrs. Hubert said the present letter reinforces Newport's need. When asked, Mrs. Hubert told the Board that members (of School Funding Fairness) were visiting all towns and asking them to sign the letter. During a discussion with the Board, Mrs. Hubert said she will be posting the House Bills (HB); any constituent can call or write to their representatives and tell them whether they approve or don't approve the pending HB. The School Board members thanked Mrs. Hubert for all she was doing.

Mr. Oberhofer Co-President NTA; addressed the School Board and said he was in attendance because the agenda stated there would be a (high school) Discipline Presentation. Knowing it was postponed to the next meeting he hoped it would be followed by reports from the other Newport schools. He said if he was political, he would state that the state of the union (school district) was strong. Mr. Oberhofer said that at the beginning of the year he had said that his mission the current year was to retain all teachers. The school is 5/8 of the way through the year; the district has lost many teachers in the midyear. Therefore the (remaining) teachers are continually trying to cover all the classes. Conditions (behavior) in the hallways have deteriorated over the year. Teachers find they are perpetually shorthanded and up against persistent (negative) behavior patterns. He said he did not have answers,

only his problems of staying engaged. He said now is the time for swift action; next year is too late. He told the School Board members they were all great leaders. We (together) need to progress beyond words and turn to data driven solutions. Chairman Darling told Mr. Oberhofer that the district was very lucky to have him.

**Approval of School Board Minutes: Public: January 17, 2023; January 26, 2023; February 4, 2023**

**Approval of School Board Minutes: Non-Public: January 26, 2023; February 9, 2023**

**January 17, 2023**

Mr. Beard made a motion *to approve the public minutes of the January 17, 2023 meeting*. It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. Chairman Darling called for a vote. *The motion passed 4-0-0.* Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked for the 5 year historical information on solar that was to be given to the Board after the January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. Interim Superintendent Magoon will send it to him.

**January 26, 2023**

Mr. Beard made a motion *to approve the public minutes of the January 26, 2023 meeting*. It was seconded by Chairman Darling. There was no discussion. Chairman Darling called for a vote. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

**February 4, 2023**

Mr. Beard made a motion *to approve the public minutes of the February 4, 2023 meeting*. It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. There was no discussion. Chairman Darling called for a vote. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

**Nonpublic January 26, 2023**

Mr. Beard made a motion *to approve the nonpublic minutes of the January 26, 2023 meeting*. It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. There was no discussion. Chairman Darling called for a vote. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

**Nonpublic February 9, 2023**

Mr. Beard made a motion *to approve the nonpublic minutes of the February 9, 2023 meeting*. It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. There was no discussion. Chairman Darling called for a vote. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

**Information/Actions:**

**High School Program of Studies (Action Needed)**

Interim Superintendent Magoon said that Ms. Martin was attending via zoom with any questions from the Board. She was looking for the Board's approval so the high school can fill students' schedules. Interim Superintendent Magoon asked if there were questions from the Board.

1. Chairman Darling said she had asked for the meaning of the acronym AWATO. Ms. Martin had explained it was a software platform for individual classroom plans for students.
2. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked for the meaning of the acronym VLACS. It is Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (for online classes).

There were no additional questions. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. said it created a lot of opportunity for Newport students. He thanked the individuals who had put the packet together. Chairman Darling asked for a motion to approve the changes to the high school program of studies.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. made a motion *to approve the changes to the high school program of studies*. It was seconded by Mr. Beard. There was no discussion. Chairman Darling called for a vote. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

**School Calendar for 2023-2024 (Action Needed)**

Interim Superintendent Magoon addressed the Board and explained how she had developed the proposed calendar she was asking them to approve at the February 23, 2023 meeting. She had changes she would like to make to the proposed calendar:

- ☐ Change parent/teacher conferences from November 7 to November 1.
- ☐ At the bottom of the page is a typographical error: December 22 should be December 25.
- ☐ Move Richards school to a 6 hour day: 8:15 to 3:15 (more time for learning; bus schedule)

The downside of changing the bus schedule is transportation for sports: administration will work on it.

The teacher contract (hours worked) will not be impacted. Teachers work 185; students go 174.

January has a voting day that has not been scheduled. She will keep the Board abreast of any changes needed for the Professional Development Day. She has been working with the Town on the date.

Chairman Darling said she had received an email that School/Town Moderator Virginia Irwin needed to give the election schedule to Interim Superintendent Magoon. Interim Superintendent Magoon said she has been working with the Town on the days. She explained the dates off coincided with the election dates except for January 2024. There was discussion on the accuracy of the dates. Chairman Darling asked if there was a deadline to approve the calendar by.

Mr. Beard said that October 9<sup>th</sup> was Columbus Day. He questioned having it off. Interim Superintendent Magoon said she received a calendar from the state DOE with (school) holidays. Mr. Beard said his only concern was a bus for sports.

Mr. Morris asked if she was asking for a vote or only for opinions of the Board. Interim Superintendent Magoon said they didn't have to vote on the time change. Mr. Beard stated his concern was the bus for sports (he could only see the availability of getting a bus more difficult as time went on). There was a discussion on voting on the calendar and the changes Interim Superintendent Magoon was proposing. Chairman Darling asked to table the vote on the 2023-2024 School Calendar to the next meeting (before school elections) due to the questions of the Board members. Chairman Darling made a motion ***to table the vote on the 2023-2024 calendar and educational changes to the next School Board meeting***. It was seconded by Mr. Beard. ***The motion passed 4-0-0.***

#### Budget Adjustments (Action Needed)

After a brief discussion, Mr. Spaulding, Sr. made a motion ***to approve the budget adjustments as indicated on the following Journal Entry Numbers: 165, 169, 170, 184, 190, 191, 192, 205, 206 and 207 for a total of \$362,540.00.*** It was seconded by Mr. Beard. ***The motion passed 4-0-0.***

#### Bullying Update (informational)

Interim Superintendent Magoon addressed the Board and stated the administration continues to create documents that are consistent across the district. The goal is to create them and meet with families for input on them.

#### Joint meeting with Croydon School Representatives

The Superintendent of Croydon contacted Interim Superintendent Magoon for a joint meeting of the two districts. It is in their contract that we have a joint meeting. Croydon would like to meet in late April/early May (after Town elections). In discussion, Interim Superintendent Magoon was asked to contact Croydon and inquire about May 11, 2023.

#### Resignation- Jess Packard and Diane Mulholland

The School Board and public were informed of two resignations: Jess Packard, Dean of Students (Middle School) and Diane Mulholland (Business Administrator). Ms. Mulholland will work with the school district over the next few months (Mr. Emond past business administrator will also be assisting). Chairman Darling wished Jess Packard and Diane Mulholland well in their future endeavors.

#### Committee Report Outs: none:

Policies: none

#### Communication

##### **Administration:**

Interim Superintendent Magoon had nothing to share at this time.

##### **Board:**

Mr. Beard stated staff surveys needed to be done of resigning staff. A lot of things are happening that have been brought to his attention. He wants a survey conducted of the current staff asking: what they need, what they see, what is not working, what you aren't liking, what isn't working, what can be done better, what we need to change. He felt the Board needed to get more involved (not just administration) so the staff knows the School Board members have their back. The high school discipline was supposed to be on the agenda. He requested that the Middle and Elementary schools be on next or future agendas. The end of the year is coming quick; he wanted something done this year to show that the Board is working. Interim Superintendent Magoon told him of general actions done at exit interviews. Mr. Beard asked for a proactive survey. There was further discussion on doing a survey via Survey Monkey using Primex services. Chairman Darling asked for a motion. Mr. Beard made a

motion ***to do an employee survey using Survey Monkey and Primex services.*** It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. When asked; the Board said it had to be voluntary, unanimous and immediate. ***The motion passed 4-0-0.***

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

Mr. Morris thanked the Spunky Dodge Memorial Foundation and family. It was awesome to see someone in the Town help out the following generation. He said thank you and farewell to Ms. Packard, he was sad to see her go. Chairman Darling echoed Mr. Morris, thanked all the teachers for their hard work, and thanked the facilities crew for their hard work as well as the bus drivers. She wished everyone a good school vacation January 27 through March 5.

Chairman Darling made a motion at 6:34 pm ***to enter into nonpublic meeting pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (a) The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has right to a public meeting, and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted and non-public meeting pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II(d) Consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community.*** It was seconded by Mr. Morris. ***The motion passed by roll call vote 4-0-0.***

Respectfully submitted,

Maura Stetson, Recording Secretary  
Approved on: March XX, 2023

The next regular meeting of the Newport School Board is scheduled on March 8, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. in the Lou Thompson Room.