

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

Minutes of March 9, 2023

Lou Thompson Room (LTR), Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Center  
245 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, Stephen Emery, Student Representative

**School Board Members Absent:** none

**School Administration and staff present:** Donna Magoon, Interim Superintendent; Kerry Finnegan, Student Support Services; Brynn Kane, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Diane Mulholland, Business Administrator; Shannon Martin, High School Principal; Sarah Fisher, Assistant High School Principal; Ed Oberhofer Co-President NTA

**Public Present:** Ed Karr

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

Chairman Darling opened the meeting at 5:00 pm followed by a roll call of Board members and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adjustments to the Agenda

Chairman Darling asked for any Adjustments to the Agenda:

**ADD:** Bus Barn discussion to first item under Informational/Actions (Darling); **ADD:** FFA Request to after School Lunch Increase (Magoon); **ADD:** NPS 91-A:3 II (d) to before New Hires brief in/out. Board will have a decision afterwards (Spaulding). Chairman Darling asked for a roll call vote on the changes. ***The Board approved the adjustments to the agenda as presented. The motion passed by roll call vote 4-0-0.***

**Public Comment** none

**Approval of School Board Minutes: Public: February 23, 2023**

**Approval of School Board Minutes: NPS: February 23, 2023**

February 23, 2023

Mr. Beard made a motion ***to approve the public minutes of the February 23, 2023 meeting.*** It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. Chairman Darling called for a vote. ***The motion passed 4-0-0.***

Nonpublic February 23, 2023

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. informed the Chair that he had not received a copy with his packet. Chairman Darling made a motion ***to table the nonpublic minutes of the February 23, 2023 meeting.*** It was seconded by Mr. Beard. There was no discussion. Chairman Darling called for a vote. ***The motion passed 3-0-1 (Spaulding abstained).***

Student Representative Report

Stephen Emery gave a report on upcoming School activities:

- 1) Student Council will be holding their annual dodgeball tournament on Saturday, April 24 at 6 pm. There are 8 teams and spectators are welcome. Faculty \$2/Public \$3. Refreshments will be sold.
- 2) The Varsity Cheer Team competed at the state preliminary competition and finished 8<sup>th</sup> place.
- 3) Future Farmers of America (FFA), Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) and Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) will compete in state competitions in near future.
- 4) Bella Osgood and Stephen Emery will be going to All State Competitions (vocal/instrument)
- 5) Two Concerts will be held the week of March 13-17<sup>th</sup>: Thursday a Bandfest at High School; Friday is 3<sup>rd</sup> annual coffee house show at Opera House
- 6) Mr. Beard said that FFA is doing a pancake breakfast on March 11. He asked if tickets would be sold at the door (later in meeting it was announced that they would be).
- 7) Basketball game on March 10 at 6:30 pm (faculty versus students) Adults \$2/ \$1 students

High School Discipline Presentation (for full presentation go to: [www.nctv-nh.org](http://www.nctv-nh.org))

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Ms. Fisher gave a detailed presentation on student behavior and mediations at the high school. Ms. Fisher addressed the Board and said the high school broke down its behavior needing interaction into three tiers: Tier I, Tier II and Tier III. Ms. Fisher explained each tier and the School policy for them.

Mr. Spaulding, Sr. told Ms. Fisher she did an excellent job on her presentation. Mr. Beard thanked Ms. Fisher, stating the information was exactly what they were looking for. He asked that the Middle School and Elementary School also present their data in her format; she will share it with them. Chairman Darling looked forward to seeing the comparative data at the end of the year.

Ms. Fisher reiterated that if there was anything the Board believed she had missed, or something additional they would like to see; let her know. Mr. Morris thanked Ms. Fisher for the data. He asked if there was a resource that they (School/teachers) are lacking; what can they do as a Board to help (resource)? Ms. Fisher relayed the excellent team she has to work with in the high school. Ms. Martin answered Mr. Morris's question: people and counselors to counsel. West Central worked closely with the school to help with counseling (but more are always needed). The Board and Ms. Martin discussed student behavior and intervention.

Mr. Emery addressed Ms. Fisher and stated it was a wonderful presentation. He prefaced his statement saying that in the past he had made the same point to the Board. He wanted to make it clear to the principal and assistant principal: the powers they have given to students in ISI have been abused; the system is being used. Multiple examples were given of the abuse in ISI. He knew of occurrences spanning several months of the year. He was glad they were working on some disciplines; the OSS (a wonderful step being taken). ISI has serious work to be done to be effective. When asked if one step was to remove student phones; Mr. Emery said that that (phone) is a big piece. Students say they enjoy ISI. Ms. Martin said that Mr. Chad Howe did assist blocking the school chrome books. Chairman Darling thanked Ms. Martin and Ms. Fisher for the presentation.

### **Information/Actions:**

Bus Barn Discussion (for full discussion go to: [www.nctv-nh.org](http://www.nctv-nh.org))

Chairman Darling said she wanted to give an update on the Bus Barn. She and School representatives had attended the BOS meeting on March 6, 2023. Chairman Darling gave a synopsis of the School Board actions included a vote to withhold the lease payment in lieu of improving the facility. The School Board's decision was not relayed as an official vote to the Town Manager or BOS. Later they reversed the vote to continue making their payment on their lease of the bus barn. At the BOS March 6, 2023 meeting the BOS made a motion to reaffirm the vote. The School has been evicted from the two bays as of June 30, 2023. She had respectfully asked that they reconsider (the BOS Chairman told the School to stop their bitching). Chairman Darling stated that the BOS also raised concerns about their joint commitments with the town (SRO, voting location). Those commitments had never been voted on. She was sad that the divide between the Town and School Board has widened. Concluding, she publicly announced that the School had been evicted from the bus barn; they could keep the buses in the yard, run separate electric (for their use) and build a lean-to structure should the School choose. She said the School Board and School would work through the eviction. She asked for input from the other Board members. Among statements made by the other board members were:

- The proposed School budget cannot be changed. Any money spent (for bus barn facilities) will come out of education monies. What the BOS is doing does not serve the municipality (the people); it does no good. The viewing public was asked for their support in overturning the wrong that has been done.

Things were said by BOS members and the town manager that were not true:

- ❖ The Interim Superintendent did not tell the town manager that the School was not going to pay for the Newport Times, SRO or Economic Developer (grant writer Allison Browning) or any joint commitment.

The BOS said that the Transportation Director discussed in detail (during budget sessions) the conditions at the bus barn for school transportation workers (bus drivers, etc.). The BOS was aware of the conditions in October 2022.

- No one from the Selectboard had reached out to Interim Superintendent Magoon or the School Board.

False statements by BOS were made to put the townspeople against the School.

- ❖ The School Board had not reached out to the town (Although the town could have reached out to the School).

The truth:

- ❖ On October 3, 2022 School Board members Steve Morris and Tim Beard were scheduled to meet Mr. Burroughs (Selectman) at the bus barn to go over the problems they were having. Mr. Burroughs missed the appointment (and apologized); they should have again reached out but didn't. To emphasize the point, they did try to meet with Mr. Burroughs as members of the (two) Boards; to try to work together and forge a type of community.

- ❖ The statement/motion of lease payment being withheld by the School Board was for improvements to the conditions of the bus barn, not nonpayment of their lease. Withholding the money for improvements would improve the entire town.
- ❖ The current problems at the town garage with the School as a tenant are serious. The lack of good leadership in the town is serious.
- ❖ Board members represented the Town of Newport. Everyone on the School Board and Selectboard were elected officials who represented the townspeople and Town of Newport: it was their only job. They are supposed to stand up for what is best for Newport. If they can't, they shouldn't be in their (Board) position.

The same representation (for Newport) is not being seen with everything that the Selectboard does.

Chairman Darling said she had begun the conversation on the bus barn; but the problem and concern on the School's side did not start with Interim Superintendent Magoon, but further back with prior Superintendent (Minnihan). The Town Manager (and Selectboard?) stated that the equipment stored around town was worth the same or more than the school buses currently housed in the bays. She said she was frustrated and even complaining (about the situation). She assured the town the School will continue to work on the problem and it will continue to be on their agenda as the School Board moved forward.

Interim Superintendent Magoon thanked the dedicated bus drivers and Transportation Coordinator. She assured the families and bus drivers that they have the Board and administration's full support. The Board will do everything in their power to make the situation right.

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

Interim Superintendent Magoon addressed the Board and stated the action item had been tabled to verify dates. She had reached out and got all the verifications the Board had requested. Mr. Beard made a motion ***to approve the 2023-2024 school year calendar as presented.*** It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. Chairman Darling announced that 2024 graduation is June 5<sup>th</sup>. ***The motion passed 4-0-0.***

Mr. Emery addressed the Board and stated he has been approached multiple times by students. He has been in the system for 14 years. He stated that in June 2022 graduation had been on the 8<sup>th</sup>. In June 2024 graduation will be on the 5<sup>th</sup>. He asked why in the hell is this year's (2023) graduation on June 14<sup>th</sup>. He was told it was due to the school calendar; it was a legal reason. When asked, Ms. Martin addressed Mr. Emery and said he could have asked without the language; then explained further the technicalities the School had to follow to determine graduation day. Mr. Emery said it was very frustrating the way the date worked out (for 2023).

#### Capital Reserve (Discussion)

The Board members reviewed the lists (town/School) of capital reserve funds for the last five years that had been compiled by Town Finance Director Paul Brown. Board members stated the print was too small and asked for a copy with larger print (Interim Superintendent Magoon will make new copies and send them to Board members). The School has bank accounts they did not know they had. There was concern there might be money in the accounts they could have used (in the budget) to lower the tax impact. Next year they would like a copy before they put together their budget.

They all thanked Mr. Brown for keeping track of the money for the School. Chairman Darling said in 2018 the School had \$404,826.01; in 2022 they had \$331,253.83. The School has a \$20,000,000 budget. The total amount in the capital reserves is not a lot if large education expenditures are needed. She said it was interesting that in 2018 the Town had \$404,680.16; in 2022 they had \$810,563.09. She said if we have to bank on the Town; we have to bank on the School.

#### School lunch Increase

1. \$.25 for HS/MS Full Price Breakfast ( \$1.50 to \$1.75 )
2. \$.25 for Adult Lunch (from \$4 to \$4.25)
3. \$.50 for Adult Breakfast (from \$2 to \$2.50)

Interim Superintendent Magoon said they looked at the numbers (unpaid). They are deficit \$13,000+. Chairman Darling stated that every year the School sends out free/reduced applications for meals. It would be interesting to know how many students owing money are eligible. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked where the School stood with the policies concerning a situation like this. Chairman Darling will look into it. Interim Superintendent Magoon said the School couldn't deny students food. When brought up, Ms. Martin explained the policy for staff and cafeteria bills. Chairman Darling asked for a motion to approve the School lunch increases. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. made a motion ***to approve the school lunch increases as presented.*** It was seconded by Mr. Morris. Mr. Beard asked if

the increase was to pay for the increased charges from the state. Interim Superintendent Magoon said it was to help defray the costs. Mr. Beard stated he did not believe students should have to pay for their meals. It was the Covid program that he agreed with: paying for students meals. ***The motion passed 4-0-0.***

#### Future Farmers of America (FFA) State Convention Travel and stay Request

Interim Superintendent Magoon said that the Future Farmers of America (FFA) are looking for the Board's approval to attend the state convention in Bretton Woods March 29 &30, 2023. It will include a two night stay at the Mt. Washington Hotel. CTE Director Perry and Interim Superintendent Magoon support their request and ask that it be approved. Mr. Beard made a motion ***to approve the Future Farmers of America request to attend the state FFA convention in Bretton Woods March 29 &30, 2023 with a two night stay at the Mt. Washington Hotel.*** It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. ***The motion passed 4-0-0.*** Chairman Darling wished them the best of luck.

#### School Climate and Culture Update (Discussion)

Interim Superintendent Magoon addressed the Board with a proposal to have an outside group come in to assess the School's climate and culture by meeting with the staff and students; involving the staff and students in a two year "School climate leadership team". They give a report of pros and cons within the Schools and create action plans. Interim Superintendent Magoon informed the Board she had reached out to other districts to see how effective the group was, other districts had had positive reviews. She said participation was voluntary (they would get paid for program work); she would contact the staff. After a discussion among Board members on the pros and cons of the program in Newport, they agreed to have the SAU admin team and staff meet with the outside group on March 27th; they would decide afterwards.

Mr. Beard said the proposal was overcomplicated. He wanted a survey from every employee in their own words, what they think needs to change in our district to make it better. He was not looking for solutions from another company; he was looking for surveys from their employees asking what they could do to help make things better. Mr. Morris asked Interim Superintendent Magoon how much it would cost. She stated it would be grant funded. Mr. Beard was against the program; he said the survey would be low impact; really simple. Mr. Morris said the program would give a comprehensive look of the Schools. He explained his thoughts on doing the program. After further discussion, Mr. Spaulding, Sr. asked why the district couldn't do both (survey and program). There was further discussion on doing both and if the program would help improve the culture but especially the behavior of the students.

#### Joint meeting with Croydon School

The Newport School Board members discussed the date for their joint meeting with Croydon School. Croydon was not available to meet on May 11, 2023. In discussion, the Board concurred to hold the joint meeting with Croydon School Representatives during the regular scheduled meeting on May 25, 2023 in the Lou Thompson Room. Interim Superintendent Magoon will contact Croydon about the meeting date (Ms. Martin asked that the Board confirm the use of the room, construction will be starting in the spring).

#### The Election Schedule (School Voting)

School Voting will take place on March 14, 2023 from 8 am to 7 pm in the high school gym. School Board members were informed that legally there needed to be a quorum of School Board members at all times. Per the statute; a pro tem could be appointed by a School Board member. The four Board members discussed coverage and the need for a pro tem. Tentative Coverage: Mr. Spaulding, Sr. 8am to 7pm; Mr. Beard 8am- 2:30 5:30-7 pm; Mr. Morris 8am- 3pm Chairman Darling 3pm-7pm

#### NPS 91-A:3 II (d)

A decision was made that it was not necessary to go into nonpublic during the meeting.

Chairman Darling made a motion ***to remove the agenda item.*** It was seconded by Mr. Beard. ***The motion passed by a roll call vote 4-0-0.***

#### Open Board Position

Chairman Darling stated currently there are four School Board members with the resignation of William Wilkinson. The Board needed to make an appointment of a new Board member. They held a discussion on when to conduct a board member search. Questionnaires/applications were already in place and available at the SAU office. They could email [msmall@sau43.org](mailto:msmall@sau43.org), call the SAU office at (603)865-9500; go to the SAU office or ask one of the School Board members. The following dates were agreed upon:

The date to close application submissions was: Monday, April 10, 2023

Applications read by School Board members: April 10, 2023 through April 12, 2023

Introduction and appointment: April 13, 2023 meeting. Appointee will start (sit) at the May meeting.

Mr. Morris had a conflict on April 13, 2023. He will attend the meeting via zoom.

Invitations will be sent to previous applicants.

New Hires Chairman Darling made a motion ***to approve the hire for Richards school guidance counselor Ms. Christine Marcinkewicz; MA Step 13 with a yearly salary of \$53,566 prorated to \$16,793.66.*** It was seconded by Mr. Spaulding, Sr. ***The motion passed 4-0-0.***

Resignations: none

Committee Report Outs: on Monday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, Newport's Increased Cost Request for the CTE went before the Capital Funds Committee for approval by the State Commissioner of the Department of Education (DOE). The money was approved; it is in the Governor's budget (\$1.5 million). It now has to pass the state legislature.

Policies: none

### **Communication**

#### **Administration:**

Interim Superintendent Magoon good luck to the school staff at the staff/student basketball game. She thanked staff during the difficult times with student behavior issues; and thank the bus drivers and her team.

#### **Board:**

Mr. Beard thanked the teachers and staff for all their hard work and the responsibilities they undertake. It's not easy with the student's behavior. He thanked the bus drivers; he said the School would work through the problems at the Bus Barn. Mr. Spaulding, Sr. thanked the administration for this year's annual reports. They were very professionally done. He stated it was an example of what the district needed to do. Interim Superintendent Magoon listed the places the reports could be found around town; they would also be available at the polls. Mr. Morris repeated his message: parents/guardians, be responsible for your children. It is a team effort; teach them to be good citizens (teach them respect for others). Make sure you are doing your part. Chairman Darling said the Bus Barn topic was not an easy one; the Board will move through it. I believe that there are things the Board could have done better; she will try to better as well. The public and school will be kept informed of how the School Board is moving forward. She wanted to thank the Newport Bus Drivers for everything they do.

Chairman Darling said that she has served as Chairman for 3 ½ years; it has been a privilege. She thanked the Town of Newport for giving her the opportunity to serve as an elected official and encouraged everyone to go out to vote on Tuesday, March 14, 2023. Chairman Darling made a motion at 7:52 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. Spaulding, Sr. ***The motion passed by roll call vote 4-0-0.***

Respectfully submitted,

Maura Stetson, Recording Secretary

Approved on: March 23, 2023

The next regular meeting of the Newport School Board is scheduled on March 23, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. in the Lou Thompson Room.