

Hermon School Committee
Minutes – Regular Meeting
Tuesday, September 6, 2016
Hermon High School Room #139

Providing Leadership to Enhance the Aspirations of our Children

Present

Mr. Anthony Reynolds, Chairperson
Mr. Ralph Carr, Vice Chairperson
Mrs. Debora Farnham
Mr. Ted Harris
Mrs. Anne Smith
Mrs. Debbie CoWallis
Mrs. Shannon Knowles
Mr. Eric Byers, Student Representative
Mr. Michael Lana, Student Representative

Absent

Staff: Mrs. Stephanie Biberstein, Mrs. Janice Clain, Mr. Micah Grant, Mr. Jesse Hargrove, Mrs. Jenny Perry, Mr. Jerry Kiesman, Mr. Brian Walsh

Guests: Mr. Billy Hart, Mrs. Debbie Langille, Mrs. Donna Pulver

Item I: Mr. Reynolds, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item II: Agenda Adjustments

Mrs. Duran, Superintendent, requested two minor adjustments as follows: (1) under Personnel, Extracurricular Activities, the distributed list of additional extracurricular appointments, and (2) under Old Business, Football clarification.

Item III: Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of August 8 and Special Meeting of August 23, 2016.

Mrs. Cowallis motioned, seconded by Mr. Harris, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 8, 2016 and Special Meeting of August 23, 2016, as presented.

Unanimous vote (7)

Item IV: **PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATION**

A. Public Comments*

Mrs. Debbie Langille from Hermon thanked everyone for the wonderful graduation at the Cross Center. She also thanked Mrs. Duran for everything she has done since she and her kids have been here, and she wished her well.

Mr. Billy Hart, inquired about the Chess Team at the High School. He was informed that it is already in process with a sign-up sheet and advisors are being looked at, but it will be dependent upon how many students sign up. The number of participants in the past had dwindled down to 3 students, and it was discontinued because they could not compete as a team. Mrs. Duran is hopeful that will change with the influx of students coming from both middle schools.

Item V: **PERSONNEL**

A. Resignations

Mrs. Duran announced the resignations of MaryAnna Russell, Ed Tech III, Hermon High School; Sarah Windsor, Ed Tech III, Pre-K; Ian Villmore, Ed Tech III, Hermon Middle School; and Caroline Phillips, Fall Musical Director.

B. Employment

Mr. Harris motioned, seconded by Mrs. CoWallis, to employ both David Oliver, Ed Tech III and Kristin Partridge, Ed Tech III in the Self Contained Program at Hermon High.

Unanimous vote (7)

C. Extra Curricular Appointments 2016-2017

We had approved Benjamin Moniz as Musical Technical Director, and he was supposed to be approved for the Musical Music Director. He asked that to be corrected on his contract.

Mrs. Farnham motioned, seconded by Mrs. Smith to make the correction.
Unanimous vote (7)

In addition to the Volunteer Football Coach, Austin Pagnozzi, and Golf Coach, Kent Johnson that were listed in the packet, Mrs. Duran advised the committee on the Middle School Girls Soccer, Co-coaches Mary Cameron and Mike Saulter, as well as French Club Advisor, Ruth Parent.

Item VI: **OLD BUSINESS**

A. Excused Absence of School Committee Member/s – None

B. Set Date for Superintendent's Search Workshop

Mrs. Duran suggested having a couple of evenings after September 23rd to start reviewing applications, prior to that there needs to be a meeting to discuss criteria and the process which will be gone through in Executive Session.

Mrs. Farnham motioned, seconded by Mr. Harris, to set the date for the meeting to discuss search criteria for Monday, September 19th at 6:30 pm.

Unanimous vote (7)

C. Update on Elementary School Project

Mrs. Duran distributed packets to the Committee members. Mrs. Duran had communication from two Board members that there was a concern that the Town Council has approved a plan without the school committee having the opportunity to approve a plan. Mrs. Duran wanted to tell them know that there is no plan yet, so nothing has been approved. The Town Council had to approve, because the school committee had no authority to approve, the expenditure of funds. In order to put something on the Referendum for November 8th, they have to have that in advance. The temporary architects have a 4th rendition that has not been accepted by the committee yet, but it is the most current rendition. The skylights and gambrel rooves over the back were opted out of to cut costs and get down to where the town council and town manager said we'd have to be for them to put this project on referendum. She discussed the new entrance pathway, watershed coming off the gymnasium, summary of square footage, as well as the school and rec department changes. The entire committee and the town manager did not think that it would be a good idea to put more than a seven million dollar project out there and ask the town to come up with more taxes. The committee realizes the addition will raise taxes to some extent, because it is going to be more teaching space, more operational costs, more teacher costs, more heating costs, which is why there has been a real effort to keep the actual building costs somewhere where they feel they'll be accepted by the town.

Item VII: **NEW BUSINESS**

A. Facilities (outside agency inventory option)

Mr. Carr motioned, seconded by Mrs. Smith, to reply in the negative to the Invitation to Participate in Maine School District Facilities Data Analysis and Benchmarking Initiative.

Unanimous vote (5)

Item VIII: **REPORTS**

A. Principals

Mr. Walsh added to his report that there will be an informal Open House for the entire school and cookout for freshman and transfer students this Thursday from 5:00 – 7:30 pm.

Mr. Kiesman added to his report that the middle school will be having an Open House on Wednesday. He also said that there are enough boys signed up for a B soccer team. There are 33 boys on the field, and the numbers are looking like they will go up next year. Mrs. Biberstien added that there are 96 middle school athletes this fall which is the highest since she's been there. There are also 188 high school athletes, this fall as well.

Mrs. Perry had just come from the 1st PTA meeting of the year discussing homework, and the new positive behavioral system. The Open House was fantastic and the school looks great. It has been a great start to the year, and the 3-day in-service was great.

Student Representative, Michael Lana reported that there are 135 cadets in the JROTC program. For community outreach, they will be doing a few color guards this weekend, one at a running event and ones at 9/11 events in Hermon and in Levant as well. Next week at the high school is their spirit week, coinciding with homecoming, and the Harvest Festival.

Student Representative, Eric Byers reported on the new Mock Trial club and auditions for the fall musical are tonight and tomorrow night and it will be Bye, Bye Birdie.

B. Superintendent

The update on football because there had been discussion at the last regular meeting about students being assessed a fee again this year. It was a misunderstanding, and it has been rectified. She believes the misunderstanding comes from a misunderstanding at the school committee level. The school committee voted to increase the budget this year; they did not agree to fully fund football. Next year the committee will have to vote to approve the budget and that may have additional football costs in it or you should vote to fully fund football. The budget that was submitted this year did not include additional monies that are anticipated in replacement costs for equipment because those costs have been raised through other means. What is in the budget this year are operational costs for this year, and the school budget is going to cover that. Some sports, such as football, requires more equipment, more supplies so if significant other funds are needed that is something that will need to be addressed next year. The assessment that was made this year was determined prior to the school boards vote and assumed that it would continue with that money so that it would be put away to cover costs they know would come in the future. The fees were returned.

Next Mrs. Duran addressed signatures on the Warrant. Last week when she spoke with the bank, we were \$72,000 in arrears and counting with every check that was coming in to be processed because the transfer from the Town Office had not been made to our account. The school department cannot make that transfer because it does not handle any money; all of the money comes from the municipality. Two individuals had gone on vacation and the transfer was not made. Fortunately, it was Mr. Raymond's last day, and he did have access to the bank accounts so he made the transaction for us. Apparently the reason the transaction was not made when we sent the warrant down at 9:30 a.m. was because it did not have three school committee signatures. The understanding that we've always had was that with Mrs. Duran's signature they would make the transfer of those funds, and then as we get the 3 signatures, we fax it to the Town Office. They waited, receiving only Mrs. Duran's signature in the morning, then it was forgotten about that afternoon and someone went on vacation and it was not done. Always expect that you'll get a call to come sign a warrant on Thursday, and we will try to get it done by noon time, but that is not always possible.

Lastly, she received an email from Dr. Webb in Bangor indicating they are having an event on November 12th for some school board training.

C. School Committee Follow-up and Request for Information

Mr. Harris stated the two items that he had brought up amongst the council have been addressed. He also let Mrs. Perry know that he had heard great things from both teachers and parents.

Mrs. Smith asked Mr. Byers to elaborate on the new Mock Trial Club. She also stated she'd like to go in to visit the 3 schools and see some of the programs going on.

Mrs. CoWallis welcomed Mr. Byers and welcomed back Mr. Lana. She commented that she thought it was an incredible opportunity for the students and a benefit to the school committee to have student representatives on the Board.

Mrs. Farnham reiterated to Mrs. Perry about hearing great feedback from the school. She spoke about volunteerism in the community, and was glad to hear it was alive and well at the elementary school, and it is at the high school with the parent council, and energetic boosters group. She's heard good things about middle school PTO as well. JROTC is a tremendous asset in our community. Transitioning into what is happening with the Harvest Home Celebration, she wanted to thank the schools for their support of the rec department. This Sunday there will be a Pies and Politics Celebration at 12:30 in the park to recognize September 11th and first responders, as well as a first blush of the candidates that will be on the ballot up for election in our community.

Mrs. Knowles welcomed Mr. Byers and mentioned the JROTC would be in the Levant Old Home Days parade on Saturday, along with several other Hermon floats.

Mr. Carr mentioned that former student representative Ashley _____ had graduated Suma Cum Ludi. He also asked Mr. Kiesman to speak on the former middle school student who had written and received \$7000 grants for the school.

Mr. Reynolds spoke about the Hermon Connection, #10 under the Charter Changes Proposed by the Town Council, stating "Vote to Authorize the Town Council to determine the total amount of School Budget to be submitted to the voters in the budget Validation Referendum." The ballots have already been printed. He stated that basically if 4 of the town officials decide that they want to cut the school budget, they could do it without attending a meeting. He feels that the school committee should do something, although not on the agenda tonight. Mrs. Duran expressed her concerns. Will all the Charter changes be processed as unit, so that all changes go as one? She intends to have a conversation with the Town Manager to explain that the interpretation that we are not in sync with the State law. She feels that we go well beyond what the Charter requires in having a meeting where anyone can attend and ask questions about the 11 cost centers and make a motion to raise or lower the budget of that particular cost center. What the Town Council is looking to do is not to look at individual cost centers, but to look at the bottom line of the budget and say we approve of this and we will put it forward for referendum. We still have to have referendum and the council is the only one that can take anything to referendum. They are looking for the opportunity to look at the bottom line of the budget, and go back and change it. Mrs. Duran will speak to the new Town Manager once he starts, then she will let the committee know.

D. Other - None

Item IX: Mr. Carr motioned, seconded by Mr. Harris, to approve Warrant # 5 of August 26, 2016, and Warrant # 6 of September 9, 2016.

Unanimous vote

Item X: An Executive Session was not needed.

Item XI: Mr. Carr motioned, seconded by Mr. Harris, to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

Unanimous vote

Respectfully submitted,

Jody White
Recording Secretary