

**Lyme School District
School Board Regular Meeting
Tuesday, December 10, 2019**

approved as is, 12/17/19

Board Members Present: Phil Barta, Vince Berk, Yolanda Bujarski, Hayes Greenway, Matthew Hayden. Administrators: District Administrator Jeff Valence, Coordinator of Business Services Janet Mitchell, Academic Director Elise Foxall, staff member: Technology and Library Media Laura Geary. Recorded by Roger Lohr

1. Call to Order Vice Chair Matt Hayden called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

2. Consent Agenda

A motion was made and seconded (Barta, Bujarski) to approve the public meeting minutes of November 19, 2019 as submitted and amended. The motion was approved 5-0-0. The change was in item 6B, 9th section replace “\$50,000 decrease” with “there is a \$30,000 reduction in substitute budget so it amounts to \$20,000.”

A motion was made and seconded (Barta, Bujarski) to approve the non-public meeting minutes of November 19, 2019 as submitted. The motion was approved 5-0-0.

3. Reports

A. Chair Report

The Executive Committee is working on the CBA.

B. Finance Report

Coordinator of Business Services Janet Mitchell reviewed school district bond status, which is 15 years and \$2,930,440 and the bond payment is made in July. At the end of this year, the bond for the roof project has 6 years remaining for \$131,787.

C. Academic Report

Technology and Librarian Media specialist Laura Geary distributed a document to the Board entitled Improving Inquiry and Research at the Lyme School and she reviewed the program. There are co-teaching models used in the Lyme School classes for students to learn how to search, react, ask questions, and cite resources in the inquiry process. Technology integration, inquiry skills and assessments were reviewed. This model is incorporated in the Lyme School Strategic Plan and it features the changing role of teachers to apply best practices as leaders.

4. Business Requiring Action or Discussion

A. Band Elective

DA Valence discussed the band elective (Rock Band) that would incorporate the expertise of a local resident and professional musician along with the Lyme School Music teacher. Any expenses associated would be funded through the Small Rural Schools Grant. The Board discussed after school program options and how the Small Rural Schools grant is applied for school programs each year.

A motion was made and seconded (Barta, Greenway) to approve the elective as part of the Lyme School program. The motion was approved 5-0-0.

B. L2 Bus Route

There has been a request to alter the bus route so that it is fairer in the amount of time spent on the bus for the riders during pick up in the morning and drop off after school. The families would be informed about the new routing, which would commence after the school vacation. There was a Board consensus that bus route changes be implemented.

C. Building and Grounds Projects

DA Valence asked for clarity and formal approval for encumbering some of the end-of-year budget surplus for buildings and grounds projects that were outlined in the Board agenda. The Buildings and Grounds Committee had discussed it and if it is to take place, project plans and estimates would need to start soon. The Buildings and Grounds Committee would review project estimates and prioritize a list of projects to recommend to the Board. There was a Board consensus to apply some of the projected surplus to school building and grounds projects / renovations.

D. Roof Repair Bond Release

Coordinator of Business Services Janet Mitchell explained that the auditor has recommended that the school district have a warrant article this year to rescind the difference in the roof bond between the project cost and actual spent/borrowed for the bond. She has consulted with our legal firm who has stated that seeing as the district borrowed only the amount of the funds it needed for the project (153,260.03), that the remaining balance (26,739.97), will remain as unissued. No article is necessary to rescind the borrowing authorization. The board acknowledged that the school district did not intend to use the remaining funds from the roof project bond.

E. Staff Position Hiring

DA Valence reviewed the plan to reconfigure some positions associated with the special education administrative assistant, food service, bus driving, and filling other clerical needs at the Lyme School. Filling the position after the school break would provide time for existing staff in the related positions to train the new hire. The amount of additional cost for filling the position would be \$7,000 for salary and benefits. Depending on the amount of time it took to advertise, interview and hire for the position, it would likely be less than the proposed amount.

A motion was made and seconded (Barta, Bujarski) to approve posting of a staff position to fill the needs of the special education administrative assistant, food service, and clerical assistant at the Lyme School. The motion was approved 5-0-0.

F. Proposed 2020-21 Lyme School District Budget

DA Valence stated that a draft of the proposed school budget for 2020-21 will be brought to the Lyme Budget Committee next week. He reviewed budget process and timeline and showed information on some slides for the Board. Controllable expenses of the budget are 13-18% of the total expenses. The Board discussed examples of controllable and uncontrollable expenses (high school tuition, special education).

F1. High school tuition is budgeted at the exact number of students times the known tuition at the different high schools. Valence showed the variances in the number of high school students in the last few years, which saw a sharp and atypical decline despite having an annual average increase. There have been move outs from the district and students going to private schools not covered by the school district. These variances in annual student numbers can change the impact by as much as \$200,000 over or under budget amounts. The High School Trust Fund has been one way to smooth the impact on the school budget and town taxes when it is above the budgeted amount. Currently there is

\$623,000 in the High School Trust. Based upon current enrollment in the 8th-11th grade High School enrollment is projected to be 97, up 8 students from current enrollment, down 3 from what was anticipated last spring. The school estimates that there would be 3 fewer students from the district that will be within the high school numbers next year. It was recommended that the High School Trust be used to cover the tuition of four students, bringing the total number of students covered by the proposed budget to 90, down 11 students from 19-20 budget. Any students above 90 would be drawn from the High School Trust.

F2. Special Education

There is a decline in the high school special education expenses in the current proposed budget. Overall, the special education expenses are projected to decline by \$73,000 next year. There is one possible out-of-district placement which is not funded, and if the placement is necessary that \$50-100,000 could be drawn from the Special Education Trust. The Special Education Trust currently has \$290,000.

F3. Personnel

No variable staffing conditions due to medical leave which provide greater accuracy in the ability to predict staffing costs for next year.

The CBA is currently being negotiated and increases associated with that negotiation will be in a separate Warrant Article and not part of the proposed budget.

Class splits are expected in the third and eighth grades next year and no additions to the staff are expected.

Instructors will be redirected from class splits this year into the third and fourth grades next year. In the case that classes currently at tipping point expand, any cost of an additional teacher would be drawn from the Enrollment Trust. The Enrollment Response Trust has \$97,000

Overall, the proposed budget has a decrease of 2.3% from last year before the CBA. Valence has met with the Administration of the Hanover SAU and proposed a tuition model which would decrease the tuition paid for students enrolling at Hanover HS. The Dresden School District will consider this proposal at their next Board Meeting.

5. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded (Greenway, Barta) to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 PM. The motion was approved 5-0-0.

The next Lyme School Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 17, 2019 at 7:00 PM.