

RSU # 12
BOARD OF DIRECTORS (REGULAR) MEETING
Thursday, March 12, 2020 @ 6:30 PM
Chelsea Elementary School

Draft Minutes

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Flag Salute

Rick Cote called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance

Nathan, an 8th grader from Windsor School, was introduced by Mike Flynn. He prepared the meal and will be competing in March in the Regional Kitchen Competition.

Attendance: Monique Crummett, Susan Stires, Alpha Williams, Richard DeVries, Michael Lemelin, Kimberly Hutchinson, Will Sugg, Sandra Devaney, Rick Cote, Abby Manahan, Ralph Hilton, Jerry Nault, Stephen Smith

Absent: Russell Gates (E), Lynette Conroy (E), Frank Hample (E), Christine LaPado-Breglia (E)

Administrators in attendance: Deb Taylor, Larry Dancer, Pat Block, Heather Wilson, Stephanie Oliphant, Mark Deblois, Mike Flynn

2. Focus on Learning: None

3. Public Comment: (10 min): *Public Comment at School Board meetings is to be restricted to items on the agenda. Comments regarding individuals or personnel matters are not appropriate for the public session. Those wishing to speak should so indicate on the Public Comment Sign-in Sheet.*

No public comment

4. Adjustments and Consent Agenda (20 min)

Note: Items may be removed from the Consent Agenda on the request of any one member; items not removed may be adopted by general consent without debate. Removed items may be scheduled for consideration immediately after the Consent agenda or placed on the agenda at the discretion of the board. [Action]

Consent Agenda items:

- a. Approve the Minutes of the previous meeting as distributed
- b. Superintendent's Report as distributed - moved to after the Solar Power Purchase on the agenda
- c. Approve the Committee Minutes as distributed
- d. Accept the Personnel Report
- e. Accept the Policies as distributed
 - i. JLIF - Suicide Prevention, Intervention, And Post-intervention - Second Reading

Motion to accept the Consent Agenda with exception of the removed items

Gerry Nault - 1st Alpha Williams - 2nd

Motion passes 13-0-0

5. Old Business

a. Heat Pump - Informational

Richard DeVries gave an update on where the RSU is at this time. We have three estimates for three different schools, which will need to be combined into one for Efficiency Maine. There was concern about the air exchange working in all the buildings, and there is one classroom that is being changed at Palermo and he will get estimates on that.

Steve Smith asked what exactly the board is being asked to approve. Richard stated that a company has been found to do the work and that is what needs to be approved.

Steve was concerned about approving a quote without having an actual number to see.

Howie discussed the previous voting on the heat pumps, but said there were concerns about ventilation systems.

Steve said there was confusion about where we are in the project, new numbers and does not feel comfortable voting blind.

Richard said he would get an estimate. Jerry said there was a lot described for the board to consider and requested seeing it on paper with an amount of the proposal. Richard will go forward with that, bring it to the facilities committee and present it to the board.

6. New Business (90min)

a. Solar Power Purchase Agreement Contract [Action]

The facilities/finance committee met and unanimously approved and recommended that the district move forward with the contract. The RSU 12 attorney handed out the alternative vote that was recommended by the finance/facilities committee and explained the different projections. She explained the board is being asked to approve that the superintendent be allowed to enter into the solar contract.

Richard DeVries commented that we will need to build in a buffer for the possibility of future heat pumps.

Rick Cote asked what other schools were doing as far as what percentage they were contracting. Aga explained that the percentages have all been different but they average 10-20%.

Michael Lemelin asked who would be responsible for repairs. She explained that the developer would be responsible.

Steve Smith asked who paid for the credits or if they were like a subsidy. She explained that we would not pay for the subsidy, but that the utility would account for the subsidy on the bill.

Richard DeVries asked if there was a guarantee in the contract. Exhibit E - the developer and investors agree to maintain the system so it will produce what is expected but if it were to drop 70% over a 24 month period, they would pay for the loss. Richard commented that the solar farms will put energy into the grid that will help with renewable energy in the state and relieve the need to expand transmission in Maine.

Steve Smith said solar in Maine seems like a silly concept, but it is more of a climate statement. The only reason to consider it is because it is being

subsidized by taxpayers or CMP. He feels that there is no reason to do this in Maine because of the seasonal changes and does not feel the RSU should be doing this.

Richard DeVries commented that the CMP stockholders would be the ones to be responsible.

Aga explained the two theories as to who ends up paying.

Michael Lemelin asked if there was a way to make the contract a ten-year contract with a 10-year extension option. This is not possible because of the investment requirement and the legislative structuring. He feels that it is a higher risk to the RSU to be committed to 20 years.

Jerry said the wild card is the PUC and how much faith should be put into them and what role they would play in the future. Aga explained that the PUC has a minimal role. She said if the RSU went forward they would join many other school districts, colleges, municipalities.

Steve Smith commented that he believed CMP will expect a return on their assets and the tariffs will reflect that.

Ralph Hilton commented that CMP does not generate power, they just deliver it. He does not have confidence that solar power will feed into this.

Richard DeVries said that a local solar farm would push power into the local grid, not out of state. Local users will use the power before it goes out of the grid.

Rick Cote commented that the board previously voted to go forward with the project and that the question tonight was only if we were going with 90% or 100%.

Susan Stires explained that she has solar power at her home and that it has been wonderful with no issues. She feels that the RSU should take advantage of this opportunity.

Howie clarified that the vote at the last meeting was to approve moving forward with consulting an attorney to do the contract. There was no vote to approve the project. A contract has been developed for you to approve.

Aga explained that the contract is buyer friendly with safeguards in place - if the credits do not appear on the CMP bill, the RSU does not pay; if the law changes in any way that changes the regulatory framework, the RSU would be protected.

Steve Smith said he has a solar hot water heater on a property he owns and has looked into solar energy for his home, but it is a huge upfront cost. He would do it for other reasons, but not financially.

Monique Crummett commented that we are not buying anything or building anything, just purchasing electricity at a lower rate. She feels there is some confusion about what we are actually doing.

Howie explained that there are several other municipalities and school districts doing PPAs (Augusta, Camden, Farmington). Our electric bill is projected to save \$50,000 in the first year. He explained there is a significant savings and that he does not see a downside to this. There are protections built into the 20-year contract.

Will Sugg asked about how the voting would go. Monique explained that we would need to vote to go forward with the project and then vote for which percentage.

Richard pointed out there was another safeguard and asked her to explain section 4.4, which is where the parties specifically state that the purchase of the credits is contingent upon CMP's acceptance.

Rick Cote made the motion to accept the contract with Sun Dog at 100%.

Monique - 2nd

Will Sugg asked to add wording to the motion to include without RECs and at the recommendation of the Finance/Facilities Committee.

Motion to accept the contract with Sun Dog at 100% without RECs as recommended by the Finance/Facilities Committee.

The motion passes 9-4-0

(6139 - 1980)

Will Sugg recognized Richard for all of his hard work on the project as well as physically going through the buildings.

Superintendent's Report: Howie discussed the COVID-19 virus. He explained that there has been a lot of activity and discussion around this topic. The Maine DOE and CDC have information for the schools, there has been a committee put together, a letter has gone home to the parents. Last Friday, the DOE had said there was little chance of schools being closed down but in less than a week there have been college closings, travel restrictions, public gathering have been discouraged. Several schools have delayed the start of their sports seasons and cancelled after school activities as well as all facilities use of the buildings. The RSU is not doing that at this time, as sports seasons have not started yet and there are not a lot after school activities at this time. We do not have any cases of COVID-19, but we do have cases of the flu, colds, strep, and stomach bugs as well as students who are simply being kept home as a precaution and we are tracking those to alleviate the rumors that a majority of schools are sick.

Richard DeVries commented that the normal recovery time is two weeks unless your health is compromised.

Will Sugg asked about parent-teacher conferences, plays, and ed fairs will still be taking place. Howie has not considered some of those things yet and will look at what the implications of cancellations will be and if there are a number of people who exceed the size of gatherings.

Howie wanted to know if the board was comfortable with our planning team making the decisions instead of calling the board together. They were comfortable with the team making the decisions.

b. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Public Comment [Informational]

Deb Taylor gave an explanation of this and invited public comment if there was any. It is an opportunity from now until May to ask questions or become involved. Parents and committee members are part of this committee.

c. Chelsea Town Office/ Land proposal [Action]

Michael Lemelin explained that Chelsea was asking to own their building and an exceptional amount of land. It was discussed at length and decided to let them have the building and two acres as the committee did not want to impede on the

athletic fields for the school. They also decided to give them the land and acres for free but the town would have to pay the fees to survey the land and the cost of correcting the deed.

Ricard DeVries made the motion to give the town of Chelsea the building and two acres of land at no cost to RSU 12.

Rick Cote - 2nd

Motion passes 13-0-0

d. Somerville Town Office space [Possible Action]

At the Central office, the Adult Ed office is space that we have rented from the town of Somerville. It is written into the reorganization, but it is not written into the deed. The town would like to have the deed corrected at their expense and they would like to start using the space as a broadband hub so they can have high-speed internet in Somerville. The board will need to decide to allow them to fix the deed.

Will Sugg asked if it would have a separate electricity bill. Howie said we could look into that and make sure RSU 12 is not paying the electric bill.

Richard DeVries made the motion to approve correction of the deed as appropriate.

Alpha Williams - 2nd

Motion passes 12-0-1 (Steve Smith abstained)

e. School Year Calendar 2019-2020 Change [Action]

We would like to change March 20th from a teacher workshop day to a student day to make up for the six snow days.

Sandra Devaney asked if it needed to be a full day or a half day.

Michael Lemelin made the motion to make March 20th a full day of school.

Richard DeVries - 2nd

Motion passes 13-0-0

f. Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Presentation [Informational]

Howie presented the draft of the budget presentation that has been presented to the towns. The Budget meeting will be May 27, 2020 and all board members are required to attend. A handout of the presentation was given to each board member.

The proposed budget is up and our student count is up by 18 students. The finance committee would like to see the 5% increase reduced. The tuition budget increases each year and exceeds the cost of prek-8 instruction. Unfortunately, the RSU has no control over tuition rate increases.

Jerry commented that the cost per student for schools and tuition would be helpful to see on the budget.

The food budget might need to be revisited as the district is having trouble meeting our vision of healthier food in our schools. Ralph Hilton said that we need to communicate to the people who are eligible to apply for the free and reduced lunch program.

Pg. 12 - Improvements, Savings, Waiting

A World Language Teacher is required by the state but we do not have one, but the curriculum committee is recommending that we hire a teacher to start a program.

The extra Chelsea Prek classroom will cost \$40,000 but the state will give us a \$20,000 subsidy. Howie does not believe the two classrooms will be filled to capacity, but does not recommend flipping back and forth between one or two classrooms each year. Jerry asked if there was any word on a 3 year old CDS program. Howie said he did hear about the suggestion, but hopefully would not happen next year as districts are not ready for this. He assumes it will be a phase in.

Will Sugg commented that the budgets have passed over the last few years as opposed to ten years ago when they would fail and need to be redone saying that we would never be in the position to have extra money that we needed to decide how to spend but feels that the RSU is in a more positive position now to add these things to the budget.

Micheal Lemelin asked about the cost of the World Language Teacher - it included salary and benefits but depends on the person hired.

Richard DeVries expressed hiring a teacher that can teach more than one language and utilize technology.

Abby Manahan commented that a certified teacher over one that relies on technology would be more acceptable.

Rick Cote suggested a language teacher being shared between the schools for a half year at a time.

Will added that the teacher should be hired and then the program be worked out to the way to best fit the needs of the district.

Steve Smith asked if we are allowed to have a rainy day fund. We are, but the district does not have one as the budgets have been very tight.

Rick Cote feels that, while he does not like the increase, sometimes we need to bite the bullet and do the repairs and improvements that are necessary.

Revenue is down because we do not have a fund balance to apply this year.

g. Draft Calendar School Year 2020-2021 [Informational]

Howie let the board know if they had any thoughts on the next calendar to let him know.

h. Cony bus [Informational]

The bus is not in the budget for next year. The RSU has said that we will put a bus together if the cost of the bus can be covered by students and their families. If the board wants to run a bus for next year, it can be suggested. No board members suggested adding a Cony bus to the budget.

i. Out of State Field Trips for Spring 2020 [Action]

SUGGESTED MOTION: *To approve the out-of-state field trips as described by the RSU 12 Administration.*

- i. Windsor, Grade 6 Field Trip to Boston Aquarium, Overnight
- ii. Chelsea 8th grade Boston Trip
- iii. Whitefield 8th grade trip to North Conway, New Hampshire

iv. Palermo 8th grade Heritage Tour to Boston, Massachusetts

Howie suggests that this be tabled until the April Board Meeting due to the uncertainty around COVID -19.

7. Adjourn 8:55 p.m.