

WINCHESTER SCHOOL BOARD
MAY 21, 2020
VIA ZOOM

Board Members Present: L. Picard, T. Perkins, V. Cole, J. Rokes, Todd Kilanski
Administration Present: K. Dassau, V. Carey, M. Henry, I. Spencer

The meeting was called to order by L. Picard at 6:34pm.

L. Picard advised, with agreement of the Board, citizens comments would be held at the end of the meeting.

MINUTES:

After discussion, the Board agreed to table approval of the 4/2/20 minutes until they could confirm information from Tim Green.

T. Perkins MOVED to accept the Public minutes of 5/7/20; SECONDED by: V. Cole; T. Kilanski – yes, T. Perkins – yes, V. Cole – yes, J. Rokes – yes, L. Picard – yes, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT- V. Carey:

*End-of-Year Celebration will be held June 8th and 9th from 12:00 – 6:00pm. with individual families in the gym for a graduation ceremony. There will be goodie bags and individually wrapped cupcakes. A video will be pieced together into one big video of the graduation ceremony. Fifteen minutes has been allotted for each family.

*There is also a plan to bring certificates to students' homes for pre-school and Kindergarten.

V. Cole thanked V. Carey for doing extra work to make graduation special for the students.

*Still waiting to hear back from the DOE regarding ESY. V. Carey thinks they are looking at a blended model; some instruction at the school and some done remotely.

*NH has a task force regarding return to school procedures. V. Carey expects it will take time; have received some resources from other districts. Will be working on contingency plans; will have to adjust plans as things change. Need to follow guidance from the DOE. Unfortunately decisions will have to be made closer to the start of school than they would like.

*V. Carey read a statement to the Board. Explained in part that with the reduction of 23 staff and the climate of the budget season there is a high level of uncertainty. Several staff have applied at other districts in case they lost their job here and were offered other positions. The Board can expect more resignations tonight in non-public session. We can't compete with offers from other districts. V. Carey advised it is an absolute shame to lose talented teachers who would not have been cut and have now taken jobs in other districts. Many were the top choice in the job pool. She cannot stress enough the importance of working on how to approach retaining and attracting new teachers in a highly competitive market. Explained she received two phone calls from Mothers wanting to purchase a home in Winchester but wanted to see if we were offering Kindergarten full-time; that was the reason they will not move here. This is the sad reality of collateral damage from the budget. It is a very hard thing they are working through right now.

L. Picard explained they all worked very hard to have good things in place here and had quite a battle.

BUSINESS MANAGER – M. Henry:

T. Kilanski requested that the Board have time to review the Manifests prior to meeting. Feels otherwise he is putting his signature on something he didn't have very much time to review.

M. Henry advised she will do the Manifests on Wednesday instead of Thursday so the Board will have more time to review them.

M. Henry advised they have received a substantial chrome book donation; currently have 20 new ones and will be picking up 40 more. She read the names of the donors from the Seacoast to the Board. She encouraged the Board to send thank-you letters. The Board will wait to send them as there will be another list of donors when they get the next batch of computers. She thinks they should recognize the company at a Board Meeting.

T. Perkins thanked M. Henry for all the work she did on this.

M. Henry advised it was a joint effort with Administration.

V. Carey advised the additional computers allow students to go 1-1, at least through Fourth grade.

*Busing Update – 5/31 is the target date for an official contract; draft only now. M. Henry explained the biggest hold-up is how the school year will look for next year. They have committed to who they will go through, but haven't signed the contracts yet. The Board will discuss it more in non-public.

*Payment schedules for next year's taxes – We have a \$385,000 deficit in the general fund and budget cuts have been made. M. Henry is proposing asking to increase the tax payment starting in July by \$850,000. Explained they have \$550,000 in projects to be done and salaries and benefits to be paid. She would request the Town change the tax schedule. The first three payments would be bigger and then the payments for the rest of the year would be lower. Need to make renovations that the Town approved. Students can't be here when the work is done and it needs to be done pre-cold weather.

L. Picard would like a better understanding where we are at the next meeting when they look at the end of year numbers. Will mention it at the Selectboard meeting.

L. Picard – At the next meeting with an end-of-year update, hopefully I. Spencer could update us on Summer Projects.

I. Spencer will discuss under M. Henry's report at the next meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – K. Dassau:

*Resignations and results of legal mediation sessions will be held in Non-Public Session tonight..

*Negotiations Committee reps. are T. Perkins and J. Rokes. They did have some exchange regarding setting ground rules. Our Attorney could reach out to the Winchester Teacher's Attorney regarding ground rules and dates to meet.

T. Perkins asked K. Dassau to have Kathy Peahl reach out to Rachel and then set some good dates.

J. Rokes is okay with that.

*The district is carrying an \$88,000 shortfall regarding an ACCESS disbursement made in 2014. K. Dassau explained with cuts in staff, budget etc., they are kind of in a perfect storm situation. He has received a letter from the insurance company with a denial of the claim and payment of money. It wasn't a matter of unauthorized taking so it doesn't qualify under the Employee Education Agreement. K. Dassau advised the District needed to file a claim by 2017. He was told they would still have had the same decision.

K. Dassau and M. Henry met with the President, Secretary and Board Chair of ACCESS. It was a very positive meeting.

Will meet again on 6/9 and V. Carey will be there and they will share ideas of how to reach an agreement for reimbursement. K. Dassau offered his personal thanks to the three people from ACCESS.

T. Kilanski – So ACCESS is not required to repay the monies, but they are stepping up to the plate?

K. Dassau – That is correct.

BOARD CHAIR REPORT/COMMENTS – L. Picard:

***Negotiations Committee:**

Some Committee meetings were held off; Negotiations will start.

***Policy Committee:**

L. Picard thinks it would be helpful to start the Policy Committee. Will follow-up with V. Carey, K. Dassau and M. Henry and get some dates.

***Professional Development Committee:**

Not much in the way of funds available; will focus around Title Two.

V. Carey advised allocation from Title 2A is typically received at the end of June or beginning of July. They would then meet to discuss priorities for those funds. Plus a long term plan is needed as we are at the end of the three-year plan.

V. Cole asked about the Scholarship Committee. Was the letter signed?

L. Picard explained she had a technical issue with getting the letter. She will print it and sign it and attach the minutes showing that it was agreed to at the Board meeting. She will get it to Amy Bond.

L. Picard will contact Karey Miner at the Budget Committee to see when they will start meeting. Advised she encouraged the Budget Committee repeatedly to attend Board meetings to give them information, but they did not attend. She will continue to encourage them to attend and asked the Board to do the same. The more firsthand information that can be shared with the public, hopefully the better information will flow.

L. Picard will be attending the Selectboard meeting and will distribute the Board meeting schedule and information for the end-of-year celebration.

V. Cole asked if V. Carey's report is something that could be posted on the website, in the Sentinel, etc.

L. Picard - There seems to be little concern about balancing the budget. People need to be thinking about that now. She is concerned about ramifications of a budget shortfall. Advised she can work with V. Carey or V. Carey can come to the Town meetings and read her statement.

L. Picard does not see any participation from people who stood up and cut the budget by 1.6 million. Concerned it will happen again next year. She encourages new Board members to get their constituents to be in attendance and get information from the Board meetings. Encourages all members to tell people to show up with ideas and come with a plan. Can stream live, so there is no reason why people are not showing up. Talking about 23 cuts to staff; now some additional people need to be replaced. People will google us and see the Sentinel Article after the budget was voted down. They won't want to move here.

L. Picard asked the Selectboard as a citizen to please live stream, do Zoom, etc. so people can safely attend their meetings.

T. Kilanski pointed out that we all know which side J. Rokes and T. Kilanski voted for. There is no sense calling them out. Feels they have stepped up to the plate. It was a small group to start with, but half the town voted for the cut. They have tried to do the best they can to do their part. He doesn't appreciate every time the subject comes up being singled out. Need to work together.

L. Picard respects that. She asked that for the next meeting the Board come with information on how to get people to the meetings and get good information out instead of just before the decision is made at the Deliberative Session.

K. Dassau – Need participation from the Budget Committee. It needs to be the same message from both the Budget Committee and the Board.

T. Kilanski advised could do a mailer or e-mail requesting participation instead of demanding people come or asking for answers. Mailers are how they got the message out for the voting.

T. Perkins advised for the new school year we have a big deficit. Do we want to spend money on a mailer? Why can't we do it on Facebook or through Social Media, instead?

The Selectboard has a Facebook and webpage. It is not exactly unknown when Board meetings happen.

V. Carey explained she is looking at setting up the Board Meeting as a recurring meeting so people don't need new log-in information each time. Thinks they could create a flyer on the website and ask people to share with others who don't have access to internet.

V. Carey will check with Missy to see if they are planning any mailers through *We've Got Your Back* so we could add information to their mailing.

T. Perkins advised she would pass out information at the Farmer's Market on Saturdays.

CITIZENS COMMENTS:

Emily Henderson asked about the Joint Loss Committee.

L. Picard would anticipate they will start to meet in September as it is a Teacher Meeting as well; meets quarterly.

V. Carey feels it would make sense to meet when they receive the CDC and DOE guidance regarding the return to school.

M. Henry – Administration is still working on items even though the Joint Loss Committee is not meeting.

V. Carey advised correct, but the Joint Loss Committee is the Safety Committee.

The Winchester Teacher's Association has awarded two \$500.00 scholarships.

Emily Henderson thanked V. Carey for letting people know about the teachers; hard to lose them. Feels misinformation, lack of involvement, etc. has caused this situation for students; disappointing and frustrating.

Jonathan Gallup suggested using lawn signs to encourage people to join the Board meetings via Zoom and social media.

L. Picard - and tell friends if joining us here. Advised if she has a sign she would redo it.

Joan Franklin advised the public wasn't able to see.

V. Carey explained attendees can't see chat; thinks they can see Q&A if a question has been answered.

Joan Franklin thinks there is a Joint Loss Meeting set for this quarter.

Stephanie advised it was not half of the Town that voted for the budget cut. Those who voted were not half of those eligible to vote.

E. Henderson feels until some specifics that are happening, get turned around, people will continue to be unhappy and they have to deal with the consequences. You are the face of that vote.

V. Carey advised she can change the setting so attendees can see the questions in Q & A.

The Board was going into non-public; attendees can remain and then public session will pop back up.

L. Picard MOVED to go into non-public session at 7:57 pm, SECONDED by: T. Kilanski – yes, T. Perkins – yes, J. Rokes – yes, L. Picard- yes, VOTED: 4-0, MOTION PASSED. (V. Cole was temporarily off of the Zoom meeting.)

The Board returned to public session T. Kilanski – yes, T. Perkins – yes, J. Rokes – yes, V. Cole – yes, L. Picard – yes.

Board Chair, L. Picard summarized the non-public topics. Asked for a Motion to seal the teacher resignation Minutes for two weeks; **T. Perkins MOVED to seal the minutes pertaining to the teacher resignation for two weeks; SECONDED by: T. Kilanski, T. Kilanski – yes, J. Rokes – yes, V. Cole – yes, L. Picard – yes, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.**

Board Chair, L. Picard asked for a motion to seal the non-public minutes regarding the bus contract for one month. **V. Cole MOVED to seal the non-public minutes pertaining to the bus contract for one month; SECONDED by: T. Kilanski – yes, T. Perkins – yes, J. Rokes – yes, V. Cole – yes, L. Picard – yes, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.**

T. Kilanski MOVED to adjourn the meeting; SECONDED BY: T. Perkins, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Higgins
School Board Secretary