

**Lyme School District  
Emergency School Board Special Meeting  
Friday, August 7, 2020  
Electronic Meeting Via Zoom**

approved w/ changes, 8/17/20

Board Members Present: Phil Barta, Vince Berk, Yolanda Bujarski, Hayes Greenway, Matthew Hayden. Jonathan Voegelé, Barbara Wilson. Administrators: District Administrator Jeff Valence, Director of Academic Elise Foxall, Special Education Director Miki McGee, Coordinator of Business Services Janet Mitchell. Public: 43 other attendees including staff and public. Recorded by Roger Lohr

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Jonathan Voegelé called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM and cited the state right-to-know laws associated with emergency electronic meetings. He welcomed attendees and stated that the faculty has not provided feedback on the Board's recent decision regarding the school reopening implementation plan. A meeting with the district administration and faculty is scheduled for August 13-14. He also said that the school district app could be downloaded for up to date information.

**2. Public Comment**

There were 12 public comments and some of them were by Lyme School teachers. The LEA president commented that the staff will meet this week and he read a statement expressing appreciation to administrators, staff, nurse, school board, and community members. The staff survey was strongly in favor of a hybrid plan option. The staff worked hard to undertake remote learning last spring and they felt it disheartening and demoralizing with regard to a negative comment made at a Board meeting about remote learning.

Concern was expressed about kids wearing masks all day and the behavior control that will be needed in the school and classrooms by faculty. The upcoming flu season was mentioned and there was concern voiced about the facility's air flow. A few comments regarded the split decision by the Board on the scenario selected. Other concerns were about the possible spread of the virus in the region and the cost of the district's mitigation efforts. There were a couple of comments opposing the full open scenario and suggestions that if necessary the district go to remote learning. At least three people felt that virus testing should play a more significant role in the operation of the school if staff and students will be on-site. With regard to anxious anticipation, it was asked how a day would look for students at the Lyme School this September.

There being no other public comments, the public comment period was closed by Chair Voegelé at 6:40 PM. Chair Voegelé stated that the Board supports the teachers and negative comments regarding remote learning were not the Board's view on the matter. The Board has spent more than nine hours in three meetings and many more hours in committee meetings on the school reopening implementation plan scenario. There was unanimous support by Board members for the letter sent to the community regarding the implementation plan. Many of the day-to-day practices within the plan are still being considered.

**3. Business Requiring Discussion and/or Action**

3A. Survey Results

There was an 86% response that students will or will likely return to the school under the full opening scenario. The Board recognized that the “likely” response could be like a “wait and see” response. The survey results are available on the district website.

### 3B. Reopening Plan Discussion

Superintendent Valence said that he appreciated the turn out for the Board meeting and the comments from the public. The administrators are striving to keep a healthy attitude in a difficult health crisis situation. It is expected that students will be susceptible to lapses in virus protection efforts and creating an absolute barrier to the virus is not realistic, but the district will make the best effort to make the environment as safe as possible. The educational system will be somewhat sacrificed as practices such as collaborative techniques, relationship building and small groups will not exist as before because all of these practices require proximity.

The implementation plan is a document on the school website and the district administrators will meet with the faculty this week to discuss more details. Efforts will be designed to avoid congregation and screening logistics, sanitation, and an emphasis on social emotional concerns will be incorporated into the plan. A balance will be sought to apply the six foot distance. Lunch will be in the classrooms and the specials will incorporate the mitigation efforts. There will be limited bus transportation and it is anticipated that many more students will be dropped off and picked up at the school by parents. The aftercare program is not run by the district but it will be available if possible. There will be a periodic review of the educational process and other aspects of the efforts.

The Board and administrators discussed the impact of six foot distancing and the amount of time that the educational assistants will be with the students. The art program was discussed. The Board discussed the process of medical exclusion and returning to school. Some of the Board members wanted to avoid too much involvement in the curricula and granular details that could be better decided by administrators and faculty. There was continued discussion about the value of the hybrid scenario option and teaching with distances and masks.

### 3C. Library

Judy Russell of the Lyme Library requested involvement with the school district’s plan development where the library is concerned. The district superintendent stated that the broader issues have been discussed to date and after the administrators and faculty work on the detailed implementation plan on August 13-14 the library officials will be incorporated in discussions about the students and their involvement with the library.

### 3D. Physical Distancing

The Finance & Facilities Committee has looked at ways to apply the physical distancing within the classes. There are two rooms that will accommodate 20 students (at six foot distancing) and the other rooms will hold 12-13 students. More desks would be needed and they would have a useful value to the district after the pandemic. The superintendent referenced an alternative to tent rentals. There was discussion about IEP students but again it was felt that such issues were better left to the professionals. Concern about the cost of the plan was expressed and it was felt that there would be no additional funding from the government, although there was a large fund balance last year.

### 3E. School Day and Alternative Calendar

The administrators and faculty work on the detailed implementation plan on August 13-14 when more decisions will be made but it is clear that time for preparation and training would be needed

prior to the opening. Professional development on topics such as social emotional learning and remote learning techniques will be included in the training work. It was recommended by administrators that the faculty begin on August 27 and the students' first day would be on September 9. The students would not be in school during the elections on September 8 and November 3.

There would be time before the school start date scheduled on the Town Common for parents and students to meet their teachers and get information and materials. The school day would start with six entrances where screening can occur and minimal congregating would be maintained. It was thought that the para-educators could do this screening and that there would be earlier dismissal to not exceed the number of hours that they can work per week.

**A motion was made (Hayden, Berk) to approve the alternative 2020-21 school calendar at the Lyme School whereby the faculty would start in-service days on August 27 and students' first day of school would be September 9.**

Discussion: The Board discussed staggering the grades' start of the school day and this is to be discussed at the faculty meeting. Another suggestion was to do a phased start with either the elementary school students or middle school students going first as a trial run.

**The motion was passed with Phil Barta, Vince Berk, Yolanda Bujarski, Hayes Greenway, Matthew Hayden, Jonathan Voegelé, Barbara Wilson voting in favor.**

### 3F. Health Screening

Board member Hayes Greenway reviewed guidelines recommended by the school nurse Task Force and Wellness Committee. Topics covered included quarantining for 14 days after out-of-state travel, use of hand sanitizer, temperature checks, process after staff or students exhibit symptoms, requirements for testing, nurse office operational issues, and so on. It was suggested that the Wellness Committee, nurse and Finance & Facilities Committee meet to discuss the suggested changes to the nurse office and a request for additional nurse staff. It was also suggested that each class have a first aid kit to help minimize visits to the nurse. There was mention of legal concerns related to teachers using first kits, the topic of home virus testing, and the cost of getting a test. The criteria for returning to on-site school (after medical exclusion) was discussed and it was stated that reasons for school shutdown or class quarantine are to be addressed.

### 3G. PPE

#### Inventory and Planning

Doug Fillian reviewed the PPE inventory and planning such as masks, gloves, disinfection liquid, wipes, sprayers, and so on. Sprayers to apply static disinfection were ordered in mid-June and are not expected to be received until November at the earliest. There was reference for how often the restrooms would be sanitized. CDC recommendations were cited for sanitation and a Board member statement was made regarding the political nature of the CDC recommendations.

Superintendent Valence requested specifics for what is needed to be prepared to open school.

### 3H. School Ventilation

Regarding the HVAC, it was stated that little can be done to accomplish an overhaul of the air filtration and vent control at the Lyme School in a timely manner before the school opening. It was suggested that closer proximity might be possible for teachers who use better masks.

On the matter of teachers, there was a comment that the number of faculty who will opt out of working on site (in the school) is uncertain and the actual student attendance is also unknown until

some of the details are finalized. The survey responses such as “likely and unlikely” are not definitive.

There was a statement regarding the VLACS program which is an option for home-based on-line education and is accredited by the DOE. It was stated that the latest information regarding enrollment for VLACS program was that it was full and will no longer be available to those who have not already enrolled. The Board discussed excluded students and the remote learning efforts for those students during their quarantine period. It was felt that faculty would be challenged to teach both on site and remote each day. Administrators and faculty will consider these issues when it meets next week.

### 3I. Furniture Assessment and Acquisition

**A motion was made and seconded (Bujarski, Barta) to reconsider the reopening scenario plan.**

Discussion: Board member Bujarski cited the sentiments of some of the staff regarding the reopening scenario options, amount of necessary expenditures, difficulty associated with drop off and pick up, need for staffing, IEP challenges, remote learning issues, and that it might be easier to have fewer students in the school.

All the scenarios were to be under consideration in the reconsideration including full remote learning. It was stated that the hybrid scenario would not address the issues related to the quality of education compared to the full on site instruction. It was felt that teacher feedback was paramount to the discussion. Concern for the situation was expressed by faculty (who strongly favor a hybrid option) at the meeting and it was also stated that the faculty will do the best they can with any scenario that was selected. A Board member referenced the lack of information regarding the level of education quality or student dropout rates associated with remote learning. The remote learning may create an educational inequity in Lyme. Some staff is concerned about changing assignments. It was stated that there would be an evaluation of the scenario and there will be an option to pivot if necessary.

**The motion was passed with Phil Barta, Vince Berk, Yolanda Bujarski, Matthew Hayden, Jonathan Voegele voting in favor and Hayes Greenway and Barbara Wilson opposed.**

There was more discussion about the hybrid scenario options.

**A motion was made and seconded (Barta, Bujarski) to change the reopening plan to the 4-10 split scenario. The motion was rejected with Phil Barta, Yolanda Bujarski, and Matthew Hayden voting in favor, and Vince Berk, Hayes Greenway, Jonathan Voegele, and Barbara Wilson opposed.**

Superintendent Valence spoke about the school furniture needs and an idea to have students use beach chairs that can be used indoors or outdoors. There was a \$10,000 difference between acquiring the beach chairs versus trapezoidal desks. The Board raised issues regarding asking the community for furniture and disinfecting the material on beach chairs. Discussion on original furniture motion: After a comment regarding the staff being creative, a member of the staff stated that it was felt that the staff was not listened to with regard to the plan scenario option.

**A motion was made and seconded (Greenway, Hayden) to authorize administrators and faculty to purchase furniture for classrooms for the Lyme School in an amount not to exceed \$20,000.**

Discussion: There was mention of the mounting costs for the school mitigation efforts and whether there would be a difference in such expenditures if the reopening plan was for the hybrid scenario or full remote learning rather than the full open scenario.

**The motion was approved with Vince Berk, Yolanda Bujarski, Hayes Greenway, Matthew Hayden, Jonathan Voegelé, Barbara Wilson voting in favor, and Phil Barta opposed.**

### **3J. Aftercare (LASP) Agreement**

Superintendent Valence explained the aftercare program that may or may not be conducted at the Lyme School depending on the purveyor. There have been about 15 participants in the program which uses the lunch area, the music room, and outdoor areas. The kitchen area will be closed off after school. All mitigation efforts of the implementation plan will be followed by the aftercare program.

**A motion was made and seconded (Berk, Wilson) to approve the reauthorization of the Aftercare program (LASP) agreement at the Lyme School for the 2020-21 school year. The motion was passed with Phil Barta, Vince Berk, Yolanda Bujarski, Hayes Greenway, Matthew Hayden, Jonathan Voegelé, Barbara Wilson voting in favor.**

### **3J. Substitutes**

Superintendent Valence explained the substitute situation and that the on-call sub had been removed from the approved budget.

**A motion was made and seconded (Bujarski, Barta) to approve the hiring of on-call substitutes for the 2020-21 school year. The motion was passed with Phil Barta, Vince Berk, Yolanda Bujarski, Hayes Greenway, Matthew Hayden, Jonathan Voegelé, Barbara Wilson voting in favor.**

## **4. Enrollment Requests**

Superintendent Valence explained the enrollment requests by Emily Girdwood and Trisha Gautreau for their respective children to attend the Lyme School. There is space available in the classes that are involved with the student enrollees. The enrollment for the 2020-21 school year is currently:

Kindergarten = 18; 1<sup>st</sup> grade = 19; 2<sup>nd</sup> grade = 16; 3<sup>rd</sup> grade = 27; 4<sup>th</sup> grade = 20; 5<sup>th</sup> grade = 22; 6<sup>th</sup> grade = 23; 7<sup>th</sup> grade = 24; 8<sup>th</sup> grade = 27.

**A motion was made and seconded (Hayden, Berk) to approve the enrollment requests at Lyme School for teachers Emily Girdwood and Trisha Gautreau for the 2020-21 school year. The motion was passed with Phil Barta, Vince Berk, Yolanda Bujarski, Hayes Greenway, Matthew Hayden, Jonathan Voegelé, Barbara Wilson voting in favor.**

## **5. Interns**

Superintendent Valence informed the Board that the Lyme School will host interns from the Upper Valley Education Institute this school year. They will be placed in classrooms for four days per week. The Board expected that the interns will comply with the protocols that are instituted at Lyme School. It was felt that the interns could help fill in some gaps.

## **6. Minutes Approval**

**A motion was made and seconded (Hayden, Wilson) to approve the Lyme School Board meeting minutes for July 15, 2020 as submitted. The motion was passed with Phil Barta, Vince Berk, Yolanda Bujarski, Hayes Greenway, Matthew Hayden, Jonathan Voegelé, Barbara Wilson voting in favor.**

**A motion was made and seconded (Hayden, Wilson) to approve the Lyme School Board meeting minutes for July 23, 2020 as submitted. The motion was passed with Phil Barta, Vince**

**Berk, Yolanda Bujarski, Hayes Greenway, Matthew Hayden, Jonathan Voegele, Barbara Wilson voting in favor.**

## **7. Other Business**

The Communications Committee reported that the community letter was completed and sent. Board member Berk also mentioned that Superintendent Valence will provide updates to the community as needed and that live streaming issues will very likely be impacted by the Internet reception in Lyme.

The next Board meeting will be scheduled for the week of August 17 to incorporate information associated with the administrator-faculty meeting. The Finance & Facilities Committee will discuss Wellness Nurse Task Force proposals prior to the next Board meeting.

Superintendent Valence referenced comments in the Zoom Chat regarding the budget and he stated that he will not request that the Board authorize all expenditures related to the implementation plan as the vast majority of expenditures are within with the approved operational budget. Chair Voegele stated that the Board is listening to all stakeholders and weighing all concepts in a very serious undertaking to make very difficult decisions for the best of all involved.

## **8. Adjournment**

**A motion to adjourn was made and seconded (Hayden, Bujarski). The motion was passed with Phil Barta, Vince Berk, Yolanda Bujarski, Hayes Greenway, Matthew Hayden, Jonathan Voegele, Barbara Wilson voting in favor.** The meeting was adjourned at 11:43 PM.