

**WINCHESTER SCHOOL BOARD
WINCHESTER SCHOOL LIBRARY
NOVEMBER 20, 2014**

Board Members Present: R. Horton, J. Cardinale, K. Bazan, T. Croteau, E. Jackson

Administration Present: J. Lewis, L. Spencer, L. Schmidt

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. by Chair, R. Horton.

T. Croteau MOVED to approve the public minutes of 10/30/14 as amended; on Page 2, L. Schmidt advised \$8,000 was earmarked for Science field trips; *teachers understood it had to be used for that*, SECONDED by: K. Bazan, VOTED: 4-0-1 (J. Cardinale – abstained), MOTION PASSED.

T. Croteau MOVED to approve the public minutes of 11/6/14 as printed, SECONDED by: E. Jackson; VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

GUEST SPEAKER:

SAU 29 and the Keene School Board came to give a presentation to address questions previously asked by the Winchester School Board. Present were Susan Hay, School Board Member; Jim Logan, Interim Principal; Dan Black, Interim Assistant Superintendent and Tim Ruehr, Business Administrator and Director of HR.

Winchester had previously asked about the high number of our students in foundation classes.

Dan Black and Jim Logan explained students are identified by Winchester in the eighth grade. Keene High School comes here with the guidance counselors and teachers and classes are chosen. Teachers, Guidance and SPED recommendations can play a part in scheduling classes for students throughout the year. Foundation classes are effective, small classes.

Dan Black explained the four year summary of Winchester students. There was an increase in Foundation Classes from Freshman to Sophomore year, but then it goes back down. The SPED percentage is much higher, but that goes down each year.

Dan Black explained they will be restructuring Math; taking Foundation Level Classes out and adding Transition Level Classes.

Graduation Rate – shows three-year rate for dropouts from Winchester.

2010/2011 – four students

2011-2012 – one student

2012- 2013 – no students

E. Jackson advised she had asked for graduation numbers.

Dan Black explained.

E. Jackson said she had asked for 2011/2012. What was the graduation rate?

Dan Black advised what he tried to give her was one group. Each one had a story of where they ended up.

Dan Black advised they have information on all graduates from the Winchester School District; could review it in non-public session.

Dan Black – Certainly agrees that Keene High School has improved, but certainly wants scores up in Math and Writing.

The Board reviewed the KHS budget.

R. Horton advised there has been a reduction in force at KHS, but our enrollment stays the same. Tim Ruehr explained if enrollment is the same, and costs don't go down, we all pay more, including Keene. It is the same for Keene or any other sending towns, if enrollment is down and costs stay the same. It is the same as in your own school's budgets.

E. Jackson asked when FTE's are cut.

Tim Ruehr advised prior to the budget year. It would affect the tuition rate for 2014-2015.

J. Cardinale advised Keene had a two percent rise in costs per pupil. Our tuition cost is based on per- pupil costs.

Tim Ruehr explained the tuition rate equals the expense budget divided by the average daily membership. It is not based on per pupil costs.

E. Jackson asked about the cost per pupil.

Tim Ruehr explained it is an equalized cost. On your DOE 25 form it shows costs that are allowed and costs that are not allowed.

E. Jackson – If you have 1600 students, 20+% are Sped. Our Sped cost is \$29,000 this year. Does this take into effect revenues also?

Tim Ruehr advised the cost per pupil has some revenues that come out of it.

Tim Ruehr explained the calculation of WSD tuition. What is included and what is not.

E. Jackson – Where would we see the 13 FTE's?

Tim Ruehr advised in the \$23,047,320 – it comes out of that.

Dan Black advised there is always a year difference for tuition. Tuition is based on the prior year.

Tim Ruehr advised if they took no cost cutting methods throughout the year, your tuition rates would skyrocket as would Keene's.

Tim Ruehr explained Keene uses the optimal number of students that should be in the building. It is based on that number, not on the number of students at Keene. That was the amendment to the contract in 2008.

Tim Ruehr advised the basic assumption is tuition is based on the previous year. No cost increase is captured. So the historic adjustment is used so it can go up or down.

R. Horton advised he had asked for five-year audit numbers. He asked if Keene brought the final numbers.

Tim Ruehr advised he received the request today at 2:30 so he didn't have time to get the information.

R. Horton asked about surplus returned to Keene taxpayers, but not WSD.

Tim Ruehr felt the question was asked in a very provocative way. Explained they charge for historical adjustments; sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't.

R. Horton feels it is black and white.

Tim Ruehr advised it absolutely is not black and white. Advised he would explain and will get the five-year figures.

E. Jackson asked about a blended rate and if Keene was willing to look at the contract and restructure the calculation to a blended rate. Dan Black said no.

Tim Ruehr explained some districts have a blended rate. Need to be careful when comparing a differentiated rate and a blended rate. If costs were blended, WSD would pay a much higher rate than other towns. WSD has a 29% SPED rate. At the High School last year it was 33%. That is about double of other sending towns. We are paying for what we are using. That can change over time.

Tim Ruehr explained surplus. Advised it is hard for people to get their heads around it. There was a \$2,000,000+ surplus. They underspent the expense budget by \$37,000 and had \$1,282,000 in revenues. Advised he could make it so they never had a surplus, but that won't change what Keene tax payers pay. It is based on the budget that is set.

R. Horton – If expenses come in lower than projected you return money back to the taxpayers. If you come in lower and don't return money to us, it does affect us. The frustration is with the contract. It doesn't mean we are happy with it.

Tim Ruehr explained in the scenario laid out if we spend more in the high school and expenses were previously not correct, that affects your tuition rate.

E. Jackson advised money returned was from insurance.

Tim Ruehr explained that is too simplistic to say we were undercharged or overcharged. You would have to do much more analysis to come to proper conclusions. If we underspent our expenses each year then you would be overpaying. Advised the Winchester School Board could get a copy of the audited financials and see for themselves. Advised it is up to you whether you keep the kids in Keene.

T. Croteau asked about AREA. How does that work?

Tim Ruehr explained he doesn't think anyone has been added since its inception. The historical adjustment is that the non-AREA pays two-and-a-half percent rental fee instead of two percent. That is the only way it differs. All other contracts are all calculated the same way.

R. Horton - Foundation Level Classes are changing in Math; want all kids on the same level. Common Core has raised the standards. Thinks there will be a lot of changes regarding Foundation Level Classes. What is the plan for kids who have been in FLC?

Jim Logan advised they would take Comprehensive or Honors-level classes.

Dan Black – The Math department can lead.

R. Horton asked if they are 100% in line with Common Core.

Dan Black doesn't think anyone is.

R. Horton – If you move a student to a Foundation Level Class that is Keene's doing. It is a little disappointing.

J. Cardinale seems a huge spike from the students we sent to the next year.

E. Jackson – Maybe we need to look at elementary and middle school classes to align with Keene so students don't have to go in FLC in ninth grade.

R. Horton – Just a guess, but if you place a student in FLC, with a little help after school or with peer help, I can see them stumbling; but is FLC the answer?

Sue Hay - We would be delighted to look at these things deeper; thinks I-time is definitely helping with students who need extra help. Thinks Winchester adding the late bus was a fantastic idea.

Tim Ruehr advised there are three other K-8 schools coming to the High School. Feels it would be good to reach out. They have the same struggles with many; same motivations/same struggles. Thinks the Middle School might be a good place to start the initiative. It is a K-8 issue, not just a grade nine issue.

T. Croteau – Do you verify that the kids on the list of Winchester students actually go to Winchester?

Tim Ruehr explained all Keene schools and sending towns struggle; it's a big job. If you have suspicions, you would have to be a partner in tracking them down. It is a weekly job.

K. Bazan asked what if someone is being home-schooled and we are still being billed?

Tim Ruehr - You need to check the tuition bill.

E. Jackson - If they stopped showing up and you had four weeks of no-shows, would you know that? Would you question it if you see it quite a lot? Is there something you do actively to verify the address?

Tim Ruehr – No. If they withdraw, they will be taken off your bill.

T. Croteau – Home-schooled students are probably easier to follow.

Tim Ruehr advised if they don't tell us and they moved and you were billed, we would credit you back. An adjustment would be made on the next bill; there would be either an additional amount owed or returned.

Dan Black advised they also work with the truant officer.

Tim Ruehr advised you get a bill with the list and you should go through it. No one knows your students like you do.

K. Bazan advised they had questions with the tuition calculations. It doesn't match the information they received.

R. Horton advised it was \$26,130 for Special Ed and \$12,504 for Regular Ed.

Keene advised it is \$29,282 for Special Ed and \$13,270 for Regular Ed.

L. Schmidt advised that is not the e-mail she received.

Tim Ruehr will go back and see what was sent. It looks like they sent the wrong rates.

L. Schmidt advised that will make a significant change in our budget.

R. Horton – Our budget stayed very close to flat; the only increase is the tuition rate which is very difficult.

Tim Ruehr still thinks Keene is competitive and less than most high schools Winchester could go to.

R. Horton – Regular rates are competitive and Special Ed Rates are high.

Tim Ruehr – Unless you are going to pay less than Keene, they are competitive.

Roberta Fraser asked about setting revenues. What came in that was not expected?

Tim Ruehr explained they budgeted \$11,000,000. They could have budgeted \$12,000,000, but would have been nervous they would have a deficit.

Roberta Fraser – If you get a surplus do you give it to Keene taxpayers?

Tim Ruehr advised they hope to have a steady surplus each year so they don't have to increase taxes each year.

Joan Franklin advised Keene is still raising and appropriating from Keene taxpayers. They are still paying. May spend surplus on something not earmarked. Advised she is well aware of trying to get a surplus at the end of the year. They are not doing anyone any favors; it's a fine line.

Tim Ruehr doesn't want high surplus; doesn't want to raise taxes.

Joan Franklin thinks if they take better care of where the money went, they won't have a surplus.

Tim Ruehr – If we spent \$2,000,000 for a new school, taxes would have gone up.

Joan Franklin – Are the elementary schools part of the rental or just the High School?

Tim Ruehr advised just the High School. Explained some buildings are included. AREA has the same calculation with two percent instead of two-and-a-half percent.

Sarah Louder asked how the meeting with Winchester students at Keene went.

J. Lewis explained it went very well. Advised Mr. Logan asked the students how Keene was doing.

J. Lewis advised the consensus was very good.

Sarah Louder asked if they think the meetings will continue.

Jim Logan advised it could be twice a year.

Sarah Louder asked how parents will know about the late bus.

Jim Lewis advised it will be a concentrated effort.

R. Horton – Right now there is no way to contact our students. How do we do that?

After discussion, J. Lewis advised he could give information to Jim Logan.

R. Horton advised they will also need residency verification.

L. Schmidt will send an e-mail to Marie Braley to request a student list.

Sarah Lounder asked how aligned Keene is with the Common Core.

Dan Black advised will learn with Smarter Balance in the Spring how aligned we are.

Jim Logan – Will have a definite answer after April, 2016.

Sarah Lounder asked what the deadline is.

Jim Logan advised to get everyone at a feeling that this is where we want to be could take two years. There are very high standards.

Amy Hill explained they are trying very hard in Winchester to be in alignment with the Common Core. Need to have a conversation between our school and the High School to make sure we are using the same things in all schools, not just in Winchester. Need to get everyone on the same page for Smarter Balance testing.

Sue Hay advised they talk about Common Core at each Board meeting; two schools come in each month.

Amy Hill feels it would be good to know what her kids need in fifth grade. She thinks there is more we can do. Needs to be a committee of all of us to work together and see what certain schools are weak in.

Sue Hay asked that Jim Lewis, Jim Logan and Lisa Spencer work on an integration challenge.

Sarah Lounder advised at an IEP meeting she was told there won't be Foundation Level Classes because Keene is not meeting the standards for Algebra. Feels there is no point putting ninth grade kids in FLC next year if they are going to change things.

Jim Logan advised the goal is to eliminate FLC starting in Math. It won't happen for September. Conversations are taking place now.

Dan Black thinks the teacher was misinformed. The State is saying students are behind when it comes to Algebra.

Sarah Lounder thinks some teachers don't know how to work students into regular classes out of foundation classes. She doesn't think they know what to do with students. Advised they were putting her student in Foundation Level Classes saying he can get out and go to Comprehensive Level Classes, but he wasn't getting what he needed in Foundation Level Classes.

Explained she always hears what Foundation Level Classes offer, but that is not her experience.

Sarah Lounder advised her son was told in FLC that he didn't need to capitalize or do punctuation.

Jim Logan – Don't think we won't check on that. Advised maybe he needs to check on the finished product.

R. Horton – This tells the story of the data you showed us.

Sarah Lounder – It is not just difficult to get a child out of FLC, it is almost an actual tug of war.

E. Jackson advised in ninth grade the GPA was 2.84 and then in tenth it was 2.3, Susan hay commented that she was not aware of any of those numbers.. Wouldn't you think the GPA would go up if students are going from FLC to Comprehensive Level Classes?

Roberta Fraser advised she is not getting answers from her student as to whom she can contact if she gets no answer from Guidance.

Jim Logan advised Roberta Fraser to call him.

R. Horton asked about an extended school year.

Jim Logan advised they didn't have the number of students to make summer school go.

R. Horton advised they had several students with IEP's; had to do classes here. Thinks if they have an IEP, Keene should offer the classes.

Dan Black – Will check to see how the ball got dropped.

Tim Ruehr advised if the Board still has information and questions, to put a list together.

Sue Hay feels that should be ongoing between the schools. These things can be resolved on an on-going basis.

Sarah Lounder was not told there would be no summer school. Her son was supposed to start the next week.

Sue Hay will look into that.

R. Horton thanked Keene for coming.

K. Bazan – Before this meeting the WSD budgeted \$236,000 less than what we found out the tuition cost was tonight.

R. Horton explained he doesn't think Keene is leaving us much of an option. Need to make serious decisions; kindergarten through eighth grade students are suffering.

Sue Hay advised they like working with Winchester. She doesn't think we would do much better than the value that we get. Advised she understands Winchester has to do what they have to do.

R. Horton advised exclusivity to the contract sticks out. Is there any chance that could change? Tim Ruehr – No. We don't have any agreements like that. Without exclusivity, it is hard for both sides to budget and plan.

Representatives from Keene left at 8:43 pm and the Board took a five minute recess.

The meeting resumed at 8:48 pm.

MANIFEST:

E. Jackson MOVED to approve the Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$216,684.28; SECONDED by: J. Cardinale, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

E. Jackson advised the Budget Committee completed the Town's budget. The Board will meet in the School library with the Budget Committee on 12/4. L. Schmidt will have the budget done by 12/2. She will call Brian Moser and get him copies of the budget for all members so they have it prior to the meeting on Thursday.

E. Jackson advised the Town tax is down to \$30.58 per thousand from \$30.73.

Sue Rice advised the Board's Facebook page hasn't been updated since August.

J. Cardinale advised he stopped updating it; wasn't sure what they wanted to do with it.

E. Jackson thinks it should have dates and times of meetings on it.

T. Croteau asked about Houghton Mifflin.

L. Spencer advised they could buy books for all grades from Houghton Mifflin for Common Core. It is very expensive and she is not sure how the Common Core should be interpreted. Thinks they should take it from multiple angles.

Joan Franklin explained there is a huge amount of awesome curriculum materials. We don't get them. Other schools get them. To support Common Core, we need materials. Advised she is downloading a lot from the Internet. Feels the school needs to purchase more consumables. Thinks they are relying too much on the Internet. They don't all have the same resources to address lesson plans.

L. Spencer advised they offered to buy Joan Franklin a set of books for grade two. L. Spencer explained Common Core is not to be a Houghton Mifflin concept for each day of the week. Teachers were told they could purchase books, but wouldn't support Houghton Mifflin or McGraw Hill.

Joan Franklin – Cannot submit to the Board what she wants to order; can't get through the Curriculum Coordinator. Feels by speaking here she will suffer repercussions. She advised the Board that it is very different from the way it used to be when they needed to order. So they will never see what she really wants.

E. Jackson advised there should be no repercussions. Advised Val Carey said no requests were submitted that have been denied. Need to submit requests.

L. Spencer explained if they buy preset books, that is what we are stuck with.

E. Jackson – So you are saying it doesn't meet curriculum requirements?

E. Jackson advised Joan Franklin that she needs to submit a request for what she wants.

L. Spencer – The second grade team came up with what they wanted. Asked Joan Franklin to pick out individual books and come up with a list.

Joan Franklin advised she would like to see the group look at a list requested by the teachers.

Amy Hill advised they are at a crossroad. When you adopt these standards as a District, you decide how to teach.

What they are running into now is we don't have common language; how do you teach? There is frustration from colleagues; they want common language across the board. There needs to be district decisions. Need to know what other schools are doing. Need to know what needs to happen curriculum-wise.

R. Horton advised a couple of years ago it was said that we needed a Curriculum Coordinator.

Amy Hill advised Val Carey is in the computer room every day for two months doing testing.

Joan Franklin – Also, in the classroom, there are not enough aides.

L. Spencer advised she took five days to help with MAP testing along with J. Lewis and D. Milde.

T. Croteau asked about getting information off the web site.

Joan Franklin – There is a clearinghouse. We have a teacher that does reading recovery. Everything on the clearinghouse is vetted. Feels they left a very structured procedure and now there is not much there. She would like to share her experiences. It is hard to be heard.

J. Lewis asked if they still do cluster meetings.

Amy Hill advised no. It has been said they need grade-level meetings. All work is in the hands of professionals; teachers know what to do. They know what is good and not good. Need to have a committee where all teachers are heard as well as the Curriculum Coordinator.

Amy Hill advised vetted information was really what the State was hiring her to find.

T. Croteau – This is our third year with the Common Core. Wouldn't you be doing things in the Summer to know what the curriculum would be for the next year?

Amy Hill explained they are given standards and told to work within the grade level. It is huge. They had meetings and went through the curriculum; that took one year. Then the second year they went through the curriculum and talked to experts and

created units. This is the third year of teaching this. Students are now learning; they have gaps. More work still needs to be done.

Amy Hill advised it is a hard practice for many. For fifteen to twenty years they were given the curriculum and the books they needed.

Joan Franklin advised then they all worked together.

Amy Hill – There was a model.

E. Jackson asked Joan Franklin how the School Board could help her, policy and procedure wise and budget wise. Advised the funds are in the budget.

Lisa Spencer thinks meetings are happening. It is a different practice; it is murky, not comfortable. It is hard; it's a lot of work.

T. Croteau – Does that take time away from instruction?

Amy Hill – Not from instruction, but it does suck up time.

Joan Franklin thinks if you are asking for something, there should be a larger group in the conversation. Feels it is hard to have a conversation with someone who didn't teach elementary education. Wants the Board to know she is always using the Internet. It is resources and materials that will prove very valuable.

Amy Hill advised the school is a professional learning community. Feels reps from grade clusters and the Board should share with the group and collect data.

E. Jackson was going to suggest that, but doesn't think it is the Board's place to be there.

Amy Hill thinks it would be proactive to have a Board rep. there.

R. Horton – Could have PLC presented to the full Board.

R. Horton thanked Joan Franklin for coming here. She is a professional teacher and needs to be comfortable with the tools she is using.

Amy Hill thinks the Board should have one rep. Advised they don't know what the teachers need.

T. Croteau advised that Val Carey came to a meeting and said everyone had what they needed.

J. Lewis advised the game has changed. Common Core is very different. Thinks cluster meetings are needed.

R. Horton – If they want a Board rep, they would do that.

T. Croteau is the Staff Development Committee Rep. Advised if they are looking for a Board member, he would do it.

R. Horton advised Amy Hill is the professional. If she thinks that's what they need, the Board supports it.

Amy Hill feels they need to also free up Val Carey so she can do her job. Also have a professional day if needed. The Board has been very good about that.

Joan Franklin feels they can be a great school, but they are going into the third year of the Common Core and it is material-driven.

R. Horton advised the message is loud and clear.

E. Jackson – Can't approve anything that doesn't get submitted.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

The Board received J. Lewis's report in their packet and reviewed.

*Has been discussion that the School will be used as an emergency shelter.

E. Jackson advised they need to work with Emergency Preparedness and the Selectmen.

*Advised Ruby Perrin is ill and on leave. The students have prepared a video for her.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT – L. Spencer:

The Board received L. Spencer's report in their packet.

Danielle Milde advised she was approached today about a field trip. She is looking for clarification. Does the Board not want them to ask parents for money?

R. Horton asked if the trip meets all the requirements.

L. Schmidt – Would it wipe out the fund?

D. Milde advised it might.

R. Horton advised if it is that expensive, maybe it should come to the Board.

J. Lewis – Probably should go to Administration.

E. Jackson – Maybe for expensive trips, parents need to contribute.

R. Horton – If they think some kids can do it. There are also scholarships; lots of different options.

The Board agreed to meet Monday, November 24th from 6:00pm. to 8:00pm. and Tuesday, November 25th from 5:30pm. to 7:30pm. The meetings can go a little longer both days, if needed.

J. Cardinale MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 10:07 pm; SECONDED BY: E. Jackson, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Higgins
School Board Secretary