

Oyster River School Board Meeting

December 21, 2011

7:00pm

Attendees:

Henry Brackett	Megan Turnbull	Krista Butts	Several additional admin,
Ann Wright	Ann Lane	Lee Levesque	teachers, and public members
Jim Kach	Jocelyn O'Quinn	Susan Caswell	

Henry Brackett called the meeting to order at 7:10pm

Motion by Jim Kach to enter into public session, seconded by Ann Lane, 7-0.

Lee Levesque presented two overnight field trip requests, one for the Music Allstate Festival and one for the Jazz Allstate Festival. Motion made by Ann Wright, seconded by Henry Brackett to approve both overnight field trips.

District Announcements

Todd Allen stated that for the two overnight field trips that were approved, the students had to try out to be accepted. It was reported that the high school Christmas concert was being held that evening. Recent graduates returning for break from college were reporting they were extremely well prepared in writing. On January 12th, the high school will be holding a fundraiser.

Jay Richard stated that the middle school held an impressive holiday concert last week. Last Friday the middle school had an impromptu dance and raised funds to purchase gift certificates for families in need. Education spokesperson Michael Thompson will be in the district on 1/11/12. Jay specifically recognized Julie Kelley for her work for bringing Thompson's presentation to the district

Kris Gallo recognized Pam Felber for Mast Way's Christmas Concert and expressed appreciation to all who worked on raising money for the less fortunate at this time of year. She also thanked everyone who tried to watch Mast Way on ABC. Although the video did not air, it may be reconsidered for airing in early 2012.

Danielle Bolduc explained that in the Giving Tree kids have animated their voices about the type of gift they would like to receive.

Henry Brackett made a motion to add the Deliberative Session date as an agenda item. Ann Lane, Jim Kach 7-0.

Correspondence

Ann Wright reviewed several correspondences received this week and stated that they are available in the SAU office for review.

Commendations

None

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes for 11/30/11 by Ann Lane, seconded by Jocelyn O'Quinn. Ann Lane made a change to the minutes. On the last page toward the bottom, Ann Lane stated that she did not

discuss the Aramark contract total coming out of \$500,000. Jocelyn O'Quinn asked that the word "capitol" be changed to "capital." 6-0-1 Jim Kach abstained

Motion to approve the minutes for 12/7/11 by Jocelyn O'Quinn, seconded by Ann Wright. 7-0

Motion to approve the minutes for 12/5/ 11, by Ann Wright, seconded by Henry Brackett 6-0-1 Krista Butts abstaining.

Curriculum and Instructional Reports

None

Superintendent Report

Lee directed our attention to a report that he has issued regarding information on the Deliberative Session and the Annual Report.

Student Representative. Cody Jacobsen stated that there was a hockey game tonight at the Whittemore Center. A coffee house was recently held in the multi-purpose room where people read poetry and played music. There will probably be more, if interest exists.

HS Athletic Director's Report

Corey Parker, ORHS Athletic Director, gave a report about the status of fall athletics. He recognized students for their academic achievement and athletic accomplishments. Corey announced that Liberty Mutual recognized Kate Messler for a top sportsman award in recognition of the game that she played in against Sanborn Regional (one of the top ten moments in sports). He reported that Oyster River High School would sponsor a basketball tournament next week.

Facilities Study

Kelly Davis and Gary Goudreau of Davis Goudreau Architects

Mr. Goudreau stated that following the meeting a complete facilities report would be available. In mid September the firm was hired by the district to work on the facilities study which consisted of assessing buildings and programming space. Their work involved consulting with staff and administration and going through archived drawings of each of the buildings to verify dimensions and actual usages. They assessed the mechanical and electrical systems in each of the schools. Also included in the report is a review of the food service facilities and suitability of vehicle and pedestrian patterns. Other sections of the report address compliance with ADA and code requirements. The firm assessed electrical power distribution, expansion possibilities, fire ratings, HVAC, interior and exterior lighting. For program analysis the firm compared the square footage of each room with current student enrollment to state and local guidelines.

In response to a question from Jim Kach regarding the appropriateness of vehicle parking in front of the high school entrance, the firm responded it was not a code issue.

Jocelyn O'Quinn asked if they had any estimates as to what the Board should use for capital improvements each year. Mr. Goudreau said that there are recommendations for mechanical and electrical upgrades. They can make short and long term recommendations if the Board desires. They did not prioritize the items but would be happy to assist the district.

Henry Brackett asked what the occupancy code would be for the auditorium (650); There are about 540 seats in that room right now, with 100-110 people sitting on the stage, the room is maxed out. Henry also asked about the labels that have been covered or painted over. Mr. Goudreau said that was a consistent problem in all of the schools.

OR Robotics Team

The team was introduced by volunteer mentor, Brian Turnbull. He thanked the district and the Board for their support of the team. He stated ORCSD had met the challenge issued by the governor for every district to have a robotics team by 2011. The team showed a video of their robot in action. They won two rookie awards which are displayed in the award case at the High School. They are currently refining aspects of last year's work. In two short weeks, the 2012 season kicks off with this year's challenge at the Regional Competition at Worcester Polytechnical Institute on March 8, 2012. Science teacher, Nathan Oxnard, spoke of the need for integrating science, technology, engineering and math in the schools. This robotics program helps to achieve that. Students are getting real engineering experience by taking a kit of parts, problem solving, and building a robot. Required are communication, writing, and problem solving skills. This program also provides a large number of scholarships to participants in the program. FIRST Robotics Competition supports the theme of Gracious Professionalism which helps participants to learn and compete in an environment of respect and kindness. Sophomore, Ethan Stuart, has been in the robotics program for two years and enjoys it. He stated a lot of problem solving was required and he gave examples of how it was applied during the construction of the robot. He stated he wants to participate for many more years and hopes that fundraising efforts can support this program. He mentioned that there are other events that occur in between the time students receive the kit and the regional competition. The work instills team building and communication. Cameron Alstrom, a freshman, feels that the program is already helping him to develop the skills that he will need to continue in a science and engineering career that he hopes to pursue. In regards to costs, it was stated that \$5,000 is needed for the competition registration which includes a kit of parts and the registration for the regional competition. The kit may require additional parts that need to be purchased. They estimated that the materials and fabrication costs are approximately \$3,000 with travel at another \$3,000. Team expense can range from \$15,000 to \$50,000 for these programs. The robotics team has been fortunate to get local business support. JC Penney has been a huge supporter of the program; the team also received support from the Space Consortium, a local resident who is with the Dupont Group, and BAE Systems. They have raised \$5,000 to date for the competition. The Robotics team will be hosting Lego League at UNH in 2012 as a fundraiser. Todd Allen stated that the economics for supporting the team is a real challenge. This year they asking the district to support their team with \$5,000.

Jocelyn O'Quinn asked how many students are participating this year. It was stated eleven students were part of the Robotics team. She also asked whether the money for this program is intended to come out of district surplus. Todd said that he did not have funding to support it from his budget. In response to a question about community member donations, Mr. Allen indicated that if anyone wanted to donate, they can contact him at ORHS.

Ann Lane asked if they had to turn anyone away. The response was "no." She also inquired about the Lego League at the middle school and how that is supported.

Ann Wright thanked the group for the presentation and said that she is definitely in support of a robotics team as it supports our mission and the hands on learning that STEM promotes; she thanked the volunteers that support this program. She asked how many girls are in the program and the answer was 3.

Megan Turnbull said she is also in support of the program but asked when were the funds needed and how would they be provided. Mr. Allen indicated that the team has already paid their registration fees, but now they were looking to cover expenses. Lee asked how much of the \$5,000 they anticipate raising outside. Mr. Allen indicated that they are hoping for the district to provide \$5,000 so that any money that they raise this year can go to support next year's team.

It was explained that some districts support their teams fully and some teams are completely self-supporting. Lee stated that he could work with Sue to find the \$5,000 to support the robotics team. Ann Wright made a motion to authorize Sue and Lee to try to find \$5,000 in the budget to support the robotics team. Seconded by Jim Kach. 7-0 approved.

ABC Report

Anne Knight thanked the Board and the Superintendent for allowing her to come back and finalize the report. She recognized the members of the ABC, Anne Knight, Jenna Roberts, Rob McEwan, David Taylor, Lisa Alison, Tom Merrick, Steve Woodruff, and Phil Dollar. The final report is now available on the district website. Reviewed was the table of contents and what was available to the public. The ABC recommends that there be an improvement to the email delivery system so that the Board can receive documents with large attachments without delay. She identified six overarching concerns: 1.) acknowledgement of the declining enrollment by adding tuition students, 2.) need for long range strategic plan, 3.) facility maintenance priority at about \$403K per year, 4.) one-time savings need to be made more evident, 5.) salaries and benefits comprise over 78% of the budget, 6.) the budget process was smoother this year. However, all funds were not reported, and it would be helpful if we got those in a more timely fashion. Prior to last week's ABC meeting, they received a list of items that was presented at the last School Board meeting. The ABC recommends further review of the non personnel suggestions proposed by Megan Turnbull and Ann Lane. The ABC looks forward to further dialogue with the Board about improving the budget process.

Jocelyn O'Quinn thanked the ABC for all the work they have done over the last two years. She said that she feels the district has made huge strides in creating a budget that is much more open and understandable. She cited district work on the strategic plan and sustainability committee but thinks that one other area that is important to assess is the community's ability to pay an increasing tax burden. That tax burden might actually affect the enrollment of our schools.

Megan Turnbull asked what the next step was for the ABC. Anne said that they do not have any additional meetings scheduled before the public hearing.

Jocelyn asked if they had a chance to look at the default budget. Anne said they would be willing to look at the required calculations as well as the recommendations in the facilities study.

Ann Wright stated she was concerned the ABC was doing far too much work. She stated that she did not see the last meeting posted on the budget calendar. Anne Knight said they did not know that they would need that meeting but that the meeting was posted after the last School Board meeting.

Ann Lane thanked the committee and its members and she specifically acknowledged Lisa for her work in the staffing report.

Megan said that she feels it would be helpful for the ABC to give some recommendations on the facilities report. Lee reminded the Board that they had a superintendent and a business administrator who could provide initial guidance. He stated that by next fall or even as early as the spring they will be developing recommendations based on the facilities report.

The Board recessed for 10 minutes at 9:06pm, Motion made by Megan Turnbull, Seconded by Jocelyn O'Quinn.

Henry Brackett called the meeting back into session at 9:16pm.

School Board Committees

Jocelyn O'Quinn announced that both the Communications Committee (to work on the press releases for the Superintendent Search Committee) and the Sustainability Committees met.

Henry Brackett reported that the ABC Committee met.

Krista Butts reported that she met with Lee early in December to turn over the policy work to the Superintendent's office.

Wendy Gibson, a teacher at the High School, read a letter on behalf of the faculty and staff regarding the recent budget cuts that they are not in support of. Of particular concern is the elimination of an assistant principal position which they feel would cause issues with safety and student discipline. In addition, they are also not in support of the reduction of a half time math teacher due to the increase to math requirements. They urge us to reconsider the cuts in the high school.

Roger Speidel, a resident of Durham, stated that the ORCSD has spent a significant amount over the state average on per pupil costs. He spoke in support of the current Board to rectify spending of previous Boards to keep the budget in a more reasonable spending pattern. He referenced several other districts and their pupil to teacher ratios.

Marnie Sumner, a resident of Durham for 57 years, spoke in favor of the robotics program. She also referenced her tax bill and that $\frac{3}{4}$ of her bill goes to education. She said that we have to be considerate of families that are here on fixed incomes as well as young families so that people can afford to stay here. She suggested that the School Board outsource school busing to some to save money. She thanked the duly elected School Board members and Mr. Levesque for his service to our district.

Daniel Day, Durham – a resident and 2009 graduate of ORHS, stated he highly opposed privatizing busing. He referenced other issues with bus companies in other districts. He is also opposed to the reduction of the assistant principal at the High School.

Brenda Worden, a resident of Lee – was concerned by adult conduct towards a student representative at the last Board meeting. She asked for the Board to apologize and stated the Board did not know its role. It should follow the policies and procedures that they expect the staff and students to follow.

Ann Chum, a resident of Durham spoke on behalf of the ORPaSS negotiating team. She stated that the Board and ORPaSS negotiating teams have worked very hard to come up with a contract that will allow them to live and while keeping in mind the tax burden on the taxpayers.

Wally Keniston, a paraprofessional at the ORHS library, spoke in favor of the proposed contract. He stated that ORPaSS unanimously voted to ratify the contract. They thought hard and long about the ramifications of their contract on the district and the taxpayers.

Jason Seaman, a resident Durham, spoke in favor of the robotics program and how much it adds to the educational quality of the district.

Jennifer Rief, a resident of Durham, read a list of reductions that have occurred over the past five years under the supervision of Howard Colter as Superintendent. She says that the assumption that the district has not addressed the declining enrollment is not true.

JoAnn Portalupi, a resident of Lee, addressed the list that Jennifer Rief just spoke about and that one thing that is interesting to note is that the reductions were sustainable. She expressed concern that there were three budget reductions that were made with little discussion very late at night. She urged the Board to understand what those funds were meant to be spent on, its effect on the students, and whether the reductions were sustainable or a deferment.

John Collins, a resident of Lee, spoke about the Superintendent Search and asked the Board to delay the choice until after the election. He suggested the Board work on the trust issue. He is concerned with the role of the Screening Committee. It does not have a robust enough of a role. The charge for the Screening Committee should be posted and given to the public.

Stephanie Adams, a resident of Lee, requested that the budget list that Megan and Ann drafted for the last Board meeting be placed on the district website.

Kathy Friarson, a resident of Durham, found the facilities study quite interesting. She asked the Board to anticipate the worst in a crisis or emergency situation when considering the assistant principal reduction. She is bewildered that anyone is shock about their tax bill.

Ruth Sample, a resident of Lee, stated that it is a worrisome proposition that teachers are 78% of the budget and therefore, a budget problem. She referenced a letter from Ann Lane to Jay Richard and her displeasure with it.

Board Comments

Ann Lane – She said that her daughter had wished to be here tonight to speak on how different her life is now that her mother is a School Board member, but above all wanted to wish all the Board members a Merry Christmas.

Jim Kach – Asked that all of the passion and knowledge be used in a more constructive way by volunteering for positions that support the district and the Board.

Discussion Items

Moving the Deliberative Session to a Saturday

Sue said that the only options are 2/4 and 2/11. Jim and Henry both said that they had heard from constituents that a Saturday meeting would be more accessible. Several Board Members expressed their opinions on the topic. Motion made by Ann Lane to change the Deliberative Session to Feb 4 with a snow day of Feb 11th, seconded by Jim Kach. Jocelyn clarified that the move was for this year. Motion passed by a vote of 4-3.

Action Items

Ratification of ORBDA and ORPaSS contracts

Jim Kach made a motion to ratify the ORBDA contract seconded by Ann Lane. Motion was approved 7-0

Ann Wright made a motion to ratify the ORPaSS contract seconded by Jocelyn O'Quinn and was approved 7-0.

Budget Discussion – Warrant Articles and Default Budget

Lee presented the Board a spreadsheet of budget summaries showing that even though the budget is relatively flat, there is a local impact because we are weaning away from the surplus that we have had in the past; he asked Sue to review the default budget calculations. Sue went over the default budget form. Jim Kach asked for clarification as to why the default budget was higher than the proposed budget. Sue said that because it is based on last year's budget.

Lee asked that the Board accept the Warrant Articles as written, motion made by Ann Wright, Megan seconded. Motion passed 6-1.

Superintendent Search Committee

Lee reviewed the slate of volunteers for the superintendent search committee put forth by the constituents of each group. Motion made by Ann Wright, seconded by Megan Turnbull, motion passed 7-0. Lee explained that he asked each Board Member to come into the SAU office this week and review the applications and choose a person to serve on the committee. Cody drew randomly from unmarked envelopes. The community members chosen were Luci Gardner and Yusi Turrell. Jim made a motion to appoint those members, seconded by Ann Wright. Jim stated that he was pleasantly pleased by all who submitted applications and thanked them all. Motion approved 7-0. Finally, Lee asked for the Board to make nominations for the Board Members to serve on the committee. Jim Kach, Ann Lane, Ann Wright, and Jocelyn O'Quinn volunteered to be on the search committee. Each member spoke as to why they would like to be on the committee. Henry made a motion for Jocelyn O'Quinn to serve on the committee, seconded by Ann Wright. Motion passed 7-0. Henry made a motion for Ann Lane to serve on the committee, seconded by Jim Kach. Motion passed 5-2.

Public Comments

Brenda Worden, a resident of Lee, stated she appreciated the IEP comment about serving on the superintendent screening committee, but she is concerned about the Board not listening to the Superintendent's recommendations and about not being listened to if she talks about the good things that have been done at MW for her son. She also spoke favorably of the After School Enrichment Program being offered by Mast Way and the music concert presented by Pam Felber.

Maria Burrett, a resident of Lee, is amazed by the lack of public address system for the Board Meeting. She said it is hard to call it a public meeting if the public in the room cannot hear them.

JoAnn Portalupi, a resident of Lee, asked the Board to reconsider the move of the Deliberative Session due to the conflict with the Lee Deliberative Session.

Tracey Schroeder, a resident of Durham, spoke to the desire to reconsider the move of the Deliberative Session.

John Collins, a resident of Lee, is disappointed that Ann Lane was chosen for the Superintendent Screening Committee. He also spoke against the Deliberative Session being changed. He stated it was a "done deal before we even got here tonight."

Denise Day, a resident of Durham, is concerned about last minute decisions.

David Taylor, a resident of Durham, expressed that there were so many beautiful things going on in this district and but much ugly going on during this Board.

Motion made by Ann Lane and seconded by Henry Brackett to revisit the change in the Deliberative Session. Motion approved 7-0.

Krista Butts made a motion to move the Deliberative Session back to 2/7/12 with a snow date of 2/8/12 to accommodate the original budget calendar that towns used to build their calendars, seconded Ann Wright. Motion passed 7-0.

Agenda Planning

Ann Wright asked to have goal setting review added to the list.

Jocelyn asked to have the email system and what is public and nonpublic to be added to the list.

Future Dates for Meetings

1/4/12; 1/18/12; 1/12/12

Motion to adjourn made by Jim Kach and seconded by Ann Wright. Motion approved 7-0 and meeting adjourned at 10:56pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Krista Butts