

NEW SALEM/WENDELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE – FINAL MINUTES
THURSDAY, November 5, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.
REMOTE MEETING – GOOGLE HANGOUT MEET

Attending: Melissa Burke, Johanna Bartlett, Barbara Doyle, Beth Erviti, Jack Radner, Carla Halpern, April Thompson, Anna Wetherby (minutes), members; Kelley Sullivan, principal; Bruce Turner, treasurer; Jennifer Culkeen, superintendent

Teachers: Gosia Spooner, Jill Putala, Lisa Aubin, Patty Savage, Paige Smith, Danika Tyminski, Shannon Flematti, Jennylou Powers, Nancy Mead, Christie Morris, Gillian Budine, Ciji Cody, Pete Nolan

Public (as identified in the call) Shelia Neilan, Kaitlin Reed, Carl and Michelle Wolf

A. Call Meeting to Order at 7:05

B. Public Hearings

- SREA read letter – request to remain in remote learning through the seasonal holidays for many reasons

C. Warrants – Record in minutes with numbers

#8080 \$79,402.47; #8090 \$87,707.43; #8092 \$44,414.37; #8093 \$46,910.77;
#8100 \$79,328.01; #408 \$69,449.93; #409 \$71,489.48; #410 \$69,867.57;
#808 \$26,355.51; #809 \$26,355.51. #810 \$26,355.51; #2807 \$1,427.43;
#2808 \$1,294.18; #2809 \$2,016.66; #4013 \$8,315.99; #4014 \$43,368.45;
#4015 \$660.00; #4016 \$42,990.64; #4017 \$27,383.25; #4018 \$36,936.10
#4019 \$817.83

D. Superintendent's Report

- Central office will be moving the week of November 9
 - Students Support Services: Shutesbury Elementary
 - Finance and Operations: Erving Elementary
 - Superintendent's Office; Swift River School
- Friday webinar on HVAC ventilation
- Recently required by DESE to fill out data on structured learning time, synchronous, asynchronous learning. This reporting will occur regular intervals throughout the year
- Report completed and submitted
- New offices at Swift River are in compliance with state regulations – could Plexiglas be inserted to create barriers from the public

E. Director of Finance and Operations Report

- Hired mover for next week's move

- Cubicles for Finance and Operations donated from Easthampton Saving's bank.
- Consultant to check the air handlers
- Doors and windows project – one item left and final test
 - Needed to replace windows in cafeteria
 - New Dorm window/door at front door
- Plan to have budget ready for discussion next month
- Bill from Previous Year – Discussion and Vote
 - Melissa moves to approve a bill from previous year for heating bill for \$2,372.74, Carla 2nd – passes unanimously

F. Principal's Report

- 70% of students wish to come back to school
- Most will use personal transportation
- Buses have been updated with safe distance X markings
- Snow days are remote learning days unless there is significant power outage
- 4 students are in person for IEP requirements
- 50% of staff are in the building, teaching from classrooms
- Teachers are setting up classrooms (could not do that over summer due to construction)
- Would like to invite new families to tour school
- Grant for water bottle filling stations
- iWaves on all air handlers – had help from town administrator to secure the HEPA filters
- Got a grant for new walk in freezer and ceiling insulation

G. Committee Reports

☐ Report from Mahar Representatives

- Met October 9th, discussed many of the same issues. Will look at metrics, discussed hybrid in Petersham. There are struggles with technology and connectivity
- Looking at different styles of going back: for science labs, drop in help, etc.
- Student reps are doing great things to connect students with students in other schools
- Changes are happening regarding interaction with students (requiring stuents to keep cameras on)
- There might not be enough remaining staff to run the school as a hybrid
- Higher number of home school students (31, up from 19 previous year)

☐ Budget and Personnel – Next Meeting – November 16, 2020 – 5:30 p.m.

☐ Joint Supervisory – Next Meeting – November 16, 2020 6:30 p.m.;

Policy Subcommittee Meeting – November 16, 2020 6:15 p.m.

H. November Items

☐ Home School Applications – Discussion and Vote

- Carla Moves to vote on home school applications 17-22 as a group Barbara 2nd – passes unanimously
- Jack moves that we accept applications for students 17-22, Carla 2nds – passes with 1 abstention
- Not currently doing in-depth questions of applications due to current circumstances

□ 2020 Reopening – Discussion

- Reopening metrics
 - Report from Nan Mead – school and boards of health need to be in close discussion, it is not just about state or local numbers
 - We are trending in the wrong directions and the governor is recommending to have schools open
 - Does not feel safe to her to bring people back into the building
 - There is not one metric that will give the right decisions
 - Jen thanks Nan for the work she has done
 - Shared graph of trends over time from towns connected to Swift River
 - These metrics are a part of the decision to make changes to remote/hybrid/in-person learning
- Testing turn around has improved
- Barbara member brought up the Europe model, specifically Germany, they kept schools open when other things were closed
 - Social/emotional learning is as important as academic learning, learn to be flexible and learn to change
- Carla thanks those who spoke and there is a need to recognize the need for the routine. People cannot learn if they are sick or dead
 - We need to look to health professional and health boards, and listen to the teachers union
- Jack asks - other schools in the area that have gone back, how is it going?
 - Specifically at the elementary level. Agrees with Barbara's comments, understands the concerns of the teachers, but is it necessary to keep schools closed for the holidays? Are those our priorities?
- Jenny from New Salem board of Health – recommends contacting Petersham Elementary School – they have been hybrid and things are going well.
 - Orange is remote and has been all year.
 - Erving is part in session.
 - Athol is remote after having in person classes.
 - Things are ramping up in Massachusetts.
 - Labs are slowing down due to the increase in tests to process
- If other things were closed, we might be able to open schools
- Danika – speaking on priorities – making remote learning the best it can be.
 - Social emotional learning is happening in remote classes, team-building games are happening. The academic curriculum is robust as well – looking at Electoral College, learning ASL, whale songs, etc.

- Returning in a hybrid situation – school will not look the same. Everything is spread out and looks sterile, not being able to share, work together
- Melissa – question regarding at risk learners – is this limited to just students with IEPs and 504?
 - Kids in general are struggling. Is it possible for students who are struggling to be allowed in-person learning?
 - Dr. Marsh has drafted a document that will provide guidance for returning. There are specific qualifications that will need to be met by the students. Currently only students with IEPs are allowed in person instruction. Needs to be cancelled next week due to staffing numbers being down
- Anna – spoke of the chaos of in-person uncertain learning environment
- Pete Nolan– it would be scary to be in school, uncertain and chaotic
- In December, we consider a return to school in January
- Rise in cases and holiday season is a concern
- Request for agreeing on a date (perhaps January 6) to start back in person
- Knowing a date is helpful for staff and families

Carla moves that we consider a hybrid approach or full in person learning to school in January 11th to be discussed at the December meeting. Melissa 2nds

- Passes with 5 ayes, 1 nay, 1 abstention
- Burke aye, Halpern aye, Doyle abstention, Radner nay, Ertviti aye, Bartlett aye, Wetherby aye

□ MOA with Swift River Education Association –

- Anna moves to accept the MOA from the SREA, Carla 2nds – passes unanimously
- Jennifer feels comfortable with the updates and the wording of the MOA

□ Policy Update and Review:

- First Reading on:
 - IHBHE – Remote Learning*
 - JLCB – Immunization of Students*
 - EBC-S – Policy on COVID-Related Issues*
 - No questions, will have 1st vote next meeting

I. Future Business

- Next Meeting Date – December 3, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.
- New Salem/Wendell Policy Committee – December 3, 2020 – 6:30 p.m.

J. Approval of Minutes:

- October 1, 2020
 - Beth moves to accept minutes from October 1, Barbara 2nds – passes unanimously

K. Executive Session – not needed

L. Adjournment

Melissa moves to adjourn , Barbara 2nds 8