

**Stratford School Board
Board Meeting-Public Minutes
December 14, 2016**

The Stratford School Board had a board meeting on Wednesday, December 14, 2016 at 6:00 pm, at the Stratford Public School in Stratford, NH. Present were: Mike Lynch, Wayne Hall and Bruce Blodgett. Also present were Superintendent Mike Kelley, Business Administrator Patty Brown, Special Education Director Michelle Mason and Principal Sandi Adams.

Wayne Hall called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

A motion was made by Mike Lynch and seconded by Bruce Blodgett to approve the public minutes of November 9, 2016 as presented. A vote was then taken and all were in favor.

Citizens Comments: There were no comments.

Sandi Adams presented her report and had nothing to add at this time.

Bruce Blodgett asked about the ski program transportation and how the program is run. Sandi Adams replied that the parents transport the students, because this is not a school sponsored program anymore. The students should be passing all classes, but the parents are paying and signing them up. Only three students signed up with Bretton Woods this year.

Michelle Mason presented her report and added that the child with a one-on-one has moved and that position will be removed.

Bruce Blodgett asked why Michelle Mason had to stay for the whole meeting, was it really necessary to have her here at every board meeting. The board then agreed that it was not necessary for Michelle to attend the monthly board meetings.

Karen Conroy's technology director's report was presented in the board packet.

Mike Lynch asked about the distance learning equipment and all the upgrades and if the distance learning was being used. Mike Kelley responded that the equipment is being used, actually next week it will be used.

Mike Lynch asked why the classrooms aren't using the distant learning more. Can it be mandated in the classrooms? Mike Kelley responded that this specific equipment doesn't have to be used with today's technology on the personal computers themselves.

Mike Lynch asked if Sandi Adams could come up with a plan to get this into the classrooms more. Sandi Adams replied that she will work on a classroom distance learning usage plan.

Charlie Goulet asked what was being taught in the technology classroom now. Sandi Adams responded that the technology curriculum is based on STEM with lots of hands on and problem solving, engineering, etc... STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics studies. K-4 receives one special a week, plus a special in the library using technology. Grades 5-8 receive a special every day at 90 minutes a time.

Bruce Blodgett then asked how the presidential change will impact our funding, legislature, education, etc... Mike Kelley replied that education is up in the air with the republican control. It could be a very scary time because there is a lot out there undecided in the legislature for changes.

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Patty Brown presented her report with an updated proposed budget for 2017-2018. Because of a student change, we were able to reduce the budget by one full time para. Patty then went over the proposed budget for 2017-2018 and highlighted any significant increases and decreases. The budget is up \$40,603, just over 2% compared to the 2016-2017 current budget. The tuition is down because high school enrollment is down 7 students, salaries are up because 1 additional paraprofessional was needed to be hired this year, additional services for speech, OT and psych needed to be purchased, NHRS increased an additional 1.69%, and fuel is down based on the three year average budgeted at \$2.50 per gallon. Patty supplied the board with a summary report describing all these differences in detail. The overall tax impact is \$.75 less than what we proposed at the last annual meeting back in March 2016.

Bruce Blodgett asked what could be cut from this proposed budget. Why are there so many teachers when our current enrollment is going down? Can't we combine some grades that have four or seven students in them? Sandi Adams and Mike Kelley explained the requirement for junior high curriculum and why they must have four core teachers for the 5-8 grades (Math, English, Science, History), regardless of enrollment numbers. Sandi then went over class sizes and teacher assignments, etc...

Bruce Blodgett also stated that if we don't take a closer look at this budget and tighten it up, we could be looking at much worse results. People find it hard to believe that we need \$2.25 million dollars to educate 70 kids. The people will make the decision for us, if we don't.

Bruce Blodgett then asked Patty Brown what the cost per pupil is and will be with this proposed budget. Patty responded that last fiscal year the cost per pupil was \$23,571, this fiscal year is estimated to be around \$25,347 and the proposed cost per pupil around \$26,714. This is elementary students only. The high school cost is based on the tuition rate, which is currently \$12,744. The cost per pupil I have stated for elementary does not include transportation, tuition, special education, food service, building improvements or equipment. The state figures out these costs in this manner, if you were to add transportation, cafeteria program, etc..., obviously the cost per pupil would be even more.

Mike Kelley presented his report and had nothing to add. There were no comments or questions from the board.

The board asked Mike Kelley about the North Country Superintendent's meeting and how that went. Mike Kelley replied that it was very small; there were a few that could not attend. Mike did work with a new superintendent in Littleton to assist him with some issues.

Mike Kelley then discussed with the board how they wanted to approach their meeting with the Northumberland school board on the tuition agreement. The board basically wants to let them know they want a choice option and how does Groveton feel about it. They also want to offer a longer agreement with Groveton if they go along with the choice option. The board wants to know how Groveton feels about it all and make sure they know the details of the choice option and that

Stratford will only pay up to Groveton's tuition rate, if someone chooses to go elsewhere. See what they have to say and go from there.

Bruce Blodgett again stated he does not agree with the choice option, but agrees the agreement should be longer than one year. Bruce feels Groveton has been good to Stratford and we should be working exclusively together.

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Wayne Hall thinks Stratford can work it out with the Groveton board and go from there.

Patty Brown mentioned the approved upon agreement will need to be drawn up and ready to add as an article to the town's warrants and be posted in time with the budget before the budget hearing.

Mike Kelley also mentioned that the law states the district must offer a free and appropriate education, which Stratford would have with an agreement with Groveton. It just has an additional option of choice, but the bottom line is they are all offered a free and appropriate education.

Mike Lynch asked if we need to schedule another quick meeting after the board meets with Groveton to discuss the tuition agreement. Mike Kelley responded that would be possible and we'll look at schedules at that time.

Mike Lynch then mentioned the recent plowing in the field was not completely done and there seems to be a lot of grass in the snow banks. The plow guy is going to have a mess to clean up in the spring. The guy should have either lifted his plow up and leave a couple inches or just run over the area a few times to pack it down first. Mike Lynch would like either himself or Joe Hakey to meet with Marc to go over the specifics stated in the contract. Everything else seems fine, but the field will never freeze if we continue with this process of plowing over it. Patty Brown suggested Joe Hakey contact Marc and set up a time to meet with him and go over the specifics to make sure the field is properly plowed and will freeze.

There were no citizen's comments.

Joe Hakey asked what he missed about the mowing discussion and the upcoming budget and school year. The board responded that he missed nothing, it was not discussed. Patty Brown then asked the board if this was a topic they wanted to decide on or if they wanted the administration to come up with a plan as a recommendation going forward.

Joe Hakey was asked if he had the time to mow within his 40 working hours at the school and how long it takes now compared to mowing with a zero turn mower. Joe responded that he does have time to mow and currently it takes about 7 hours, but with a zero-turn mower it could cut an hour or two off that time. The board asked Joe to look into a zero-turn, what it would cost with and without the John Deere as a trade. What is the John Deere worth if we were to sell it outright?

Mike Lynch volunteered to ask the town about the specifics in using their mower up at the school. Wayne Hall and Bruce Blodgett do not think it would be a good idea to use the town's mower. What if it breaks while it's being used at the school, who's responsible for what? Maintenance, gas, repairs, etc... That could get complicated and cause issues itself.

A motion was made by Mike Lynch and seconded by Bruce Blodgett to go into nonpublic session for a student issue at 6:50 pm. Bruce-YES, Mike-YES, Wayne-YES.

Mike Kelley and Michelle Mason spoke to the board about a student issue. This discussion was informational only.

A motion was made by Mike Lynch and seconded by Bruce Blodgett to come out of nonpublic session at 7:00 pm. A vote was then taken and all were in favor.

DRAFT – SUBJECT TO REVIEW AND APPROVAL AT NEXT BOARD MEETING

A motion was made by Mike Lynch and seconded by Bruce Blodgett to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 pm. A vote was then taken and all were in favor.

These minutes were respectfully submitted by Patricia Brown