

## **NOTES OF MARCH 20, 2013 RYE SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

Final Revision B – Provided by the Rye Civic League

Present: School Board members Peggy Balboni, Mike Schwartz, Jeanne Moynahan, Scott Marion, Mike Moody. SAU50 Superintendent George Cushing, SAU50 Assistant Superintendent Mary Lyons, Rye Junior High Principal Chris Pollet, Rye Elementary School Principal Patricia-Lane Richardson, plus one other person from SAU50

### Election of Officers and Appointments to Committees

Jeanne Moynahan was unanimously elected Chairman, Mike Schwarz Vice Chairman, and Peggy Balboni Secretary. There was discussion about appointments to the various committees, but no votes taken. Ms. Balboni indicated that she had been the representative to the Budget Committee for a number of years and believed that it would make sense to continue as she has established relationships. Next year might be the time to start a transition. Mr. Marion expressed interest in the curriculum committee. There was a mention of a superintendent search committee. Mr. Cushing indicated that that would be discussed at an April 10 meeting. Ms. Moynahan indicated that she wanted to remain on the policy committee. Ms. Balboni indicated that she wanted to remain on the Professional Development Committee, which is an SAU committee involved in revising the master plan. There are usually two board members on the Special Issues Committee which is an important one.

### Advisory Committee on Class Size

Mr. Schwartz indicated that this had come up two meeting ago. It wouldn't be just involving the fourth grade. There's a question of scope: would it include Rye Junior High or just Rye Elementary School? It was agreed that guidelines, rather than a policy, would be established and that Rye Junior High would be included. Mr. Schwartz stated that a class size of 19, 20 or 21 plus additional staff to help out might be better than a class size of 15. Mr. Marion stated that it's an important issue, with financial implications. Ms. Balboni read the agreed charge, which was to establish a comprehensive guide to determine class size at Rye Elementary School and Rye Junior High School, considering staffing and effectively maximizing student learning. It was agreed that the results would be available by December.

The makeup of the committee, to be called the "Class Size Advisory Committee" was agreed to:

- 1 Assistant Superintendent
- 2 Principals
- 2 School Board members
- 2 Parents (1 from each of the two schools)
- 3 Staff (1 each from Jr. High, K-2, and 3-5)
- 2 Integrated Arts (from each of the two schools)
- 1 Special Education coordinator

### Elementary School Principal Search

Ms. Balboni reported on the results. There were 32 applicants, 9 were interviewed. Schools are now being visited (Bedford today). Some withdrew after their current district found they were looking. There will be a community night to meet the candidates, with feedback forms.

### Elementary School Report

Lane Richardson reported on various activities planned. The recent election had a small turnout of 1200. There were complaints about the doors being unlocked, when they are locked at other times, however two police officers were present, plus Jeanne Moynahan was there selling cookies for the PTA.

### Junior High Report

Chris Pollet reported on recent activities including a science fair, the kids testing out robots and a play with 60 kids.

### Financial

Time was taken to explain to the new board members the manifest and approval process. Three manifests were approved unanimously. It was explained that the Board Chairman typically goes down to the SAU offices to look at the list before the checks are cut. Mr. Moody asked whether there was just an annual budget or whether it was divided up into smaller periods of time. Mr. Cushing reported that the Principals get line item detail to show where they stand. This could be provided to the Board. Business Administrator Jim Katkin usually comes down 2-3 times to answer questions. He will probably be at the next meeting. Ms. Balboni stated that the overages are all related to special education. Mr. Marion asked whether review of the manifest was the time to worry about whether they are on or off budget. Mr. Cushing said that it was not.

### 2013-2014 Calendar

The calendar for the 2013-2014 school year was approved unanimously. The other three districts in SAU50 and Portsmouth High School have also adopted it, so they will be on the same schedule.

### Visitor comments

There were two visitors in the audience and a number of teachers, but none used the opportunity to make comments.

### Extension of school day

Chris Pollock explained that a committee had been looking into this. There will be a pilot program next week to see how it works with the bus schedules. The school day at the Junior High is now 8:10 a.m. to 2:35 p.m., 6:25 long. The range of other schools surveyed is 6:10 to 7:00 long. The new schedule will allow core instruction time to be increased to 60 minutes per class. They think that the last bus can be set to drop off at 8:04 a.m., with home room from 8:00 a.m. to 8:10 a.m., and classes ending at 2:40 p.m. He referred to this as a 15 minute increase. Mr. Moody stated that realistically they might gain 5 minutes. The order of pickup in the afternoon will be reversed between the Elementary School and the Junior High.

Discussion ensued as to whether a renegotiation with the bus company might be needed to add a bus in order to meet the schedule. Mr. Schwartz indicated that this would not be realistic for 2013-2014 as the contract is not up until the year after that. There are constraints as the same buses transport children for the Greenland schools before coming to Rye and they need to drop off at both schools.

#### Junior High staffing

Mr. Marion asked about the sixth grade social studies program. Mr. Pollock explained that there had been three retirements this year: 8<sup>th</sup> grade language arts, 7<sup>th</sup> grade math and special education. The plan is to have the 3 sixth grade teachers all involved in teaching social studies rather than have a separate social studies teacher. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade social studies teachers will be involved in the design of the program. Ms. Balboni explained that this was a return to a model that had been used before. The projected attendance for next year is as follows:

65	Sixth grade
55-56	Seventh grade (Mr. Cushing believes 8 will be coming from New Castle)
79	Eighth grade

Mr. Schwartz noted that this would mean 13-14 per class for the seventh grade. Ms. Lyons responded that the long-term plan was to have 3 seventh grade teachers.

#### Elementary School staffing

Ms. Lyons stated that it had not been decided how fifth grade would be done. They are looking at a home room arrangement with multiple teachers. Ms. Balboni noted that there would be four teachers at the elementary school and then moving to three at the junior high (apparently she was referring to fifth and sixth grades). She asked how the plan would be communicated to fourth grade parents.

#### Policies

A number of policy documents were reviewed. Ms. Moynahan explained that these go through several readings. A change was made to one of the policies such that, if an action taken by the superintendent might at a later point come before the school board

(for example an action involving a teacher who decided to appeal to the school board), the Board Chairman would be informed, and then the Chairman would inform the rest of the School Board. Mr. Schwartz requested this change. Ms. Lyons stated that, because of this change, the policy would need to again be reviewed by the other three towns. Mr. Cushing stated that, if 3 of the board members felt that something was worthy of further discussion it would be put on the agenda.

There was a discussion about a resident student form. Currently parents are only asked to give an address. A certification that the person is a resident will now be needed.

### Reporting Committees

Ms. Balboni reported on the Portsmouth High School committee. Clarification had been asked for regarding a number of articles in the paper. There was one about a student dealing drugs, and another teacher issue. The truth was somewhat different than what was in the paper.

### Portsmouth High School Attendance

Mr. Moody asked when they would know what the Portsmouth High School attendance would be. Mr. Pollett responded that they know what the acceptances are from the private schools, but they don't know where the students have decided to go. They can ask again in early May. Ms Balboni reported that they will not really know until October 1. Mr. Cushing reported that Portsmouth High School can now "push a button" and show the number of Rye students.

### Recreation (after school program)

Ms. Richardson reported that there was no memorandum for next year yet. Things are going smoothly this year. The room for next year has not been determined yet. Ms. Lyons said that there are a couple of issues for the next memorandum. For one, in an emergency situation, they want a place for the kids to go. They will try to work this out with Rec.

### Budget

Ms. Balboni stated that there was nothing to report. The next Budget Committee meeting will be in May and there will be an update then.

### Non-public session

The board then voted to go into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(a).