

RYE SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Administrative Unit 50
48 Post Road, Greenland, New Hampshire 03840

To be approved by the Rye School Board at the February 21, 2024, meeting.

RYE SCHOOL DISTRICT
RYE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

A regular meeting of the Rye School Board was held in person on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. at the Rye Junior High School.

PRESENT

School Board Members: Matt Curtin
 Katherine Errecart
 Heather Reed (remote)
 Susan Ross
 Michelle Wheeler

SAU Administrators: Stephen Zadravec, Superintendent of Schools
 Susan Penny, Business Administrator
 Brian Helfrich, Director of Facilities
 Chris Russo, Director of Technology

School Administrators: Anne Gilbert, Principal, Rye Junior High School
 Michelle Pitts, Principal, Rye Elementary School

Visitors: Howard Kalet, Steven Bourne

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Curtin called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS / PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Curtin recognized the visitors and asked for public comment, there was none.

Mr. Curtin indicated the board meeting would break at 6:30 for the budget meeting and reconvene after for any unfinished business. He asked for any recommendations for the order of the meeting.

Mr. Zadravec indicated the warrants need to be voted on prior to the budget committee meeting. He suggested the reports from the principals and the cell tower proposal.

It was determined, there being no objection, that the board would discuss the warrant articles, the cell phone tower, and the principal's reports first.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Warrant Articles

Mr. Curtin confirmed that there were no significant changes to the warrant articles from what the board had previously before voting.

On a motion by Katherine Erracart, seconded by Sue Ross, the board voted to approve warrant article 1, Shall the Rye School District vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$17,854,947.00? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$17,065,048.00 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Rye School District or by law, or the the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. Majority vote required. Note, this warrant article, operating budget, does not include appropriations in any other warrant article. Discussion: none. Roll call vote: 5 yes, 0 no.

On a motion by Sue Ross, seconded by Katherine Erracart, the board voted to approve warrant article 2, Shall the Rye School District vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Rye School Board and the Rye Educational Support Personnel Association, RESPA, which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels - fiscal year 2024-2025 - \$86,147.00 estimated , 2025-2026 - \$66,188.00, and 2026-2027 - \$70,967.00 and further to raise and appropriate \$86,147.00 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels. Majority vote required. Note, this appropriation is in addition to warrant article 1, the operating budget article. Discussion: It was noted that the acronym in the title should be revised to RESPA. Roll call vote: 5 yes, 0 no..

On a motion by Katherine Erracart, seconded by Heather Reed, the board voted to approve warrant article 3, Shall the Rye School District, if warrant article 2 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option to address warrant article 2 cost items only? Majority vote required. Discussion: none. Roll call vote: 5 yes, 0 no.

On a motion by Sue Ross, seconded by Michelle Wheeler, the board voted to approve warrant article 4, to see if the Rye School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to \$60,000.00 to be added to the School Property Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund previously established, with such sum to be funded from June 30, 2024, unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2024, with no amount to be raised by additional taxation? Discussion: none. Roll call vote: 5 yes, 0 no.

NEW BUSINESS

Verizon Cell Tower Proposal

Mr. Zdravec noted the proposal and other documents in the Drive folder for the board to review. He noted the process for tonight is to come up with any questions that he can take back to Verizon. He noted the common interest in cell phone reception, including emergency communications.

The location of the cell tower was discussed and the coverage it could provide to Rye. The board noted that the town has not officially asked for this to be adopted or offered any alternatives. The board discussed coming up with questions tonight to discuss further in February. Mr. Zadavec indicated he is not aware of any timeline to make the decision. It was noted that the school district owns the parcel of property being looked at. The board discussed considerations to think about going forward. The board noted possible health concerns and concerns from abutters as well as getting data on emergency communications. Mr. Zadavec indicated he could reach out to Mr. Scrutin or others for more information. The board discussed having a presentation at the next meeting.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS

Principal's Report - Rye Elementary School

Ms. Pitts spoke about the PTA and the Rye Junior High School band that visited the elementary school. She noted the sing-along with students and staff before the break. She noted staff families joining next year to see the joy. She noted the Rye Elementary School band trumpet players sound amazing, they will be playing on Friday morning. She noted that they are piloting Step Up to Writing for staff professional development. She noted the stocking elves this year being a huge success and the impact it made on the local community.

Principal's Report - Rye Junior High School

Ms. Gilbert spoke about spirit week and team building games. She spoke about professional development around MTSS and IXL. She highlighted the social studies event on how to survive as an adult, discussing topics such as how to register a car, how to balance a budget. She noted the experience of students working through adulthood.

Ms. Pitts recognized Mr. Helfrich, Mr. Gordon, and the custodial staff for taking care of the school during the recent storm.

On a motion by Katherine Erracart, seconded by Sue Ross, the board voted to recess the school board meeting at 6:25 pm to attend the budget committee meeting. Discussion: none. Vote: 4-0.

RECONVENED MEETING

Mr. Curtin reconvened the school board meeting at 7:30 pm.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Katherine Erracart, seconded by Michelle Wheeler, the board voted to approve the public minutes of December 13, 2023. Discussion: none. Vote: 3-0. Mr. Curtin abstained as he was not present at the December meeting.

Communications

It was noted there were no communications.

Other

It was noted there was no other.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Manifest

On a motion by Sue Ross, seconded by Michelle Wheeler, the board voted to approve the manifest dated December 14, 2023, for the period of November 29, 2023 to December 14, 2023, in the amount of \$533,101.71. Discussion: none. Vote: 4-0.

On a motion by Sue Ross, seconded by Katherine Erracart, the board voted to approve the manifest dated January 2, 2024, for the period of December 15, 2023 to January 2, 2024, in the amount of \$490,698.25. Discussion: none. Vote: 4-0.

Financial Report

Ms. Penny noted the financial report is in the Drive as well as two budget transfers for approval.

On a motion by Katherine Erracart, seconded by Sue Ross, the board voted to approve the budget transfer of \$58,878.75, to move funds from psychologist salary line accounts to psychologist contracted service line accounts . Discussion: none. Vote: 4-0.

On a motion by Michelle Wheeler, seconded by Katherine Erracart, the board voted to approve the budget transfer of \$24,320.51 for HVAC repairs. Discussion: none. Vote: 4-0.

Ms. Penny circulated the warrant articles, the default budget, and the voting warrant for signature.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Zdravec indicated his report is in the Drive folder. He shared the SAU Sensation is linked in his report introducing Portrait of a Learner. He noted the Portsmouth School Board has three new members and has just reorganized. He indicated the opportunity for SAU 50 to re engage in participating and noted the sign up sheet for upcoming meetings. He shared that planning continues for the March 12th professional development day. He noted that something that comes up frequently from staff is focused training around diversity, equity, and inclusion so we are moving forward with some professional development with NH Listens.

Director of Facilities

Mr. Helfrich noted his report is in the Drive. He noted all the things Mr. Gordon helps out with at the schools, including changing out the signs, disposing of the soccer goals that were just tossed into the woods, and training his staff. He noted Mr. Gordon's recent assistance with a plumbing issue with the 1933 valves in the basement at Rye Junior High School that were spewing water. During the holiday break Mr. Gordon transformed two small offices into safe spaces for students. He noted the pride that Mr. Gordon takes in both schools.

The board discussed the plumbing issue at Rye Junior High.

Director of Technology

Mr. Russo noted his report was in the Drive folder. He noted it centered around cybersecurity. He shared the upgrade to two factor authentication through Google for the student information

system and thanked Lindsay Greenberg for her help. It was implemented over the weekend with no questions from staff on Monday morning. He spoke about the Data Governance Plan that he has been updating. He noted he has modeled it after several other districts while meeting our needs. He also highlighted partnerships he has secured over the past few months, CISA - Cybersecurity Infrastructure and Security Agency, a branch of Homeland Security, they work with K-12 schools on external vulnerability scanning looking for vulnerabilities. He has them coming in to look at the inside of our networks. He noted he has also joined the Multi-State Information Sharing Analysis Center which provides real time threat analysis for towns and schools. He noted his report shares information about the CIS controls that we use. He noted that as part of the Data Governance Plan there is a section that speaks to threats and how we would respond. He shared NH has adopted a set of standards called NIST SP 800 that he has provided for reference.

The board discussed the Data Governance Plan as it relates to apps being used by teachers. Mr. Russo explained the current process and noted he is updating it to make it easier for staff.

NEW BUSINESS

Data Governance Plan Approval

Mr. Zdravec noted this was coming before the board similar to policy for a first and second second reading before approval. EHAB is the policy that speaks to creating the plan. He noted the policy was approved in August and there is one small change from the fall updates that speaks to high school students with personal social media accounts when doing things relating to CTE and internships. Since it was just adopted, Mr. Zdravec recommended a single reading and adoption.

On a motion by Sue Ross, seconded by Katherine Erracart, the board voted to approve policy EHAB - Data Governance and Security for a single reading and adoption. Discussion: none. Vote: 4-0

The board discussed the Data Governance Plan. Mr. Russo indicated it speaks to how his department works and staff behavior. He noted he is working with Ms. Killen for staff training opportunities at the beginning of the year through Frontline. He noted there might be some budgetary things in the future to enhance security.

On a motion by Katherine Erracart, seconded by Michelle Wheeler, the board voted to approve the Data Governance Plan for a first reading. Discussion: none. Vote 4-0.

2024-2025 Draft School Calendar

Mr. Zdravec noted it is being provided as a first reading, no need to vote. He noted aligning the four districts when possible as well as with Portsmouth. He noted Newington starts after Labor Day and thought the schools could all look at starting after Labor Day but with three election days it won't be possible without getting into Juneteenth at the end of the school year. He noted this calendar offers consistency for professional development days common for all staff. Feedback has been starting students on the 27th to have Friday be a longer Labor Day break. He noted the elections in September, November, and March being contemplated as professional development days. He noted the last school day is June 16th, a half day. He noted this could change with snow days and if no snow days he would come back to ask for June 13th to be the last day as we will

have met hours. He spoke about early release days for common professional development in January, February, and May, on Wednesdays, to be aligned with all districts and Portsmouth. This will allow smaller groups across the SAU to get together. He noted feedback on the January day was how quickly it is when they come back and noted this may move if they are okay these days.

The board discussed the calendar, noting the longer break over the holidays. The board discussed the professional development days on voting days being parent teacher conference days. The board discussed timing for the parent teacher conferences being later in the day to accommodate working parents.

The board discussed the benefits of aligning the calendar to Portsmouth as much as possible as well as the consistency of having the Friday before Labor Day off.

Project Graduation Donation

Mr. Zadravec indicated the board has made a donation in the past to project graduation.

On a motion by Katherine Erracart, seconded by Sue Ross, the board voted to approve a \$250.00 donation to Portsmouth High School Project Graduation. Discussion: the board asked Mr. Zadravec if he knew how much the students needed to raise for Project Graduation. Mr. Zadravec shared that it depends on the location the graduates are going to but it is around \$10,000.00. Mr. Zadravec confirmed that \$250.00 was a consistent donation around the SAU. Vote: 4-0.

Mr. Curtin spoke about using School Messenger to communicate the school district officials openings and confirmed with board members if they were okay with their school email address being used. He also asked that Ms. Pitts and Ms. Gilbert share the information as well. The location of postings of the school district officials openings was discussed.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Mr. Curtin asked for updates from standing committees. He noted sharing emails with Rye Recreation and how to work together on scheduling fields for activities.

POLICY

Second Reading / Adoption

Mr. Zadravec noted nothing has changed since the first reading. He shared that what they saw previously were the school board model policies, he has reformatted our current policies to show the new language in red. He noted this doesn't change their practices.

On a motion by Katherine Erracart, seconded by Michelle Wheeler, the board voted to approve the second reading and adoption of policies JCA - Change of Class or School Assignment Best Interests and Manifest Hardship and JKAA - Use of Restraints and Seclusions. Discussion: none. Vote: 4-0.

Single Reading

EHAB - Data Governance and Security: This was discussed and approved earlier in the meeting.

FUTURE PLANNING DATES

Mr. Curtin spoke about the deliberative session on February 6th. Ms. Penny and Mr. Zadavec indicated that only the numbers can be changed on the warrant articles at the deliberative session. They can increase the budget by any amount and decrease it by only 10%.

The board discussed who would read the articles at the deliberative session and explanations that could be provided if questions were asked.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Katherine Erracart, seconded by Sue Ross, the board voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 pm. Discussion: none. Vote: 4-0

Respectfully Submitted,
Diane Peterson
January 10, 2024

School Board Secretary

Date