

MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT NO. 52

Greene, Leeds, and Turner, Maine

Minutes of the Twelfth Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors for 2016-2017

March 2, 2017

Leeds Central School

Members present: Elizabeth Bullard, Chairperson; Carlos Gnipp; Robert Allen; Peter Ricker; Pamela Sirois; Jon Woodard; Yuri Kowalski; Richard Gross

Members absent: JoAnn Nickerson

Others Present: Kimberly Brandt, Superintendent of School; Thomas Ambrose, Assistant Superintendent; Del Peavey, Director of Special Education; Deborah Roberts, Business Manager, Eben Shaw, Leavitt Area High School Principal; Gail Marine, Tripp Middle School Principal; Kelly Marston, Turner Elementary School Principal; Theresa Gillis, Turner Primary School Principal; Mark McDonough, Greene Central School Principal; Danielle Harris, Leeds Central School Principal; Karen Potvin, Technology Education Coordinator; Razell Ward, Adult Education Director; District Citizens; District Employees

1. Chairperson Elizabeth Bullard called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Yuri Kowalski.
2. The Minutes of the Third Special Meeting, February 16, 2017 was approved under general consent.
3. Communications:
 - 3.1 Superintendent Brandt reported the resignation of Diane O'Donnell, Turner Primary School Title 1A Ed Tech III, effective March 31, 2017.
 - 3.2 Superintendent Brandt reported the retirement of Joanne Blouin as Fifth Grade Teacher at Turner Elementary School, effective end of the 2016-17 school year.
4. Budget Work Session
 - 4.1 Work Session on the 2017-18 budget
 - 4.1.1 Superintendent Brandt reviewed the ED279 noting that there are forty-eight proposed changes to the EPS funding formula as part of the Governor's Biennial Budget. General Purpose Aid is cut \$9.5 million and an additional \$5.5 million each of the next two years will be diverted to fund what the Governor is calling "regional education service agencies."

At the same time, District fixed costs are rising, including teacher retirement costs, shifted onto districts in 2013 by the State, which are going up \$7 million for a statewide total of \$45 million. Special Education costs are going up \$17 million statewide.

The proposed budget discontinues the practice of subtracting federal Title 1 funds from EPS allocations while increasing some student-staff ratios. Support for System Administration has been removed from the per pupil calculation in the FY18 ED279.

Targeted Funds for Pre-K pupils have been discontinued as has the declining enrollment adjustment. Targeted Funds for K-2 pupils has increased from 0.10 to 0.15.

The calculated EPS rates per pupil have decreased. The rate for elementary schools has decreased by \$157 per pupil and the rate for secondary students has decreased by \$146 per pupil. This matters because the per pupil rate is used in Section II of the ED279 to establish our District's allocation.

Mrs. Brandt shared the revenue sheets based on the current proposed budget. Mrs. Roberts explained the document. The increase in expenditures is 4.26% and the increase to communities in the form of taxes is 9.71% overall.

Robert Allen asked about the Medicaid billing. Mrs. Roberts noted that the district made the decision last year to no longer bill for Section 65 services.

Peter Ricker asked about the amount we would have to reduce to remove a money to lower the impact to taxpayers. Mrs. Brandt noted that 1% impact in taxes is approximately \$114,000.

Mrs. Roberts handed out a document that showed the impact to homeowners based on their property value. Chairperson Bullard asked for any comments regarding the amounts.

Peter Ricker asked if the administrators have met to discuss making cuts because he feels that the District cannot move forward with a nearly 10% increase to taxpayers.

Chairperson Bullard noted that once the Board gives the administrative team direction they will present a modified proposed budget.

Peter Ricker said that he feels there needs to be at least a 3-4% decrease in tax impact to the communities. He also noted that he did not want to review the line by line if the administrators have cuts to recommend. Robert Allen agreed with Peter Ricker that a 3-4% reduction is necessary.

Yuri Kowalski noted that lowering the amount will require close to a \$500,000 decrease.

Jon Woodard noted that going from year to year with a zero percent increase is challenging and he does not want to decide until he sees the proposed cuts. Pam Sirois noted that she agrees with Jon Woodard.

Carlos Gnipp noted that a 10% increase is a lot to ask but the taxpayers will need to know that this is what is needed to run the District.

Richard Gross noted that education is expensive and we need to continue to be on the plane of excellence. He said that 9% is a lot to ask for in one year. He noted that he would like the community to be educated about the budget and that he would like to hear feedback before making decisions.

Chairperson Bullard noted that there is some distinct trepidation on the part of the Board Members in having a 9% increase in the budget on the heels of a close to 6%

increase last year. She recognized the hard work of the administrators and that the Board would like to see an increase of closer to 6% to the communities. She said that she trusts the administrators to make recommendations and would like to hear input from the communities. Chairperson Bullard asked if the conversation has given adequate feedback to the superintendent. Mrs. Brandt said that it had and that the administrators have worked very hard already and they will revisit the proposed budget and make recommendations that will decrease impact in taxes. 3% is \$342,000 and 4% is \$456,000.

Yuri Kowalski noted that 3% of state mandate and contractual obligations means we will cut to lower than the previous year's spending if we propose a budget that is less than 6% impact in taxes.

- 4.1.2 Chairperson Bullard asked if the Board wanted to do the line by line review or should they wait for the additional recommendations from the administration team. The Board discussed the options and agreed to wait for the line by line review until the administrators could recommend cuts. Peter Ricker suggested that the Board not go through the line by line until the administrators present the recommended changes. Richard Gross agreed with Peter Ricker. Mr. Ricker asked about the additional unfunded mandate of Pre-K. He asked if the Ed Techs are a mandate. Superintendent Brandt said that Assistant Superintendent Thomas Ambrose had contacted the State to clarify information surrounding the mandate. Mr. Ambrose said that he had researched this thoroughly including the ratios required by law and the potential funding implications if the District does not comply with the mandate.

Leavitt Area High School Principal Eben Shaw asked a process question. Is there a contingency plan if there is a windfall and funds are returned to the budget? Chairperson Bullard said that the state may change their numbers and there will be many deliberations. The Board discussed the potential changes the legislature may make to the funding formula. Peter Ricker noted that he feels confident that if the numbers change we will be able to add money back in the end as long as it is before the final vote.

Chairperson Bullard stated that there is a hearing on March 3rd for the proposed budget. She noted that she did not feel comfortable representing the Board without direction from the Board. She asked the Board if they had thoughts on her attending or on the budget process. Peter Ricker noted that anyone can go to the hearings and may speak on concerns about the budget. He noted that the state budget is huge and that he felt comfortable with anyone who would support or not support parts of the proposed budget.

Yuri Kowalski noted that he did not feel comfortable representing the school board at the hearings. Robert Allen agreed with Yuri Kowalski and that he would err on the side of not going. The Board decided not to.

Business Manager Deb Roberts shared that the diesel fuel bids came back at \$1.93 per gallon. This will be a savings to the proposed budget of \$20,000.

Peter Ricker said that he would like to see new budget sheets to replace the old ones if there are major changes by administration.

5. Adjustments to Agenda

5.1 Agenda Item 10.9 was removed.

5.2 Agenda Item 10.11 was removed.

6. Committee Reports:

6.1 Finance Committee- Jon Woodard reported the committee has not met.

6.2 Plant/Transportation/Building Committee - Peter Ricker reported the committee met and discussed the proposed projects for the budget. He said they asked questions and will discuss questions once the next round of proposed changes has been presented by administration.

6.3 Curriculum/Policy Committee – Richard Gross reported that the committee met and reviewed truancy, attendance and adult education policies that will be presented to the board for first read at the next meeting.

6.4 Student Representatives Report –Chloe Veilleux reported that students just returned from winter break and winter carnival. Students are preparing for AP tests and upper level students are getting ready for SAT examinations. Students are focused on picking up where they left off before all the snow days in February.

6.5 Tri-Town Education Association Negotiations (Teacher) – The February 16th meeting needed to be rescheduled due to needing to reschedule the Board meeting scheduled on February 9th.

6.6 Administrators Report – None

6.7 Superintendent's Report – Superintendent Brandt shared with the Board that during the month of April, for each Hannaford Helps reusable bag with the good karma message sold at the Hannaford store in Turner, the Friends of Tripp Middle School will receive \$1.

On February 22, 2017 the US Dept. of Justice and the US Dept. of Education withdrew the Obama administration's policy guidance affording protections for transgender students under Title IX. This policy reversal will have little impact in Maine because Maine State Law still requires transgender students be treated consistently with the gender with which they identify, if different from the gender assigned at birth. A 2014 decision by the Maine Supreme Court (Doe v. Regional School Unit 26) ruled that denying a student access to a communal bathroom consistent with the student's gender identity constituted sexual orientation discrimination in violation of the Maine Human Rights Act.

Superintendent Brandt talked about her visits to staff meetings as part of her entry plan and to begin capturing ideas for upcoming strategic planning. She stated these meetings are invaluable in terms of hearing directly from our teachers.

Superintendent Brandt dropped off the budget books to each town office along with a copy of her initial budget presentation. This provided her the opportunity to meet with Kurt Schaub, Charlie Noonan, and Joyce Pratt. She shared with the Board the next Tri-Town Selectmen's meeting will be held on March 6 at 6:00 p.m. at the Leeds Town Office and that State Representative Jeff Timberlake and State Senator Garrett Mason will be attending.

Superintendent Brandt noted there were questions about the composition of subcommittee meetings and clarified that should all five members agree on an action, that would be considered the action of the Board.

7. Public Comment – None.

8. Old Business None

9. Consent Agenda:

9.1 Non-Instructional Appointments: A motion was made by Yuri Kowalski, seconded by Robert Allen and voted unanimously to approve the Non-Instructional appointments:

9.1.1 Randy Hutchinson Jr., Adult Education Enrichment Instructor.

10. New Business:

10.1 A motion was made by Peter Ricker, seconded by Richard Gross and voted unanimously to approve a Color Me Run fundraiser for Greene Central School.

10.2 A motion was made by Peter Ricker, seconded by Richard Gross and voted unanimously to approve a fundraiser to support Leukemia Lymphoma Society for the Key Club at Leavitt Area High School.

10.3 Mrs. Brandt noted that Non-instructional Salaried Employees (NISE) group is ready to start negotiations. She asked if the Board wants to continue with this practice. She explained that other districts have the superintendent negotiate directly with this type of group with direction from the Board. Peter Ricker stated that he would like to have the group continue to negotiate the same way so that it is fair for all employees. Pamela Sirois asked the pros and cons of changing the process and why is this set up the way it is. Mrs. Brandt noted that often the board would give the superintendent direction and she would negotiate with the group and administrators. Eben Shaw noted that the Board negotiating with the administrators has been a recent development. Mrs. Brandt explained that the benefits for the District are that the superintendent knows the work of the staff and negotiating directly can lead to healthy relationships and clarity around the work together. Mr. Ricker said that he has been on the negotiations with the NISE group for the past three times and he recognizes that there is a work agreement and not a collective bargaining agreement but he does not understand why the Board would treat this group differently. Mrs. Brandt noted that the Robert Allen noted that it is important to have the Board be aware of the contracts and Chairperson Bullard noted that the Board in other districts would provide parameters but the superintendent would negotiate. Jon Woodard stated that he has not been involved with NISE or administrator negotiations but he feels that we have hired a chief executive to handle these situations and that he would be fine with the superintendent handling these negotiations. Pam Sirois agreed with Mr. Woodard. She noted that if Mrs. Brandt has done this in previous districts she would be capable of handling this work.

Mrs. Bullard asked for a motion. Mr. Ricker stated that he would like to discuss this in an executive session. Mrs. Bullard noted that there were others who felt differently.

A motion was made by Pam Sirois, seconded by Yuri Kowalski and voted unanimously by those present not to change the process to allow the superintendent to handle the negotiations for the NISE group.

- 10.4 A motion was made by Yuri Kowalski, seconded by Peter Ricker and voted unanimously by those present to approve the December and January Operating Expenditure reports.
- 10.5 A motion was made by Yuri Kowalski, seconded by Peter Ricker and voted unanimously by those present to approve the completion of probationary employees:

GCS	Sarah Ingalls	Special Education Ed Tech III DTP	3-1-2017
GCS	Nicole Poliquin	Special Education Ed Tech III DTP	3-1-2017
LCS	Amy Legere	Special Education Ed Tech III FSP	3-1-2017
LCS	Danielle Stevens	Food Service Manager	3-1-2017
LCS	Molly Hibler	Special Education Ed Tech III	3-1-2017
TES	Dana Monbleau	Half-time Ed Tech I	3-1-2017
TMS	Jenifer Poulin	Special Education Ed Tech III FSP	3-1-2017
TPS	Rhaina Goeway	Special Education Ed Tech III ASP	3-1-2017
TPS	Lindsey Laverriere	Special Education Ed Tech III ASP	3-1-2017
TPS	Kara Murphy	Special Education Ed Tech III ASP	3-1-2017

- 10.6 A motion was made by Richard Gross, seconded by Peter Ricker and voted unanimously by those present to approve the Second Reading and Adoption of Policy JJJ: Extra/Co-Curricular Academic Eligibility Leavitt Area High School and Tripp Middle School and Regulations JJJ-R.
- 10.7 A motion was made by Peter Ricker, seconded by Richard Gross and voted unanimously by those present to approve the Second Reading and Adopt Policy AC: MSAD 52 Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action.
- 10.8 A motion was made by Peter Ricker, seconded by Richard Gross and voted unanimously by those present to approve the Second Reading and Adopt Policy JICK: Bullying and Regulation JICK-R, and Exhibits JICK E1, JICK E2, JICK E3, JICK E4.
- 10.9 – 10.12
Agenda items removed.
11. A motion was made by Robert Allen, seconded by Peter Ricker and voted unanimously by those present to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Kimberly Brandt, Secretary