

Our Mission is to prepare and support all students within a culture of excellence to do their best and to be their best, so that each can be a successful contributing citizen, able to adapt to change and to successfully respond to the future.

RSU 16

Mechanic Falls * Minot * Poland

the 3rd Regular School Board Meeting
for 2020-2021 was held
Monday, September 14, 2020

6:30 p.m.

>>>> VIA REMOTE <<<<<

MINUTES

1.0 CALL TO ORDER: Mary Martin, Chair

Pledge of Allegiance & Mission Statement

Pursuant to subsection 403-A of 1 MRSA (Maine Revised Statutes Annotated), we will now confirm that each member of the Regional School Unit 16 School board can both hear and be heard. We will do this by calling the roll, members present are asked to say Yeah. We ask all other members to listen and report any audio difficulties when the roll call is complete.

Poland	Minot	Mechanic Falls	Student Rep
Ed Rabasco - Yes	James Crouse- AB	Amber Lyman - Yes	Amy Fryda - Yes
Joe Parent - Yes	Laura Hemond - Yes	Arleena Stotts - Yes	
Melanie Harvey - Yes	Mike Downing - Yes	Mary Martin - Yes	
Norm Beauparlant - Yes	Mike Lacasse - AB	Scott Lessard - Yes	
Norm Davis - Yes	Steve Holbrook - Yes	Travis Ritchie - Yes	

To join the School Board meeting via Zoom Webinar, the link is listed below.

<https://zoom.us/j/91264521833?pwd=Znl3dHdCc0lDYWNIWkhwOHFUR0VqZz09>

Password: 776271

OR iPhone one-tap :

US: +13017158592,

Webinar ID: 912 6452 1833

Password: 776271

FOR ALL VOTES

Pursuant to subsection 403-A of 1 MRSA, item D. –“All votes taken during the public proceeding are taken by roll call vote”. To the question before the board, I will call the roll, those in favor of passage are asked to say yea, those opposed say nay; members wishing to abstain may do so by stating abstain.

Poland	Minot	Mechanic Falls	Student Rep

Ed Rabasco - Yes	James Crouse - AB	Amber Lyman - Yes	Amy Fryda-Yes
Joe Parent -Yes	Laura Hemond –Yes	Arleena Stotts - Yes	
Melanie Harvey - Yes	Mike Downing - Yes	Mary Martin - Yes	
Norm Beauparlant - Yes	Mike Lacasse - AB	Scott Lessard - Yes	
Norm Davis - Yes	Steve Holbrook - Yes	Travis Ritchie - Yes	

2.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: (10 minutes)

Mary Beth Taylor, Poland: Mary asked about questions in regards to the new nurse position and the resignation of the District Nurse. She inquired about the possibility to move nursing positions around the district to help provide more coverage at PCS and to move the RN district nurse position to the high school.

Kavita Sharma-Nason, Minot inquired about the nursing position and the potential shortage in the district. She also asked if the board would consider moving the public participation section to a different part of the meeting in order to allow participants to provide feedback on the topics when they are being discussed.

Mary clarified that the public participation by policy has always held the public participation time at the beginning of the meeting. She clarified that when there are larger topics that require additional feedback from the public, they do offer additional time for public comment during the meeting.

3.0 RECOGNITIONS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: (5 minutes)

 **CONGRATULATIONS** to Logan Landry, BWMS teacher, selected for a National History Day Summer Webinar Series.

 **CONGRATULATIONS** to Amy Fryda for her Opening Day remarks.

4.0 AGENDA ADJUSTMENT:

5.0 PRESENTATIONS: (20 minutes)

6.0 CONSENT AGENDA INTRODUCTION: (5 minutes)

Approve 8-10-20 2nd Regular Meeting Minutes

Notification of Support Staff New Hire:

- Cathy Ayotte, Food Service – PRHS
- Walter O'Driscoll, Ed Tech III – ESS
- Monique Collins, Ed Tech II – ESS
- Alexis DiTrapano, Ed Tech II - PCS

Notification of Retirement:

Notification of Resignations:

- Tim Matteson Ed Tech – PRHS
- Emily Denny, Ed Tech – PCS
- Doug Libby, Bus Driver
- Melanie Whited, District Nurse
- Kristen Bernard, Ed Tech - PCS

Sub Committees Minutes **attached**

- Operations
- Personnel & Finance
- Educational Policy Committee

Friends of RSU 16 Agenda – no meeting scheduled

Travis Ritchie asked about the letter of resignation from the district nurse and why her letter was not included in the board packet. Ken shared that the nurse did submit a letter of resignation in which she shared her concerns with the reopening plans, but that her letter was not included in the board packet with the others as it shared confidential information in regards to decisions that were made during our A-Team meetings.

Norm Davis asked about the bus driver resignation and how this impacted our bus driver coverage. He inquired about the number of drivers and if we would still have enough drivers to cover our current routes with the hybrid model.

Ken shared that we currently have enough drivers in the district to complete our current routes as we are operating them right now.

Motion: by Steve Holbrook to accept Consent Agenda
Seconded: by Norm Beauparlant
Vote: Unanimous, motion carries

7.0 ACCEPTANCE OF THE FINANCIAL SUMMARIES: Stacie Field (10 minutes)

Stacie Field shared the Budget to Actual document with the year end of June 30, 2020. She discussed the revenues and the expenditures line. She shared that in the revenue, we had three positive areas in tuition and fees, interest income, and miscellaneous which was as a result of the money we received for the sale of the modular building and buses. On the expenditure side, she shared that as a result of schools closing sooner we spent less a number of our lines as a result of not having to heat buildings, no school-based field trips, benefit changes and the cancellation of all spring sports. The interest on the debt services from the estimate on the bond for the principal on the interest was lower which resulted in savings. We built the budget with a fund balance from FY19 with \$886,630 that we would use to support the new budget, we only used \$328,500. The vote and final approval from the towns for FY 21 was after the fiscal year had started which resulted in us transferring \$500,000 for our educational reserves and \$70,000 for food services after FY 20 had ended. This left us with an unaudited carryover of \$1,666,306 and we are using \$670,149 for FY 21. This makes our final undesignated fund balance \$426,157. This amount will remain in the fund balance should we need to allocate it for future budget purposes.

Adult Education had \$32,000 fund carryover and we did have to dip into that to cover additional expenses related to the closure.

The fund balance of CIP carried over \$322,437.00 for FY19 and the local contribution for FY20 was \$200,000 which held a total of \$522,437.00 in CIP with our FY20 expenses being \$163,080 giving us a carryover for FY20 of \$359,357 in our capital improvement project line.

Middle School Project carryover for FY19 was \$3,984,099 with interest for FY20 of \$22,655 and the expenses for FY20 for the project were 3,612,390.00 leaving a carryover on the middle school project of 394,364. Stacie shared that any balance left for carryover can be used to pay back the balance owed.

Food Service: Ended the year \$117,000 in the red due to the increase COVID costs with delivering meals. The \$70,000 fund balance transferred after 7/14/2020. This left the current fund balance for FY20 for food services at -\$47,270.

Ken explained that the reimbursement costs from the State will not cover the increased costs for the districts as a result of meal delivery and the restrictions related to food services as a result of the pandemic.

Norm Beauparlant asked about the technology fund reserve and if these funds can be used for any additional technology

Ken shared that we would use the fund to finish up the remaining work needed at the middle school before those funds were released to payback the bond.

Motion: by Norm Beauparlant to accept Financial Summaries

Seconded: by Steve Holbrook

Vote: Unanimous, motion carries

8.0 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: (10 minutes)

The current enrollment of Regional School Unit 16 as of September 11, 2020 is:

Minot Consolidated School (211), Elm Street School (190), Poland Community School (367), Bruce M. Whittier Middle School (238), Poland Regional High School (436), Virtual Learning 5 (VL5) (183) for a grand total of (1,625) (-130 less from the last report April 5, 2020) New Homeschool (119).

Overall, the start of school went well. I was able to greet students in each school over the last two weeks. It seemed that most students were happy to be back to school, and, although their smiles were covered, you could see the excitement and joy in their eyes. As I visited each school, I spoke with administrators, teachers and support staff and my overall impression is that they were mostly pleased with the way school started in each of their schools. I would like to take this opportunity to thank every RSU 16 employee for all of their hard and often complicated work that allowed us to open school for the new school year. It wasn't always easy or pretty at times, but because most everyone worked together, we were collectively successful, living this year's theme of "stronger together".

Most of the summer maintenance work was focused on the Siemens Industry Performance Contracting Agreement (PCA) that will make nearly \$2.6 mil in the Energy and Building Improvements Project around the school district this year. This includes new lighting and building envelope improvements in each building. Upgraded HVAC system for

central office. Minot Consolidated School will get a new fire suppression system, new entrance, administrative office space and kitchen expansion.

Other initiatives accomplished this summer were the alternative sentencing program that freshly painted many classrooms in the elementary schools, the modification of all elementary school nurses' offices that added a medical grade ventilation system and an isolation room to each office to accommodate the Covid-19 medical requirements.

Elm Street School had the main office reconfigured so that they have a more secure reception area to better process visitors to the school. Each elementary school and the central office were outfitted with a keyless entry system, allowing each employee ready access into their building using a swipe pass. Additionally, we have signed a contract with Siemens Industries to fix all the existing elementary ventilation systems and add the O2 Prime air cleaning to school wide ventilation systems. Also, we will be installing 120 individual wall-mounted ventilation systems in elementary classrooms for added ventilation protection. These three initiatives will be paid for from our recently approved \$1.4 mil Covid Relief Fund Grant.

Most of you probably know that the US Government has extended the free lunch program for the remainder of this school year. While this is good news for our students, it will be costly to our district. Unfortunately, the reimbursement cost for each meal will not cover the full cost of preparing and delivering each meal. We are estimating that the free lunch program will cost the district as much as an additional \$100,000. This brings new meaning that there is nothing really free in life. The primary reason for the additional cost is the greater number of consumables like bags both paper and plastic, disposable flatware and individual condiments to name a few.

I will be taking a few days of vacation on September 17th, 18th, and 21st. Assistant Superintendent Amy Hediger will have the helm.

Norm Davis asked about the timing of the fire suppression system. Ken shared that it is scheduled to start in the next month.

Travis Ritchie inquired about the ventilation for the nurse's office and who completed the work.

Ken shared that we used a local company to complete the work.

9.0 ASST. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT (10 minutes)

Cari Medd shared information about the VL5 model for the high school. There are 39 students participating in VL5. The program is a mixture of some remote classes offered through the high school, in combination with a program called Edgenuity. These classes will continue to move our students towards the graduation requirements. The high school is offering four different blocks for this semester and four different classes for next semester. The VL5 students are still placed into a cohort to continue the connection to the high school. A staff member has been assigned to monitor these students and to ensure that they are completing their assignments.

Shawn Vincent shared that they have 33 students enrolled in VL5 at the middle school. They are participating in core classes with Edgenuity, which are history, science, math and English Language Arts. There are 5 teachers who are working with the VL5 students to provide feedback to students and they work with students in the afternoon. Students zoom into their roundtable every morning and they have a weekly check-in with our school counselor. The Dean of Students, Sam Chatto, has been leading the VL5 program at the middle school. Sam continues to engage the school community, parents and staff to ensure that they are responding to the needs of the students enrolled in the VL5 program and to keep those students connected to the middle school.

Amy Hediger shared her report in regards to the elementary virtual learning academy, called VL5. The elementary VL5 program has a combination of virtual classes via Zoom and content that is shared through our online platform. The VL5 program is staffed with ed techs and teachers who have been allocated for either part-time or full-time roles in VL5. Jill Mathieu has been assisting with Amy Hediger to manage the staff and students within VL5. There are currently 111 students in grades PreK-6 enrolled in VL5. Students enrolled in VL5 are required to meet the same standards as our hybrid students. On Wednesdays, school counselors are meeting with our VL5 grade levels to lead Second Step, our district-wide social, emotional curriculum lessons.

10.0 NEW BUSINESS: (45 minutes)

Approve .3 teacher nomination – Allison Curtsinger, PRHS

Motion: by Norm Davis to approve .3 teacher nomination

Seconded: by Leena Stotts

Vote: Unanimous, motion carries

Approve special ed teacher nomination – Charles Pray, PRHS

Motion: by Steve Holbrook to approve special education teacher nomination

Seconded: by Norm Beauparlant

Vote: Unanimous, motion carries

Consideration for Fall sports, pending recommendation from DOE, MPA

Don King, Athletic Director did a presentation in regards to the fall sports plan for PRHS and BMWMS. He shared that this plan has been created by individuals who have the best interests of our students at heart and want to see our kids safely participate in our fall sports programs. The MPA, along with the DOE, has approved soccer, field hockey and flag football for regional competitions between schools. In addition, approved for competition are cross country, golf, and fall cheering. Sports that are not approved for competition are tackle football and volleyball, but they are considering letting them play in the spring.

The general recommendations from the MPA and DOE are that all players, coaches and officials would be wearing masks, they would be completing a daily health screening, sanitizing equipment and benches, social distancing, using personal water bottles, adopting a COVID isolation plan, using hand sanitizer, not sharing personal equipment and regular washing of sports uniforms. The coaches complete a daily six with their athletes that encourages the promotion of the guidelines. There are sport specific adjustment for specific sports, such as limiting players in the box, on corner kicks for soccer, no post game handshakes or picking up balls with their hands for field hockey, socially distancing, not pulling flags or raking dirt for golf. In addition, cross country would wear face coverings at the beginning, move away from finish area quickly and fall cheering would eliminate run throughs or banners, and, additionally, they will be wearing masks during competitions. Football plan would be to play 7 v 7 flag football and simulate practice, but they would be allowed to use heavy bags and defend against each other. After talking with the coaches and the students, the football coach would like to have a skill development practice with some 7 v 7 games at the end of the season.

Middle School sports would like to offer their activities for these students, as well. One recommendation would be to have coaches working all week and have them practice with cohort A students and cohort B students on their assigned days. Students would not be expected to return for practice, but could if they would like to.

Transportation will require additional buses for some sports, as they can only have 23 athletes on the bus at a time. In addition, we are bound by the 100-gathering limit for sporting events. It would likely be 75 participants based on the number of players, coaching staff, game officials, etc. We are recommending not having spectators at games given the gathering limits. We have a number of cameras working on fields that would allow us to stream games. Don is also considering ways to honor our senior athletes this year, as well.

Travis Ritchie shared that he recognizes the importance and value of sports for our students. Travis shared that the physical education requirements of 14 feet of distancing and the inability to sing in school is due to the number of particles created by these activities. Travis shared that he has concerns about students not wearing masks during their games and their practices. Don King shared that there is an assumption of risk related to COVID with the participation of sports, however physical education is compulsory in schools. In looking at local recreation departments, the recommendation of the Maine Sports Committee and the consultation of Doctor Hynes, they approve of playing without masks while on the field actively playing, but the masks will be worn on the sidelines by everyone at all times during the games.

Scott Lessard asked Don to elaborate about the subscription to a video service. Don shared that the service would allow us to livestream games through the NHFS network. A number of schools within our league are using this service, which would allow spectators to livestream the games on their own devices to watch the live action play. There is a membership fee for individuals interested in purchasing a subscription to this. Scott asked about how equipment is being handled. Don shared that players are asked to clean their uniforms, sanitize their own gear, and the balls are cleaned using a sanitization process completed by coaches at the end of practice. Don shared that all shared team equipment is sanitized and then allowed to air dry.

Leena Stotts asked about the mask requirement for cheerleaders and why they are required to wear the masks during their competitions and other sports do not have to wear masks while they are actively participating. Don shared that while no stunting will be allowed during the fall cheering season, they are being asked to wear masks as they will be

yelling their cheers for athletes to hear. Don shared that this was a recommendation at the state level. Leena asked if they had considered contacting a radio station to broadcast games. Don has not looked into this at this time.

Norm Davis shared his concerns in regards to the students not wearing masks during the competitions as masks are required in all of our locations within our school currently. We are asking them to wear a mask on the bus and they aren't breathing hard and when they are playing sports, they are breathing heavy. Norm shared he is concerned with all that we know about COVID being airborne that this presents a higher level of risk for our students while they are competing.

Norm Beauparlant asked for information in regards to the disconnect between in-school learning requirements and the practice expectations being so different. He shared that the concern of COVID spread is the same in these settings. Don King shared that the rationale behind this decision is based on the National Pediatrics Association coming out in support of kids participating in activities. Don highlighted that students within the state of Maine have been participating in recreational supports and travel teams with no known breakouts occurring from these events. Don shared that while we cannot eliminate the spread of the virus, we are looking to minimize it.

Joe Parent shared that he is concerned that this is an airborne virus and not a contact surface virus. Joe shares the concerns that were raised by other members of the board in regards to not wearing masks while competing. He shared concerns that while the athletes have signed a waiver agreeing to the higher concern of COVID contact, they will be in classrooms with students who have not made that agreement. Joe also asked about who is going to ensure that fans are not attending games to keep our participation numbers at the state limit for gatherings of 100.

Cari Medd shared that if we are not providing activities for our students, the student will likely look for alternatives to participate in activities which would decrease our level of control over their actions and could increase their exposure to other states and areas. These alternative leagues could potentially have further travel and less restrictions than we currently have in place with our athletes. Cari is confident that the students will be able to follow the guidelines put in place.

Ed Rabasco asked if the Maine CDC was on board with the plan presented by the Maine Principal's Association. Don shared that this plan was done in conjunction with the Maine CDC and doctors.

Leena Stotts shared that we are making efforts to reduce the spread within our schools and that we need to trust that if our student athletes are wearing masks in school, they are working to protect the other students. Leena suggested that we consider tracking attendance at these events to monitor spread. Leena asked if the conversation about winter sports is happening at the state level, as well. Don shared that they would be tracking attendance at the competitions and practices. He also shared that at the state level they are having a conversation in regards to the plan for the winter sports season, but they do not have any recommendations to share at this time.

Melanie Harvey shared that she feels that the CDC and the DOE have done what they need to do to put guidelines in place that will keep our students safe and that we should trust their recommendations. She noted that the teams are playing fewer games, limiting travel and eliminating playoffs. The athletes will be wearing masks on the sidelines and will be sanitizing. She shared that the students have been faced with many challenges this year and losing the opportunity to play sports will be very hard for them.

Joe Parent shared that the board received an email from the Maine School Board Association speaking against the recommendations to play sports. Mary Martin read a portion of the email that states that delaying of playing fall sports to the spring semester would better protect our athletes.

Motion: by Mike Downing to approve the recommendations of fall sports.

Seconded: by: Leena Stotts

Further discussion:

Travis Ritchie shared that the CDC is recommending that masks be worn as much as possible during sporting events. He shared that someone else is making the recommendation not to wear the masks during the competitions.

Norm Beauparlant inquired about what Ken and Amy's recommendations might be.

Ken shared that he has concerns, but trusts the recommendations of the MPA and the DOE. He recommends the board support the plan as proposed by Don King.

Amy shared that she feels the comradery of being on a team and being a student athlete is an important part of our student's educational experience, and that she has full confidence with the administrators to play sports and to do so safely.

Ed Rabasco clarified that face coverings are not required when engaged in active play, but they are required when on the sidelines or not actively playing.

Norm Davis asked if the sports could be looked at individually or if the board had to look at each sport separately. **Mary** shared that the motion on the floor is to approve the recommendations for the falls sports teams as presented by Don King, which does not allow us to look at them separately.

Vote: 9 to 4 (Joe Parent, Norm Davis, Amber Lyman, Travis Ritchie).

Weighted Vote: 603-402, motion carries.

Consideration of registered nurse for the tracking of COVID-19 contacts.

Ken Healey shared that this registered nurse position is being created to do the tracing and tracking of students and staff who are out due to COVID related symptoms. We will pay for some of it out of the CFR grant and through funds we have due to not filling the French teacher position. Cari Medd shared that given the new protocols and guidance coming from the CDC calling for any student who is sick with any COVID related symptoms to be sent home and follow up with their doctor to get a COVID test or an alternative diagnosis not related to COVID, we need an additional nurse to assist with this process. Cari shared that we are required to send students home who have any symptoms and there is necessary documentation that is required for them to return to school. We need to be able to have a designated person who is doing this follow-up and tracking with families. Cari shared that given the enormity of this task district-wide, we will need an additional nurse to provide the tracking, giving families guidance with the process to the schools, and to be working with families and close contacts if we have a confirmed case in the district. Ken shared that he would be re-adjusting the COVID lines to help pay for the position from those funds, but we can look to use the funds from the unfulfilled French teacher position to cover this position. This would be a one-year position only.

Discussion:

Steve Holbrook asked about the cost. Ken shared that this position, including benefits, would be approximately \$60,000.

Leena Stotts recommended for the position to be an LPN based on the potential cost-savings and that an LPN would be able to provide the same level of care that is being recommended by Ken with this position.

Norm Davis inquired about why we have an RN at Elm Street School and an LPN at Poland Community School with a higher number of students. Norm shared that he feels that an LPN would fulfill this obligation without hiring an RN. Norm also shared that he has concerns that we would fill the RN position given that it is a one-year position.

Travis Ritchie asked for more information in regards to the resignation of the district nurse position. Ken shared that Travis was able to connect with her if he wanted more information.

Motion: by Mike Downing to approve the hiring of a registered nurse for tracking COVID-19 contacts as outlined by Ken Healey

Seconded: by Steve Holbrook

Vote: 9-4 (Norm Davis, Steve Holbrook, Leena Stotts, Travis Ritchie)

Weighted Vote, 647-258, Motion Carries

11.0 OLD BUSINESS:

12.0 POLICIES:

13.0 REPORTS TO THE SCHOOL BOARD:

Student Representative: (5 minutes)

Amy Fryda shared that the first two weeks of school have been a cultural shift and that there is a different energy coming from students and staff. She reported that everyone is handling the changes well, compliance with mask wearing and the hand sanitizing. There is some confusion in regards to online learning and attendance. She shared that we are students in the midst of the pandemic and that everyone is adjusting to the new routines. She feels that the first two weeks of school have gone well.

Report of the School Board Chair: (5 minutes)

Mary shared that she represented the board at the Opening Day presentation via zoom with the full district staff. Mary shared a speech in support of the theme for this year, "Stronger together"

- Website School Board Bio: Mary encouraged board members to create a biography and to submit a picture for the website
- Set Goals Workshop: The educational policy committee will come with a proposal.
- Attendance: Reminder to board members to check attendance in the packet to make sure it is correct.
- LRP/Board Governance: We will be doing our annual board self-evaluation and reflection in the coming months

14.0 ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION:

15.0 COMMUNICATIONS:

16.0 HANDOUTS:

17.0 EXECUTIVE SESSION:

To enter into Executive Session regarding personnel issue pursuant under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (A)

To enter into Executive Session regarding personnel issue pursuant under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (A)

Motion: by Steve Holbrook to Enter into Executive Session at 8:47 p.m.

Seconded: by: Mike Downing

Vote: Unanimous

Open session reconvened at 9:00 p.m.

Motion: by Ed Rabasco to approve leave of absence for person A

Seconded: by Travis Ritchie

Vote: Unanimous

Motion: by Steve Holbrook to Enter into Executive Session at 9:02 p.m.

Seconded: by: Mike Downing

Vote: Unanimous

Open session reconvened at 9:07 p.m.

Motion: by Ed Rabasco to approve leave of absence for person B

Seconded: by Travis Ritchie

Vote: Unanimous

18.0 REMINDERS:

19.0 ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: by Steve Holbrook to adjourn meeting at 9:08 p.m.

Seconded: by: Leena Stotts

Vote: 13 – 1 (Joe Parent)

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth J. Healey