

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 10th Regular School Board Meeting
for 2020-2021 was held
Thursday, April 15, 2021
6:30 p.m.

>>>>> VIA REMOTE <<<<<

MINUTES

1.0 CALL TO ORDER: Mary Martin, Chair - Pledge of Allegiance & Mission Statement
Mary Martin called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

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
Yes Ed Rabasco	Yes James Crouse	Yes Amber Lyman	Yes Amy Fryda
Yes Joe Parent	Yes Laura Hemond	No Arleena Stotts	Yes Anna Brettler
Yes Melanie Harvey	No Mike Downing	Yes Kelsey Earle	
Yes Norm Beuparlant	No Mike Lacasse	Yes Mary Martin	
Yes Norm Davis	Yes Steve Holbrook	Yes Travis Ritchie	

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

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://zoom.us/j/99602087197?pwd=RzFlWFN4UmNQWFp3UmZ6YjVlQ3MzUT09>

Passcode: 230975

Webinar ID: 996 0208 7197

We now would like to confirm that members of the public who are remotely attending the public proceeding are able to hear all members. As a reminder to conduct an orderly meeting, all board members and community members must remain muted and wait to be recognized by the chair before speaking.

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	James Crouse	Amber Lyman	Amy Fryda
Joe Parent	Laura Hemond	Arleena Stotts	Anna Brettler
Melanie Harvey	Mike Downing	Kelsey Earle	
Norm Beuparlant	Mike Lacasse	Mary Martin	
Norm Davis	Steve Holbrook	Travis Ritchie	

2.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: (10 minutes)

3.0 RECOGNITIONS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: (5 minutes)

Welcome new school board members effective July 1, 2021....

Scott Tiner – Minot; Christine Downs – Poland; Emily Rinchich - Poland

Congratulations – *Sophie Patenaude* for earning the Maine Principals Association Principal’s Award for the Class of 2021!

Congratulations March Optimist Student of the Month – *Keiralyn Tapley*, 6th Grade, Poland Community School

Congratulations to the Bruce M. Whittier Middle School staff and students on a very successful 10th Annual *Whittier History Day*. The event was virtual for the first time this year, but there were still more than 70 community members who participated as judges and provided feedback for the students. Special thanks to teachers: *Logan Landry, Erica Swenson, Jamie Karaffa, Sean Galipeau-Eldridge, Shannon Shanning, and Kelly Adams* for leading the effort.

4.0 AGENDA ADJUSTMENT:

5.0 PRESENTATION: (20 minutes)

6.0 CONSENT AGENDA INTRODUCTION: (5 minutes)

Approve 3-8-21 9th Regular Meeting Minutes

Notification of Staff New Hire:

- Barbara Howard, Bus Monitor - District

Notification of Retirements:

Notification of Resignation:

- Rob Sawyer, Mechanic

Sub Committee’s March Minutes attached

- Operations
- Personnel & Finance
- Educational Policy Committee

Superintendent Evaluation Committee’s March Minutes attached

Motion: by Norm Beuparlant to approve the Consent Agenda

Seconded: by Amber Lyman

Vote: Unanimous

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

8.0 NEW BUSINESS: (45 minutes)

Approve 2021-2022 School Budget

- Mary Martin outlined the process that was used for developing the budget. Administrators worked on a budget and the board created a budget committee with representatives from each community. There was a budget meeting and the budget was presented to the committee. The budget that was presented was a status quo budget. The committee voted on a proposed budget. Following that meeting, there was a question around what line should be used from each town’s evaluation numbers to determine the estimated tax impact numbers. The budget committee met again to make some adjustments, based on the agreed upon tax evaluation line and adjusted insurance costs. At that meeting, additional deductions to the budget were made. There was also additional money from the fund balance that was recommended to be used to offset the additional costs.
- Stacie Field reviewed the Revenue sheet including the Local Revenue, the Local Only Debt, the Additional Local, State Revenue, and the other Revenue section. Stacie explained the Fund Balance and how current money in the balance will be used to help fund next year’s budget. She described how each section is determined and gave an explanation for any changes that have occurred within each section. Stacie explained the General Fund Increase. Mary asked how the required Local Revenue is determined and Stacie explained that it is determined by the state and that if we do not raise that amount, then we do not receive the state revenue.

Stacie then discussed the tax impact, which is determined by the town evaluations. She explained that the increases include an increase in insurance, and an increase in adult education, and has a \$0.00 budget for CIP. She reviewed the tax increase that each town would see based on the proposed budget.

- Ken Healey explained that we looked at a status quo budget. He explained that \$400,000 of salaries would be reduced by the use of a grant. He explained that the fund balance also helps to keep it lower. There is a \$0.00 budget for CIP. The goal was to maintain current programming and retain staff with the negotiated salary increases for staff. Ken explained that student counts are based on a two-year average. Therefore, due to the reduction of students because of the pandemic, the district's student counts are lower. This will affect the funding the district receives from the state. This would be the lowest possible budget that we can present that wouldn't result in a reduction of force.
- Board Discussion: Mary Martin stated that this proposal was approved by the Budget Committee unanimously.

Public Participation:

- Lisa Cesare (Minot) - Asked about the French Teacher position. Ken explained that it is currently in the budget, but remained unfilled. It is not a new addition to next year's budget.
- Steve Robinson (Poland) - Thanked the group for a neutral budget. Steve asked Ken to explain how the student count determined not to go with previous student counts from previous years because he would like to advocate at the state level so that the community doesn't feel the impact across the two years. Ken explained that it was hopeful that they would use the 2019 numbers, but then they were reminded that it is actually written into law, and so that wasn't allowed in the end.
- Mary Beth Taylor (Poland) - Why does the RSU exceed the maximum state and local spending target? She would like to see CIP and Adult Education in the budget so that we can see the full budget all together. Are we reaching out to homeschool families to try to come back full time? Ken answered that we have reached out to homeschool families. He also shared that the EPS is the minimum recommendation that is provided.
- Whitney King Buker (Minot) - There is a concern that if there is not a definitive plan for a 5-day plan, then many parents will be looking at other options because that will continue to have the funding drop.

Motion: by Norm Beauparlant to approve the 2021-2022 School Budget

Seconded: by James Crouse

Vote: Unanimous

Approve Warrant Articles

Motion: by Steve Holbrook to approve Warrant Articles

Seconded: by Kelsea Earle

Vote: Unanimous

To approve the 2021-2022 School Calendar, as recommended by the 3 subcommittees at their March 22nd meeting.

Motion: by Steve Holbrook to approve the 2021-2022 School Calendar

Seconded: by Ed Rabasco

Vote: Unanimous

Ken highlighted that the calendar is created with the hopes that we will, in fact, be in a 5-day model. The calendar follows the LRTC calendar. There is one difference due to a Muslim Holiday that they observe that RSU 16 does not, so RSU 16 ends a day earlier. The calendar reflects a 1-hour early release on Wednesdays.

To appoint teachers to a 2nd or 3rd year probationary contract and annual contracts

Motion: by Steve Holbrook to approve teachers to 2nd or 3rd year probationary contract to annual contracts

Seconded: by Joe Parent

Vote: Unanimous

9.0 SUPERINTENDENT & ASST SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: (20 minutes)

Ken Healey shared:

The current enrollment of Regional School Unit 16 as of April 15, 2021 is:

Elm Street School (237 – no change), Minot Consolidated School (231 – up 3), Poland Community School (430 – down 3), Bruce M. Whittier Middle School (276 – up 2), Poland Regional High School (457 – down 5)

Total Enrollment 1631- down 3 from 3/8/21, VL5 (127 - down 26) from 3/8/21

After re-watching the Listening Sessions recordings, reading email correspondence, analyzing all of the official survey data, monitoring and tracking the recent COVID-19 positive cases in our school, community, county and state, weighing the risks of the virus and the social emotional health toll the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our staff, students, schools, families, district, and the academic, transportation and meal service changes to student and staff schedules and routines - the most prudent decision to make at this time is to stay the course for the remainder of the school year and plan for the full return of all our students in the Fall.

He feels that with school employees receiving the vaccine and vaccines being available for all Mainers 16 years and older, the conditions and environment in the Fall will allow us to have a fresh start with the new school year, avoiding the major disruptions to students, families, schools and communities, this kind of decision would involve. So, you know that we are still very supportive of bringing our students back 5 days a week, for full time in-person instruction. Unfortunately, the deciding factor on our recommendation to stay status quo was the avalanche of positive Covid-19 cases we have had in the school system, county, and state over the last month.

Amy Hediger shared:

The district's focus for keeping the buildings open for learning has been implementing the 6 requirements to minimize the risk for students and staff for COVID-19. Amy shared that within the district to date, we have had 121 positive cases that have resulted in 776 individuals needing to be quarantined due to being close contacts. She also shared the case totals for each month leading up to and including April which illustrated that the positive cases have been increasing each month. Amy shared the percentage of staff who have had the opportunity to vaccinate. She highlighted that we have provided a consistent and predictable schedule for students and families this year, even if it hasn't been the 5 days-a-week schedule that we would prefer, and that with this hybrid schedule we have continued to see academic growth for our students. The teacher association sent out a survey and their data matched the data that was gathered through the district's survey. The survey conducted through the association asked teachers to provide their rationale for their response. Teachers responded that the current structure provided consistency and predictability for students, and students were growing academically. Amy explained that at this point, in order to bring all of our students back to school it would require re-assigning students to other classrooms or even bringing in additional teachers to make it happen to be able to get the students in following DOE requirements. It would also make it difficult to feed the students with the 6 ft requirements for meal times. The length of the day would have to change because we would need to do a staggered entrance into school and dismissal. The administrative team will be planning for a return to 5-day instruction for the fall. The plans would be presented in June to Ken and Amy. Then they would make changes based on any changes from the DOE. The finalized plan would be presented to the board in August. There would still be a remote option next year; however, it would not look the same as it looks this year. Amy Hediger highlighted ways the community could volunteer to support the district with lifting the re-opening off the ground for the Fall.

Board members responded to the plan.

Kelsey Earle said she was appreciative of the plan being presented of what it would look like if a 5-day return happened immediately. She felt like the recommendation was the best bet at this time, but was happy that we were planning for a full return in the Fall.

Norm Davis reminded the team that we are a bedroom community of Lewiston and Auburn, and discussed the impact the virus has had on those two cities. He felt it was the right thing to delay a full return to the Fall. Norm asked about the bus capacity, the number of the buses and the drivers. He expressed a concern that this would still be an issue for the Fall.

Amy explained what the staggered pick-up and drop-off would look like to address the bus capacity issues. Amy said that they would look to see how they can address this for the Fall so that all schools would still have their normal school times.

James Crouse expressed concern that the district would be missing an opportunity for re-opening this year. He felt that it would be an opportunity to identify any issues that could be addressed for the Fall. He doesn't see why this isn't being considered for now. He is happy that there is talk to re-open fully for the Fall, but feels the district is moving too cautiously at this time.

Public Participation

Nathan & Jennifer Raby (Poland) - Nathan is a doctor in the community and the district's medical adviser. He commended the ATeam for taking the time to do the Listening Sessions for teachers, families and students. He felt the decision was the safest and best decision for the students and staff. Androscoggin County has the highest positivity rate and the highest levels are with 20-year-olds and then children. He is seeing a large spread of the virus within our community. He feels that district has done their due diligence to keeping staff and students safe. His medical advice for the board was to pass the plan as it was being presented.

Whitney King Buker (Minot) - Is there a way to incorporate teachers and parents in the work the ATeam is doing to plan for the Fall? Consider referencing the schools that have been back for 5 days a week. Parents are looking at other options outside of the district for schooling next year. The timeline doesn't allow for a lot of planning for parents for the Fall, considering August is when the final plan will be determined.

Jennie Raby (Poland) - The return for 5 days in May would have resulted in a lot of changes for a small amount of in-person days. She also mentioned the added students in quarantine. She would like to learn more about how the schools will overcome the space issues for the Fall.

Nicole Patenaude: Thanked individuals who have provided the information that has led to the recommendation to wait until the Fall. She felt that the hybrid model has helped to keep her children and family safe.

Ed Rabasco - It comes down to a medical, science and safety issue. The return to 5 days doesn't address those factors, and this change is too late in the game.

Motion: by Steve Holbrook to approve the recommendation to continue the year in the hybrid model
Seconded: by Travis Richie
Vote: 11- 1 (James Crouse)

10.0 OLD BUSINESS:

11.0 POLICIES:

To approve the 1st & Final Reading of the policies below, as recommended by the Educational Policy Committee at their March 22nd meeting:

- JICH – Substance Abuse & Possession
- JICH-R – Substance Abuse & Possession Procedure
- JICK – Bullying & Cyberbullying in Schools
- JICK-E4 – Bullying Reporting, Investigation & Intervention/Resolution Process Flow Chart
- JIH-R – Questioning & Searches of Students Administrative Procedure
- JJIBA – Hiring & Evaluation of Coaches
- DJ-R – Administrative Procedure Federal Procurement Manual

Motion: by Steve Holbrook to approve 1st & Final Reading of the policies below, as recommended by the Educational Policy Committee at their March 22nd meeting

Seconded: by Norm Davis

Vote: Unanimous

12.0 REPORTS TO THE SCHOOL BOARD:

Student Representatives: (5 minutes)

Report of the School Board Chair: (5 minutes)

- Attendance
- LRP/Board Governance

13.0 ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION:

ATeam Reports

14.0 COMMUNICATIONS:

15.0 HANDOUTS: LRP March 2021 Publication

16.0 EXECUTIVE SESSION

17.0 REMINDERS:

18.0 ADJOURNMENT

Motion: by Steve Holbrook to adjourn at 8:00 p.m.

Seconded: by Joe Parent

Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth J. Healey