

**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 2021 - 2022 was held  
 Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30 p.m.

>>>>> **PRHS LIBRARY** <<<<<

REVISION in Bold Italics: - 6.0 & 13.0

# 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.

Mechanic Falls	Minot	Poland	Student Reps
Alyssa Morrison (Remote)	Angela Swenson (Present)	Christine Downs (Present)	Anna Brettler (Present)
Amber Lyman (Present)	Elizabeth Martin (Present)	Ed Rabasco (Present)	Joseph Elliott (Present)
Jessica Smith (Present)	Laura Hemond (Present)	Emily Rinchich (Present)	
Mary Martin (Present)	Mike Downing (Present)	Joe Parent (Absent)	
Patrick Irish (Present)	Steve Holbrook (Present)	Melaine Harvey (Present)	

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85709801798?pwd=VmhEMDQxNIRUVkhnOU1rU3Npa1o3QT09>

Meeting ID: 857 0980 1798 Passcode: 062621

### 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.

Mechanic Falls	Minot	Poland	Student Reps
Alyssa Morrison (Remote)	Angela Swenson (Present)	Christine Downs (Present)	Anna Brettler (Present)
Amber Lyman (Present)	Elizabeth Martin (Present)	Ed Rabasco (Present)	Joseph Elliott (Present)
Jessica Smith (Present)	Laura Hemond (Present)	Emily Rinchich (Present)	
Mary Martin (Present)	Mike Downing (Present)	Joe Parent (Absent)	
Patrick Irish (Present)	Steve Holbrook (Present)	Melaine Harvey (Present)	

## 2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT: (15 minutes)

Mary Beth Taylor, Poland: Speaking on behalf of the Selectboard from the Town of Poland. She read a letter written by the Selectboard to make a couple of suggestions in regards to the RSU 16 pamphlet to voters for the referendum meetings and voting at the polls. Her suggestions included:

\*Leave off what the towns do as you didn't include one town who votes at the polls for their budget.

\*Add that the school board will be deciding how many need to be at the referendum meeting to pass the budget.

\*The last part of the pamphlet implies that the public can't ask questions. If you still have the district meeting, voters can ask questions or send out a newsletter that explains each article for people to read at home and then vote at the poles or absentee.

## 3.0 RECOGNITIONS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: (5 minutes)

\*\*\*\*\* On April 18, 2022 during School Board Recognition Week, the Maine Legislature recognized school boards for their service to students and their districts.

**Congratulations** RSU 16 Adult Education student, **Brian Surette**, was recognized today as our Optimist Student of the Month for April.

**Congratulations Alyssa Mason** (PCS) and **Blake Brown** (MCS) who competed at the local level in the Optimist Oratorical speech contest in February. They placed 1st and 2nd respectively which allowed them the opportunity to compete in the regional competition in New York this weekend. Congratulations to Blake who came in 2nd place and won a \$1500 scholarship for college!

**Congratulations Jamie Karaffa** Middle School Social Studies Teacher was presented with a Milken Educator Award. Jamie was recommended to the Milken Family Foundation by the Maine Department of Education.

**Congratulations Sheryl Scribner** (PCS) and **Kim Simpson** (PCS) and **Daniella Mason** (PCS) (were each chosen to participate as Enactment teachers for the Place-Based Learning for Elementary Science at Scale (PeBLES2) project through Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance.

**Congratulations** Bruce M. Whittier Middle School students who were recognized during Maine National History Day awards ceremony have the opportunity to compete in the virtual national competition:

**Jenna Caron** won 1st place for Individual Exhibit; **Caelea Theriault & Irelyn Smith** won 2nd place for Group Website; **Boden Jones & David Crump** won 3rd place for Group Website.

\*\*\*\*\* Educators Appreciation Week May 2nd to May 6th

\*\*\*\*\* National School Nurse Day - May 11th

*Thank-you to all of our nurses and educators for all they do to support our students and our families.*

## 4.0 AGENDA ADJUSTMENT: None

## 5.0 PRESENTATIONS: (20 minutes)

## 6.0 CONSENT AGENDA INTRODUCTION: (5 minutes)

Approve 4-11-22 9th Regular Meeting Minutes

### Notification of Support Staff New Hires:

Judy Green, Food Service - District

Jeremy Lothrop, Coach MS Softball

Ashley Farrell, Coach MS Softball

Emily Stefansson, Coach MS Outdoor Track

### Notification of Retirement:

None

### Notification of Resignations:

Cari Medd, Principal - PRHS

Ashley Richards, Teacher - ESS

Allison Briggs, Teacher - ESS

Jen McNally, Teacher - PRHS

Danielle Pouzol, Special Ed Team Leader - WMS/PRHS

Melody Gammon, Teacher - ESS & MCS

Roxanne Pearl, Ed Tech - PRHS

Christa Erde, Ed Tech - MCS  
*Ben Smith-Poulin, Teacher - PRHS*  
*Nicole Smith-Poulin, Ed Tech - MCS*

### **Sub Committee Minutes**

Operations - April minutes attached  
Personnel & Finance - April minutes attached  
Educational Policy - April minutes attached

**Motion by Steve Holbrook to approve the Consent Agenda;  
Seconded by Mike Downing  
Vote: Unanimous**

### **7.0 ACCEPTANCE OF THE FINANCIAL SUMMARIES: (10 minutes)**

Report from Stacie Field, RSU 16 Business Manager:

The summary presented tonight is number 21, which is 19.23% remaining. You may have noticed on page 3 that overall we are at 18.22%, which is because the teacher and administrator salaries are encumbered in these printouts. We examined the three areas that were below that 18% and it included system administration, including the salaries for administration and teachers as we will continue to pay them the funds they have earned through August. We looked at special education to examine the Mainecare seed money. The state takes this money out of our state subsidy. When students receive those services there are Federal payments, but there is also a state match. However the State does not pay their match, we are required to pay it so that comes out of our subsidy. In FY20 it was \$92,000 and in FY 21 it was \$217,500 and I am estimating that it may be around \$234,000 this year. We might not see the FY 22 amount come out until the FY 23 budget begins. As long as the amounts come out before August, we can accrue that back; but once the auditors come and we do the final reports, it might end up coming out of the subsequent year.

The Food Services report was printed with a payroll and accounts payable that had to be done in April. The updated amount for you for the program shows it is in the black at \$194,764. The outstanding subsidy that we are waiting on for April is \$98,384. We did look at the grant with the Finance Subcommittee for Title One, and the amount that the State owes us currently for all grants is \$830,000. We do bill them every month for those funds. We also do remind them nicely that we are waiting for the funds from the State, but they are not always timely in their payments.

#### ***Discussion:***

**Mary Martin:** You mentioned special education, but, overall, our special education numbers look healthy.

**Stacie Field:** I predict we will likely overspend that line, but not in the amount that we have in the past providing the Mainecare seed money comes in this year.

**Patrick Irish:** I heard that the state is doing the feeding program over the summer. Does that come from our funding or does the State help with this?

**Stacie Field:** We do not qualify for the summer feeding program, given our free/reduced percentage.

### ***Motion by Steve Holbrook to approve the Financial Summaries***

***Seconded by Mike Downing***

***Vote: Unanimous***

### **8.0 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: (10 minutes)**

The current enrollment of Regional School Unit 16 as of May 9, 2022 is:

Elm Street School (247 – no change)  
Minot Consolidated School (233 – no change)  
Poland Community School (433 – up 3)  
Bruce M. Whittier Middle School (288 – no change)  
Poland Regional High School (484 – down 1)  
Total Enrollment 1685 – up 2 from 4/11/22

Participated in the Middle School Assembly to recognize students for Maine National History Day Awards on April 12, 2022. This assembly also served to recognize one of our middle school teachers, Jamie Karaffa, as this year's Milken Educator Award. The Deputy Commissioner of Education Dan Chuta took part in the assembly.

The Teachers Association has formally requested we start negotiations on the next contract. We will meet with them on May 11, 2022 at 5:00 PM in the central office for our first meeting. Helped grade the PRHS Senior Celebrations on April 28, 2022. This was so much fun. Every senior who presented to my group was very prepared and so connected to their topic. The PRHS staff and administrators were awesome, and they should be very proud of all the seniors for such a productive day of learning. The Town Manager's Breakfast was on April 13, 2022. Served as the Acting Principal at MCS on April 22, 2022. At the students request, I wore my Sponge Bob Square Pants tie. We had a fun afternoon. Kaitlynn Brown left me lengthy written instructions. Very easily summarized as doing what the Administrative Assistant tells me to do and I should avoid making anything worse than it already was. Once again I enjoyed my time at MCS.

Because we are now on the search to replace Cari Medd as the PRHS Principal, both Amy and I conducted 1 on 1 interviews with interested staff to find out what qualities they would be looking for in their next Principal. Amy has also sent out a survey for families and students to provide us insight to what they would be looking for in their new Principal. I have asked Amy to lead the hiring process for the next PRHS Principal - she will assemble a screening and interview team, and will recommend a candidate to me to interview prior to me making a recommendation to the full School Board.

Not to put a too fine point on how important it is to be able to hire our staff early, the following are the open RSU 16 positions that will need to be filled for the next school year:

**PRHS:** 2 Physical Education; 1 English Language Arts; 1 Social Studies; 1 Spanish;  
1 Computer Teacher; (1 Math/Science Interventionist; 1 Social Worker)

**BMWMS:** 1 Grade 7 Math/Science (1 year only); 1 writing teacher (1 year only)

**PCS:** 1 Grade 4; 1 Grade 5; 1 Grade 6; School Nurse; 1 Title 1 Teacher

**ESS:** 2 Classroom Teachers, (maybe 2 more Classroom Teachers)

**MCS:** 1 Dean of Students; 1 PreK Ed Tech; 1 Kindergarten Teacher

**Special Education:** 1 PCS Social Worker; 2 FLS PRHS Teachers; Social Emotional Teacher Elementary; Numerous Education Technicians

**Adult Education:** Part-time Business Skills/Computer Teacher

**Facilities/Operations:** 1 Custodian MCS

**Transportation:** 3 (maybe 4) Bus Drivers, 2 Van Drivers

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the departure of two really talented Administrators who will be leaving RSU 16 at the end of the school year:

Cari Medd and Lisa Burns.

**Cari** has been the PRHS Principal for the last 14 years and has been in the district for 23 years. Her exceptional, educational leadership will be sorely missed.

**Lisa** will be leaving after 2 years of serving as the Poland Community School Principal. Although her time has been short, she has left a lasting impression on myself and the school community as a whole.

As they both leave for a new chapter in their professional lives, I would like to wish them both the best of luck in the future as they continue to educate the children of Maine.

Do I have any questions?

**Discussion:**

**Christine Downs:** You are doing exit interviews with staff, are you hearing why they are leaving the profession and choosing to go to other schools or careers? Does it have to do with salaries?

**Ken Healey:** We have people leaving for a variety of reasons. Our salaries fall within the low-average range in comparison to districts around us.

**Amy Hediger:** Working in education is a challenge right now and we are working hard to support our educators. It is important to think about the referendum piece and how we can speed up our budget process to be able to hire positions sooner. We have begun having conversations about what we will do if we are unable to fill these critical positions.

**Patrick Irish:** Shared that what we are seeing with staff leaving is no different than what other districts are seeing as well. He also shared that other careers are having a hard time filling positions.

## 9.0 ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: (10 minutes)

Amy has been reviewing the science and social studies curriculum maps with the K-6 grade levels and doing updates to our digital curriculum software program Atlas. The goal is to have the curriculum posted and available on our Atlas software for families and students to view.

Our students in grades 3-8 are completing their required NWEA State testing in reading, math, and language usage. In addition, students in grades 5, 8, and 11 are completing the science MEA.

We will once again be completing our tradition of the senior parade at our elementary schools. Our graduating seniors will return to their elementary schools to walk through the hallways and to celebrate all that they have accomplished with our younger students. This will happen on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. We have completed the interviews with the PRHS staff to see what they are looking for in their next principal. We have really enjoyed the opportunity to have these face-to-face conversations with our staff. We have also shared our survey with the community to get their feedback on what they are looking for. We are hoping to have interviews in early June.

Last week, I facilitated a meeting with our grade 6 and 7 teachers across the district to share information about the transition, curriculum, and strategies to help support our students as they transition from elementary school to the middle school. The elementary principal team has been meeting once a month to evaluate our current teaching practices and our curriculum. We are beginning to discuss our game plan for what professional development for next year will look like, as well.

Mr. Carter shared that the trip to Italy/Greece with 41 students and 14 adults went really well. Everyone was able to return on time and together. There were highlights from the trip shared. Thank-you to the other RSU 16 staff chaperones who went on the trip and a thank-you to Mike for organizing this trip. We were able to recognize our ten and twenty years of service teachers by having them complete a questionnaire and the information was shared on the RSU 16 facebook page. We highlight personal notes from our staff members to help our community see them in a different light.

Tomorrow we are hosting two sessions to review our mission statement as part of our strategic plan process. Amy invited all members of the board to attend these sessions. Androscoggin county remains green, which indicates low for COVID-19 transmission. We are at our typical 2% of absences with staff and students per building per day.. We will also be distributing at-home COVID-19 test kits for families to pick up at our schools.

**Discussion:**

**Melanie Harvey:** Do we still do a step-up day for sixth grade students to come to Whittier?

**Amy Hediger:** Yes. We will do a step-up day for students to visit Whittier.

**10.0 NEW BUSINESS: (5 minutes)**

Approve Breahna Jenkins, ESS/MCS Music Teacher Nomination

**Motion by Steve Holbrook to approve the nomination of Breahna Jenkins, ESS/MCS Music Teacher**

**Seconded by Mike Downing**

**Vote: Unanimous**

**11.0 OLD BUSINESS: (15 minutes)**

Approve Referendum Flyer with changes made as recommended by the Personnel & Finance Committee at their 4-25-22 8meeting.

**Discussion:**

**Jessica Smith:** We did not get many comments after our board meeting, other than what was shared at the meeting. We tried to make the document look more fair and balanced. We took out the graphics and made the language more clear.

**Mike Downing:** Did they get sent out?

**Jessica Smith:** We have not sent this out yet. Overall, the committee feels good about how this new draft turned out.

**Melanie Harvey:** Suggested creating one bullet by combining two bullets into one. Melanie asked for a summary of what has changed since the last one. Can you highlight the important changes?

**Jessica Smith:** We received feedback that we should not be encouraging people how to vote. We talked about whether we should send it at all. The format is the same in terms of explaining the two questions and we simplified the language. We removed some bullet points to make it more visually equal and we added reasons in support of the yes vote.

**Angela Swenson:** Asked questions about if it is the School Board's responsibility to pick a number for how many people would have to participate in order for the budget to pass.

**Jessica Smith:** We really wanted to make sure that individuals knew what the impact of a no vote and a yes vote would be. We did recognize that the original document was more biased and we wanted to make sure that the new document was more balanced and supported the voters with making the decisions they feel is best.

**Christine Downs:** We should move the second bullet into step one.

**Jessica Smith:** Emily Rinchich had a suggestion to add back the information about the cost associated with running two votes.

**Emily Rinchich:** We are here on behalf of the RSU and I think that it makes sense for us to be a bit more biased in how we present this if we know that one side will benefit the RSU. There are times where suggestions are made on the ballots and this is simply an informational flyer that will be shared with the communities.

**Melanie Harvey:** Is this something that is restricted by the State in terms of how we can speak about the voting process and our recommendations?

**Ken Healey:** There is nothing that prohibits you from making a recommendation and our lawyers have supported that.

**Emily Rinchich:** I understand politically why we might not want to take a stance, but I thought that our function on this board was to purely represent the district and if there are advantages to the district, then we should make those recommendations.

Further discussion by board members on combining two of the bullet points into one bullet. There was additional discussion about copying and pasting bullets and combining them with others. The changes were made in the draft document as they were being discussed.

**Angela Swenson:** I do feel like we are a select group of people picked to represent our students. The goal of being more neutral was to build trust within the community so that we can get them to support our local budget. Our goal is to build trust so we can begin to educate them about the process and to gain their support of our schools and the work we do.

**Jessica Smith:** Are there any points from the Poland letter we need to address in the new document? If it is approved, it would be mailed out the week before the vote. If it is not approved, it would go back to the subcommittee to be re-worked and brought back to the committee for changes.

**Patrick Irish:** In order to be as transparent as possible, we should highlight the section on how voters can ask questions and get information as votes are cast.

Further edits and discussion around the flyer were made and a final document was presented to the board.

**Motion by Mike Downing to approve the proposed Referendum Flyer with the changes recommended.**

**Seconded by Amber Lyman**

**Vote: 14 - 1 (Steve Holbrook)**

## 12.0 **POLICIES: (10 minutes)**

Approve 1st & Final Reading of below policies with recommended changes made as presented by the Educational Policy Subcommittee at their April 25<sup>th</sup> meeting:

BCB - Conflict of Interest

BDD - Board-Superintendent Relationship

BDE - School Board Standing Committees

BDF - Board Advisory Committees

BDG - School Attorney/Legal Services

DN - School Properties Disposition

GBGB - Workplace Bullying

### **Discussion:**

**Ed Rabasco:** Some of the policies had no changes, some had minor changes, and some had references to statutes that have been updated. We like to look at the policies to make sure they are reviewed and updated periodically to ensure they are up to date and inline. The one policy that did receive a significant change was the role of the chairperson being able to vote on a sub-committee vote. This new policy will allow the chair to vote on the sub-committee that they are assigned to. We thought the chair should be able to vote at one subcommittee because we always short one vote from the town that the chairperson is a representative from.

**Christine Downs:** What is the purpose of the chair being a non-voting member of the sub-committee?

**Ken Healey:** The superintendent and the chair work together to develop agendas, not only for the board but also for the subcommittees meaning the chair has more information available to them than other members of the board.

**Christine Downs:** It seems like this policy as it was written follows policies from other surrounding districts, which leads me to think there must be a purpose to why it was written that way?

**Ken Healey:** It depends upon the make-up of those boards and how they are able to get fair and balanced representation on their subcommittees.

Approve the Above Updated Policies:

**Motion by Mike Downing**

**Seconded by Emily Rinchich**

**Vote: 16- 1(Christine Downs, no vote) Motion carries**

### 13.0 **REPORTS TO THE SCHOOL BOARD:**

Student Representatives: **(5 minutes)**

**Joseph Elliott:** National Honor Society completed their renovation project in the garden area in the center of the high school. We updated the grass and the gardens. We built some benches and picnic tables. We were able to finish this project ahead of schedule and are appreciative of the donations that helped make this possible. Last week was Teacher Appreciation and hand-written letters were passed out from students to teachers. The teachers received a breakfast and some other treats.

**Anna Brettler** shared how wonderful the trip to Europe was over break. She shared her appreciation to Mr. Carter and Mr. Wright for organizing the trip. The Senior Celebration was an overall success. I presented my project on the importance of music in all of our schools. I am hopeful that the music tours to the elementary schools will continue after I am gone. We are beginning our AP tests this week. The musical, *Zombie Prom*, was a big success and wrapped up last weekend. Prom is May 21<sup>st</sup> at the Poland Spring Resort and the high school band/chorus concert will be held May 25<sup>th</sup>. The last day for seniors is May 27<sup>th</sup> and the banquet is June 1<sup>st</sup>. May 31<sup>st</sup> is our senior trip to Boston. Graduation is Friday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Report of the School Board Chair: **(5 minutes)**

- ❖ Staff Retirement Recognition at the June 13<sup>th</sup> Board meeting at 6:00 p.m
- ❖ Board Stipends
- ❖ Negotiation Team Members
  - ❖ Ken Healey, Amy Hediger, Mary Martin, Joe Parent, Melanie Harvey and Mike Downing
- ❖ School Board Meeting Dates, don't usually have a meeting in July. General meeting the second Monday of August. The first meeting in August will be our organizational meeting.
- ❖ Subcommittee Meeting Dates
- ❖ Friends of RSU 16 - 5/13/22 @ 10:30 a.m. ESS
- ❖ Attendance

Mary Martin discussed the strategic plan committee that has been formed to begin drafting the strategic plan. She asked if anyone else would like to join the committee. Mike Downing shared that he would be interested in joining this committee.

**Discussion:**

**Melanie Harvey:** When will we have the dates for the school board meeting for next year?

**Ken Healey:** At the board meeting in June.

**Steve Holbrook:** Asked about who from the school board would be on the interview process for the high school principal.

**Amy Hediger** shared that Mary Martin would be the school board representative for the upcoming principal search.

### 14.0 **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION:**

A Team Reports

Cari Medd provided an overview of the high school graduation plan on the football field (weather permitting) and Project Graduation will take place in the high school. Graduation will take place at 6:00 p.m. on June 3<sup>rd</sup> and tickets will not be required if it is held outside.

**Mary Martin:** Shared the concerns from the administration in regards to finding staff during a competitive hiring season and she is happy to see that a social-emotional learning classroom is being offered at the elementary level.

**Patrick Irish:** shared that he is happy to see the social-emotional learning program, as this will be a \$300,000 cost savings to the district and will allow us to bring our students back to our schools.

**Mary Martin:** Thank-you to those board members who are attending town meetings to represent the Board.

### 15.0 **COMMUNICATIONS:**

16.0 **HANDOUTS:** LRP Publications - May 2022

### 17.0 **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

To enter into Executive Session regarding a personnel issue pursuant under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (A) (PCS Principal Nomination)  
**Motion by Steve Holbrook** to enter into Executive Session regarding a personnel issue pursuant under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (A) (PCS Principal Nomination) at **7:56 p.m.**  
**Seconded by Michael Downing**  
**Vote: Unanimous**

*Open session reconvened at 8:18 p.m.*  
**Motion by Ed Rabasco** to approve the **PCS Principal Nomination Brandi Comeau.**  
**Seconded by Christine Downs**  
**Vote: Unanimous**

**17.1** To enter into Executive Session regarding a personnel issue pursuant under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (A), if needed.  
**Motion by Steve Holbrook** to enter into Executive Session regarding a personnel issue pursuant under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (A) at **8:22 p.m.**  
**Seconded by Michael Downing**  
**Vote: Unanimous**

*Open session reconvened at 8:32 p.m.*  
**Motion by Emily Rinchich** to approve **PCS Assistant Principal Nomination Denelle Gendron.**  
**Seconded by Mike Downing**  
**Vote: Unanimous**

**18.0 REMINDERS: .....Sign Policies**

**19.0 ADJOURNMENT:**  
**Motion by Steve Holbrook** to adjourn at **8:35 p.m.**  
**Seconded by Mike Downing**  
**Vote: Unanimous**

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth J. Healey