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EPPING SCHOOL BOARD PUBLIC MINUTES
DECEMBER 15, 2011

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm in the Epping Town Hall with the Pledge of Allegiance. In attendance were School Board Members Gregory Dodge, Jeff Harris, Dave Mylott, and Brian Reed, School Principals Mark Vallone and Kyle Repucci, Special Services Director Cathy Zylinski, Athletic Director Larry Averill, and Superintendent Barbara Munsey.

SCHEDULED GUESTS – Student Josh Boswell was acknowledged for his Seacoast School of Technology Team placing third in the nation at the FAA (Future Farmers of America) convention.

Athletic Director Larry Averill acknowledged the EMS teams for all making it to the Tri-County semifinals/championships and the EHS teams to the NHIAA Division tournaments. The Boys Football Team was a finalist in the State Championship and Epping Captains Bernie Hutchinson and Dustin Jarosz were recognized. Football Coach Ryan Francoer was thanked for his service as he will be moving on next year. The School Board congratulated all the athletic teams and awardees for representing Epping.

Mr. Averill reported that Applebee's had requested 12-15 pictures of Epping sports for their Epping restaurant. It was recommended that the district send memorabilia and photos that did not include students. For other items including students it was recommended that the district obtain the adequate permission and consult legal counsel. *Gregory Dodge made a motion to approve sending memorabilia and photos as recommended with coordination of the Athletic Director and Superintendent, seconded by Dave Mylott. The motion passed 4-0.*

Mr. Averill requested permission to accept 21 athletic travel suits that were ordered by the donator and arrived in the wrong color royal blue which is our colors. *Gregory Dodge made a motion to accept the uniform warm-ups as donated, seconded by Dave Mylott. The motion passed 4-0.* Mr. Tim Sullivan had also made an enclosed and locked bulletin board for athletic photos and donated it to the Epping program. It is to be placed in the gym foyer over the bubblers. *Gregory Dodge made a motion to accept the donation, seconded by Jeff Harris. The motion passed 4-0.*

Mr. Averill requested permission for sports teams to practice after 5:00 pm on Presidents' Day January 16 and Civil Rights Day February 21. The Board was assured that there would be no consequences for non-attendance. *Jeff Harris made a motion to approve the practice request, seconded by Dave Mylott. The motion passed 4-0.*

The first reading of Policy JLCJ Concussions and Head Injuries and JLCA Physical Examinations of Students was taken out of order to obtain the Athletic Director's input. The recommendation is to make baseline concussion testing a requirement for athletes due to our knowledge of concussions and to be proactive. Dave Mylott questioned if it was mandatory for all athletes. Larry Averill reported that the baseline testing is free and conducted on site. The intent is to implement next school year. Jeff Harris inquired if anything had been done this year. That has not happened. Superintendent Barbara Munsey stated that she advocates for all students after attending a conference in which the risk of concussions were discussed. The first reading of Policy GEA Athletic Team Coaches was also presented as district practice. Dave Mylott requested clarification on equivalent athletic experience. It was explained that educator coaches were preferred; however coaches with student team experience would also be considered. Please reference attached Athletic Director's Report.

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Director of Professional Learning Lyn Healy was not present, but supplied a report. See attached.

Teacher Mary Beth Coleman addressed the Board regarding the elimination of the EES library position in next year's budget. This position will affect the library and the entire school as it is the heart of the school. She stated that the library provides students with responsibility, access to the Internet, personal interactions, social skills, and special events. Librarian Barbara Young has taught the love of reading for 24 years and helped needy families at the holidays. She explained that morale at the school was at an all time low. She asked that the Board reconsider the decision and reinstate the library position. Gregory Dodge thanked her for her nice presentation.

Superintendent Barbara Munsey addressed the audience stating that the district is between a rock and a hard place. The district has been directed by the Budget Committee to make cuts in acknowledgement of the difficult economy and it was reported that the town is taking peoples' homes for not paying their taxes. The district continues to face financial challenges due to increasing health insurance, utilities, and retirement costs. We acknowledge that any cuts we make will impact student program. EMS and EHS have had position cuts over the past five years and there is no place to go without impacting public school standards and accreditation. The elementary and special education administration was directed to provide options and made these difficult decisions.

Principal Mark Vallone stated that making these decisions was hard to do. The library will remain open with a library paraprofessional so that students can still check out books. The school/district is looking at science instruction. He conducted a study and found teachers are providing 10 to 33 minutes of science instruction two to three times a week. Science, engineering, and math have been made a priority at the federal level placing attention on the importance of science. At this time EES has a math and reading specialist, but does not have a science specialist. EES can manage without a library specialist and the science position will add 152 minutes of science instruction for grades 1 to 5. The library decision was a tough call, but the school has added resources and built up classroom libraries. It is not the best scenario, but students need science education knowing the economic climate.

Member Gregory Dodge stated that we were asked to make cuts. He has been present in non-public when people have asked for their homes back. This is very real. The Budget Committee, Town, and School Board do not have easy decisions to make. Last deliberative session the School Board went in united and came out fractured. The student population is decreasing and costs are increasing.

Library Paraprofessional Mary Ann Nicosia spoke on behalf of the librarian position as it promotes thinking skills and supports curriculum. The library provides social and emotional connections and a collaborative space. Member Gregory Dodge stated that this was not about the person, but the position.

Trustee Heather Clark spoke on behalf of the Library Trustees. They felt that this decision was unwise because instruction regarding complex resources from an expert improves the learning skills of our students. They urge the School Board to retain the position. Please reference attached statement.

Member Dave Mylott stated that this was a struggle taking an increase of hundreds of thousands and getting close to zero. Something had to be cut. If we save in one area we anger one group and if we save in another we anger another group. There is pain no matter what the cut. The Board did not take this situation lightly.

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Member Jeff Harris stated that the Board met and took into consideration the comments and recommendations from administration. It was difficult, but the Board needed to make it. It is not the best situation, but there needs to be a balance between the school and the taxpayers. The Board needed to do what is best in this economic situation.

Member Brian Reed stated that he has seen how the budget process works and he does not want to hurt kids. It is not personal. The district has had a default budget for three years. We are in tough times and he doesn't know what to do. The Board has tried its best.

Principal Mark Vallone commented that this is not a great scenario. Watching the budget deliberations have not been fun to watch. We must remember that we have great staff and students.

Parent Shannon McTague stated that she worked in a school district with a similar situation with no library special. There were pros and cons. She asked if teachers were consulted on making cuts and ways to find money as they could come up with good ideas. One idea was to eliminate professional development days.

Parent Tracy Dwyer stated that she knew it was not personal, but it felt personal. She also recommended eliminating PD days and let the teachers teach. There were multiple secretaries. Science mattered, but what about literacy. She also commented that people were talking about athletics. She understood that cuts affect different groups of people, but she had to say her piece.

Teacher Mary Beth Coleman stated that the district could save money by dealing with the temperature in EES.

Parent Heather Clark asked why the district returned so much money at the end of the year. It was reported that last year it was in the \$400k range. The Superintendent explained that the budget includes both revenue and expenditures. By law the district cannot spend surplus revenue which amounts to half of the fund balance. The other half is due to special education, health insurance, and other areas coming in less than budgeted. The district cannot keep this money and it is returned in a fund balance and becomes part of the district's revenue stream. For example, this school year the district started \$400k in the hole before we did anything due to the return of the fund balance. If the district did not return this money it would increase the tax rate. Member Dodge reported that the auditor had stated that the size of our fund balance was comparable to other school districts. Ms. Clark asked why we did not use these funds to pay for positions like the library. It was explained that the district cannot encumber money for salaries in another school year. All money encumbered must be associated with a project that is in process like the repairs on the front of the SAU Building.

Teachers Katie Buchanan and Danielle Donahue addressed the Board regarding the changes in the preschool teacher position for next school year. This change will not deal with the issues and the teacher will need to be out case managing and not teaching. As a result the district will not save money as a substitute will be needed. Director of Special Services thanked the preschool staff and stated that this choice was difficult. The choice was made focusing on instruction and keeping the classrooms in place. She will support the preschool coordination. Principal Mark Vallone stated that he had met with Ms. Zylinski and they may need to move an office closer to the preschool to help with preschool administration. See statement attached.

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Preschool parent Peter Stitch reported that without the teachers his daughter would not be able to speak. We needed to be passionate about every child and we would be failing them in some capacity.

Parent Heather Clark stated that the preschool was a wonderful program. Preschool parents needed a lot more hand holding and having the same teacher in there every day was needed. She asked about the grant funds that helped support the administration of this program. It was reported that only \$7,000 in IDEA funding offset preschool administration. The Superintendent reported that the district has attempted to get grants and these efforts have resulted in larger districts obtaining them. The federal Title grants have either been eliminated or reduced squeezing the district in attempting to offer programs. Ms. Clark commented that she understood the Budget Committee's role, but felt that the School Board needed to do what was best for kids.

Teacher Katie Buchanan stated that she didn't know how much the preschool change would save as the teacher would still need to be at meetings. Ms. Zylinski reported that meetings would have to be before and after school as we have done in the older preschool model. We don't have another way. She also reported that the case manager was not required at meetings if there was a district representative.

Superintendent Barbara Munsey reported on challenges in Seacoast School of Technology with program reductions due to state aid cuts. An additional cut was anticipated for next school year and a meeting with state legislators was held to discuss it. Epping brought up the retirement issue and it was learned that they did not know that these costs would be shifted down to the school districts. The district needs parents to be involved at the state and federal levels. We need help from the state and federal to solve problems. As to secretaries there are safety considerations and the expectations for state/federal reporting have increased while the funds have decreased. We cannot fix this and we don't know what the answer is any more.

The School Board thanked guests for their input.

MINUTES – Jeff Harris made a motion to approve the public minutes for December 1, 2011, seconded by Dave Mylott. The motion passed 3-0 as Member Reed had left the meeting briefly. Jeff Harris made a motion to approve the non-public minutes for December 1, 2011, seconded by Brian Reed. The motion passed 4-0. Dave Mylott made a motion to approve the amended public minutes for the December 3, 2011 Budget Committee, seconded by Jeff Harris. The motion passed 4-0.

MANIFEST – Dave Mylott made a motion to approve the payroll manifest #P-12 dated 12-09-11 in the amount of \$310,892.28, seconded by Brian Reed. The motion passed 4-0. Dave Mylott made a motion to approve the accounts payable manifest #12 dated 12-15-11 in the amount of \$179,545.11, seconded by Jeff Harris. The motion passed 3-0-1 with Gregory Dodge abstaining as he had not had the opportunity to review it.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS – EES Principal Mark Vallone noted the concerts and active PTO. The report included a band update and in January EES would like to provide a math update. Recently EES was visited by other schools due to the excellent literacy instruction. At a recent conference Mr. Vallone won a Mimeo that works with a white board. The value is \$800 and he would like to donate it to the school. Gregory Dodge made a motion to accept the donation thanking Mr. Vallone, seconded by Brian Reed. The motion passed 4-0. Member Reed commented on the great concert. Member Mylott was concerned that the EMS solution to the EES band instruction needed a long term plan. The Board has

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plans to schedule a work session in January to discuss EES facilities. He recommended that band be included in the EES report every month. Reference attached report.

EMS and EHS Principal Kyle Repucci reported that there was an online video tutorial on the website to assist parents in receiving notices from Powerschool. EMS was working on a project period integrating 21st century themes and skills. EHS was working on authentic performance assessments. He reported a concern about the cost of EMS extended field trips, but does not have a solution at this time. He also reported that students and staff continue to amaze him with their fundraising for trips and causes. National Honor Society inductions were recently held and two students were selected for the 2012 All State Music Festival.

Superintendent Barbara Munsey reported on the 2011 District Report Card highlighting some demographic, educational, and financial data. Member Mylott was concerned about the reduction in post-secondary attendance. Principal Repucci replied that the work the school was doing this year on grading, assessments, and learning expectations will help in this area. He would also talk to other schools to see what they are doing to encourage attendance. The Board approved printing the report card in the Annual Report. Epping School District was acknowledged as 1 out of 4 NH districts having progressive professional learning practices which speaks highly of the work our principals and teachers are doing. Reference attached report.

FACILITIES/FINANCIAL – The draft warrant and public hearing presentation were reviewed. It was agreed that if the town was going to use the EES mural for their cover the district would use something else. Warrant articles were reviewed. Discussion took place on warrant article 2 authorizing the district to call one special meeting if warrant article 1 teachers' agreement failed. Member Reed recommended taking it out as it gives the idea that warrant article 1 is not supported. Member Dodge stated that he didn't think it did any harm and would save district from filing a court petition. Member Harris stated he didn't know where the district would go on a re-negotiation and the time schedule for a special meeting was difficult. *Gregory Dodge made a motion to include article 2 on the warrant, seconded by Dave Mylott. The article failed with a 2-2 vote with Members Reed and Harris voting against.* Article 2 will be considered at the January meeting.

Member Dodge stated that he has been asked why the district does not publish salaries like the town. There was a discussion regarding the cost and the number of employees as the district had a lot of substitutes on record. *Gregory Dodge made a motion to publish the base/contract salaries only, seconded by Jeff Harris. The motion passed 4-0.* It was clarified that salaries would be included in the 2011 Annual Report.

POLICY – A second reading was held on School Board policies BB, BBAA, BEAB; GDS Bargaining Units; JEC Educational Hardship; and KFA Public Conduct. Member Mylott requested an amendment to BEAB on school board use of electronic devices to be able to use such devices for school board business. Member Mylott recommended that Policy GDS be eliminated as it was not needed. *Dave Mylott made a motion to eliminate Policy GDS, seconded by Gregory Dodge. The motion passed 4-0.* Member Mylott questioned transportation being the parents' responsibility under manifest hardship and it was reported that that is the way it worked under law.

COMMENTS –

- Member Reed appreciated people expressing their concerns. He would recommend attendance at work sessions and meetings.

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- Member Mylott was a member of the Technology Committee and shared the successes special education was having with iPads. The committee unanimously recommended purchasing 10 more. *Gregory Dodge made a motion to approve 10 more iPads, seconded by Brian Reed. The motion passed 4-0.* He was also impressed by the standing only EMS and EHS concert. He also thanked Epping students that were serving in the military.
- Member Harris expressed concern about the district's wellness policy and how restrictive it was. Students were no longer able to sell candy. The Superintendent will report back on this policy next month.
- Member Dodge reported that the Default Budget form needed to be signed. *Gregory Dodge made a motion to approve the default budget of \$16,667,037, seconded by Dave Mylott. The motion passed 4-0.* Member Dodge stated that meetings were an open forum and he appreciated the input, but encouraged people to engage in the process earlier. It was important not to let these discussions overshadow the good things that our students were doing.

The community was wished a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and Happy New Year.

Gregory Dodge made a motion to enter non-public session per RSA 91-A: 3, II a-e, seconded by Dave Mylott. The motion passed 4-0 with a roll call vote. The meeting was to adjourn immediately thereafter. The Board entered nonpublic session at 9:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara D. Munsey

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EPPING SCHOOL BOARD NON-PUBLIC MINUTES
DECEMBER 15, 2011

School Board Members Gregory Dodge, Jeff Harris, Dave Mylott, and Brian Reed and Superintendent Barbara Munsey met in non-public session immediately following the regular meeting held in the Epping Town Hall.

The Superintendent made a bullying report for one incident in EMS and one incident in EHS. The Superintendent updated the Board on personnel issues. No action was taken by the Board.

Dave Mylott made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Gregory Dodge. The motion passed 4-0 with a roll call vote and the meeting was adjourned at 10:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara D. Munsey