

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, December 21, 2023, 7:00 PM
EPPING SCHOOL BOARD
Epping Town Hall/Epping TV Channel 22/Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Heather Clark called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm with the pledge of allegiance.

In attendance: Chair Heather Clark, Vice Chair Ben Leavitt, Member Robin O’Day, Member Julie Knight, Member Jen Jacoby, Superintendent Furbush, Business Administrator Christine Vayda, Student Jacob Twombly, and Student Landon Toomire

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

SCHEDULED TOPICS

a. Boys Soccer Team and Coach Kerry McDermott - Div IV Champions

The Board congratulated the team on their accomplishment. Captain Jacob Twombly spoke about the season and the path to the Championship. Coach McDermott spoke about the talent, sportsmanship, citizenship, and character of the student-athletes on the team. The Board thanked the parents for their continued support of the program. NH State Representative Mark Vallone presented a commendation from the NH House of Representatives to Coach McDermott to display at EMHS.

b. Junior Class Privileges Discussion

Principal Mazzone explained that they requested this to be an agenda item since it is an amendment to the student handbook. Landon and Abby discussed the process they went through to get to this point. They also outlined what students would need to accomplish in order to get the privileges. They are requesting off-campus lunch privileges for juniors who are passing all of their classes, maintain good attendance, stay out of trouble, and meet the credit requirement to be a junior.

Ben asked what the criteria was for students to be considered “staying out of trouble”. Landon said this means no detentions or office referrals. Julie asked what would happen if a student had good grades and suddenly starts doing poorly. Landon explained how grades will be monitored and the timeframe they have to get grades back in good standing. Julie also asked if there is any policy regarding students leaving campus in other students' vehicles. Principal Mazzone said he will look into this. There was further discussion about the request for privileges. Student Patrick Thompson spoke about the importance of being able to get away for a minute to help regain focus. Class Vice President TJ Sousa said he is proud of the class as a whole for coming together to come up with this request.

Member Robin O'Day made a motion to accept the Junior Class' Proposal for Junior Privileges. Seconded by Member Julie Knight. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

Heather asked Principal Mazzone what his plan is to get this information out to students and parents. He said he will send messages out leading up to the start date of the privileges. Julie noted the importance of informing the whole school since it is an amendment to the handbook.

c. Budget Discussion - Superintendent Bill Furbush

Superintendent Furbush spoke about the recent meeting with the Budget Committee. He said some members want to see a reduction in the budget of around \$66,000. This number comes from the full-time custodial and maintenance position they were hoping to move forward with. He said he feels the cut can be made with minimal impact to the day-to-day operations. He mentioned the option of cutting the position to half-time which would save \$38,000. He also mentioned that they budgeted \$23,500 for the installation of two additional security cameras, but they have been approved for a grant which will cover that cost. He also spoke about reducing the \$10,000 budgeted for administrator requested PD to \$8,000. Lastly, he mentioned that the budgeted amount for the snow removal equipment could be reduced by \$2,000 based on the quotes received from vendors. The cuts noted above would make up the \$66,000 reduction requested by some members of the Budget Committee.

Ben said that he thought the cuts proposed by Superintendent Furbush make sense. He isn't thrilled by the idea of reducing the custodial/maintenance position to part-time but hopes that making it half-time can be revisited in the future. Julie voiced concerns about reducing the position to half-time. She thinks it may be difficult to find someone willing to work with no benefits but supports the proposed cuts. Jen said that she does not like the process of presenting the budget and then having to make cuts, but she supports the proposed cuts. Robin does not support the proposed cuts. She feels the continued negotiations will still not make everyone happy. She would like to present a budget that includes the \$23,500 reduction for the cameras and some other minor cuts but keeps the custodial and maintenance position as full-time. Heather said she supports the cuts and thinks they will make the budget more palatable to the community. She would like to present the tightest budget possible in order to help ensure that it passes. There was further discussion about the proposed budget cuts and the need for the custodial and maintenance position.

Chair Heather Clark made a motion to reconsider. Seconded by Member Julie Knight. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

Christine recognized and thanked the Town for their partnership and help with maintenance activities.

Chair Heather Clark made a motion to reduce the budget by \$66,502 based on the proposed cuts. Seconded by Vice Chair Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 4-1. Motion carries.

There was a brief discussion regarding warrant articles and increasing the salaries of the School Board to match the Selectmen.

Member Robin O’Day made a motion to increase School Board Member salaries to \$3,000 and \$3,500 for the Chair to match the Selectmen. Seconded by Member Julie Knight. VOTE: 4-1. Motion carries.

Ben said he feels it is inappropriate for any elected official to vote on their own salary and that it should be a warrant article. Jen said she used to have a similar stance but believes it is fair to increase salaries to match what other Boards/Committees are being paid. Robin said she believes that the increase is fair due to the hard work and commitment shown by the Board. Julie also thinks the increase is fair since it will match other Boards.

d. SST Agreement - Superintendent Bill Furbush

Superintendent Furbush talked about the change to the RSA which now requires 4-year agreements. He said the new 4-year agreement mirrors the previous agreement. Julie asked if the agreement said that they have to start on the same date as SST. Superintendent Furbush said it is not.

Member Julie Knight made a motion to approve the regional agreement for the Career and Technical Education Center for Region 18 for 2024-2028. Seconded by Member Robin O’Day. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

POLICY

a. IMGA - Service Animals, 2nd/3rd Read

Vice Chair Ben Leavitt made a motion to approve Policy IMGA - Service Animals. Seconded by Member Jen Jacoby. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

b. DFGA - Crowdfunding (New), 2nd/3rd Read

Member Robin O’Day made a motion to approve Policy DFGA - Crowdfunding. Seconded by Vice Chair Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

c. DFGA-R & Form (New) - The Epping School District Crowdfunding Request Procedures & Form, 2nd/3rd Read

Ben noted that on page three there is an approval date that needs to be updated.
Member Robin O’Day made a motion to approve Policy DFGA-R & Form - The Epping School District Crowdfunding Request Procedures & Form with the updated approval date. Seconded by Member Julie Knight. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

PERSONNEL

None

REPORTS

a. Student Reports

Jacob and Landon gave an overview of what different classes are currently working on. They also gave an overview of the recent and upcoming extracurricular activities.

b. Principal Reports

None

c. Superintendent Reports - Fremont tuitioning discussion

Superintendent Furbush spoke about Fremont's reconsideration to choose Epping and Pinkerton as the school's of choice for their students to attend. He discussed what was needed of the Board and how this process will go. He also talked about how a warrant article is not required for the receiving District, but there is some merit to making it one. Heather said she believes it is important to be transparent and inform the community but doesn't think the warrant article should be binding. Julie said she thinks it would reflect poorly on the Board if the article were to not pass and they move forward with the plan anyway. Superintendent Furbush clarified that Fremont did select two schools which gives students the opportunity to go to either Pinkerton or Epping. There was further discussion about the need for a warrant article. Heather and Ben will be helping to finalize the proposal. Superintendent Furbush also gave an update about alternate meeting locations. He said the team is ready to test out the setup for a live meeting.

FINANCIAL BUSINESS & DISTRICT SERVICES

a. Safety Grant

Christine discussed the grant that Epping received. The funds will be used to cover camera installations and security/access control system upgrades.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Public Meeting Minutes December 7, 2023

Vice Chair Ben Leavitt made a motion to approve the Public Meeting Minutes from December 7th, 2023 as written. Seconded by Member Robin O'Day. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

MANIFEST

a. Accounts Payable deposited on October 30th, 2023

Vice Chair Ben Leavitt made a motion to accept Accounts Payable deposited on October 30th, 2023 in the amount of \$24,561.76. Seconded by Member Julie Knight. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

b. Payroll deposited on November 22nd, 2023

Vice Chair Ben Leavitt made a motion to accept Payroll deposited on November 22nd, 2023 in the amount of \$393,798.66. Seconded by Member Julie Knight.

VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

BOARD COMMENTS/OTHER

a. Board Comments

Jen said the Juniors who presented did a fantastic job. She said she loved the energy of the full room during the meeting. She thanked everyone for their work on the budget and wished everyone a great break.

Ben extended his congratulations to everyone involved with the recent concert. He said it was fantastic, and he heard tons of positive feedback. He also wished everyone a safe and merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Julie asked for more information to be sent out regarding Hudl and how to access the feed from the camera. She also said it was exciting to have a full room for the meeting, and she hopes to have more visitors in the future.

Robin wished everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

Superintendent Furbush also said the concerts were amazing and he congratulated everyone involved. He wished everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

Heather thanked the Juniors and said she was impressed with their presentation. She also thanked the Admin team at the high school for their work on the Fremont proposal. She wished everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

NEXT MEETING TO BE SCHEDULED

a. January 4, 2023

NONPUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3, II Non-Public Meeting **is not scheduled** for December 21, 2023 after the public meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn at 9:38 pm. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,

Dagny Wilkins

School Board Secretary