

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, March 21, 2024, 7:00 PM
EPPING SCHOOL BOARD
Epping Town Hall/Epping TV Channel 22/Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

Superintendent Furbush 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

Superintendent Furbush asked the Board to appoint a School Board Chair.

Member Robin O’Day made a motion to appoint Heather Clark to School Board Chair. Seconded by Member Julie Knight. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

Heather asked the Board to appoint a Vice Chair.

Member Robin O’Day made a motion to appoint Ben Leavitt to School Board Vice Chair. Seconded by Member Jen Jacoby. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Robin O’Day thanked the residents of Epping for supporting the school budget and the paraprofessionals’ contract. She gave quotes from a post made on an online public forum. She felt that the quotes crossed the line and blatantly disrespected the School Board as a whole. She said that the post exhibited slander and defamation of character which she will not tolerate.

SCHEDULED TOPICS

a. Epping Education Association President Deb Dyer

Deb expressed her appreciation for the dedication the School Board shows to the community. She talked about the common goal to improve the culture and climate within Epping schools. She also spoke about the importance of educator satisfaction. She recalled the previous meeting in which decisions were made regarding a reduction in force and the restructuring of an administrator position. She noted the importance of getting input from teachers when making these decisions. The Epping Education Association (EEA) respectfully requested the formal inclusion of the EEA in discussions that directly impact teachers.

Heather said that EEA is always welcome to speak on any agenda item, and they can also be added to the agenda if there is something they would like to speak about. Julie mentioned that the proposals brought forward are not discussed beforehand, so the Board may not always know when to invite the EEA. There was further discussion about how to best inform the EEA of

upcoming agenda items that they may like to provide input on. Jen said she agreed with a lot of what Deb said. She also believes that there is a teacher voice that is very unique from the administrator voice. She feels that they are missing out on a very valuable perspective if a formal invitation is not extended to the EEA. Robin said she feels her role as a School Board Member is to direct administrators to ensure they are getting the feedback from teachers. Her concern is that this may cause a disconnect in communications between the teachers and administrators. There was further discussion on how to best include the input from the teachers.

b. Curriculum and Data Position Discussion - Superintendent Furbush

Superintendent Furbush gave a brief recap of previous discussions regarding this topic. He explained the difficulties with having one person trying to cover both buildings. He also identified the advantages of having two positions. Heather asked if the positions would be on an administrative contract. Superintendent Furbush said that they would not be on an administrative contract. He also outlined some of the reasons why the positions would not fall under the CBA. Julie noted that the positions' primary role would be to support teachers, but there are a number of days that they would be required to work when the teachers aren't in the building. Superintendent Furbush said that the positions would still be responsible for the curriculum and data assessment aspects as well. There was a discussion about how the positions will be funded and whether or not it will impact the budget.

Principal Murphy spoke about the decision that was made to switch to co-principals. She believes that was one of the best decisions that has been made regarding the reorganization of building leadership. She thinks it is important to make changes based on necessity regardless of the timing. Jen agreed that the decision was beneficial; however, she noted that the co-principal decision was a reorganization of two existing positions rather than the creation of an additional position. Principal Sousa stated the importance of dedicating one position to each building in order to offer the level of support that is needed. Principal Mazzone said he believes that having students that are unable to read, write, and do math at their current grade level is an emergency. There was a discussion about how to best support the needs of the teachers and students.

Tracy Dwyer said she thinks students would benefit from a math interventionist and asked if any thought had been given to hiring one. Superintendent Furbush said that it has been discussed, and they will be discussing it more during the next budget cycle.

Landon added that if they have the ability to be flexible with the funds then he believes they should do what is best for the students. He also believes that reorganizing the position as described is the responsible way to resolve the issue at hand.

Julie asked if they were planning to use the salary from the RIF position to help fund the new position. Superintendent Furbush explained that it does not work that way and that the RIF discussions are completely separate. He said there has never been any discussion to RIF a position in order to gain another.

Rachel NAME spoke about how the idea of a math interventionist was brought up to the EES staff. She said when the RIF was presented they discussed the focus on numeracy and

literacy along with the hope of bringing in a math interventionist. She also said they discussed the idea of restructuring the grade-level teachers with one of the teachers potentially taking on the role of the math interventionist. She also spoke about the need for more clarity in what the positions like interventionists will be responsible for. She added that science is taught by every teacher at some level, but they are not able to teach all of the standards and that was where the UA science position came in.

Member Robin O’Day made a motion to support the additional Curriculum & Data Assessment role. Seconded by Vice Chair Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 3-2. Motion carries.

POLICY

a. JKAA - Use of Restraints and Seclusion - 1st Read

Superintendent Furbush explained that the Policy is not new and the only major change is the form. It now requires that two adults are present. This policy was moved to a 2nd/3rd read.

b. JKAA-R - Use of Restraints and Seclusion - Form

This policy was moved to a 2nd/3rd read.

PERSONNEL

a. Retirement of Kindergarten Teacher Julia Masury

Superintendent Furbush commended Julie for her years of service and dedication. Heather wished her the best and thanked her for her service.

Member Robin O’Day made a motion to accept the retirement of Kindergarten Teacher Julia Masury with extreme regret. Seconded by Member Julie Knight. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

b. Teacher Nominations List - 24-25

Nominations were tabled until the next meeting.

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. They also spoke about the upcoming Chess Tournament, Student Athletics Leadership Team meeting, and Electives Fair. Jacob also asked for further explanation on why he, and other students, are not being allowed to play both baseball and track. Superintendent Furbush said he will look more into it but believes this has been allowed in the past.

Principal Mazzone spoke about the recent decision to have both a JV and Varsity baseball team. He explained that there are barely enough athletes to run both teams, so they want to ensure that the athletes will be available.

b. Principal Reports

None

c. Superintendent Report

Superintendent Furbush spoke about the School Board meeting location. He said they have done some tests but need to do a little more fine tuning. He spoke about the upcoming eclipse. He noted that there will be an opportunity for the students to be outside to view the eclipse. Parents will be able to come and share the moment with their children and more details will follow. He also talked about the recent Arts Night. He commended everyone involved for their efforts in making the night a huge success.

d. Committee Reports

Elementary School PTO

Ben said they have been discussing some upcoming events (Movie Night and the Ice Cream Social) and the PTO budget.

SST

Heather said that about half of the SST classes for next year are full. She also said that while the number of SST students is down slightly, the percentage of the sending schools' student population attending SST has remained the same. There have also been discussions about starting an Electrician Program. The scholarship presentation has been scheduled for May 23rd with graduation on the 30th. Julie added that Bring Back the Trades will be having an event on May 4th at SST.

Selectmen

Heather thanked everyone involved and everyone who stepped up to help make voting day a success. She also thanked the community for their support.

FINANCIAL BUSINESS & DISTRICT SERVICES

a. Paraprofessional CBA - Board signatures

The Board signed the recently passed Paraprofessional CBA.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Public Meeting Minutes March 7, 2024

Member Julie Knight made a motion to approve the Public Meeting Minutes from March 7th, 2024 as written. Seconded by Vice Chair Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 4-0-1. Motion carries.

b. Public School Board Retreat Meeting Minutes January 25, 2024

Member Julie Knight made a motion to approve the Public School Board Retreat Meeting Minutes from January 25th, 2024 as written. Seconded by Vice Chair Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

c. Non-Public Meeting Minutes March 7, 2024

Member Julie Knight made a motion to approve the Non-Public Meeting Minutes from March 7th, 2024 as written. Seconded by Vice Chair Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 4-0-1. Motion carries.

MANIFEST

a. Accounts Payable deposited on March 7, 2024

Member Julie Knight made a motion to accept Accounts Payable deposited on March 7, 2024 in the amount of \$40.00. Seconded by Vice Chair Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

b. Accounts Payable deposited on March 8, 2024

Member Julie Knight made a motion to accept Accounts Payable deposited on March 8, 2024 in the amount of \$117,875.79. Seconded by Vice Chair Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

c. Payroll deposited on March 15, 2024

Vice Chair Ben Leavitt made a motion to accept Payroll deposited on March 15, 2024 in the amount of \$359,813.35. Seconded by Member Julie Knight. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

BOARD COMMENTS/OTHER

a. Committee Assignments for 2024-25

The Board will serve on the committees as follows:

Budget: Robin, Julie (alternate)

Policy: Robin, Julie (alternate)

Teacher Negotiations: Ben, Jen

Wellness: Jen

Emergency Management: Heather
Fields & Facilities: Heather
Safety: Ben, Robin (alternate)
SST: Heather, Julie (alternate)

b. Board Comments

Jen said she appreciates that everyone is still ok with one another even if she voices an unpopular opinion on a topic.

Ben thanked everyone who came out to vote and for showing their support. He appreciates that they were able to have productive discussions and make tough decisions.

Julie said she respected that Superintendent Furbush brought the reorganization to the Board for discussion. She is looking forward to seeing the results.

Robin noted the importance of being careful with the advertising being allowed. She noted a flier for an outside organization that featured the Epping Blue Devil logo even though it is not a school sponsored program. There was a discussion about school advertisements. Robin also spoke about the disrespectful/inappropriate Facebook posts discussed earlier.

Superintendent Furbush said he respected the Board's passion and is thankful that they are able to have healthy discussions.

Christine explained how the budget can be adjusted if necessary for the additional position.

Heather gave a shout out to the Music & Arts Department for a wonderful Arts Night. She said both the concert and all the works of art were fantastic.

NEXT MEETING TO BE SCHEDULED

a. April 4, 2024

NONPUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3, II Non-Public Meeting **is scheduled** for March 21, 2024 before the public meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 10:24pm. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,

Dagny Wilkins

School Board Secretary