

## **APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday July 15, 2021**

**EPPING SCHOOL BOARD - Epping Town Hall/ Epping TV Channel 22/Zoom**

**7:00 pm**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Deborah Brooks called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm with the pledge of allegiance.

In attendance: Chair Deborah Brooks, Vice Chair David Mylott, Member Heather Clark, Member Ben Leavitt, Superintendent Furbush, and Business Administrator Christine Vayda. Member Robin O'Day was absent.

### **SCHEDULED GUESTS**

a. Food Service Program 21-22 - Moss Crutchfield, Food Services Director

Moss introduced himself and explained his background. The meal program they'll be doing this year involves no cost meals for all Epping students. This means no end-of-year negative balances. It is part of the American Rescue Plan. He went through some charts that showed the difference in savings with the Seamless Summer Option. There is no requirement for families to fill out the free and reduced forms. There is equal access for all students, even for students bringing food from home. Another plus is faster service at the point of sale which allows students more time to eat. He wants to offer restaurant quality choices and options. He wants all the food to meet nutritional standards. He will also offer customer-oriented service. He uses a data-driven decision-making process for sales-reactive cyclical menus. He wants to make sure that the students actually like the food. Heather asked if there were any negatives with this program. He said that the only negative is figuring out what to do after the program ends. David asked how Moss will get the kids to try the food and how he will get them to keep coming back. Moss said that the first part is gaining the students' trust and winning them over. The Food Services Department has to do a good job marketing the food. Additionally, they need to make sure that the food is high quality, so they keep coming back. He'll utilize the data in order to ensure they eliminate menu items that aren't selling. Ben asked how he'll get families to fill out the free and reduced lunch forms in the future. He said spreading the word and repeating the

information and sending reminders will be the most helpful. If a student brings a lunch from home and wants an item from the lunch line, they have to get three items, but they get them all for free. If they just want one item, they can pay for it if they want.

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to approve the Seamless Summer Option for the fiscal year 2021 to 2022. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

b. Robert Hodgman - Mask Wearing

Robert would like students to not have to wear masks or at least give them the choice of whether they want to or not. They talked at length about the different reasons why masks aren't good for people and the negative consequences of them. They discussed how they think masks aren't effective and that the virus is able to get through them. He claims that there were lots of violations while the vaccine was created. As of now, the district isn't requiring masks this coming school year. The Board doesn't plan on mandating vaccines for students or staff. If a parent wants their child to wear a mask at school, they'll be reminded to keep it on. The Board doesn't know if masks will be mandated again in the future. The safety of the students is the Board's top priority.

c. [COVID Task Force Fall Opening Plan](#) - Bill Furbush

The plan is very similar to the plan they currently have. The Task Force is very supportive of this plan. They have been following updated guidelines from the State. Phase 4 is what they recommend starting the school year in. This plan allows for flexibility. They're focusing on transmission and keeping an eye on it. Masks will be optional at the start of the school year. They will continue to review this. Phase 5 is what they hope to get to. They are still recommending good hand hygiene, staying home when sick, and encouraging social distancing. Limited remote options will be available. They are encouraging students to use VLACS for remote learning. Synchronous learning will not be offered district wide.

**Vice Chair David Mylott made a motion to approve the COVID Task Force Fall Opening Plan for the 2021-2022 school year. Seconded by Member Heather Clark. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

## **POLICY**

Superintendent Furbush thanked everyone for their involvement with this policy. He noted that once a student comes out, it is the district's obligation to help them with this process. They've created a support plan to help students when they're ready to come out publicly, i.e. coming out to a teacher, coming out to peers, etc. Counselors and psychologists' goal is to assist and support the students. They've created a waiver option to protect students who may not have a safe home life, may self-harm, etc. They decided that elementary students will eventually need parental guidance. They want to make sure that their staff and the parents are being supported as well. Robin said that she feels that these policies are in the best interest of the students, staff, and parents. David thanked everyone for their input on this matter, and he voiced his concern with the policies. He said that once things are mandatory, he said that it crosses a line. He doesn't think these policies are legal. There was a discussion about the two-to-three-month timeline for talking to the parents. David would like to hear Sara Wagner's thoughts on the policy. Heather likes that they added a support plan. She also said that it seems a little vague with who will and who will not see the plan. Superintendent Furbush said that it will depend on the child's support plan. The district can't legally change the student's name in PowerSchool, etc unless the student legally had their name changed. Heather thinks that that part of the policy isn't clear. There was a concern about the locker rooms and making sure that all students are comfortable. Heather thinks that including definitions of LGBTQ+ terms in the policy limits them since the definitions change so frequently. If a student comes out to one teacher, it is not classified as coming out publicly. If a child tells all of their teachers on their own, Superintendent Furbush would assume that the parents are aware of the situation already. Tyler Nekton would like training on how to deal with these different situations. Michelle Mylott asked if a student needs to take a proactive step to kickstart this process, and the answer is yes. Additionally, she would like the waiver form to be put on the Drive before this policy is voted on. Heather also said that training of some sort should be given to teachers regardless of which policy is passed. If a student asked one teacher to refer to them by their preferred pronouns and keep it secret, the response will depend on the teacher. Jess Marcoux addressed how she would handle a student coming out to her in the classroom. She would ask them a handful of questions to assess the situation. It is important to ask the student what they want and what they're comfortable with. Student Patrick McTague likes this new policy and is happy with the changes. Prism is in support of having the definitions in the policy. The definitions can serve as a building block to educate staff. He emphasized the importance of training the teachers. He has some suggestions for updating the definitions. Heather suggested putting the definitions in a training handbook instead of the policy, and Patrick suggested making an appendix for it as well. He also suggested that when a student comes out to a specific classroom, the student typically understands that that information will circulate throughout the school. He thinks that forcing a person to come out to another person is unethical, illegal and not right. Patrick said that regardless of age, he hopes that the school will still work with and help the student until they're ready to come out to their parents. He still thinks that the school should help the student come out and help facilitate the conversations.

Heather is worried that the parents' trust in the school would be damaged if the school doesn't tell the parents within a certain amount of time. Patrick noted that the longer a person stays in the closet, the harder it is on them mentally. It is important to make it easy and safe to come out. Pat Weisberg has some information on potential training opportunities. Parent Steve Thomas said that the school is answerable to the taxpayers, and he asked if a staff member withholds information whether they should be dismissed. Parent Nicole Bizzaro said that she agreed with Patrick's statement about the risks that can arise when someone stays in the closet for too long. She also stated that there is a difference between coming out as transgender or gay. She said that these students need support and help. She noted that parents have legal rights as well. Student Nathan McTague pointed out that the gender-neutral bathroom signs have been altered. Deb said that this was due to the public's concern over the signs a couple years ago. Jess Marcoux shared the Title IX laws that relate to transgender people. The waiver will be posted online for people to review. The gender support plan section needs greater detail. The definitions may be moved to a different section or document. There was a discussion about lawyers and laws regarding this topic. Patrick would like the policies discussed at each meeting to stay within that meeting folder on Google Drive. Heather noted that they typically just leave the updated version in order to prevent confusion with different versions. Student Emily Kelley recommends watermarking the different versions. David would like the new policy to allow the option for the school to talk to the parents. There needs to be consent from the student before conversations happen with the parents. Amy Newman, EMHS Media Specialist, said that they really need to look at their practices and that training is crucial. Heather also noted the importance of training. Former student Devon offered assistance to the Board since he transitioned while he was at Epping High School.

a. JBAB - Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students - 3rd Read

This policy was tabled until the next meeting.

b. JBAB-R - Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Procedures - 3rd Read

This policy was tabled until the next meeting.

**PERSONNEL**

a. Resignation Retraction - Krista Gulick

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the resignation retraction of Krista Gulick. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

b. Resignation of Alex Eustace - Gr. 7 Language Arts Teacher

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the resignation of Alex Eustace, Grade 7 Language Arts Teacher, with extreme regret. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

c. Nomination of Emily Baker - EES Library Media Specialist

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the nomination of Emily Baker for the EES Library Media Specialist position. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

d. Nomination of Katherine D'Appolonia - Gr. 7 Language Arts Teacher

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the nomination of Katherine D'Appolonia for the Grade 7 Language Arts Teacher position. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

e. Resignation of [Debbie Jankowsky](#) - EES Teacher/Technology Coach

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the resignation of Debbie Jankowsky, EES Teacher/Technology Coach, with regret. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

f. Resignation of [Bill Hinkle](#) - EES Assistant Principal

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the resignation of Bill Hinkle, EES Assistant Principal, with regret. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

g. Nomination of Sarah Swible - EHS Spanish Teacher

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the nomination of Sarah Swible for the EHS Spanish Teacher position. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

f. Nomination of [Marissa Vitolo](#) - EMS Art Teacher

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the nomination of Marissa Vitolo for the EMS Art Teacher position. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

David has an issue with teachers resigning before the start of the school year since it technically breaks their contract. He understands there are special circumstances. There was a discussion about this topic. Sometimes the Board doesn't accept resignations until a reasonable replacement is found. Superintendent Furbush discussed their current practices regarding teacher resignations.

## **SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS**

a. Superintendent's Report

He said that all the projects are going well. The weather lately has been slightly impacting the roofing project. The HVAC project is moving along very smoothly. He is very happy with MB Mechanical. The custodians have been extremely busy getting the buildings ready. They are doing some projects to give the buildings a face lift. The custodial staff is fully staffed.

## **FINANCIAL BUSINESS & DISTRICT SERVICES**

a. Financial Report

She is wrapping up year ends, and she should have those numbers by the next meeting. The ESSER II Grant got approved. Since it got approved, they will be adding the ventilation, sanitation supplies and technology upgrades back in.

b. Approval of School Name to Epping Middle High School

Superintendent Furbush said that they need the name change for administrative reasons, and this name can serve as a placeholder for now. Heather asked about signage, and they won't be making any changes to the signs for the time being.

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to approve the school's name change to Epping Middle High School. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

c. Approve 2021-2022 School Board Meeting Schedule

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to approve the 2021-2022 School Board Meeting Schedule as amended. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

d. Committee Reports

David said that the HVAC project is going well. He also said that the COVID Task Force continues to meet regularly.

Heather mentioned that a teacher from Winnacunnet reached out to her and said that they have to resign by a certain date. The teacher is sending her a copy of their contract.

Deb said that Bonnie thanked the Board for her gift, and she read her thank you note.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. Public Minutes for June 17, 2021

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the Public Minutes from the June 17, 2021 meeting as amended. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

b. Non-Public Minutes for June 17, 2021

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the Non-Public Minutes from the June 17, 2021 meeting as amended. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

## **MANIFEST**

### a. Account Payable Manifest #25

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept Accounts Payable #25 dated 6/17/21 in the amount of \$230,571.48. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

### b. Account Payable Manifest #26

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept Accounts Payable #26 dated 6/30/21 in the amount of \$761,124.63. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

### c. Account Payable Manifest #1

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept Accounts Payable #1 dated 7/2/21 in the amount of \$931,020.32. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

### d. Payroll Manifest #26

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept Payroll Manifest #26 dated 6/25/21 in the amount of \$216,234.45. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

### e. Payroll Manifest #1

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept Payroll Manifest #1 dated 7/9/21 in the amount of \$125,168.62. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Parent Amy Hodgdon asked Superintendent Furbush about his upcoming goals, and she asked for an update on his last year's goals.

## **COMMENTS/OTHER**

David mentioned that he would like the Board to respond to the press every time they reach out. There was a discussion about this. Sometimes the press doesn't give the Board a large window of time to reply to them. David asked that when Deb or Superintendent Furbush reply to the press that they cc the other members of the Board so they know that the press received a reply. Deb asked if they still have a lawsuit, and Superintendent Furbush hasn't been served any papers.

## **NEXT MEETING TO BE SCHEDULED**

a. August 5, 2021 - Regular School Board Meeting

## **NONPUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3, II**

A Non-Public Meeting is **not scheduled** for July 15, 2021 following the public meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 pm.  
Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 4-0. Motion carries.**

Respectfully submitted,

Dagny Wilkins

School Board Secretary