

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 2, 2021

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

7:00 pm

Public Meeting Starting Prior to School Board Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

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

In attendance: Chair Deborah Brooks, Vice Chair David Mylott, Member Heather Clark, Member Ben Leavitt, Member Robin O'Day, Superintendent Furbush, Business Administrator Christine Vayda, Student Emily Kelly, and Student Nathan McTague.

Deborah introduced and welcomed the new student representative from the junior class, Nathan McTague.

PUBLIC MEETING

The School Board has to accept the unanticipated grant funds for COVID Relief ESSER III Grant in the amount of \$542,630.50. The money will be used during the following operating years: 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024.

Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the grant funds from the ESSER III Grant in the amount of \$542,630.50 to be used during the operating years listed above. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

The School Board also needs to approve of the transfer of the surplus from the 2020-2021 school year into the Trust Funds. They will move \$200,000 into the Capitol Building Trust Fund and \$50,000 into the Special Education Trust Fund if approved. These numbers were voted on and accepted by the public.

Member Heather Clark made a motion to approve allocating \$200,000 into the Capitol Building Trust Fund and \$50,000 into the Special Education Trust Fund

from the surplus from the 2020-2021 school year. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

David noted that they had raised the amount going into the Capitol Building Trust Fund due to the anticipation of the roof project, etc and needing more money for the projects. He was wondering if they should continue putting the same amount in or if they have any other upcoming projects. Superintendent Furbush said that they are developing the Capital Improvement Plan, and they will have upcoming projects that they need the funds for. He supports the continuation of putting \$200,000 into the Capital Reserve Fund. David thinks that it is a significant number that isn't going back to the taxpayers. Heather noted that the upcoming paving and field projects will cost a significant amount of money. There is currently \$166,000 in the fund.

The School Board needs to vote to approve the spending of surplus money from the 2020-2021 school year in the amount of \$200,000 for fund retainage in case the operating budget from the 2021-2022 school year goes into a deficit. The money will be returned to the taxpayers at the end of the 2021-2022 operating year to offset tax rates if it is not used or needed. Christine explained why this money is helpful.

Member Heather Clark made a motion to approve retaining \$200,000 in case the 2021-2022 school year goes into a deficit. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

Last year, they did the same thing and didn't need the money, so they returned it this year. Now, they are doing it again.

Member Heather Clark made a motion to adjourn the Public Meeting at 7:12 pm. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

Deborah thanked the person who gave the Board flowers.

SCHEDULED GUESTS

a. Athletic Handbook and Athletic COVID Plan - Ben Bourgoin

Ben went through the proposed changes made to the Athletic Handbook. He said they want to update the athletic eligibility for the middle school students. He went through the four updates

that will be made. Robin noted that student athletes and parents must attend a mandatory parent/player night, and she doesn't want this to negatively affect students whose parents are unable to make it to the meeting. Ben said that he keeps attendance and follows up with the parents who can't make the meeting. He is hoping to do a digital meeting in the future. She also asked about team tutoring. He said that each team has a different format for that. He explained that some teams have time before practice/games for homework.

Member Heather Clark made a motion to approve the Athletic Handbook for the 2021-2022 school year as presented. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

Ben also went through the Athletic COVID Plan. He noted that playing sports is voluntary. The NHIAA hasn't changed its stance from the spring. There are no mandates or restrictions for sports. All sports were approved to begin this season. The NH Athletic Directors were surveyed, and only two schools are requiring masks during competitions. He proposed that all athletes and athletic personnel wear masks in the buildings to match the Reopening Plan. This includes basketball and volleyball athletes during games/matches. The Task Force hasn't looked into the athletic plan. This plan is only for the fall right now, so it doesn't affect the basketball teams. Volleyball is the only indoor sport for the fall season. Masks are optional for outdoor sports. Social distancing will be maintained when possible. He encourages home screening protocols. He reiterated some of their practices from last year that they will be following again this year such as not sharing equipment and transportation. Spectators will be allowed to watch indoor and outdoor competitions this season.

When the volleyball team has away games and the away team doesn't require masks, it is up to the Epping team whether they want to wear masks. Volleyball officials will need to wear masks. David would like to give the indoor athletes the opportunity to play without masks similar to part of last year. There was a discussion about this. No other volleyball teams that they're playing are requiring masks. Ben said that he would feel comfortable with what David proposed, but he is also fine with the original proposal. Member Ben asked if masks would be a deal breaker for any athletes, and Ben doesn't think so.

Member Heather Clark made a motion to approve the Fall Athletic COVID Plan as presented allowing students to remove their masks when they cross the line to actively play the sport. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

Robert Hodgman asked if athletes were hypothetically required to wear masks whether there would be a certified trainer at matches to revive students if necessary. Ben said that there will always be a trainer at home matches, and he can't speak for other schools. He reiterated that no other schools that they'll be playing are requiring masks. Ben went through the precautions that are available at all schools.

b. Monthly Principals' Reports

Principal Cantagallo is excited to have students back in the building. The students are excited about the new food program. She said that they had the kindergarten orientation on Tuesday. She said the new traffic pattern is working well. She said all the buses were off campus by 3:21 pm the other day. She said that the pickup car line is still taking quite a bit of time. She gave a shout out to the art teacher for completing another book illustration. In October, she will give them an update on their literacy goal. Deborah was excited that the kindergarten students got to ride the bus at orientation and complemented the person who came up with that idea. David asked about student drop-off. Principal Cantagallo said that it still needs a little practice and pointed out a couple concerns. Superintendent Furbush and Principal Cantagallo thanked the bus company for their timeliness and making sure that there's enough drivers for all the routes. Principal Cantagallo said that it is still too early to tell if there are more or less students taking the bus this year.

Principal Ernest thanked everyone for a seamless start to the school year. He said that they've had to make a couple small adjustments to their traffic pattern. He said that Chromebook distributions started this week. He thanked Moss Crutchfield for the great food, and he said that food numbers are up. He thanked Joe for his work with the facilities. He said that the staff retreat for team building was a success. He mentioned some upcoming events. David followed up about the privacy issue in the ladies room, and Principal Ernest will get him an answer tomorrow.

c. Student Reports - Emily Kelly, Nathan McTague

Emily discussed what the different classes are working on. Some students have had issues scheduling classes, but the issue is being addressed. Student Government has their first meeting coming up, and they'll be planning homecoming. The election for Junior Student Government is coming up soon. Band students have been prepping for the upcoming game. Students and staff have some concerns about the limited bells. They help keep the class schedule, and without them, it has caused confusion. With the new traffic pattern, SST students have been held up waiting to get back to the building at the end of the day. Students are very appreciative of the free lunches and breakfasts this year. Nathan said that the boys are happy about the urinal dividers. David welcomed Nathan. David asked for their opinions about the new breakfasts and lunches. Emily said that she was always able to find something that she liked and enjoyed them. Heather requested that their student document gets shared with the public.

d. Draft School Board Goals

Superintendent Furbush said that he wanted to present the Draft School Board Goals to the Board this meeting, so they can make adjustments before they discuss them at the next meeting. There were no comments about them at this time.

POLICY

None

PERSONNEL

None

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS

a. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Furbush thanked the Tech Department for the early rollout of the Chromebooks. He thanked the Tech Director for the updates. He mentioned the EMHS Staff Retreat and how veteran teachers learned new things about each other. He said it was a great team building event. He also was able to participate in the elementary school literacy professional development day. He said that they've been working on Culture & Climate as well. He said that all traffic issues are being addressed. He thanked the students for their excitement and for being so positive. He said he's excited for the year.

FINANCIAL BUSINESS & DISTRICT SERVICES

a. Financial Report

Christine said that they finally wrapped up last year. She presented the MS 25 to the Board. They ended the school year with a surplus of \$1,261,815 which helped offset the tax rate. The district received about \$618,000 in COVID grants this year. They spent the grant money wisely which made it possible to have such a big surplus. David asked if she has talked to the Selectmen yet about the surplus; she hasn't yet but will. She reiterated that the surplus is due to the grant money.

Vice Chair David Mylott made a motion to approve the School Financial Report on the MS 25 as presented. Seconded by Member Heather Clark. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

b. MOU's of SELT

Superintendent Furbush discussed SELT. They are going to co develop programs with Burley Farm. He went through the different programs. This program is not new; it will just be new to Epping. There is no cost to the district. The MOU is for a three-year period. Deborah is worried about fundraising for the second and third year since it isn't guaranteed that it's free for those years. They have the right to withdraw at any time. Ben asked if all grades will eventually be able to participate. The answer is hopefully. All students will have the opportunity. For now, it will be a limited scope for the first year. Superintendent Furbush described it as nature-based play. Robin asked if SST students could use this as a volunteer opportunity. They haven't had that discussion yet. Deborah would like extra verbiage added to the contract that will allow them to discontinue services with them.

Member Heather Clark made a motion to give Superintendent Furbush permission to sign the MOU with the Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire as amended. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Non-Public Minutes of August 26, 2021

Member Ben Leavitt made a motion to approve the Non-Public Minutes from the August 26, 2021 meeting as written. Seconded by Member Heather Clark. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

MANIFEST

a. Payroll Manifest

Member Heather Clark made a motion to approve Payroll Manifest #5 September 3, 2021 in the amount of \$76.42. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

Member Heather Clark made a motion to approve Payroll Manifest #6 September 17, 2021 in the amount of \$232,751.20. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

Member Heather Clark made a motion to approve Payroll Manifest #7 October 1, 2021 in the amount of \$74,172.21. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

Member Heather Clark made a motion to approve Payroll Manifest #8 October 16, 2021 in the amount of \$259,502.78. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

John Scully asked for Deborah to repeat the surplus amount. He would like the list of those who were present for the Task Force vote. He would like their addresses. He will not be given their addresses. There was a discussion about this. The purpose of a person stating their address when they speak at a meeting is to verify that they're an Epping resident. He doesn't think that teachers who don't live in town should be able to affect town politics. Superintendent Furbush respectfully disagreed with him.

A person tried speaking on behalf of Brittany McNamara about an America's Frontline Doctors article. It is not allowed for people to talk on behalf of others at Board meetings.

COMMENTS/OTHER

David clarified that initially people were turned away from the Task Force because there was a lot of interest. They wanted to ensure that they would have a functioning committee. They made sure that they had a mixture of people. Minutes are being taken for the Task Force meetings. They will start posting these minutes. He is happy with the feedback he has been hearing about the first week of school. He welcomed everyone back and wished everyone a great year.

Heather said that the Elementary School PTO has a meeting this coming Tuesday. The Middle/High PTO has a meeting on 9/14. This information will be sent out in the weekly newsletter. The football team has their first home game coming up. The volleyball team has their first game coming up as well. The cross-country team had their first meet, and the soccer teams had their first games. She also mentioned that Policy GBB states that teachers have the right to express their opinions. Heather summarized the policy.

Ben mentioned the upcoming community event through the PTO.

Deborah asked about quarantining. Superintendent Furbush explained DHHS's new recommendation.

NEXT MEETING TO BE SCHEDULED

a. September 16, 2021 - Regular School Board Meeting.

NONPUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3, II

A Non-Public Meeting **is scheduled** for September 2, 2021 following the public meeting. (a. Personnel - personnel update).

ADJOURNMENT

Member Heather Clark made a motion to enter a Non-Public Meeting and to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 pm. Seconded by Member Robin O'Day. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,

Dagny Wilkins

School Board Secretary