

RSU #63 Board Meeting
Date: March 28, 2022
Location: Holden Elementary School
Minutes

RSU 63 Board Member(s) Present:

Town of Holden: Matthew Campbell, Cherie Faulkner, Tracy Roberts, and Holly Whitmore

Town of Clifton: Linda Graban

Town of Eddington: Robin James, Tracy Bigney, and Jaime Pangburn

Board Chair, Holly Whitmore called the meeting to order at 6:30pm

A flag salute was conducted and a moment of silence was observed.

Holly Whitmore read opening remarks regarding public comment guidelines.

Motion by Tracy Bigney with a second by Robin James to approve the February 28, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes.

Discussion: None

Vote: 8 Approved; 0 Opposed

Recognition and/or Awards of Students, Staff, and Others: Superintendent Smith recognized School Counselors Janet Nichols and Ebonie Baker, as well as William “Pops” Mangum. They support our students’ social and emotional learning and health, provide lessons, and connect families to outside resources. Superintendent Smith congratulated George Cummings, Technology Coordinator, for becoming certified as a Chrome Book repair person.

Acceptance of Gifts/Donations: Superintendent Smith announced Brandy Walsh and the Holbrook School was awarded a grant from ReTree Us for a fruit tree orchard.

Presentation: Returning to Pre-COVID Procedures

Superintendent Smith advised the plan for safe return to school has been posted on the website as required by the grant funding we receive. She gave an update on how the return to pre-covid procedures is going. Much of the discussion focused on end-of-day parent pick-up.

Pick-up and Drop-off: Superintendent Smith advised, due to safety, Holbrook Middle School will not be reverting back to the pre-COVID traffic pattern. Morning drop-off will remain the same at all schools. Proposed pick-up changes at Holden and Eddington include parents entering the school, signing in and waiting in the gymnasium. Staff will join the student with the appropriate adult and then exit them through the side gym door where they will walk around the building to return to their vehicle in the parking lot. Superintendent Smith added there have been concerns raised regarding parents entering the school and others who are not happy about unpacking their younger children from the vehicle and going into the school to pick-up their students. Don Spencer, Holden and Eddington Principal stated many parents have shared their concerns with him regarding the Board’s decision to change the pick-up procedures. They like the way it is, because it works. Mr. Spencer added that he checked with area schools on their pick-up procedures. They all have curb-side pick-up. Heather Kiley, Holden Elementary School Secretary shared her concerns with parents congregating in the lobby, causing a blockage to the exit, disruption of instruction time for Grade 2, and lack of phone call privacy in the main office. She stated she has received many calls from parents who are unhappy with the change, they want to leave the pick-up the way it is. Matthew Campbell thanked Ms. Kiley for the information. He said he has only heard from a few people and it was the complete opposite of what she is saying. Mr. Spencer added that he could add an additional line to help get traffic off the road. Jaime Pangburn asked what the major concern was with pick-up at Holden. Mr. Spencer stated the big trucks not slowing down and traffic backed up waiting to turn left into Holden. Superintendent Smith asked if the Boards biggest concern was the traffic backed up on 1A. They confirmed. Linda Graban added her other concern is the fire department getting through the traffic in an emergency. Mr. Spencer stated they recently had that situation and the fire department had no trouble getting through. Ms. Graban stated it was utter chaos. Mr. Spencer disagreed and said the fire department had no issue at all. Heather Kiley voiced her concern for a bigger safety issue with having the students walking around the building and through the parking lots to get to their vehicles. Linda Graban agreed that is an issue, she would like to have the traffic go behind the building and change where staff park.

Motion by Matthew Campbell with a second by Robin James to continue pick-up at Holden and Eddington the way it is for the rest of the school year to buy time to address safety concerns.

Discussion: Superintendent Smith recommended surveying parents. Jaime Pangburn would like to know what the fire department and police department think. Superintendent Smith and Don Spencer have both talked with both

departments and they both agreed to keep traffic patterns the way they are. Tracy Bigney would like to hear more from administrators. Linda Graban asked for a public meeting for discussion. Superintendent Smith advised there is limited time with budget and negotiations. Tracy Roberts would like to see a motion with a solution to the traffic problem on 1A.

Motion revised by Matthew Campbell with a second by Robin James to continue afternoon pick-up at Eddington and Holbrook the way that it is currently, through the end of the school year.

Discussion: Cherie Faulkner stated the traffic at Holbrook is a problem too. Ashley Allen stated right now traffic at Holbrook is the best it has ever been and if we change it back to how it used to be, traffic will be backed up more than it is now and create an even bigger safety issue. Superintendent Smith stated the problem is that we have three schools built on very busy traffic roads. Studies have been done in the past. Maine Department of Transportation has done surveys, and recently UMaine students conducted the Capstone Project and found traffic is being handled the way it should be. Linda Graban stated before COVID she did not believe there was ever a problem with traffic backing up onto the roads at any of the schools. Many disagreed.

Vote: 6 Approved; 2 Opposed (Linda Graban and Cherie Faulkner)

Holly Whitmore, Board Chair announced the motion passed.

Superintendent Smith stated she gathered from the conversation, the Board would like to keep the pick-up at Holden the way that it is right now and look at ways to pull more vehicles off of 1A. Tracy Roberts stated she wanted it more than looked at. Linda Graban suggested that traffic go to the back of Holden.

Motion by Matthew Campbell with a second by Robin James to continue current pick-up process in Holden with additional effort to eliminate standing traffic on 1A through end of the year.

Discussion: None

Vote: 6 Approved; 2 Opposed (Linda Graban and Cherie Faulkner)

Holly Whitmore, Board Chair announced the motion passed.

Questions from the Public: Tom Copeland, Holden Resident and Holden Town Council Member urged the Board to be cautious during the budget process. He realizes inflation is affecting everything, but asked to the Board to be mindful of increasing the budget.

Dates of Next Meetings:

Policy Committee Meeting: Monday, April 4, 2022 at 5:30pm, Holbrook Middle School

FY23 Budget Workshop: Tuesday, April 5, 2022 at 5:30pm, Holbrook Middle School

Budget and Finance Committee Meeting: Tuesday, April 12, 2022 at 5:00pm, Holbrook Middle School

FY23 Budget Workshop: Tuesday, April 12, 2022 at 5:30pm, Holbrook Middle School

FY23 Budget Informational Meeting: Monday, April 25, 2022 at 6:00pm, Holden Elementary School

Board Meeting: Monday, April 25, 2022 at 6:30pm, Holden Elementary School

Budget and Finance: Kelly Theriault added the budget process is well underway and they are working hard to keep a zero impact to towns. She advised the Holden Generator Project had an unexpected change that will be discussed later in the agenda. Cherie Faulkner had nothing to add to Budget and Finance Committee.

Superintendent's Report: Nothing to add.

RSU #63 Chair's Report: Holly Whitmore apologized for not having a report this month.

Acceptance of Reports: Motion by Matthew Campbell with a second by Cherie Faulkner to approve the written and verbal reports from Budget and Finance Committee, Policy Committee, Administrators, and Superintendent.

Discussion: Tracy Bigney asked how the current legislation regarding the transition of responsibility of CDS students to public schools will affect RSU 63. Superintendent Smith stated she was not sure where in the legislative process the bill was right now, but she would look into it.

Vote: 8 Approved; 0 Opposed

Old Business:

Strategic Planning Meeting: Superintendent Smith advised the meeting with Judy Enright is scheduled for Thursday, April 28, 2022 at 5:30pm. Ms. Enright will join remotely. Superintendent Smith reminded the Board to be thinking about setting a chair or co-chair for the Strategic Planning Committee as it get underway from this fiscal year into the next fiscal year.

New Business:

June 2022 Board Meeting Date Change: Superintendent Smith advised the June 19, 2022 (Juneteenth) federal holiday falls on Sunday and will be observed on Monday, June 20, 2022. The Board meeting scheduled for June 20, 2022 will need to be changed. She recommended changing the date to Tuesday, June 21, 2022.

Motion by Matthew Campbell with a second by Cherie Faulkner to change the Board meeting scheduled for Monday, June 20, 2022 to Tuesday, June 21, 2022 due to the Juneteenth federal holiday.

Discussion: None

Vote: 8 Approved; 0 Opposed

Holbrook Indoor Air Quality Bids: Superintendent Smith advised Randy Bragg recommended to extend the bid due date to April 7, 2022 to allow more time for bidders to submit their proposal. This falls in line with bringing the information to the April 12, 2022 Budget and Finance Committee and an anticipated recommendation to the Board on April 25, 2022. Superintendent Smith will notify the state of the extension.

Holden Indoor Air Quality and Generator – Main Distribution Panel Proposed Change: The proposed change has a hefty price tag. Superintendent Smith advised the Main Distribution Panel was not up to code because it was not grounded. Before they could connect the generator to that panel, it would need to be grounded. Tracy Roberts asked how did we not know there was a problem. Superintendent Smith stated Randy Bragg's answer (from Carpenter Associates) was that they wrongly assumed when it was put in around 2007-2009, that it was grounded. Ms. Faulkner stated Carpenter Associates was responsible, because this was not a little oversight, it was a lot of money and we should not have to absorb this cost. Tracy Roberts asked Superintendent Smith to explain the process and problem. Superintendent Smith reviewed the overall process leading up to the proposed change and advised she would get the cost of the process and more details about the project to the Board.

Policies to Approve: Robin James gave a brief overview of policies for approval. Policy BCC – Nepotism; policy BHC – Board Communication and Relationships with Staff; policy IJOA – Field and Class Trips; policy IL – Evaluation of Instructional Programs.

Motion by Robin James with a second by Cherie Faulkner to approve policy BCC – Nepotism, policy BHC – Board Communication and Relationships with Staff, policy IJOA – Field and Class Trips, and policy IL – Evaluation of Instructional Programs.

Discussion: Tracy Bigney recommended changing “restricts” to “restrictions” in policy BCC section IV.1.D. and V.1.A. The Board agreed.

Vote: 8 Approved; 0 Opposed

Policy Recommended to Rescind: Robin James advised policy DBA – Budget Systems is not a required policy nor a policy recommended by Maine School Management Association (MSMA). Kelly Theriault reviewed the policy and agreed this policy is not necessary as the District follows the required cost centers law.

Motion by Robin James with a second by Jaime Pangburn to rescind policy DBA – Budget Systems.

Discussion: None

Vote: 8 Approved; 0 Opposed

Personnel Actions:

Appointments: Gracy Malm – Ed Tech III Holden Math Support, John Kelley – Substitute Bus Driver, Amber Clement – Substitute, Darrell Pluard – Softball A Coach, Teighan Colson – Substitute, Erin McDonald – Track and Field Club, Desiree Doughty and Nathan Dusablon – Hiking Club, Ashley Hutchins and Carigan Allie – After School Coordinators, Stephenie Soucy – Substitute, Teresa England – Substitute, and Harry Hayes – Substitute.

Resignations: Gayle Middleton – Technology Integrator, Patricia Philbrook – Bus Driver, and Susan M. Smith, Superintendent/Director of Curriculum and Instruction. Superintendent Smith read a public statement (*Attachment A*).

At 7:58pm, Motion by Matthew Campbell with a second by Tracy Bigney to enter into Executive Session for discussion of employment pursuant to 1 MRSA section 405(6)(A).

Roll Call: Cherie Faulkner: Yes; Matthew Campbell: Yes; Robin James: Yes; Linda Graban: Yes; Tracy Roberts: Yes; Tracy Bigney: Yes; Jaime Pangburn: Yes; Holly Whitmore: Yes

Vote: 8 Approved; 0 Opposed

Public session resumed at 8:10pm.

Motion by Robin James with a second by Tracy Bigney to accept the resignation of Superintendent Susan Smith, effective May 27, 2022 with details to be worked out during an Executive Session on April 4, 2022.

Discussion: None

Vote: **8 Approved; 0 Opposed**

Superintendent Smith stated the meeting on April 4, 2022 will have an executive session and a presentation by Steve Bailey from Maine School Management Association (MSMA).

Reassignment: None

Elections: None

Searches: Long Term Occupational Therapist Substitute, Technology Support Specialist, and Substitutes.

Questions and Comments from the Public: None

Adjournment:

Holly directed the Board to their board binders for reflection.

At 8:20pm, motion by Matthew Campbell with a second by Cherie Faulkner to adjourn the meeting.

Discussion: None

Vote: **8 Approved; 0 Opposed**

Respectfully submitted by,



Susan M. Smith

RSU #63 Superintendent/Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Approved: April 25, 2022

Attachment A

I am proud of the RSU 63 staff. As Superintendent, I see and hear a lot of what they do.

Over the past two years the RSU 63 staff

- have learned new technology.
- boxed and bagged thousands of meals, worked together to deliver those meals to many smiling faces and to a heated warning (don't come on my property again, I have a shotgun).
- They took care of more than 26 students who were so depressed they were considering suicide.
- They went outside to greet students rain and shine, when it was 90° and when it was 10° below zero. They made sure the kids got safely in the schools, on the buses, and into the right cars.
- They kept their eyes open and reported to me when the person with schizophrenia was on our grounds and when a student got into a vehicle with an unsafe driver.
- They wore masks and reminded students and each other to mask up, hoods down, use hand sanitizer, stay apart, be safe.
- They helped our students process the January 6th riot on the Capitol building, the Black Lives Matter protest, their fear of Covid, deaths of parents, and the incarceration of other parents.
- They moved furniture from one place to another and back again countless times.
- They made hundreds of difficult phone calls to keep parents and staff informed about Covid.
- They transported homeless students from various locations in Bangor and Brewer so the students could have a stable education.
- They taught the multiplication tables and quadratic equations, how to read, write, and reason.
- They incorporated many outdoor education activities into the school day and provided after school support, sports and other physical activities (Hiking Club, Backyard Games, Ultimate Frisbee) as well as enrichment and engagement opportunities (such as Minecraft and American Sign Language).
- They modeled the RSU 63 core values and recognized students when they exhibited kindness, compassion, courage, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

These good people have worked tirelessly to educate our children, implement health and safety protocols, and follow more than 200 school board policies. They do these things because they care deeply about our students. It has been an honor to work with them over the past 10 years and I thank them for their dedication and service to our communities. Thank you.

However, it has become clear to me that, at this time, the District needs a different Superintendent. I have provided the RSU 63 Board of Directors 60 days notice and have let the Board know of my decision to resign, effective May 27th. I want you to know I am taking this action because I truly hope it will help the students and staff of RSU 63 have continued success. I look forward to working together over the next few months towards a smooth transition for the District.