

Wakefield School Board

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

6 p.m. – Meeting held remotely via Zoom

With public access provided at the Paul School Library and videotaped in a live feed

Minutes – Approved

Present: Chair Bob Ouellette, Vice Chair Tracey Kolb, Members Sandy Johnson, Relf Fogg, and Mary Collins; Superintendent Jerry Gregoire, Business Administrator Marie D’Agostino, Student Services Director Anne Kebler, Facilities Manager Joe Williams, Assistant Principal Jenn Spector, Clearview videographer Ted Taylor, Administrative Assistant Larissa Mulkern

Roll call attendance: Ouellette, aye, Kolb, aye, Johnson, aye, Fogg, aye, Collins, aye

Call to Order: Mr. Ouellette called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda: Mrs. Kolb made a motion to approve the consent agenda [accounts payable and payroll manifests] seconded by Mrs. Johnson; members roll call vote [4-1]; Ouellette, aye, Kolb, aye, Johnson, aye, Collins, aye, Fogg, nay.

Minutes: Mr. Fogg made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 3 with any amendments offered, seconded by Mrs. Kolb; Roll call vote 4-0-1, Ouellette, aye, Kolb, aye, Johnson, aye, Fogg, aye, Collins, abstain. Mr. Fogg made a motion to approve the minutes of March 23 with any amendments offered, seconded by Mrs. Kolb; Roll call vote 5-0; Ouellette, aye, Kolb, aye, Fogg, aye, Johnson, aye, and Collins, aye.

Old Business

Update of remote learning during COVID 19: Mr. Gregoire provided an overview of remote learning during these unprecedented times; things are evolving quickly at times. There’s no rule book to follow. There’s very little research; there are a few documents from reputable educational programs and the district is following some of those guidelines. The idea is not to do harm to students and to make sure everything we do is in their best interests. We don’t want to put any student at a disadvantage, as there are households where parents are able to be at home with the children and other households where the parents or caregivers cannot be there. The goal is not to give the students too much or too little; to have teachers teach, with paraprofessionals providing support. Discussion ensued regarding the hours per day students are spending; Mr. Gregoire noted it varies from 90-270 minutes. Pre-K students, 20-60 minutes per day of instruction; it’s not the amount of work they are getting but the amount of instruction from their teacher. Kindergarten: 30-90 minutes; Grades 1-2, 45-90 minutes; Grades 3-5, 60 minutes to 120 minutes and grades 6-8, 15-30minutes per class but 90-270 minutes at the outset for total for the day. The fifth day will be for enrichment or remediation, where students get more who want more – some kids are buzzing through the work – and some kids don’t have that support and we want to help through remediation. Mr. Lampron and Mrs. Spector discussed their interactions with grade level teams and the timing of assignments. They are trying to give students every opportunity to finish what they started. Mrs. Kebler added that the Guidance Counselor and the Social Worker set up a Student Services Google Classroom, one for children, one for teachers and one for parents. She and the School Nurse are involved. We’re getting good information from the meetings. Mrs. Kebler said her role is to make sure we’re ready when they come back. Another thing she’ll be doing is surveying teachers, parents and student to get an understanding of where they are in terms of social emotional health.

Mrs. Kolb said we're in an unusual situation. She has heard positive things about what the school is doing; this is a work in progress, but she wanted to thank you all.

Mr. Gregoire said on a positive note, a parent, Amber Gilmore, made 60 re-usable masks for staff. This was a very thoughtful caring thing to do. We appreciate her efforts.

Teachers Contract – Plan A: Mr. Ouellette said this is something Mr. Fogg brought up at last meeting. He did some homework and learned that the board can petition the courts – it can take 90 days or much longer – to give step increases to teachers, if the board wanted to go this route. The attorney opined that given the town being frugal and board may get push back from the community and Budget Committee. Mr. Fogg said his intent is not to issue bonuses, but to follow the contract as written; if the teachers union was a willing party and if two sides agreed in substance, it would be unnecessary to go to court. Two parties willfully, without coercion, could agree to do a certain thing. Mr. Fogg said it would take \$46,000 to accomplish the step increases. Mrs. Johnson said the contract Mr. Fogg is referring to expired on June 30, 2010; she gathers from the attorney's letter that they need to have a conversation with the teacher's union; she also asked if we have the money to give the increases, as Mr. Fogg stated. Mrs. D'Agostino said we seem to all be interpreting the attorney's letter differently and that perhaps we should meet with the attorney present or Zoom in. At this point she cannot say what funds we'll end the year with and will not be able to do so until the audit is completed. The audit is scheduled for the second week in August 2020. She provides monthly financial reports. She suggested having an attorney speak to what we can or can't to, so our interpretation is on the same page. Members discussed this topic at length. Mr. Ouellette said the board could petition the court but that would be against what the community voted. Mrs. Kolb said the budget committee didn't ask a single question about the teacher's contract and mistakenly thought the teachers got a raise this year, when they did not get a raise. Plus, not every teacher gets step increases. We don't have enough information to move forward tonight. Mr. Fogg asked the chair to revisit this topic prior to the first meeting in June, but Mrs. Kolb and Mrs. Johnson said they wanted to move on. Mr. Fogg made a motion to grant step increases and longevity increases this year to teachers; the motion failed for lack of second. Mr. Fogg wants to revisit this in June; members will have new assignments for subcommittees; he believes monies are in the budget. Mrs. D'Agostino asked what is her homework, what information is expected from her? Mr. Fogg said she does a good service by providing the numbers in the monthly reports, and that there are no special tasks at this time. Mrs. D'Agostino clarified that the district does not move money from one line to another – it's a bottom-line budget.

New Business

Kindergarten Registrations: Mr. Lampron said typically they meet the first week of May. They created a pre-registration form to get an approximate number of students and names. Last year they had 40 plus student, then gained another 20 during the summer. Members discussed planning and timing for Kindergarten student registration and evaluations. Mrs. Kebler advocated doing screenings in the fall and Mrs. Johnson agreed.

School Calendar 2020-2021: Mr. Gregoire reviewed a revision to the start of the school year, whereby contract Sept. 4 is a no school day. The change does not change the bottom line.

Motion: Mrs. Kolb made a motion seconded by Mrs. Johnson to accept the revised school year calendar 2020-2021; members voted roll call 5-0: Ouellette, aye, Kolb, aye, Johnson, aye, Collins, aye, Fogg, aye.

Other Business

Washington, D.C. and Camp Calumet Trips: Mr. Gregoire said we're preparing to send parents a letter cancelling the trips even if we went back to school and Mr. Kearns is in the process of getting the deposit money back to refund parents. It needs to be decided what happens to the funds, whether they go to the high school or an activity. There will be some discussions about that.

Bids: Windows Replacement, and Asbestos Removal: Mr. Williams noted the email with the bid checklists were sent out earlier today. Bids were opened during a meeting with Mr. Gregoire, Mr. Williams, Mrs. D'Agostino and Ms. Mulkern at the SAU office. The one bid for the windows project was from Portland Glass for \$367,500. Two bids were received for asbestos removal: Accolade for \$7,800, and DecTam for \$14,626. Details of the bids, including exclusions, guarantees and trust fund balances, were discussed.

Motion: Mr. Fogg made a motion to accept the bid from Portland Glass for \$367,500 to do the window replacement; Mrs. Kolb seconded the motion. Members voted, roll call vote 5-0; Ouellette, aye, Kolb, aye, Johnson, aye, Collins, aye, Fogg, aye.

Motion: Mr. Fogg made a motion to award the asbestos removal job to Accolade for \$7,800; seconded by Mrs. Kolb. Members voted all in favor, roll call 5-0: Ouellette, aye, Kolb, aye, Johnson, aye, Collins, aye, Fogg, aye.

Mrs. D'Agostino said no money will be expended until after the public hearing on April 21.

April Vacation: Mr. Gregoire said whether to forego the April vacation is up to the school board. He said a poll was conducted and 76 percent asked to work through April vacation towards an early end to the school year. The Rochester School District will make its decision on April 9 but is considering an end of school date of May 15. Mr. Gregoire was thinking of June 5, a Friday, as an end date for Wakefield. He thinks May 15 is too early. Discussion ensued.

Motion: Mrs. Kolb made a motion seconded by Mrs. Johnson for remote learning to continue through April vacation. Members voted 5-0, roll call: Ouellette, aye, Kolb, aye, Johnson, aye, Collins, aye, Fogg, aye.

Resignations: Board members were notified of the resignations of fifth grade teacher Emily Stevens; a motion was made and seconded to accept the resignation with regret. Members voted 5-0, roll call: Ouellette, aye, Kolb, aye, Johnson, aye, Collins, aye, Fogg, aye.

Board members were notified of the resignation of music teacher Trevor Frost. A motion was made and seconded to accept the resignation with regret. Members voted 5-0, roll call: Ouellette, aye, Kolb, aye, Johnson, aye, Collins, aye, Fogg, aye.

Textbook drop off: Mrs. Collins said parents were wondering if they could return books, perhaps at drop box or something. Mr. Lampson said he prefers the books are kept at home until we're through the pandemic to minimize traffic to and from the school for everybody's sake.

Purchases:

Motion: Mr. Fogg made a motion to approve the expenditure of \$267.54 in cleaning supplies, seconded by Mrs. Collins. Members voted 5-0, roll call: Ouellette, aye, Kolb, aye, Johnson, aye, Collins, aye, Fogg, aye.

Motion: Mr. Fogg made a motion seconded by Mrs. Collins to approve the expenditure of up to \$100 for office supplies. Members voted 5-0, roll call: Ouellette, aye, Kolb, aye, Johnson, aye, Collins, aye, Fogg, aye.

Motion: Mr. Fogg made a motion seconded by Mrs. Johnson to approve the expenditure of up to \$100 for an outdoor security drop box for the SAU office. Members voted 5-0, roll call: Ouellette, aye, Kolb, aye, Johnson, aye, Collins, aye, Fogg, aye.

Motion: Mrs. Kolb made a motion seconded by Mrs. Johnson to approve spending \$72 for a subscription for middle school staff members for Go Formative. Members voted 5-0, roll call: Ouellette, aye, Kolb, aye, Johnson, aye, Collins, aye, Fogg, aye.

Mr. Ouellette thanked the teachers, staff and board members for their hard work during this crisis.

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and passed all in favor at 7:39 p.m.. Members voted 5-0, roll call: Ouellette, aye, Kolb, aye, Johnson, aye, Collins, aye, Fogg, aye.

Respectfully submitted:
Larissa Mulkern
Administrative Assistant