

Wakefield School Board  
**EMERGENCY MEETING**  
Covid-19 & Remote Learning  
12-9-20 Public Minutes  
Held in the Multi-Purpose Room and via Zoom  
APPROVED

In attendance:

Board: Relf Fogg, Mary Collins, Lino Avellani and Bob Ouellette via Zoom

Administration: Superintendent Jerry Gregoire, Business Administrator Marie D'Agostino, Student Services Director, Anne Kebler, Principal James Lampron, Assistant Principal Jenn Spector, Facilities Director Joe Williams. Transportation Director Brennan Peaslee

Public: Parents and community members via Zoom  
Jim Miller, Clearview TV

**Call to Order**

Mr. Ouellette called the meeting to order at 6:05 and led those present in person and on zoom in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Gregoire announced that this is an emergency meeting that does not require the typical notice. He contacted all School Board members individually late morning by phone to inform them that we have multiple cases of Covid-19 in the building. The entire office staff has either been diagnosed or were in close contact which would require them to be quarantined for up to ten days. He said we can not run the school without having an office staff. Other staff have also currently been diagnosed with Covid-19. He felt it necessary to close the school until January 4<sup>th</sup>. He said multiple students have also been diagnosed. And they don't want to have this spread among the rest of the school.

Mr. Fogg asked if this was based on a recommendation from DHHS. Mr. Gregoire replied that DHHS isn't going to recommend that we go to remote learning. They agreed with his description of the issue. Mrs. Collins asked when the students will begin remote learning as those who have been in the building learning will need to get all their equipment. The teachers will come in tomorrow to prepare and Friday to distribute the technology equipment. Mr. Avellani asked why the technology wasn't sent home today if a decision had already been made. Mr. Gregoire said he did not want to create a panic amongst students by sending out technology before their parents had a chance to speak with them. Mr. Avellani asked why there wasn't enhanced screening after the holiday? Mr. Gregoire responded if Mr. Avellani means taking temperatures, that has been proven to be ineffective. Mr. Fogg wanted to know whose decision that was and Mr. Gregoire said that was a discussion that took place during the reopening plan discussions. Mrs. Collins asked if all the parents of students that have been around those who were diagnosed have been contacted? Mr. Gregoire said that has been started and parents and teachers also will be contacted. Mr. Fogg asked about the parents who will not be able to go to work to earn a living

and how we will be able to help them. Mr. Gregoire said he doesn't know but right now his focus has to be the safety and security of the building. Mr. Fogg asked if Mr. Gregoire thinks the economic stress that is being created affects the children. He said he's well aware and he was the one that made that recommendation that we come back to school face to face because of these issues with parents. He did that because of concerns and he still has concerns but he has multiple concerns now. Mrs. Collins wanted to reemphasize that everyone at school is wearing masks and the cleaning crews have been continuously cleaning and cleaning. Mr. Gregoire commended the staff for all they have done to ensure that they have been able to be face to face this long. There are schools that haven't even started face to face. He said at times we have been hanging on by a thread when staff have been out and no subs were available. Mrs. Collins said we have taken all the precautions and this still happens.

Mr. Ouellette asked if there were plans for reentry. Mr. Gregoire said that he hopes to come back after the break on January 4<sup>th</sup> and a date should be set to reevaluate that at the meeting on December 29<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Fogg asked Mr. Gregoire what the time periods for this virus are. Mr. Gregoire answered forty eight to seventy two hours prior to the onset of symptoms you're considered contagious. One case we had, the person hadn't been in the building less than seventy two hours so we didn't have to contact trace that. The ones we became aware of today will have to be contact traced. Once you're diagnosed it's ten days after a set of symptoms it's ten days you're allowed to come out of quarantine. And those who were in close contact could be ten to fourteen days after contact. If you have multiple people in your house that are diagnosed at different times this could drag out for a month or more.

Mr. Fogg asked the chair to place a non public on this agenda for the end of the meeting under 91-A:3 ll (c) . Mrs. Colbath asked if you can have a non public in an emergency meeting. Mr. Gregoire questioned that as well. This discussion will be held in non public on December 15<sup>th</sup> at their regular meeting. Mr. Lampron said pick up for materials and equipment is scheduled for Friday from 1:30 to 6:30. Mrs. Spector explained that the parent drives up and tells them what they need, paperwork or technology. These items are put out on a table and the parent picks it up. There is no contact. The machines are continually sanitized but will be wiped down prior to pick up. Mrs. Collins asked if the students that need face to face services still be coming to the school for those services? Mr. Gregoire said, as we can. Mrs. Kebler said three of her staff people in Special Ed will need to be quarantined. Each student will be looked at on an individual basis and those services can be made up for those eight days. Mrs. Kebler said there is an executive order that takes in the needs of the child and the situation. Mr. Fogg asked if we are setting up a furlough plan for employees that aren't putting in hours? Mr. Gregoire suggested they follow the same plan as they did in the last remote learning.

## **Adjournment**

**Mr. Avellani made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ouellette, to adjourn the meeting at 6:31.**

**Roll call: Collins aye, Ouellette aye, Fogg nay, Avellani nay. (Vote 2-2)**

Mr. Fogg said these people may be parents and employees and we should give them an opportunity to speak to this issue. Mr. Ouellette said he's not sure public comment should take place during an emergency meeting. Mr. Gregoire said it's the will of the Board. The chair allowed the public to comment.

## **Public Comment**

Mrs. Joy questioned that one person not working was told to use their vacation time and bus drivers doing nothing will get paid. She said there has to be consistency. Mr. Gregoire will look into this. Parents and community members asked questions and made comments. The rest of the conversation was about personnel and how they would get paid.

**Mrs. Collins made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ouellette, to make a list of those bus drivers who wish to get furloughed.**

Mrs. Colbath said, I don't know how you're doing this in an emergency meeting. Mr. Gregoire said he doesn't think it's inappropriate to discuss because it has a direct relationship to the emergency. Mrs. Colbath said, and you can make these kinds of motions and seconds? Mr. Gregoire said it's not prevented in an emergency. Mrs. Colbath said just trying to keep you out of trouble. Mrs. D'Agostino said if we furlough an employee and we have work for them unemployment is going to call us and ask if we have work, even if it's an hour a day and if an employee denies the work they won't be offered unemployment. She said Primex is their unemployment provider and they go by the document provided by Primex. Mr. Avellani would like to see that document and the entire policy. Mr. Avellani then asked if Primex is a private company that provides our unemployment insurance? Mrs. D'Agostino said we contract with Primex they comply with the state laws. He asked if the employees would be paid through Primex or the State of New Hampshire. Mrs. D'Agostino answered Primex. There has been no money paid out for unemployment.

Mrs. Robbins offered some suggestions that they use in her school. Mr. Avellani suggested the district reach out to the unemployment agency and get the ball rolling so they can receive their benefits in a timely manner. The benefits have been extended and the waiting period lowered and should be utilized in this time for these unplanned layoffs. Mr. Fogg called for a needs assessment. Mrs. Peaslee said the food deliveries entail one bus three hours a day, three days a week. Mrs. Peaslee said she already has what will be available starting tomorrow for hours. Currently there are four routes available and they are not their contracted hours.

**Roll call: Collins aye, Ouellette aye, Fogg nay, Avellani nay. (Vote 2-2)**

Mr. Avellani asked if all hourly employees will be offered a layoff until a date certain to return? Mr. Gregoire said most of the rest of the hourly employees will be providing services remotely.

## **Adjournment**

**Mr. Avellani made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ouellette, to adjourn the meeting at 7:06.**

**Roll call: Collins aye, Ouellette aye, Fogg aye, Avellani aye. (Vote 4-0)**

Respectfully submitted for approval at the next School Board meeting.

Priscilla Colbath

Secretary Pro Temp

