

## WAKEFIELD SCHOOL BOARD

6-15-21 Public Minutes

Held in the library

Approved

In attendance:

Board: Bob Ouellette, Relf Fogg, Mary Collins, Sheena Robbins, and Caitlin Gelinas

Administration: Superintendent Jerry Gregoire, Financial Manager Michael O'Neill vis zoom, Principal James Lampron, Assistant Principal Jenn Spector.

Others present: Facilities Manager Joe Williams, teacher Cara McNevich, Stacey Dubreuil, Kelly Bushman, Doug Soares and Renee Gagne

Mr. Ouellette called the meeting to order at 6:02. Those present joined in the flag salute.

### **Presentations**

#### Technology Committee Presentation

Teacher Cara McNevich from the Tech Task Force told the Board that the network was not up to the job and that teachers were not able to get their entire classrooms on the internet at the same time and had to deal with continual freezing. This is because of the lack of network capability. She said the freezing occurs even when the network is supposed to be working fine. Right now, teachers are unable to use projectors, document cameras and touch boards. The FCC has offered 7.1 billion dollars in grants for devices and access. She said this would cover chrombooks for each student and they would be able to take this computer home at night to do their homework. This also covers headphones and extra chargers and the hotspots and the cost of the hotspots. Mr. Fogg asked why the problem exists when we were told we had the very best? Mr. Gregoire said we can accommodate all our devices but the bandwidth is not up to speed. He said the bandwidth will be increased in July at a cost of \$199 a month. It will not cover internet upgrades such as airports. The Task Force would like Board permission to pursue this grant which opens in a couple of weeks and is open for 45 days. Mrs. McNevich said they are looking at GoGuardian which helps schools manage their devices. It's a monitoring program that keeps students safer. The program has a five year warranty and they provide training. She is asking for around \$165,816 to come from the ESSER funds. She also said that the grant will not cover work onsite as this is more for homework capability. Mr. Gregoire said they are waiting for money to come from the ESSER funds and suggests she come back to the Board with a firm number. The district is expecting \$729,000 from ESSER.

**Mrs. Gelinas made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Collins for the Tech Tack Force to apply for the FCC Grant. (Vote 5-0)**

Mrs. Robbins reiterated her desire to have a written vision for the use of technology at Paul School.

### **Public Comment**

None

### **Consent Agenda**

**Mrs. Robbins made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Gelinas, to approve the Consent Agenda. (Vote 3-2)**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Collins, to approve the public minutes of 6-1-21 with any amendments offered. (Vote 5-0)**

By consensus, the Board tables the non public minutes, session 1&2 until non public.

## **Reports**

### Business Administrators Report

Mr. O'Neill said that currently there is a remaining balance in the budget of \$463,330.80 which takes into account any payroll that will be paid out during the summer and items that have been received. He asked the Board if they wanted to encumber the \$56,000 for the SAU software upgrade that has been in the budget for three years. After some discussion it was decided that it was too late to have this done now and so they will put it in the 2023 budget during budget season.

## **New Business**

### Shade Project (and other items added to the agenda)

Mr. Williams said both companies for the fire panel did honor their quotes. BK systems is a notifier specific company. We currently have a BK system in the building. He said he talked it over with the Facilities Committee and would like to recommend going with BK Systems.

**Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Collins, to award the bid to BK Systems as recommended by our Facilities Manager for \$34,975. (Vote 5-0)**

Mr. Williams sent out an RFP for the steel door project and another for the aluminum door project and only received one bid and that was for the aluminum door project. The total for the aluminum doors, glass and framing is \$39,100. He said there is \$75,000 currently in a Trust Fund and there was a warrant article that passed in March for \$20,000 this money was to do both these projects. He recommends moving forward with the aluminum door project and putting the steel door project back out to bid. If the bids come back higher than the amount left in the Trust fund that project may have to be postponed. The cost for changing out the locks will be from taken the Operations and Maintenance function in the operating budget.

**Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Robbins, to approve \$39,100 for Portland Glass to do the aluminum door project. (Vote 5-0)**

Mr. Williams told the Board that the conditions of the ramp and handrails going to the modular are in rough shape. The wood has to stained and the handrails replaced. It's now a safety issue. The total cost is \$10,700 which includes a metal handrail. He would remove the carpet and make sure everything under it is repaired or replaced. The money would come out of the Care of Buildings line in next year's default budget. This is not in the budget.

**Mrs. Collins made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fogg, to have Mr. Williams spend \$10,500 for the handrails and the ramps for the modulares. (Vote 5-0)**

Mr. Williams would like to get GameTime out here to take a look at the small playground to get their recommendation on removing it. It has fallen into disrepair. It's not up to code and it's too close to the fence. He and the Facilities Committee will determine a better place for a new one to be erected closer to the building. The new playground will most likely be funded by ESSER Funds. The Board agreed to have Mr. Williams pursue this.

Mr. Williams said that sun blocking shades have been used throughout the lower section of the building and he'd like to finish off all doors and the Middle School end. The estimate is \$10,999 which would come out of the Care of Buildings line. This is also not in next year's default budget. Mr. Fogg made it clear that they would not be spending down this years surplus. They would be spending down next years surplus.

**Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Collins, to approve \$10,999 for widow shades. (Vote 5-0)**

Mr. Fogg said there is an opportunity to have a whole tree harvest on the Rines Road property. He said the Board was advised by a forester five years ago that the property should be a whole tree or chip harvest. There is an opportunity to have the property cut at no expense to the district. Mr. Fogg is asking Board permission for he and Mr. Williams to talk to the logger working on the property next to the schools property. This property was harvested about twenty five years ago and what is there now is not marketable. Mrs. Gelinas questioned the cut. Mr. Fogg explained that new growth grows faster and that this property would not be clear cut. Mrs. Gelinas asked what the benefit of having it cut would be. She said we don't know what we're doing with it, does it make sense to move forward with a cut right now? Mr. Williams said time is of the essence with the company being right there now. A right of way closer to the school may be established. Mr. Fogg also said that the Water District may move forward with us. The Board, by consensus gave Mr. Fogg and Mr. Williams permission to talk with the logger.

#### Greater Wakefield Lions Club

Mr. Doug Soares requested permission to hold a shred-a-thon in the Paul School parking lot on Saturday September 11 from 9:00 to 1:00. This is done using a mobile shredding truck. The company is fully insured and the Lions Club has liability insurance. Mr. Soares will add the district as a rider on their insurance policy.

**Mrs. Gelinas made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Robbins, to allow the Lions Club to hold a shred-a-thon in the parking lot on September 11th. (Vote 4-1)**

#### **Public Comment**

Stacey Dubreuil read a prepared statement (see attachment) Renee Gage requested that the Board no longer mandate mask wearing and social distancing. She read a list of fifteen items she had found while doing her research that dissuades mask wearing. She said she sent a certified letter to the school four weeks ago and has yet to receive a response.

#### **Resignations/Nominations**

**Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Gelinas, to accept with regret the resignations of Diane O'Neill, Jessica Fortgang, Jenn Spector and Jeff Boynton. (Vote 5-0)**

**Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Gelinas, to approve the hiring of Melanie Duval for 7/8 grade science. (Vote 5-0)**

Sara Cook was hired as an ABA tutor in a newly created position. Mr. Fogg asked if this brought the number of ABA tutors to twelve. Mr. Fogg said there is a program for special needs students as presented to the Board and the umbrella seems to be expanding. He asked if there was reimbursement through the DOE to defray the costs for all these students who fall under the

umbrella? Mr. Gregoire said the only program we have is the Partner Program. We get reimbursed through Medicaid but we can't know who is eligible for reimbursement. A medical diagnosis is required for reimbursement. Mr. Fogg questioned that the competitive bidding process hasn't been adhered to. Mr. Gregoire said there are no other places he's aware of that provides the services that NECC does. Mrs. Gelinas said this topic hasn't anything to do with tonight. She asked that the topic be added on to an upcoming agenda as this is Mr. Gregoire's last meeting, it's not on the agenda and there's not much he's going to be able to do.

Mr. Ouellette said that this is Mr. Gregoire, Mr. Lampron and Mrs. Spector's last meeting and that they will be missed.

### **Non Public**

**Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Collins, to enter nonpublic session at 8:02 under 91-A-3-II (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant and 91-A-3-II (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee. Roll call: Ouellette aye, Collins aye, Fogg aye, Robbins aye, Gelinas aye (Vote 5-0)**

The Board returned to public session at 9:38.

**Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Collins, to adjourn the meeting at 9:40. (Vote 5-0)**

Respectfully submitted for approval at the next School Board meeting,

Priscilla Colbath  
School Board Secretary

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On May 3rd, my 7 year old daughter, a first grader, was touched inappropriately on my bus by a 15 year old highschool student.

It was not known until after this event took place, that I learned that this students dad had gone to the school and explicitly told the superintendent that their child was not to sit with any young children and it was for this exact reason.

The parents notified the school as soon as they found out that their child had interaction with small kids on the bus and asked that they made it clear, that it was for my own kids protection and that it was ok to be thorough with the details, so I was aware of the risk.

The only thing I was ever told was that this student needed to sit in his own seat until further notice without any other information. My daughter was pushed out of her seat by her 5 year old brother and when she got up the student moved over and she sat down. Bc we were almost at the highschool I left it alone and didn't give it much thought.

I want to know why I wasn't told? Why was I not informed of a predator on my bus and warned of the potential risk? Why was the most vital piece of information that would have allowed me to properly protect my daughter, along with any other kid on that bus passed along?

I could have changed routes or sent my kids with another driver. I would have kept this student in the front seat, in my view all times to prevent any sort of trouble or better yet, the student could have been taken off the bus all together.

Jerry neglected to to tell me everything I needed to know to do my job properly and my daughter paid the price and it's not ok.

I've been asking for a staff meeting for months with no luck, after this incident, I asked to be put on the agenda for a non public school board meeting, and instead was sent to Mike O'Neil and told that we had to have a staff meeting.

I have issues with what's been going on with the transportation department, things you as the board are not being told, only getting half truths or full lies about. It seems that all my efforts to bring them up are being silenced, talked over or ignored. No one is listening to me.

We had a sub committee meeting today and again nothing was accomplished and so speaking tonight was my only other option. My next step is to seek out a lawyer and hope they have better luck. Can you hear me now?!