



Wakefield School Board Public Minutes

February 1, 2022

Held in the Paul School Library

Approved

BOARD MEMBERS		ADMINISTRATORS	
Bob Ouellette, Chair	✓	Anne Kebler, Administrator	✓
Relf Fogg, Vice Chair	✓	Michael O'Neill, Financial Manager	✓
Mary Collins	✓	Kristen White, Principal	✓
Sheena Robbins	✓		
Caitlin Gelinas	✓		

Joe Williams Facilities Manager

Others Present: Dino Scala, Nichole Dolaher, Norma Joy, Emma Joy, Randie Fox, Kyla Pennino, Stacey Dubreuil, Kelley Bushman, Sandra Taliaferro, Jill Garnett

Mr. Ouellette opened the meeting at 6:00 with the flag salute.

Public Comment

Mr. Scala came to tonight's meeting to discuss Deliberative Session with the Board. Mr. Ouellette asked what time they should get to the Town Hall. Mr. Scala said 11:00 to 11:30. The town will go first followed by a break and then the school. Mr. Ouellette will move the article and the person that will speak to the article will second it. Board members will email Mr. Scala with any questions.

Consent Agenda

Mrs. Gelinas made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Collins, to approve the Consent Agenda. (Vote 4-1)

Mr. Fogg asked that the meeting minutes be swapped with Correspondence. The Board, by consensus, agreed.

Meeting Minutes

Mrs. Collins made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Robbins, to approve the 1-18-22 public minutes. (Vote 5-0)

Mrs. Gelinas made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Collins, to approve the 1-18-22 nonpublic minutes. (Vote 5-0)

91-A Request and subsequent response from district attorney

Mr. Fogg read a statement and the School Board's attorneys' response to Mr. Fogg's 91-A request.

January 19, 2022

RECEIVED

JAN 19 2022

Wakefield School District Administration
Attn: Interim Superintendent Kebler/Chairman Ouellette
SAU 101 76 Taylor Way
Sanbornville, N.H. 03872

Good morning Ms. Kebler and Mr. Ouellette

After considering many aspects of accusations by Ms. Kebler on January 6, 2022, I am writing to request the response to this 91A request for information from the Wakefield School District and/or SAU 101.

On Tuesday, January 18, 2022 Mr. Ouellette claimed that an attorney said it was okay and legal to poll individual members of the Wakefield School Board outside of a legally posted meeting of the Board in order to formulate a plan of action that was, in fact, executed at last night's meeting of the Wakefield School Board.

Please provide in writing the source of that advice, date and expense and explanation of the reasoning that the action would not violate RSA 91A.

Please provide in writing the verification of Ms. Kebler's accusations that drivers were neglecting their duties because of assurances from myself, whereas the accusations were not answered at our meeting in the public. To be specific, as the accusations were pluralized, the response shall include each assurance made to each driver the assurance was made to.

This violation of RSA 641:4 is an attempt to defame my person, resulting in slanderous allegations and a libelous written statement easily accessible and retaliatory in nature.

This also clearly violates the employee/ employer contract in which it is agreed that both parties would not violate N.H. State law.

Although I have remained somewhat quiet about this issue, the fact remains that any employee of the District that would make such false accusations cannot be trusted in the capacity that Ms. Kebler's position requires. Any acceptance or condoning of Ms. Kebler's actions would appear to be a violation of elected officials' oaths of office and Administrations' contracts in which signed agreements acknowledge any violation of N.H. law would be grounds for dismissal.

If you choose to deny this request, please provide a written explanation for the denial including a reference to the specific statutes upon which you rely.

Thank You for your assistance. Sincerely,

Relf Fogg
163 Stoneham Rd.
Wakefield, N.H. 03872

Response from the School District Attorney:

Dear Mr. Fogg:

I am in receipt of your January 19, 2022, correspondence requesting information pursuant to the Right To Know Law, RSA Chapter 91:-A (RTKL). As you are likely aware, the provisions of the RTKL apply to the production and inspection of governmental records and the conduct of public meetings. Accordingly, your request for a written “explanation” of the source, date and reasoning of any legal advice is outside the scope of the RTKL in that no such governmental record exists. Further, and to the extent the cost of any legal advice provided might be subject to disclosure under the RTKL, there was no legal advice given relative to polling members of the Board outside of a legally posted meeting and thus there is no expense to disclose.

As to your request for “written verification” of Ms. Kebler’s accusations that drivers were neglecting their duties, there are no governmental records which are responsive to your request under the RTKL. As to the remaining provisions of your January 19, 2022, correspondence, they amount to statements relative to your beliefs and conclusions of which no response is required under the RTKL.

Thank you very much for your anticipated cooperation and understanding.

Matthew H. Upton

Attorney

Mr. Fogg then asked the chair why he said he got legal advice when he didn’t. Mr. Ouellette said he did get advice from the attorney, and he did not poll the members of the Board. He asked them to read statements. He received that advice from the attorney and Mrs. Kebler was there also. Mr. Fogg and Mr. Ouellette were both concerned that Mrs. Robbins would resign. Mr. Fogg felt the presentation was orchestrated. Mr. Ouellette agreed that it was orchestrated. Mr. Ouellette stated that he had received a few statements and the attorneys got involved to see how to handle this. He looked back at previous meetings where this had previously happened. He was given a step-by-step process to follow and he did so.

Mr. Fogg questioned Mr. Ouellette’s authority to contact a lawyer. He said he was brought into the discussion with the attorney, he didn’t ask for it. He did not poll the Board member. He asked them to read statements. Mr. Fogg asked if he created Board action. Mr. Ouellette responded that he followed the attorneys advise and did not talk to them as a group. He said he talked to each individually and asked them to read statements. Mr. Fogg feels this is a violation of the law. Mr. Ouellette assured him that it was not, and the attorney can corroborate that.

Mrs. Gelinas asked, what is the purpose of this discussion? She asked how this is helping children. She said you got your response and asked to move forward and do our job of benefiting children. She said Mr. Fogg ignored the Board, the Board called you out on it and now let’s move forward. Mr. Fogg continued with his recap of past events. Mrs. Colbath said the minutes

he was referring to are sealed and he shouldn't be discussing them. He insisted that they were not sealed. He went on to say that he should not have been the subject in a non-public discussion. He also questioned some of the discussion that took place in nonpublic. He said after a lengthy discussion he stated that he would continue to help the district anyway he can. He continued to reiterate what he had previously said and said he was setup.

Mrs. Robbins said that hopefully the sealed minutes will be able to be unsealed so that the response that Mr. Fogg is saying didn't happen can be out there because it was an explicit discussion.

Reports

SAU Administrator Report

Mrs. Kebler read the following:

The transition to the current SAU Management Plan, where I am managing the day-to-day business as the SAU Administrator, and Pam Stiles acting as Superintendent of Record is working well. While our COVID-19 numbers have surged in the past few weeks and we have experienced a serious critical staff shortage, I feel the plan is working, and have received nice feedback from staff that they are pleased with the ongoing oversight of the school district. Pam and I meet 2 times a week for up to 2 hours a meeting to discuss the upcoming needs of the week, as well as problem-solving concerns, and of course, Pam is available by phone whenever I might need her consultation. Her consultation and advice have been of great help since I have stepped into this position. I appreciate everyone's patience as this plan was a work in progress and believe that what we have in place is a good plan for the Wakefield School District and the Paul School for the remainder of the year.

I was asked by the board at our last board meeting to research the confusion around the number of hours the Superintendent on Record would work. In the original management plan that was reviewed by the school board on January 4, 2022, the recommendation was for Superintendent Stiles to provide 20 hours a month for Superintendent Services and the information you received at the board meeting of 20 hours a week was a mistake on my part as it was a typo error I did not pick up on. I want to apologize for any further cause of grief this created for Pam, as well as any confusion I caused at the board level. Unfortunately, when working under pressure in a system that is not functioning at its optimal abilities, a simple mistake such as this can occur and with each mistake adds to the learning process. Thank you for your patience.

In addition, I was asked by a member of the audience to research the "job postings" that are on the Department of Education, as she did not see the Superintendent posted under this. The "job postings" or Careers as it refers to on the site is a state job posting sight, and only posts state jobs. It does offer a link to the EdJobsNH which is one place where the Superintendent's posting would be.

I have been working with the school administration and the middle school to revise their middle school schedule for the remainder of the year. The middle school has created a schedule that does not have 90-minute blocks for students, rather they will have a 52-minute block for each content area in the morning, a recess/lunch block and a shortened (23-minute) block of each content area to practice the skills they learned in the morning session, work on projects assigned to them in the class and receive the support they need from their teachers. Again, I want to thank

the staff, board and community for supporting me while I am in this position of SAU Administrator.

School Administration Report

Mrs. White read the following:

Our 5th through 8th grade students are eating lunch in the cafeteria again. Before lunch we went to the classrooms to discuss what the students should expect and what the school expectations are in the lunchroom. Students have been doing a great job being responsible by cleaning up after themselves and doing what is expected. This month I have been assessing students using NWEA, Star, and Core phonics. The students in grades 3-5 are taking the NWEA tests. Grades 1 and 2 are completing star testing and our kindergarten classes are using core phonics. All of these assessments will be used as a benchmark for teachers to determine what students know and what skills are still needed.

Students in 4th and 5th grade will participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). NAEP is different from our state assessments because it is a common measure of achievement across the country. The assessment is administered by the National Center for Education Statistics, within the U.S. Department of Education. The results are released as The Nation's Report Card, which provides information about student achievement to educators, parents, policymakers, and the public. In addition to subject-area questions, students voluntarily complete NAEP survey questions. These questions provide valuable information about participating students' educational experiences and opportunities to learn both in and outside of the classroom. The assessment takes approximately 2 hours for most students" which includes transition time, directions, and completion of survey questions.

On January 14th our students in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 5th grade had an opportunity to speak with a Boston Pride women's professional ice hockey player, virtual guest speaker, Taylor Wenczkowski, Mrs. White's daughter, spoke with students about playing ice hockey and the perseverance it takes to reach for and achieve your goals. Over the last two weeks of January, Title I students completed various mid-year assessments. The results of these assessments are being used in planning and reconfiguring of grade level groups that meet the instructional level needs of students.

Mrs. Diana Pettis, Title I Director, has been moved into Mrs. Tyler's second grade classroom for her maternity leave. This is due to the fact that finding qualified staff has been a major challenge for Paul School this year. This move does have implications on the level of services that the Title 1 program will be able to provide for students. All students in the Title 1 program will continue to have services with Ms. Kate Kelley, using a different schedule. On Thursday, February 3, 2022, our 8th grade students and teachers will visit Spaulding High School. Students and staff will tour the Richard W. Creteau Regional Technology Center along with a demonstration by the Spaulding High School ROTC. This visit will help inform students of the opportunities available to them at Spaulding High School in an effort to provide our middle school students with choice and voice with their Integrated Arts classes, the IA teachers created a Google Form for students to indicate what Integrated Arts classes they would like to take. The IA teachers took this information to create class rosters, doing their best to ensure students are placed in classes they indicated the most interest in.

In the core classes of Math, ELA, Science and Social Studies, the Middle School teachers used assessment data from NWEA, classroom observations, and student work to generate class

groupings that will allow instruction to be specifically targeted to student levels and needs. By providing solid core instruction coupled with interventions, extensions and/or enrichment, our students will be ready for the next grade level. This means students may have math with some peers and have science with a different group of peers K-8 has been working hard and having lots of fun in PE this year. Middle school has been learning the skills of basketball and volleyball. They have improved quickly at those sports. Elementary school has been working in stations for the first time all year, which we have really enjoyed. The stations have included hula-hooping, jump roping, toss and catch, target games, as well as gymnastics. I can't wait to see what's in store for the remainder of the year.

She would also like to thank the PTA for the pancake breakfast for the students of the month. Lino's donated the pancakes. She invited the Board members to attend one of these breakfasts. Mrs. Collins asked if was possible for the seventh graders to also visit Spaulding High School. This was discussed at the AREA meeting. Mrs. White said she'd touch bases with the director on Thursday. Mrs. Robbins had a question about the fourth grade testing. Mrs. White said the additional test is for schools that are randomly selected. The data is not provided for individual schools so isn't used to drive instruction and parents can opt out of NAPE.

Facilities

Mr. Williams asked for an official vote of the Board to approve the purchase of playground equipment through GameTime for the younger children. The minutes were checked and all other projects were approved using ESSER Funds except this one. Board members remembered the conversation. The playground will be moved closer to the school. It will be for up to age twelve.

Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ouellette, to approve the purchase of playground equipment through GameTime. (Vote 5-0)

Mr. Williams asked the Board if he could salvage the minivan that he uses for dump runs. Mr. Fogg asked that he also load metal into the van.

Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Collins, to allow Mr. Williams to salvage the minivan. (Vote 4-0-1)

Mr. Williams also said that one of the custodians had been hired elsewhere but is still employed here parttime. The job opening has been posted. Starting pay is \$15.00 an hour with holidays and a single insurance plan.

Mr. Ouellette made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Gelinas, to ratify the locations of the Annual School Deliberative Session on Saturday February 5, 2022, to the Town Hall Opera House where both the Town and School meetings will be held beginning at 9:00 am. (Vote 5-0)

Old Business

Preparation for Deliberative Session

Mr. Ouellette said the Moderator will read the articles and he, as Chair, will move the article. The person that seconds the article will speak to that article. The Board divvied up the articles amongst themselves. Each received a summary of the articles they will speak to. Attorney Greg Im will be at Deliberative Session representing the School Board.

Mrs. Kebler read the following from Mrs. Stiles:

To the members of the Wakefield School Board and the Wakefield Community,
The gut-wrenching decision I made to leave Wakefield has been judged by some as unprofessional, by others as expected and by others with support. I will not rehash or assign blame as by doing so only keeps negativity brewing in a district that should be focusing on far more important issues.

The Board was kind enough to acknowledge the extensive amount of time I dedicated to the district beyond my contract by way of an exit compensation. The time I devoted to SAU 101 was done gladly and without expectation that there would be recognition for it. Because a school district requires superintendent services, which I will provide, I will manage and oversee the legal requirements as described by law and other duties as needed. Anne will take care of the day-to-day management with my consultation and direction. To address the ranker that this compensation has caused, I am rescinding the proposal regarding hourly pay to provide services I will consider the exit compensation payment for services, which will give the district up to 12 hours a week for the remainder of this school year. No hourly rate will be charged which will allow, the district to specifically manage the budget. I will continue to provide timely thorough and thoughtful assistance to the district as Superintendent of Record through the end of June.

The weight of negativity and distrust has plagued this district for far too long. Feelings and actions from the past cloud and taint decisions for the future. The noise that is generated regarding someone's title or a partial story greatly takes time away from what is important. When there is recognition that honest mistakes can be made, that everyone is doing the best they can and that understanding reaps more than blame or a "gotcha", then there will be a start to truly coming together for a cause that could not be more critical.

An opportunity has presented itself to SAU 101 to move beyond the things that stand in the way of educating our children and to critically evaluate the total scope of need in this district. There must be trust that collaborative work can take place in a respectful and appreciative manner.

I recognize that there are those who consider my actions to have been improper and selfish. I will forever regret that my career in education after 44 years ended this way. If this upheaval prompts a serious resolve to develop a community of learners who support each other when there are lows and celebrate when there are highs, then there is a silver lining. Please, be on fire for improvement, excited about conversations with differing viewpoints and steadfastly affirm that the small things will not overshadow what is most important - educating children.

Community Member Questions

Mrs. Kebler, addressing Mrs. Joy, went on to say the following:

I am hoping that the statement that was just read will address most of your questions –

12 of the questions/comments centered on compensation for Superintendent Stiles – it is hoped that the statement that was just read have answered some of these questions –

Costing out of current SAU management plan:

Pam

- \$ 87,000.00 contract \$ 48,000.00 (approx.) earned to date
- \$ 22,000.00 exit compensation
- Total amount paid: \$ 70,000.00
- Savings in health insurance: \$ 4500.00
- Total savings: \$ 21,500.00

Anne:

- \$ 500.00/week X 25 weeks = \$ 12,500.00
- NHRS: \$ 2500.00

Total Overall savings to the operating budget: \$ 6500.00

Three Questions pertaining to Anne's certification:

- According to DOE, Anne can provide services but not with the title of Interim Superintendent as she does not hold a post Graduate degree. However, while the title may have changed to "SAU Administrator", there are NO changes to the duties and responsibilities' she will do.
- Once Anne was approached to take this position, she sent her transcripts to the NHDOE to be analyzed, because I have a second graduate degree in Trauma Informed Practice and Policy, the NHDOE does not recognize this course work as a Post Graduate Degree – this was not determined until after the announcement. She does meet criteria for Assistant Superintendent and has pursued this certification for her own purposes.
- Pam will continue as "Superintendent of Record" (needed by law) and there are NO changes to the duties and responsibilities she will do. The titles changed to meet the letter of the law, but the responsibilities and management of the district did not change, and it completely meets state requirements.

This has been a work in progress and community members are welcome to watch or attend meetings to stay informed.

3 Questions relating to transportation:

- These are things that obviously were heard 2nd and 3rd hand questions. The superintendent managed transportation and therefore the Board will not respond to 2nd or 3rd hand questions that may or may not be completely accurate or out of context.
- A transportation mtg. was held on January 19th and concerns from drivers were addressed.

Mrs. Kebler asked Mrs. Joy if that helped and Mrs. Joy replied it did. Mrs. Joy said she wanted her questions and a document sent to the Chair be part of the record.

Policy BEDH-Public Comment

Mr. Ouellette said the policy doesn't state how many public comments the Board will have. It states 15 minutes, 3 minutes per speaker. He opened it up for discussion amongst the Board. Mr. Fogg believes past practice allowing two public comments should continue. Mrs. Gelinas is okay with two public comments but the policy states "members of the public may offer comments on agenda items only. The Board will not entertain comments on items that do not appear on the agenda". She said other policies state that items should go to the principal first, then the superintendent, then the Board. She feels public comment should stick to agenda items.

Mrs. Robbins would like one public comment at the end so people can hear what's being said first. She would like to stick to the policy of agenda items only. She feels that the way it's been has impeded the Board's ability to stay focused. Sometimes there is back and forth discussion in the middle of meetings. She feels this is a good place to start tightening up on a lot of things. This will help define our roles for us and the community to know what the role of this Board is. Mr. Ouellette asked if Mrs. Robbins felt this should go back to the Policy Committee to be rewritten. She said no, we just need to follow it.

Mr. Fogg said there may be times when someone has come in to address something on the agenda that might be critical to a Board decision, they should be able to speak prior to the discussion. Mr. Fogg said to limit comment is detrimental to the district. Mrs. Collins would like to discuss this at a policy meeting and see what other schools do and NHSBA recommended policy. Mrs. Robbins said School Boards in other towns have one public comment.

New Business

Superintendent Search

Mrs. Kebler told the Board that there were six applicants. Mrs. Stiles recommended that the Board narrow it down to four. She is willing to facilitate that for the Board. She suggested questions with a committee and then an interview with the Board with more narrow questions. The deadline for applications closed January 28th. The Board decided to meet next Tuesday at 5:30 in non public session to narrow the six candidates down to four. The past committee consisted of 2 School Board members, 1 Budget Committee member, a former superintendent, 2 teachers and 3 community members.

Policies

Sub Committee Updates

Other Business

Public Comment

Mrs. Dolaher said it's not ok not to have two public comments. She says she emails the Board and gets no response. She said Café Services is not ok and they need to go. She said the sixth grade put together a petition to get rid of Café Services. She said a child ate a pizza with a rubber glove in it. The children get yelled at. She said it is the Chairs obligation to contact her. She has heard nothing for two months. Mr. Ouellette said he had sent it to the SAU and it's their

responsibility to get back to her. Se also said the Administration at the school and SAU, wearing many hats, have been absolutely amazing. Mrs. Kebler commended Mrs. Dolaher's work the past three weeks has been amazing.

Mrs. Garnett said she has come to a majority of the meetings the past two years. She said the Board does not act like adults. She said Mrs. Kebler is an administrator not the superintendent. She said if the Superintendent in service is still part of the Board she needs to be here. She needs to be at meetings. Mrs. Joy said the Board was acting like children. She is impressed with the way Mrs. White and Mrs. Kebler are handling things.

Mrs. Taliaferro asked if applications for superintendent would still be accepted even though the deadline has come. Mr. Kebler said it would be a committee decision. If one came in now, she would have the committee take a look at it. Mrs. Dolaher said her daughter is nineteen and she has been volunteering in the school for a long time and has never come face to face with a superintendent in the school. Mrs. Soares said both Mrs. Stiles and Mrs. Kebler have spent time in the school. Mrs. Fox asked if testing results gets reported to the Board. The answer is yes, the Board has presentations. She asked if there was data on how many students opt out of the testing. Mrs. Kebler said there is a non-participation section reported to the Board. She asked questions on data, how the school is doing compared to others. Mrs. Kebler said they look at data and assess it and interventions are done based on that data. Mrs. Fox said policy is a guide not a law and their use is discretionary. She would like two public comments. She said she also emailed Board members and got no response.

Mrs. Garnet was told that foodservice would be going out to bid. She suggested a questionnaire go out to kids and their parents and form a committee. Mrs. Joy asked if there would be an extended school year because of the numbers of student attendance. Mrs. Kebler said the are marked in attendance if they complete their work.

Nominations/Hires/Resignations

C. Dolaher

Mrs. Gelinas made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fogg to accept the nomination of Chole Dolaher. (Vote 5-0)

Non Public

Mr. Ouellette made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Gelinas, to go into non public under 91-A 3:ll (a) &(c) at 8:07 Gelinas aye, Collins aye, Robbins aye, Fogg aye, Ouellette aye (Vote 5-0)

The Board returned to public session at 9:26

Mr. Ouellette made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Gelinas, to approve the sealed minutes of 1-4-22. (Vote 4-1)

Mrs. Robbins made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fogg, to unseal the minutes of 1-4-22. (Vote 5-0)

The Board signed the June 3, 2022, manifest for \$134.58

Adjournment

**Mr. Ouellette made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Gelinas, to adjourn the meeting at 9:26
(Vote 5-0)**

Respectfully submitted for approval at the next School Board meeting,

Priscilla Colbath
School Board Secretary