

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

In attendance: Board Chairman, Luther Kinney; Board Members: Denys Draper, Chris Thayer, Amy Mullins, Christi Gignac; Principal, Gordie Johnk; Business Manager, Kristin Franklin; Administrative Assistant/Substitute Board Clerk, Toni Butterfield.

Community members – Gergana & Paul Fresolone (Arriving later)

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 4:35 PM

PUBLIC INPUT: Chairman Kinney informed the Board that members of the public that had a question for the Board could not get there until 5:00pm. The Board agreed to move back to Public Input when they arrived.

LPTO REPORT: Denys Draper reported that the LPTO was ready for the First Day of School Coffee for the parents. The LPTO gave each classroom teacher \$100 to help meet their needs and to acknowledge that teachers spend their own money every year to make everything work. The Check Writing Campaign mailing was in the back to school packets and will run until 9/20/18. The goal is \$5,000 to be used for busses for the all school trip to the HOP Center for the Arts, and the Scientist in Residency in the spring.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 14, JULY 17, & JULY 24, 2018 MEETINGS: MOTION BY CHRISTI GIGNAC, SECONDED BY AMY MULLINS TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 14, JULY 17, AND JULY 24.

The following amendments and corrections were requested.

June 14 Minutes -

Page 2, the second paragraph should read 'some students'

Page 2, the eighth paragraph, should read "a grant to create a two trail system.

June 17 Minutes -

Page 2, the sixth paragraph, should read "there were specific reasons"

ALL IN FAVOR AS AMENDED, MOTION CARRIED.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT: Principal Johnk informed the Board that the Back to School Packets were ready for pick up on July 23 so as to avoid any problems we encountered last year. Unfortunately, some of the teacher's supplies are not in as a result. Always hard to keep everyone happy.

The July Professional Development with Martha Dubuque was outstanding. Martha is a retired principal from Vermont. She worked with the staff on best practices for writing in grades K-6. She differentiated between primary, intermediate and specials writing so that everyone learned something new.

Principal Johnk talked about the Emergency Operations Council appointed by Governor Sununu. Sugar Hill Fire Chief Allan Clarke was part of this group and helped to write the NH Emergency Plan Guide. Copies will be distributed by email to all Board members this week. To note, there has not been a fatal fire in a school since 1950, but until recently only fire drills have been what schools practiced. Now there is a need to think about practicing for school shootings. There will be a balance in making both police and fire departments satisfied with what schools practice. Among the best practices mentioned in the study was for the principal to have a baseball bat in his office.

Chris Thayer recommended a conversation about these changes at the First Day of School Coffee, discussing the Homeland Security Assessment and the Governor's Council. It is important for parents to understand all that is being done to keep their children safe.

Principal Johnk told the Board that all Lafayette Staff have had Active Shooter Training. Chairman Kinney pointed out that there is a big mental health piece that affects this new challenge. There are task forces being put in place and training for what needs to happen in times of crisis. The staff will be seeing a speaker in October that will talk about the trauma induced student and how teachers can meet the students' survival needs so they are ready to learn.

Principal Johnk informed the Board that Lafayette has a new para-educator named Sara Reeder. She has her teacher certification and is a certified math teacher.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Gergana and Paul Fresolone, parents of daughters in 4th and 5th grades were requesting if their daughter who turns five years old on October 13 could attend kindergarten this coming school year. Mr. and Mrs. Fresolone mentioned that perhaps pending evaluation she could be accepted into kindergarten.

Lafayette's policy, Age of Entrance (JED), states that a student must be five years old by 9/30 of the year entering kindergarten. The student must be six years old by 9/30 when entering 1st grade. If a student is transferring to Lafayette in first grade, they must be six by 12/31. Lafayette also has a policy Assignment of Student to Grade Level (JG) that states the student will be assigned to the grade that best meets the students' needs. Principal Johnk explained that over time the cut off date has moved from December 1, to November 1 and now September 30. Students were entering school too early and were not ready to learn.

Mr. and Mrs. Fresolone did approach the principal regarding this matter and he had told them no because of the School's policies. Superintendent Couture explained that the School Board can vote to waive the policy and make an exception on a case by case basis.

Superintendent Couture explained that all schools in SAU 35 are now using September 30 as the cut off date. A comment was made that Littleton may be September 1.

A lengthy discussion followed about what was involved in waiving a policy and the evaluating that had been requested. This will be the first year we are “testing” our incoming kindergarten students with a screening called Dial 4. This test helps the teachers to understand a student’s strengths and weaknesses. It does not determine if a student is eligible for kindergarten. The Dial 4 helps uncover learning, hearing and vision issues.

Christi Gignac asked if we had requests like this before and are we looking at unchartered territory. There have been several requests in the past, but policy has always been followed. Superintendent Couture pointed out that we would be setting a precedent if we waive the policy. Chris Thayer asked how many students were going to be in kindergarten this coming year. Principal Johnk explained there were eight students registered, very different from the 18 registered at this time last year. Denys Draper asked what the wording would be to waive the policy today so that it would be a one time, non-precedent setting decision. Amy Mullins stated that the policy is in place for a reason. She reminded the Board that we denied a student from attending school unless the family lived in Franconia, Sugar Hill, or Easton. Denys Draper pointed out that Mr. & Mrs. Fresolone are actively advocating for their child and that she did not like policies to be written in stone. She stated that policies should be fluid. Chris Thayer stated he was leaning towards not waiving. Christi Gignac stated that she agreed policies needed to be fluid but that this was a hard date that was made a policy in March of 2013.

The Board agreed to table this matter at 5:15pm until later in the meeting.

PRINCIPAL’S REPORT (Continued):

LAFter Care - Several handouts were passed out and explained by Christi Gignac, Principal Johnk and Toni Butterfield. Denys Draper stated her opinion that the Rec program should not take this program over. Amy Mullins commended all the work that had been done to prepare for the LAFter care program. Chairman Kinney asked if the Board was in agreement to move forward. He stated that the handouts adequately explained that the rates would change according to the enrollment, and that if the program fails it will go away, and not lose money as there is no place in the budget to meet this need. Christi Gignac explained that the 15th of the month was fast approaching which was when the deadline for signing up was planned. She suggested we move this date for the first month of the program.

Principal Johnk explained that we had discussions with FCC and they were supportive of the kids that had signed up for FCC aftercare to pull out and come to Lafayette. FCC needs the space for younger children. Chris Thayer mentioned the Boys & Girls Club choice as an option as well.

Principal Johnk brought up that Bernadette Costa was starting a grant writing business, Over the Rainbow Grant writing, to work with schools and municipalities. He suggested we could work with Mrs. Costa to find funds for programs like LAfter Care.

Chris Thayer reiterated that this program should be moved to Rec. A committee has been formed to facilitate this transition. In addition to School Board members, the committee will

have two Rec board members - Cindy Berlack & Haley Ireland, and Rec staff Kris Kappler and Kim Cowles to be resources.

Christi Gignac asked the Board to consider and to make known why the LAFTER program has been established as it has been. We were asked to create a program on the spur of the moment, we need families to sign up, and understand that we can't be flexible right now. We have created an option and hoping that the Board will be supportive.

CHRIS THAYER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CHRISTI GIGNAC, TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE PROPOSAL TO START LAFATER CARE FOR THE 2018-2019 SCHOOL CALENDAR YEAR, UNLESS IT BECOMES ECONOMICALLY NOT FEASIBLE AT A SOONER DATE.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED WITH SPECIAL NOTE OF THE BOARD'S INTENT TO WORK WITH THE REC DEPARTMENT ON A TRANSITION PLAN.

Principal Johnk brought up a question about the Pfos Award. Each year the school requests funds to be awarded to the Pfos award winner(s) at the Awards Assembly on the last day of school. We have been asked by The Trustees of the Trust for a School Board motion approving this request.

DENYS DRAPER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CHRISTI GIGNAC, FOR THE PRINCIPAL OR THEIR DESIGNEE TO BE THE BOARD'S DESIGNEE TO REQUEST FUNDS FROM THE PFOSI TRUST TO BE AWARDED TO THE PFOSI RECIPIENT(S) AT THE END OF THE YEAR.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

The 2018-2019 Lafayette School Board meeting schedule is set to be the second Thursday of each month thru June 2019.

The Regional Education Funding Forum is scheduled for 9/6/18 at 6:00pm in the Berlin Middle School auditorium. Superintendent Couture will attend and report back to the Board next month.

SAU 35 formed a partnership with Ammonoosuc Community Health Services (ACHS) in the fall of 2017 through Steven Noyes who heads the counseling department for ACHS. Mr. Noyes has found two graduate level interns from SNHU (Southern New Hampshire University). One intern will be shared between Lafayette and Bethlehem Elementary, the second will be at Lisbon and Landaff. Steve Noyes will be at Profile.

Superintendent Couture announced the resignation of Michelle Overhoff.

DENYS DRAPER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CHRISTI GIGNAC, TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION WITH REGRETS OF MICHELLE OVERHOFF.

THE MOTION PASSED. MRS. OVERHOFF WILL BE RELEASED FROM HER CONTRACT SIGNED LAST SPRING.

APPROVAL OF BILLS/FINANCIAL REPORT:

Business Manager Franklin explained that Lafayette's opening cash balance was a soft figure at this time of \$100,000, as reported to the auditors. We still do not have the final food service numbers as we have not received June's numbers from Cafe Services. The Kindergarten Aid represents a calculation based on last year's number of kindergarten students.

Auditors Engagement Letter:

CHRISTI GIGNAC MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CHRIS THAYER, TO AUTHORIZE CHAIRMAN KINNEY AND SUPERINTENDENT COUTURE TO SIGN AN ENGAGEMENT LETTER WITH THE AUDITORS FOR NEXT YEAR. THE MAXIMUM FEE WILL BE \$7,501.

THE MOTION PASSED.

AUDITORS' REPORT:

The auditor's letter has a qualified opinion because Lafayette's audit did not include an actuarial study to determine the liability for obligations related to past employee benefits. This has to do with how we account for healthcare for retirees. To have an unqualified opinion or a clean audit, Lafayette would need to hire an actuarial service at a cost of \$600-\$1200. Many towns do not think it is worth the extra cost and forgo this service.

Historically Lafayette has not paid for this actuarial study. The need for an unqualified report is for public perception when there is a need to borrow money. Not having the clean audit should not impact our cost of borrowing. Chris Thayer noted that we don't anticipate any borrowing needs. The Board agreed to be satisfied with a number chosen by the auditors by using the internal controls.

The E-Board has approved the hiring of a full time position at the SAU to assist the Business Manager and Human Resources function rather than a part time position to help assure there is more oversight and control.

Principal Johnk made special mention to thank Business Manager Franklin for moving forward with bringing the Administrative Assistants together for training on the Student Activity Accounts. He noted it will be very helpful to standardize across the board.

CHRIS THAYER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CHRISTI GIGNAC, TO TABLE THE ACTUARY SERVICE FOR THIS YEAR.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.

Business Manager Franklin mentioned that former business manager Sandy Stone had come in to help with the State reports. In addition, the 2018-2019 audit will not take place until October instead of July.

Chris Thayer and Christi Gignac echoed Principal Johnk's thank you to Business Manager Franklin.

Chairman Kinney noted that when he spoke to the auditors, they were very complimentary of Business Manager Franklin's work. The implementation of internal controls is going well. She has done an excellent job for all five districts.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

No E-Board meeting

Budget: Principal Johnk will have names to recommend for the Advisory Budget Committee at the September meeting,

Building & Grounds: Principal Johnk has met with the School's abutter Beverly Hunt. He thanked her for removing items that we have found are on property owned by the School. Her husband maintained this land for over 50 years without knowing exactly where the property lines stood. Mrs. Hunt will continue to remove and clear the property that belongs to the school. The School will need to decide how to handle two out buildings that cross onto the school property. Principal Johnk hopes to be able to use the land this school year. Christi Gignac suggested writing a letter to the abutter with a deadline.

School Beacon Issue: A community member was upset by the continued flashing of the school zone signs during the summer. It is very difficult to change the programming of the lights. Communication with the DOT and the community member resulted in a letter from the DOT to Principal Johnk. Principal Johnk agreed to see what sort of grant money might be available to replace the current signs with ones that are easier to program and operate. In addition, we will attempt to work with the DOT to help us to use the lights we have in place now.

The local water district mandated the \$1200 installation of a backflow valve. Schools are now required to have the valve inspected once a year or possibly twice a year, by one of a designated list of plumbers. Business Manager Franklin suggested coordinating this inspection among the districts since the plumbers on the list are not local.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES:

Christi Gignac distributed a list of all the policies that need updating this fall.

Policies for first reading:

BCA Board Member Ethics. This is not required but is recommended. The change is such that the language will better reflect that individual board members can vote their opinion based on their knowledge. Legal references were added as needed.

EHB Data & Records Retention. This is a required policy. This policy is mostly about the high school. Needed to add the word guardians where parents were referenced.

DENYS DRAPER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CHRIS THAYER, TO APPROVE THE FIRST READING OF POLICIES BCA AND EHB.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.

RETURN TO DISCUSSION OF PUBLIC SESSION REQUEST

The Board agreed that they appreciated the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Fresolone were advocating for their child. Because there is a policy in place, waiving it would create a precedent no matter the wording.

CHRISTI GIGNAC MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CHRIS THAYER, NOT TO WAIVE THE POLICY REGARDING AGE OF ENTRANCE (JED) FOR THE REQUEST MADE DURING THE PUBLIC SESSION.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED WITH THREE VOTES IN FAVOR AND ONE VOTE OPPOSED.

Principal Johnk made the Board aware of a student who would be starting on August 27th who had a Purchase Agreement to close on a home in Easton on September 20. Until September 20th, the family has shown the School proof that they are residing in a camper on land they own in Easton. The plan had been to build on this land, but the house came on the market and proved the right move for the family at this time.

DENYS DRAPER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CHRISTI GIGNAC, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 6:50 p.m.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED

Respectfully Submitted,
Toni Butterfield
Substitute Clerk