

**RUMNEY SCHOOL BOARD
RUSSELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
FEBRUARY 17, 2010
MINUTES**

Board Members Present: Paula Ferenc, Jerry Thibodeau, Yvon Cloutier, Tom Cowie

Administration Present: Holly Barrett-Morse, Ethel Gaides

Others Present: Various members of the community

Non-Public Session: Ms. Ferenc made the motion at 5:30PM to enter into non-public session to discuss personnel issues. Mr. Cloutier seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Public Session: At 6:10 PM Mr. Cloutier made the motion to enter public session, Mr. Cowie seconded the motion and all voted in favor. Based on discussions during the non-public session, Mr. Thibodeau made the motion to present Cheryl Gaiero with a contract as presented by the administration for the position of interim office manager/administrative assistant to cover the remainder of the school year. Mr. Cowie seconded that motion and all voted in favor. Ms. Ferenc made a motion to approve the change of Katelyn Walden from the 60% para-professional position in kindergarten to the 100% position of grade 4 special education classroom assistant. Mr. Cowie seconded the motion and voted in favor.

Agenda Review: no change

Minutes of January 20, 2010: table until next meeting

Minutes of February 3, 2010: Mr. Cloutier made the motion, Mr. Cowie seconded and all voted in favor to accept the minutes as written.

Minutes of February 10, 2010: Mr. Cloutier made the motion, Ms. Ferenc seconded and all voted in favor to accept the minutes as written.

Privilege of the floor #1: Tammy Lapointe asked about the role of the student teacher in grade 4. There was some confusion regarding the change of the classroom assistant and the role of the student teacher from PSU was explained. Another parent expressed a desire to volunteer to ride on a school bus to supervise the students. The administration will check with Robertson Transit to try to work that out. Mary Hulse questioned why no spelling or geography bees were held this year. It was explained that the positions

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to coordinate these events are made available to the staff but no one came forward to do it. Mrs. Hulse noted that the students are missing opportunities and is concerned about the lack of positive programs. It was noted again that news of Russell School is never in the local paper. Another question was raised about how to find the minutes of previous meetings and it was noted that the school website information regarding board meetings was incorrect. The administration will work on updating the website.

Principal's report: Mrs. Morse reported that the second meeting of the Parent Support Group will be held on March 2. It is being run the guidance counselor and all parents are encouraged to attend. After the winter vacation break, a K-8 winter Olympic event will take place on March 12. A family group event is being planned for April, to be facilitated by the 8th grade class with a goal of community building. On March 18, at 8:15AM, an assembly will be held as a Celebration of Success. This is to recognize student achievements for the second trimester.

The last day of winter program will be determined after the vacation break. Scheduling for the end of the year school trips is being worked on. Mrs. Morse noted that she agrees with Mrs. Hulse regarding lack of school news in the local paper and will try to address that. Mr. Cowie suggested at that point that maybe the students could get involved in that. Have it become a student project to gather information and make it available to the newspaper and the school website. A question was raised from the audience at that point about how to start a PTO. It was noted that it has been many years since an organized group existed.

Board Issues: 8th grade trip – class advisor Tammy Lapointe distributed a handout that detailed the plans for the class trip. After reviewing the handout, Mr. Cloutier noted that transportation cannot be provided by personal vehicle. It must be with a licensed commercial driver in a van or small bus. Mr. Cloutier went to on to thank Mrs. Lapointe for her hard work, knowing what a difficult job it can be. There was also discussion regarding a conflict with the dates proposed that involved one of the students.

Mr. Cloutier made the motion to approve the request of the 8th grade class trip, with a preference to the dates of June 11 and 12, 2010, secondary choice of June 3 and 4, 2010. Mr. Cowie made an amendment to the motion, noting that it is also subject to transportation approval, Ms. Ferenc seconded the amendment and the amendment was approved by all. Mr. Thibodeau then seconded the original motion, as amended. Ms. Ferenc seconded the motion and all approved in favor.

Wellness policy – Mr. Cloutier made the motion to approve of the Wellness Policy as drafted on 10/29/09. Ms. Ferenc seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Policy Committee Discussion – Mr. Cloutier suggested starting with the PTO guideline/policy to assist interested parents in starting a group. Mrs. Morse noted that the teachers have already formed a group to prioritize the policies that need to be updated

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and a meeting is planned. Mr. Cloutier pointed out the need to have board members at that meeting. Mrs. Morse, Ms. Ferenc and Mr. Cloutier will talk soon to coordinate and set meeting dates. It was noted to the community members present that parents can volunteer for these committees also.

Board Goals – a draft of the 2010-2011 School Board Goals appears at the bottom of the agenda. Mr. Cloutier suggested that the list be prioritized and the wording changed on some. After discussion of wording and prioritizing, Mr. Cloutier made the motion to accept the goals for 2010-2011. Mr. Thibodeau seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Board Member Recognition – Ms. Ferenc acknowledged the 12 years of service of Tom Cowie to the Rumney School Board. She noted that he has been an incredible presence on the board and in the school. She has appreciated his compassion, calming nature and the many insightful contributions he has made over the years. His expertise at negotiations over the years has been especially helpful. It was noted by all that he will be sorely missed and was presented with a gift as token of appreciation.

Privilege of the Floor #2: Mr. Cowie was asked if he had any advice for future board members. Mr. Cowie responded that you must be ready to learn, that he was always learning new things while on the board.

Mary Hulse asked how often the principal has meetings with the teaching staff. Mrs. Morse explained that it was controlled by the teachers' contract which allows for a one hour meeting once a month. She pointed out that special team meetings, by grade level, are held weekly.

A question was raised about the role of the Title I math teacher and how her services were being used. What was the job description, what grades are being serviced? A couple of parents present expressed concern that the needs of grade 7 were not being met. The students are forced to work at the same rate when many are capable of working at a faster rate. These concerns were expressed to the teacher in the fall and the parents feel that nothing has been done.

Julie Dyson asked a question regarding the qualifications of the staff and administration and how to obtain that information. It was explained that the information is available at the SAU office.

Regarding the school budget, Tammy Lapointe questioned the cost of out of district placement for Rumney students – what is RES lacking? Mr. Cloutier explained that the decision to place a student out of district is not made lightly. Some students have very special needs that require very specialized staff and space to meet those specific needs, and in some cases RES is just not equipped to handle those needs. The decision to place a student out of district is made by the special education team.

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At 7:50PM Mr. Cowie made the motion to adjourn to non-public session to discuss a personnel issue. Mr. Thibodeau seconded and all voted in favor.

At 8:00PM the meeting returned to public session. Discussion during non-public centered on reports of misuse of cell phones by staff during the school day. It was determined that all staff can be reached by the school phone system during regular school hours. Mr. Cloutier made the motion that ALL cell phones in the building are to be turned off between the hours of 7:45AM and 3:00PM. Mr. Thibodeau seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Mr. Cowie made the motion to adjourn at 8:05PM, Mr. Cloutier seconded and all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy McQuinn-Downing