

**RUMNEY SCHOOL BOARD
RUSSELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
MAY 20, 2009
MINUTES**

Board Members Present: Paula Ferenc, Jennifer Miller, Yvon Cloutier, Jerry Thibodeau and Tom Cowie (5:40)

Administration Present: Peter Helgerson, Ethel Gaides

Others Present: Holly Barrett-Morse (incoming principal), Jon Francis, Tim Korade, Heidi Adams, Kim Catucci, and MJ Gessner

Non Public Session: Mr. Cloutier made the motion at 5:35PM to enter into non-public session and to invite incoming principal Ms. Barrett-Morse to join the board during the non-public session. Mrs. Miller seconded the motion and all present voted in favor.

Public Session: At 5:52PM a motion was made by Ms. Ferenc to enter into public session. Mrs. Miller seconded the motion and all voted in favor. Based on discussion that was held during the non-public session, Mr. Cloutier moved to accept with regrets the non-signed contract of the Library Media Assistant, Rachel Funk. It was noted that we have been very fortunate to have someone with her level of training as our media assistant. Ms. Funk is moving from the area and will not be returning to Russell School in the fall. Mr. Cowie seconded the motion and all voted in favor. Based on the recommendation of the SAU office and Ms. Barrett-Morse, Ms. Ferenc made the motion to accept the nomination of Joelle Hague for the position of grade 7/8 language arts teacher. Ms. Hague comes with strong references and enthusiasm from those involved with the interview process. Mrs. Miller seconded the motion and all voted in favor. Mr. Cowie made the motion to accept with regrets the resignation of the health teacher, Christine Fritschka. Ms. Fritschka's position with Russell Elementary was part time and she has found employment with a full time schedule. Mr. Cloutier seconded the motion and all voted in favor. Ms. Gaides will see that the process is started to find replacements for the media and health positions.

Agenda Review: At the request of Mr. Cloutier, three items to be added to the agenda are 1) an update of the year end budget figures and available surplus. 2) An update regarding the AYP appeal letter and 3) discussion of the handbook/policy reviews.

Vinyl Siding – Jon Francis, director of facilities maintenance for SAU #48, was present to discuss the options for fixing the problems being encountered with the vinyl siding on the gymnasium addition. Based on a handout from the April meeting and another quote

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recently received, Mr. Francis recommended that the current siding be replaced with a cement board siding or a higher grade vinyl than what is there. The current siding is not of good quality and something is needed that can withstand the heavy snow load that falls from the roof. Mr. Thibodeau brought up the possibility of using T1-11 siding as opposed to vinyl. Discussion ensued and the different factors of cost, maintenance and aesthetics were covered. It was agreed upon by all that cement board will be the material used when the time comes. At present, the temporary fix will hold and the board needs to wait to see what funds may be available in the near future before a decision is made. Mr. Francis will obtain quotes and specifications from different companies in the meantime.

Technology/Internet – Tim Korade, the Director of Information Technology for SAU #48 was present to update the board on the status of internet access. As discussed at the April meeting, the current internet access capabilities are proving to be inadequate. Mr. Korade presented a summary of the situation and suggested ways to improve it. At the request of Mr. Thibodeau, the possibility of “T1” circuits was explored but found to be much more expensive and required a long term commitment. After discussion of the options available Mr. Thibodeau made the motion to accept the recommendation of Mr. Korade to switch to the Time Warner Cable business class high speed service at \$84.95 per month. Mr. Cowie seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Minutes of April 15, 2009 - a correction was noted to the second page, third paragraph, line nine, an extra “a” needs to be removed. Ms. Ferenc made the motion to accept the minutes as amended. Mr. Cowie seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Privilege of the Floor - none requested.

Principals Report – Safety committee update: Mr. Helgerson reported that a committee has reviewed and revised the emergency procedures guide that is present in each classroom. He also told the board about an emergency practice drill that was held recently. With assistance from the town police and fire departments the school property was evacuated and everyone escorted to the main building of the Rumney Bible Conference. The drill went well, taking about 15 minutes for everyone to get to the conference grounds. The drill provided the administration and the town agencies with good information and ideas for improvement in the event of a real emergency. The board expressed their thanks and appreciation to Mr. Helgerson for his attention to these details. The board will review the final procedure guide when it is complete but will not need to approve it. Final approval rests with the administration.

Activities update: the school garden project, also known as “Russell Sprouts” is well under way. Raised boxes are in place, with more to come, and plants have been started in the classrooms. Outside planting should take place next week. The “RES Mastery Club” has been instituted by Mrs. Hinckley and Mrs. Kelly as a guide to offer students ways to move beyond their current levels of learning. The guidebooks present extra work and challenges for those students who complete assignments readily and are looking for

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more. The work can be done at home and has become a great motivating tool. “Middle School Madness” was held last Friday night. It was a night of fun and games open to all schools in the SAU. Attendance was not as good as anticipated but Mr. Helgerson felt it was busy enough and the students enjoyed the taco and smoothie bars.

Board Issues – Master plan input: no action has been taken, board members had been asked to review the plan on file with the town but there was no response. Some board members expressed confusion over what had been handed out and who had written it. In acknowledging that the document was about thirty years old they did not feel it was written by someone from the school and did not know where to start as far as re-writing it was concerned. Ms. Gaides offered to look into it in more detail and will give her thoughts on it at a future meeting.

Community Picnic: Ms. Ferenc reported that the school/community picnic will be held on Thursday, June 18 from 11:00 to 1:00. The picnic is open to the public and notices will be posted in the REST, at locations around town and in the Plymouth Record Enterprise.

Signing of bi-monthly manifest: Current procedure states that all manifests should have the signature of three board members before checks are released. This has become difficult to do on a timely basis due to the inability of board members to get to the school during school hours. As a result, checks have been mailed and signatures obtained at the next board meeting. Discussion took place regarding the use of e-mail and other ways to get the information to board members so they could review the list and ask questions on a timely basis. It was decided to request that a copy of the manifest be sent to all board members directly from the SAU office. Any specific questions are to be directed to Mae, the bookkeeper for Rumney. After that, members are to send an e-mail to the treasurer, Ms. Downing, with their approval. After three approvals are received by e-mail the checks can be released. Copies of the e-mails will be retained with the manifest to signify the approval.

End of the year budget/surplus: Mr. Cloutier requested that the information be made available as soon as possible. With barely a month left in the fiscal year, decisions need to be made regarding the use of any surplus funds. A special meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 3, 2009, from 6:00 to 7:00PM to review the budget. Mr. Helgerson was directed to obtain “wish lists” from the staff and maintenance department in the event funds are left over to be encumbered before year end.

AYP Appeal: A letter has been written by Ms. Gaides and reviewed by Mr. Cowie to send to the head of the Department of Education. Although the board recognizes that the Russell School does not meet the guidelines for a formal appeal, all agreed to send the letter as a way to state their disapproval of the way scores are interpreted.

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Handbook/policy review: as stated at previous meetings, all are in agreement that some policies are in need of review and updating, particularly the attendance policy. Mr. Helgerson has done extensive work in reviewing the attendance policy and comparing it with other schools and consulted with staff. The complete handbook will need to be reviewed before the start of the next school year. Mr. Helgerson will pass on his notes and suggestions to Ms. Barrett-Morse for her to consider as revisions are made. Mrs. Adams requested permission to allow for teacher input for the handbook. All agreed that would be most helpful and to be coordinated by the principal.

Correspondence: Ms. Gaides distributed a message from Carol Hahn of the SAU office regarding the lack of availability of preschool classes in the Rumney/Wentworth area and the implications that may have in the near future.

Reminder – graduation night will be Friday, June 19, 2009, all are invited. Mr. Cowie inquired if there were any students ineligible to graduate with the class. Mr. Helgerson responded that there is one student who has recently presented some problems with behavior and academic issues. He was advised to review the policy on hand to be sure that correct procedures are followed.

Privilege of the Floor #2 – none requested.

Non-Public session – Ms. Ferenc made a motion at 7:35PM to enter into non-public session to discuss a personnel issue. Mr. Cowie seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

At 7:50 PM Mr. Cowie made the motion to adjourn. Ms. Ferenc seconded the motion. No action was taken as a result of the non-public session and all voted in favor to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy McQuinn-Downing