

**RUMNEY SCHOOL BOARD
RUSSELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
JULY 29, 2009
MINUTES**

Board Members Present: Yvon Cloutier, Paula Ferenc, Tom Cowie, and Jerry Thibodeau (4:50)

Administration Present: Holly Barrett-Morse, Ethel Gaides

Others Present: Kim Catucci, Paula Thompson

Non-Public Session: At 4:30 PM. Ms. Ferenc made the motion to enter into non-public session to discuss personnel issues. Mr. Cloutier seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Public Session: The motion was made by Mr. Cloutier and seconded by Ms. Ferenc to enter into public session at 5:10 PM, all voted in favor. Based on discussion during the non-public session the board voted to accept the recommendations of Dr. Gaides with documentation as presented on cost factors for the aides. Mr. Cowie made the motion to accept the nominations of Clement J. Soscia 30% health teacher, and Ginger Darling as Title I mathematics teacher for the 2009-2010 school year. Mr. Cloutier seconded the nominations. The nominations were approved by all. Mr. Cowie made the motion to accept the nominations of Karen Flynn as library media assistant (20 hours per week), Veronica Besemer as 1:1 classroom aide, Joyce Morrison as grade five classroom aide, and Sarah Carlson as 1:1 kindergarten aide (60%). Mr. Cloutier seconded the nominations. The nominations were approved by all. Mr. Cowie made the motion to increase Shannon Bender from 60% Kindergarten aide (PM) to an additional 40% special education aide (AM) for grades 2-3. Mr. Cloutier seconded the nomination. The nomination was approved by all. Ms. Ferenc made the motion to accept the nomination of Tammy LaPointe as 8th grade class advisor. Mr. Cloutier seconded the nomination. The nomination was approved by all.

Agenda Review: Mr. Cloutier requested that we have a plan for the Russell Sister's 2009-2010 school year funds, in particular a music request for the September school board meeting. He also requested that the Winter Program discussion be scheduled for early fall and to invite Peggy Grass to meet with the school board.

Minutes of June 17, 2009: Corrections to the minutes include Ms. Ferencs' title and correcting the spelling of Speare Hospital. Ms. Ferenc made the motion to accept the minutes as amended, Mr. Cloutier seconded and all voted in favor.

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Privilege of the Floor #1: Paula Thompson, advisor to the Class of 2009, reported to the school board that the balance of the 8th grade class fund is at \$1234.01. She discussed several possibilities for the fund. She recommended to the school board to leave \$1,000 in escrow for the next class. She reported that she spent several hundred dollars out of her pocket last year in preparation for Old Home Day and she was concerned that 8th grade advisors may not have that amount of cash to put “upfront”. The school board asked Dr. Gaides to refer to Mr. Petrin at Central Office to see if the school can keep the funds in escrow to support the needs of fronting funds to prepare for Old Home Day.

Principal’s Report: Mrs. Barrett-Morse shared with the board the summer school program. Of the 38 students registered, attendance averaged 80%, with the ten pre-kindergarteners having the highest attendance. She felt the program went well, the staff was great and she was impressed with the student’s involvement and level of interest. Mrs. Barrett-Morse discussed a middle school staff meeting that was held and that there was 100% attendance. A three day NELMS conference was recently attended by Mrs. Barrett-Morse and two middle school teachers. She felt it was a great conference, good presentations and that they returned with lots of helpful information. The middle school scheduling has been revised using new information obtained at the conference. The meeting and conference was paid for by the Title IIA redistribution grants. A team of four teachers will be attending a writing conference in August, the Six Traits Writing Workshop, this is also grant funded.

The handbook was discussed at length. Mrs. Barrett-Morse has been working with Miriam Downs and they have updated basic information such as dates and names of staff. They have revised the order of the information to make it more user friendly. Mr. Cloutier asked about the discipline policy and was told that it is in the handbook as it appears in the School Board Policy already on file. Clarification was discussed regarding what items are actual policies as compared to guidelines. No changes were made to the tardiness page at this time. Mrs. Barrett-Morse would like to meet with staff and be able to observe what is happening before instituting any changes. The handbook will be available at the school, unless other arrangements are made, for the board members to review the changes over the next week or so. After three members have reviewed and approved the handbook and notified Dr. Gaides of their approval, it will go the printers. A deadline of August 10, 2009 was requested to get those approvals.

Mr. Cloutier asked a few questions of Mrs. Barrett-Morse regarding the summer meeting with staff, the use of the term “in-service” day and budget concerns relating to conference expenses. It was clarified that the conference fees and paid staff days are covered by grants and will not conflict with the contractual in-service days that are part of the regular school calendar.

Board Issues: Budget – discussion was held regarding how the excess funds from the 2008 – 2009 budget year will be handled. Dr. Gaides was informed by Mr. Petrin at the Central Office that as discussed at previous meetings, \$10,000 was transferred to food service, \$18,064 has been encumbered for maintenance projects and \$40,000 will be used to offset future taxes. The question was raised in regards to the encumbered funds for maintenance and if there was a time table as to when those funds need to be spent. It was pointed out that although there is a list of

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needs that will easily use up those funds, the 2009-2010 budget for capital improvements was cut during budget negotiations and could some of the encumbered funds be saved for future needs?

Mr. Cloutier made a motion to table the approval of any spending for maintenance until a point of clarification is received regarding the use of those funds, i.e. can we hold onto them or do they need to be spent by a certain time. Mr. Cowie seconded the motion. Discussion followed as the suggested list was reviewed and items with safety concerns were highlighted. Mr. Cowie amended Mr. Cloutiers' motion to state that \$1800 be spent to replace the window in the nurses' office to bring it into compliance with the fire marshals report. Mr. Thibodeau seconded the motion and all voted in favor of the amendment. Another vote was taken and all voted in favor of the amended motion to spend \$1800 and to wait until further notice on the remaining funds.

Winter Program: information regarding the winter program has been removed from the handbook as the previous program is not longer feasible. New plans of how to proceed with a winter program will be discussed at a later date.

Dental Permission slip: Discussion was held regarding the terminology of the permission slip. There is debate over whether the form should be written so that parents have to give permission for their child to participate, or if students are automatically included in the program unless parents state that they do not want their child to be screened. Mrs. Barrett-Morse clarified for the board that the initial phase of the program is a very brief screening with a special light to detect potential problem areas. If additional dental work is recommended, the family is notified and another permission slip is required before any arrangements, if any, are made for further care. The director of the dental program requests that the screening be given to all students, with parents needing to "opt out" if they do not want to participate. The current handbook wording states that parents must give permission before any screening is done. It was decided that the handbook will remain the same with no action taken by the board.

Food Service: In recent years there have been three lunch periods. It has been decided that in order to help with class scheduling, food service will return to two lunch periods, with grades 1-4 in one period and grades 5-8 in the other. It was noted that there are increasing problems with collecting money from families. Over \$700 in lunch fees remain unpaid from the past school year. It is possible that many families are eligible for free and reduced meals but neglect to complete the paperwork required. Mrs. Cloutier inquired about using e-mail to remind families of monies due in an effort to reduce postage costs. Mr. Cowie felt that a general reminder would be OK but not to mention specifics of amounts due. Mrs. Barrett-Morse and Mrs. Cloutier will work together to try to get more families to apply for the free/reduced program.

Negotiations: At the last meeting Mr. Cloutier volunteered to work on the teacher contract negotiations and recommended Mr. Cowie to work with him again as they have worked well together in previous negotiations. Mr. Cowie stated that he would like to participate but is concerned that due to personal reasons he may not be able to put in the time that is required. It was noted that there will be approximately six meetings and they are held at the end of the school

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day for the convenience of the teachers. After some discussion, Mr. Thibodeau volunteered to be the second representative for the board.

Privilege of the Floor #2: none

Correspondence – the current manifest was signed and two recently received thank-you notes from former staff members were passed around. A handout from Mr. Halloran regarding the use of e-mail for school board business was distributed by Dr. Gaides.

At 6:55 PM Mr. Cowie made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Cloutier seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy McQuinn-Downing