

Board of Education, Concord School District
Annual Organization meeting and Regular meeting
January 3, 2017

Board members Clint Cogswell, Tom Croteau, Nathan Fennessy, Barbara Higgins, Jennifer Patterson, Jim Richards, member-elect Pam Wicks and Esther Elonga (student representative)

Administrators: *Superintendent* Terri Forsten, *Assistant Superintendent* Donna Palley, *Business Administrator* Jack Dunn, *Director of Human Resources* Larry Prince, *Director of Facilities* Matt Cashman

Annual Organizational Meeting

Superintendent Terri Forsten called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She recognized new Board member Pam Wicks, and welcomed Jennifer Patterson to her fourth term as school board member and Jim Richards to his second term. She pointed out those clauses in the Charter that govern the first meeting of the Board in each calendar year, as well as several policies related to Board process and conflicts of interest.

She then opened the floor to nominations for president of the School Board.

Tom Croteau nominated Clint Cogswell for president, noting that he carries a breadth and depth of history in the district and for his leadership. There were no other nominations.

The Board voted 9-0 to elect Clint Cogswell as president of the Concord School Board for 2017 (motioned by Mr. Croteau, seconded by Nathan Fennessy).

Board President Cogswell thanked the Board for its vote of confidence in his leadership, and opened the floor for nominations for vice president of the School Board.

Mr. Cogswell nominated Jennifer Patterson as vice president, noting that she is the best right-hand person possible. There were no other nominations.

The Board voted 9-0 to elect Jennifer Patterson as vice president of the Concord School Board for 2017 (motioned by Mr. Cogswell, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

Barb Higgins added that Ms. Patterson had been extremely helpful in acting as chairperson of the Instructional Committee in the past year, and is a true servant of the school district and the city.

Mr. Cogswell opened the floor for nominations for secretary of the School Board.

Maureen Redmond-Scura nominated Mr. Croteau as secretary of the Board. Jim Richards seconded the motion.

The Board voted 9-0 to elect Tom Croteau as secretary of the Concord School Board for 2017 (motioned by Ms. Redmond-Scura, seconded by Mr. Richards).

Mr. Cogswell reminded the Board about the appropriate use of electronic communication, noting that almost everything the Board does is open to the public, as it should be. He referred to Policy #150 Electronic Communication and the proper legal procedures for moving into non-public sessions.

Mr. Cogswell noted that he is in the process of forming committees. A maximum of four Board members will serve on each committee, to avoid a quorum of the Board on committee votes.

The Board voted 9-0 to adjourn the organizational meeting (motioned by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Ms. Redmond-Scura).

Concord School District
Board of Education
Regular monthly meeting
January 3, 2017

Board members: Clint Cogswell, Tom Croteau, Nathan Fennessy, Barb Higgins, Alana Kimball, Jennifer Patterson, Maureen Redmond-Scura, Jim Richards, Pam Wicks; student representative Esther Elonga

Administrators: *Superintendent Terri Forsten, Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley, Business Administrator Jack Dunn, Director of Human Resources Larry Prince, Director of Facilities Matt Cashman*

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

Board President Clint Cogswell called the meeting to order at 7:24 p.m.

Agenda Item 2. Approval of Agenda

Superintendent Forsten asked to amend the agenda to add updates on the steam to gas conversion; the water main break at BGS, and new information on the bond process for the \$12 million loan. There will be an action item from Central Office.

The Board voted 9-0 to approve the agenda with revisions as noted (motioned by Jennifer Patterson, seconded by Nathan Fennessy).

Agenda Item 3. Public Comment– agenda items only

Betty Hoadley, a resident and taxpayer of Concord, spoke about two issues, referencing Policies 112 and 801 (Publicity Releases), relative to disseminating information to the public about Board considerations and actions.

She noted that the budget presentation will begin in early February and will include costs of conversion from Concord Steam to natural gas, downshifting of costs from the state, and full-day kindergarten among many other items. She noted that full-day kindergarten has not been studied thoroughly, comparing it to the conversion to a four-year high school, which went very smoothly and was not a matter of “everybody’s doing it.” She noted that there has been no full-day kindergarten study except in 2009-2010, for which Ms. Patterson and Mr. Cogswell were present, and at that time, the issue about space in the new elementary schools had to be settled. At that time, the decision was made not to include full-day kindergarten for several very significant reasons.

Mrs. Hoadley noted that, late in 2015, a small group of people came to a few Board meetings to give input to the Board on this issue: over half of them were spouses, friends, and campaign volunteers for people running for state offices. Their platforms had to do with full-day kindergarten and, she said “politics had arrived at the door” of the School Board, where it had not been in evidence before. She said that some of the arguments were specious and irrelevant, noting that the School Board is not the economic development director for the City of Concord, nor does it have any obligation to do things to attract families to the city.

The Board responded to this input, and a committee, run by the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent, was formed, which met from November to June 2016, and gathered a great deal of information. She said that she was not overwhelmed by references to research in the presentation of the report, and hopes that the written report that came from the committee was fully digested by School Board members.

Mrs. Hoadley noted that the School Board did not examine the philosophy of full-day kindergarten, and there has been no discussion of the merits/demerits of full-day kindergarten. Mrs. Hoadley looked to the Board to embrace a philosophy of full-day kindergarten; but rather, Instructional Committee meetings have focused merely on: implementing other programs; how to define full-day kindergarten; how to measure achievement, etc. She said she would have expected a unanimous vote (the vote on November 2 was closest to this). Mrs. Hoadley said she hoped the School Board was not simply sending a full-day kindergarten plan on to the budget process just to placate petitioners.

Mrs. Hoadley asked whether there will be a way to judge kindergarten achievement; how long the achievement results will last; whether it will dissipate by grade 3; whether there will be other social changes that take place because of full-day kindergarten, among other questions. Mrs. Hoadley noted that on November 4, the Board passed a motion on the recommendation of the Instructional Committee, and at that time, Ms. Patterson specifically requested that this option be fully described.

She noted that, importantly, the Concord School Board is an autonomous body with tax-appropriating privileges, and that the complicated budget process must play out. She emphasized that the Board must know how to answer the questions for taxpayers whether this is a valid proposal and what are the relevant pieces of data.

She suggested that the Board send a note or notice or newsletter or write a “My Turn” editorial in the newspaper so the community knows what proposals are going to the Board. She said that, if the Board wants the public to show up at the Public Hearings on the budget in March, they need to know, among other things, the scope of the full-day kindergarten program, what the School Board expects from it and how it will be judged.

She said that more than the initial \$1.2 million price tag, what is most troublesome is that this cost will continue every single year thereafter. Most of the cost is in labor,

which will escalate upward every year. While the School Board has consolidated eight elementary schools down to five, building three new schools in the process, no construction costs will compare to the ongoing cost of full-day kindergarten.

Mrs. Hoadley complimented the administrative staff, which has complied with every request the School Board has made: developed lower cost options, and costed out to miniscule level. She faulted the School Board, however, in that it did not take time to say “we cannot live without full-day kindergarten,” and noted that the taxpayers deserve that kind of information now, not after the fact. If the School Board truly believes that full-day kindergarten is the *one* thing that Concord really needs, it must articulate to the community what it is that is being proposed: what happened in the study, what has influenced the School Board, how thoughtful the School Board has been, and how complex and difficult its deliberation has been to reach that conclusion. She asked the Board to comply with its own Policy 112 – Publicity – Public Information.

Agenda Item 4. Presentation by Mill Brook School (MBS) students

Principal Phil Callanan discussed STEM in action at MBS, a pre-K to grade 2 school. He introduced Technology Integrator Bethany Roberge, who spoke about Project Lead the Way, and software programs Lexia and Dreambox that are already available in the District. She said that the STEM activities at MBS follow “Next-Generation” Science Standards. Mr. Callanan said that MBS prides itself in involving its families in every way possible. The monthly STEM activity, which is sent home, is a good example of this. Families complete the activities and present them at the school once a month on a weekend day. A STEM activity was also offered at a “Coffee with Callanan” for parents who attended.

Ms. Roberge noted that STEM provides a hands-on activity requiring problem-solving, a critical skill that needs to be developed; questioning; and applying knowledge to real-life application. She described an activity where students created a beanstalk using pipe cleaners, which required attention to the structure of the item (needs a base). Although students approached the problem differently, they were all given the same problem, using the same materials, with the same constraints and criteria.

Several other projects included designing a parachute for the Mill Brook owl (mascot); creating the longest paper chain possible using only one sheet of construction paper and working in a team; designing a house using marshmallows and toothpicks that was sturdy and big enough to fit the “3 little pigs;” building straw boats to convey mice across a river. Students learned about the properties of matter (solid, liquid and gas). In other projects, students learned about conductors and insulators (keep a popsicle from melting for one hour) and how to cooperate in order to build a bird perch. The STEM projects have involved families; for example, parents and siblings communicated with their children and worked together to develop a rake. Haley

Spencer (grade 2) and her mother Megan presented their project and the process they went through; and Evan (grade 1) and his brother David presented their project.

Board members had several questions about the design process, the materials and the challenges the students encountered.

ConcordTV Executive Director Doris Ballard and Josh Hardy discussed training opportunities for Rundlett Middle School and Concord High School students, new planned equipment for the CHS studio; and a new 5-year contract with the City and the School Board. They noted that ConcordTV has been back at CHS full-time since August. They are planning a comprehensive series of social media training workshops hosted by Concord Community Education in February. They noted that CHS has one of the best live morning-announcement high school shows in the state. She thanked the School Board for its support of ConcordTV.

Agenda Item 5. Recognitions

Student Board representative Esther Elonga noted that head custodian Angel Douglas retired today after 22 years with the District and that there was a celebration at the student center for her. Seniors are starting to receive their college acceptances. The "Celebration of Africa" has been postponed to January 10 due to adverse weather.

Agenda Item 6. Approval of Board Minutes

Mr. Cogswell reviewed the minutes of the Public Hearing on December 5, which was about the \$12 million bond that will fund various projects, and the minutes of the regular monthly meeting on December 5.

Mr. Cogswell noted that Concord resident and former Board President Betty Hoadley had recommended holding capital improvements to 5% of the budget, which has been past Board practice.

The Board voted 9-0 to approve the minutes of the Public Hearing and the regular monthly meeting on December 5 (moved by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Maureen Redmond-Scura).

Agenda Item 7. Joint Capital Facilities / Instructional Committee

The minutes of the joint meeting on December 5, having been reported verbally at the December 5 Board meeting, were included for the record.

Agenda Item 8. Instructional Committee

Instructional Committee acting chairperson Jennifer Patterson presented the report of the meeting on December 7, which was a presentation of the Annual Enrollment Report. The Committee reviewed the 10-year enrollment history, which showed a 12% decline since 2007; class sizes; special permission requests; RMS and CHS enrollments; course enrollments; AP classes; the district music program; strong CRTC enrollments with several new programs; and special education numbers (15%) district-wide.

Agenda Item 9. Communications and Policy Committee

Communications and Policy Committee chairperson Jennifer Patterson presented the report of the meeting on December 14. She noted that the committee reviewed a number of policies, including the proposed wellness policy and the transportation policy, which have been deferred for future discussion. She read the two policies which were before the Board for a first reading: Policy #683 School, Family and Community Partnerships and Policy #684 Family and Community Engagement with Respect to Title I Programs.

Nathan Fennessy asked whether the New Hampshire School Board Association (NHSBA) recommended that policy 684 be split into two. Supt. Forsten noted that the recommendation from NHSBA was developed with input from NH DOE and addresses several very specific components related to Title I students.

Ms. Patterson read the five policies before the Board for a second reading: Policy #133 Minutes; Policy #462 Criminal Records Checks; Policy #642 Opening Exercises - Patriotic Exercises; Policy #518 Access to Public School Programs by Nonpublic, Charter School and Home-Educated Pupils; and Policy #875 Relations with Police Authorities. There was no further discussion of these policies.

The Board voted 9–0 to adopt revisions to Policy #133, as presented (moved by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Barb Higgins).

The Board voted 9–0 to adopt revisions to Policy #462, as presented (moved by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Ms. Redmond-Scura).

The Board voted 9–0 to adopt revisions to Policy #642, as presented (moved by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Mr. Fennessy).

The Board voted 9–0 to adopt Policy #518, as presented (moved by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Tom Croteau).

The Board voted 9–0 to adopt Policy #875, as presented (moved by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Ms. Redmond-Scura).

Updates

Bond Process

Mr. Dunn provided a review of the bonding process. Section 14 of the 2012 Charter does not require that a notice must be in the newspaper for a public hearing; but a Public Hearing needs to be noticed in the newspaper per state law. If the Board approves, the notice of a Public Hearing with a special Board meeting to follow in two weeks, will go into the paper tomorrow.

The Board voted 9-0 to hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, January 18, 2017 and introduce the \$12 million loan resolution as presented – document #AM59074406.1-R (moved by Mr. Fennessy, seconded by Mr. Cogswell).

Facilities

Matt Cashman informed the Board that a break in an 8" incoming water main at Broken Ground School (right outside the Principal's office and the bus stop) had been discovered. While there was no water inside, Broken Ground School will be closed on Wednesday, January 4 for this repair. The pipe is the District's responsibility because it is within the school property line. The City has been very responsive and helpful in its response and with its specialized equipment to locate the break.

Agenda Item 10. Proposed calendar of meetings

Superintendent Forsten discussed the proposed Board committee meetings for January and February.

Agenda Item 11. Public comment

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item 12. Adjournment

The Board voted 9-0 to adjourn (motioned by Barb Higgins, seconded by Mr. Fennessy).

The Board adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Croteau, *Secretary*