

Concord School District
Board of Education
Special Board meeting
March 30, 2020

Board members present: Jennifer Patterson, *President*; Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Liza Poinier, Jim Richards

Board member absent: Danielle Smith

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

Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

Board President Jennifer Patterson called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. She noted that a roll call would be taken to determine which Board members were participating. Based on Governor Sununu's emergency order #12, and the necessity of all Board members to remain in separate locations to protect public health during the COVID-19 emergency, she as Board President had determined that all members would participate remotely, and this emergency determination would be noted in the minutes.

Ms. Patterson said she would confirm by roll call who was participating, that participating members were able to speak and to hear each other, and whether anyone else was present in the room from which Board members were participating. She said no votes were anticipated during the meeting, but if a vote was taken it would be by roll call. The following Board members noted that they were present, could speak and hear others speaking on the call, and that no one else was present in the room: Gina Cannon; Tom Croteau; Chuck Crush; Barb Higgins; David Parker; Liza Poinier; Jim Richards; Jennifer Patterson.

Danielle Smith was not present.

Interim Superintendent Frank Bass, Business Administrator Jack Dunn and Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley were present at the SAU; Director of Human Resources Larry Prince and Director of Facilities Matt Cashman were present remotely.

Ms. Patterson noted, in the event she lost connectivity or was unable to participate in the meeting, she had determined, in consultation with Vice President Jim Richards and Secretary Barb Higgins, that Gina Cannon would chair the remainder of the meeting. Ms. Cannon had participated in NHSBA training on the requirements and procedures for conducting meetings in conformity with New Hampshire's right-to-know law. Ms. Patterson expressed appreciation for her willingness to serve as backup.

Ms. Patterson noted that a declaration of an emergency meeting which would suspend the presence of quorum or a physical location under the Governor's emergency order #12 and [RSA 91-A](#) must be stated and included in the minutes. She read the following statement:

In calling the meeting, the Board President, in consultation with Interim Superintendent Frank Bass, determined that the protection of public health, in keeping with the Governor's emergency order #12, dictates that no physical location be provided for today's meeting and that Board members participate remotely.

Pursuant to paragraph 3 of Emergency Order #12, I declare this to be an "emergency" meeting per RSA 91-A:2, III (b) qualifying for suspension of the requirement that a quorum be present at a physical location of the meeting.

The requirement of a physical location from which the public can observe is also suspended based on the following steps that the District has taken, consistent with Emergency Order #12:

Members of the public can observe the meeting by watching on CCTV, by joining on their computers, or by calling in on their phones. We are not taking public comment during this meeting, so public lines will remain muted except for a brief test we will conduct in anticipation of the public hearing on April 2.

The meeting has been posted for more than 24 hours on the District's website, and information about the meeting and how to participate remotely was disseminated last week to community members.

District staff will be available by phone during the meeting for members of the public to contact if they are unable to connect to the meeting. If there is a systemic problem preventing the public from observing the meeting, District staff will inform me and I will recess the meeting if the problem can be addressed quickly, and adjourn the meeting if it cannot be addressed quickly.

On the basis of these actions, I believe the meeting may go forward without a physical location, and that holding the meeting in this manner is consistent with the emergency order, other relevant provisions of RSA 91-A, and the protection of public health during the COVID19 emergency.

Ms. Patterson noted that this meeting took the place of the usual Executive Committee meeting. Administrators presented information on the upcoming calendars of meetings, as well as the agenda for the April 6 monthly Board meeting. While the meeting was open to the public, the Board did not take public comment, nor vote or decide on any substantive matters. This meeting provided an opportunity to test the remote participation process in advance of the public hearings and monthly meeting.

Superintendent Bass reported on a TV show of that day, with NH Senate president Donna Soucy, Senator Dan Feltes, and Jack Dunn. He noted that the District had done a very good job setting up meal delivery for students and getting remote learning well established. He noted that Mr. Dunn had helped start a food drive in the community; the school nurses had provided materials to Concord Hospital; and the state Department of Homeland Security

had been able to borrow some health materials. Dr. Bass said the District had a good remote learning program, but that he was even more impressed with additional efforts that had been made to address the public health crisis.

Mr. Dunn showed the draft Agenda for the April 6 Board meeting. Ms. Cannon suggested that anything that was not absolutely necessary be put off until such time as the public could physically attend. Some of the items related to personnel were removed, as they could be voted on at a later time.

Tom Croteau noted that he would provide an overview of the Superintendent search process to date, noting that confidentiality at this point must be observed. That said, he thought it was very important that the public know the status of the search. Ms. Cannon noted that the search process may be extended again and the Board might want to develop an additional schedule. Ms. Patterson commented that the Board was very committed to have public input in this process. Mr. Croteau noted that it was a matter of very fine timing when the Board could announce candidate names so the public, staff and Board members could meet and talk with the candidates.

The Board reviewed the April, May and June calendars

Mr. Dunn discussed the remainder of the budget process, as it would be done electronically. He said that slides would be posted online so the public could view them before and during the meeting. He said that he and Dr. Bass had met with the *Monitor* that afternoon to review the changes. He said he had sent the proposed staffing changes to the Board on March 23rd, showing those reductions. These would be highlighted at the public hearing on April 2. Dr. Bass noted that he and the administrators had met and recognized the negative impact on Concord taxpayers under the circumstances. The budget had been trimmed down by \$1.5 million, with the removal of 18+ new proposed positions. He said he would then need to meet with the building Principals to reallocate positions.

Dr. Bass noted that many had been stepping forward with creative initiatives, from teachers and students. He said some students reported this was “kind of like starting college early,” and that most were getting used to a different daily flow. He had also heard from parents reporting positively that they were getting to work with their kids on a more regular basis. He said that parents were jumping in and trying to help shape the lessons, and that he was really pleased with how the community was responding to the emergency.

Ms. Patterson noted that Dr. Bass’ TV shows have been wonderful, and that information going out from the schools has been robust.

Ms. Cannon commented that another district was just now beginning to get its AP classes online; was otherwise mailing out photocopied paper packets to students. She said it was incredible that this district was so far ahead of the curve, and that she wanted everyone to appreciate how amazing this district is.

Mr. Croteau said he was grateful that the administration had the foresight to take a good hard look at this budget to be able to trim it by \$1 million. He said that, when looking at a budget, it is difficult to predict what increases citizens might be able to handle.

David Parker said he was worried that staff would get overwhelmed; about social isolation; and how that can affect mental health of the student population. He suggested the community listen to one another, be nimble; be kind. He said most people know hundreds of people who are now not employed. He said that are needs that this Board would not have answers to. Dr. Bass noted that he had had several calls from teachers who are also parents: teachers with 125 students, and several children of their own under 5 years old. He noted that Principals were in touch with teachers almost daily, and that the administration was remote conferencing with Principals on an every-other-day basis. Principals were making adjustments building by building.

There was additional discussion about the function of the remote conferencing software. A member of the public called in to continue the testing.

Agenda Item 13. Adjournment

The Board voted 8-0 to adjourn (motioned by Jim Richards, seconded by Ms. Higgins).

The Board adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Higgins, *Secretary*