

Concord School District
Special Board Meeting
May 12, 2020

Board President Jennifer Patterson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and read the following statement:

As President of the Concord School Board, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

The business we intend to conduct today is necessary due to the need to continue moving forward with urgent business of the Board, including the Superintendent search and planning for Concord High Graduation.

We will take public comment by unmuting phone lines one by one during the public comment period. It would be helpful for those wishing to comment to indicate their names in the "comment" function of *Microsoft Teams* so we may call on you more easily. In accordance with Board Policy #136, public comments are limited to 5 minutes per person to allow all interested parties to comment.

We encourage the submission of comments via e-mail at: concordinfo@sau8.org. Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, we are:

a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access by other electronic means: we are utilizing *Microsoft Teams* for this meeting. All Board members have the ability to communicate contemporaneously through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone # (925) 391-1169, Conf ID: 763 078 446#, by clicking on the link provided on the sau8.org website. The meeting will be broadcast contemporaneously on ConcordTV's education channel, and a recording of the meeting will be posted on the ConcordTV website. **Due to an inadvertent conflict between the posted meeting time and ConcordTV's own annual budget hearing, after the approval of the agenda, I will recess this meeting until 7:00 p.m. or such time as ConcordTV is able to broadcast this meeting simultaneously.**

b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting: we previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using *Microsoft Teams* or telephonically. The meeting and pertinent instructions were posted on the District website, sau8.org, more than 24 hours prior to the meeting, and are highlighted at the top of the website.

c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access: if anybody has a problem, please call 603-513-9008.

d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting: in the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled. **Again, we will be recessing this meeting so as to enable it to be broadcasted contemporaneously on CCTV.**

All members will be participating remotely, and any votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

- Board members present:** Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Liza Poinier, Danielle Smith, Jennifer Patterson
- Board members absent:** Chuck Crush, Jim Richards
- Administrators present:** *Interim Superintendent Frank Bass, Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley, Business Administrator Jack Dunn, CHS Principal Mike Reardon, RMS Principal Paulette Fitzgerald*
- Other participants:** Art Bettencourt of NESDEC

Ms. Patterson briefly reviewed the agenda, then recessed the meeting to the end of ConcordTV budget meeting.

Ms. Patterson reconvened the Special Board meeting at 7:00 p.m., recapped the emergency meeting statement, and took roll call of participating Board members.

- Board members present:** Gina Cannon, Tom Croteau, Barb Higgins, David Parker, Liza Poinier, Danielle Smith, Jennifer Patterson
- Board members absent:** Chuck Crush, Jim Richards
- Administrators present:** *Interim Superintendent Frank Bass, Assistant Superintendent Donna Palley, Business Administrator Jack Dunn, CHS Principal Mike Reardon*
- Other participants:** Art Bettencourt of NESDEC

Ms. Patterson noted that, after a diligent and thorough effort supported by NESDEC, the Board is suspending its Superintendent search. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, the finalists made the difficult decision to withdraw their names from consideration. She thanked everyone who participated in the process, and assured the community that the search would resume in the fall. She noted extensive community, staff and student input in the development of a “successful candidate” profile, and the work of the screening committee which narrowed the field to five semifinalists and then two finalists for consideration by the Board. She thanked Mr. Croteau for his leadership on the search, and

Mr. Dunn and Ms. Smith for their considerable work on the entire process. She said the Board would develop a plan for moving forward with the help of NESDEC. Mr. Croteau thanked Mr. Bettencourt for his dedication to the search. Ms. Cannon added that the search committee did pick two excellent candidates. Ms. Patterson also thanked Superintendent Bass for his excellent work and dedication to the District since he came on Board in November 2019, noting the completion of his contract at the end of June.

Concord High School Graduation

Superintendent Bass noted that the class of 2020 had missed the senior trip, prom and all the other events of the remainder of the seniors' final year of high school. He said he, CHS Principal Mike Reardon and other CHS administrators, and particularly Administrative Assistant Lisa Lamb had been working with the NH DOE, Concord's police chief Brad Osgood and administrators on a proposal that would meet all the criteria established by the Governor and NHDHHS. He thanked Police Chief Osgood particularly for his diligent and detailed work on the plan.

Mr. Reardon described the various permutations of the plans. The original plan was to have three separate graduation ceremonies, one for each Commons. The current plan, which could still change based on additional input from health and law enforcement, would be a single ceremony. He described starting at 9 a.m. on Saturday June 13, with a rain date of June 14. There are anticipated being approximately 300 graduating seniors. He showed a diagram of Memorial Field, designed by teacher George Golden, which would provide an "8-foot box" delineated by painted lines for each senior. Parents would be asked to drop students off in the Memorial Field parking lot (with parents then parking on South Fruit Street, at the State Hospital or in the senior parking lot off Warren Street). No parents would be present at the ceremony itself. Seniors would wear masks prepared by teacher Jennifer Speidel and Board member Barb Higgins. Students would line up alongside the track. Administrators would need to communicate directly and clearly with both parents and students about the stringent social-distancing, mask-wearing expectations of them during the course of the ceremony. Music would be available "remotely;" seniors would march in; faculty would be seated facing the seniors on either side of the new stage. Four student speakers would include valedictorian Victoria Yang, salutatorian Joanna Nichols, a "memory chair" speaker and the winner of a competitive speaking contest. Poetry Out Loud champion Sydney Kilgore would be composing an original poem for the senior class. NH Senators Jeanne Shaheen and Maggie Hassan have planned to submit recorded speeches for the seniors as well. Each graduate, still wearing a mask, would come up the ramp and retrieve their diploma from a table on which it had been placed by a gloved administrator. The ceremony is planned to be broadcast on radio and on ConcordTV. At the end of the ceremony, seniors would process out of the field and begin the March of the Graduates accompanied by the high school band drummers (masked), up South Fruit Street and all the way around the high school in three rows. Parents and community members would line the street and around the school, making as much celebratory noise as possible. Social distances would be marked off along the streets, by family. Several golf carts would be provided for seniors who were unable to walk the distance. The administrative team and school volunteers would be available to guide students in safe

distancing. Arriving finally at the senior lot, parents would meet their students in their cars. Principal Reardon said he felt the administration would be able to make this graduation very special, with the cooperation of students.

Several Board members expressed appreciation for the enthusiasm and work that had been done on this plan. Ms. Patterson acknowledged the necessary future conversation with NH DHHS required before completion of this plan, to ensure the safest possible event. There were questions about the changing nature of health guidance on gatherings, and what liability might be presented. There were concerns expressed about the willingness of community members to adhere to the event guidelines. Superintendent Bass emphasized that the event as outlined would not take place without the approval of state health officials. He noted that there were several contingency plans for various aspects of the overall plan. Principal Reardon noted that the District did not have the authority to make people stay in their cars. Superintendent Bass noted that a meeting was being set up between the administration and NH DHHS for a determination about the plan.

Spring Coach stipends

Mr. Dunn referenced an article in the *Concord Monitor* about spring coach stipends. The spring season was not cancelled until mid-late April. The Director of Physical Education and Sport had encouraged coaches to be in contact with their students prior to the season being cancelled, so they had done some work on behalf of the teams though the teams did not begin formal practices or compete. He proposed the payment of 25% of coach stipends as a good-faith gesture acknowledging conditioning work and/or virtual meets, which coaches may have already done. Mr. Dunn noted that the total budgeted cost would have been \$69,000 (not including FICA and NHRS expenses for coaches who were also employees); 25% of that would be \$15,000 plus FICA/NHRS. Mr. Dunn noted that non-athletic co-curricular stipends, which are year-long, would be paid at 100%. At the athletic level, coaches had been doing conditioning and/or other work with students. Stipends are typically paid by May 29. Mr. Parker said he felt the public should be given an opportunity to provide input on this item, which had not been included on the posted meeting agenda.

Public comment

There was no public comment.

Ms. Higgins made a motion to pay 25% of the spring coach stipends at a cost of \$15,000 plus associated benefits.

Mr. Dunn commented briefly on the agenda of a proposed Finance Committee meeting related to the unreserved fund balance, noting essentially that the partial dispensation of the coach stipends would not affect the future budget.

The Board voted 7-0 by roll call (Ms. Cannon, Mr. Croteau, Ms. Higgins, Mr. Parker, Ms. Poinier, Ms. Smith and Ms. Patterson voted aye) to pay spring coach stipends at 25% (motioned by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

Ms. Patterson made a motion to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II(b), the hiring of any person as a public employee.

The Board voted 7-0 by roll call (Ms. Cannon, Mr. Croteau, Ms. Higgins, Mr. Parker, Ms. Poinier, Ms. Smith and Ms. Patterson voted aye) to enter non-public session at 8:23 p.m. under RSA 91-A:3, II(b) The hiring of any person as a public employee (motioned by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Ms. Cannon).

Ms. Patterson made a motion to come out of non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II(b), the hiring of any person as a public employee.

The Board voted 7-0 by roll call (Ms. Cannon, Mr. Croteau, Ms. Higgins, Mr. Parker, Ms. Poinier, Ms. Smith and Ms. Patterson voted aye) to come out of non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II(b), the hiring of any person as a public employee at 8:49 p.m. (motioned by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Mr. Croteau).

Ms. Patterson summarized the discussion that occurred in non-public session, the next steps in the Superintendent search. This search would resume next year with NESDEC as consultant, as under the original contract this contingency was included.

Ms. Patterson made a motion to seal the minutes of the non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II(b), the hiring of any person as a public employee, with respect to potential candidate names and similar identifying information

The Board voted 7-0 by roll call (Ms. Cannon, Mr. Croteau, Ms. Higgins, Mr. Parker, Ms. Poinier, Ms. Smith and Ms. Patterson voted aye) to seal the minutes of the non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II(b), the hiring of any person as a public employee with respect to potential candidate names and similar identifying information (motioned by Ms. Patterson, seconded by Ms. Smith).

The Board voted 7-0 to adjourn (motioned by Ms. Higgins, seconded by Ms. Cannon).

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Higgins, *Secretary*
Linden Jackett, *Recorder*