

**BETHLEHEM BOARD OF EDUCATION
BETHLEHEM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BETHLEHEM, NH 03574**

**DATE: JUNE, 15TH 2022
TIME: 5:30 PM**

BETHLEHEM BOARD MEETING MINUTES- Draft

MOTION MADE BY JENNIFER LUCAS, SECONDED BY JAMES NOYES TO APPROVE THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE MONEY AWARDED FROM THE ACADIA GRANT. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSES.

Sue mentions additional opportunities with the Acadia Grant. Additional funds might be available, and this could just be the beginning of the partnership and resource that is Acadia--more information to come as all unfolds.

PRESENT: Principal Sue Greenlaw, Superintendent Tari Thomas, Business Manager Toni Butterfield, Chairman Bob Weir, Board Members; James Noyes and Jennifer Lucas. Board members not present; Becky Beno and Tim Fleury.

I. Call to Order:

CHAIRMAN ROBERT WEIR CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 5:37 PM, ROLL CALL: CHAIRMAN ROBERT WEIR, JAMES NOYES, JENNIFER LUCAS. NOTE THAT TIM FLEURY AND BECKY BENO NOT PRESENT AT TONIGHT'S MEETING.

II. Announcements & Good News

Principal Greenlaw shared that the first end of the year PD day went well today. Laura Clerkin came in to talk about how the Library will be providing access for BES staff and students. Laura mentioned all that they at the Library can offer as a community resource. They (school and Library staff) are excited and looking forward to that experience next year as the Bethlehem Library will act as their school library. Conversation ensued about different programs and backgrounds of the town librarians. Sue states the end of the year went well at BES. Students and staff were excited for field trips and happy about more "normal" routines. The last day of school presented students that were both happy and sad. Sue states that more and more students are very sad that the school year ends for a multitude of reasons. Conversation ensued.

III. Approval of the Minutes

MOTION MADE BY JAMES NOYES, SECONDED BY JENNIFER LUCAS FOR THE APPROVAL OF MAY 10th, 2022 MEETING MINUTES. MOTIONED PASSED.

IV. Public Input

None

V. New Business

None

VI. Continuing Business

None

VII. Standing Reports

A. Principal

1. Principal's Report

Sue states that Allison Culver said in the past individuals at the school have done presentations for the board to talk and show what they are doing in the building— one per board meeting perhaps. Sue proposes this to the Board that this should be brought back. Wouldn't contain classroom teachers necessarily, more like supporting staff (art, Spec.Ed., STEM etc.) Conversation ensued about what this could look like. The Board would love it to be brought back to the board meetings.

Sue states benchmarking went well this year. Next year they are going to start earlier so there is not so much for students to work through. She states that the state test results have already come back. James mentioned that a student expressed increased anxiety about testing and what that means for the student. Conversation ensued about Summer Science Camp. Sue said she will bring up the idea that there could be some extra communication regarding the results from testing and the option/consideration for summer science camp. Conversation ensued.

James wanted to know if students were talked to about the importance of those testing results and why they are needed/done. Sue states that students are explained about the ways these tests are used and how benchmarking helps with teaching—she talked about 29th ranking of BES in the Fall, and how that connects to the testing itself as well. Sue explains that state testing is not used for any grading at BES, as common core standards are not always aligned with the state testing questions for grade levels. They do not “teach to the test.” Conversion ensued. Next year, the hope is to eliminate winter benchmarking, just do Fall and Spring benchmarking—then after April break do state testing on the earlier side. Bob says that COVID could have had a huge impact on this testing experience now and maybe that added to the stressors of the testing process. James states that benchmarking seemed to be more meaningful for students but the state test was not as clear but also felt like higher stakes. Conversation ensued about the fact that the testing process is not user friendly and very technological. Sue states that her and Steve Hoyt, along with other educators in the state of NH, went to the state a few years ago and expressed their horror about the length of the test. Bob asks if we are still under Common Core, and Sue confirms that is true.

2. COVID Check In

No conversation.

B. Superintendent

1. Monthly Superintendent Report

Superintendent Thomas shared the EOY report. Discussed this past year's hiring and 19 changes to the Stronger Together document. She expressed the multitude of information provided for all the annual meetings this year and how Kate will have a good template to follow. There has been great transition planning with Kate as well, and Kate is excited to start with SAU #35. Tari states that she attended both Profile and Lisbon's graduations, and that it was nice to see those schools come together for a mostly normal graduation.

2. July Board Meeting

Tari asks the Board if they want a July meeting. Board states they do not.

VII. Business Manager

1. Surplus & Deficit Statement

2. Year End Projects & Purchases 2022

Toni states that there might have been some confusion about the end of the year and the ability for purchases and approval of those purchases.

Discussion that there is flexibility to the June pause we have experienced and that if there is an abundance of needs, we can extend to July 15th.

Discussion ensued about what this might look like. Toni states that they do have the power to make those adjustments in timing if needed.

3. ESSER Grant Finances

Toni handed out the report that was created and provided to the state, and was also put up quickly by Nikki Kerstetter on the website. It was both needed and required, and was something Toni worked on in order to ensure we were all set. We received the ESSER money. Sue came up with the list that helped focus the spending. Encumbered money was also taken into account. Sue wrote up the grant. Spreadsheets were created to break down all aspects of the uses of the grant, which includes 2022/2023 and 2023/2024. Conversation ensued.

The outdoor playground/classroom is still being brainstormed and looked at. Sue has been in touch with a gentleman from National Playground. He scoped out the playground spaces at BES, and stated that they don't have a lot of space for a lot of the projects. It is looking like the monetary amount could very well decrease. He states that he likes to include wooded areas when planning outdoor Ed space. Sue states that the easternmost fence is going away and is being replaced by a chain link fence extending into the woods—in order to allow students access to play in the wooded areas. Sue also states that they will be moving the fence by the parking lot up the hill to the actual parking lot. They are looking into kits for two outdoor classrooms, which looks like less money than originally thought. They will need volunteers to assemble in the future. There is a need to replace the drainage to prevent the flooding in the basement level.

Steve Hoyt has been in contact with companies regarding the fence. The original company is willing to come and remove the fence that is being moved and replaced at no cost, then the other company will come in to install the new fence and the change in location of the other. James asks if they know what they are going to do with the materials. James suggests that they keep it for repairs. Sue agrees that is a great idea.

Bryan Smith wants to try to get a classroom on wheels for technology/STEM based learning. Looking to put that in for the grant for a little over \$7500 if they can. Toni states that 20% of the ESSER grant needs to go towards student growth and academic recovery and teachers; has to be used for anything that makes the school a safer place for kids and what kids lost from Covid. Social emotional learning is a big piece of that, and Sue believes that the outdoors ideas/applications can be used for this grant as there is a broad scope. Conversation ensued about the ESSER grant and how it is being used across the nation.

4. Fuel Bids

No one is doing fuel bids. Toni mentioned that we are going to do something in the Fall. Conversation ensues about the current fuel situation as a nation. The group states that pellets didn't jump that much. BES uses pellets as much as they can, then uses oil as a back up. The hope is to keep it that way the best that they can.

5. Food Service Contract

Toni explains the process of how the food service contract works— lots of back and forth between the state, the SAU, and the food service before anything is signed. Toni says that everything is good to go at this time, and that the contract can be signed. At this time, it looks like the program is in the positive and not the negative as it usually is. Sue asked Toni, was the staffing issue the reason behind this. Toni said no, that is not it as she has also looked into that as well. Conversation ensued. Toni states that due to the absence of one of the cafeteria workers, the one that remained at the school asked for a stipend for being alone, and that is what they, Cafe Services, are doing for her. Toni states that Chris mentioned that keeping good people while maintaining the bottom line is important to them. Chris said that they should have made a more conscious effort to communicate details with the school and SAU. Conversation ensues.

Toni said that she feels good about sending things to the state for approval before having the board sign off on anything related to food service. It is stated that there are invoices and receipts for the inventory, but not the labor. Toni and James agree that they should get that paper trail for the labor for cafe services as well as what is already provided so that the SAU/Board has all the details. Conversation ensued. Subsidizing pay as a supervisor? Conversation ensues about connecting with other schools to see what they are doing as well. Several members suggest that the auditors might be interested in this topic as well.

HWB Contract:

Discussion ensued about the changes in the services. Sue believes that the services provided by HWB will be more efficient and effective than what we are having at this time. BES is looking forward to the partnership.

6. DOCU Sign Check In

Toni asks if all is going well. James states that it is.

7. Auditors Discussion

Plodzik and Sanderson: Toni speaks highly of the group. States that we used to have them, but there was a change in their company at that time which is why it stopped. Plodzik and Sanderson want to come back to us and have presented a contract to the SAU/Board. Toni states that they have not received the audit for the 2019/2020 year from the current auditors. This new company promises that once the SAU gives them everything they need over two week span, and then we have reports within 90 days. Conversation ensued about the difficulties of the process that has occurred this year with the current company. Toni and Tari recommend that Bethlehem make this switch. There has been no audit seen this year, which brings up many concerns. Bob asks if all of the other districts have agreed to this. Toni and Tari confirm that they do. James asks if they need our lawyer to reach out to the current auditors for what we are missing right now. Tari states that the lawyer has been used for other contract issues with other businesses. Conversation ensues. Bottom line from Tari—our lawyers can do that.

8. TBG Additional Support

Bob and Toni; Based on the unexpected turn out and process that was the superintendent search, it looks like SAU 35 schools could get 300 dollars per school back due to unexpected circumstances. However, the company is willing to help us with services and training— more storytelling as a technique for interviewing, helping the individual boards evaluate the superintendent, and what the superintendent should be looking for as far as benchmarking and evaluations. Bob estimates that this training/resource they are offering to provide is worth more than the reimbursement amount. He states that the company's expectations were incredibly high and then didn't go quite as planned. Bob explained that it was just not what they thought it was going to be. Other boards seem to be in agreement with the decision to take the support versus the lump sum. James asks if they will have things they can take away from this. Bob states that yes, there will be a lot of resources for them to use. Conversation ensues. General agreement that there is value in taking that deal to get the resources rather than the money back.

9. Finance Committee

Toni proposes the need and want for a finance committee. She states that having a small committee is vital. James volunteers to be on the committee. Bob, wants to know if this committee will be formed in the fall and are we going to form it with or without people outside of the Board/SAU/School. Toni states, no, if they did something with outside stakeholders that would

look more like a budget committee, which is not this committee's intent. Tari and Toni state that the finance committee needs to just have an internal small sub-committee. Tari said that other schools she has worked with and experienced have the business manager, board member, and principal. Toni agrees with this and states that she needs and wants to share that very important information with James and Sue. James states that this would be good accountability for all.

MOTION MADE BY JAMES NOYES, SECONDED BY JENNIFER LUCAS FOR BOB WEIR TO SIGN THE FOOD SERVICES CONTRACT, THE HWD CONTRACT, AND THE PLODZIK & SANDERSON CONTRACT. MOTION PASSED.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Executive Board (BW)

B. Negotiations for Professional Staff (JN & –)

This is happening in the fall. Toni asks if there is a schedule or a handout. James said there may have been a playbook from the old superintendent. Sue mentions that the teacher union has people that work with them with that process. James talks about the equal footing and clear boundaries on those processes and timing that Pierre provided when they first started. Conversation ensued about what other districts look like and how it could help.

C. Facilities

No new projects, just ongoing ones; the gym floor is being paid for with the insurance. Painting of the floor is also part of that as well. This will displace the Rec program for a bit of time. No bids for the painting portion of this at this time.

IX. Policy Handbook

A. JLCD-R Protocol for Medicine – Second Reading

This policy is all about the delivery, storage, and administration of medications. Tammy Reardon and Principal Greenlaw would like to draft a few revisions this summer and bring it back to the board in August. Sue states that after the last time it was discussed, it slipped off the radar. Tammy Reardon has looked it over carefully and is in the process of getting feedback from other schools. Bob asks once this is done will they get this situated and approved. All agree that this looks to be the case. Tari talks about getting the districts synced up on the documentation. Conversation ensued about the district's policy processes. Tari states that the details of those documents, the organization, and the ease and compliance of it all comes from consistent policy. Procedures can be changed frequently by the principal so long as it meets the policy standards and laws. She also states that the Board can also ask for changes in policy to be put on agendas as well at their meetings to discuss these topics as well. Bottom line, policies are harder to change, and procedures are easier. The motion regarding this topic will be presented in the fall.

X. School Staffing Notifications & Approvals

A. New Staff Nominations: Sue states that there are more 3rd grade interviews happening this week, but the new art teacher is confirmed at this time. James confirms with Sue that Tim Fleury is still on the committee for hiring.

MOTION MADE BY JENNIFER LUCAS, SECONDED BY JAMES NOYES TO APPROVE KATHRYN DEVLIN, AS THE ART TEACHER. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED.

XI. Non-Public

MOTION TO GO INTO NON-PUBLIC MADE BY JAMES NOYES, SECONDED BY JENNIFER LUCAS. ALL IN FAVOR. ROLL CALL: NOYES, LUCAS, WEIR. MOTION CARRIES, TO ENTER NON-PUBLIC AT 6:45 PM.

MOTION TO LEAVE NON-PUBLIC MADE BY JENNIFER LUCAS, SECONDED BY JAMES NOYES. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES, TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION AT 7:19 PM.

XI: Additional Business

Bob states that overages in special education, competitive hourly salary rates in an era of significant staff shortages, pressing needs for pandemic-related learning loss and the various facilities upgrades this year resulted in a deficit.

Bob adds that once we learned how to better leverage ESSER funding we were able to offset some of these costs but not all of them, therefore monies from the Special Ed Trust and Building & Grounds Trust have been utilized to cover these vital services and building supports for children.

MOTION TO APPROVE MOVING UP TO \$85,000 FROM THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TRUST AND UP TO \$56,500 FROM THE BUILDING AND GROUNDS FUND DEPENDING ON THE 2022 END OF THE YEAR/FISCAL YEAR BALANCE BY JAMES NOYES, SECONDED BY JENNIFER LUCAS. ALL ON FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES.

Bob, on behalf of the board, thanks Tari for her help and support these last two years. Tari states that she learned a lot from our schools and their development of programming that is unique and well matched to the communities they serve.

James states that he has sent an email to Sue about professional development and wellness for the BES staff. He would like that transparency to be stated in this board meeting. Bob and Jennifer appreciate this information. Sue looks forward to hearing more about it.

XII. Adjournment

MOTION MADE BY JAMES, SECONDED BY JEN TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:26 PM. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

Minutes were taken by Nicole Kerstetter (filling in for Rhienna Miscio)

Respectfully Submitted,
Nicole Kerstetter
Bethlehem Resident & BES Office Manager