

KEENE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Meeting Minutes

DATE: March 16, 2010

LOCATION: Large Group Instruction Area, Keene High School, 43 Arch Street, Keene, NH

CALLED TO ORDER: 6:30 p.m. after the swearing in of new board members @ 6:15 pm.

TIME ADJOURNED: 8:26 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell, Chair
- Mrs. Kristin Blais
- Mr. Carter Chamberlin
- Mr. Chris Coates
- Mr. Neil Donegan
- Mr. Mark Nugent
- Mr. Kris Roberts
- Mr. Carl Panza

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

- Mr. William Gurney, Co-Superintendent of Schools
- Mr. John Harper, Business Administrator
- Mr. Paul Cooper, Director of Human Resources
- Mr. Tom Remillard, Director of Buildings, Facilities and Ancillary Services
- Ms. Catherine Reeves, Director of Special Education

OTHERS PRESENT:

- Miss Taylor Putnam, Student Representative
- Mrs. Carmelita Tonkinson, Keene School District Clerk, for a portion of the meeting
- Mrs. Chris Weeks, Public Information Coordinator
- Mrs. Dru Fox, Stenographer
- Members of the Public (7)

Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell, Chair, called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone, thanked Cheshire TV and called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. Public Input

Ms. Misty Martinez-Bohannon 74 Dale Drive, commended the recent email notification from the district and asked if they can be more frequent and can also be sent out as reminders for upcoming committee and board meetings. Ms. Bohannon spoke about meeting agendas not being posted on the website in a timely fashion and also meeting minutes for the months of January and February were not yet posted. Ms. Bohannon asked that all meeting agendas and meeting minutes be posted in a timelier manner.

Ms. Beth Zinn, 242 Church Street asked when the board will begin to review the shared principal draft proposal submitted by Ms. Yoerger and Mr. Harris, asked for a timeline to come forth soon outlining the next steps in the process and wondered when the

proposal will actually be made public. Ms. Zinn requested there be public input before any final decision is made.

Keene Middle School Update - Mr. Chris Coates stated the ground breaking is scheduled for April 1 and Mr. Neil Donegan announced tree cutting has begun and everything is moving along very well.

2. Consent Agenda

a. Agenda Item #3, Approval of Minutes of Special Meeting, January 9, 2010; Regular Meeting & Public Hearing, January 12, 2010; Regular Meeting, February 9, 2010.

b. Items Recommended by Committee Chairs

1. Approve the March 2, 2010 Financial Report

2. Approve a transfer of \$4,689.00 from various CIRTT accounts into the Tech Support New Equipment Account to purchase a new ICT server for the District

3. Acceptance of Gifts - Donation of \$850.00 to the KMS Grade 8 trip in memory of David Rajaniemi

Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion to approve the items appearing on the consent agenda. Mr. Chris Coates seconded. Vote taken, motion unanimously passes, 8-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

Special Meeting, January 9, 2010, Regular Meeting & Public Hearing, January 12, 2010, and Regular Meeting, February 9, 2010 handled in consent agenda.

4. Report of Student Representatives

Miss Taylor Putnam reported on the following; 30 parents and 45 students used the newly constructed online course registration and course selection sheets, 98% were returned on time, the girls basketball team made it to the semi-final playoffs, 4th quarter begins April 5th, upcoming teacher appreciation week and the Mr. Keene High event.

5. Report of Board Chair

Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell welcomed new board members, Mr. Kris Roberts and Mr. Mark Nugent and provided the following resolutions and highlights of the two outgoing members and their service to the Keene School District:

Mrs. Carol A. Brown has served as a school board member for the past three years; as Secretary of the Board and Chair of the Education Committee; served on Building Facilities and Ancillary Services, Finance, Personnel, Policy and Keene Middle School Building Committees; served on the Negotiation Committees for School Secretaries (KEOPG), Tutors and the committee for Speech Pathologists and School Psychologists; has been a dedicated and loyal advocate for the teachers, students and staff of the Keene School District; has always conducted her duties diligently and with passion, and has given her time and expertise in a manner truly reflecting her genuine interest in the City of Keene, its children and the future; whose commitment to education has been evidenced by her willingness to talk with, and listen to, community members to become better informed as to the needs and wants of the community; has held high expectations for herself and other board members relative to the decision-making and policy development processes; is

experienced, knowledgeable and dedicated; and that the School District of Keene, in grateful acknowledgement of Carol A. Brown's numerous contributions to the students, schools, and the community by unanimously adopting this resolution as a lasting tribute to Carol A. Brown, to be entered into the permanent records of the district, and that a copy of this resolution be presented to Mrs. Brown.

Mr. Donald N. Parker has served as a school board member for three years; served as Chair of the Communications Committee; served on the Education, Personnel, and Policy Committees; served on the Negotiation Committees for Tutors and Keene Association of Principals and Supervisors (KAPS); has been a loyal advocate for the teachers, students and staff of the Keene School District; has always conducted his duties diligently and with passion, and has given his time and expertise in a manner truly reflecting his genuine interest in the City of Keene, its children and the future; commitment to education has been evidenced by his willingness to talk with, and listen to, community members to become better informed as to the needs and wants of the community; has held high expectations for himself and other board members relative to the decision-making and policy development processes; is experienced, knowledgeable and dedicated; he will be missed; and that the School District of Keene, in grateful acknowledgement of Donald N. Parker's numerous contributions to the students, schools, and the community by unanimously adopting this resolution as a lasting tribute to Donald N. Parker, to be entered into the permanent records of the district, and that a copy of this resolution be presented to Mr. Parker.

Tutor Plan – Ms. Cathy Reeves announced currently there are 134 tutors, which is an indication that the matrix developed is working very well. Mr. Neil Donegan asked what she anticipates happening next year and Ms. Reeves replied the plan will remain pretty much the same, is moving forward and that the number may decline. Training was recently held for all elementary staff on differentiated instruction and the hope is that teachers now have more tools to support all learners in all classrooms. Mrs. Amy Speas asked about and Ms. Reeves responded that the number of out-of-district placements remains consistent throughout the year and that they are primarily court placements. Discussion ensued pertaining to day and residential placements, special education at the high school and the preliminary report not being complete enough to formulate a plan, presentation of the preliminary report, and the budget process and elimination of tutors at high school and middle school and its affect at the elementary level.

Strategic Planning Session – Mr. William Gurney reports a meeting last week with a consultant and his proposal and it is now a matter of establishing a date and getting started.

Differentiated Learning – Mr. William Gurney reported on the differentiated learning workshop recently held which was well attended and that he is working with a company to bring more advanced programs to KMS. Mr. Gurney said the process is ongoing and there will be a full report next week to the education committee. Mr. Neil Donegan questioned strategic planning, said that after reviewing the last 3 retreat minutes he noticed a lot has fallen short and wondered how to get back to these issues. Mr. Gurney replied that he would be going through those minutes. Mrs. Amy Speas spoke about the visit last fall to Nashua and wondered when there will be a report on the gifted and talented information taken from that visit and Mr. Gurney replied next week at the education committee meeting. Mr. Gurney then reported on bringing the National Honor Society to KMS, by-laws approved, students have applied and the first induction will be in April.

KMS Marketing Committee – Mr. Neil Donegan relayed the assurance from Mr. Greg Johnson that there is activity and he is awaiting a first offer. Ms. O'Donnell asked about, and Mr. Remillard responded, there is only one more ceiling repair as part of the multi-phase safety repair required by the fire department to the current middle school. He described it as a fairly messy job; going out to bid very soon, with the expectation to cost in the \$8,000 to \$10,000 range and that there is nothing else after that. Ms. O'Donnell further inquired and Mr. Remillard replied that the Royal Avenue landscape plans are in process.

34 West Street – Mr. John Harper reported the marketing stage is about to begin, the new appraisal of the property has been ordered and that the same process to sell this property will be the same as was used for the Tilden and Roosevelt properties. He described the intent to bring a warrant article forward next March. Mr. Chris Coates asked about cameras being installed in the conference room of the new SAU building for the purpose of recording committee meetings and Mr. Gurney replied that it is being discussed and at the new middle school as well. The issue will be brought up before the communications committee. Discussion ensued.

Posting of Minutes - Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell asked about meeting minutes being posted and Mr. Paul Cooper replied that only approved minutes are posted and that they are working very hard to get agendas out as soon as possible. There is no backlog to post the minutes once they are approved.

Co-Superintendent Structure - Ms. O'Donnell asked for an explanation on the issue of two superintendents for Keene being erroneous information and Mr. Woolridge provided a history going back to 2006 when the structure of the upper level of administration was one superintendent and two assistant superintendents. He explained how the evolution of two superintendents came about, the division of the workload, seven districts within the SAU, the efficiency of this system and the reality that Keene only has one superintendent and the towns have only one. Discussion ensued pertaining to previous staffing levels, Director of Curriculum, job descriptions, SAU employees and the SAU budget. Mr. Woolridge said that he is responsible for six towns and their school boards and Mr. Gurney's responsibility is Keene. Mr. Panza questioned and Mr. John Harper clarified that Keene pays for 50% of the co-superintendents and the towns pay for 50%, which in essence means Keene pays for one superintendent. Mr. Chris Coates added that this model will be thoroughly looked at over the next three years and the SAU board will move one way or another on adopting a long-term leadership structure.

Elementary Schools Future Committee – Mrs. Kristin Blais was asked to chair this committee and she requested further information from the board as to the charge of the committee. Her particular concerns were; finding a balance for thoughtful long-term planning and the short term issues currently being faced, whether it is to be an executive or steering committee, looking at the Concord School District model, who the members serving on the committee should be and the tricky issue of recruiting members when the actual charge of the committee has not been defined. Mr. Neil Donegan suggested beginning with a steering committee of 8-10 members and eventually forming a larger group with a substantial budget. He further recommended beginning with the administrative task force study report. Mrs. Blais asked if the board was expecting the committee to have answers for the 2011 budget season and her opinion was, that if they were, that would be a very difficult and very different task than setting up a comprehensive

review and providing some answers. She expressed concern over setting a strategic master plan versus a committee working on crisis intervention and those being two very different challenges. Discussion ensued pertaining to the direction to take, fiscal realities, city and community involvement, setting timelines, developing goals and objectives. Mrs. Blais brought up many issues to be studied, such as; building structure, grade span configuration, special education and the opportunity to make some short term decisions versus significant long-term changes in time for the 2011 budget season. Discussion continued around coming to some conclusions by January 2011, short-term crisis management and upcoming retreats to further discuss the charge.

Mr. Neil Donegan talked about the results of the task force study and the clear imbalance of spending at the elementary level compared to other districts, Exeter and Concord for example, and we might say that is because our scores are better, but they are not. The question needs to be, how much money does this community need to provide for the school system before we tax them out of the city? The board has a financial responsibility not to let this continue and that should be the charge of the committee. Mr. Donegan said we are going to bring our costs down over the next 3-4 years. He said the board could sit and read the report together and flat out make the decisions but this really needs to be a long-term process with community involvement. Mrs. Blais concurred with Mr. Donegan but explained that there cannot be a long-term process with community-based involvement if what he is really saying is that it needs to be fixed by January 2011. Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell spoke to the very huge issues to address and the necessity for community support.

Mrs. Kristin Blais again asked how she should respond to potential committee members when they ask what the purpose of the committee is. There was no concise response to her question and discussion took place on the charge of the committee, excessive amount of spending at elementary level, crisis management objectives, declining enrollment, the vision has to evolve and the fact that momentum is here and the time is now.

Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion to nominate Mrs. Kristin Blais to be chairperson of the Elementary Schools Future Committee and to meet with the 2010-2011 Keene School District board chairperson and set up a task force of a small group of people to begin the vision of the future structure of Keene's elementary schools. Mr. Carl Panza seconded. Vote taken. Motion unanimously passes.

Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell spoke about the successful meeting with city officials and the tremendous effort from Mr. Scott Rogers of the Cheshire Room and his students for putting on such a wonderful dinner.

Ms. O'Donnell asked Mr. Gurney about the shared principal issue and Mr. Gurney responded that he, Ms. Yoerger and Mr. Harris have been meeting and putting together timelines for moving forward with this plan and answering questions raised by parents. Mr. Donegan asked if there will be 4 principals for 5 schools in the fall and Mr. Gurney replied yes. Mr. Chris Coates clarified that there needs to be a proposal put forth first which requires the support of the full board and that if the plan is not acceptable he will not support it. Discussion ensued pertaining to presentation of the plan to the education committee, presentation to the public and current enrollment numbers.

Mr. Neil Donegan asked how the initial concept of sharing a principal came about and Mr. Gurney replied after the elementary principals were charged with meeting a

budget target, the principals presented it, and the finance committee agreed and the full board approved this recommendation. Mr. Donegan announced he could not imagine why the school board would not like and approve the plan and Mr. Coates reminded Mr. Donegan that it is their job to make sure the plan is everything the principals said it would be and should be, and explained the need to review the plan and hear from the community before moving forward. In Mr. Coates' opinion it is not a done deal. Ms. O'Donnell agreed that the approval ultimately lies in the hands of the school board members.

6. Report of Co-Superintendents

Mr. William Gurney thanked Keene residents who manned the polls, Mayor Pregent for his support, the city for their resources and the residents of Keene who voted and supported the budget and all warrant articles. Mr. Gurney provided information on a KSC recruitment fair, a partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, Keene State College and River Valley College and the federal grant for manufacturing, forums on the future of NH and shared an inspirational story and article appearing in the Boston Globe about Amos Winter. Mr. Gurney announced KHS Open House on March 18th, no school on March 19th, kindergarten registration day on April 2nd and spring vacation April 19th to the 23rd. Mr. Gurney commended numerous students on their achievements: Evan West, Coryann Larkin, Nicholas Schlerf, Caitlin Scanlon, and Tara Morrison. He announced the KHS Acapella choir was one of fourteen to be featured on NH public TV, eight DECA members who attended this year's NH DECA Conference, senior Connor Burke representing the state at the National Career Development Conference in Kentucky, gold medal sports marketing event winner Spencer Wilhelm, Jimmy Berry and JJ Ornstill-travel and tourism winners, Kristy Ricardi, Danielle Smith, Darcy Delaney and Michelle McEwan-certificate of excellence award winners and Peter Murphy who qualified for the National Geography Bee.

Mr. Wayne Woolridge provided a legislative update on several bills currently being debated; Senate Bill 486 which calls for a 2 year moratorium on building aid, House Bill 1677 which would extend transition aid for two years, House Bill 1674 which would extend transition aide indefinitely and explained the ramifications and effect on Keene and the towns for each. Mr. Woolridge also spoke about Senate Bill 465 which would maintain transition aid based on the current formula and the potential for a gloomy future if we depend on state revenue, House Bill 1414 and House Bill 1523-cyber bullying, the great deal of work that went into the proposal for "Race To The Top" federal funding, the reauthorization of NCLB and our goal to have the largest number/percentage of students to graduate high school.

Mrs. Kristin Blais questioned the impact on our funding for the new middle school and Mr. Woolridge replied there are no plans at the state level to eliminate funding for approval of the project and that any projects approved before June 30 2010 will be considered under the current process. Mr. Woolridge further described an exception to this would be fire safety issues.

Discussion ensued pertaining to adequacy aid and state building aid. Mr. Kris Roberts said he would not go so far to say the money was guaranteed and talked about the state's borrowing and funding of money, looking to future election results and the need to be prepared. Further discussion ensued on the failure of various bills and the affect it has on Keene and if Senator Kelly's Bill 1677 fails it is likely we sill see smaller revenue

increases. If she is able to collar this bill the transition formula we have been operating with in recent years will stay in place and we would continue to receive a higher appropriation of state revenues.

7. **Report of Secretary** - None

8. **Report of Standing Committees**

Building Facilities and Ancillary Services - None

Education Committee - None

Finance Committee - Mr. Neil Donegan said all matters were handled under the consent agenda, the next finance committee meeting will be April 6th and the committee will be looking at spending some of the surplus money for necessary maintenance items.

Personnel Committee - Mr. Carter Chamberlin said the only matters to be discussed would come in non-public session later.

Communications Committee - None

Policy Ad Hoc Committee - None

9. **Reports of Special Committees**

NHSAU 29 School Board - None

Cheshire Career Center Advisory - Mr. Carter Chamberlin reported there was a great article in the newspaper recently detailing the growth of the program. Ms. O'Donnell added that the evening of Friends of the Cheshire Career Center was very well attended and the commitment and passion of the students is very impressive.

NH School Boards Association - Mr. Carl Panza reported on; an opportunity for everyone to get on the email list, survey results on student bullying and declining incidents and searching of student vehicles and what is constitutional - reasonable grounds and not probable cause.

Liaison Reports - Mr. Chris Coates reported on the excellent KHS girl's basketball game against Winnacunnet and it was the first time Winnacunnet had ever been under double digits at half time. He talked about the amazing Special Olympics program with over 500 athletes participating and commended Mr. Bill Hope and Mr. Michael Salce for their hard work and having the strongest Special Olympics crew by far.

Mrs. Amy Speas spoke on behalf of the KHS boys basketball club and the booster club scholarship award to Sam Galloway and Nick Nelson.

10. **Old Business**

Mr. Neil Donegan asked about co-curricular salaries and Mr. Gurney replied they were level funded this year, Keene is below market value for compensating our coaches and it is an issue that needs to be addressed. He suggested putting together a committee of coaches and board members to determine fair compensation. He reports a small increase only coming about every 3 years or so.

Mrs. Kristin Blais talked about the visit to Exeter School District and a similar upcoming visit to Salem.

11. **New Business**

Certify March 9, 2010 Second Session Vote

Mrs. Chris Weeks announced there were 1,388 people who cast 11,104 votes.
Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion to certify the March 9, 2010 Second Session Vote. Mr. Chris Coates seconded. Vote taken, motion unanimously passes.

Reaffirm Existing Policies

Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion to reaffirm existing Keene School District Policies. Mrs. Kristin Blais seconded. Vote taken, motion unanimously passes.

Elect School Board Officers

Mr. Neil Donegan nominated Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell for chairman of the Keene School Board. Mrs. Amy Speas seconded. Vote taken, motion unanimously passes.

Mr. Neil Donegan nominated Mrs. Kristin Blais as Vice Chair of the Keene School Board. Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell seconded. Vote taken, motion unanimously passes.

Mr. Neil Donegan nominated Mr. Carl Panza as Secretary of the Keene School Board. Mrs. Amy Speas seconded. Vote taken, motion unanimously passes.

Committee assignments

Buildings, Facilities and Ancillary Services – Chris Coates, Chair, Carter Chamberlin, Neil Donegan and Kris Roberts

Communications – Carl Panza, Chair, Chris Coates, Neil Donegan and Kris Roberts

Education – Amy Speas, Chair, Kristin Blais, Carter Chamberlin and Mark Nugent

Finance – Neil Donegan, Chair, Chris Coates, Mark Nugent, Carl Panza

Personnel – Kris Roberts, Chair, Kristin Blais, Carl Panza, Amy Speas

Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion to approve the proposed committee assignments. Mr. Chris Coates seconded. Vote taken, motion unanimously passes.

12. Resignations - None

13. Nominations/Election of Staff – None

Mr. Chris Coates made a motion to move into non-public session according to RSA: 91-A3. Mrs. Amy Speas seconded. Role call vote taken. Mr. Kris Roberts-yes, Mrs. Amy Speas-yes, Mr. Carl Panza-yes, Mr. Chris Coates-yes, Mr. Neil Donegan-yes, Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell-yes, Mr. Carter Chamberlin-yes, Mrs. Kristin Blais-yes and Mr. Mark Nugent-yes.

Meeting entered into non-public session by a unanimous role call vote at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dru Fox
Stenographer

William B. Gurney
Co-Superintendent of Schools
WBG: md

**Approved by the Keene Board of Education:
April 13, 2010**