

# **KEENE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**DATE:** April 13, 2010

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

**CALLED TO ORDER:** 6:38 p.m.

**TIME ADJOURNED:** 9:50 p.m.

### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

- Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell, Chair
- Mrs. Kristin Blais
- Mr. Carter Chamberlin
- Mr. Chris Coates
- Ms. Amy Speas
- 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
- Mr. Wayne Woolridge, Co-Superintendent

### **OTHERS PRESENT:**

- Ms. Ashley McCormick, Student Representative

-Ms. Chris Weeks, Public Information Coordinator

-Ms. Sarah Palermo, Keene Sentinel Reporter

-Ms. Britta Reida, Stenographer

-Members of the Public (approximately 60)

Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell, Chair, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 6:38 pm.

## **1. Public Input**

### **a. Keene Middle School Update by Architect Frank Marinace**

Mr. Marinace reported that building has begun on Maple Avenue, with trees and stumps being cleared. He continued that the budget is in very good shape – the bids came in several million dollars below budget. He continued the bid received is for the biggest part of the project and that there are many other pieces to put together, but they will fall into line and there will be enough money to do the job right and make sure all contingencies are covered. He continued that there is archeological work happening and a few artifacts have been found so far, and what else will be discovered is unknown, although the archeologist hopes to be done by the beginning of next week. Mr. Marinace continued that there is a contingency plan in case there are major archeological discoveries which prevent construction. He continued that there is off-site work that the City of Keene is doing as well – reconstruction, modifications to the nearby roadways, the exit ramp on Route 12, sidewalks, etc., and those projects are still in the design stage and being discussed with the City. He continued that some other budget items are the Maple Ave sidewalk construction, the well and irrigation system, and the archeologist's fees, and even with all of those items, there is still plenty of money. He continued that he is recommending changing the amount of the funds for this project. Voters approved \$40,250,000, and that figure can be reduced, for a total of \$38,600,000. He reiterated that the most conservative stance has been taken and the money will not run out.

Mr. John Harper stated that he agrees that there is no need to borrow money that is not needed. He continued that any money leftover when the project is complete would go back in the form of a payment on the bond itself.

### **b. Other**

Mr. Alex Henkel, 50 Blossom Street, stated that he enjoyed talking with Ms. Reeves and each of the board members, and thanks the administration and school board for their interest in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade class sizes of Symonds school. He urged the Board to finalize the Finance Committee's recommendation to have three 4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms instead of two.

Mari Fauth, 9 Starlight Drive, thanked the Finance Committee for recommending to have three 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes at the Symonds school. She referred to a written document she had brought with her that gives a breakdown of the classroom needs and information about the benefits of smaller class sizes. She stated her belief that all students, those with

special needs and those without, benefit from smaller class sizes and that condensing the classes strains the capacity of the teachers. She strongly urged the board to vote in favor of having three 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes.

Bob King, 42 Hurricane Road, read from a document with information about the benefits of smaller class sizes, which stated several ways in which smaller classes were better for both the teachers and students. He asked the Board to please restore the third 4<sup>th</sup> grade class.

Beth Zinn, 242 Church Street, thanked the Finance Committee for their recommendations, and urged the Board to use the surplus funds to keep the current principals in their current assignments and get a new Fuller School principal immediately.

Matthew Walton, 73 High Street, thanked the Finance Committee for voting to fund the 5<sup>th</sup> principal position.

John Stewart, 70 Laurel Lane, thanked the Finance Committee for voting to fund the 5<sup>th</sup> principal position, and urged the Board to do the same. He stated that middle schoolers and elementary schoolers love watching construction, and with the current construction project happening, it is necessary to have a principal there full time, not just 50% of the time, to make sure no one gets hurt.

John Luopa, football coach of Keene High School, spoke to urge the Board to approve the installation of lights on the Alumni Field. He read a letter from Mr. Ken Osbon, the head football coach of Dover High School. Mr. Osbon's letter contained a 12-point bulleted list of benefits of having football games on Friday nights (for which lights on the field are necessary), instead of Saturdays or Sundays. Mr. Luopa stated that he is in agreement with Mr. Osbon's letter and that putting lights on the field is important to the community, and continued that Keene High School is the only school in the area without lights. He asked the members of the Booster Club to stand up to show their support of this issue, and approximately 20 people stood up.

Bill Hope, 60 Pearl Street, Keene High School teacher and football coach, and Business Manager of the Monadnock Marauders, stated that part of the Monadnock Marauders' goal is to work for the community just as much as they play football. He talked about the annual scholarships they give and all of their fundraisers and community service. He stated that everyone wants lights on the Alumni Field, and that if the Marauders played at Keene High School, revenue would increase, and the Marauders would raise a lot more money and give it back to the community. He urged the Board to vote to install the lights.

Kathleen Gould, 10 Wakefield Street, stated that she has lived in back of Keene High School since the 1970s and enjoys the activities, but that she is opposed to the lights being installed in the Alumni Field, due to the effect they would have on her home and neighborhood on Friday nights.

R. Ramirez, 18 Dale Drive, encouraged the Board to approve the funding for the 5<sup>th</sup> principal. He also encouraged the Board to restore the foreign language teacher at the elementary level.

Joan Hill, 38 Evans Lane, Keene Middle School foreign language teacher, thanked the Finance Committee. She spoke in support of reinstating the 5<sup>th</sup> grade foreign language program, stating that foreign language programs develop high order thinking, and have many benefits. She asked the Board not to let the schools move backwards by not having this integral part of the curriculum.

Karen Brown, 81 North Lincoln Street, stated her belief that the report put out on principal-sharing seems more like an emergency roll-out plan in case of a loss of a principal, not an actual plan that would work. She continued that it puts a burden on parents and teachers to carry the school in the absence of a principal, and that when she worked at Jonathan Daniels School as a special education teacher, her position was supposedly a half time one, but a half time position is never just half time, for a teacher or a principal. She thanked the Finance Committee for voting in favor of reinstating the 5<sup>th</sup> principal and asked the Board to do the same.

Christy Garner, 115 Darling Road, stated that she has two children in middle school and feels it is important to get improvements, and she is in support of the lights being installed.

Gary Garner, 115 Darling Road, stated that he is in favor of lights being installed on the Alumni Field.

Marilyn Morel, 15 Autumn Hill Road, stated that she made a point to be at this meeting on time but the Board members were late, and that what this says to her is that the feelings of members of the public do not matter. She continued that she feels many of the Board members have been distracted while members of the public have been speaking, despite the fact that the approximately 60 people in the audience are giving their attention to the meeting. She asked the Board to keep a principal at every elementary school because it is important for each school to have their own, instead of sharing, similar to the way in which successful businesses in the community do not share leaders.

An unidentified speaker apologized for her email to the Board last week. She stated that she has been arguing for over a year to keep the 5<sup>th</sup> principal and asked the Board to please listen to the members of the public, whom the Board has been elected to represent.

John Cunningham, 14 Marshall Court, spoke in favor of each school having its own principal, and also in favor of having lights installed on the Alumni Field. He stated that competitions frequently go late at night, but without lights, referees stop the games when it is too dark to see the ball. He stated that a lot of kids attend the games and that he is glad the games give the kids something constructive to do, and that the presence of lights would increase kids' attendance and increase safety.

Christine Lane, 48 Wakefield Street, stated that she and her family moved to Keene two years ago and she loves working at Keene High School but finds it embarrassing that the field does not have lights. She stated that she feels it is important to bring the whole

student body together, which would happen at Friday night games if there were lights on the field.

Keith Boucher, 41 Hilltop Drive, stated that he is in favor of the lights being installed on Alumni Field and also in favor of having all 5 principals. He continued that he thinks Keene is great and does a lot for kids, and that he has faith in the administrators here, and that lights on the football field are long overdue. He continued that he would be willing to bet that Keene taxpayers would say that the expense of the lights is worth it to the community.

Kristin Giarratana, 93 Kendall Road, Symonds PTA president, spoke in support of having three 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes. She spoke of the many benefits of having low student:teacher ratios, benefits which have been noted by both parents and educators.

Pam Rogers, 38 Dale Drive, expressed support for having lights installed on the Alumni Field, stating that other schools have amazing turnouts at football games, in comparison to the turnout at the Keene High School games, because the other schools have lights and Keene does not. She also spoke in favor of having a principal at every elementary school, for safety purposes. She stated that while background checks are done on people who work in schools, background checks are not done on delivery people who come to the schools, for example, and that people who are a threat to our children may try to take advantage of the lack of leadership/a school that is unprotected by a principal.

Cindy Rodenhauer-Stewart, 48 Pine Avenue, stated that she has been a resident of Keene for 17 years. She stated that she began cheering in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and fulfilled a dream by cheering at the 1983 Rose Bowl, and that she wants other students to be given the chance to fulfill dreams as well. She continued that having the lights is about much more than just Friday night football; it is about community building and generation strengthening.

Allen Markland, 34 Trowbridge Road, spoke in favor of installing lights on the football field. He stated that he took his freshman son on a tour of the county prison, where they found state-of-the-art lighting and geothermal energy. He continued that the County Commission made that decision to spare no expense in building the prison, and Keene citizens had no input on the decision, but *can* impact the decision to install lights on the football field.

Josh Greenwald, 39 Concord Hill Road, asked the Board to keep all 5 elementary school principals. He stated that he wants his kids to have just as great of an experience at Franklin School as he did. He continued that he is a realtor and when people ask about the Keene school district and hear that there might be principal-sharing, it makes people hesitant to move here. He urged the Board to continue Keene's positive reputation by keeping all 5 principals.

## **2. Report of Student Representative**

Ms. Ashley McCormick, Keene High School student representative, 7 Pheasant Hill Road, shared the following information:

- The winter art show, featuring student art, on the second floor of the Colony Mill Marketplace is almost over.
- This past weekend, 18 students from Keene High attended the All-state Music Festival and it went very well.
- Report cards are being mailed out this week.
- Athletes start competitions this week.
- This past Friday, there was a pep rally following the renaissance philosophy , and it went well. This rally celebrated athletics, academics, and extracurricular activities.
- There are 4 overseas trips this vacation for Keene High students – Greece, Paris/London, Belize, and the French exchange.
- The Nostalgia show is May 6, 7, and 8.
- Prom is on May 22 at Keene State College.
- Graduation is June 11 at 6 pm.

Ms. McCormick also spoke in support of reinstating the third 4<sup>th</sup> grade class at Symonds School. She stated that she was once a student at Symonds in class of 25 or 26 students, and that it was a struggle – she and her classmates did not receive as much attention as they had in previous years. She also spoke in favor of installing the lights on the field, stating that she is not much of an athlete but is in the band and would have loved to have had the opportunity to play at Friday night games, which would involve the entire student body, not just the athletes. She continued that there is a lack of school spirit and Friday night games would help a lot.

Chair O'Donnell thanked Ms. McCormick, and stated that she encourages students to express their opinions and comments on what is happening in their schools. The Board presented Ms. McCormick with a gift for her birthday, which is today.

### **3. Report of Finance Committee**

*Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion, on behalf of the Finance Committee, that the Keene School Board of Education restore the 5<sup>th</sup> elementary school principal position for school year 2010-2011. Mr. Chris Coates seconded.*

Mr. Donegan stated that he was happy to report that the Finance Committee voted unanimously in support of this.

Mr. Roberts stated that he is not in support of this motion. He continued that he did a lot of research and found that schools in MA, VA, ND, TX, AZ, and NH all have had success with two elementary schools sharing a principal. He continued that parents have sued school districts over the issue of principal-sharing and the courts ruled that the school districts are allowed to do this, as long as, it is safe. He continued that there will be many budget problems when the stimulus money runs out, and difficult situations will

arise, such as having to choose between having two elementary schools share a principal, or letting some of the teachers go. He continued that he believes principal-sharing is a way of protecting the overall value of the system.

Mr. Chris Coates stated that the Board may have to make difficult decisions in the future, but can make what he believes is the right decision by reinstating the 5<sup>th</sup> principal. He continued that the Elementary School Advisory Task Force will meet and make recommendations, and hopefully gather information such as the information Mr. Roberts found, so that the Board can make plans for the future.

Mr. Carl Panza stated that initially he was in favor of eliminating a principal, after he and all of the Board members read a book which explained how principal-sharing could work. He continued that he changed his mind when he thought of safety issues, recalling an incident from October 2009 when a man in a car attempted to abduct a middle school girl. He continued that he hates to think that even one child could be kidnapped or molested, and that it is necessary to wait for the task force to make its recommendation and play it safe in the meantime by having a principal at each elementary school.

Ms. Amy Speas stated that it is a safety issue for her as well, and that what closed the issue for her was hearing a parent talk about the dangers of students potentially being unsupervised around the construction area. She continued that she supports the reinstatement of the 5<sup>th</sup> principal, and is happy to be part of the new task force committee and hopes for a high level of community engagement.

Ms. Kristin Blais thanked Mr. Roberts for bringing information about principal-sharing. She continued that she, too, supports reinstating the 5<sup>th</sup> principal. She continued that yesterday was the first meeting of the Elementary Advisory Ad Hoc Committee, and she gave each committee member a copy of the book “The Art of Possibility,” which includes the powerful concept of enrollment. She continued that one cannot force an idea upon someone, one must be persuasive enough to enroll people in one’s idea, and in this regard, she thinks the Board fell short. She continued that she does not think principal-sharing is impossible or irresponsible, and it may be necessary in the future, but she is not in favor of pushing it now because she does not think it would have come up as an option if the health insurance estimate had not been so high. She continued that the health insurance reality was much lower, which means that principal-sharing is not necessary to save money.

Mr. Carter Chamberlin stated that from his perspective, it did not seem like the Board was able to fully define the roles and duties of a principal in a principal-sharing situation in time to be able to pull it off. He continued that there are probably lots of different models of how this work would, but that at this time, the Board does not have a firm grasp of how this would work for the Keene elementary schools.

Ms. Blais added that she thinks it is important to not be too complacent by believing that having a 5<sup>th</sup> principal automatically solves all safety issues, because principals do leave the building at times when children are still in it; so let’s not lull ourselves into a false sense of security.

Chair O'Donnell stated that she has been thinking a lot, and that she had trusted that principal-sharing was possibly workable, but was troubled by the lack of specificity in the plan and by how long the plan took to come out. She implored everyone to come to committee meetings, because that is where the work happens. She continued that there will be serious budget problems in the coming years, a difference of millions of dollars, and it would be most constructive if the Board has community input from day one. People need to show up at the first meetings, she continued, not just the last. She added that her intent is not to be critical, but to encourage more communication.

Mr. Kris Roberts stated that he agrees with Ms. Blais – principal-sharing was a good idea that was presented badly.

Mr. Chris Coates agreed with Chair O'Donnell's request for the public to be involved from the beginning, stating that despite the fact that the Elementary Advisory Ad Hoc Committee has only met once, somehow a rumor was started that Wheelock School is closing and a meeting has already been called this Saturday to discuss this misinformation. This, he continued, is an example of why it is important to get involved from the beginning.

*Vote taken, motion passes 8-1, with Mr. Kris Roberts opposed.*

*Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion, on behalf of the Finance Committee, that the Keene School Board of Education restore the 4<sup>th</sup> grade Symonds school teacher position for school year 2010-2011. Mr. Chris Coates seconded.*

Mr. Donegan stated that this issue is more critical than was first thought, thanks to all of the information the Board received from the community this evening.

Mr. Carter Chamberlin stated that while the Board has heard a lot of data from different sources in regards to the issue of class size, he has not heard much yet from Ms. Cathy Reeves, regarding the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students with special needs.

Ms. Cathy Reeves replied that the point is determining what is best for all of the children, not just the ones who have been identified as having disabilities. She continued that while every class has a varying number of students with special needs, decisions need to be made about what is best for all of the children as a whole.

Mr. Chris Coates stated that he thinks that what Ms. Ashley McCormick said [about her experiences in 4<sup>th</sup> grade in a large classroom] and what the parents said make it clear that adding the 3<sup>rd</sup> class is the right thing to do.

Ms. Amy Speas stated that she supports the motion and believes having three 4<sup>th</sup> grades is the right thing to do.

Ms. Kristin Blais stated that she wanted to carefully say that she has concerns with the process that everyone went through in making this decision, and that what she saw was a lack of functionality between and among all the levels that needed to talk together. She continued that the parents ended up presenting lots of data about class structure and needs tonight, but it feels like when this was proposed in January based upon a board policy,

that was the time when the Board needed a lot of people to sit down and talk together and figure out what is best for the kids and then tell the Board. She continued that she feels comfortable about voting yes on the motion, but that she was not comfortable with the process.

Mr. Mark Nugent stated that he was going to support the motion for personal reasons – he taught 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and his class was small but difficult, and he cannot imagine having 25 or 26 kids in one class.

Chair O'Donnell stated that she is a Symonds parent and supports the motion and agrees with what Ms. Blais said: the Board can only make decisions based on the information that it has. She continued that she hopes there is more community input early on next time, so everyone can have a more collaborative conversation.

*Vote taken, motion passes unanimously, 9-0.*

*Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion, on behalf of the Finance Committee, that the Keene School Board of Education restore the foreign language program at the elementary level for school year 2010-2011. Mr. Chris Coates seconded.*

Mr. Donegan stated that this was a misunderstanding by the finance department – they thought the proposal was to cut French classes only, not the whole foreign language program. Discussion ensued, and the Board agreed that they never would have voted to cut the entire foreign language program. They agreed that it is important for elementary students to learn foreign languages, as early as possible.

*Vote taken, motion passes unanimously, 9-0.*

*Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion, on behalf of the Finance Committee, that the Keene Board of Education approve \$110,000 to install lights on Alumni Field using 2009-2010 surplus funds. Mr. Chris Coates seconded.*

Mr. Donegan stated that he has been in favor of this for 6 years.

Ms. Speas stated that she was glad to hear so many people use the term “academic athletes,” in recognition of the fact that a lot of athletes maintain a high GPA, and continued that lights would benefit all students, not just the athletes, for it is a matter of school pride.

Mr. Roberts agreed that this is about more than just athletics, and continued that he also supports the motion because it has a quick payback and in many ways, the lights will pay for themselves.

Chair O'Donnell agreed with Mr. Roberts, and added that she feels frustrated when the Board has to hear about issues which have been around for years with no movement.

Mr. Panza stated that he is in favor of lights, but that he is not clear on the payback of this. He continued that installing lights on the field at Brattleboro's high school did NOT dramatically increase their revenue, and also, Brattleboro got the lights all through fundraising – the school did not have to pay for it.

*Mr. Panza made a motion to put this issue off to have more time to gather information and discuss it. Ms. Kristin Blais seconded.*

Mr. Roberts stated that he believes that the money should be spent on the lights now, while the money is available, and that if this issue is put off any longer, it will be too late.

Ms. Speas agreed.

Ms. Blais stated that she supports Mr. Panza's motion to wait a month and gather more information, because although she really wants the lights, she feels that since the Board has been telling the community "We're in a budget crisis," it muddles that message if the Board approves an expense such as this which is worthwhile but not essential. She continued that she wants more information about the true costs of it, such as the electric bill, whether it will be necessary to hire extra staff, increase security, etc. She continued that she feels the Board's message of the importance of being economically responsible will not be believed if they spend money on the lights without knowing all of the facts.

Mr. Coates stated that he thinks revenue is secondary, and the real purpose of installing the lights is to benefit the community, and the time is now. He reminded the Board that there is a \$7800 discount if the school purchases the lights itself (as opposed to purchasing the lights through fundraising).

Mr. Donegan stated that spending this money is not irresponsible - he does not think this expense could have been justified a few months ago, but it makes sense now, during these unusual circumstances with a budget surplus at the end of the year.

Mr. Nugent stated that he does not agree with Mr. Panza's motion.

Mr. Roberts stated that he disagrees with Mr. Donegan's statement that the purchase of the lights could not be justified earlier, and that he believes this expense has been justified for a long time but there were always higher money priorities, and right now this purchase is finally possible.

Mr. Panza stated that everyone wants the lights, but he is proposing gathering more information first and searching for donor money.

*Vote taken, motion fails, 2-7, with Mr. Panza and Ms. Blais voting for the motion.*

*Ms. Kathleen O'Donnell makes a motion to move the question. Mr. Chris Coates seconded. Vote taken, motion passes unanimously, 9-0.*

*Vote taken on the original motion, motion passes, 6-3. Mr. Mark Nugent, Ms. Kristin Blais, and Mr. Carl Panza are opposed.*

*Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion, on behalf of the Finance Committee, that the Keene School Board of Education approve \$30,000 for Administrative Review Task Force Committee, \$8,971 for Keene Middle School Mathscapes and Algebra modules, \$5,000 to contract with the UNH Survey Center, \$5,000 to replace an elementary piano, and \$3,779 to pre-purchase math instructional materials for a total request of \$52,750 as*

*presented by Mr. William Gurney using 2009-2010 surplus funds. Mr. Chris Coates seconded.*

Ms. Kristin Blais requested that the motion be amended to change the committee name to Elementary Ad Hoc Advisory Committee.

*Vote taken, motion as amended passed unanimously, 9-0.*

*Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion, on behalf of the Finance Committee, that the Keene School Board of Education approve \$57,376 for the pre-purchase of Keene High School textbooks, using 2009-2010 surplus funds. Ms. Amy Speas seconded. Vote taken, motion passes unanimously, 9-0.*

*Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion, on behalf of the Finance Committee, that the Keene School Board of Education approve \$273,000 to reconstruct and make safety improvements to the grandstands on Alumni Field using 2009-2010 surplus funds. Mr. Chris Coates seconded.*

Mr. Donegan stated that the stands need to be fixed, for safety's sake.

Ms. Speas stated that she thinks it is embarrassing that the stands are not in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and need to be fixed right away.

Ms. Blais stated that she strongly supports this.

Mr. Chamberlin stated that although this is a big expense, it can only be done now, not next year.

Mr. Roberts stated that he does not support this motion, because there are other problems that are a higher priority, such as fixing the heating system, and there is a budget crisis right now.

Ms. Blais stated that she appreciates Mr. Robert's points, but that she does not think it makes sense to put lights on the field if people do not have a safe place to sit.

Ms. Speas reiterated that it is important to meet ADA regulations, and to consider the needs of people in wheelchairs.

*Vote taken, motion passes 8-1, with Mr. Kris Roberts opposed.*

*Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion, on behalf of the Finance Committee, that the Keene School Board of Education approve a total construction budget and related bond financing for the Keene Middle School and SAU building construction projects in the amount of \$38,600,000 based on the recommendation of architect Frank Marinace. Mr. Chris Coates seconded. Vote taken, motion passes unanimously, 9-0.*

#### **4. Consent Agenda**

- a. Agenda Item #3, Approval of Minutes of March 16, 2010
- b. Items Recommended by Committee Chairs

1. Approve the April 13, 2010 Financial Report – *Finance*
2. Approve the fee waiver request for the girl’s Cheshire County Knights Basketball Program for one season only – *Finance*
3. Appoint Richard K. Fox as Trustee of the Keene School District Trust Funds for a term to expire June 30, 2013 - *Finance*
4. Budget Transfers - *Finance*
  - a. Approve \$9,700 from the maintenance department natural gas and electrical accounts to the maintenance department repair materials and grounds repair and maintenance accounts
  - b. Approve \$6,400 from the maintenance department repair equipment and repair maintenance accounts to the repair maintenance account.
  - c. Approve \$6,000 from the maintenance department safety training and repair equipment accounts to the repair maintenance and supplies account
  - d. Approve \$5,325 from the maintenance department snow removal and natural gas accounts to the repair maintenance and maintenance contracts accounts
  - e. Approve \$7,800 from the maintenance department natural gas accounts to the maintenance supply accounts
  - f. Approve \$22,000 from the maintenance department summer help, security and snow removal accounts to the maintenance supply account
  - g. Approve \$3,065 from the elementary math print media account to the elementary core reading account
  - h. Approve \$6,500 from the Keene Middle School extended guidance salaries account to the private psych counseling account

*Mr. Neil Donegan made a motion that the Board approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Mr. Coates seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

## **5. Report of Board Chair – Kathleen O’Donnell**

### **a. Tutor Plan – Update on Numbers and Implementation – Catherine Reeves**

Ms. Cathy Reeves reported that there are 138 tutors. She continued that there is a tutor at the Head Start school whose position was provided in the past, but that this school year started without that tutor and then it was determined that the tutor was needed – due to a student who needed a one-on-one moving into the district - so the position was reinstated. She continued that this number includes regular education tutors as well as special education tutors because they are not separated out. She continued that there were 2 new positions for regular education tutors, and that she received a new request for a tutor today that she will take under consideration. She continued that her colleagues across the state have requested copies of the work the Keene School district has done, regarding implementing tutor guidelines, to use as a model. Mr. Donegan asked where the funds are coming from. Ms. Reeves replied that the new tutor request for the one-on-one has not come to the Finance Committee yet, and that the other 2 are funded from regular education. The preschool tutor position, she continued, was already in the budget. Mr. Coates asked if the regular education tutor requests go through the regular administration, and Ms. Reeves replied yes, these tutors are for students with severe behavioral issues in the regular classroom that require a one-to-one for safety reasons. Mr. Gurney stated that he was aware of these tutor requests and supported the recommendations of the principals. Mr. Donegan asked if the tutors are all for elementary students, and Ms. Reeves replied that she thinks so, except for the one preschool tutor.

### **b. Differentiated Learning/KMS Program – status – William Gurney**

Mr. Gurney reported on the status of the Differentiated Learning program at Keene Middle School. He stated that in October, middle school teachers attended a conference to learn about resources for gifted students. He read a report from Dorothy Frazier about the teachers’ ongoing training in Differentiated Learning.

Chair O’Donnell asked Mr. Gurney what the middle school’s program for gifted students will look like in the fall. Mr. Gurney replied that although the Board voted to hire two teachers that would run a program to identify gifted and talented students, the budget did not have the funds to do that and still does not. He continued that the middle school philosophy is inclusive in nature, and that it is possible to accomplish the goals that the board established without hiring more staff.

Ms. Speas asked Mr. Gurney to define the term “Outlier.” Mr. Gurney replied that outliers are children who are on either end of the academic spectrum, and that the term is not derogatory. Ms. Speas replied that she thinks it is derogatory and lots of the students do, too.

Ms. Speas spoke about her beliefs that the gifted students at KMS need accelerated classes and separate curricula to meet their educational needs. Mr. Gurney spoke about his belief that gifted middle schoolers’ needs can be met within the regular classroom with differentiated instruction techniques.

Mr. Coates stated that if honors classes are offered at the high school level, then middle school teachers, too, should be able to recognize students who rise to a higher level and offer them a higher standard of expectation, and he asked if the middle school teachers are on board with this. Mr. Gurney replied that the middle school teachers are eager to continue training in differentiated instruction and they are moving forward.

Ms. Speas and Mr. Coates questioned why math is the only subject in which a class is offered at the higher level in middle school, and why, if the model of an accelerated class exists, it cannot be expanded to other subjects. Mr. Gurney replied that accelerated math cannot be taught in the regular education and thus needs its own class, but that gifted students can do more challenging work in the other subjects in the regular classroom. Mr. Coates disagreed and asked to have Ms. Frazier and other educators on her team speak to this issue. Mr. Roberts stated that not all teachers are qualified to teach accelerated classes, and that just as there was no single plan that could fit all the elementary schools, because they were all different based on the students and the teachers, there is no one plan that would work at the middle school the same way every year.

Chair O'Donnell stated that this is a huge, unresolved issue that the Board will return to at a later date.

c. Preschool Plan (6/1/10) – William Gurney

Mr. Gurney reported that they are waiting to hear back with a preliminary memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Keene State College (KSC) and then the Keene School District and KSC can talk about areas of common interest and if there is enough common area for the Keene School District and KSC to work together he will return with some recommendations. He continued that part of whether or not this would work for KSC is dependent on new programs being introduced at the college and they are going through their budget process now, so there is a lot that is still unknown. The Board discussed the fact that there are urgent preschool problems that need to be addressed, such as the overcrowded conditions, which is unacceptable. Mr. Gurney stated that due to budget constraints, this program cannot be moved or changed by fall 2010, and that the way to improve the preschool program is through the recently-formed Elementary Advisory Ad Hoc Committee. Chair O'Donnell stated that the Board was expecting a plan for preschool improvements by June 1 and needs to know that there will be a resolution. Mr. Coates stated that the Board needs Mr. Gurney to give them a plan by June 1, even if that plan is not one that can be implemented exactly as presented, because it is then the Board's job to respond to the plan and determine a solution.

d. Elementary Enrichment – William Gurney

Tabled

e. KMS Marketing Committee – non-public, Fred Parsells

Saved for non-public session

f. New KMS Construction – Update from Neil Donegan

No report

g. Current Middle School – Update from Tom Remillard

Mr. Remillard reported that the plan is to move the Ascutney Boulder next week.

h. 30 Royal Ave – Update from Tom Remillard

No report

i. 34 West Street – John Harper

Mr. Harper reported that it is scheduled to be appraised this month.

**6. Report of Co-Superintendents – Mr. Gurney/Mr. Woolridge**

- a. Acknowledgements - none
- b. Legislative Update - none
- c. Other

Mr. Gurney reported that an SAU 29 teacher, Dominique **Benedetto**, was celebrated at a New England Middle School conference as an outstanding young educator.

**7. Secretary’s Report – Mr. Panza**

None.

**8. Report of Standing Committees**

- a. Building Facilities and Ancillary Services – Mr. Coates

No report

- b. Education Committee – Ms. Speas

- 1. Preliminary Report of the Pre-K Special Education Report

Ms. Speas reported that there was a great, very well-attended meeting, about assessment of preschool and elementary programming, with two educational consultants there to give a presentation.

- 2. Gifted and Talented

Ms. Speas reported that Mrs. Frazier came to discuss the gifted and talented program.

- 3. Everyday Math Curriculum Implementation Update
- 4. Keene Community Education Dropout Prevention

Ms. Speas reported that there was a very informative presentation from Jan Barry, about the alternative diploma program, and GEDs.

5. Policy Approval – IIC, IKF, IMBC

*Ms. Amy Speas made a motion, on behalf of the Education Committee, that the Keene School Board of Education approve Policy IIC – Instructional Time-Schedule. Mr. Neil Donegan seconded. Vote taken, motion passes unanimously, 9-0.*

*Ms. Amy Speas made a motion, on behalf of the Education Committee, that the Keene School Board of Education approve Policy IKF – High School Graduation Policy. Mr. Neil Donegan seconded. Vote taken, motion passes unanimously, 9-0.*

*Ms. Amy Speas made a motion, on behalf of the Education Committee, that the Keene School Board of Education approve Policy IMBC – Alternative Credit Options. Mr. Neil Donegan seconded. Vote taken, motion passes unanimously, 9-0.*

6. Other

The next meeting is April 27 at 6:30, with a busy agenda. Mr. Coates recommended that if the committee is having Mrs. Frazier speak again, have other people from her team come and talk as well.

- c. Finance Committee - Mr. Donegan

Covered earlier

- d. Personnel Committee- Mr. Roberts

All for non-public session

- e. Communications Committee – Mr. Panza

No report

- f. Policy Ad Hoc Committee – Mr. Chamberlin

No report

- g. Elementary Advisory Ad Hoc Committee Report – Kristin Blais

Ms. Blais reported that the date has changed for the first community forum and is now May 1. The committee will meet on April 26 and May 10 in this room, and then have another community forum on May 19.

**9. Reports of Special Committees**

- a. NHS AU 29 School Board - Mr. Donegan

No report

- b. Cheshire Career Center Advisory - Mr. Chamberlin

No report

c. NH School Boards Association - *Mr. Panza*

No report

d. Liaison Reports

No report

**10. Old Business**

None

**11. New Business**

None

**12. Resignations**

None

**13. Nominations/Election of Staff**

None

**14. Other**

Mr. Donegan asked about the process for the distribution of minutes. Discussion ensued. Board members had differing opinions on which minutes they wanted to receive, and when, in which format. Chair O'Donnell tabled the topic for another time.

Ms. Speas and Chair O'Donnell want it noted in the minutes that the woman in the audience who scolded the Board for being late was very rude.

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

*Meeting moves into non-public session at 9:50 pm by unanimous roll call vote.*

Respectfully submitted by

Britta Reida

Stenographer

**Approved: May 11, 2010**