

Ashland School Board Regular Meeting
Ashland Elementary School – Heffernan Media Center
Tuesday, August 6, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m.
Policy Review Committee – 5:15 p.m.
MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. RECORD ROLL

Members Present:

Mr. Stephen Heath, Chair
Mrs. Sandra Coleman, Vice-Chair
Mr. Jesse Farris
Mr. Stephen Felton
Mrs. Jennifer Foote

Administrators Present:

Mrs. Mary Moriarty, Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Ashley Dolloff, Business Administrator
Mr. Guy Donnelly, AES Principal

Members Absent:

None

Others Present:

Mr. Paul Bemis

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT – *Opened at 6:01 p.m.*

V. MINUTES

A. Tuesday, June 4, 2024 Regular School Board Meeting Minutes

Two grammatical edits were made to the minutes.

Mr. Felton moved, seconded by Mrs. Foote, to approve the minutes of the June 4, 2024 Regular School Board Meeting.

The motion carried 3-0-2, with Mr. Farris and Mrs. Foote abstaining.

VI. CURRENT BILLS PAYABLE

A. General Operating Expenses

Mrs. Coleman inquired about check #32129, and asked if the amount is for one month. Mrs. Moriarty explained that those are expenses for a specific IEP. Mrs. Dolloff noted the amount listed may be a combination of May and June expenses.

Mrs. Foote inquired about check #32080 where it says, "daycare pest inspection." Mrs. Dolloff clarified that this was an inspection of the school.

Mrs. Foote noted the expenses for newspaper job listings, and asked if the district has any information about how many applicants see advertisements in the newspaper compared with online. Mrs. Dolloff said that sometimes applicants do cite the newspaper as being where they found the job. Mrs. Foote wondered if it is still worth advertising in the paper. Mrs. Dolloff said

that the district is very thoughtful about what positions are advertised in the paper.

Mrs. Foote moved, seconded by Mr. Farris, to approve the payment of bills, manifests #2001 and #2017.

The motion carried 5-0.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. **United States Department of Agriculture**

Mr. Bemis has been working with AES through the ventilation project and successfully obtained congressional spending from the USDA in the amount of just over 1.3 million for ASD. The project is to build an envelope around the building to prevent heat loss, increase fuel efficiency, and ultimately impact the budget in a positive way. Initially, the district was under the impression that a 20% match was required, and cashflow was a concern.

Mr. Bemis and Mrs. Moriarty met following the June Board meeting and determined that the 20% match was not necessarily required. They then met with the USDA program specialist and learned that two other school districts are in a similar position, with cashflow and the 20% match being a concern. After meeting with the program specialist, they learned that if a district does not complete the project with \$1.3 million, the 20% match is not required, but the project must be considered complete by USDA standards. Mr. Bemis has indicated that they will design the project in such a way that it falls within the parameters of the USDA funding.

Mrs. Moriarty expressed concern that construction projects are notorious for having unexpected problems arise and suggested having Mr. Bemis sign an agreement stating that if costs exceed 1.3 million, his company would be financially responsible. She acknowledged that this request would involve a significant commitment for them.

At the meeting with the USDA representative, Mrs. Moriarty and Mr. Bemis also addressed the issue of cashflow. The USDA funds are provided as reimbursement for bills that the district has paid already. Mrs. Moriarty made the USDA representative aware that a small school district does not have the ability to be that flexible with spending and cashflow. The representative said she would bring that to her colleagues at the USDA, to discuss the possibility of spending down from a block of money instead of reimbursement.

Mrs. Moriarty explained that there are still questions up in the air, but since there have been some updates since the June meeting, she wanted the Board to be aware of the situation. She acknowledged that Mr. Bemis was present to answer any questions the Board may have.

Mr. Heath noted that the Board had previously discussed the different phases, and asked Mr. Bemis what might happen if we got through Phase 1 but could not then complete Phase 2 or 3 for some reason.

Mr. Bemis explained that Phase 1 involves building the envelope, and this alone would lower the district's energy bills. Phase 2 involves putting in heat pumps, replacing the oil system with air source heat pumps and adding solar to offset the electrical costs associated with rooftop solar. The district could also stop at this phase. Phase 3 would be adding batteries and intelligence to the new system, to get to net zero. Each stage gets the district to a better situation, but each phase stands on its own. There is a good probability the district could get funded for all three phases.

Mr. Heath asked what the time frame would be for each phase. Mr. Bemis shared that each phase would hopefully take one year.

Mr. Bemis shared with the Board some additional details of the project, including how each phase would be completed, the materials that would be used, and how the improvements would help the school building become more efficient.

Mr. Heath asked what would happen if after getting through the design phase and then discovering the cost of further work would be higher than anticipated, and the Board concluded that it does not seem practical, where that would put us with the grant money.

Mr. Bemis said that the USDA would pay for the invoices as they arrive. In that situation, they would pay for the design phase only. The design phase would cost about \$100,000. This phase would also include testing.

Mrs. Moriarty emphasized that it will be important to get answers from the USDA regarding cashflow. She also noted that any time construction is being performed, there is a disruption to the learning environment of students. She suggested that the Board wait to take any action until USDA has provided answers regarding cashflow and reimbursement issues, as well as a clarification of what they consider as a complete project. She emphasized that this is not a good year to go after a funding opportunity that would require a 20% match. The Board concurred.

Mr. Bemis noted that there is a lot of money coming through the Inflation Reduction Act, and there is going to be a continued push from the Department of Education to reduce carbon emissions.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

A. **Principal's Report/Enrollment Report**

Mr. Donnelly shared his Principal's Report with the Board.

Ashland Elementary School was recently audited by the NH Department of Education to ensure test compliance this year and met all requirements set by the federal and state agencies. Information about school opening will be emailed to families this week through Alma, with a letter attachment. The school has been interviewing for open positions, including paraprofessionals and a part-time special education position, and has identified promising

candidates. Custodians have been diligently working and are making progress to ensure readiness for opening day. The focus of the school year will be on core values, with a particular emphasis on respect and perseverance. An Open House has been scheduled for September 19, with the PTO planning a cookout. The school is excited about the new staff, who will join a day earlier than the rest of the staff to familiarize themselves with AES on August 19, with all staff returning on August 20. A successful summer blast was held this summer, attended by approximately 20 students.

B. Year-to-Date Financial Report

Mrs. Dolloff shared with the Board that a monthly Year-to-Date Financial Report will be made available to the Board beginning in October.

IX. OLD BUSINESS (CONT.)

A. NHSBA Call for Resolutions

The Board agreed not to submit any resolutions at this time.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Impact of Village at Mills Pond on Ashland Elementary School

The Board examined the proposal's impact on Ashland Elementary School as outlined in a report provided by the Lakes Region Community Developers.

Mr. Farris moved, seconded by Mrs. Foote, to approve the Superintendent sharing the analysis as presented with the Ashland Planning Board.

The motion carried 5-0.

B. 2024 State Assessment Monitoring

Mrs. Moriarty presented the 2024 State Assessment Monitoring letter from the Department of Education. Ashland Elementary School was found to be compliant in all sections. No action was taken.

XI. POLICY

A. First Readings

Mr. Farris moved, seconded by Mrs. Foote, to approve first reading of the following policies:

- ACE – Procedural Safeguards: Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Handicap/Disability
- ACF – Food and Nutrition Services: Anti-Discrimination and Civil Rights Complaints
- ADB/GBEC – Drug-Free Workplace & Drug-Free Schools
- IHBA – Programs for Pupils with Disabilities
- IHBA-R – Programs for Pupils with Disabilities – Section 504 – Notice of Parent and Student Rights
- JI – Student Rights and Responsibilities

The motion carried 5-0.

B. Second Readings

Mrs. Foote moved, seconded by Mr. Felton, to approve second reading of the following policies:

- JICH – Student Drug and Alcohol Policy
- JJG – Non-School Sponsored Contests for Students
- CCB – Organizational Chart
- CF – Role of the Principal
- DA – Fiscal Management Goals
- DB – Annual Budget
- DBC – Budget Preparation
- DBI – Budget Implementation
- DBJ – Transfer of Appropriations
- DI – Fiscal Accounting and Reporting
- DIE – Audits
- DKA – Payroll Procedures

The motion carried 5-0.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENT – Closed at 7:18 p.m.

XIII. NONPUBLIC SESSION

A. Nonpublic Session

R.S.A. 91-A:3 II(c): This includes matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of this Board, unless such a person requests an open meeting. Mrs. Coleman moved, seconded by Mrs. Foote, to enter nonpublic session at 7:19 p.m. Mr. Heath called the roll.

YES: Mr. Heath, Mrs. Coleman, Mr. Farris, Mr. Felton, Mrs. Foote
NO: --

The motion passed unanimously.

The Board entered nonpublic session at 7:19 p.m.

B. Public Session

Mrs. Colean moved, seconded by Mrs. Foote, to reenter public session at 7:39 p.m. Mr. Heath called the roll.

YES: Mr. Heath, Mrs. Coleman, Mr. Farris, Mr. Felton, Mrs. Foote
NO: --

The motion passed unanimously.

The Board reentered public session at 7:39 p.m.

The Board requested a draft class size policy. Mrs. Moriarty will bring this to the next Board meeting.

XIV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Tuesday, September 3, 2024

Ashland School Board @ Ashland Elementary School - Heffernan Media Center.

- Policy Committee - **5:30 p.m.**
- Ashland School Board Regular Meeting – **6:00 p.m.**

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Farris moved, seconded by Mrs. Foote to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

The motion carried 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Bullimore, Recording Secretary