

**BETHLEHEM SCHOOL BOARD
BETHLEHEM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
GOOGLE MEET**

**DATE: DECEMBER 8th, 2020
TIME: Immediately following
public hearing**

BOARD MEETING MINUTES - Draft

PRESENT: Chairman Robert Weir, Superintendent Tari Thomas, Principal Sue Greenlaw, Business Manager Toni Butterfield, Board Member Becky Beno, Chris McGrath, Roger Metras

PRESENT GOOGLE MEET: Board Members: Tim Fleury, James Noyes, Jennifer Lucas **Public:** Erica Smith, Allison Culver, Donna Brooks, Breanna Brit, Christine Young-Rinner, Annalisa Blake, Tammy Reardon, Jolee Horvath, Jo-Ann Brusseau, Barbara Kunz, Kathryn Fleury, Paul Jackson, Sara Cascadden, Rosie Shea, Christina Noyes, Emily Russell, Terri Russell, Barbara Loughman, Teresa Wood, Joanna Boisseau

PUBLIC HEARING: To acceptance of the unanticipated funds from the Supplemental Public School Response Fund and the Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Robert Weir called the public hearing to order at 5:41 pm. Roll Call: All Board Members present.

Chairman Robert Weir stated Bethlehem Elementary School is to receive \$28,400 in supplemental public school response funds for Covid related expenses.

MOTION TO ACCEPT \$28,400 FUNDS FROM THE SUPPLEMENTAL PUBLIC SCHOOL RESPONSE FUNDS BECKY BENO SECOND JENNIFER LUCAS. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIES.

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Robert Weir called the meeting to order at 5:44 Roll Call: All Board Members present.

II. PUBLIC INPUT

Roger Metras approached the board with concerns regarding the original vote on November 10th, 2020, to go remote until January 19th, 2021. He expressed that it didn't seem like it was open for public input. Expressing concerns with one case in the school, the state guidelines is if there are less than five cases in the school and less than 5% infection rate in the community, then continue with in-school learning. He understands the need to take precautions, but he thinks coming back November 30th, 2020 would have been okay as long as no one else had shown to be infected. He recommends the 4th of January, 2021 to re-open in- person learning which is after the break. He believes there is a concern with people not being

truthful on the surveys. He states that he feels people are being honest and if people were to travel they would quarantine as would staff. Expressed by Mr. Metras it seems like everyone is being cautious and following the guidelines.

Chris McGrath thanked the Board for revoting on the decision to be remote until January 19th, 2021. He also thanked Chairman Robert Weir and Principal Sue Greenlaw for reaching out to him after the last meeting. He wishes that school would open up earlier, he wanted to remind people that there is an option to be remote, as well as an in-school learning option. Chris referred to the state guidelines. He compared Bethlehem Elementary School to the surrounding schools, and mentioned that most schools are going back earlier than January 19th. Mr. McGrath recommends the school goes back after school vacation on January 4th, 2020 if possible, or January 9th, 2020. He expressed concerns about coming back on January 19th, and getting another case of Covid-19. He questioned if Bethlehem Elementary School would close again until February vacation. He wishes the school would follow what other schools have done in this situation. Mr. McGrath thanked the teachers for their hard work. He expressed concerns for some children that remote learning is a challenge, and believes in person learning is the best for the children. He also expressed financial burdens for some families and the inflexibility from some employers. He recommends that when school is reopened and in the event that there is a case of Covid-19, it is to be closed for 10 to 14 days per government guidelines that he hopes is being followed.

Chairman Robert Weir thanked Roger Metras and Chris McGrath for coming forward and expressing their concerns. He recognizes that this isn't an ideal situation. Chairman Robert Weir empathized by sharing his experience with his own children during this time. He understands the difficulty and respects others opinions on this situation. Chairman Robert Weir addressed the vote that took place on November 10th, 2020. He stated the Board viewed the vote as an emergency situation, after reflecting they realize that it was not the best way to approach it. They would like to ratify that tonight. He stated that the guidelines from the State of New Hampshire have left it up to each individual school district to make a decision.. He spoke with Principal Sue Greenlaw before the school year started, the main underlying thought was safety for the kids, teachers, staff, parents and grandparents. The focus for everyone's safety is paramount. BES was the first school to have a positive case of Covid-19 in the area, at the time the decision was made in November, the thought process was that holidays are coming and with travel to keep everyone safe, the January 19th, 2021 date was chosen. The thought process was to have the built in quarantine period if there was a positive case after the holidays or for those who may be asymptomatic, and then get back into school safely. The Board wants individuals to know why the decision was made in November and to be transparent.

Board Member James Noyes acknowledges the difficulty of this decision. Understands not all children flourish in this environment, as a parent, it is a struggle for him. Mr. Noyes has been looking at the research trying to understand what is the best thing for the school, he doesn't see any other way to do this that doesn't disregard safety. Mr. Noyes mentions that he has to step out of the role as a parent, and has to think about what is best for teachers, staff and community. This is a topic that is impossible to get right, he states. He notes the schools are all trying to do the best they can given the information that they have. He states, we are all trying to do the best for the ones that don't have a voice and that is our kids, that is our responsibility. He wanted to share that this was a very difficult decision for the Board to do, and

personally a challenge. Personally he doesn't see anyway around this. He thinks the Board is doing what is best in this situation. He understands this is a lot more than any of us signed up for.

Principal Sue Greenlaw spoke and wanted everyone to know that this is a decision that was not made lightly. Being a principal is her dream job, but not fun when there aren't kids in the building. Principal Sue Greenlaw understands after being an educator for almost 40 years that face to face instruction is best. Every BES educator is passionate about what they do, when she talks to her staff they know it isn't ideal, but it is safe. She is thankful for Chris McGrath and Roger Metras and has appreciation for the respectful communication. She expressed that she understands their frustration. She states the community has been outstanding, people are making it work and working with the school.

Roger Metras has concerns with what guidelines are being used. He is bothered not with the decision to go remote until January 19th, 2021 but how it was handled. That there was public input in a non public session of the meeting. He mentioned that when someone asked at the meeting about remote learning when the meeting was about to be adjourned this person was told there hadn't been a decision. Then the meeting was adjourned, then it was immediately started back up and was voted on. Parents were notified shortly after. Mr. Metras is concerned that this isn't the first or second time where he had issues with the board being less than honest with the public. He is concerned how this gets resolved and doesn't happen again. He is also concerned with how everyone can be heard. Mentioned the Board discussed what we would do, but Mr. Metras weren't aware of any guidelines given to the parents other than the basic survey. He understands that a decision was made quickly, but feels there should have been a guideline that was followed. Following the state guidelines as a base, but allowing it to be changed.

Principal Sue Greenlaw expressed an understanding of Mr. Metras concerns. She wanted to explain what happened in the events leading up to the decision. Described it being at the end of the day, and the day before the board meeting, and she got the call that there was a positive Covid-19 case in the building. It was a shock. Principal Sue Greenlaw explained she knew steps needed to be taken immediately. She saw a level of fear in people's eyes when it was in the school. She spoke to the staff, they came to the decision that elementary school kids can't be in and out, in and out. Since then, there was a child that tested positive for Covid-19 because BES was remote, they are okay. It was expressed if the school kept going during that period of time, we would have been out again. There would have been staff members that would have been exposed. The in and out scheduling did not sit well with Principal Sue Greenlaw. From a parents perspective there would be the constant fear of getting the phone call at any moment that the school is shut down again. The teachers stated to Principal Sue Greenlaw that the back in forth interrupts education for the elementary children. The idea was to make this as smooth as possible without interrupting the learning and that is happening now remotely. It was mentioned that this isn't ideal but some amazing things are happening remotely.

Chairman Robert Weir addressed Mr. Metras concerns. When the question was asked at the end of the meeting, a decision was not made. The board had a non-public session that started at the beginning of the meeting. An hour before the meeting it was brought to Chairman Robert Weir that a non-public was needed, during that meeting there were some personal matters and names being discussed. The board acted in good faith. At the end of the meeting there was a discussion, then turned into the message that Mr. Metras received. As Chairman, he questioned if that was done correctly, and he apologized for that.

He prides himself on being honest, but the process that night wasn't the best, but is trying to make it right tonight. As a board they want to be transparent and honest on how the decision was made. He apologized to Mr. Metras for feeling there was dishonesty, but it was an act in good faith and an emergency meeting. Chairman Robert Weir expressed appreciation and respect for Chris McGrath and Roger Metras comments. Moving forward Chairman Robert Weir states he has learned a lot through the process and wants to be transparent, to everyone, people online, teachers, parents and staff members. Chairman Robert Weir has served the board for 9 years, he takes this position seriously and tries to do the best job he can. He serves on the board with some good people, and they are honest people. He tries to take all the stakeholders into account, students, teachers, parents and the board. He is always willing to take a call or email and to be as transparent as possible.

Principal Sue Greenlaw reflects on the November 10th meeting, she was reeling in that moment of considering closing a school. Prior to this year and the end of last year, this would never have been on her radar. After the meeting ended and she thought of all the parents she saw that day while handing out materials they wanted to know the plan. Principal Sue Greenlaw realized that at the end of the meeting she didn't have a discussion with the board. She knew she couldn't leave people hanging. She understood that it is difficult to bring people together for an emergency board meeting. Principal Sue Greenlaw acted and requested to have that conversation. She didn't think of the legalities, and the Board honored her request. She believes because she had panic in her voice and knew that a decision had to be made, as families were waiting and wondering. Principal Sue Greenlaw knew she couldn't leave that night without a plan in place. She takes full responsibility for requesting that, it wasn't ideal but she knew something had to be decided.

Chairman Robert Weir addressed the guidelines that Mr. Metras spoke of. He mentioned Superintendent Tari Thomas being on the forefront of this, and the school has never been through this before. Information changes daily, there are guidelines for the board to work within a framework to make decisions. Ultimately the decisions are made by the SAU and school district. There were perimeters set during the start of the school year along with Superintendent Tari Thomas. There were many stakeholders to create this policy such as the principals, school nurses and Department of Human Health Services were consulted. There was a lot of work and unknowns. Every school district is struggling with a definitive policy, he thinks that no district has that. It is learning as they go and try to be supportive and work along with each other.

Teresa Wood thanked the Board for acting quickly when they needed too. Wanted to know what is the plan for after January 19th, and what is the plan if there is a case? What is the criteria, so Principal Sue Greenlaw can have the power to make a quicker decision and parents know what to expect.

Chairman Robert Weir stated that he and Superintendent Tari Thomas in September had a discussion that was happening among other superintendents across the state of what was going to happen during the holidays. This was a discussion going directly to the Educational Commissioner - Frank Edleblut from the beginning. Chairman Robert Weir expressed there were many unknowns with travel and if things were going to get worse. Everything happened at once then BES had the first case in the SAU. Expressed they have learned from the last few weeks.

Principal Sue Greenlaw thanked Theresa Wood for her question. Principal Sue Greenlaw stated that in the teachers minds they are going to be in the back in the building safely on January 19th, 2021. It is a case by case issue, she never makes a decision on her own, she makes it with staff, the school board and administration team. She will always air on the side of safety, it is hard to answer Mrs. Wood's question with 100% sureness because there are so many situations that happened and each situation is different. Principal Sue Greenlaw stated rest assured that the staff is committed to be back in the building safely on January 19th, 2021. As long as everyone can be in the building safely, that is the plan. Principal Sue Greenlaw can't give a decision at this point as she doesn't know what it will look like after the holidays, it is an ever changing situation.

Chris McGrath questioned keeping kids in small groups this year so if one kid tests positive the cohort shuts down not the whole school.

Principal Sue Greenlaw responded to Mr. McGrath commented regarding cohorts. The school is keeping close cohorts, and the hope was to close the small cohort in the event of a positive case. However, the positive case was more far reaching in the building. She explained that if a child in a cohort tests positive, the concern is who the child is coming into contact with outside of the building. The school can keep their cohorts tightly watched, but the school doesn't know who they do have contact with outside the building. This is the part that is scary, from a school perspective, the school can say it was confined to this area, however without contact tracing the school wouldn't know that. The school would need time to make sure that the sick child did not come in contact with another cohort.

Chris McGrath questioned if another case happens if the school will close for another 14 days or is there an unknown.

Principal Sue Greenlaw commented that given the holiday passing that the school would close for the recommended time. If she could foresee the closure it wouldn't be for as long as the school did this time, but the holidays did play a role.

Teresa Woods wanted to clarify, when there is another case, what will that look like for BES? The CDC has guidelines, where it recommends seven days if you have a test. She has children in Profile and BES, she received notice from Profile saying that they were going to go hybrid certain weeks or remote. She feels that notices like that from BES will help parents and teachers prepare. She understands we can't control variables of this pandemic, but having a blueprint in place would be helpful. Feels more communication will be helpful. Her feedback is to have more communication regarding "if" this happens then "this" will happen.

Principal Sue Greenlaw commented that she wishes she could tell what would happen in any given scenario, but can't. Feels that it would be a disservice to tell everyone what she would do because she doesn't know what will happen in the future. Principal Sue Greenlaw apologized about the communication, she felt she communicated often.

III. Ratification of November 10th vote to move to Teaching Remotely Until January 19th

MOTION MADE BY JAMES NOYES SECONDED BY TIM FLEURY FOR THE RATIFICATION OF NOVEMBER 10TH, 2020 VOTE TO MOVE TO TEACHING REMOTELY UNTIL JANUARY 19TH, 2021. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSES.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 10, 2020 MEETING

[2020-11-10 Board Meeting Minutes](#)

[2020-11-10 Non Public Meeting Minutes I](#)

[2020-11-10 Non Public Meeting Minutes II](#)

MOTION MADE BY JENNIFER LUCAS SECONDED BY BECKY BENO FOR THE APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 10TH, 2020 MEETING. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTIONED PASSES.

MOTION MADE BY TIM FLEURY SECONDED BY JAMES NOYES FOR THE APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 10TH, 2020 NON PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES I. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTIONED PASSES.

MOTION MADE BY JAMES NOYES SECONDED BY JENNIFER LUCAS FOR THE APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 10TH, 2020 NON PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES II. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTIONED PASSES.

V. FINANCIAL

A. Electronic Signature Update

Business Manager Toni Butterfield presented the Board with programs that can be used for electronic signatures. Docusign was recommended, the cost would be \$2500 divided amongst the 5 schools which would be used every two weeks by each school to approve the manifest and payroll. In the future could be used for special education to have documentation signed. Discussion ensued.

B. Budget/Budget Committee Discussion

Business Manager Toni Butterfield discussed the fiscal year 21/22 budget. A 3% increase was used for staff, mandated increase at 9.2% in health, and retirement was a mandated increase based on salaries. If there are any questions about the budget contact Principal [Sue Greenlaw](#) or Business Manager [Toni Butterfield](#) before the January meeting. Discussion ensued.

Chairman Robert Weir mentioned developing a budget committee, and thinks it should be a goal for next year. Possibly start the processes in October.

C. Food Service Update

Business Manager Toni Butterfield reported revenue and expenses are down. Fresh Picks Cafe is encouraging the school to decide if they want to use the National Meal Incentive Program formally

known as Free/Reduced Meal Program to provide meals over vacation and weekends. This would be a way to raise meal incentives, otherwise BES may need to pay more at the end of the year. Any child under the age of 18 is entitled to a meal from BES. The food pantry can place an order for meals. This conversation needs to happen between Principal Sue Greenlaw and Fresh Picks Cafe. Currently BES is paying Profile for food and labor, which isn't clearly marked out as of now in the information handed out, but will be next month. Discussion ensued.

D. General Information

Business Manager Toni Butterfield encouraged the Board to source the school's energy with Freedom Energy for 34 months at .0669/kWh. Lisbon and BES both have contracts expiring at the end of the month, and because of this they could put out a bid together for a lower rate. The idea is for all 5 schools to have contracts expire within the same range so that they all can all be put out for bid for a lower rate. Currently BES sources their power from a third party, not from Eversource, then Eversource delivers it to BES. Current rates that BES is paying is .07248/kWh. Business Manager [Toni Butterfield](#) is recommending that BES signs the contract with Freedom Energy and approves Chairman Robert Weir to sign the contract from Freedom Energy for 34 months at .06691/kWh starting at 1/1/2021.

MOTION MADE BY BECKY BENO SECONDED BY TIMOTHY FLEURY FOR CHAIRMAN ROBERT WEIR TO SIGN THE CONTRACT FOR FREEDOM ENERGY FOR 34 MONTHS AT .06691 STARTING AT 1/1/2021. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

Business Manager Toni Buterfield discussed year-to date revenue expenses. Contracted services under the operation line shows \$28,000 unencumbered balance, that is because Principal [Sue Greenlaw](#) has reorganized how the school is cleaned.

VI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. General Information

[December 1, 2020 Enrollment](#)

Superintendent Tari Thomas reported that Bethlehem enrollment is at 139 students, 77 boys and 62 girls; a difference of 19 from the previous school year. These numbers include distance learners.

[December Supt Report](#)

Superintendent Tari Thomas mentioned that the December Superintendent Report includes items like the school funding report, information on high school sports, a picture of Principal Sue Greenlaw reading to the kindergarteners this morning, enrollments, new personnel, COVID updates and Lisbon's Music performances, and information from the SAU full Board Meeting.

VII. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

A. General Information

[Principal's Report](#)

Principal Sue Greenlaw reports that she and Business Manager Toni Butterfield wrote to the State of N.H. requesting \$130,000 out of the state's 10 Million in supplemental public school response discretionary reserve funds to replace the money for the ventilation systems. Principal [Sue Greenlaw](#) is awaiting a response. A brief discussion ensued.

VIII. BOARD OF EDUCATION REPORTS

[FY22 SAU#35 District Shares](#)

[FY22 SAU#35 Budget Summary](#)

[FY22 SAU#35 Full Budget Detail](#)

[FY22 Executive Summary](#)

[Slide Deck](#)

Chairman Robert Weir gave an update regarding the full SAU board meeting. The SAU budget did pass. At the meeting it was discussed that Superintendent Tari Thomas will have her contract extended for a second year. This allows time to search for a permanent superintendent, this time also allows Superintendent Tari Thomas to form policies and structure the SAU. The Executive Board has also revamped how the Superintendent is reviewed, which will now be in segments, not annually. Also the Executive Board is to form a selection committee for the superintendent search. There will be stakeholders involved in the search such as; staff, students, parents and principals. The new superintendent once hired will start June 2022. It was approved to act on behalf of the Executive Board until June and the 2021-2022 SAU 35 Calendar was approved.

[2020-12 Full Board Report](#)

[Supt Eval Goal Setting Report](#)

[Draft 2021-2022 SAU 35 Calendar](#)

IX. POLICY COMMITTEE

Chairman Robert Weir stated the electronic signature policy needs to be started.

X. NON-PUBLIC SESSION AS PER RSA 91A:3 I, II (If Needed)

Board called a non-public meeting to support personnel.

MOTION TO GO INTO NON-PUBLIC BECKY BENO, SECOND JENNIFER LUCAS. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTIONED CARRIES.

MOTION TO LEAVE NON-PUBLIC MADE BY JAMES NOYES, SECOND BECKY BENO. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTIONED CARRIES, TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION AT 7:20 PM.

Returned to Public Session 7:20 PM. Called by Roll Call.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

Business Manager Toni Butterfield mentioned manifests need to be signed. She will leave them at the school for signatures.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Robert Weir thanked the Board for it is not an easy position and for the support they give to the staff, parents and stakeholders and he is appreciative of the work they do. Principal Sue Greenlaw second that.

There being no additional business to come before the Board adjourned the meeting.

MOTION MADE BY JAMES NOYES SECONDED BY BECKY BENO TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:27 PM. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhienna Miscio
Substitute Board Clerk

The next Board Meeting will be held on January 12th, 2021 at 5:30 PM.

A Checklist To Ensure Meetings Are Compliant With The Right-to-Know Law During The State Of Emergency As Chair of the Bethlehem Elementary School Board, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically. Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously

to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are: a. Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means: We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. 1 All members of the Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting by clicking on the following website address:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75529453267?pwd=cStKaEdKaVBJWkRibzN5aTFhemR1QT09> Meeting ID:

755 2945 3267 Passcode: H3f6i4 Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the

meeting: We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonically. Instructions have also been provided

physically as posted outside the SAU #35 office door and on the websites of Bethlehem Elementary

School and SAU #35 at: www.bethlehem.k12.nh.us and www.sau35.org c. Providing a mechanism for the

public to alert the public during the meeting if there are problems with access: If anybody has a problem,

please email Sue Greenlaw at s.greenlaw@bethlehem.k12.nh.us d. Adjourning the meeting if the public is

unable to access the meeting: In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be

adjourned and rescheduled. Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by

roll call vote. Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their

presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is

required under the Right-to-Know law. 1 Many public bodies are utilizing video teleconferencing

technology, such as Zoom, to ensure the electronic meeting comply with the Right-to-Know law and any

applicable due process requirements. In certain circumstances, a regular business meeting of a public

body may be conducted utilizing audio-only technology. If you have any questions about the

appropriateness of the technology utilized to conduct your meeting, please consult your agency counsel or

the Attorney General's Office.