

ROCKPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING
Wednesday March 1, 2017

Chairperson Martha Morgan called the regular meeting of the Rockport School Committee to order at 7:00 p.m. in the MS/HS Library. Present were Colleen Coogan, Martha Morgan, Heather Nelson, Rebecca Sly and Mary Porter. Also, present were Superintendent Robert Liebow and Recording Secretary Ingrid Keating.

I. Opening of Regular Meeting

A. Approval of Minutes

Motion: Heather Nelson motioned to approve the regular and executive minutes from February 15, 2017.

Seconded: Colleen Coogan seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

B. Personnel Actions

N/A

II. Community Participation

A. Student Advisory Representative

Student Representatives Meagan Smith and Andrea Hamel reported that Spirit Week is going on and that there has been a good response from students. The student body is talking about the new schedule for next year mostly the Junior class. They filled up their first two years hoping have more free time in the last two, now they have to sign up for every block. There is discussion that seniors may be able to leave early on Thursdays during the long block, this would also allow them to pursue internships. They also fee that classes will meet more frequently during the week, right now some classes have several days in between.

B. Public Participation

III. Discussion and Recommended Action

A. K-12 PE/ Health

Grades 5-12 Health Education/K -12 Health and Wellness Curriculum Coordinator Amanda King introduced EL PE Teacher Erin Caniff, 6-12 PE Teacher John Parisi, and 9-12 PE Teacher/Athletic Director Mary Ryan. Mrs. King reviewed the state law regarding physical education, the elementary school students meet once a week for 45 minutes, in the middle and high school the schedules vary and try to meet the requirement of the state. Next years new schedule should help getting more students into physical education classes. Mr. Parisi explained that “independent fitness” is very popular and it has more flexibility for students to participate in PE. Erin Caniff reported that RES focuses on creating a positive environment and promote the enjoyment of physical activity. Students work on being active, skill development and have small group games. The “Choices of Challenge” theme meets the student at their ability and as they make individual progress they feel good about where they are at. Ms. Caniff encourages community members to help and bring their talents to the program, such as the coaches from Cross Fit Cape Ann. Last years Motif #1 Day Race received a North Shore Award and the proceeds funded many projects. She explained the “W.E.L.L. Mission” which builds and fosters a culture of health and wellbeing in the school community. Darlene Trumbour was the AFHK National Award Winner 2016 Healthy School Hero. Mrs. Trumbour purchased yoga equipment for the Wellness Center with the financial award she received. The school committee thanked the teachers for the influence on the students who learn lifelong skills from their classes.

B. MS Math Tracking

K-12 Math Specialist Jodi Goodhue reviewed the current middle school math program tracking. Middle school students are tested and put into separate curricular tracks: high, general and low tracks. She explained the current model and placement decisions. She and middle school math teacher Yvonne Story have found that the current way of tracking the middle school students is not working. Rockport middle

school has a good state test percentile but is a Level 2 school due to a lower rate of growth. Through extensive research they propose 4 mixed- ability classes in grade 6, 3 mixed-ability classes and 1 accelerated class in grade 7, and 3 mixed-ability and 1 accelerated Algebra classes in grade 8. They would develop plans for service providers and delivery grids to meet the needs of students on IEPs. This approach would start with the incoming 6th grade. The teaching staff is very supportive of the proposal. RMHS Principal Gregg Bach supports this concept and is impressed with the thoughtful work that Ms. Goodhue and Mrs. Story have done on the research. He believes that this new model will benefit all students and overall climate of the school.

C. Field Trip

Motion: Colleen Coogan motioned to approve the out of state field trip to Durham, NH for the University of New Hampshire Jazz Festival on March 11, 2017 with the addition of one more chaperone.

Seconded: Mary Porter seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

D. Appointment of School Attorney

Motion: Heather Nelson motioned to approve the reappointment of Naomi Stonberg as the School District Attorney.

Seconded: Rebecca Sly seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

E. Budget Update

Superintendent Liebow reported that he was informed that the town's health insurance increase for next year has been set at 9.47%. The budget model we have been working with for the schools for the last three years, in cooperation with the town which is dealing with limited financial resources, has been structured as follows: The school department makes every attempt to keep the total increase in the school budget to 3% or less (the increase for next year is set at 2.75%) the Town makes every attempt to provide the school with a 2.3% increase in the base funding for the school budget. The 2.3% base increase from the town is dependent on health insurance cost increases not exceeding 5%. Through this model it is hoped that school budget "overrides" can be spread out to at least a five year period of time and be of a moderate amount. As you can see from the model, the schools will be responsible for 4.47% of the increase in health insurance costs for next year. This percentage increase equates to just over \$100,000 and this amount will unfortunately be subtracted from the schools base increase from the town for next year. The bottom line effect of this situation is that we will need to do some belt tightening and some restructuring with how we do business but rest assured it will not be necessary at this time to reduce overall staffing levels because of this situation with health insurance cost increases. A second issue for us that is generated by this situation with the health insurance cost increase is that we had been hoping to hold off on having to ask the townspeople for an override for the school budget for two more years. Unfortunately it appears that we will need to be asking for that override next year at this time when we are building and proposing the school budget for the 2018-2019 school year. For your information, the last school override, which was approved by voters from the Town of Rockport, was seven years ago.

F. Policy Review/Proposals

File IIB – Class Size: After discussion and explanation of ideal class size numbers vs. range the school committee said they would take a vote on this policy noting that it can be reviewed at any time.

Motion: Heather Nelson motioned to approve revised File IIB – Class Size policy as presented.

Seconded: Mary Porter seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

File ADF – Wellness Policy: After discussing the revision of the policy with Amanda King, regarding recess and lunch, the committee decided to bring it back to the next meeting after Administrators and the Wellness Committee had a chance to look at it and give back their input.

G. Warrants and Payroll

IV. Information and proposals

A. School Council Update

B. Donations

C. Updates

Sub-committee reports:

School Committee Handbook Draft: Mr. Liebow suggested mentioning “chain of command”, communications outside of a meeting setting should be just through the chairperson and do not “reply all” only reply to the member who sent out the original email.

V. Correspondence N/A

VI. Other Business

Fundflow: Superintendent Liebow reported that there is not a significant change in the outlook for the end of the year balances.

VII. Future Agenda Items

A. K-12 Guidance/Counseling & PBIS/Lighthouse/SEPAC (3/15)

B. Superintendent’s Evaluation (4/5)

C. Growing Good Kids: Informing Student's Social/Emotional Knowledge & Behavior in grades K -12(April)

D. K-12 Library/Technology (4/5)

E. School Choice Vote (4/5)

F. School Committee Self Evaluation (3/15)

VIII. Calendar

A. March 15, 2017, regular meeting

B. April 4, 2017, regular meeting

VIV. Executive Session

At 9:30 p.m. a motion was made to go into executive session to discuss personnel. A Roll Call vote was taken. The Committee unanimously voted to adjourn to Executive Session and will return to open session.

Colleen Coogan	yes
Martha Morgan	yes
Heather Nelson	yes
Mary Porter	yes
Rebecca Sly	yes

Motion: Heather Nelson motioned to adjourn the regular meeting at 9:52 p.m.

Seconded: Colleen Coogan seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Liebow
Superintendent of Schools