

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY DECEMBER 5, 2017
GILFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TOCCI LIBRARY
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The Gilford School Board held a regular meeting on Tuesday December 5, 2017 at the Gilford Elementary School Tocci Library. Present were board members Sue Allen, Gretchen Gandini, Chris McDonough, and Karen Thurston. Representing Gilmanton were Adam Mini and Frank Weeks. Administrators present were Kirk Beitler, Danielle Bolduc, Scott Isabelle, Peter Sawyer, Anthony Sperazzo, Steve Tucker, and Sean Walsh.

OPENING

School Board Vice Chairperson Chris McDonough called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., led the Pledge of Allegiance, and confirmed posting of the meeting.

Gretchen Gandini made the motion that the board approve the minutes of the November 4, 2017 meeting. Sue Allen seconded the motion and after discussion of corrections it was voted in the affirmative. Adam Mini and Frank Weeks abstained.

Karen Thurston made the motion that the board approve the minutes of the November 6, 2017 meeting. Gretchen Gandini seconded the motion and after discussion of corrections it was voted in the affirmative. Adam Mini abstained.

Karen Thurston made the motion that the board approve the minutes of the November 6, 2017 public hearing. Sue Allen seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Adam Mini abstained.

Gretchen Gandini made the motion that the board approve the minutes of the November 15, 2017 meeting. Karen Thurston seconded the motion and after discussion of corrections it was voted in the affirmative. Sue Allen and Adam Mini abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered.

**STUDENT
PRESENTATION**

Danielle Bolduc introduced Grade 3 student Kali Griffin, who gave her learner-led conference presentation.

Grade 3 teacher Carole Podmore first described the process, from initial assessment and self-assessment to determine her learning style, establishing goals, preparing documents in Google Docs, printing them to create a portfolio, and practicing presentations on fellow students.

Kali then narrated her slide presentation/learner-led conference and passed her portfolio to board members. She described her goals, which included learning cursive writing and becoming more confident when doing math exercises. She showed her action plan and examples of her work. One of her favorite subjects is social studies. Attendees applauded Kali.

Mr. Sawyer commented that she “presented your power point better than most adults: you did not read from your slides. That was awesome, very nice.”

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Student Council Report

No student council representative was present.

Superintendent Report

Kirk Beitler reviewed his written report, highlighting as follows:

- Correspondence from the New Hampshire Department of Education Bureau of Special Education reflects that once again the district is in substantial compliance with requirements and standards. “Kudos to Esther [Kennedy] and the Special Ed Department. This is really huge.”

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- Drawings reflecting the current and proposed secured entry at the elementary school generated discussion. Mr. Isabelle will confirm the ability to detain a visitor and the break-resistance of the security doors. Contractor Bonnette, Page, and Stone (BPS) will establish pricing. If the budget allows and with the board's approval BPS will put the project out to bid this winter.
- The school calendar for 2018-2019 aligns closely with that of Laconia, except that Laconia starts on September 4, 2018.

Discussion followed about the timing of conferences. Mr. Beitler advised that the high school plans conferences midway into the first trimester while learner-led conferences at the elementary school require more time. Mr. Sawyer added that Grades 5 and 6 conferences also require more time. Mr. Sperazzo noted that additional conferences with other teachers in other trimesters would require adding school days. Parental attendance at high school conferences is about 25 percent.

Further discussion ensued about combining half-days into full-days. Contractual obligations, minimum instructional days, and the Huot schedule restrict any present ability to combine half-days. The calendar will return for approval next month after input from GEA.

In reference to the lockdown practice, Chris McDonough inquired whether the elementary school library doors can be locked from within. Mr. Walsh replied that at present they cannot, however he will investigate whether the hardware is interchangeable.

Mr. McDonough inquired about turnaround time for the new student assessment instruments. Mr. Beitler responded that it remains about the same as Smarter Balanced. Mr. Tucker added that the new assessments require shorter testing times, which is well received by the teachers.

Karen Thurston observed that the high school and middle schools must lock down simultaneously and inquired whether the elementary school locks down simultaneously. Ms. Bolduc replied "depending on the threat we make that call. It's not automatic."

Gilford Elementary School

Danielle Bolduc submitted her report as written.

Gilford Middle School

Peter Sawyer submitted his report as written, adding two items of note:

- The Heifer Farms International trip has been canceled.
- Grade 8 students sent care packages and wrote letters to troops in the Middle East. The troops have reportedly received the care packages and letters. "The socks and snacks were great but the soldiers liked the letters best."

Gretchen Gandini asked for an example of "minor aggressive behavior." Mr. Sawyer replied that "pushing and shoving does not mean they're angry with each other, but they do put their hands on each other." Mr. Walsh offered that such behavior is usually "not meant with harm. It's 'boys will be boys' taken too far." Ms. Gandini inquired about truancy. Mr. Sawyer replied that the reported instances are attributable primarily to one student.

Gilford High School

Anthony Sperazzo submitted his report as written. He emphasized that for the next six months his staff will be examining five NEASC standards for best practices and how Gilford ranks. On-site reviewers will come to evaluate and make recommendations.

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Mr. Sperazzo requested that the board approve the 2018 Senior Class trip to go whitewater rafting in Caratunk, Maine. Students will miss one day of school, leaving Friday May 4 and returning Sunday May 6. The total cost per student will be between \$150 and \$180, depending on the final sales from the winter craft fair. Scholarships will be available. Karen Thurston moved that the board approve the trip. Sue Allen seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Business Administrator Report

Scott Isabelle prefaced his remarks by reminding that health insurance costs were estimated to increase by 14 percent but actually increased by only five percent. Further, dental insurance costs were estimated to increase by 15 percent but due in part to reconstructing the plan, costs decreased by six percent. Total savings was approximately \$600,000.

Adam Mini noted that Gilmanton's budget forecasts a positive fund balance at year's end, and Gilmanton's town budget committee has difficulty understanding why the budget is not simply reduced by a like amount.

Mr. Isabelle responded that, using for example the health and dental insurance figures above, the reality is likely to fall somewhere in between the 14 percent anticipated increase and the five percent actual increase. Typically the administration builds in some additional plans for shifts in staff. "We build in a buffer for that and have reduced it significantly for next year."

Mr. Isabelle reviewed his Revenue Report. Following considerable discussion, Sue Allen moved that the \$62,500 in the Capital Reserve Roof Repair account not be used for other purposes. Karen Thurston seconded the motion.

Ms. Allen expressed her preference that some of the retained fund balance be used to offset roof replacement costs "but not dip into the capital reserve since it was established for a specific account on the CIP schedule."

Chris McDonough pointed out the budget committee's apparent "intention to cut some of our capital improvements in the budget. I think applying the \$62,500 to pay for part of that now would be appreciated by the budget committee. But it's pay now or pay later."

Ms. Allen's motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Isabelle next inquired as to the board's preference concerning application of the retained fund balance to offset an anticipated six-cent tax rate increase, which would be a departure from past practice.

Chris McDonough observed that the purpose of the retained fund balance is to alleviate spikes in the tax rate. "Do we consider a six-cent increase following a year where we had a 12-cent decrease? My preference is to keep it the way we've always done it instead of using the fund balance to change it."

Gretchen Gandini favored "being consistent with what we've done, if it's not going to make a significant impact."

Further discussion yielded a consensus to adhere to past practice and not apply retained fund balance to offset the tax rate.

Mr. Isabelle noted that "It gets confusing when you've reduced the budget by one percent and still have a six-cent increase in taxes."

Kirk Beitler brought forward requests from the budget committee as follows.

- To discontinue salary "holding accounts" and redistribute funds currently shown in those accounts to the administrative and support staff salary accounts. Brief discussion revealed a consensus to comply with the request.
- To create a line item for each membership dues account. Sue Allen noted that "we've had that discussion before and voted not to pull them

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out; to do them the way we presented.” The board’s consensus was to maintain present practice.

- To prioritize maintenance projects for the 2018-2019 budget year. Karen Thurston pointed out that the school serves as the community’s life safety building in the event of a disaster. Her view is that all maintenance projects are important, necessary, and cannot be further delayed. “There are no frivolous items on that list.” Chris McDonough voiced his view that “we only put stuff on there that we feel is important.” Following further discussion the board’s consensus was not to prioritize maintenance projects. Scott Isabelle reminded that while a bond may help fund such projects, if a bond initiative is not passed by the voters then no funds, even if available, can be expended on those projects until the next budget cycle.

Mr. Beitler next reviewed a request by the board to contact the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) for clarification on rulings. He sought the board’s approval to arrange a meeting with Steve Hamilton of DRA to include himself, Scott Isabelle and Mr. Silber from the budget committee. Chris McDonough offered to attend on behalf of the board. Mr. Isabelle clarified that DRA can give its “opinion or interpretation on how the law works, but the Court would determine ultimately.”

Board Chair Report

Vice-Chair Chris McDonough brought forward the 2017-2018 school board meeting schedule. Mr. Beitler clarified that the December 7 budget committee meeting will cover the middle and high schools; the December 14 budget committee meeting will cover special education; and the December 28 budget committee meeting will cover district-wide accounts.

POLICY REVIEW AND REVISION

First Reading:

Chris McDonough brought forward the following policies for first reading:

JBAA—Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

ACA—Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, and Unlawful Harassment

ACA-P—Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures

GBAA—Sexual Harassment—Employees & Staff

GBAA-R—Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

JBAA—Sexual Harassment-Students

JBAA-R—Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

JLCJ—Concussions and Head Injuries

Kirk Beitler reviewed that the district already has Policies JBAA, ACA, and ACA-P which combine employee sexual harassment and student sexual harassment. The NHSBA provides different policies for employees and students. The policy committee agrees that there should be separate policies. If the new policies are adopted the old policies (JBAA, ACA, and ACA-P) will be retired. Policy JLCJ has recently received input from the athletic director and high school nurse who have investigated NHIAA policies as well as those of other districts.

Second Reading:

Policy JH—Attendance, Absenteeism and Truancy

Gretchen Gandini moved that the board approve the policy as presented. Karen Thurston seconded the motion.

Ms. Thurston observed that the subject policy still contained bold and strikeout designations and questioned whether policies are usually acted upon in final form.

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**POLICY REVIEW AND
REVISION**

Ms. Gandini noted that board minutes are typically approved with changes as noted.
Ms. Gandini's motion passed unanimously.

Policy BCB—Board Member Conflict of Interest

Sue Allen pointed out that GEA had not been consulted after the final change was made to the draft motion. She moved that Policy BCB await board action until GEA review. Karen Thurston seconded the motion.

Chris McDonough observed that submission of policies to GEA "is a courtesy, not a requirement. It is not school board's policy." Ms. Allen observed that seeking GEA input had been the practice of the board throughout her tenure.
Ms. Allen's motion passed 5-1. Mr. McDonough opposed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered.

ADJOURNMENT

As no non-public items were on the agenda, at 7:59 p.m. Sue Allen moved to adjourn. Gretchen Gandini seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Gretchen Gandini
School Board Secretary**