

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
MONDAY DECEMBER 2, 2019  
GILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY  
Page 1 of 6**

**The Gilford School Board held a regular meeting on Monday December 2, 2019 at the Gilford High School Library. Present were Board members Chris McDonough, Gretchen Gandini, Jeanin Onos, and Karen Thurston. Administrators present were Kirk Beitler, Scott Isabelle, Anthony Sperazzo, Rick Acquilano, Peter Sawyer, and Danielle Bolduc. Gilmanton Board members present were Michelle Heyman and Malcolm MacLeod.**

**Opening**

School Board Chair Chris McDonough called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. Superintendent Beitler confirmed posting of the meeting. Chris McDonough led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Jeanin Onos made the motion that the Board approve the minutes of the October 22, 2019 meeting. Gretchen Gandini seconded. Gretchen Gandini made the motion that the Board approve the minutes of the October 23, 2019 meeting. Jeanin Onos seconded. Both minutes were approved unanimously as amended. Michelle Heyman and Malcolm MacLeod abstained.

Jeanin Onos made the motion that the Board approve the minutes of the November 4, 2019 meeting. Gretchen Gandini seconded the motion. Corrections were made. The motion passed in the affirmative.

**Public Comment**

Public comments were made by the following Gilford residents:

Betty Tidd spoke about her lack of knowledge about the transgender subject, but learning about a friend's child being transgender encouraged her to learn about the topic. It is not a sexual agenda for the child, it is about identity, she stated. She said that children should be given the choice of which bathroom to use or which locker room. "How we as adults respond to their bravery is so important," she commented. She stated that she had attended a policy committee meeting and was impressed with the work being done, and feels we need this policy for all of our children.

Skip Murphy spoke about the policy and questioned as to when the policy has to be instituted. Reading from the law, RSA 354-a, Mr. Murphy asked to know when the Board will be developing the infrastructure for this policy, covering all of the protected classes of people listed in the RSA. Chris McDonough replied that we are currently working on one section at present. Mr. Murphy stated that the law is asking for a coordinated plan. He would like to know when the Board will be dealing with that. Chris McDonough said that Kirk Beitler will get him an answer on a coordinated plan. Mr. Murphy stated that he wants all other protected classes listed to be addressed by a policy.

Dorothy Piquado spoke about a previous comment regarding a transgender female competing on a girls' sports team. She stated that the myth is that there will be an unfair advantage for the transgender child, should the child be allowed to participate as the gender with which they identify. She clarified several myths. She stated that she feels that all students should not be excluded from participation in any athletics or other after school activity. She continued that there is no research to support the claim that a competitive imbalance exists when competing on the team with which they identify. She also stated that transgender students compete on teams with which they identify in everyday life, not just when participating in sports.

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
MONDAY DECEMBER 2, 2019  
GILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY  
Page 2 of 6**

Kyle Sanborn spoke about a letter he wrote to the Laconia Daily Sun. He gave evidence he found stating that biological boys have caused girls to lose out on scholarships. He feels that the policy is regressive, not progressive, and the policy is against Title IX.

Angelo Farruggia stated that he feels acceptance of a child is important, but when infringing on the rights of others to get there is where there is an issue. He stated that he feels that we are trampling on the rights of others, and that we can't trample on the rights of one to support the rights of others. He reiterated that he is against the policy.

Joe Wernig spoke about people referring to one student, and one family, saying it is not about just one student, that we have students at all schools who are transgender. Mr. Wernig stated that he has coached for 30 years, and scholarships don't just go to record holders. He said that we need to focus on the policy, and a similar policy is in effect in his district without issue; that no rights are infringed upon in his district – he has not seen this at all in his district. He said that as an educator, the biggest issue we have is how the kids feel and it is the parents who have the issue, not the kids. Mr. Wernig stated that the policy is simple; there is nothing on record having an issue with problems caused by the transgender students, only by the non-transgender students.

Gaye Fedorchak said that she understands that people are speaking from the heart. She questioned that staff is being told not to use the word transgender. She continued, saying that we need to have students feel able to ask the questions they need to ask.

Matthew Wood said that he feels that we need to have more conversations on the topic, as in his opinion it feels like one side is against the other, but that no one is trying to discriminate against the other side. He stated that he feels the Board should be more supportive of a policy that is best for Gilford, not other towns, and he wants to see that time is taken to be sure it is done the right way.

Public comment was closed at this time.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Beitler presented his report as written.

Following presentation of the proposed 2020-2021 School Calendar, the following discussion ensued.

- Michelle Heyman asked if the HUOT start date would impact us. Mr. Beitler replied that it would mean a three day difference for GHS students.
- Chris McDonough asked about the start date for athletic games. Rick Acquilano said that the first day of practices would be around August 9, 2020, with the first games being near the end of August and before the students come back to school. Kirk Beitler stated that we did that this year as well.
- Gretchen Gandini commented that she has heard a lot of positive comments on the late start this year. However, she is concerned about the start time for HUOT students.
- Michelle Heyman asked if the missing three days would impact the HUOT students as aspects of the program depend on their attendance. Mr. Beitler said that they would not be penalized for missing those three days.
- Karen Thurston reminded the Board that our start date was affected by Laconia schools starting after Labor Day, but now Laconia has flipped and gone back to starting before the holiday.
- Gretchen Gandini asked about other sending schools and their start dates. (Shaker Regional starts before the holiday.)

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
MONDAY DECEMBER 2, 2019  
GILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY  
Page 3 of 6**

- Kirk Beitler stated that we want to avoid going back and forth about start dates. Chris McDonough agreed.
- Gretchen Gandini reiterated that as a parent, she appreciated starting after the holiday. She would feel comfortable staying consistent with what was done as long as the HUOT students are not adversely affected.
- Chris McDonough asked if anyone needed more information before voting on this tonight.
- Malcolm MacLeod stated that he feels it is a very late start.
- Gretchen Gandini asked about students who work for the summer.
- Anthony Sperazzo asked if Mr. Beitler and the Board wanted him to look at early release dates. Chris McDonough said that if a change is needed for early release dates, parents could be notified as needed.

Karen Thurston made a motion to accept the 2020-2021 school calendar. Gretchen Gandini seconded. Malcolm MacLeod spoke against it. Voting followed with Michelle Heyman and Malcolm MacLeod voting against the 2020-2021 calendar as presented; Chris McDonough, Gretchen Gandini, Karen Thurston, and Jeanin Onos voted in favor. Motion passed 4-2.

### **Principal Reports**

#### **Gilford Elementary School**

Danielle Bolduc reviewed her report as written. She noted that our ABC (Always Building Connections) program has been extremely successful this year. Mrs. Bolduc said the students are enjoying having high school “buddies” meet with them.

#### **Gilford Middle School**

Peter Sawyer reviewed his report as written. He congratulated Mrs. McLane for being named the Eastern District Middle School Physical/Health Education Teacher of the Year. He stated that she is now one of just six finalists competing for the top honor in the country. Mr. Sawyer also offered congratulations to Alden Townsend and Riley Powers for being accepted to the 2020 Middle Level Honors Band Festival. The festival will take place in Stratham, NH on Tuesday March 10, 2020.

#### **Gilford High School**

Anthony Sperazzo reviewed his report as written. He commented that the Choose Love program is going very well, and GHS has implemented its activities throughout the first trimester. Mr. Sperazzo said that the show, *School of Rock*, was very well received, and the cast and crew should be commended for their talents. He congratulated Coach Amy Tripp and the players for winning their second consecutive state volleyball title. Chris McDonough asked Mr. Sperazzo how you grade portrait of a learner. Mr. Sperazzo replied that that is not finalized yet; however it will not be factored as a standard grade, but based on the rubrics. Mr. McDonough asked about consistency comments on the exit ticket. Mr. Sperazzo replied that yes, we are trying to have it cover all three schools and modeled on the four attributes, but at each grade’s level. Gretchen Gandini asked how this will translate into a college application. Mr. Sperazzo stated that it will be reported on but not listed as part of their grade/GPA. Mr. Beitler said that the “soft skills” it addresses will not be included in the grades.

### **Athletic Director’s Report**

Rick Acquilano spoke about the turf field replacement. He shared with Board a first draft concept before making any further steps in the process. Mr. Acquilano stated that he is looking for guidance and direction on the next move regarding the fields. He said that the Committee, including Mr. DeHart, should be thanked for all

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
MONDAY DECEMBER 2, 2019  
GILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY  
Page 4 of 6**

their work on the project. Mr. Acquilano presented a video on all the sports teams that use the fields and proposed an on-campus facility that would be located behind the school parking lot. He said the facility would include a concession stand and stadium bleachers with seating for 1,400. He pointed out that this does not interfere with the new track or softball field. Mr. Acquilano stated that it was an exciting project to be involved with.

The following discussion ensued.

- Chris McDonough asked about the advantages of a turf field. Mr. Acquilano replied that schools with turf fields have the opportunity to be outside earlier in the season, where we are often indoors for five or six weeks because of the conditions of the natural fields, and it would mean that our students would be ready or on an equal footing as teams we play against. He commented that the turf field would stand up to wear and tear better than the natural fields.
- Kirk Beitler said it was a great concept. He stated that when he went to the homecoming football game, it felt like a big event because of playing under the lights.
- Rick Acquilano said that if the facility was on-campus, it would pull more people to our events, as many do not attend those that are off-campus at the Meadows facility. He stated that he feels it would offer many other sports a place to practice instead of in a parking lot, even if they don't play a game there.
- Gretchen Gandini asked about a ballpark figure for the project. Mr. Acquilano said that he is hesitant to give a number at present until we get more input. Mr. Beitler agreed with not putting a number on it at present as it is in the concept-only stage. He continued, stating it would take an architect and engineering study before a cost could be given, especially as we don't know what the ground work would be for putting in a field, such as drainage, etc. Mr. Beitler said we are looking for direction – where do we want to go next? Do we need a construction manager to begin the process so we can get a figure?
- Michelle Heyman asked if this would be a high school only field – Mr. Acquilano replied no; it would be open to all.
- Chris McDonough asked for a copy of the presentation from Mr. Acquilano. Mr. McDonough stated that he is looking to see how the Board feels about the project, asking if we should go forward or not. Do we get a fundraising committee together to get it started and set a fund raising goal? He says the first step is to find out from each member of the Board where we go next.
- Karen Thurston, who was also on the committee, addressed having the teams playing at the Meadows as being less cohesive than having the teams brought back to the main campus. She addressed other issues, such as safety, and feels that bringing the school teams back to the main campus would solve one of the bigger problems we have currently - the facility could also be where graduation could be held without having to limit tickets.
- Gretchen Gandini asked at what point we bring the town into the conversation, especially from the people in town who live nearby and would be most affected by the new facility. She stated that it is easier to have the conversations on the front end rather than later in the process.
- Gretchen Gandini stated that she wants to be sure that the new facility's activities would be married with the track activities, given its proximity to the new project.
- Chris McDonough stated that the Meadows fields would still be practice fields, but a simple bathroom structure is still needed there for it to continue to function as it is.
- Malcolm MacLeod asked about the maintenance cost on a turf field versus a grass field. Mr. Acquilano stated he had spoken with the Laconia Athletic Director, but does not have a cost yet.

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
MONDAY DECEMBER 2, 2019  
GILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY  
Page 5 of 6**

- Gretchen Gandini stated that she appreciates the project as her son enjoys football, but she reiterated getting the pulse of the community first.
- Rick Acquilano said that the response to playing under the lights by the students was overwhelmingly positive and palpable.
- Gretchen Gandini asked if the baseball/softball field would fit in its current location. Mr. Acquilano replied that yes, it would.
- Chris McDonough commented that the only field that would be displaced would be the middle school baseball field. Mr. Acquilano stated that they are working on finding a placement site for that field.
- Michelle Heyman asked if the football and soccer games would overlap. Rick Acquilano replied that some might, so they would have to look at the schedule to make it work, but that the games can be arranged to share the venue, because of the lighting, through the fall.
- Michelle Heyman continued, saying that she did not feel she could give an opinion without a monetary figure and without the financial impact.
- Gretchen Gandini said she would like to get the figure for an engineering design before making an opinion.
- Mr. McDonough said that we have \$45,000 in the Meadows engineering budget.
- Karen Thurston stated that the bathrooms at the Meadows are a priority, asking where we go from here.
- Chris McDonough asked Rick Acquilano to get an engineering estimate before the next Board meeting. Mr. Acquilano replied that he would do that.

**Business Administrator's Report**

Scott Isabelle addressed the updated financial information, specifically the recent default budget law changes. He stated that long-term contracts that increase cannot be included in the next year's default budget under the new law. Mr. Isabelle reviewed the Draft of the Gilford School District Default Budget. The Total Operating Budget Appropriations for this year's adopted budget is \$26,937,971.00 (twenty-six million, nine hundred thirty-seven thousand, nine hundred seventy-one dollars); reductions total \$901,223.00 (nine hundred one thousand, two hundred twenty-three dollars); one-time appropriations total \$460,003.00 (four hundred sixty thousand, three dollars). This would result in a Default Budget of \$25,576,745.00 (twenty-five million, five hundred seventy-six thousand, seven hundred forty-five dollars).

Mr. Isabelle stated that the teachers' contracts would be presented to voters by increments of three years, so it would be "Sanbornized." Chris McDonough clarified that even if we go to the default budget, teachers' contracts are honored and not affected by a decreased default budget. Mr. Isabelle said we do not have teacher's contracts yet, so this would apply to next year.

Gretchen Gandini made the motion that we approve the default budget of \$25,576,745.00; Jeanin Onos seconded. Michelle Heyman and Malcolm MacLeod abstained. The vote was unanimous; motion passed.

**Policies for Review – First Reading**

**JBAB – Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students** – Gilford School District proposed policy. Following discussion and suggested changes made to the policy, this will now go back to the GEA and Policy Committee.

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
MONDAY DECEMBER 2, 2019  
GILFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY  
Page 6 of 6**

**GBEF – Employee Use of District Issued Computers & Devices** – Sample policy; we do not have this policy. Following discussion and suggested changes made to the policy, this will now go back to the GEA and Policy Committee.

**Public Comment**

The following Gilford residents spoke:

Sean Aquarro addressed the board, stating that his daughter had called him as she was upset by an incident that occurred in the restroom. (A student entered who she thought was a male student, but was a female student who is transitioning.) He asked the Board what their plan is to address situations that might occur in the bathrooms.

Kirk Beitler said that there are single-stall bathrooms available if they choose not to use the gang bathrooms. Mr. Aquarro again asked what the plan is. Mr. Beitler stated that students in transition may use the bathroom of the sex with which they identify.

Mr. Aquarro also asked about the clothing policy. He questioned why guns on a t-shirt are wrong, but not gay pride on a t-shirt. Chris McDonough responded that this is not a Board issue. Anthony Sperazzo stated that he will address the issue with the parent.

Skip Murphy asked for an amended copy of JBAB from tonight’s meeting, as well any changes made prior to tonight’s meeting. Kirk Beitler stated that changes will be posted on the District’s website tomorrow, weather permitting, and it will be in the “Policies Under Review Section.”

**Non Public Session**

Non-Public – RSA 91-A:3II (c) *Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of this board, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to include any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant.*

At 7:53 p.m., Jeanin Onos made the motion to go into non-public session; Gretchen Gandini seconded. Voting was unanimous, motion passed.

At 8:45 p.m., the Board came out of non-public session. On a motion by Karen Thurston and a second by Jeanin Onos, the Board voted unanimously to seal the non-public minutes of the November 4, 2019 7:50 session indefinitely.

**Adjournment**

Motion was made at 8:45 p.m. by Jeanin Onos to adjourn the meeting; Gretchen Gandini seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Jeanin Onos  
School Board Secretary**