

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2020
GILFORD HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
PAGE 1 of 7**

The Gilford School Board held a meeting on December 7, 2020 in the Gilford High School Auditorium. Present were Board members Chris McDonough, Gretchen Gandini, Jeanin Onos, Kyle Sanborn, and Karen Thurston. Gilmanton representatives were Adam Mini and Michelle Heyman. Administrators present were Kirk Beitler, Danielle Bolduc, Brenda McGee, Anthony Sperazzo and Amie Leigh. Peter Sawyer joined remotely.

Opening

School Board Chair Chris McDonough called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Superintendent Beitler confirmed posting of the meeting. Chair McDonough informed the public they could email comments to comments@sau73.org.

Public Hearing

Chair McDonough opened the Public Hearing to accept the Supplemental Public School Response Funds. Amie Leigh outlined the guidelines for the funding. The funding is formulated at a rate of \$200 per student, has to be spent by the end of December 2020 and must be COVID related.

There being no discussion, Chair McDonough closed the Public Hearing.

Public Comment

Chair McDonough opened the public comment session.

Several comments were made for and against a Hybrid learning model. Some of the comments included:

- In favor of a Hybrid learning model.
- In support of in-person learning.
- In-person learning has a positive effect on children.
- Schools are not super spreaders.
- Children are safer attending school.
- The risk does not outweigh the benefit of in-person learning.

There being no further comments, Chair McDonough closed the public comment session.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Karen Thurston and a second by Gretchen Gandini, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2020 meeting with a 6-0-1 vote with Adam Mini abstaining from the vote.

On a motion by Karen Thurston and a second by Gretchen Gandini, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2020 meeting with corrections with a 5-0-2 vote. Michelle Heyman and Adam Mini abstained from the vote.

On a motion by Jeanin Onos and a second by Gretchen Gandini, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the November 2, 2020 meeting with corrections with a 6-0-1 vote with Adam Mini abstaining from the vote.

GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2020
GILFORD HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
PAGE 2 of 7

On a motion by Karen Thurston and a second by Jeanin Onos, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the November 24, 2020 meeting with corrections with a 7-0 vote.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Beitler referred to his report and highlighted the following:

Student Learning

- NWEA, AP & NHSAS assessment data is ready to present to the Board. We are waiting for SAT data.
- Required staff training on suicide prevention, Title IX, bullying and homeless were completed during the two professional development days in November.
- Two new precautions have been put in place for the GES nature trail.
- A Hybrid schedule could provide more social distancing in the schools.

Families and Communities

- We continue to work with the Partnership for Public Health and the Gilford Fire Department.
- Officer Raxter (SRO) provided ALICE update training during the November PD days.
- Proposing to eliminate three early release days and use March 10th as a full PD day.
- Proposed 2021-2022 Calendar for the Boards review and approval.

Resource Management

- The work with the Budget Committee is moving along.
- There are several open positions across the District.
- The CDC has come out with new guidelines for quarantining as a close contact.

Safety and Facilities

- Three circulator pumps had to be replaced at Gilford Elementary School.
- The custodial crew continues to work hard daily sanitizing and disinfecting all facilities.
- Teachers are wiping down desks on a regular basis.
- We have been able to add to our stockpile of cleaning solution, wipes, paper towels and PPE.

Chair McDonough opened up discussion on the pros and cons to the Hybrid model now or in the future as a response to circumstances.

Anthony Sperazzo stated that conversation started in response to the 6 days of contact tracing that took place November 13-20. There were six cases resulting in 150 student close contacts and 17 staff members. Anthony highlighted the following:

- It was difficult making the calls to families as it was over Thanksgiving.
- They have been talking since the summer about what can it look like.
- We've had 10 weeks of great instruction.
- A lot of instruction was outside in the warmer weather.
- Considered what it could look like for Dec, Jan and Feb.

The Hybrid model would accomplish:

GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2020
GILFORD HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
PAGE 3 of 7

1. Allow for more spacing within each class - limit the close contact per positive case.
2. Provide for a more consistent instructional model with more face-to-face time.
3. Create cohorts.
4. Co-curricular activities.

Tim Goggin stated that over the summer he met with committees to plan for Hybrid. It would allow students to be present in the building while creating space. The class sizes would go from approximately 21 to 12. Tim handed out a breakdown showing a reduction in class sizes of 49% - 51%.

Gretchen Gandini asked what the sense of timeline is that staff would be able to pivot to the Hybrid model. Anthony replied that they could pivot by Monday if the Board chose to pursue it. Gretchen asked if we have explored how other Districts live stream classes. Superintendent Beitler stated that we have not explored the topic with other Districts but it is in our MOU with the union that this is not something we would require teachers to do. We can explore it and have a conversation about it but we did sign off with the union that we would not require it. If teachers want to do it, they can do it and some are doing it.

Discussion ensued regarding a Hybrid model at Gilford High School. Discussion topics included:

- Can students Google meet live into the classes?
- Hybrid would provide consistency for all students.
- Paraeducators would still assist students.
- The use of larger spaces in the building.
- Distancing of teachers to minimum contact.
- Smaller class sizes would allow distancing.
- Special needs students in-person every day.

Peter Sawyer spoke about a Hybrid model at Gilford Middle School and does not recommend it. Peter stated that the Hybrid model would not have changed the 6th grade going remote. Classes at the middle school average between 14 – 15 students. The staff is concerned about consistency with a Hybrid model. They had a very successful remote week. If there were only two choices, Hybrid or in-person learning, the middle school would prefer to go with in-person learning.

Danielle Bolduc spoke about a Hybrid model at Gilford Elementary School and does not recommend it. Danielle stated that the stats show we can still be in person.

Chair McDonough clarified that this is not the first time the Board has considered the Hybrid model. The Board had the same conversation in the fall regarding the Hybrid model. The Board chose unanimously to go 100% in-person at that time.

Chair McDonough asked if there was any action items any Board member wished to bring forward. More conversation ensued regarding the pros and cons of the Hybrid model at Gilford High School.

- We knew the high school was going to be more difficult to contain.
- The remote option is much improved over the spring.
- The spacing has been the challenge.
- The quarantine numbers from only six positive cases was enlightening.
- Laconia has been doing it successfully.

GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2020
GILFORD HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
PAGE 4 of 7

- Provide a consistent model for a consistent amount of time.
- Quarantine students are not getting equal access to education.
- Community numbers have to be considered.
- It is better to have half the time with a live teacher than no time.
- Hybrid is better than remote but not as good as 100% in-person.

Chair McDonough stated he would be more on board if he felt the kids that were not in the building were following along across the board with class instruction and not at half speed. If they can remote into classrooms and all learn at the same time, he would be more open to it. The numbers in the building do not dictate the need for a change.

Gretchen Gandini opinioned that though it may sound like half speed, in-person days add value and being kicked to remote will take away any in-person learning. It is not ideal but as we saw last week, the remote option is much improved than it had been but at the same time, it does not take the place of in-person instruction. Though it may not cover as much material, students will be in the classroom and with their peers sometimes verses being at home all the time.

Karen Thurston stated that she would rather see students half time with a teacher than remote.

Adam Mini stated that Hybrid slows down the learning process and feels we should wait until there is a reason to change from in-person learning.

Michelle Heyman stated that over a quarter of the high school population learning under quarantine is a totally ineffective way of learning and understands going Hybrid is slower than in-person but going fully remote is even slower. She agrees that a plan needs to be put in place.

Superintendent Beitler clarified that the MOA states that teachers shall not be required to record or stream live classroom instruction. He is meeting with GEA this week and asked the Board if they would like him to have a conversation with them regarding live streaming. The MOA was put together with all three GEA presidents. The MOA is for the 2020-2021 school year.

Kyle Sanborn stated the he felt it would be worthwhile and would be much more comfortable knowing that there is consistent learning happening.

Jeanin Onos does not see where it is mitigating the risk. If the teacher is exposed and is working the room, they are still wiping out the classroom. If teachers are walking the room, they could still be a close contact.

After more discussion, Gretchen Gandini motioned to ask administration and staff to prepare for a Hybrid mode for trimester 2 understanding that it might take a little longer then the start of trimester 2 but put the wheels in motion so we can implement it as soon as it is feasible. Karen Thurston seconded the motion.

Chair McDonough stated that the motion does not have a trigger of when we would transition to Hybrid. Discussion ensued on a reasonable date.

Gretchen Gandini revised the motion to ask the administration and staff to prepare for remote learning that the Board could review on December 14th for the high school only. Karen Thurston seconded the motion. The Board voted as follows: Michelle Heyman, yes; Karen Thurston, yes; Gretchen Gandini, yes; Jeanin Onos, no; Chris McDonough, no; Kyle Sanborn, no; Adam Mini, no. The motion failed 4-3.

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2020
GILFORD HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
PAGE 5 of 7**

Gretchen Gandini asked if the Board was just going to continue on and not prepare for an alternative. Chair McDonough asked Anthony if they are prepared to go into Hybrid as early as Monday. Gretchen Gandini clarified that the motion was to have administration put the wheels in motion to have a plan we could potentially pivot to after understanding the plan and voting on it on December 14th. Chair McDonough stated that it is his understanding that the high school is prepared to switch to Hybrid, he just does not want to switch to Hybrid. After discussion, Chair McDonough asked Anthony and Tim if they needed a formal motion of directive from the Board to plan to transition to Hybrid. Anthony said not to plan for it but if the Board put forward a vote, they pivot on Monday but may not have all teachers live streaming instruction.

After more discussion on a plan, Adam Mini motioned to ask the high school administration to draft a formal transition plan to Hybrid learning to be discussed at the next Board meeting. There was no second on the motion.

2020-2021 Calendar

Chair McDonough motioned to eliminate the January 13, February 10 and March 10 early release dates and use March 10th as a full day of professional development. Superintendent clarified that we have met the hours required by the Department of Education. The changes have been reviewed with GEA. The motion was seconded by Karen Thurston and passed with a unanimous vote.

2021-2022 Proposed Calendar

Jeanin Onos motioned to approve the 2021-2022 calendar as presented. Karen Thurston seconded the motion, which passed with a unanimous vote.

Superintendent Beitler asked the Board if they wished to adopt the 10-day quarantine period as opposed to the 14-day quarantine as outlined by the NH Division of Public Health as well as the CDC. Kyle Sanborn motioned we go to the 10 day quarantine period. Jeanin Onos seconded the motion. Chair McDonough clarified that the motion on the floor would replace the current 14 day quarantine period with a 10-day quarantine period. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

On a motion by Karen Thurston and a second by Jeanin Onos, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Supplemental Public School Response Fund #1 in the amount of \$200,400. Michelle Heyman clarified that this funding is only for Gilford students so Gilmanton will be abstaining from the vote. The Board voted 5-0-2 to accept the grant. Michelle Heyman and Adam Mini abstained from the vote

Principal Reports

Danielle Bolduc presented her report as written and highlighted the smooth transition to remote learning last week. She also stated that the giving tree is out and the staff has fulfilled all the needs.

Peter Sawyer presented his report as written and highlighted the “ins and outs” of remote learning. He also stated the first round of after-school activities went off very well.

Anthony Sperazzo presented his report as written and highlighted the seamless transition to remote learning last week. He also informed the Board of a new student orientation for students that were remote first trimester that will take place on December 10th.

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2020
GILFORD HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
PAGE 6 of 7**

Discussion ensued on the Edmentum program and if students will be able to complete the coursework and return to GHS for the third trimester.

Business Administrators Report

Amie Leigh presented her report as written and updated the Board on the budget process status. She also informed the Board that the State of NH has announced another round of COVID relief funds. SPSRF is ten million dollars which is available via approved requests. This is in addition to the \$200 per student funds we received. Amie has collaborated with technology and buildings and grounds to write the request for the District to receive another \$60,000. The application was submitted to the state prior to the Thanksgiving break. We should have a formal response this week and will need to have another public hearing in January to accept the funds if approved. Amie also informed the Board that the food service revenue is down \$36,000 for the first four months compared to the prior year.

Amie Leigh presented revised warrant article documentation. Gilford's past practice has always been to approve the withdrawal of funds at a Board meeting verses a written warrant article. She has revised it to remove the warrant article so there is no capitol withdrawal article and the Board will have the opportunity to make the withdrawal at a formal Board meeting, which is how they have done it in the past.

Gretchen Gandini motioned that the Board continue with past practice and change to the proposed warrant article document. Karen Thurston seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0-2 vote. Michelle Heyman and Adam Mini abstained from the vote.

Gretchen Gandini made a motion to approve the four warrant articles as written. Karen Thurston seconded the motion. Kyle Sanborn asked if Article 1 could be separated from 2, 3 and 4 as he would like to vote no on Article 1. Chair McDonough clarified that the motion was only for the wording and the Board would vote on the actual warrant articles at a later date. The motion passed with a 5-0-2 vote. Michelle Heyman and Adam Mini abstained from the vote.

Athletic Directors Report

Rick Acquilano thanked the Board for their support of athletics and presented a document regarding returning to play. Discussion ensued regarding the expectations and protocols for sports. Chair McDonough asked if any regional schools have cancelled sports. Rick stated that he did not know of any at the high school level. Discussion ensued over mask wearing while playing sports. Chair McDonough thanked Rick for his work.

First Reading Policies

- IHAM – Health Education and Exemption from Instruction
- GCG – Part-Time and Substitute Professional Staff Employment
- GCGAA – Per Diem Rates for Substitute Teachers

Chair McDonough asked if we remove the Per Diem Rates for Substitute Teachers out of a policy and into a handbook, does that take the rate setting out of the hands of the Board and put it into the administrator's hands or would it still be the Board's decision to set the rate. Superintendent Beitler replied that we could bring it to the Board on a yearly basis. Moving it to the handbook would allow the Board to change the rates at one School Board meeting rather than go through the 3-month process. Superintendent Beitler will bring any recommended changes to Substitute Handbook to the Board in the future.

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2020
GILFORD HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
PAGE 7 of 7**

Second Reading Policies

- EBCF – Pandemic & Epidemic Emergencies – Sent back to Policy Committee to review GEA feedback.
- EBCG – Communicable & Infectious Diseases – Sent back to Policy Committee to review GEA feedback.
- GBGAA – HIV/AIDS – Sent back to Policy Committee.
- DGA – Authorized Signatures – Policy was approved on a motion from Gretchen Gandini and a second by Jeanin Onos. It was a unanimous vote.
- DK – Payments, Checks & Manifest – Policy was approved on a motion from Jeanin Onos and a second by Karen Thurston. It was a unanimous vote.
- EHAC – Electronic/Digital Records & Signatures – Policy was approved on a motion from Jeanin Onos and a second by Karen Thurston. It was a unanimous vote.
- GCCBC – Family and Medical Leave Act – Policy was approved on a motion by Jeanin Onos and a second by Karen Thurston. It was a unanimous vote
- EEBA – School Owned Vehicles - Policy was approved on a motion by Jeanin Onos and a second by Karen Thurston. It was a unanimous vote

Chair McDonough opened the second public comment section. Some of the comments included:

- Parents have the option to send their children to school or keep them remote.
- The schools have done a great job.
- School is the safest place for students.
- In-person learning is most suitable for most students.

There being no further comments, Chair McDonough closed public comment.

At 8:45 p.m., on a motion by Karen Thurston and a second by Jeanin Onos, the Board voted unanimously to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A:3II (c). A roll call vote was conducted as follows: Chris McDonough, yes; Gretchen Gandini, yes; Karen Thurston, yes; Jeanin Onos, yes; Kyle Sanborn, yes; Michelle Heyman, yes; Adam Mini, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanin Onos
School Board Secretary