

Approved by the Rye School Board at its January 21, 2009 meeting.

**RYE SCHOOL DISTRICT
RYE, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

The monthly meeting of the School Board of the Rye School District was held at the Rye Junior High School on December 17, 2008 at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

School Board Members:

Ian Grant, Betty Anderson, Peggy Balboni,
Michael Schwartz, Jeanne Moynahan.

Administrators:

Dr. George A. Cushing, Superintendent
Chris Pollet, Principal, Rye Junior High
Patricia-Lane Richardson, Principal, Rye Elementary

Staff

Kathleen Cole, Phoebe Guarnaccia, and Tim Moynahan

Residents/Visitors:

Dick Henry, Executive Director of Jordan Institute, Lucy
Neimann, Jordan Institute; Stephen and Mimi White of the Rye
Energy Committee

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Grant called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Approval of public minutes

On a motion by Mrs. Moynahan, and seconded by Ms. Anderson, the public minutes of November 19, 2008 were accepted as amended by Mrs. Balboni. Vote: Unanimously approved.

On a motion by Mrs. Moynahan, and seconded by Mrs. Balboni, the public minutes of November 24, 2008 were accepted as amended by Mr. Schwartz and Mrs. Balboni. Vote approved: Mr. Grant, Mr. Schwartz, Mrs. Balboni, and Mrs. Moynahan. Abstained: Ms. Anderson because she was unable to attend the November 24, 2008 meeting.

On a motion by Mrs. Moynahan, and seconded by Ms. Anderson, the public minutes of November 25, 2008 were accepted. Vote approved: Mr. Grant, Ms. Anderson, Mrs. Balboni, and Mrs. Moynahan. Abstained: Mr. Schwartz because, due to a prior commitment, he had to leave the November 25, 2008 meeting before it concluded.

REPORTS:

Superintendent:

- Dr. Cushing reported on the Christa McAuliffe Technology Conference; he included the highlights of key note Speaker, Dr. Yong Zhao, Distinguished Professor and Director of Technology at Michigan State University.

- Dr. Cushing provided an update on the superintendent search for Portsmouth. He reported there were initially 19 candidates and the committee narrowed the field down to 4. One candidate withdrew and the remaining 3 finalists were recently profiled in the *Portsmouth Herald*. Ms. Donna Harlan is superintendent of schools at Central Berkshire, MA and is experienced, detail-oriented, and politically savvy. She is also a finalist for a superintendent position in two other districts. Mr. Ed McDonough is superintendent of schools at Wells-Ogunquit, ME and was an assistant superintendent prior to that. He has valuable experience and understands the importance of team work. He was a football coach and has coached teams to several championships. The third finalist is Dr. Maureen Ward, assistant superintendent of schools for SAU #21 in Hampton. She is well-qualified as well.
- On January 15th and 16th Dr. Cushing and Ann Mayer will participate in district visitations for the three finalists. On January 21st there will be a public forum for the three candidates and they will meet with teachers, students, and board members. Color coded feedback sheets will be used to gather information as we have done here in the past.
- If a candidate is not chosen from these 3 finalists, the position may need to be re-advertised. Mr. Schwartz asked Dr. Cushing if he knew where the first candidate was a finalist. Dr. Cushing only knew Dudley as one of the districts she was finalist in; he was not sure of the other.
- Dr. Cushing asked if there were any questions about the special education report that was distributed. There were none.

Principals

Ms. Lane Richardson – Rye Elementary School

- Ms. Richardson thanked Mr. Schwartz for having his carpenter build and install a frame around the two tile murals that students had created. She thanked Ms. Manning for painting the frame and said the colors are perfect.
- NEASC – David Flynn, Director of the Commission, Commission on Public Elementary and Middle Schools met with the steering committee
- The Special Issues meeting is set for January 8, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at RJH
- Much going on with philanthropies: Mr. Southworth is working with the Rye Fire Department to identify families in need to receive holiday gifts.
- Holiday concert was rescheduled to December 22nd due to weather. Ms. Richardson received 2 phone calls and 2 e-mails of disapproval from parents. Mr. Schwartz also heard disapproval from a parent. Mr. Schwartz suggested acknowledging it was Hanukkah at the beginning of the concert.

Mr. Grant said from what he saw, the preview of the international celebration looked amazing. Ms. Richardson credited Ms. Wheeler for her work with, and dedication to, the students.

Mr. Grant asked about the draft of the parent survey. Ms. Richardson said Ms. Wheeler and Ms. Kennedy created a draft but it is too lengthy (2 pages). She will bring to the board next month.

Mr. Chris Pollet – Rye Junior High School

- Mr. Pollet mentioned the “One warm coat” and “Toy Drive” underway at RJH. He said it is heartwarming to see the response of students. The fire department had told Mr. Pollet they would appreciate whatever RJH can provide and the students really came through.
- Ball in the House – this Boston-based a capella group provided an entertaining performance for the whole school on December 5th. Members of the group shared stories and spoke to character and staying true to what you believe. A particular emphasis was put on doing the

'right thing' even if it isn't the popular thing to do. The assembly was very well received by all.

- NEASC – Meeting with David Flynn after the first of the year.

Mrs. Balboni said she appreciated the option to have cell phone contact as part of the school wide phone alert system. This proved to be particularly important during the recent power outage.

Dr. Cushing took a moment to recognize the help of the Rye Police Chief Kevin Walsh; Fire Chief William Sullivan; Town Administrator, Alan Gould; Tim Moynahan; and Bud Jordan of Rye Department of Public Works, during the recent ice storm and subsequent power outages. Dr. Cushing said these people of Rye have a strong communication network which was a big help in coordinating all efforts. Dr. Cushing said one of the first things he realized was that Jim Gordon was not known among those in emergency management. He introduced Jim to everyone and made sure they all had his cell number and that Jim had their contact information. Dr. Cushing also acknowledged Lisa Furman (RES) and Jan Philbrick (RJH) for their efforts to take care of food in their schools during the power outage. Dr. Cushing said the town really came together and worked well during this time of need.

Mr. Grant acknowledged Dr. Cushing's efforts during this time as well noting that he spent many hours tending to the two schools of Rye and assuring that the buildings and staff were safe and spearheaded coordination of efforts with the other town departments. Mr. Schwartz added that Dr. Cushing did this for all four districts of SAU 50 and that his time was greatly appreciated.

Mr. Grant said he was able to see the recent RJH concert and that it was a terrific performance.

Ms. Richardson noted the recent performance of Annie was also a very big hit. Mrs. Moynahan said working on Annie was a lot of fun.

Ms. Anderson said that during the recent ice storm and power outage she received a call from a concerned citizen voicing concern of the possibility of freezing pipes at the schools and potential related costs to citizens.

Dr. Cushing said he, Mr. Gordon, and the emergency management team were all in constant communication and noted that the buildings maintain heat for several days. The emergency management team told Dr. Cushing it takes several days of sustained low temperature to freeze pipes and that our schools were never in danger of this occurring during the recent power outage.

Ms. Cole noted that the new windows at RES have already paid for themselves and really made a big difference during this storm.

Mr. Schwartz suggested a generator might be something to consider at some point from the standpoint of food spoilage during a power outage. Mr. Schwartz also said he spoke with Mr. Gould about the need to use RJH as a shelter. Mr. Gould said he wanted to stay with Portsmouth High School as a central shelter. Mr. Schwartz said it might make sense to use RJH as a backup for playing basketball, providing wireless access, etc. during a power outage. Dr. Cushing suggested the principals discuss this with their safety committees.

FINANCIAL:

Manifest –

Mrs. Moynahan proposed, seconded by Ms. Anderson, a motion to approve the manifest of November 15, 2008 through December 17, 2008 in the amount of \$718,774.67. Mr. Grant had asked Mr. Katkin to look into check #40510 (McNally's Property Maintenance) as he found it hard to believe that a 12-hour day could be worked with short daylight. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Budget committee meeting –

Mrs. Moynahan reported that the budget committee is meeting tonight. Budget books had been dropped off at town hall.

Mr. Grant said he had spoke with Mr. Goldman who said the first part of the meeting would be the 2007-2008 year and then the meeting would move onto 2009/2010 budget.

Summary of pending projects –

- Track and Safety Road – Mr. Schwartz reported that he, Dr. Cushing and Mrs. Moynahan met with Bud Jordan and reviewed a breakdown of projected cost estimates for the track (hydro seeding cost was still outstanding). Bud presented an opportunity for significant savings with the track; there are not many savings possibilities with the safety road. Mr. Schwartz thanked Mr. Jordan and Greg Mikolaities for their work to get us to this point. The next step, if the Board approves, is to go back to the town. The other piece is that the estimate shown does not include the \$5,000 or \$6,000 for Mr. Mikolaities' work.

It is a 1/8 mile track and would get the greatest use from the physical education classes. Mrs. Moynahan noted that the track was designed with underground piping to allow for lighting at some time in the future.

Mrs. Balboni proposed asking if the PTA had any interest in contributing to the cost.

Mr. Schwartz made a motion to see if the town is interested in the project if funds can be raised from outside sources.

Mr. Grant noted that we need to validate the cost and indicate the outside funding is to be decided.

Mr. Schwartz amended the motion to ask the town (assuming outside funds can be found) to validate the cost estimates and for a commitment to the cost of the track project. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Moynahan. Vote: In favor: Mr. Schwartz, Mr. Grant, Mrs. Moynahan, Mrs. Balboni. Abstained: Ms. Anderson.

- Safety Road – Mr. Grant said he initially saw the benefits of this project but feels it is a big price tag to clear up some congestion. Ms. Richardson said the safety road/bus loop would be beneficial to take on at some point when budget allows. There was Board consensus to table the bus loop project for now.
- RJH Library – Mr. Schwartz said the library cost estimate is around \$150,000-\$160,000 which includes insulation and will provide a second floor room for Harkness-style learning for students.

Mr. Pollet said the addition would provide more options for use of the library. He said that Mrs. Coombs does a great job with the current space and coordinates with the Rye Public Library. The problem is that if a class is in the RJH library there isn't space for any other students/classes. Mr. Pollet also said that circulation is far out-pacing space at the library. He believes library and technology are two key components of a middle school building.

Mr. Schwartz said he had not asked about a time-frame for the renovation but is hopeful it can be completed during the summer. Mr. Pollet said he may offer to close the library in May to allow 3 months for the renovation.

Mr. Grant said he loves the design but pointed out the projected cost does not factor in furniture so the number is actually low. He asked if, in light of declining enrollment, an existing room can be repurposed for a conference room which is most of the proposed plan instead of building an addition. Mr. Pollet said that is already being done somewhat and he does not see the space needs for circulation and teaching space/conference room going away if enrollment were to decline.

Mr. Grant asked if the project could be funded with private funding or REF or a general fundraiser.

Mrs. Moynahan said she loves the plan and thinks it is a great idea but is on the fence given the economy.

Mrs. Balboni likes the plan as well and said in another economic climate she would be 100% for it and that because of the economy she is opposed to the renovation at this time.

Ms. Anderson suggested putting it on a warrant and letting the residents have their say. Mr. Schwartz agreed and feels the warrant article is the way to go. Mr. Grant said that part of the Board's responsibility is to make the leadership decisions, if not we should put everything under a proposed budget for consideration if we follow the premise that we let residents tell us what they want to pay for.

Mrs. Balboni said typically on the warrant article there is a notation if the Board approved the article and that voters often look for that notation for guidance.

Mr. Schwartz made a motion to add a warrant article for \$200,000 for Rye Junior High School library renovation to better the education of our students. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Moynahan.

Discussion – Mr. Grant said it would be stronger if we sought full or partial private funding and were just looking to offset a balance. Mr. Schwartz said he would talk to REF and Mr. Katkin about any opportunities. Ms. Anderson said it is important that the wording doesn't lock us into construction costs only and that we include furnishings and all foreseen related costs. Mr. Grant said he would like to have another year with the hope that construction costs may go down. Mrs. Balboni asked for input from the principals. Mr. Pollet said the school can function and get by as is but the renovation would provide enormous opportunities and give the staff the push about "now look what we can do". Mr. Grant said he feels this is a 'make do' year.

Vote on motion by Mr. Schwartz: In favor: Mr. Schwartz, Mrs. Moynahan, Ms. Anderson.
Opposed: Mr. Grant and Mrs. Balboni.

Mr. Grant said a warrant article will need to be drafted to give the budget committee tomorrow.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Calendar of Policy Action for December – payment of district treasurer

Goals Update – done last month

Verizon – none

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Grant introduced Dick Henry, Executive Director of Jordan Institute, Lucy Neimann, Jordan Institute; Stephen and Mimi White of the Rye Energy Committee.

The Board had Jim Katkin's review of the comprehensive energy evaluation as prepared by the Jordan Institute, Inc.; an executive summary energy assessment report for RES and RJH; and the summary of annual projected net savings as prepared by the Jordan Institute, Inc.

Mr. White said there is a compelling case to pursue the energy conservation measures recommended by the Jordan Institute.

Mr. Henry presented the executive summary and the summary of annual projected net savings. For the heating plan, they recommend a combined heat and power system at RES. Electricity is a byproduct of the heat/power system which would provide electricity off the grid. This type of system is already in place at Epping Town Hall.

Ms. Anderson asked if the electric company would provide electricity in the event of system failure of the combined heat & power system. Mr. Henry said they would as RES would not come off the electric company's grid altogether. He also suggested the system would not run during the summer so all power would come from the power company. Mr. Grant asked how long the system had been in place in Epping. Mr. Henry said it has been in place for 18 months and in the first six months their heating/electric bill went from \$14,000 to \$5,000.

Mr. Henry pointed to the projected annual savings of \$92,741 for the Rye School District on the summary sheet. He feels this is a wise investment and recommends a 10-year lease purchase which nets \$42,315 annual savings without any private funding. He noted he assumed a \$2.20/gallon fuel cost for all costs and put in 5% inflation over 10-year period.

Mr. Henry said he spoke with Ed Murdough at the New Hampshire Department of Education and there is no validity to the rumor of building aide going away.

Mr. Grant asked what would happen if, in the second year of the lease, we didn't receive funding. Mr. Henry said the company would come and remove the system. Mr. Grant asked how they would remove the insulation and the like.

Mr. Schwartz said we could take \$50,000 of energy costs (electricity/oil) to operate under the lease if we changed the line item to read in a way that covers us and allows that flexibility. Ms. Anderson agreed with Mr. Schwartz that we should have wording to allow for moving the money and should create a line item for that flexibility.

Mr. Grant asked if other school systems have implemented programs recommended by Jordan Institute. Mr. Henry said he just finished a recommendation for the Holderness School and was part of the Merrimack Valley High School renovation.

Mr. Grant asked if there was a way to dual track. The unreserved fund balance would allow for building shell upgrades; if we had outside state or federal funding available we would go for everything. Mr. Henry said the downside is cost-savings of getting everything done at once. Mr. Grant noted that the report indicated that 20% of the total cost (or an investment of \$85,000) would realize a 45% of the annual energy savings (savings equaling \$40,000) and 0% of the annual fuel oil savings. He thought this is the best approach and would allow the school to evaluate and confirm the true savings proposed before investing the additional \$325,000 since The Jordan Institute cannot guarantee the stated savings in the report are accurate.

Mr. Grant confirmed with Mr. Henry that the cost projections do not cover asbestos abatement.

Mr. Schwartz said there seems to be consensus to use unreserved fund balance for the project. Mr. Grant said Mr. Katkin's thought is we could use that fund and we should find out if the monies would be available in April.

Mrs. Balboni said this is assuming no receipt of grants or other funding. Mr. Henry said the Jordan Institute will work with the school district on available grants.

Ms. Anderson asked who would write the grants and feels it is important to have funding for someone to write the grants.

Mr. Grant will follow up with Mr. Katkin to see if a warrant article is necessary and then create a committee. Ms Anderson suggested that, if a warrant article is needed, it would be better for the Rye Energy Committee to present the Article, rather than the School Board, with the School Board's approval.

In closing Ms. White said the Jordan Institute was brought to Rye because of their outstanding reputation and acknowledges it takes bold leadership to make an investment. She feels that as a resident we will see greater gains with this type of investment.

Ms. Anderson expressed appreciation for the analysis and recommendations, respects that Jordan Institute was chosen because of their reputation, and feels that this is the right thing to do economically and environmentally.

Ms. Anderson made a motion to move forward in concept as a full project or a staged project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Schwartz. Vote: Unanimously approved.

As the physical plant committee representative, Mr. Grant offered to follow up/pursue on this project and establish a committee with Jim Katkin and to take the next steps and come back to the Board with more information and a suggested path of action. Mrs. Moynahan offered to serve on the committee. Mr. White offered to be part of the committee, if appropriate. Ms. Balboni suggested a budget committee representative be considered for the committee. Ms. Anderson said Paul Goldman should be involved and Mr. Schwartz said we should make sure the Rye Energy Commission is involved.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

- Physical Plant – No updates
- Special Issues – The next meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2009
- REF – Mr. Schwartz stated \$40,000 worth of grants have been issued
- PHS – Secondary School Advisory Committee is meeting at 5:00 on January 8, 2009
- PTA – Mrs. Moynahan said current membership is 183
- Rye Rec – Quarterly meetings are now set up – Mr. Schwartz, Ms. Richardson and the Rye Rec. Department had a good meeting about improving communications. Their December newsletter was distributed. The meeting in January will address space needs, time, etc. Ms. Richardson toured the building with Ms. Richardson to determine space availability.
- Communications – Mr. Schwartz distributed the Communication Strategy draft via email prior to the meeting. He asked that Board members review the document at home and provide input.
- Technology – Mr. Schwartz reported that he shared the news of the budget with the 1-1 laptop initiative committee. The good news is the cost of small computers is going down and there still may be some funds available and Mr. Schwartz could pursue REF but wanted to make sure the Board supports this. Mr. Grant said he actively supports the concept but wants to make sure the teaching piece is in place. His understanding from other schools that have this program is that they have a written plan in place long before they get the computers and that it wasn't just a case of buying laptops and it just happens. Mr. Pollet said all teachers want it and the C.O.W.s (computers on wheels) are not meeting the school's current needs. Mr. Pollet said he has identified readiness of teachers in anticipation of a roll-out. Mr. Schwartz asked for, and received, Board consensus to look for outside funding for the 1-1 laptop initiative.
- Curriculum – Portsmouth Curriculum Council meets on December 18th. PLAC met and they are trying to make professional development funds more versatile.
- NEASC – discussed in principals reports
- Peer Schools – nothing new to report
- Bus Committee – will be discuss in non public session due to contract negotiation issues.
- Track and Safety – done
- Policies:
 - IGAC – Recognition of Religious and Cultural Diversity, for adoption - The following changes were made to the fifth paragraph of IGAC: 2nd line – ‘necessary’ was changed to ‘necessarily’; 4th line – omit ‘,and not exclusive to only one religion or culture’; 5th line – insert period after the word ‘symbols’ and omit ‘, including music and art programs’.

Mr. Schwartz made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Balboni to adopt IGAC as modified. Vote: Unanimously approved. Mr. Grant thanked everyone for their work on this.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION:

Mrs. Moynahan proposed, seconded by Mrs. Balboni, a motion to go into non-public session at 9:00 p.m. in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 to discuss negotiations. Unanimously approved on a role call vote.

PUBLIC SESSION:

The Board returned to public session at 9:15 p.m.

SECRETARY'S REPORT *continued:*

Approval of non-public minutes

On a motion by Mrs. Moynahan, and seconded by Mrs. Balboni, the non-public minutes of November 24, 2008 were accepted and sealed. Vote approved: Mr. Grant, Mr. Schwartz, Mrs. Balboni, and Mrs. Moynahan. Abstained: Ms. Anderson because she was unable to attend the November 24, 2008 meeting.

On a motion by Ms. Anderson, and seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, the non-public minutes of November 25, 2008 were accepted and sealed. Vote approved: Mr. Grant, Ms. Anderson, Mrs. Balboni, and Mrs. Moynahan. Abstained: Mr. Schwartz because, due to a prior commitment, he had to leave the November 25, 2008 meeting before it concluded.

ADJOURN: Mrs. Moynahan proposed, seconded Mr. Schwartz motion to adjourn at 9:30 p.m. Vote: Unanimously approved.

School Board Secretary