

Approved by the Rye School Board at its January 16, 2008 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 19, 2007 at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

School Board Members: Ian Grant, Betty Anderson, Peggy Balboni, Gary Dodds
Michael Schwartz

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

Staff Tim Moynahan, Kathleen Cole, Jeanne Brown, Sheila Adams,
Joanne Costanzo, Tom Southworth.

Residents/Visitors: Tom Hildreth, David Velez.

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Grant called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION:

Mr. Schwartz proposed seconded by Mr. Dodds, a motion to go into non-public session at 6:00 p.m. for personnel related matters. Vote: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Mr. Dodds proposed, and Mr. Schwartz seconded, a motion to approve the School Board public minutes of November 14, 2007, as amended. Vote: Unanimously approved. Mr. Schwartz proposed, and Mr. Dodds seconded, a motion to approve the public minutes of December 3, 2007. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Communications:

- Dr. Cushing handed out a copy of his holiday letter to the SAU 50 staff.
- Dr. Cushing received correspondence from Susan Detwiler and Michelle Glynn both requesting maternity leave.
- Dr. Cushing read a letter received from a New Castle parent, Elisabeth Robinson. The letter thanked Piper Cronin for organizing the after school badminton club, Ms. Hughes for her work with student council, Mr. Pollet for the parent meetings at "Coffee with the Principal" and other staff members at RJH for the wonderful learning environment they have created.
- Dr. Cushing noted that Mary Lyons has been re-elected to the NEASC.

REPORTS:

Superintendent:

- Mrs. Costanzo discussed the findings of the High School survey. 55% rated their child's experience thus far at PHS as excellent, 38% good, 2% fair and 5% poor. Mr. Schwartz asked if they had asked what would have made them answer excellent. Mrs. Costanzo said they did ask more probing questions if there was a negative response, and that the comments were specific to the student. Most respondents stated that, as time went, on they were becoming more satisfied with PHS. Some of the main factors that were reported positively were: band, spring and fall tours and the excellent e-mail communication at PHS. The parents were enthusiastic about the parent to parent meetings. Some of the negative factors reported were: block scheduling or unbalanced schedules. One respondent did contact the school regarding their student's schedule and worked with the school to fix it. Mr. Grant thanked Mrs. Costanzo and Mr. Southworth for their time and the valuable information they gathered. He suggested that there might be more value for the principals in asking more specific or structured questions such as how well was their student prepared for math or language arts. In addition he suggested, and the board agreed, that a consistent set of questions would be beneficial to ask all parents. Ms. Balboni stated that a lot of the differentiated instruction the students receive at the middle school ends some when they go to PHS. Mr. Dodds asked if any of the students had left PHS to go to a private school. Mr. Southworth stated that there were two students he knew of that will be transferring to private schools. Mr. Schwartz asked what their motive was for transferring. Mr. Southworth replied the school culture and staff members were the reasons cited. Ms. Anderson asked if students of dissatisfied parents were male or female. Mrs. Costanzo stated that they were probably more parents of male students. She further stated that she is working with Mr. Pollet on fine tuning all areas of issue. Mr. Grant would like to revisit this to discuss how we will continue and improve this study including seeing a draft of consistent questions.
- Dr. Cushing handed out the Special Education report from Mrs. Lyons.
- Dr. Cushing spoke about his recent attendance at the Christa McAuliffe conference. He remarked at what a wonderful program they put together and how it energizes him. He further stated that blogging and interactive video is great, but his main concern was how do we teach students ethics and legitimacy when using the internet.

Elementary School

- Ms. Richardson complimented Lisa Furman and her help with the wonderful holiday staff luncheon at RES.
- RES will have their Winter Celebration in January. Ms. Richardson said that she received several comments appreciating the change and disappointment in the change. It will be reevaluated again next year. Mr. Grant said he had received several calls expressing satisfaction and dissatisfaction as well.

Junior High

- Mr. Pollet said the Winter Concert and Unified Arts presentation at RJH was very well put together and received.

- The 7th grade trip to greet returning troops at Pease was canceled due to flight changes. The students were very disappointed and a lot of them went to greet the troops on their own after school hours.

Financial

Manifest –

Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, a motion to approve the manifest of November 1, 2007 in the amount of \$40.00. Vote: Unanimously approved. Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Mr. Dodds, a motion to approve the manifest of November 14, 2007 through December 5, 2007 in the amount of \$931,888.34. Vote: Unanimously approved. Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Mr. Dodds, a motion to approve the manifest of December 6, 2007 through December 19, 2007 in the amount of \$323,961.09. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Budgetary considerations-

Ms. Anderson thanked Mr. Grant for presenting the budget to the Rye Budget Committee. Mr. Grant thanked Mr. Katkin for all of the work he has put into the budget.

Review Dates: January 10, 2008 at 6:00 pm there will be a public hearing on the budget. Mr. Katkin will be unable to attend but will be available by phone. Ms. Anderson will e-mail Board members meeting dates to confirm.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Calendar of Policy Action – December: Payment of Treasurer – completed.
- Track Update: Mr. Schwartz passed around a map and stated they had investigated the possibilities outlined on this map, in addition to looking into traffic flow and safety. Due to cost and location, a 1/8 mile track is more reasonable to consider. He stated that Public Works Director Bud Jordan was a great help and offered to help out if the track is built if the town was in agreement. Mr. Schwartz asked two questions: Do we support the track and do we want to put money in the warrant to build it? Mr. Grant asked if a 1/8 mile track was big enough. Ms. Balboni replied that the track would only be used as a practice facility. Mr. Schwartz agreed that it would not be used for track meets which conceivably would only be held there 4 times a year. Mr. Grant thanked Mr. Dodds and Mr. Schwartz and suggested that they meet with the town and get the final numbers. Mr. Schwartz stated this could be discussed at the January meeting.
- Proposed Verizon Wireless Land Lease: On behalf of Verizon Wireless, Attorney Tom Hildreth spoke about leasing school land to put in a cell tower. He passed out site maps and photos of the towers. He informed the Board that the towers produce no noise or light and that once installed, it requires 1 or 2 visits a month to monitor the equipment. Various options were discussed. Mr. Grant stated that the Board wanted flexibility as land in Rye is scarce. He does not want to encumber any land that we may need to use in the future. Mr. Hildreth replied that once the tower was built, the access road used to build it could be erased, and technicians would access the tower by foot to monitor. Mr. Schwartz was concerned with safety of the students and any environmental concern. A mono tree or flagpole tower was discussed. Mr. Schwartz asked how tall the mono tree was. Attorney Hildreth replied 80 feet. Mr. Grant stated that they would want to follow the town's philosophy of allowing other carriers to access the tower for their wireless customers. Likewise, the concept of putting the housing structure next to the tower underground was strongly preferred. Mr. Grant would like to relegate further discussion of the tower to a committee for gathering further information. He stated that there are still many other factors that need to be

considered. As it might have some relationship to the track, Mr. Dodds and Mr. Schwartz would take the next steps with Verizon Wireless. He told Attorney Hildreth that they would look into this issue further and get back to them. Ms. Anderson stated that she would like to go on record that at this point she is opposed to all the options presented by Verizon Wireless to date. Mr. Schwartz also stated he is opposed at this point. Mr. Dodds stated that he would like to get more information and consider the benefits of the tower.

- Goals Update: This will be discussed at the next meeting.
- Other: Ms. Anderson said that she met with 7th graders in response to the letters the Board received. She did respond to each letter she had and thinks we need to formally follow up on some of the suggestions. Mr. Grant relegated this to Mr. Pollet. Mr. Pollet and Dr. Cushing have scheduled a lunch with the students and they will address issues with them then.

RECOGNITION OF GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS:

- Ms. Adams passed around photos of the 7th grade greeting the troops at Pease.
- Ms. Brown announced that ACT will be holding their annual blood drive on January 24 at RJH from 3:00 to 7:00.
- Mr. Pollet wanted to thank everyone for their generosity who donated with the Giving tree benefiting families in the Seacoast area.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

- Mr. Grant stated that the Board would forgo this portion of the meeting this evening due to the weather unless anyone had any pressing issues that needed to be discussed.
- REF: Mr. Schwartz stated that REF grants have been approved and awarded. REF has further funds to spend and it was suggested some of these funds could be used to fund the study of the RJH library expansion. This will be looked into further.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Dr. Cushing discussed a letter from Vicki Scally requesting her child be allowed to attend RES for full day kindergarten. Her child would only be able to attend ½ day kindergarten in her current home town. She is only interested in her son attending kindergarten at RES as she feels it is important for him to go to school in his own town. Mr. Schwartz asked what would happen if the student had special issues. Dr. Cushing stated that the district would be responsible only while that student attended its school. The cost of tuition was discussed among the Board members. It was agreed that Ms. Balboni would obtain tuition costs from the Children's Center and Rye Country Day. Mr. Grant thought it would be a good idea for this to be a negotiated item in the teacher's contracts for long term consideration as previously stated by Ms. Anderson.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION:

Mr. Schwartz proposed, seconded by Mr. Dodds, a motion to go into non-public session at 8:09 p.m. Vote: Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

PUBLIC SESSION: The Board returned to Public Session at 8:15 p.m.

ADJOURN: Ms. Balboni proposed, seconded by Mr. Schwartz a motion to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. Vote: Unanimously approved.

School Board Secretary