

Kearsarge Regional School Board
Minutes of the Public Meeting
Kearsarge Regional School District
May 7, 2020

NOTICE: Some Board members may be attending remotely to establish a quorum, Per Governor Sununu Emergency Order 12: Temporary modification of public access to meetings under RSA 91-A.

I. Call to Order	The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.
II. Pledge of Allegiance	The Chair led the Pledge of Allegiance.
III. Roll Call	Present: Ken Bartholomew, Emma Bates, Art Bobruff, Emilio Cancio-Bello, Bebe Casey, Ben Cushing, Eric Gregoire, Alison Mastin, Dick Wright; Beth Perkins (KREA Representative); Katherine Kelly, Nina Spinney (Student Representatives) <i>Mr. Bartholomew changed the order of the meeting.</i>
Public Hearing	<p style="text-align: center;">Public Hearing</p> <p>Mr. Bartholomew opened the Public Hearing and explained the purpose.</p> <p><i>Appropriation for Unanticipated Funds – As required per NH RSA 198:20-b, III, the Kearsarge Regional School Board shall conduct a hearing regarding unanticipated revenue funds after participating in an energy efficiency program with Eversource, and will vote to accept.</i></p> <p>There were no comments.</p> <p><i>Mr. Cancio-Bello made the motion to accept funds in the amounts of \$10,400.00 from PSNH/Eversource for an LED light upgrade at KRES New London as presented. Ms. Bates seconded. The motion carried 8-0-0.</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Cancio-Bello made the motion to close the hearing. Ms. Mastin seconded. The motion carried 8-0-0.</i></p>
IV. Approval of Minutes	<p><i>Mr. Cushing made the motion to approve the Minutes of April 20, 2020 as amended. Ms. Mastin seconded. The motion carried 6-0-2 [Dr. Bobruff and Mr. Cancio-Bello abstained].</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Cancio-Bello made the motion to approve the Minutes of April 16, 2020 as written. Ms. Bates seconded. The motion carried 7-0-1 [Mr. Wright abstained].</i></p>
V. Reports of Administration	<p><i>Chair:</i> Mr. Bartholomew reminded attendees that during public comment, statements may be time limited according to Board policy at either three or five minutes. He would give a warning at four minutes if necessary.</p> <p><u>Discussion Out of Order:</u> <i>COVID-19/KRHS Graduation:</i> Mr. Feneberg noted the district has been dealing with the pandemic since March and he expressed his pride in students, teachers, leadership, and especially parents. There is a can-do attitude. He felt there has been much creativity dealing with the unknown. There have been many directives since March 15: school closing, remote instruction and stay-at-home</p>

order. On Friday, Governor Sununu affirmed the stay-at-home order while he was beginning to slowly relax business restrictions. There has been much discussion about graduation this year. The Superintendent strongly objected to the implications that the decision about graduation was a result of lazy, uninformed and haphazard thinking. Administration has attended up to fifteen Department of Education meetings and ten or more regional meetings with intense discussions. Mr. Bennett attended weekly meetings with thirty to forty principals around the state. There have been numerous meetings with the KRHS Senior Advisor, Mr. Bianchi. Students have met to discuss alternatives and solicit feedback. All options proposed were considered. When the Governor issued the May 1st order, the district needed to act and execute a plan for graduation. Mr. Feneberg pointed out the considerations of a virtual event. As a public school, our district needs to adhere to the Governor's State of Emergency Order. The district cannot and will not assume responsibility for a district endorsed event that poses health risks to many. He further stated that graduation must be available to all; postponing may make it impossible for some to attend. To achieve the best possible virtual event, the district made plans to use a professional production company. Mr. Feneberg asked a high school representative to explain the plans for a virtual ceremony.

Mr. Bennett explained, noting it has been a very difficult process and decision. Beginning on May 20th, pre-taped speeches will be recorded. They will follow as normal a sequence of events as possible. The auditorium will be set up for the ceremony. Students with their family members will come in with their cap and gown, receive their diploma and have pictures taken. One student and their family will come to the auditorium at a time. The production company will put it together and a first-class video will be aired for viewing on June 13th.

Ms. Casey commented that she thought not enough credit was being given to the students to be able to follow all of the necessary social distancing guidelines. She appreciated the time that the administration has put into the planning already, and understands that typically there isn't a lot of student input. But under these circumstances, she hoped that collaboration among all parties, including the students and their families, would continue. These students deserve the best that we can give them.

Mr. Bianchi added that students will keep their gown this year as well as the usual cap and tassel. He felt strongly that a product will be produced worthy of their achievements.

Mr. Feneberg added that sanitizing between participants will take place. If the order is lifted, there will be a graduation held on the field just as always. Ms. Spinney asked about the tradition of moving of the flags. Mr. Bennett stated they are trying to work out some of the details, but at this time, the moving of the flags is not part of it. Mr. Feneberg assured Ms. Spinney that it will be addressed as best as possible.

Mr. Bessette addressed the idea of social distancing during a traditional graduation. He felt it was not realistic, particularly in a graduation ceremony.

Mr. Bartholomew noted the Board does not typically get involved in the details

of graduation. This circumstance is a bit different. He did want to ensure that everyone was heard however. He stated that some people feel they have not been heard, so this is another opportunity for public input to be heard. Mr. Feneberg stated the district tried to communicate upfront at all levels through Blackboard, Facebook and the district website. He did apologize that notification to students was not done in a more timely manner. Mr. Bessette explained how Blackboard worked, and he was under the impression students were also notified. He found out this was not the case and stated it was his mistake.

Mr. Bartholomew asked about the other alternatives considered. Mr. Feneberg explained other alternatives and ideas, but none were as reasonable and practical as the virtual ceremony. It was felt the virtual ceremony would be both meaningful and safe.

Mr. Feneberg stated the notion that this solution is easy is a mistake. He felt strongly that support and help from parents is needed. He felt everyone needs to work to put this together; it is a communal effort.

Ms. Kelly commented that she felt students and families could abide by the rules of social distancing as mentioned earlier by Ms. Casey. Students are eager to have an in-person graduation.

Ms. Kathy Meagher, parent of a graduating senior asked why we needed to do either or. She felt the video is a great idea, but there needs to be a celebration piece as well. Why could they not have a celebration later in the summer when orders may be lifted?

Mr. Feneberg stated there is a possibility to celebrate the Class of 2020 at a later time. He noted it's a possibility to celebrate during Homecoming in October.

Mr. Fleury spoke as a parent of a graduating senior. He stated it would be heartbreaking to decide to conduct a graduation in July and then not be able to do so. He felt we can deliver a virtual experience and there was a lot of effort and thought in the decision making. He noted that social distancing is already an issue. Our playgrounds are clearly marked that they are not for use, but some families are still using them.

Ms. Nicole Bush, New London, stated students want to be together, even if families could not be a part of it. She felt students could respect social distancing.

Ms. Cathy Harmon, New London, echoed Ms. Bush's sentiments. She wants the students to enjoy this experience together. We can't give our seniors Expo Night or spring sports, but the district could do graduation. She felt walking away with a video was not the same.

Mary Bourque resident of Wilmot read a statement. *"My name is Mary Bourque, and I am a resident of Wilmot. I have two daughters at the high school, a senior and a freshman. Thank you for maintaining easy public access for tonight's meeting and the opportunity for me to speak on behalf of a group of*

parents of the Class of 2020. Information is rapidly changing even during this discussion tonight, so I will vary from my submitted statement, but will submit a revision. I represent about 12 parents listed below, and I believe they will support the variation. In general, the District's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been thoughtful and well-executed while facing and adapting to many challenges. Communications in regards to planning only a virtual graduation, however, were not well-executed. The May 4th letter was emailed around 4pm to parents, not seniors, and then posted shortly after on the District's Facebook page. Many parents, myself included, work in jobs deemed "essential" under the Stay-at-Home Order and cannot work from home. While this creates challenges supporting our teens every day during remote learning, it caused many seniors to learn about this impactful change to their graduation via Facebook. Thank you for addressing what happened on May 4th, but it has been a recent trend also with the high school principal leaving and replacement hired, important information about major changes has been published on social media without direct communication to those most affected. We ask that you evaluate the process and procedure for future communications on impactful issues, so that changes and messages are thoughtfully and timely sent to parents, students, and staff before release to the public. Positively, since May 4th, the high school has released more detail on a plan to produce a virtual graduation with prerecorded elements that include an opportunity for each student to walk across the stage and their photo will be included as part of the video aired on June 13th to be watched from home. We truly appreciate this inclusive plan to ensure that our graduates have something guaranteed. The plan indicates a traditional ceremony in August, only if social distancing restrictions, as of July 15th, allow over 1000 people to gather. It is unlikely that Governor Sununu will issue guidance this specific. We respect social distancing measures in compliance with Governor Sununu's orders, and we understand that it is complicated. We recognize that graduation is Kearsarge's most formal event steeped in tradition and protocol that makes it successful year-after-year. The traditional program has aspects that increase the crowd size beyond graduates, immediate families, and staff. The crowd size, and subsequent risk, can be significantly reduced if we consider sacrificing some of elements of the program, as well as limiting graduates' guests. We know this is difficult, as traditions are an important aspect of graduation, and it is traditions like Pomp and Circumstance and changing of your tassel in unison with your classmates that make all of us still "feel" the memories of our own graduations decades later. That is what the in-person experience brings to graduation that a virtual experience cannot replicate. Although graduation is an event planned and executed by the School District, as parents we want to offer what we can to mitigate the burden of a creative alternative whether that support is through fundraising, in-kind services, or coordination of activities. Please ask and allow us to contribute in an organized way that helps the process, but does not hinder. Any ask for assistance is neither too big nor too small. In August 2019, Superintendent Feneberg announced that the Kearsarge School District's word of the year was "commit." In the Eagle Times, he said "I want our community to take time to dedicate themselves to our goals, embrace challenges, celebrate success, triumph over adversity and commit to being the best we can." In an uncertain time, we are asking you to commit to the significance of an in-person experience knowing that it will need to be different than what has always been done. We encourage continued meaningful dialogue and decision-making for a

modified in-person ceremony in addition to the virtual production that can still respect the health and safety of our community without relying on a modified order allowing a 1000+ crowd. Thank you.”

<i>Shelly Boucher</i>	<i>Mary Bourque</i>
<i>Nicole Busch</i>	<i>Jeffie Goodwin</i>
<i>Kathy Karr</i>	<i>Heidi Korst</i>
<i>Heidi Roberts</i>	<i>Amber Ruggles</i>
<i>Alison Seward</i>	<i>Malaika Sidmore</i>
<i>Carol Williams</i>	

Ms. Kelly suggested they could perhaps play the graduation video at a drive in theater at some point so all can feel the accomplishment together at the same time. Mr. Feneberg suggested this may be possible; however, it could not be sanctioned as a school district function.

Ms. Spinney asked about the funds from parking passes; will the money go to the making of the video or could students use it for a drive-in theater option. Mr. Feneberg stated the funds were not used for the video and the option for the class to use it at a drive-in could be discussed.

Other members of the public offered a variety of ideas. Mr. Shane Boucher, student, sent out a survey about graduation to seniors. He said 82% of the 40 respondents said they could attend a graduation on August 1st. He noted that Mr. Bennett and Dr. Downing had seen the responses.

It was also noted that regardless of social distancing, large crowds were not permitted.

Mr. Bartholomew closed this topic thanking those for attending remotely or live.

Superintendent: Mr. Feneberg stated he would report on hiring nominations, but wished to share a report at the Board’s request regarding levels of engagement during remote learning. The consensus from principals in all buildings is that elementary, middle and high school are seeing a consistent and strong attendance of students. There is a slight trend of engagement going down. There is a core group of student who continue to struggle; they are difficult to contact and don’t participate; however, this is the same group of students teachers would find have struggles in school as well. Mr. Feneberg noted parents are also struggling with the added role to supervise their children’s education, especially those who are not motivated to perform. The middle school as seen very active engagement with about 90% consistently. And, yet meaningful engagement is leveling off and going down. There is a similar trend at the high school. The Superintendent felt the novelty is wearing off. Mr. Feneberg has heard from colleagues that some districts took three weeks to get remote learning started. Our district pulled it off in two days. It is much harder work than anyone anticipated.

Mr. Feneberg reported on one resignation. ***Dr. Bobruff made the motion to accept the resignation of Melinda Wilder, ELO coordinator, effective June 30th with regret. Mr. Cancio-Bello seconded. The motion carried 8-0-0.***

The Superintendent presented nine nominations and one hire announcement for Occupational Therapy: Scott Sweat, .6 Theater position at the high school, Christine Matzke, Special Educator at New London, Lauryn Spadafore, elementary Psychologist, Caitline Mauser-Row, Art position at NLES and Sutton, Brian Horn, elementary Social Worker, Caroline Gray, .4 Math Specialist, Caileu de Crest, Preschool teacher, Elizabeth Paul, Reading Specialist at KRMS and Michelle Chamberlin, Health position, one year at KRMS. **Mr. Cancio-Bello made the motion to approve the nominations as presented. Ms. Casey seconded. The motion carried 8-0-0.** Mr. Feneberg also informed the Board of the new hire, Nicole Larocque, for the district OT position.

Assistant Superintendent: Mr. Bessette extended a huge thank you to all the teachers noting this week as Teacher Appreciation. He also commented today is Nurses Day. He urged all to watch the dance video our district nurses created noting they are a great group of people.

Discussions are taking place on assessments. Conversations have also begun for preplanning to reopen. The district will respond accordingly to whatever is put before us.

Business Administrator: Mr. LeBoeuf presented two purchase order recommendations. The first was for the high school graduation production. Mr. LeBoeuf explained the rationale for the recommendation. **Dr. Bobruff made the motion to approve the purchase order for \$12,500.00 to Winwood Productions. Mr. Cancio-Bello seconded. The motion carried 8-0-0.**

Mr. LeBoeuf also presented a purchase recommendation for cafeteria booths at KRMS. This is a high bid, however, there is a fifteen year warranty and the quality is far superior to other products. In addition, the district has experience with this vendor and they are very responsive. Mr. Paterson, KRMS Principal, and Mr. Fleury, Facilities Director, also explained the choice. **Mr. Cancio-Bello made the motion to accept the purchase recommendation of School Furnishings for AmTab cafeteria booths in the amount of \$34,582.91 as presented. Ms. Bates seconded. The motion carried 8-0-0.**

Mr. LeBoeuf also reported the food/meals will be provided to families until the end of June. A waiver has been granted from the DOE.

Mr. LeBoeuf and Mr. Feneberg requested Board approval to extend a payment of \$100 to all staff for use of their internet over the past several months. Teachers have without hesitation used their own resources without any complaint. This is just a small token to show the district's appreciation for going well above and beyond to provide opportunities for our children. **Mr. Cancio-Bello made the motion to approve the request to pay staff \$100 each for their internet use as a token of appreciation. Ms. Bates seconded. The motion carried 8-0-0.**

Staff Representative Report: Ms. Perkins shared some virtual highlights to include the Math League meet, the online version of the Memorial Day Assembly and the meetings planned to talk to students about transitioning from elementary to middle school.

	<p><i>Student Representative Report:</i> Ms. Kelly reported that SWOCO is working on a talent show for teachers similar to the one presented by students. Student Council is putting out gifts and thank-you cards. Game night is tomorrow night. Ms. Spinney added that climate and culture work continues as well as advisory projects. A bulletin board has been created for eighth graders to ask questions of high schoolers anonymously. Ms. Kelly also noted her senior project of a yoga class has been super positive and she hopes to do another.</p> <p>In response to Mr. Bartholomew’s questions regarding Senior Expo Night, Dr. Downing stated they are working on ideas and may present a slideshow of student projects.</p>
<p>VI. Public Comments</p>	<p>No comments</p>
<p>VII. Presentation</p>	<p><u><i>Special Education During Remote Learning:</i></u> Larry Elliott, Director of Student Support Services presented a PowerPoint presentation. He shared typical days of special education students noting each student’s schedule is slightly different depending on their different needs.</p> <p>Remote summer school was briefly discussed. Ms. Casey expressed concern about kids falling through the cracks. She felt remote learning is very difficult and not the best atmosphere for students with complex needs. Ms. Casey hopes that, following whatever guidelines that come out from the NH DOE and the Governor around ESY (Extended School Year), other ways of delivering services to students, besides remotely, will be considered.</p>
<p>VIII. New Business</p>	<p><u><i>A. New Trust Fund Account – Project Climb Scholarship Fund:</i></u> Mr. LeBoeuf explained the rationale for the new trust fund. <i>Mr. Cushing made the motion to approve the new trust fund account for the Project Climb Scholarship as presented. Mr. Cancio-Bello seconded. The motion carried 8-0-0B.</i></p> <p><u><i>B. KRMS Furniture Purchase:</i></u> [Discussed during the Business Administrator’s Report.]</p> <p><u><i>C. Policies:</i></u> <u><i>JFA, JFA-R – Residency and JFAA – Admission of Resident Students:</i></u> Mr. Bessette presented and explained. The policy and procedures were included in the Board packet for review. <i>Mr. Cancio-Bello made the motion to waive the first reading and adopt the policy and procedures as presented. Dr. Bobruff seconded. The motion carried 8-0-0.</i></p> <p><u><i>D. Approval of Banks for the District:</i></u> Mr. LeBoeuf recommended Bar Harbor and New Hampshire Public Deposit Investment Pool. <i>Mr. Cushing made the motion to approve the banks for the District as presented. Dr. Bobruff seconded. The motion carried 8-0-0.</i> .</p> <p><u><i>E. Year End Discussion:</i></u> Mr. Feneberg presented. He proposed the end of instruction for the school year be June 2nd, with the remaining days of that week (June 3rd-5th) as an opportunity to students to catch up on assignments. Teachers and paraprofessionals will be available for help until June 5th. The following week staff will examine student progress during remote learning, assess and prepare for a fall re-opening (remotely, in-school or hybrid). Most districts in the state have shortened their school year. KRSD is in good standing with the number of hours of school attendance. Typically we report on school days rather</p>

	<p>than hours. Our hours exceed the minimum required. Elementary student conferences will also be held during the last week for teachers. Board members agreed that parents and students are struggling now and are in favor of an early end of year. Mr. Cancio-Bello made the motion to modify the school year with an end of instruction of June 2nd and last day of June 5th as presented.. Ms. Casey seconded. The motion carried 8-0-0. Mr. Bartholomew asked if there has been thought of end-of-year celebrations. Mr. Paterson addressed his questions with an explanation of the tentative plans for the middle school.</p>
X. Board Committee Reports	<p><i>Communications (4/22):</i> Ms. Mastin reported. Topics discussed in committee included: press releases, good communication with parents, graduation, remote learning and social media. She noted more people are visiting the website and Facebook. Mr. Bessette reiterated the process for the communication blasts from the district. Mr. Feneberg noted there is a balance, we don't want to communicate too much too fast; we are continuing to improve.</p> <p><i>Human Resources (4/22):</i> Ms. Mastin stated much has already been covered in the Board meeting. One topic of interest is if the district can force employees back to work if they are not comfortable. This may be a legal issue. In terms of hiring, the Zoom interviews went very well. Ms. Menard, Human Resources Director, is looking into digital processing for new hires, rather than in-person meetings. The committee also discussed the records of employees for emergency contacts. This will be inputted into PowerSchool and information will not be held at the building level.</p> <p><i>Facilities (4/30):</i> Mr. Cancio-Bello presented. Phase 1 of the KLC is almost complete. Phase 2 of the project may be 20% higher. Prices have increased in the last few months. The committee recommended abandoning the Harris Lodge purchase and acquiring modular classrooms at Bradford Elementary. Renovations and repairs needed would cost in excess of \$200,000. Mr. Cancio-Bello made the motion to withdraw from the Purchase and Sales Agreement as presented. Dr. Bobruff seconded. The motion carried 8-0-0.</p>
XI. Non-Public Session	<p>Dr. Bobruff made the motion to enter Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A: 3II (c) at 9:49 pm. Mr. Cushing seconded. The motion carried by roll call vote.</p>
XII. Return to Public Session	<p>Mr. Cancio-Bello made the motion to return to Public Session at 9:57pm. Mr. Cushing seconded. The motion carried 8-0-0.</p>
XIII. Adjourn	<p>Mr. Cancio-Bello made the motion to adjourn at 9:57pm. Mr. Cushing seconded. The motion carried 8-0-0.</p>

Respectfully submitted,

Leigh Ann Stone
Clerk, KRSD School Board