

Surry School Board Minutes 4.20.26

Attending: Tim, Becky, John, Carroll (minutes), Kim, Bruce, Tabitha Sipler (parent)

Call to Order at 7:00 PM

Secretary's Report—will review next time

Treasurer's Report—Tim moved, John seconded to accept the manifest of \$54,689.38. All approved.

Sarah, Jodie and Kim reviewed budget: IDEA (federal grant) is coming in at about \$25,000, looks like there may be about \$100,000 unspent at the end of the year.

Public Comment—Bruce asked if officers were sworn in—yes. He noted that Homeland Security requires inspections every 3 years. SVCS was done 2-3 weeks ago. Report will go to Concord and SSB.

Old Business--Renovation Project

Bathrooms: Kim to ask for an itemized bill. Work to start at end of this week. They plan to start at 6:00 AM, Kim will let them in and lock door at end of the day.

Parking lot: Barker estimated \$95,000 to do a small section of the lot. Barker got another estimate higher than Hutter's. Gemini estimated \$69,000 to pave 12A to Village Rd includes 2" top coat on existing pavement, moving the shed, adding 5 parking spaces at end of building, 3" asphalt pad to level entryway, 2 loads gravel, road will be crowned, will take about a week. He owns his trucks, petroleum products come from Venezuela.

We only need 2-3 handicapped spaces. We'll need 3 signs and to paint the pavement.

Need to check with Smalls about paving their land, need SVCS summer program dates

Tim moved, John seconded, all approved to pay \$15,000 deposit.

Future Work: Parking lot may leave \$26-30,000 in savings to move janitor's sink or other jobs. Hutter was hired for bathrooms, is not the general contractor. Barker's contract will be ending June 30. We are paying for immediate access to Barker. Need to decide by August if we want to bid out discrete jobs. Need a committee to put together a list of work needed and review potential contractors. Best to have one company for consistency. We have stand-alone projects. Contractors required to follow our policies, these are up to date on our website.

Policy Review and Adoption:

Policy BDB-A Treasurer Responsibilities—Tim moved, John seconded, all approved to adopt.

Discussion about the following policies. Some typos noted.

AC/ACA Non-Discrimination (revised)—the revision clarifies AC and ACA are different, changes clear

ACAC Title IX Sexual Harassment

ACE Procedural Safeguards (revised)

ADB Drug-Free Workplace

ADC Tobacco Products Prohibition

Tim moved, John seconded, all approved to adopt all these policies on this second reading.

New Business

Board Meeting Recorder—reviewed contract including: minutes due 5 days after meeting, required to follow board policy, minutes sent to Secretary for review who sends to the Board. \$25/hr. Board members can keep record of Non-Public discussions. Carroll moved, Frank seconded to authorize Kim to send out an ad. All approved.

Policies for discussion:

AB Parental Bill of Rights—NH has strong parental rights, the following summarize state laws:

JICK Pupil Safety

JJJ Access to Public School Programs

JLDBB Suicide Prevention and Response

Tim moved, Carroll seconded, all approved to adopt these policies on first reading, to waive the second reading.

General Assurances for Federal Programs—have to abide by federal law to get federal funds
Tim moved, Frank seconded, all approved for superintendent to sign the form that the SSB will comply with federal statutes, administrative rules and regulations in 2027.

Joslin Rd. Subdivision—Planning Board has requested a statement from the SSB about how an 11-house subdivision on Joslin Rd. would impact education for Surry students. Tim read his statement. Kim to find out what the state regulation says about how far children are allowed to walk to school/bus.

Current Open Enrollment Bills in NH Legislature—Kim relayed our opposition to Senator Fenton. He is opposed. It's headed to a Committee of Conference. We can testify online. Some of us have.

We need to renew contacts next month for Business Manager, Special Education Director and Bookkeeper.

Preschool Services provided in the home—there is liability if services are not provided in a center. Kim to ask if our preschoolers could go to JD or Marborough special education preschool programs. Maybe we can develop contracts with private preschools. Carroll noted we usually have 1-2 special ed preschoolers a year.

Carroll mentioned that we were charged \$650 for the OmniBallot Tablet which made our school ballot handicapped assessable. This service is required by the Secretary of State. Upon questioning, Felicia Erlich of DemocracyLive said this is a flat fee, for all elections in the year. Since we only had three positions on our ballot, and no other elections this year, we feel this is unreasonable. Carroll was authorized to contact the Secretary of State about this.

Superintendent's Report—attached

Public Comment-- Bruce noted that the bus has never gone up Joslin Rd. since he was a child.

Non Public: Frank moved, Tim seconded, all approved to go into Non-Public at 8:23 PM

Discussed options for out-of-district student, will meet to clarify in May

A kindergartner was identified in March

We need to pay a full year for a student who moved from Marlow and was not billed

A family with 2 students moved to Keene

We have 20 special education students now: 14 in Keene, 1 at SVCS, 1 at Gathering Waters, 2 at Charter high schools, 2 preschoolers.

Frank moved, John seconded, all approved to end Non-Public and adjourn at 8:45 PM

Superintendent Report

The following is a general update of activities as of May 10th since the last Board meeting. Please note that the numbering on this report follows the school board agenda.

3. Treasurer's Report.

3a. Review semester 2 tuition bill from Keene.

3b. The treasurer/superintendent's review of the May 2026 manifest.

3c. The business administrator's update of budget status and grant reimbursements.

5. Old Business.

5a. Surry School Bathrooms Project. Status. The girls and boys bathrooms were renovated over the April break. Hutter did a nice job coordinating and timing the work for completion. New ceilings, lighting, floors, stalls, and bathroom fixtures were installed. Hutter was notified by the superintendent that the countertops and sinks do not meet ADA specifications for elementary schools. The countertops and sinks were installed too high off the floor for elementary children to use properly, and certainly not accessible for a wheelchair student. The board chair and superintendent requested that Hutter take the necessary steps to correct this issue in a timely way. Hutter confirmed that the counters and sinks were not installed to ADA specifications and will do the necessary work to rectify the issue. The

superintendent is working with Hutter to coordinate the repair as soon as possible.

5b. Parking Lot Paving/ADA Compliance Work. Status and discussion. Gemini Paving was contracted to complete the parking lot paving and necessary ADA work over the summer. A deposit was sent to Gemini in April to secure the work.

6. New Business.

6a. Preschool update. Discussion/Vote. The intersection of preschool education and the federal requirement to provide special services for qualified children ages 3-5 years represents a gap in our educational programs for resident students, not found in our tuition agreements for students in kindergarten through grade 12. The student services director continues efforts to patch together appropriate special education and related services for preschool children. The administration continues to explore other options that might provide a wider continuum of services for preschool special education. A memorandum dated May 2nd was sent to the school board outlining the issue and recommended action.

6b. MK: Policy Notice to Independent Student Services Providers. Informational. Attachment 1. The school board attorney recommends that the district provide notice to our independent student services providers that affirms that they are familiar, and will comply with, all applicable federal and state laws and regulations, all applicable district policies, and all applicable receiving district policies. This notice will be kept in the district policy manual under importance documents and attached to service provider contracts.

- Note: The superintendent sent eleven policies to the school board on May 1st in advance of our May meeting to provide ample time for review. The objective is to get the district caught up with important policy development lagging from various delays. The superintendent also included a document for review entitled "Role of a School Board Member" from the NH School Boards Association as to clarify and remind us of roles and responsibilities.

6c. BBB: School Board Elections. First Reading. Attachment 2. Policy BBB describes the composition of the school board and the process to fill any vacancies until the next annual election.

11. 2. 3. 4. 6d. BDA: Board Organizational Meeting. First Reading. Attachment 3. Policy BDA briefly describes a simplified process for the annual school board organizational meeting and that the school board is required to be notified of the organizational meeting (via the agenda).

6e. BDC: Clerk of the District. First Reading. Attachment 4. Policy BDC clarifies the role of the school district clerk and process for filling a vacancy until the next annual election.

6f. BDG: School Attorney. First Reading. Attachment 5. Policy BDG states that the board recognizes that it may require legal services in the day-to-day administration of the district and that the board will engage counsel. The policy underscores that the superintendent will usually contact the attorney consistent with standard practice, that the chair may contact the attorney as needed, or the board as a whole may motion to seek legal advice if needed.

6g. BEDDA: Rules of Order. First Reading. Attachment 6. Policy BEDDA outlines school board rules and procedures for the efficient and effective operation of meetings.

6h. BEDGA: Minute Taking Procedures. First Reading. Attachment 7. Policy BEDGA provides guidance on the essential components of minute taking.

6i. BG: School Board Policy. First Reading. Attachment 8. Policy BG underscores that the adoption of policies that govern the school district is one of the board's most important duties and provides direction to the superintendent and administrators in the management of the district. The policy outlines the process of policy adoption.

6j. DBB: Budget Development Calendar. First Reading. Attachment 9. Policy DBB outlines a general timeline for the school board to prepare and vote to adopt the projected school district budget. The school board may use regularly scheduled meetings and/or special meetings or budget workshops. The objective is to honor the district mission while meeting statutory deadlines, town schedules, and advocate for a responsible budget.

6k. DBC: Enrollment Projections/Demographics. First Reading. Attachment 10. Policy DBC is intended to establish guidelines to determine enrollment and demographic projections for budget development and district planning. It defines a process for enrollment and demographic projections in a way that protects confidentiality and limits board and district liability.

6l. DGA: Authorized Signatures. First Reading. Attachment 11. Policy DGA clarifies the personnel who have the authority to sign documents on behalf of the school district.

6m. GBEB: Staff Conduct. First Reading. Attachment 12. Policy GBEB states that the individuals and companies under contract with the district and working in receiving schools are advised to make themselves aware of, and are required to comply with, the rules and regulations of the receiving school and the policies and practices of the receiving school board.

7. Superintendent's Report.

The superintendent continues the necessary policy work to bring the school board into compliance with best practice and regulations and continues to monitor district needs and the evolving educational landscape.

The business administrator continues the efforts to monitor district expenses and revenue, and interface with the state to ensure fiscal compliance.

The student services director continues to monitor our special education students, 504 students, follow through with federal requirements, oversee their educational progress, and maximize IDEA and Medicaid reimbursements for qualified expenses.

AREA agreement (k-5). As discussed at the October 2025 school board meeting, replacing the current tuition contract for grades K-5 with an AREA agreement could reduce tuition expenses. Holding pending school board discussion.

25. 6. 7. 8. 9. District Bookkeeper and Financial Records. The superintendent discussed the nature of the business relationship with the contracted bookkeeper and district financial records with the general counsel of Primex, the district's insurance carrier. The general counsel reviewed the bookkeeper's contract and made several recommendations to strengthen safeguards in this business relationship. The superintendent revised the bookkeeper agreement based upon the advice of Primex and the school board attorney addressing ownership of financial information, liability insurance coverage and surety bond, and confidentiality and data security. The superintendent is discussing web-based QuickBooks with the district bookkeeper to provide access to financial data by district users. More to follow. Preschool update. As reported previously, the intersection of preschool education and the federal requirement to provide special services for qualified children ages 3-5 years represents a gap in our educational programs for resident students, not found in our tuition agreements for student in kindergarten through grade 12. The student services director continues efforts to patch together appropriate special education and related services for preschool children. The administration continues to explore other options that might provide a wider continuum of services for preschool special education. More to follow at an upcoming school board meeting.

Revising and refining contracts for the business administrator, district bookkeeper, and special education and student services director.

Internet and Data Governance Policy Issues. The school district is mandated to develop a data security and privacy plan (RSA 189:66) and an acceptable use policy (RSA 194:3) that address computer security, data governance, email, and internet communications. The development of these policies requires careful school board consideration because of our unique status as a small sending district, part-time SAU services, and current electronic communication and remote practices.

Financial Issues. The superintendent wants to make the school board aware of proposed legislation that may impact district finances as we move forward over the next several years. This legislation, along with reductions in state education aid, seemingly results in a "squeeze play" for the community placing increased financial responsibility on local taxes to support education. This is particularly concerning given our status as a sending district where much of our budget is contractual student tuition costs and related mandated expenses.

a. Open Enrollment. Open enrollment refers to proposed legislation that would allow students to attend any public school in the state, regardless of their residence or school district boundaries. This legislation would allow parents to choose any public school in the state. Although school choice is a sound concept, appropriate implementation of such a concept requires extensive study and adequate funding. The superintendent is concerned about what this proposed legislation will mean for our administrative costs, special education costs and monitoring, as well as for general tuition costs, census, and roster tracking in multiple districts. More recently, the NH House failed to pass SB101, the open enrollment bill. However, another open enrollment bill is still under consideration, HB 751. At this point, HB 751 is in "Committee of Conference." The Committee has until May 28 to find solutions to the various concerns about open enrollment presented in public hearings. The House and Senate would need to pass the compromise bill before it goes to the Governor for action. The superintendent has been in contact with Senator Fenton (Keene) regarding the open enrollment bill. More to follow.

b. Mandatory Tax Cap. HB 1300 is proposed to establish a biennial local tax cap for school districts, mandating that every town conduct a vote on a school budget cap during even-numbered years. If adopted, the local tax cap would limit the amount raised through local school district taxes to the prior fiscal year's amount, adjusted for inflation, excluding costs for bonded capital projects. Additionally, SAU expenses would be capped at 6% of the combined appropriations of the school district. The superintendent is concerned about the potential impact of this proposed legislation on our small sending district where large components of the district budget are driven by factors outside of the school board's budgetary control. These factors include student tuition expenses, transportation costs, and mandated special education costs.

c. State Education Adequacy Funds. As the school board has discussed over the last several years, the NH legislature has been adjusting the formula that determines the level of state funding provided to local school districts via the adequacy grant. These adjustments result in a net loss of state funding for education for our

school district. More to follow.

Non-public. The superintendent will provide the school board with confidential updates as allowed under RSA 91.

Thanks. Kim