

**RSU 56 Board of Directors Minutes**  
**Board Meeting Amended Agenda- April 25, 2023- 6:30pm**  
**(This meeting will be held at Dirigo High School.**

**The board meeting will also be available via zoom and live streamed on YouTube.)**

School Board Members Present: Barbara Chow, Tim Kelly, Don Whittemore, Elizabeth Kelly,  
Bruce Ross, Larry Whittington, Carl Lueders, Natalie Sneller,  
Deanna Dolloff, Marianne Young (6:39), Dianna Cayer (Student Rep)

School Board Members Absent: Angela Cushman, Peru (Vacancy)

Staff Attending: Pam Doyen, Cathy Arsenault, Jared Hodgkins, Chris Araujo, Beth Edwards, Jay  
Nicholson, Michele Araujo, Aaron Arsenault, Elaine  
Finnegan, Joy Jancewicz, Kelly Porter, Sara Thurston, Heidi Broomhall,  
Rachel Buck

Also Attending: Bethany Meehan-Poulin, Marianne Hutchinson, Kathleen Szotek, Students: Kara  
Woods, Jenna Gallant, Grace Robbins

**CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Barbara Chow, Board Chair, opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:31pm. Audience introductions were made. Everyone on zoom and YouTube were welcomed.

**ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

Motion to add the following:

**VII Supt. Report- Resignation of stipend positions**

Motion: B. Ross Seconded: D. Wittemore

Motion Carried

**CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES**

1. Minutes of the April 11, 2023 Board Meeting

Motion: T. Kelly Seconded: D. Whittemore

Not Voting: L. Whittington

Motion Carried

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chris Araujo- Father of two girls, one that does soccer & one that does field hockey. Here tonight to state the facts to continue the program of soccer here at Dirigo high school. I am the coach here at DHS. I have been a coach for 9 years here in the River Valley program starting at Canton rec and moving on to a boys high school program, now I'm here at Dirigo high school to stay. Last year the girls had a winning team record of 8-6, they placed 13th in Class B. That was a Co-op with Spruce Mtn. It was a really great program. We had 3 of the 6 athletes score on varsity level. Right now we have 5 girls returning, 1 new athlete. 8 freshmen girls coming in, totaling 14 girls ready to play. We also have 4 boys returning,

unknown freshmen coming. We have 3 seniors who want to finish their career playing soccer. This program has been cut due to money. It's only 0.01 % of the budget. I would like you to please add this program back into the budget to give the opportunity to the students.

Bethany Meehan-Poulin- I'm here tonight as a mom. I'm the mom of students who have tried to muddle their way through college and middle school through Covid. My girls lost a lot during that time, they lost time at their school, their teachers and their friends. They lost social opportunities and they lost out for my middle school daughter on half of her extracurricular activities because of restrictions. She finally is in a position where she & her friends are able to be together, they're finally getting some normalcy back and she was one of our really awesome co-op kids who played with the Dirigo/Spruce team. Those girls fought so hard and they won so many games. They just really felt a joy for their sport. They were told all year that they would have enough to play in an 8-man league next year. They were feeling really confident, they knew they had at least 14 of them ready to go and then they had the rug pulled out from under them. For kids that have lost and have lost and have lost over the last years of their school career it was gut wrenching to watch their reaction for \$9k. We brought over over \$660k in carry over money and we're cutting something directly for kids that is not even a percentage point of the budget. I'm here tonight to tell you that our kids have really lost enough. I've watched their struggles with mental health, I'm an educator, it is painful. It's time we give them just a little bit back because they deserve it. I really hope that the ones that made the choice last time can make a different choice for our kids.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Pam received a call from Tom Child. He was asking if RSU 56 would be interested in allowing the Poodunk Snowmobile Club to build a structure to house their groomer at the 33 Nash Street site. They were looking at the space where the old gym was formerly on. He felt like that would be a good central location, easy access to the trails. Pam told him she would bring it forward to the board and if it was something they wanted to consider she would put it on the next board agenda.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Request for Project Graduation trip (Miss Edwards and seniors)

#### **Class of 2023 Project Graduation- 89% Plan to Attend**

- 3 Seniors from the class of 2023 gave a presentation asking for permission for Project Graduation and for transportation of two buses.

#### **Organized by:**

President: Grace Robbins

Vice President: Jenna Gallant

Treasurer: Kara Woods

**Chaperones:** Beth Edwards, Heidi Broomhall, Jillian Bryant, Nathan Schultz, Kaitlyn O'Connor, and Mr. Karavas

**Number of Students:** 47 Seniors & 2 Juniors ( Class Marshalls)

**Number of Bus Drivers:** 2

**Schedule: Friday June 9, 2023**

8p- Buses leave Dirigo High School

9pm- Buffalo Wild Wings in Auburn Me

12 am- Urban Air in South Portland Maine

Dropzone, Runway, Wipeout, Skyrider, Ropes Course, Climbing Walls, Prozone  
Performance Trampolines, Battle Beam, Warrior Course, Apex Trampoline, Dodge Ball,  
and Slam Dunk Zone

Everyone will receive two drink tickets (Gatorade, or Soda)

Everyone will receive socks to wear at the facility

Snacks will be provided by the class and through donations

Students are allowed to bring gaming devices to plug into the televisions. (At their own risk)

Everyone is suggested to bring an empty water bottle to fill up at the water fountains.

Everyone will have free access to all video games in the facility at no additional charge to them. Prize tickets and prizes will not be awarded.

5:30 am- Arrive back at Dirigo High School and have breakfast served by the parents.

**Requests:**

School Board- Two buses with drivers to transport students, chaperones, snacks and belongings from 7:45 pm- 5:30 am. One of the buses needs to be handicap accessible.

Parents/Community- Snacks, breakfast items, and cooks for breakfast

**Student Requirements:**

Sign waivers for Urban Air

Empty Water Bottles

Food Donations

Items that they want to take with them in the office by 9am on Friday, June 9th. B. Ross- Asked how many students would be going. Officers & Ms. Edwards responded that there would be a total of 49 students. 89% of the Class plan to attend. B. Ross- also stated that the class asked for two buses & 1 of them a handicap. Do we need to send 2 buses and do we have a handicap? Pam responded that we will send two buses & we do have a handicap one. B. Chow- asked if we send a bus driver(s) do we book a room for them to sleep? The students responded that a room was booked for the driver so they could get some sleep. Motion: T. Kelly Seconded: L. Whittington Motion Carried

2. Motion to move the following teachers from year 2 probationary to continuing contract:

Jillian Bryant, (DHS, Academic Dean of Students)

Hannah Karcher (DES, Teacher)

Joy Jancewicz (DES Teacher)

Elaine (Randolph) Finnegan (TWKDMS Teacher)

Sherry Hu (DES/TWKDMS World Language Teacher, ESSER funded)

Katie Chicoine (DES Teacher)

Devan Melcher (DHS Nurse, ESSER funded)

Brianne Johnston (DES Spec. Ed Teacher)

Sara Thurston (DES Teacher)

L. Whittington asked: if they are going from probationary to continuing they keep their same wage, Is that correct? Pam responded that is not correct. They will go up one year so they'll go from whatever level they came in on and they will go up another level next year.

B. Chow- so there are 2 that are paid with ESSER money and those positions will go away after,

do they have bumping rights? Pam responded that they would have bumping rights however the two people in these positions are the low person in their department.

Motion: B. Ross Seconded: L. Whittington

Motion Carried

3. Motion to move the following teachers from year 1 probationary to year 2 probationary.

T. Olaf Johnson (DHS Math Teacher)

Erin Beedy (DHS Math Teacher)

Chris Araujo (DHS Alt. Ed Teacher)

Kaitlyn O'Connor (DHS Science Teacher)

Emma Campbell (DES Teacher)

Julie Couture (DES Teacher, currently paid with ESSER)

Motion: B. Ross Seconded: D. Whittemore

Motion Carried

### **OLD BUSINESS**

1. Region 9 Updates (Bruce Ross/ Brian Keene)

We have not met since the last board meeting here. Bruce wanted to give everyone another update that May 3rd is the vote for the Region 9 budget at 6pm at Region 9. A reminder to be a registered voter in your town if you plan to attend the meeting and vote. As he explained at the last meeting that the budget was significantly less and some members of the board brought it up quite a bit which affected the RSUs so we want to get the budget back to a more palliative amount and save RSU 56 some money that would be the way to go. There were many meetings on the budget and it had been cut over \$90k and at the next meeting the finance committee decided to restore the budget back to its original amount. They did show that they could cut the budget and make it workable and then it went up more. He was one of the ones who objected to it and it still passed through. He is telling voters, at least from RSU 56, if they are concerned with the increases that they're doing, can go and voice their opinion on May 3rd at 6pm at Region 9.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE**

*Superintendent's Report:* Pam Doyen

School vacation went smoothly.

The annual Budget Newsletter has been sent off to the printers. Huge thank you to Jesse Heath who organizes the newsletter each year. Also, a shout out to Mary Dailey and Terri Cox who edit it each year. Each administrator submits an article featuring their school or department- I thank each of them as well. The newsletter should be in all mailboxes in our four towns prior to the May 23 budget meeting.

Heidi Connelly was needed at a family emergency tonight so she will report out at a later date.

*Administrator's Report:* ~~Heidi Connelly, Director of Special Services~~

*Resignations/Retirements:*

Earl Couture resigned as the Civil Rights Team Advisor

Earl Couture resigned as the Student Council Advisor

Bethany Meehan-Poulin resigned as Co-Advisor of the Drama Club

Laura Johnston resigned as Co-Advisor of the Drama Club

Erin Carlson resigned as the Debate Club Advisor

B. Ross asked if we were advertising for these positions. Pam stated she has posted all of these stipend positions.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. Student Representative Report- ( D. Cayer)- Senior tri-folds are coming up so if any board member is interested in being a judge please contact Ms. Morse at the high school. Spring sports are getting started. We were supposed to have a couple of games this week but they were canceled due to the weather.
2. Policy Committee- Barbara received an email from Mary that we can save some money on our insurance if we have all the required policies. There are two that state we need to follow the law. The next policy meeting we will work on three policies to fine tune them.
3. Finance Committee- Nothing to report
4. Curriculum Committee- Jason did an update on the reading program, the math program. Jason went over scores and his plan for materials before the Covid money is gone. Pam added that all of the elementary teachers are doing the Letters program which is the Gold standard for reading instruction. He has been able to get all of them involved in that so it should make a huge difference at the elementary school for the reading program. Barbara also mentioned that Jason was concerned with the students that started their school life with computers, not in person. We are noticing a difference in their scores.
5. Buildings & Grounds Committee- Not met
6. Negotiations Committee- Nothing this year
7. Personnel Committee- Nothing new to report
8. Ad-hoc Committee- Met - They will do a presentation in June on their responsibilities.

### **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

D. Whittemore- At the last board meeting it was mentioned that if the board could find some extra money we are going to put back in for the team. Pam responded that it was what the board gave under general consensus. If we find the money, if something comes in less than anticipated then they would reinstate soccer because as she noted last time soccer is not something that we want to eliminate, it was just that it was the program that had the least amount of students in it. D. Whittemore- If people here and other people want to get this program back in they should come out and vote next Wednesday night because that will save us some money. Pam- the difference between the initial budget we saw from Region 9 and the one that was voted in was about \$20k for RSU 56.

L. Kelly- Feels it should be put back in if it can because I feel that most of us voted on it because we were under the impression that there weren't enough people playing. I feel it would behoove us to get it back in there if we can, but there's probably no way. Pam - There is a way to get it back in regardless of what happens next Wednesday. When we come here for the Budget hearing on May 23rd if there is a motion to put \$18,800 back into the soccer program that can come from the floor, if it is seconded and approved it would go back into the budget. So we'll either try to find that money or we'll put it back in at that budget

meeting if the board or someone from the floor so chooses to make that motion. L. Kelly- I don't think any of us wanted to cut it. It just seemed the logical thing to do but getting all the emails and feedback from parents & citizens it seems like a good idea to get it back.

L. Kelly- Not sure if anyone saw last week the vote for a new garage over in Peru. They are getting a garage 2200 sq feet larger than what we want to build and they capped it at \$600k. Liz went over some of the specs that the garage in Peru will be and they came in under \$600k and we're at 1.1 million...just wondering how that shakes out...if I'm comparing apples/oranges, if something else is playing into it that she doesn't understand.

There was some discussion about the comparison between the garage at Peru and the one we're building.

B. Ross- feels they don't have the final figures. We have everything done, and laid out. What they may be looking at might be preliminary numbers.

L. Kelly- She wasn't saying we shouldn't build it. She was just trying to understand the difference in cost. Didn't know if someone knew more about it.

B. Chow- If Region 9 budget goes through and it doesn't pass to add \$18k when would we know if we had enough money. Pam- Wants to be clear again that cutting soccer is not a great thing. Pam went over the numbers from last time. It appeared that we would have 10 girls and 4 boys. It appeared we would be struggling to fill teams to capacity, so that was the decision. At this point in time, she is not trying to pit Region 9 against soccer, if there is anything comes in less than we projected and we could rearrange money. The board gave that with the general consensus, so regardless of where the money sits going into next year, we would probably do sign ups to see if it's even something that's possible. Then Mr. Karavas and Pam would have some difficult decisions on how to move things around to make it work. We're not looking to offer less. We were just looking to be fiscally responsible at a program that didn't appear to have enough students at the time.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **1. Motion to adjourn**

Motion: B. Ross Seconded: D. Whittemore

Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 7:07 pm