

Tamworth School Board

1. Call to Order

A meeting of the Tamworth School Board was held at the Kenneth A. Brett School on Wednesday January 14, 2009 at 5:40PM. The meeting was called to order by Lisa Remick. Present were Lisa Remick, Brenda Robinson, Dan Rowe, Dana Littlefield, Gwen Poirier, Pat Kehoe, Noel DeSousa, Joanne Dolbear, and Kathi Brown. Laura Pike arrived at 5:48PM.

2. Approval of Agenda

Brenda Robinson made a motion to approve the agenda. Dana Littlefield seconded the motion. There will be an additional 8c Ed Views Template. Motion passed.

3. Approval of Minutes (December 10, 2008)

Dana Littlefield made a motion to approve the minutes of December 10, 2008. Dan Rowe seconded the motion. Motion passed. Brenda Robinson abstained.

4. Director of Special Services Update

Pat Kehoe handed out her report and went over it. There are no enrollment changes.

a. Ready Readers

Pat Kehoe handed out a report on the Ready Reader Program and stated that these students are an at risk group. The pros and cons were discussed regarding having the program in house. It was noted that this program is a parental choice and that the program may keep kids from being coded. Pat Kehoe spoke about the possibility of a Tamworth student moving who has a one to one aide and different possibilities for this staff person. Noel DeSousa pointed out that the student has not withdrawn yet, so nothing can be done legally yet. This topic will be brought back next month.

5. Visitor's Comments

Norma Johnson read a letter from David Farley regarding his thoughts on how to reduce the budget. The letter is attached to the end of the minutes.

Susan Colton asked about the cost per pupil in Tamworth. Dan Rowe explained how the cost per pupil is figured out and Chris Kennedy stated that you can't compare to other schools unless they are a K-8 configuration. Brenda Robinson spoke about programs that we have that other schools do not.

6. Committee Reports

a. SAU 9/13 Committee/Report

Charlie Pugh gave a report and discussed the law which involves a warrant article and recommends that it is worth doing. It must be all three towns in our SAU or none. He also explained the time frame and that it would be cleaner if the school board put it together. Charlie also spoke of the meeting they had with SAU 9. Brenda Robinson spoke of us leaving SAU 9 in the past due to the services available to our kids. Gwen Poirier handed out a rough estimate for merging. Dan Rowe thinks the report has no value and Dana Littlefield disagreed with him.

Dan Rowe made a motion to form a study committee with the other towns to see if a merge would be feasible. There was no second.

Dan Rowe wanted to know why no one on the board would second his motion. Laura Pike explained her reasoning of SAU 9 structure and being more disconnected.

b. Strategic Planning Committee

There is a meeting on Thursday January 15th at 5:30PM at the Brett school. Material has been sent to the committee members.

7. Old Business

a. Fuel Usage Comparison

A report was handed out showing the usage and the board would like the chart to include the average temperature starting next month. Dana Littlefield and Laura Pike would like to clarify the number of gallons delivered in December 2008. Maybe it was for two deliveries.

b. Guidance Counselor Job Description – Adoption

The only change on the job description is item 10. Brenda Robinson made a motion to get it on the floor. Laura Pike seconded the motion. Motion passed. It will come back next month for adoption.

8. New Business

a. Assistant Principal Job Description

The current job description was handed out which was dated June 9, 1993. Brenda Robinson made a motion to update it and bring it back next month. Dana Littlefield seconded the motion. Motion passed. Dan Rowe abstained.

b. Transportation Bid

A handout was given to the board regarding this. Dana Littlefield asked about other alternatives and putting it out to bid. Last time it was put out to bid we got one reply, from the current company. Laura Pike would like to know when were routes evaluated last and could there be a consolidation from four buses to three. Dan Rowe wants to know what percentage of the total cost is for fuel. This will be brought back next month after the bus coordinator can get these answers.

c. Ed Views Template

Laura Pike distributed a hand out to the board members. The board would like the teachers to give them feedback on this template. Noel DeSousa handed it out at the faculty meeting yesterday and will return any feedback to the board when it meets next month.

9. Superintendent's Report

a. Expenditure Report

The handout was presented to board members and Joanne Dolbear stated that she has encumbered as much as she can. Dan Rowe appreciates her efforts.

b. Other

Gwen Poirier spoke about increasing communications with SAU 9. There are going to be four different staff (core area) meetings with SAU 9 and SAU 13. They will be two hour roundtable meetings and sped will also be represented.

10. Principal's Report

a. Monthly Update

Noel DeSousa presented the handouts and there were no questions.

b. Other

None

11. Review of Proposed 2009-2010 Operating Budget and Warrants

Gwen Poirier went over the major changes since last time. On page 36 the SAU has been removed from the budget as it is a separate warrant article. On page 44 the fuel oil has been reduced to a better price of \$2.29 per gallon with an estimated 25,000 gallons. On page 45 under pupil transportation, this is being looked into.

Dan Rowe would like to see any changes from last time highlighted. Joanne Dolbear said that the program cannot do that, it must be done manually. Dan Rowe stated that \$240,000. is not in the budget due to warrant articles and could this be noted as a memo at the end of the report. Lisa Remick suggested that it could be a hand written note stating that the warrant articles are not included, before making copies. Dan Rowe stated that school board discretionary funds and contingencies are ok, per the auditors. Laura Pike spoke about the recycling program and how it should be supported but the process will need to change for next year. Laura Pike would also like to see alternative configurations regarding staff reductions. At the present time the budget shows a reduction of two teachers, and she would like to see what it would be like to keep the two teachers and remove the part time secretary, one aide and one custodian. These are not student facing positions. She feels that the board has not done their job without exploring alternatives. Laura Pike does not support the current process, people can't make informed decisions. She did feel that a better job was done this year, line by line. Dan Rowe wants to look at the support staff. Noel DeSousa will get the current and budget information to him. Dan Rowe would like to see the offsetting Madison credit in the budget. As it stands now, Dan Rowe will not support the budget as it does not represent the economic times we are in. Gwen Poirier stated that she is aware of the economic times we are in and that reducing staff by two teaching positions is a significant cut. Dana Littlefield stated that board members can come forward for information. Noel DeSousa stated that 96% of the budget is for personnel or fixed costs. Personnel involves looking at programs. Dan Rowe feels that the student to adult ratio of 3.8 to 1 does not seem right. Lisa Remick stated that we can schedule one more workshop and give a directive to administration.

12. Visitor's Comments

a. First Grade Parents

Heidi King handed out signed petitions by $\frac{3}{4}$ of the parents in the current Kindergarten class.

Other Comments

Melanie McBrian stated that the ratio of 3.8 students per teacher is incorrect.

Susan Colton asked what the ratio really is and what the class sizes are. She was referred to the state website where it shows that we are comparable to other K-8 schools. Dan Rowe challenges this information. Gwen Poirier will get the data.

Noel DeSousa mentioned that some positions aren't included in the ratio. Re: Principal and Guidance Counselor.

Heidi King brought up the Ready Readers program and the original proposal to cut the Kindergarten aide.

Chris Kennedy asked how it can be business as usual if you cut two teachers.

Lisa Remick stated that there is \$180,000. less in the budget

Dan Rowe says you are comparing to the budget and not expenditures. There are no meaningful reductions. He feels they have an obligation to taxpayers and students.

Lisa Remick pointed out that parents have a right to vote.

Donna Ulitz spoke about the money that is returned to the town and the money being saved by buckling down at the school. She also was offended when Dan Rowe referred to the professional staff as heads and the substitutes as babysitters.

Dan Rowe did not mean to offend the professional staff by referring to them as heads, but does not apologize about the substitutes being babysitters.

Melanie McBrian stated that the school cannot be run like a business as you have to include all of the kids, you can not pick and choose who you want.

Herb Cooper questioned the cost of health insurance. The staff currently pays about 10% of the premium. It is in the collective bargaining agreement and is in line with other districts.

Heidi King thanked the board for everything and to Laura Pike for looking at other options.

Donna Ulitz remarked on the beautiful building we have due to past votes and people now have to realize we have to pay for it.

Susan Colton asked if anything can be done about debt service or the building. Can we attract other services here?

Dana Littlefield asked if the SAU could be brought in house. Could we reorganize space for them to work out of here until we needed the space again? Gwen Poirier stated that they have one more year on their lease. Lisa Remick said that the joint board could discuss it and see if we have space here.

13. Board Comments

Laura Pike spoke about if it was a business, what would you cut. She mentioned Bascom, if you don't use the service, electronic grading, carpeting, scrubber, custodial staff, secretary, computers (buy nothing new), and staff reduction. Where we cut staff is critical, larger class sizes in upper grades, not lower grades.

Lisa Remick suggested that we schedule another work session and the board should give the administration ideas.

Plan B To see a couple of alternatives

Put back the two teachers and remove a custodian, paraprofessional and part time secretary. What would the impact be? Remove electronic grading and consolidate bus routes. Is there an alternative to different teaching positions lost?

Dan Rowe would like to see a range of options.

Laura Pike will not support loss of a Grade 1 teacher. She would also like to see the old computers sold.

Laura Pike made a motion to go to Plan B (alternative cuts with an overview) Dan Rowe seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Brenda Robinson made a motion that the next work session will be on Wednesday January 28, 2009 at 5:30PM in the library. Laura Pike seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Dana Littlefield thanked Donna Ulitz and Melanie McBrian for their comments. Testing scores are a small aspect of what the staff does here.

14. Communications

None

15. Non-Public Session

RSA 91 – A: 3 II a, b, c, d, e

At 8:16PM Brenda Robinson made a motion to go into Non-Public Session. Laura Pike seconded the motion. Motion passed. At 8:53PM Dana Littlefield made a motion to go out of Non-Public Session. Dan Rowe seconded the motion. Motion passed.

16. Action as a Result of Non-Public

Dana Littlefield made a motion to appoint Terri Eldridge as part time secretary for the remainder of the school year. Dan Rowe seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Dana Littlefield made a motion to increase the principal's salary for the school year 09-10 by 5.8%. Laura Pike seconded the motion. Motion passed.

17. Personnel

None

18. Adjournment

At 8:55PM Dana Littlefield made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Laura Pike seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathi S. Brown, Recording Secretary
Draft Pending Board Approval