

ROCKPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES OF June 17, 2020
Via Zoom

Chairperson Michael Kelley called the regular meeting of the Rockport School Committee to order at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Present were Nicole Altieri, Colleen Coogan, Richard Drost, Michael Kelley, and Cathy Reilly. Also, present were Superintendent Robert Liebow and Recording Secretary Ingrid Keating.

I. Opening of Regular Meeting

A. Approval of Minutes

Motion: Colleen Coogan motioned to approve the regular and executive minutes from May 20 and June 3, 2020.
Seconded: Nicole Altieri seconded the motion.
Roll call: Nicole Altieri yes
Colleen Coogan yes
Richard Drost yes
Michael Kelley yes
Cathy Reilly yes
Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

B. Personnel Actions

CHANGES IN THE ROCKPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS FACULTY/STAFF 2020-2021

Retired in 2020:

- Nienstedt-Santos, Mary Sue (EL Team Chair)
- Tower, David (HS Chem)
- Wilson, Mike (HS Para)
- Waller, William (.3 Physics)

Resigned in 2020:

- Montana, Nicole (MS/HS Psychologist)
- Merrill, Samantha (MS Counselor)
- (Out of District Coordinator)

Leave

- Day, Whitney (MS SS) transfer to Dean
- Hall, Brett (MS Dean) transfer to SPED
- Hensler, Emma (HS English) one year
- LaMantia, Amanda (MS Principal)

Non-renewal

- O'Connell, Joy (.36 FTE MS SPED Teacher) position increase to 1.0 FTE

New Faculty/Staff 2020-2021

- Castonguay, Heather (MS Principal - One Year) LaMantia
- Collins, Susan (EL SPED Teacher)
- D'Antonio, Amy (HS Permanent Sub) Valvano
- Day, Whitney (MS Dean) Hall
- Fauci, Kriisten (transfer to .6 MS Reading/.4 Elective Teacher) Rich?
- Hall, Brett (transfer to MS SPED Teacher) Fauci
- Czajkowski, Hock (MS/HS Psychologist) Montana
- Lamontagne, Julia (HS Chem) Tower
- McCarthy, Aedan (HS Physics) from .5 to 1.0 (Waller)
- McNiff, Catherine (increase from .4 to 1.0 FTE HS SS) Hermann
- Poole, Samantha (HS Paraprofessional) Wilson
- Spencer, Natalie (perm. Gr 5)
- Tierney, Alicia (MS Counselor) Merrill
- Tripp, Hazel (.5 MS Spanish) D'Antonio
- (Out of District Coordinator)
- Herrman, Kerry (MS/SS) Day - transfer from HS SS

- (Anticipated 1 YR EL SPED Teacher)

II. Community Participation

A. Student Advisory Representative

Student Advisory Representative Noah Cook reported that graduation went well and 8th grade gifts have been delivered. Nathaniel Kirby reported that the senior car parade was a lot of fun and there was a lot of community support along the route. Nathaniel Kirby also explained the changes and additions to the Student Council constitution, most changes related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

B. Public Participation

Zenas Seppela 92 Granite St. asked about the listing of “town meeting” on the agenda under “calendar” it was explained that it is a future event for school committee.

III. Discussion and Recommended Action

A. Update on remote learning and communications with families

Mr. Liebow reported that graduation went remarkably well, he was able to talk with each graduate, which does not happen at the traditional event. He felt it was very meaningful to both graduates and families.

Mr. Liebow is expecting preliminary directives from the Commissioner of Education this week, a final version will come out later in July, which is not a good timeline to prepare for next fall. The commissioner withdrew statements that he made in previous meetings regarding masks and class size. Costs such as supplying every staff member with 2 masks a day is a concern, the estimate is approximately \$50,000.

Elementary Principal Todd Simendinger reported things ended really well for the end of the school year. The 5th grade had their parade, about 95% of the students signed the shoe, and the teachers have done a great job providing fun events that are traditionally done at the end of the year.

Assistant Principal Heather Castonguay reported the Kimbal Prize and other awards are going out to students.

Middle School Principal Amanda LaMantia reported that there will be closing activities on Friday at all grade levels. Eighth grade gifts were delivered Monday. Recognition Night will be online tomorrow and Jeff Richards is providing the traditional 8th grade video.

High School Principal Amy Rose reported senior week wrapped up with graduation on Friday and is already working on the August 5th event, details need the approval by the Board of Health. They have been getting scholarships and awards out to students and families. Tomorrow at 3pm NECN will be showing a video produced by Nathaniel Kirby, Evelyn Mierz, and Charlie Prentis honoring the seniors. Tomorrow is the last formal day of classes and she and AnnMarie Luster will be collecting materials from students and staff on Thursday and Friday this week.

Director of I.S. & Technologies Monty Hitschler explained that all original budget increases have been granted and the CIP budget was increased, largely, to accommodate flipping all town employees over to laptops from desktop and should be in pretty good shape with the schools. End of year device turn-ins will begin next week to prepare equipment for the next school year. Goal for the fall is to hand out the newer Chromebooks to those with higher needs and several town projects will begin such as the SeaBin.

IT Support Technician/Technology Integration Specialist Mike Montgomery reported that the Apsen conversion project is going really well and as soon as the final pull is completed we will start using the new system. The Website Committee has chosen a new company and will develop a design next week.

Director of Student Services Martha Wright reported that she is working on Extended Year Services (EYS) to at least 58 students and until she receives guidance from the DESE and Early Education and Care (EEC)

regarding EYS she will be planning a remote format. She will acquire private contracts to provide services to those students with the most needs. Hiring staff for EYS has been challenging since it will probably require remote services and she feels staff are anxious to continue work this summer. Ms. Wright will be talking with the technology department regarding support of students and teacher through the summer. She and Principal Simendinger are providing professional development (PD) through Landmark for 12 elementary teachers and paraprofessionals and can also offer PD to middle and high school staff. The school counselors are partnering with Salem State Department of Social Work to place interns in the schools to support general education needs around mental health and wellbeing as we make the transition back to school.

Support Staff President Allison VanDerpool reported the union will be holding a meeting tomorrow, she had hoped to have more guidance from the State to give the members, but will advise them that they may have to negotiate things like wearing a mask.

Mr. Liebow stated he is working as hard as possible to maintain staff since it will be very important to have “all hands on deck” for the reopening of schools.

RTA Negotiator Jodi Goodhue has joined classes and the attendance is still good. She stated the unions are involved with the reopening and will provide feedback from the members and feels that any negotiations will be done positively and collaboratively. Ms. Goodhue thanked the administration for being very flexible and reaching out to be sure everyone is on the same page.

B. Athletic Clubs/Teams

Athletic Director John Parisi reported there really isn't a formal procedure to find out what sports students are interested in since we are a small school with limited options. But, recently he was able to add a Freshman basketball team based on the number of students interested in joining. We have to be sure that the numbers are there to fill a team and we find out with preseason signups. Rockport can usually fill a Varsity and sometimes a Junior Varsity team where most other schools can fill 3 teams. Rockport has had a co-op with Manchester/Essex (M/E) schools for the last three years for cross country and track and field, three years ago 3 girls participated in indoor track. The last two years the coaches from M/E have come to Rockport, no students showed up for the sign-up. Announcements are made for a minimum of two weeks along with social media posts for all programs. We also have students participate in football and hockey via co-ops. We do not currently have any club sports, which would be organized through the principal's office. Mr. Parisi would be happy to work with Principal LaMantia to create a running club at the middle school level. Mr. Parisi does feel that this year will be a difficult year to start any new programs, the coaches stipends have been reduced by 25% as did all stipends. Part of the reason a middle school running club has not worked is it would have to begin at 6:15am and the afternoon conflicts with other afterschool activities. High School teacher Zach O'Brien volunteered to start a running club but only 4 students showed interest and cross country needs between 5-10 students to compete in events. RTA representative Jodi Goodhue explained the process to set up a club through a volunteer staff member. The committee discussed the process to start a club/team, interest and what this year's sports might look like. Mr. Parisi will also send out a message to the current 5th, 6th, and 7th grade students to see if there is any interest in a cross country club and would reach out to other districts to arrange a couple of meets. Parent Clair Harper feels there are two very distinct groups of athletes and there is a lot of concern about funding. She would like a survey sent out to gauge the interest. Jodi Goodhue offered to draft a procedure, along with John Parisi, for all club proposals, based on past practice, run it by the principals, and then bring to school committee before adding to the handbooks.

C. School Improvement Plans

Elementary Principal Todd Simendinger presented the elementary school improvement plan. Two main goals are focusing on, identifying and meeting the shifting social-emotional and academic needs of students and staff, and forming a cultural competency committee, participate in meaningful professional development and identify a scope and sequence for delivering cultural competency lessons. Middle School Principal Amanda LaMantia will focus on research and implement research based social emotion learning strategies, implementing a more comprehensive educational approach, attendance, universal design, and develop a digital learning plan. High School Principal Amy Rose will focus on developing a digital

learning plan, fully implement the social-emotional learning and themes of cultural competencies, respond to the loss of face-to-face connection, engagement and academic learning, and implement alignment of curriculum across disciplines, identify and implement assessments that collect data from multiple measures.

D. School Handbooks

The principals presented their student handbooks, all stating that there were very few changes. The school committee discussed attendance and the N-grade. Principal Rose reported the change in the attendance policy has helped to get families to communicate with the school when absentee issues come up. Mrs. Rose stated that she would look at the language being used in the attendance warning letter and have it be similar to what was rewritten in the handbook. The student representatives offered a list of suggestions and comments regarding the high school handbook.

E. Policy revise/review

First reading for policy File IJOB: Community Resource Persons/Speakers

Second reading for the following policies:

File IHBHE: Remote Learning
File IHBHE-E: Remote Learning Addendum
File JJA: Student Organizations
File JJH-R: Student Travel Regulations
File JLCB: Immunization of Students
File JLCC: Communicable Diseases
File JRA: Student Records (was overwritten needs to be reinstated)
File JRD: Student Photographs

Motion: Colleen Coogan motioned to approve the adoption of File IHBHE: Remote Learning and Addendum File IHBHE-E Remote Learning Addendum, the revision to File JJA: Student Organizations, File JJH-R: Student Travel Regulations, File JLCB Immunization of Students, File JLCC: Communicable Diseases and File JRA: Student Records, and to review and correct the incorrect language (printed over from a different policy) or File JRD: Student Photographs,

Seconded: Nicole Altieri seconded the motion.

Roll call: Nicole Altieri yes
Colleen Coogan yes
Richard Drost yes
Michael Kelley yes
Cathy Reilly yes

Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

F. Warrants and Payroll

IV. Information and proposals

A. School Council Update N/A

B. Donations

Smith Hardware: ramp for graduation
Wolf Hill: Planting for graduation
Clay Sign: Athletic signs
Mr. & Mrs. Ram and Mithlesh Gupta: 2 copies of "India Unveiled" for RMHS Library

C. Updates

Superintendent Liebow clarified that the schools had 25% absenteeism in 2018, this was due to an error with the student information system and how we were documenting absences. Certain absences should not have been counted if they were excused.

D. Other Business N/A

V. Correspondence

Letters from school committee to State Reps
Kesterson, Amanda Ltr #1 Re: masks
Kesterson Amanda Ltr #2 Re: masks
Lilly, Sean Re: Support of teachers

Motion: Richard Drost motioned to send a Rockport School Committee Resolution: Covid-19 State Funding to state legislators stating that there can be no unfunded mandates for Covid-19.

Seconded: Cathy Reilly seconded the motion.

Roll call: Nicole Altieri yes
Colleen Coogan yes
Richard Drost yes
Michael Kelley yes
Cathy Reilly yes

Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

VI. Future Agenda Items

- A. State Representatives (8/26)
- B. Superintendent Proposed Goals (8/26)
- C. School Committee Goals Review (8/26)
- D. School Start Times Recommendation (TBD)
- E. Superintendent's Report/FundFlow

VII. Calendar

- A. August 26, 2020, Regular Meeting
- B. TBD, Town Meet

. Executive Session

Motion: At 10:51 pm Colleen Coogan motioned to go into executive session for the purpose of personnel matter and will not reconvene in Open Session.

Seconded: Nicole Altieri seconded the motion.

Roll call: Nicole Altieri yes
Colleen Coogan yes
Richard Drost yes
Michael Kelley yes
Cathy Reilly yes

Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Liebow
Superintendent of Schools