

1 **Newfound Area School District**

2
3 Newfound Regional High School Library Media Center

4 Wednesday, March 21, 2012

5 6:30 pm

6
7 **APPROVED MINUTES**

8
9 School Board: Vincent Paul Migliore (Bridgewater), Don Franklin (Hebron), Paul Rheinhardt (New
10 Hampton), Ruby Hill (Danbury), Lloyd Belbin (Bristol), Lou Lieto (Groton), Sue Cheney (Alexandria
11 6:39 pm)

12
13 Staff Present: Marie Ross (Superintendent), Sue Cross (SAU), Sheila Miller (NRHS), James LeBaron
14 (NRHS), Michael O'Malley (Principal, NRHS), Monica Jackson (NRHS), Dan Rossner (Business
15 Administrator)

16
17 Clerk: Paul Hoiriis (NRHS Assistant Principal)

18
19 Public Present: John Jenness (New Hampton), Todd Westfall (Alexandria), Murray Campbell (Bristol),
20 Amy Kench (Bristol)

21
22 At 6:30 pm, the Clerk issued the Oath of Office to the new School Board members Ruby Hill and Don
23 Franklin and to returning School Board member Lou Lieto. The Superintendent reviewed the agenda
24 and procedures for the first meeting after an election. She then introduced the Board members, staff,
25 and members of the public present at the meeting.

26
27 At 6:39 pm, the Superintendent called the meeting to order and led everyone in the recitation of the
28 Pledge of Allegiance. Dr. Ross then indicated the notice of postings for this meeting at the individual
29 town halls, the schools, at the SAU and on the website www.sau4.org.

30
31 Organization

- 32 • The Superintendent invited nominations for School Board Chair. Lloyd Belbin nominated Vincent
33 Paul Migliore as School Board Chair. Paul Rheinhardt seconded the nomination. Sue Cheney
34 nominated Lou Lieto as School Board Chair. The nomination failed for want of a second. Mr.
35 Migliore indicated that he would be willing to serve if elected. Mr. Migliore was elected as School
36 Board Chair with a vote of 6-0-1-0 (Alexandria abstaining). The Superintendent turned the meeting
37 over to the new chair.
- 38
39 • Mr. Migliore thanked the Board for their confidence. The Chair invited nominations for Vice Chair.
40 Sue Cheney nominated Lou Lieto as Vice Chair pointing out his experience on the Board and as
41 Groton Town Moderator. The nomination failed for want of a second. Paul Rheinhardt nominated
42 Lloyd Belbin as Vice Chair. Mr. Belbin declined. Don Franklin nominated Ruby Hill as Vice
43 Chair. Mr. Rheinhardt seconded the nomination. Lloyd Belbin made a motion to close
44 nominations. Mr. Rheinhardt seconded this motion. Nominations were closed with a vote of 6-0-1-
45 0 (Alexandria abstaining). Ms. Hill was elected as Vice Chair with a vote of 5-2-0-0 (Alexandria
46 and Groton opposed).

47 • Mr. Migliore indicated that there are conflicts for some with the proposed March 26th “Eat and
48 Learn” and that the Board will set a new date. Mr. Migliore then welcomed everyone and noted
49 that there have been significant changes in the District this year specifically the large turnout at the
50 First Deliberative Session and in the passing of the 2% Tax Cap. Mr. Migliore then acknowledged
51 Mary Campbell's years of service as a Board member in this District. He asked the Superintendent
52 to put together a more formal acknowledgment. He then stated that he would like to encourage
53 staff, the public and elected officials to visit with the Board and perhaps the future agenda will be
54 altered to offer that opportunity. Mr. Migliore proposed an Adjusted Agenda for the evening as
55 follows:

- 56
- 57 • Public Comments
- 58 • High School Competency and Assessment Discussion
- 59 • Other Business
- 60 • Non-public
- 61

62 Mr. Lieto moved to approve this adjusted agenda and Mr. Rheinhardt seconded the motion. The
63 motion was approved 7-0-0-0.

64

65 Public Comments:

- 66 • Todd Westfall spoke about the recent elections. He stated that he was surprised about the tax cap
67 and that he and his group did not promote it as it does not serve its intended purpose. He did note
68 that it is significant that the required 2/3 vote was achieved to pass it. He says this further sends the
69 Board the message which the Superintendent has acknowledged that the public is looking for lower
70 budgets, yet until this year there hasn't been much change. He reiterated that the taxpayers have
71 had enough and want an education that costs less. He added that the makeup of this Board is
72 phenomenal and that the public, parents, students, and staff deserve leadership that is excellent and
73 that listens to them. He says that the leadership must be honest providing both good and bad news
74 and that it concerns him that this has not always happened. He quoted Einstein regarding insanity
75 is doing the same thing over and over again without a change in the result. He says change is
76 courageous in that those who make change take the heat for it. He closed by saying we deserve
77 someone who is committed to the district, not someone who is job seeking.
- 78
- 79 • Mr. Migliore corrected Mr. Westfall that the tax cap required a 3/5 majority vote and it was barely
80 achieved.
- 81
- 82 • Murray Campbell of Bristol spoke about the District Comparison Task Force pointing out that one
83 measure of comparison among the districts were the NECAP results. He said that these tests are
84 given early in the school year and are not a really good way to compare district to district. He
85 added that a better comparison would be if the state had a Regents exam that assesses students in
86 coursework immediately upon completion of the course. He says that this would be a better
87 measure of student achievement and effectiveness of instructors.
- 88

89 HS Competency and Assessment

- 90 • Ms. Hill opened this discussion by saying that she ran into a member of our faculty in the fall and
91 asked this person how things were going to which the faculty member replied that the competencies
92 are going to kill us. Ms. Hill then acknowledged that the state has not provided much direction on

93 the competencies nor given any feedback. She suggested that Jim LeBaron meet with the Assistant
94 Superintendent from Kearsarge since they too have struggled with the competencies and both they
95 and Newfound are part of the i3 Network and could benefit from one another in their work on the
96 competencies. Mr. LeBaron responded that the Assistant Superintendent has visited Newfound this
97 year as part of a meeting with a few schools in discussing reporting on the competencies. Ms. Hill
98 added that she would hate to see teachers spinning their wheels which would drive good people out
99 of teaching.

100

- 101 • Mr. O'Malley spoke to the dual reporting as a means of not moving away from the old system
102 overnight until the public and families completely understand the competency-based system. He
103 added that it is important to make sure that what is sufficient in competency achievement would
104 match the grade and that sometimes it seems we are spinning our wheels to get the language
105 correct.
- 106
- 107 • Ms. Hill asked how many competencies are there for each course. Mr. O'Malley responded five to
108 six. Mr. O'Malley brought examples for a social studies and English course and distributed the
109 examples to the Board. He explained the competencies, the performance indicators, and the depth
110 of knowledge levels (1-4).
- 111
- 112 • Mr. Rheinhardt asked how someone could pass a class and not be competent. Mr. O'Malley replied
113 that this could happen because the level of the benchmark has been raised for what is sufficient for
114 competency. Dr. Ross added that you will now need to be proficient in each of the competencies
115 where in the old system all grades were averaged so that you could achieve a passing grade even if
116 you were not competent in one area.
- 117
- 118 • Lou Lieto stated that we have been listening to the discussion regarding competencies for a year
119 and are still a little confused and that the public must be completely confused. He encouraged
120 dialogue with the public on this issue.
- 121
- 122 • Mr. Belbin asked if this new competency system white washes away grading on effort. Mr.
123 O'Malley replied that standards-based does not assess compliance and moves away from social
124 promotion. Students must show they can proficiently meet the standard. He said the report card
125 will report attitude and effort; it's just not a part of the assessment of learning as showing what they
126 can do and what they can apply. Mr. O'Malley added that he intends to invite more people to more
127 forums. Mr. Migliore agreed and invited everyone to look for ideas of how to make this happen.
- 128
- 129 • Don Franklin asked a clarifying question regarding communication of the competency-based
130 system. Dr. Ross mentioned "School Matters" on television and the website has communicated
131 certain issues and initiatives about the schools and that we could do this regarding the
132 competencies. Mr. Migliore agreed that this could be one option, but added that we should not get
133 an answer regarding communication from just this group tonight. Mr. Franklin asked about the
134 number of hits on the website to which Sue Cross said she would check that data. Mr. Lieto added
135 that the website is a useful tool, but a passive tool. He stated that through discussion by Mr.
136 O'Malley with others is a more active approach and that we could look at a half dozen approaches.
137 Ms. Hill added that her constituents in Danbury do not have access to the television channel and
138 often video is slow on the internet connection and that a written summary delivered to those

- 139 citizens would be more effective.
140
- 141 • Ms. Hill asked how many assessments are used to show a competency has been met. Mr. LeBaron
142 replied that it depends on the performance indicators, but there is never only one assessment.
143
 - 144 • Mr. Belbin asked if the parents understand this system. Mr. O'Malley replied not really, not yet.
145 Mr. Belbin responded by saying that this may be putting the cart before the horse. Mr. O'Malley
146 replied that the high school is not reporting on the competencies yet to the parents and will pilot this
147 reporting using Progress Reports. Mr. Belbin asked if they will get an explanation of what this
148 means as part of the Progress Report. Mr. O'Malley replied in the affirmative.
149
 - 150 • Mr. Lieto asked that looking down the road a few years, will this competency-based reporting filter
151 down to the lower levels. Mr. O'Malley replied that it would and that the oncoming switch to the
152 Common Core will compel this and will force vertical integration in all districts. He added that the
153 Common Core tests levels three and four, depth of knowledge skills and even the textbook
154 companies are printing textbooks that are consistent with the Lexile Scores consistent with the
155 Common Core requirement of reaching 1300 by senior year. Dr. Ross reviewed the time line of the
156 switch from NECAP to Common Core and added that a consultant will help schools develop power
157 standards that align to the Common Core. She mentioned that she and Dana Andrews (principal at
158 BHVS) will be attending a conference in April on the Common Core as well as some K-8 teams
159 from the district. Mr. LeBaron added that the high school competencies will also be aligning to the
160 Common Core. Dr. Ross suggested that the Board should have a Planning & Dialogue Session on
161 the subject of the Common Core.
162
 - 163 • Mr. Migliore asked how the staff is doing with this change to a competency-based system. Mr.
164 O'Malley said that they are hard at work doing a lot of heavy lifting, remapping their curriculum
165 and in understanding where the level of proficiency is exactly, recreating units of study promoting
166 relevance over what is relative. Mr. Migliore asked if there are different levels of work and
167 satisfaction amongst the staff and what do you do if some are ahead and some are behind. Mr.
168 O'Malley replied that there are professional learning groups and other groups working with those
169 that need support. Mr. Migliore asked if Mr. O'Malley is satisfied with the progress overall. He
170 replied some days yes, some days no. He said the level of satisfaction is most often tied to student
171 success with the process. Mr. Migliore encouraged Mr. O'Malley to communicate any issues or
172 need for resources to the Board.
173
 - 174 • Mr. Lieto also encouraged communication to the Board on how well it is going, student progress,
175 any bumps in the road. He said the Board would like to be involved in a timely fashion if any
176 issues come up so that the Board can respond to the public. Mr. O'Malley noted this request. Mr.
177 Lieto added that this goes for all buildings.
178
 - 179 • Mr. Migliore stated that the message is that you have the support of the Board.
180
 - 181 • Mr. Belbin added that he would encourage teachers to come and speak to the Board. Mr. Migliore
182 said that he would like to put something in place and is looking for ideas. Ms. Hill noted that
183 Kearsarge has a faculty liaison to the Board who collects information and provides feedback. Mr.
184 Migliore noted that this is similar to our Student Council representative. Mr. Belbin encouraged a

185 more open door policy. Dr. Ross suggested making a statement encouraging feedback at public
186 forums and that many staff have spoken at Budget Committee and Board meetings.
187

188 • Mr. Migliore stated that we should address the policy that staff cannot access the Board except
189 through the Superintendent. He suggested also forwarding the agenda to the entire staff and the
190 packets to those in the public that have asked for it. Dr. Ross said that the agenda was sent to the
191 entire staff. She added that teachers and Board members can have a conversation as many serve on
192 committees and councils together throughout the district. She reiterated that communication is ok,
193 just not directives from the Board to the staff.
194

195 • Mr. Franklin stated that Policy BG does limit and filter Board to staff communication without going
196 through the Superintendent and that we should explore this policy if we want unfiltered
197 information. Dr. Ross said that this is based on a certain level of trust that the Superintendent
198 would bring a concern from the staff to the Board. However, she added, policies can always come
199 up for review. Mr. Franklin added that as a former auditor for the federal government, he has never
200 completely relied on what managers say as the complete story. Mr. Lieto added that this is an area
201 to tread carefully in that although we do not want to inhibit communication, this is governed
202 through the Superintendent and we do not want to undermine the governance of that office. Mr.
203 Franklin addressed a further part of Policy BG regarding a Board member having to clear a school
204 visit through the Superintendent. He said that in audits, we make surprise visits so that we see the
205 normal routine. Dr. Ross explained that this is a courtesy in case there is testing or a safety drill and
206 not because they have anything to hide. Mr. Rheinhardt agreed with Mr. Franklin's audit analogy.
207 Mr. Lieto spoke regarding his visit to the high school where he was invited by Mr. O'Malley to go
208 wherever he wished and observe any classes he desired. He noted the genuineness of the teaching
209 he observed. Furthermore, if an administrator attempted to restrict a Board member's access or
210 control the teaching for the purpose of influencing the Board person, that administrator should be
211 replaced.
212

213 • Mr. Migliore added that we cannot go over all of the policies and procedures tonight and suggested
214 that the Board study the policies and will discuss this more at the "Eat and Learn."
215

216 • Dan Rossner advised that the RSA puts the Superintendent in charge of the facilities and that there
217 may be a reason for this. Mr. Migliore reiterated that we will study the policy and put it to the
218 Policy Committee to review any changes we would like to make in line with where the Board is
219 going.
220

221 Other Business

222 • Mr. Franklin asked why there is no Audit Committee. He recommended adding one. Mr. Rossner
223 responded that the audit report is addressed to the School Board not the Superintendent along with
224 an offer for the Board to meet with the auditors. Dr. Ross encouraged the Board to study the list of
225 committees and make a list of suggestions between now and the next meeting on which committees
226 may need to be added and/or deleted. Mr. Belbin asked when the Chair would be making
227 assignments. Mr. Migliore replied that the Board should look over the committees, communicate
228 with the Superintendent, and that once the assignments have been made, the Board will vote to
229 approve the assignments. Mr. Rossner pointed out that a School Board Audit Committee could be a
230 conflict of interest as the auditors review expenses authorized by the School Board.

231

232 • Mr. Migliore encouraged new members to actively review manifests in that it is a good education
233 on the expenses. Mr. Rossner added that there is an RFP out for new auditors and he invited the
234 Board to become involved in the selection process.

235

236 • Dr. Ross asked about rescheduling the date for the “Eat and Learn” with consultants from the State
237 School Board Association. Don Franklin stated that he is not available until after April 11th. Mr.
238 Migliore suggested April 23rd. Dr. Ross stated that it would be held at the middle school with a
239 dinner at 5:30 before the workshop.

240

241 • Mr. Franklin asked Dr. Ross if New York still uses the Regents Exam. Dr. Ross replied that she
242 believes so but it has been altered to be in compliance with No Child Left Behind.

243

244 Public Comments

245 • Mr. Westfall said there is a lot of misunderstanding by the Superintendent regarding the School
246 Board/Staff communication policy in that there is a lot of restrictions placed on such
247 communication. He stated that he thinks this policy could be challenged under the Whistle Blower
248 statutes and freedom of speech. He also added that he is glad to hear about the open door policy at
249 the high school and glad to hear about the outreach to the public regarding communication.

250

251 • Amy Kench agreed that the policy regarding Board/Staff communication needs to be looked at and
252 in her research on the state website she was unable to find out who is responsible for informing her
253 that she had not been renewed in her position as School Board Clerk. She wants to know who is
254 responsible for informing her and in what time frame. She added that she only found out this
255 afternoon when she happened to stop by the SAU to drop off an application. Mr. Migliore noted
256 her request.

257

258 • The Chair entertained a motion to go into non-public session for purposes of discussing personnel
259 per RSA 91-A:3 II a. Mr. Lieto so moved, with Mr. Rheinhardt seconding the motion. The motion
260 was approved on a roll call vote 7-0-0-0.