

RSU 54/MSAD 54

**Meeting of Board of Directors
September 7, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Skowhegan Area Middle School**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Maine School Administrative District No. 54 was held on September 7, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at Skowhegan Area Middle School Cafeteria.

ATTENDANCE BOARD MEMBERS (883 present, 116 absent):

Mark Bedard (Skow-53) PRESENT	Janet Burrill* (Canaan-43) ABSENT
Sarah Bunker (Mercer-16) PRESENT	Daniel Frey* (Smith-27) ABSENT
Jeannie Conley (Skow-53) PRESENT	Cheyenne Goodrich* (Norr-46) ABSENT
Karyn Curran (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Samantha Delorie (Norr-46) PRESENT	
Annemarie Dubois (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Jean Franklin (Canaan-43) PRESENT	
Theresa Howard (Corn-30) PRESENT	
Bruce Hurley (Mercer-16) PRESENT	
Michelle Kelso (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Michael Lambke (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Desiree Libby (Norr-46) PRESENT	*excused
Peggy Lovejoy (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Janice Malek (Norr-46) PRESENT	
Amy Rouse (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Julian Payne (Corn-30) PRESENT	
Lynda Quinn (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Sara Smith (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Michelle Taylor (Smith-27) PRESENT	
Timothy Williams (Skow-53) PRESENT	

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

a. Flag Salute followed.

2. Good News and Recognitions

There were no scheduled presentations.

3. Approval of the Minutes - 8/17/23

A MOTION WAS MADE BY Theresa Howard, seconded by Peggy Lovejoy, to approve the minutes of the Board of Directors' meeting of 8/17/23 into the record. (883 yes)

4. Communications

a. Letters

Superintendent Moody acknowledged and accepted letters of resignation from the following:

- Krista Savage – Behavioral Consultant
- Heather Ross – Social Studies Teacher at SAHS
- Ashley Green – Ed Tech at SAMS
- Rebecca Plasse – Ed Tech at SAMS
- Lori McKenney – Ed Tech at SAMS
- Joseph Godin – Ed Tech at SCTC
- Ethan Blodgett – Ed Tech at SAMS
- Robert Witts – Ed Tech II at MSLC

b. School Personnel

There were no school personnel who wished to speak.

c. Visitors

A visitor spoke and shared concerns about the public comment period, Board Meeting Structure, masking in schools and educational programming.

5. Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

6. Superintendent's Report

a. Vacancies, nominations, recommendations

Superintendent Moody reviewed vacancies and recommended the Board's approval of nominations.

ON A MOTION BY Jean Franklin, seconded by Julian Payne, the Board voted to approve nomination pages one through six. (883 yes)

b. Report on Assessments Payments to Date

Superintendent Moody shared that as of September 7, 2023, Canaan, Cornville, Mercer, Norridgewock and Smithfield were current on their monthly assessments. Skowhegan was outstanding for July and August. Assessments are due on the 20th of each month.

c. Update on New School Construction Building Project

Superintendent Moody shared that the next Building Committee meeting is scheduled for October 11th. The architects will be reviewing color pallets with the committee.

Mr. Leavitt shared that the school construction project is moving along with 120 yards of concrete poured today. A 30-inch drainpipe is being replaced by a 36-inch drainpipe. There was a theft last week at the construction site and it is being investigated.

d. Review/Update of Federal Projects/Federal Funds

Superintendent Moody reported on federal (ESSER II) funds which are coming to a close at the end of September. The remaining covid relief funds (ARP) run through this fiscal year. A review of ARP funded positions, including nurses, counselors, administrative support, computer technicians, instructional aids, etc. will be discussed during the budget process.

A significant number of students have moved into the district (80), yet we are down 20 students in PreK, in part due to transportation. The district has partnered with KVCAP and the Alford Youth Center to add aftercare for PreK, in addition to the 21st Century Grant after school program.

The middle school project (ESSER II) is near completion. The cistern will be installed next week and ventilation and technology issues are being addressed.

e. Review of Tennis Court Project and Consideration of Bid

Superintendent Moody reviewed the bid on the Tennis Court project and shared a summary of the School Revolving Renovation Fund Project Funding Details (approved by the Board of Directors 10/22). The

following recommendation was made to accept the low bid submitted by E.L. Vining & Son, in the amount of \$1,282,154 and to instruct administration to move forward with the project, utilizing up to \$1,282,154 from the District Major Capital Reserve Fund. The superintendent shared that in May at the district budget meeting he will be asking voters to approve adding the savings from the district Revolving Renovation Projects (\$1,863,997) to the Major Capital Reserve Fund for district facilities. This responsible step is consistent with the district's approach to avoid budget spikes which would negatively impact district taxpayers.

ON A MOTION BY Desiree Libby, seconded by Michelle Taylor, the Board voted to accept the high bidder E.L. Vining & Son, including bid-alternates, in the total sum of \$1,282,154 and to instruct administration to move forward with the project, utilizing up to \$1,282,154 from the District Major Capital Reserve Fund.

Following questions, the motion **PASSED**. (883 yes)

f. SRO Update

Superintendent Moody reviewed the status of the School Resource Officer progress. Administration feels strongly that we should have an SRO dedicated to the high school and middle school campus, and the new SRO dedicated to the elementary schools (Canaan, Bloomfield, Margaret Chase Smith, Mill Stream, North El). The current SRO (through the Skowhegan Police Department) would remain on campus. Superintendent Moody shared that through conversations with the Sheriff, Chief and District Attorney, it is clear that only a Sheriff's deputy or deputized Skowhegan Police Officer would have jurisdiction in towns outside Skowhegan. The Skowhegan Police Chief has shared that a team approach between departments would not work. The Sheriff is not willing to deputize Skowhegan Police officers. The vast majority of a SRO's work does not include arresting anyone, in fact, it was shared that in the past twenty years the district SRO (a Skowhegan Police Officer) has not arrested anyone outside of Skowhegan as part of their duties. Mr. Moody indicated that through his conversation with the District Attorney, liability concerns may exist. It was shared that agreements between towns could allow a Skowhegan Police Officer to serve as the second SRO, and allow them arrest powers. Superintendent Moody took Board questions and is going to follow-up with the District attorney and will provide information to the Board at the next meeting.

g. Opening of School

Superintendent Moody addressed the issue of hot temperatures in schools, an annual challenge on the shoulder seasons (Fall & Spring). The district has increased air handling systems in the buildings through the night and early morning to provide fresh quality air and to utilize outside air to cool buildings outside of school hours. School administrators have reached out to staff to gather feedback and provide options for cooler spaces, utilization of fans, etc. District high need special education rooms have been provided with air conditioners for the neediest students. The Superintendent explained that the district works to avoid sending kids home to situations which could potentially be dangerous as kids could be home alone in hot homes/buildings without adequate supervision.

h. Other

Superintendent Moody shared that the Crisis Team has met and will meet again tomorrow following two recent tragedies outside of school over the past week. The district works with families and communicates to staff, but generally follows the guidance of the team and respects of the families impacted regarding district-wide communication. Mental health student and family supports have been updated on the district website, and staff have connected with any students / others who have been identified as needing additional support.

A video of the groundbreaking event by Landry/French contractors was shared with the Board and is provided on the district website.

7. Assistant Superintendent and Support Services Manager

Assistant Superintendent Hatch was absent but will provide additional information about the opening of schools at the next Board meeting.

The Support Services Manager reported that the elevator project is at a standstill waiting for the elevator, which is expected to be delivered next week. The Canaan project is near completion waiting for the electrical panel. Support staff have done exemplary work preparing buildings/grounds for the start of school.

8. Old and Unfinished Business

A Board member asked if we are capturing all reimbursements for services billed to Medicaid. Superintendent Moody shared that although the district currently does bill for mainecare/etc., there are potential opportunities for additional billing if the district were to hire staff and adopt a different approach. The District Finance Director is currently exploring this with our special education department.

9. Introduction of New Business

Todd Smith, Skowhegan Select Chair shared that Selectmen meet next week and will be signing warrants for assessment payment.

10. Adjournment

The Board adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan Moody, Superintendent of Schools