

**MINUTES OF REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING,  
MASON SCHOOL DISTRICT  
NEW HAMPSHIRE, April 12, 2010**

A meeting of the Mason NH School District was held on Monday, April 12, 2010 at approximately 7:46 p.m. at the Mason Elementary School Cafeteria, pursuant to due notice of all members and the public.

Chairperson Dr. Donald Hodges called the meeting to order. Upon calling of the roll, the following members answered present: Bob Hemmer, Wolfgang Millbrandt, and Dr. Donald Hodges.

Superintendent Dr. Deborah Bemis, Secretary Becky Partridge, Moderator Catherine Schwenk, School Principal Betty Mulrey, Treasurer Sue Wagoner and Mike O'Neill of MRI were present.

**Recognition of Public**

Refer to sign in sheet dated 04/12/10.

*Motion by Wolfgang Millbrandt to enter into non-public session at 7:51 pm to review non-public minutes submitted by Becky Partridge and per RSA 91-A:3 II (b) hiring of any person as a public employee, Seconded by Bob Hemmer.*

aye: Hemmer, Millbrandt, Hodges

nay: none

**Motion carried 3-0**

Those present were School Board members Dr. Donald Hodges, Wolfgang Millbrandt, Bob Hemmer, Superintendent Dr. Deborah Bemis and School Board Secretary Becky Partridge.

*Motion made by Wolfgang Millbrandt to enter into public session at 9:10 pm, Seconded by Dr. Donald Hodges.*

aye: Hemmer, Millbrandt, Hodges

nay: none

**Motion carried 3-0**

*Motion by Wolfgang Millbrandt to approve sealed non-public minute 03/22/2010B submitted by Becky Partridge, Seconded by Bob Hemmer.*

aye: Hemmer, Millbrandt, Hodges

nay: none

**Motion carried 3-0**

**Minutes of Previous Meetings**

*Motion by Wolfgang Millbrandt to approve non-public minutes submitted by Becky Partridge titled 03/22/2010A, Seconded by Dr. Donald Hodges.*

aye: Hemmer, Millbrandt, Hodges

nay: none

**Motion carried 3-0**

*Motion by Wolfgang Millbrandt to approve the minutes submitted by Becky Partridge dated March 22, 2010, Seconded by Dr. Donald Hodges.*

aye: Hemmer, Millbrandt, Hodges

nay: none

**Motion carried 3-0**

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**Announcements of Next Scheduled Meetings**

Monday April 26, 2010: Regular School Board Meeting at 7:45pm, MES Cafeteria

**Action Items**

1. Mr. O'Neill will prepare a manifest one week prior to the meeting and distribute to school board members for review. At the meeting he will bring any updates to be added.
2. Dr. Bemis will design a survey to be sent to parents to gauge interest in a summer program for regular education students. Dr. Bemis has been directed to email the survey to the board for approval prior to being sent out
3. Dr. Bemis will draft a "letter of intent" to be used by the school board to give to teacher in regards to their contracts.
4. Mr. O'Neill will prepare a detailed construction / building expense report for the Board.
5. Dr. Bemis will provide a comparative report of payroll services and process.

**Public Communications**

At this time, Madame Moderator Schwenk asked to be heard.

*Motion by Moderator Catherine Schwenk to change the start time of School Board meetings from 7:30 to 7:45 pm, Seconded by Bob Hemmer.*

aye: Hemmer, Millbrandt, Hodges  
nay: none

**Motion carried 3-0**

*Motion by Moderator Catherine Schwenk to change Executive Session from the beginning of the meeting to the end of the meeting out of courtesy to the public, Seconded by Bob Hemmer.*

aye: Hemmer, Millbrandt, Hodges  
nay: none

**Motion carried 3-0**

*Motion by Moderator Catherine Schwenk to allow the Business Manager to provide his report to the Board first out of courtesy to him, Seconded by Bob Hemmer.*

aye: Hemmer, Millbrandt, Hodges  
nay: none

**Motion carried 3-0**

Mary McDonald presented a thank you note and badges to School Board members and herself from the Boys Scout thanking them for their support with their Merit Badge College.

**Business Manager, Mike O'Neill:**

Wolfgang Millbrandt asked to have the reports before the meeting so they can be reviewed. Mr. O'Neill's concern would be that if he prepared the manifest one week in advance it would not be current at the time of the meeting. Dr. Hodges said that Mr. O'Neil can present the updates at the meeting. Mr. O'Neil agreed and said that he would prepare the reports one week in advance and bring any updates to the meeting.

Mr. O'Neil presented the Board with a 2008-2009 End of Year Report and a proposal that will be sent to auditors that could perform a Financial Audit.

Mr. O'Neill submitted the current manifest to Board members. It is noted that Board members signed said manifest.

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Mr. O'Neill submitted building checks for signatures. It is noted that Sue Wagoner will be the third signature on the building checks as Bob Hemmer is not an approved signer at this point. There was a question on a building check that was written to Scully for egress charges. It is noted that after consultation with the Building Committee the Board came to the conclusion that this was an inappropriate invoice and the check was not signed. Dr. Bemis asked if there has been a formal detailed building / construction report submitted to the Board. Mr. O'Neill responded that he has given the Board quarterly reports that included bank statements but that he had not presented it in a bound form as that was not requested and he does not spend money on binding if not necessary. Mr. O'Neill stated that if the Board wished to see a report in that fashion he would be glad to do so but he needs to be directed to spend printing costs in that manner. It was decided that Mr. O'Neill would provide a detailed, unbound construction report to the Board.

Mr. O'Neill inquired about the meeting that he had scheduled with SERESC that was cancelled without his knowledge. After a brief discussion the Board determined that there was a miscommunication about scheduling of the meeting, the need to cancel the meeting, and the inconsistency of exactly who cancelled the meeting.

**Superintendent's Report. Dr. Deborah Bemis:**

Dr. Bemis provided the Board with a copy of Milford's approved school calendar for next year and asked for the Board's input before creating the MES calendar. Dr. Bemis told the Board that MES should follow the Milford schedule. The Board agreed.

In response to the Norman Tanguay report Dr. Bemis informed the Board that she will be sending out a survey to the teachers, staff and parents in the district. After analyzing the results, focus groups will be established to address any issues.

**Principal's Report, Mrs. Betty Mulrey:**

Mrs. Mulrey told the Board that the Congregational Church has confirmed that the district may use the church in case of MES evacuation. Mrs. Mulrey will look at the church to ensure that she knows where everything is. On May 12-13 the staff will attend an ICS training with David Cook, Mason Fire-EMS Chief. Appropriate staff is also attending workshops for administering the Science NECAP and selected staff is attending a Project Read workshop. The Spring Concert is scheduled on May 14 and the String Orchestra tentatively has a concert date on June 11. Mrs. Mulrey explained that there have been some questions about who is responsible for custodial duties for such events. Dr. Hodges said that there is a policy regarding the matter and to just follow the policy.

**Unfinished Business**

Dr. Bemis told the Board that the Special Education Extended Year Program and the Title I Extended Year Program is all set. Mr. Millbrandt asked what does "all set" mean. Dr. Bemis responded that she meant that the appropriate staff has said that they will run the program.

Dr. Bemis informed the Board that she will be sending out a survey to judge the interest of the parents to a program offered to regular education children two weeks prior to the start of school. Mrs. Losee asked how this program would be paid for. Dr. Hodges said that it is self-funded. Mrs. Losee inquired whether we needed it in the budget. Mr. Millbrandt explained that one of the first warrant articles that the district voted on and approved was the use of unanticipated funds; the tuition would be considered unanticipated funds and therefore can be used to fund the program. Mrs. Phalon asked what the purpose of the two week program is. Dr. Bemis said that it is to get the kids ready to learn. Mr. Millbrandt said that he would like to see the survey

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before it is sent out. Dr. Bemis agreed and she was directed to email the survey for approval before sending it out to the parents.

Mrs. Losee said she still has not seen a plan. Dr. Hodges said that it is incomplete and once the survey is returned Dr. Bemis will be able to design a program. Mr. Hemmer asked if this would be ready for review at the next Board meeting. Dr. Bemis said it would.

**Committee Reports**

**Building Committee Report, Mr. Fred Greenwood:**

Mr. Greenwood informed the Board that the stone has been added to the old church and that the concrete will be poured soon. Once the slab is poured, construction on the walls can begin.

**Curriculum Committee Report, Betty Mulrey:**

Mrs. Mulrey said that in addition to the committee looking at different Science programs it will look at Math support for those that need help. Mrs. Mulrey said that Kate Belletete approached her and said she was locked out of next years K12 Science Curriculum. Bob Hemmer confirmed this. Mrs. Partridge said that she would forward contact information to Mrs. Mulrey to get prices for the K12 Science Curriculum for next year. Dr. Hodges inquired the status of the contract between the Mason School District and K12. Mrs. Partridge said that there were issues with the proposal for the Charter School with the DOE and at this time the attorney for NHOCS (NH K12) is providing a response to the DOE's concerns. Dr. Hodges asked if the hold up was with the state or K12. Mrs. Partridge said that there are problems in both areas.

**MESO Committee Report, Becky Partridge:**

Mrs. Partridge informed the Board that she had received a letter from the IRS containing corrections needed to the 1023 application. Mrs. Partridge was happy to say that there are only minor changes needed. However, the IRS case manager assigned to the filing is out of the office until April 19.

**Technology Committee, Betty Mulrey:**

Mrs. Mulrey said that the next meeting is scheduled for April 19 where they will be reviewing the final draft of the Technology Plan. Mrs. Partridge informed the Board that she emailed the Chairperson of the Technology Committee, Mr. Mark McDonald, the KDC Website Publishing Policy with the Board's changes. Mrs. Partridge noted that Mr. McDonald sent back an email confirming he received it.

*Motion by Dr. Hodges to appoint Bob Hemmer as ex-officio of the Technology Committee, Seconded by Wolfgang Millbrandt.*

aye: Hemmer, Millbrandt, Hodges

nay: none

**Motion carried 3-0**

**Safety Committee, Betty Mulrey:**

Mrs. Mulrey informed the Board that this is a never ending project; the members of the Safety Committee continually investigate and review ways to keep the students safe.

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**Administration Staff Structure Committee Report, Mary McDonald:**

On behalf of the Administration Staff Structure Committee, Mrs. McDonald reviewed the committee approved recommendations (see attachment title Mason School District SAU #89 Administration Staff Structuring Committee).

After presentation of the recommendations Mr. Millbrandt asked how adding another person would reduce the administration overhead. Mrs. McDonald explained that there are no new positions being added and that the committee worked within the budget.

Mr. Millbrandt asked when the Building Construction ends. Mr. Greenwood said could not give an exact date but he thought it would be around July 1.

Mr. Millbrandt asked if the recommendations fit within the budget. Mr. Hemmer responded yes.

*Motion by Dr. Hodges to enter into contract negotiations with Dr. Bemis for a one year contract, Seconded by Wolfgang Millbrandt.*

Discussion: Mrs. Phalon responded to the motion by saying it is the school board's responsibility to hire a person with the qualifications to perform the job. The school board also has the responsibility to post and interview for the position and have Dr. Bemis submit a resume and interview as any one would. If she has the qualifications required, then there should be no worry.

Mrs. McDonald asked to go into non-public session with the school board to discuss issues. Dr. Hodges denied her request.

Mrs. McDonald said that the board has not done their due diligence and has shown a lack of fiscal responsibility with this motion.

Dr. Hodges asked what the problems are, as they have not been made clear to him. All he hears is that there is low morale, which can be fixed, and he feels that Dr. Bemis is trainable. He states the District is in good shape and that the District has met AYP and is in compliance. The issue that he sees is that there is no separation between the District and the school. That can be corrected along with the low morale.

Mr. Garth Fletcher said that perhaps because there is so much debate on the motion and that there have been documented issues with Dr. Bemis, the Board should not vote on the motion tonight and maybe readdress the issue next meeting.

Dr. Hodges stated that if the staff is unhappy about the decision they can leave.

Mr. Fletcher said that is the most arrogant thing a school board member could say and that he suggests the school board seek legal counsel before continuing.

Mrs. McDonald said that this decision is unbelievable, especially with the amount of information that has been gathered about issues with Dr. Bemis. Dr. Bemis asked if the conversation could end as Mrs. McDonald is causing harm to her reputation. Mrs. McDonald reminded the school board that she requested a non-public session to discuss these issues and was denied. Dr. Bemis said that the meeting should be adjourned. Moderator Schwenk reminded Dr. Bemis that she has no say in such matters and that it is not her place. Dr. Hodges said that the District is in great shape and that he is not going to tear the district apart. Mrs. Phalon reiterated that by continuing to have Dr. Bemis on staff the school will be torn apart. She states that she is very disappointed in the school board and that those approving of this motion are not fit to sit on the board as they have not listened to the voters, staff, and parents of Mason.

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Mrs. Phalon asked where the minutes of all the previous meeting are. Secretary Partridge stated that she provides a draft of meeting minutes within 48 hours to the School Board, Superintendent, Principal and anyone who provides a formal report to the school board. Non-public minutes are likewise submitted within 72 hours if they have not been sealed. Once minutes are approved they are put in final format and submitted to the Board, Superintendent and Principal. Mrs. Phalon said that they are public record, however they are not posted anywhere. Dr. Hodges said that he believed that they were on the SAU website. Mrs. Phalon said they are not. Dr. Hodges said that minutes will be posted.

Mr. Hemmer asked if it was the intent of Dr. Hodges not to at least interview candidates for the positions as has been the recommendation. Dr. Hodges said he is not going to interview candidates.

Mrs. McDonald said that she is very disappointed in the Board and that they have shown no fiscal responsibility and they have not listened to the voters. Mrs. McDonald asked if anyone is being held accountable for 30% of missed SPED meetings that she showed documentation of. Dr. Bemis said that meetings are often rescheduled.

Moderator Schwenk said she was deeply concerned that the Board has chosen not interview any other candidates and that the Board is willing to go into negotiations with someone having documented issues and without the requisite experience.

At this time, Moderator Schwenk presented each school board member with a sealed envelope and asked that they do not share the content publicly. Dr. Hodges said that they would determine that after they read it. It is noted that after reading the letter the Board decided that it would remain private.

After much heated discussion the Board called for a vote on the motion on the table.

*Motion by Dr. Hodges to enter into contract negotiations with Dr. Bemis for a one year contract, Seconded by Wolfgang Millbrandt.*

aye: Millbrandt, Hodges

nay: Hemmer

**Motion carried 2-1**

*Motion by Dr. Hodges to advertise and interview for the Business Manager position, Seconded by Wolfgang Millbrandt.*

aye: Hemmer, Millbrandt, Hodges

nay: none

**Motion carried 3-0**

At this time many members of the public left the meeting.

*Motion by Bob Hemmer to give the teachers and contract staff a letter of intent, Seconded by Wolfgang Millbrandt.*

aye: Hemmer, Millbrandt, Hodges

nay: none

**Motion carried 3-0**

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The Board directed Dr. Bemis to draft a letter of intent that the school board can review and give to the teachers as stated in the motion. Dr. Hodges asked Mrs. Mulrey when it would be possible to meet with the teachers. Mrs. Mulrey said that April 19 is a possibility and will check with the teachers availability. Dr. Hodges also asked if Mrs. Mulrey can have the teachers ready to discuss anything that they would want to see or not see in the contract.

**New Business**

After a brief discussion it was decided that Dr. Bemis will do a comparative report of payroll services and process.

Mr. Millbrandt asked why the teachers do not use the data software that the district purchased, specifically for attendance records. Dr. Bemis said that Heidi does all the attendance and that it is just as easy for her to do it.

Dr. Bemis said that she and other staff members are trying to use Google calendar. Dr. Hodges said that there are a lot of calendar software available. Dr. Bemis asked if it was OK to use whatever worked. The Board agreed as long as it does not cost money.

Bob Hemmer moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:07 pm, seconded by Dr. Hodges.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Partridge  
School Board Secretary