

Notice: These minutes are in D R A F T format, and shall remain as such as the legal record in compliance with RSA 91:A in their written archival form. They are likely to contain errors and may be in need of correction which can only be done in public in a properly-posted, subsequent meeting of the School Board. Accordingly, you are referred to the minutes of a subsequent (i.e. future -- but not necessarily the next sequential) meeting of the Board to identify what may have been changed as an approved and properly modified record in compliance with law.

NEWFOUND AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

**School Board Minutes**

For

Monday, June 12, 2023

Non-Public: 6 p.m.

Public Session: Following Non-Public

Location: LMC - Newfound Regional High School

- I. Call to Order by the School Board Chair Melissa Suckling at 6 p.m.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Record Roll:
 

Kimberly Bliss, Alexandria	present
Dominic Halle, Bridgewater	present
Joe Maloney, Bristol	present
Melissa Suckling, Danbury	present
Britta Matthews, Groton	present
Thomas Edwards, Hebron	arrived 6:05 p.m.
Nathan Saler, New Hampton	present
- IV. Melissa moved to enter Non-Public Session: 91-A:3(a): The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employer or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted. Kim Bliss seconded. Board left for nonpublic. Kim motioned first and Tom second to exit nonpublic at 6:15 p.m. Board returned to public session at 6:30 p.m. Board discussed human resource issues.
- V. NRHS Girls Track and Field Recognition  
 Second consecutive championship division III. Coach John Daly noted the competition was better this year in addition to torrential downpour. Three players qualified for New England in four different events. Taylor Mooney broke the pole vault record for one example of championship. Players Soraya Glidden and Elle MacDonald were present to receive the NRHS Girls Track and Field Recognition and accompanied Coach Daly. Coach noted the academic standing of all the players as evidenced by the number of scholarships awarded to them. Newfound School Board Student Representative Mika Austin also played on the Track and Field team and was present at tonight's meeting to receive applause.  
 Newfound has a history of winning as evidenced recently by Volleyball winning two consecutive State Championships.
- VI. Approval or Modification of Agenda  
 Melissa noted the Facilities Committee has a request.

Notice is hereby made that public comment shall be made without expectation of a response by any School Board member to matters raised by such commentary. The Board will not hear personal complaints about school personnel nor against any person connected with the school system. The expectation of all in attendance is to conduct themselves in a civil manner. The Board respects the right of the public to communicate its stance of matters of interest, but meetings are scheduled in advance to conduct business put forth on its publicly posted agenda only.

- VII. Approval of Minutes  
 a. May 22, 2023  
 Dominic moved to approve minutes 5-22-23. Tom seconded. Vote 6-0-1-0 (Groton abstained)  
***Motion Passed***
- VIII. Public Comment (Minimum 30 minutes)  
 Melissa received two emails for public comment. Aubrey Freedman, Bridgewater wondered why taxpayers are paying for camping equipment and providing a teacher stipend for a grant-funded program recently board approved. Academics should be the focus of schools. The second email from Ariel Maloney, Bristol noted confusion among staff due to receipt of an email from facilities concerning compliance with fire codes. Board is encouraged to review policies of seeing that facilities are in compliance.  
 Sarah Ohl, New Hampton noted her tenth year of teaching at the high school and she noticed salaries are low at the start and may be a reason we can't fill jobs here plus staff need to get multiple jobs to make a living. Paraprofessional's salary is in the bottom 40% and does not incentivize to stay. Consider the impact of pay on students.
- IX. Correspondence  
 Pierre Couture sent a letter of congratulations to the Girls Track and Field Team and to Mr. Hoiriis, Mr. Tivey, Mr. Daley and Mr. LaPlume for winning the second consecutive track and field state championship.  
 The superintendent sent out letters to the faculty retiring.
- X. Announcements and Recognition  
 a. Superintendent Report  
 Pierre noted Sue Severans position filled as Project Coordinator. He is busy filling jobs. Summer cleaning is with a different contractor. Irrigation update: two wells are drilled. ESSER funds will replace auditorium chairs this summer and repair floors where we remove carpeting. Middle School bleachers will be replaced.  
 Our new Interim Superintendent is aboard at the SAU to train and tour the buildings.
- b. Student Representative Report  
 Mika Austin updated the board on school activities: SALT went to BES on a field day, a trip to Hampton (the water was cold) and Westward Bound this summer.  
 Mika noted that students are concerned with teachers leaving. The students would like more information on water updates and who to contact if necessary for various issues.
- c. Teacher Representative Report  
 Sarah Ohl highlighted all the district schools tonight. BHVS held field day with water activities (it was a hot day) barbeque and yoga.  
 BES Kindergarten was doing tie-dye and talent show. First grade was studying animal habitat. Students traveled to the Bristol Historical Society, Flume, and Museum of Science. Fifth will go to middle school next year.  
 Danbury went to Holderness Science Center.  
 Middle school eight grade went to Wellington. Mika reported on the high school.
- XI. Committee Reports  
 a. Budget Committee-none  
 b. Facilities Committee-IT is working on infrastructure. Nate introduced a request by the TTCC for a land swap. Board discussed what this entailed like parking and warrant articles. In August, there will be estimates available and a presentation.

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- c. Policy Committee-none
  - d. Wellness Committee-finishing wellness policy
  - e. Building Committee-architect is working on cost estimates and design
  - f. Curriculum Committee-none
  - g. Hill School District Committee-no follow-up to offer to house Danbury students at Hill.
- XII. New Business
1. Recommendation(s)
    - Jessica Rominger NMMS Science 1 year position
    - Jessica Pine DES Principal
    - Melissa moved to approve staff hire, seconded by Kim. Vote 7-0-0-0 ***Motion Passed***
  2. Resignation(s)
    - Norma Ross DES Principal
    - Julie Mahoney BES Special Education
    - Tom moved to accept resignations, seconded by Nate. Vote 7-0-0-0 ***Motion Passed***
  3. Transfer(s)
    - Sam Tracy DES Guidance Counselor
    - Erin Gokey-Kaik BES Title 1 Reading Teacher
    - Melissa moved to approve transfers, seconded by Dominic. Vote 7-0-0-0 ***Motion Passed***
  4. Declare Critical Shortage
    - Pierre requested the board declare critical shortage for Library Media Specialist so he can hire Amy Smith who can receive certification through alternative programs.
    - Melissa moved to declare critical shortage for Library Media Specialist, seconded by Tom. Vote 7-0-0-0 ***Motion Passed***
  5. Approve and expend funds, Pond and Peak Reading Council donation of \$1,000 to NHCS
    - Melissa moved to accept and expend funds, Pond and Peak Reading Council donation of \$1000 to NHCS. Kim seconded. Vote 7-0-0-0 ***Motion Passed***
  6. Add unified Basketball at NMMS to APPENDIX A-1-Co-Curricular Salaries
    - Deirdre Conway requested this. Kim moved to add unified basketball at NMMS to APPENDIX A-1-Co Curricular Salaries for \$730. Joe Maloney seconded. Vote 7-0-0-0 ***Motion Passed***
  7. Policies for Second Reading
    - a. IGE Exceptions to Use of Specific Course Materials
    - b. IGE-F Parent Guardian Objection to Specific Material
    - c. JFCN Use of Student Work-Student Photograph
    - d. EEAEA Mandatory Drug and Alcohol Testing – School Bus Drivers and Contracted Carriers
      - Dominic moved to approve policies IGE, IGE-F, JFCN, EEAEA, for second reading.
      - Britta seconded. Vote 7-0-0-0 ***Motion Passed***
  8. Field Trips
    - Sarah Cutting requests a trip to Green’s Grant NH and the Great Gulf Trail. August 9, 2023 to August 10, 2023.
    - Summer Outing Club requests a trip to Nancy Pond Trail Harts Location NH. July 19, 2023 to July 20, 2023
  9. Approval for repairs to drainage and fencing at BES
    - Robin received a letter from an abutter that drainage needs repaired by June 30. Cost estimate is \$27,365. Tom moved to approve repairs to drainage and fencing at BES up to \$27,365. Kim seconded. Vote 7-0-0-0 ***Motion Passed***

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10. Approval for Superintendent to hire and accept resignations until June 30, 2023.  
Tom moved to approve the Superintendent to hire and accept resignations until June 30, 2023. Dominic seconded. Vote 7-0-0-0 ***Motion Passed***
11. Approval for Interim Superintendent to hire and accept resignations from July 1, 2023 until the next scheduled board meeting  
Kim moved to approve the Interim Superintendent to hire and accept resignations from July 1, 2023 until the next scheduled board meeting. Tom seconded. Vote 7-0-0-0  
***Motion Passed***
- XIII. Old Business
- a. Interim Superintendent  
The new Superintendent Steve Nilhas introduced himself to the board.
- b. HB 349  
Under review since the amendment was proposed.
- XIV. Board Comments  
Members praised several events. Kim asked if NHCS new windows would come out of storage. The memo from facilities should have been more sensitive to décor in classrooms and Kim wants staff to know we are listening to them. We should meet state requirements at the same time welcoming environment. Pierre will follow up with Jason.
- XV. Financial
- a. Manifest(s)  
Kim moved to approve May 2023 manifest. Tom seconded. Vote 7-0-0-0 ***Motion Passed***
- XVI. Adjournment  
Joe moved to adjourn at 8 p.m. Nate seconded. Vote 7-0-0-0 ***Motion Passed***

Respectfully submitted by Ruth Whittier, School Board Clerk

District staff: Pierre Couture, Superintendent of Schools; Robin Reinhold, Business Administrator; Interim Superintendent Steve Nilhas; Nancy Coffin, Student Services Administrator; Jeannette Shedd, Curriculum Administrator; Sarah Ohl, Teacher Representative; Coach John Daly with two track and field students; Susan Read, Videographer

Public: Tom Caldwell, Bristol; digital public comment by Aubrey Freedman, Bridgewater and Ariel Maloney, Bristol

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Susan Cross &lt;scross@sau4.org&gt;

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**Fwd: Letter for Public Comment at School Board Meeting Tonight**

1 message

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**Pierre Couture** <pcouture@sau4.org>  
To: Susan Cross <scross@sau4.org>

Thu, Jun 15, 2023 at 4:07 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Melissa Suckling** <msuckling1@sau4.org>

Date: Tue, Jun 13, 2023 at 3:08 PM

Subject: Fwd: Letter for Public Comment at School Board Meeting Tonight

To: Pierre Couture &lt;pcouture@sau4.org&gt;

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Aubrey Freedman <aubreyfreedman@gmail.com>**Date:** June 12, 2023 at 12:17:04 AM EDT**To:** Msuckling1 <msuckling1@sau4.org>**Subject:** Letter for Public Comment at School Board Meeting Tonight

Hi Melissa. I cannot make it to the school board meeting tonight, but I have a letter for Public Comment. Can you please read it?

At the last school board meeting, there was a hearing regarding accepting a grant for \$23,038.35 for "Beyond School Enrichment Opportunities" from the New Hampshire Department of Education. The grant application request was not attached to the back-up for that meeting, but it is attached to the back-up for this meeting. I now have a few concerns that I would have mentioned at the last meeting if I had seen the grant request at that time:

1. As all grants from the New Hampshire Department of Education are not "free" money, why are the taxpayers paying for rock climbing, hiking, camping, and whale watching? Outdoor activities are great for everyone and should be encouraged, but why are our schools involved when such activities should be organized by families and voluntary community organizations? If the Newfound schools concentrated more on academics--and less on entertainment--perhaps proficiency scores like 35% and 34% (mentioned in Principal Ulrich's report) would be a thing of the past. It seems that every year Newfound schools get further and further away from the core intent of what a school is for. Taxpayers should not be paying for Boy and Girl Scout activities.

2. It looks very strange that the grant applicant is also the same person who benefits financially from the field trips. Please see Stipend of \$1,460 to pay for two program advisors. This, to me, looks like a conflict of interest and should not have been done.

Thank You,  
Aubrey Freedman  
Bridgewater

6/15/23, 4:12 PM

Newfound Area School District Mail - Fwd: Letter for Public Comment at School Board Meeting Tonight

P.S. Please confirm receipt of this email. Thanks!

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Pierre Couture  
Superintendent of Schools  
Newfound Area School District  
603-744-5555  
ext. 8500

Susan Cross <[scross@sau4.org](mailto:scross@sau4.org)>

## Fwd: Public comment for tonight's SB meeting

1 message

**Pierre Couture** <[pcouture@sau4.org](mailto:pcouture@sau4.org)>  
To: Susan Cross <[scross@sau4.org](mailto:scross@sau4.org)>

Tue, Jun 13, 2023 at 2:51 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Melissa Suckling** <[msuckling1@sau4.org](mailto:msuckling1@sau4.org)>  
Date: Mon, Jun 12, 2023 at 6:43 PM  
Subject: Fwd: Public comment for tonight's SB meeting  
To: Jason Torsey <[jtorsej@sau4.org](mailto:jtorsej@sau4.org)>, Pierre Couture <[pcouture@sau4.org](mailto:pcouture@sau4.org)>

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Ariel Maloney <[ariel.maloney@gmail.com](mailto:ariel.maloney@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** June 12, 2023 at 3:07:15 PM EDT  
**To:** Melissa Suckling <[msuckling1@sau4.org](mailto:msuckling1@sau4.org)>  
**Cc:** [kbliss@sau4.org](mailto:kbliss@sau4.org), [nsaler@sau4.org](mailto:nsaler@sau4.org), Dominic Halle <[dhalle@sau4.org](mailto:dhalle@sau4.org)>, [jmaloney@sau4.org](mailto:jmaloney@sau4.org), Thomas Edwards <[tedwards@sau4.org](mailto:tedwards@sau4.org)>, BRITTA MATTHEWS <[bmatthews@sau4.org](mailto:bmatthews@sau4.org)>  
**Subject:** Public comment for tonight's SB meeting

Good evening to the members of the school board:

My name is Ariel Maloney, and I am a resident of Bristol, a parent of a student at BES, and a teacher at NRHS. I am writing to you tonight about the recent communication between facilities, administration, and the educators of Newfound schools regarding furniture and personal items.

On May 23, teachers at NRHS received an email forwarded from Facilities listing a number of end-of-year items, including as number 5 in the list, the direction to remove all furniture and personal items from our classrooms, referencing "rules" and a need for a "culture shift." There was a lot of discussion in our school about what this meant: all furniture? Only particle board furniture? What about donated books, family photos, classroom decor that we had purchased with our own money? Information was unclear and the method by which this was communicated was very damaging to staff morale.

Then, last week, we were informed that this was due to our district being out of compliance with the fire department and Department of Education, and provided PDFs of the Fire Code Issues in Educational Occupancies bulletin from 2005, a DOE Classroom Setup Do's and Don'ts from 2021, and a DOE Top Ten Tools for Schools Indoor Air Quality Interventions, also from 2021. While I understand that we are held to fire code regulations, and I see the logic underpinning a number of the safety recommendations in these materials, I would like to express my concern about how this information is still incomplete and unclear for teachers.

I am finishing my second year at NRHS. At no point in my onboarding or employment have I been informed of what precisely the Dept of Ed or the local fire department requires for classroom setup. The lack of clarity is not something that I alone have noted: I've had many conversations over the last few weeks with colleagues who have also expressed confusion. One of my colleagues was told during an inspection that a pile of papers on the floor was a fire hazard, which had never been communicated before, but another teacher had an inspection and her piles of papers weren't commented on. Another was told that a plastic art supplies storage cart, which was not a personal item but purchased through her department's budget, would need to be removed because it would release toxic fumes in a fire. Another teacher asked if

he could donate a table in his classroom to the school, so it could remain, and was told that was acceptable. These various anecdotes reveal how arbitrary and inconsistent communication has been thus far.

Additionally, the DOE memos we were provided appear to be recommendations but not actual law, so it is unclear as to how beholden we are to this guidance, such not having plants in our classrooms, and vague references to "too much clutter" and student artwork becoming "dust collectors," nor how Facilities would or should enforce it.

I am writing the School Board tonight as a parent and as a faculty member, to encourage you to review these materials if you have not already, and through the Facilities and Policy committees, to navigate the actual RSAs, state regulations, and/or DOE policies to create some clear, concise, thorough, and sensible direction for Newfound educators. We teachers don't want to be micromanaged, but unfortunately, the lack of clear and specific communication, and the dismissal of our questions and concerns, further demoralize and devalue teachers at a time when public education is already struggling and our district already operates with a meager budget.

I appreciate that Facilities and the administration wants us to be in compliance, although to be honest I wish they were prioritizing things like putting AC at the high school, or ensuring that all classrooms abide by the legal requirements for square footage per student. That said, I hope that the school board and its existing committees can collaborate with Facilities to better articulate the letter of such regulations and to ensure that the way they are being interpreted can support us in continuing to create classrooms that are warm and welcoming homes away from home for staff and students alike.

Thank you,  
Ariel Maloney

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"I am in the world to change the world."  
~ Käthe Kollwitz

--  
Pierre Couture  
Superintendent of Schools  
Newfound Area School District  
603-744-5555  
ext. 8500