

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**

Monday, August 14, 2023

Non-Public: 6 p.m.

Public Session: Following Non-Public

Location: LMC - Newfound Regional High School

- I. Call to Order by Melissa Suckling, School Board Chair 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 excused absent
  - Thomas Edwards, Hebron arrived 6:01
  - 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. Joe Maloney seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent **Motion Passed**  
Board left at 6:01 and returned at 6:30.
- V. Approval or Modification of Agenda  
Add under New Business 7. New Superintendent Search Committee 8. School Assignment 9. Hire Kindergarten Aide BHVS 10. Professional Development for Superintendent  
Add under Financial d. Fund Balance and e. Adequacy Aide
- VI. Approval of Minutes
  - a. June 12, 2023
    - Kim Bliss moved to approve minutes 6-12-2023 and Dominic seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent **Motion Passed**
- VII. Public Comment (Minimum 30 minutes)
  - Tara Muzzey, Bristol noted communication to teachers and staff to remove personal furniture was hurtful to children who thrive in a safe home like environment. Tara is not asking for money but the respect to do her job to protect children.
  - Aubrey Freedman, Bridgewater sent an email that Melissa read. He noted a lot of time off and benefits for teachers and how does that justify high salaries. He advocated for a more sustainable budget that is equally fair to taxpayers.

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.

VIII. Correspondence  
None

IX. Announcements and Recognition

- a. Superintendent Report: Steve Nilhas noted highlights of the summer. 1. preschool info is prepared to go out to parents including their responsibilities 2. a request to support the marathon is received and info will go out 3. Budget Committee meets Thursday 6 p.m. at the high school 4. Governor signed additional funding \$143,000 5. SAU and administrative team held a productive retreat and New Hampton School provided food service 6. House Bill 349 was signed August 4, 2023 7. Robin is working with Hill to provide them lunch 8. Steve is attending Town Select Board meetings and spent one hour with Student Representative Mika Austin. Tom Edwards is interested in the meeting with Bridgewater and the board should know about it.
- b. Student Representative Report none
- c. Teacher Representative Report none

X. Committee Reports

- a. Budget Committee Thursday
- b. Facilities Committee update tonight
- c. Policy Committee Sue Cross is reviewing policies
- d. Wellness Committee not met
- e. Building Committee – Jason Torsey
- f. Curriculum Committee not met
- g. Hill School District Committee not met

XI. New Business

1. Recommendation(s)  
Hannah Ferrell NRHS Music  
Bailey Hildreth DES K  
Amanda O’Leary BES Special ED  
Sol Liliana Aponte NRHS Spanish  
Elaine Dodge DW Out of District Coordinator  
Kim moved to approve recommendations and Nate seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent ***Motion Passed***
2. Delegate Assembly Discussion Joe Maloney is delegate and should register for October 14. Resolutions will be voted on later.
3. Maintenance Trust Discussion Items brought by Facilities Committee request for projects: High School needs new curtains, 15K was budgeted and another 17K is needed for a total of 31K for higher quality curtains. Melissa noted this item should receive further committee discussion. High School openings have 26 entrances that need replaced for 156K. DES boilers need replaced for 28K or 57,800 for both and includes flushing.
4. Add unified Soccer at NMMS to APPENDIX A-1-Co-Curricular and salaries Kim Bliss moved to approve the addition and Dominic seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent ***Motion Passed***
5. Approval for Superintendent to accept Resignations until the next scheduled board meeting Tom moved to approve Steve accepting resignations until next scheduled board meeting and Nate seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent ***Motion Passed***

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6. Approval for Superintendent to hire until the next scheduled board meeting  
Joe moved to approve Steve hiring until next scheduled board meeting and Nate seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent ***Motion Passed***
  7. New Superintendent Search Committee: Melissa moved to approve a full committee and Dominic seconded the recommendation for participants. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent ***Motion Passed***
  8. Melissa moved to approve the Superintendent's recommendation for School Assignment and Kim seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent ***Motion Passed***
  9. Hire Kindergarten Aide BHVS: Joe moved to approve the hire and Tom seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent ***Motion Passed***
  10. Professional Development for Superintendent: Melissa moved to approve the recommendation to cover \$498 to attend training to come out of professional development during the contract year. Joe seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent ***Motion Passed***
- XII. Old Business
- a. HB 349 (?)  
Terry Murphy emailed Melissa with a request to structure a continued conversation so they can inform their voters before the March 2024 day. Melissa moved to appoint two representatives to a steering committee for House Bill 349. Tom seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent ***Motion Passed***  
Melissa moved to nominate Kim and Joe to the committee. Nate seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent ***Motion Passed***
  - b. Civil Engineering study for TTCC request discussion  
For a full design cost of the bus parking lot request is \$7,700. Melissa has questions as do others and requests someone from TTCC come on August 28, and maybe First Student too.
- XIII. Board Comments
- Tom noted an email that could have been more up front.  
Melissa asked Steve how we determine valedictorian and salutatorian. Kim suggested Mika in Student Senate may discuss this.  
Sports has begun.  
Tom discussed communication of the enforcement of safety policies. Steve expressed working with Tara on her requests.
- XIV. Financial
- a. Manifest(s) Melissa moved to accept manifests for June and July 2023 and Kim seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent ***Motion Passed***
  - b. Local Food for Schools Grant: Kim moved to approve 3K plus for the grant and Melissa seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent ***Motion Passed***
  - c. 2022-2023 School Year Food Balances: the current negative school food balance is \$13,700.
  - d. Fund Balance is over one million so we can decide on warrants. A handout detailed the funding and was explained by Robin Reinhold.  
Melissa moved to approve transfer 400K to the Maintenance Trust. Kim seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent ***Motion Passed***  
Melissa moved to approve transfer 100K to IT Trust. Joe seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent ***Motion Passed***

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Kim moved to put 500K in the retained fund balance. Dominic seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1  
Groton excused absent ***Motion Passed***

- e. Adequacy Aid: Robin explained a change in funding and Kim Bliss made a motion to not accept any additional adequacy aid. Joe seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent  
***Motion Passed***

XV. Adjournment

Joe moved to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. Nate seconded. Vote 6-0-0-1 Groton excused absent  
***Motion Passed***

Respectfully submitted by Ruth Whittier, School Board Clerk

District staff: Steve Nilhas, Superintendent; Robin Reinhold, Business Administrator; Nancy Coffin,  
Student Services Administrator; Jeannette Shedd, Curriculum Administrator; Susan Read, Videographer

Public: Tarra Muzzey, Bristol; Aubrey Freedman, Bridgewater by email

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

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**Fwd: Letter for Public Comment for August 14 School Board Meeting**

1 message

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**Melissa Suckling** <msuckling1@sau4.org>  
To: Sue Cross <scross@sau4.org>

Tue, Aug 15, 2023 at 2:04 PM

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Melissa Suckling <msuckling1@sau4.org>  
**Date:** August 14, 2023 at 6:47:17 PM EDT  
**To:** RUTH WHITTIER <rwhittier@sau4.org>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Letter for Public Comment for August 14 School Board Meeting

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Aubrey Freedman <aubreyfreedman@gmail.com>  
**Date:** August 13, 2023 at 10:50:44 AM EDT  
**To:** Msuckling1 <msuckling1@sau4.org>  
**Subject:** Letter for Public Comment for August 14 School Board Meeting

Hi Melissa. Unfortunately, I have to miss this meeting too, but I have the following for Public Comment. Please read my comments.

At the last school board meeting, there were several comments about the teacher shortage at SAU4. I have a few thoughts.

First of all, the complaint that teacher salaries are too low. Average pay for teachers in SAU4 is \$53,352 per the NHED iPlatform. (It is understood that more experienced teachers are paid a lot more than new teachers.) That sounds quite low considering the cost of living these days. However, what folks have not pointed out is that teachers get a lot more time off work than in other professions. Ten weeks off during the summer, one week for Christmas break, one week for winter break, and another week off for spring break. That comes to at least 13 weeks off, not to mention a very generous sick leave, personal days, holiday, health insurance, and pension package. When you factor in all this time off that workers in other professions do not receive, plus the generous benefits, \$53K no longer sounds so "meager."

Secondly, it was noted that teachers are leaving SAU4 because our pay is not competitive here anymore. I've been attending school board meetings for two years now, and I've heard it stated numerous times that we are a relatively poor rural area, and that's why we have a lot of poverty, food insecurity, substance abuse, and family instability. You can't have it both ways. You can't expect to continually hire more and more staff to offset the problems of poverty and at the same time expect taxpayers to

pay top salaries. SAU4 is not the federal government and cannot print money out of thin air, and the ESSER funds will run out eventually. What we have is unsustainable.

Perhaps it's time to start means testing for education, just like it's done for health care, food stamps, and housing. Even fiscal conservatives are now suggesting this as a way to save Social Security when the well runs dry in 10 years. Insist that those with the means to pay **the full cost** of educating their children (currently \$20,444/year/child per iPlatform) pay **the full cost** themselves rather than putting the burden on residents on limited or fixed incomes. Why should the poor subsidize education for the children of rich parents?

Thank You,  
Aubrey Freedman  
Bridgewater

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

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

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**Fwd: Meeting**

1 message

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**Melissa Suckling** <[msuckling1@sau4.org](mailto:msuckling1@sau4.org)>  
To: Susan Cross <[scross@sau4.org](mailto:scross@sau4.org)>

Tue, Aug 15, 2023 at 2:06 PM

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

From: <[terrym@metrocast.net](mailto:terrym@metrocast.net)>  
Date: Fri, Aug 11, 2023 at 10:14 AM  
Subject: Re: Meeting  
To: Melissa Suckling <[msuckling1@sau4.org](mailto:msuckling1@sau4.org)>

Hello Melissa

I apologize, I think I may not have clearly communicated. HB 349 authorizes the formation of a steering committee from residents of our member towns; those individuals have already been selected and appointed. My invitation to you was simply to have you, as the SAU4 Chairwomen, the Vice Chair and Superintendent to have an initial meeting with a subset of that committee. We would simply like to meet with the SAU4 leadership team to determine the level of interest SAU4 has in a continued but different relationship.

The steering committee's function is to develop an action plan for the withdrawal process from SAU4 and the formation of our own district. Since the legislation is unique the RSA 198 doesn't apply, hence the formation of the steering committee.

If there is interest in meeting, we would like to talk about and organize a more formal structure on how to continue the conversations, similar to what is happening in your negotiations with Hill. Our committee has begun mapping out our structure plan and so we can periodically update educate the citizens of our three towns.

We have interest in a continued and mutually beneficial relationship with SAU4; it is the preference of many of our committee members. While we have preliminary explored viable alternatives, it simply makes more sense to make an attempt at a continued relationship; so this is our initial and official outreach to SAU4.

If you cannot be on that delegation, obviously we would accept and welcome a substitute appointed by you. I would suggest it not be a member from one of our towns for "conflict of interest" reasons, but that is your prerogative.

I certainly hope you chose to accept of invitation for an initial discussion. We see multiple benefits for both our towns and the SAU4 in a changed but continued relationship. Again, I sincerely hope you accept my invitation to an initial meeting.

Regards,

Terry