

RSU 54/MSAD 54

**Meeting of Board of Directors
March 21, 2024, 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 March 21, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. at Skowhegan Area Middle School Cafeteria.

ATTENDANCE BOARD MEMBERS (893 present, 106 absent):

Mark Bedard (Skow-53) PRESENT
Sarah Bunker (Mercer-16) PRESENT
Janet Burrill (Canaan-43) PRESENT
Jeannie Conley (Skow-53) PRESENT
Valerie Coulombe (Norr-46) PRESENT
Karyn Curran (Skow-53) PRESENT
Samantha Delorie (Norr-46) PRESENT
Lauren Fox (Mercer-16) PRESENT
Jean Franklin (Canaan-43) PRESENT
Daniel Frey (Smith-27) PRESENT
Theresa Howard (Corn-30) PRESENT
Michelle Kelso (Skow-53) PRESENT
Michael Lambke (Skow-53) PRESENT
Desiree Libby (Norr-46) PRESENT
Peggy Lovejoy (Skow-53) PRESENT
Janice Malek (Norr-46) PRESENT
Julian Payne (Corn-30) PRESENT
Amy Rouse (Skow-53) PRESENT
Lynda Quinn (Skow-53) PRESENT
Sara Smith (Skow-53) PRESENT
Michelle Taylor (Smith-27) PRESENT

Annemarie Dubois* (Skow-53)-ABSENT

Timothy Williams* (Skow-53) ABSENT

Carly McCabe (Student Rep) 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 was no presentation.

3. Approval of the Minutes – 3/7/24

ON A MOTION BY Michelle Taylor, seconded by Theresa Howard, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the Board of Directors’ meeting of 3/7/24 into the public record. (893 yes)

4. Communications

a. Letters

Superintendent Moody acknowledged and accepted a letter of intent to retire in June 2024 from Karen Unger, School Social Worker at Canaan Elementary School.

b. School Personnel

There were no school personnel who wished to speak.

c. Visitors

Several visitors were present to share concerns regarding the lack of progress toward the construction of a baseball field. Speakers shared frustrations around communication with the town, the impact the lack of a field would have on athletes, the concern that not having a field is a Title IX violation, the need to move forward as quickly as possible and the frustrations with the Town of Skowhegan and School District in the planning process to build a baseball field. Speaking on behalf of those present were Jennifer Hight, Corey Hight, Rob Brown, Jacqueline Wolinski, Scott Libby, Ron Mayo, Colin Quinn and Garrett Quinn.

Superintendent Moody shared his appreciation to all present, responded to some of the concerns and agreed that the number one goal is for kids to have a field constructed that they can play on as soon as possible. The Superintendent indicated the town has repeatedly indicated they are in fact building a baseball field, as recently as the week previous. The Superintendent indicated that he would follow-up with the town and provide an update to the Board.

5. Committee Reports

a. Support Services Committee – 3/7/24

ON A MOTION BY Jean Franklin, seconded by Sarah Bunker, the Board voted to accept the minutes of the Support Services Committee meeting of 3/7/24 into the public record. (893 yes)

Jean Franklin, Committee Chair, reviewed the minutes and asked the Board to vote on the following recommendations:

ON A MOTION BY Jean Franklin, seconded by Julian Payne, the Board voted to approve the quote from Buzzard Masonry in the amount of \$110,000 for exterior repairs at the high school. (893 yes)

ON A MOTION BY Jean Franklin, seconded by Karyn Curran, the Board voted to approve the establishment of the Pauline J. McGowan Nursing Scholarship. (893 yes)

ON A MOTION BY Jean Franklin, seconded by Valerie Coulombe, the Board voted to accept the following donations:

- **2010 International Tractor Trailer donation to the Somerset Career and Technical Center's CDL Program**
- **\$1,300 from Hannaford Helping Schools the Skowhegan Area High School**

6. Superintendent's Report

a. Vacancies, nominations, recommendations

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

ON A MOTION BY Samantha Delorie, seconded by Theresa Howard, the Board voted to approve nominations page one. (893 yes)

b. Report on Assessments Payments to Date

Superintendent Moody shared that as of March 21, 2024, Canaan, Cornville and Mercer paid March assessment, while Norridgewock, Skowhegan and Smithfield were outstanding for March assessment. All towns continue to do well paying monthly assessments, which are due on the 20th of each month.

c. Update on New School Construction Building Project

Superintendent Moody shared that there is a capping ceremony scheduled for April 10th for the installation of the final beam. Over the next two weeks, students will be signing the beam, along with board members and donors.

David Leavitt reported that the floors in several wings have been poured and the project is going well.

d. Review/Update of Federal Projects/Federal Funds

Superintendent Moody asked the Board to approve the federally required re-entry plan (2020-2024), already in place, with no adjustments.

ON A MOTION BY Michael Lambke, seconded by Mark Bedard, the Board voted to approve the federally required re-entry plan in place with no adjustments. (893 yes)

e. Update on FY25 Draft Status Quo Budget

Superintendent Moody reviewed upcoming committee meetings. The Educational Policy/Program Committee will continue its review of the budget on April 9th and the Support Services Committee will meet on April 11th. There will be no Board meeting on April 4th, as we anticipate receiving information on health insurance rates after that date. The Board will meet on April 11th for possible consideration of a proposed FY25 Budget. If approved, the Board will meet to sign warrants on April 25th or at the May 2nd meeting.

The Superintendent reviewed the budget overview. Overall budget is up 15.74%, due to the new school project and SCTC budget which are 100% State funded. The superintendent explained that after removing CTE & School Construction funding from the state, the actual budget is up 4.601%, with the local budget impact to taxpayers up approximately 4.44%. The Superintendent explained that the district will use a substantial amount of fund balance to offset local increases to taxpayers.

f. Other

Superintendent Moody shared that the next Building Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 23rd. The Committee will be starting

the process of selecting furniture for the new building and Percent for Art.

Following the first round of screening interviews for the new principal position, final interviews with the Personnel Committee will tentatively be scheduled for April 1st.

Superintendent Moody shared a summary on LD-974 and urged board members to contract their legislators. LD-974 would raise Ed Tech Salaries over the State Minimum Wage by 150%, and other staff by 125%. For MSAD 54 this would represent a dramatic increase in the budget (roughly \$900,000 or 5.81%). Superintendent Moody shared that districts like MSAD 54, who place a priority on benefits and retirement for educational technicians, something schools districts do not fund as well, are particularly at risk from a state down mandate which essentially is a direct tax to members of the community. The result would be loss of staff through cuts, loss of programming and a dramatic increase in local property taxes.

7. Assistant Superintendent and Support Services Manager

Assistant Superintendent Hatch shared the application for First Ten Community School grant has been approved (\$250,000), which will pay staff and hire a family outreach coordinator to build a system to work to get that get parents and families involved in the schools at earlier ages.

Received literacy grant from DOE to fund materials and books for our staff and professional development.

EASE grant will fund two of our clinical counselors.

Reapplying for 21st Century Grant for a four year extension. Dawn Fickett is working with a committee of administrators and other members of the community to finalize the grant.

Applications for summer school staff are underway. A new summer school grant through the state is in the works.

Support Services Manager David Leavitt reported that the support services team is getting ready for spring.

8. Old and Unfinished Business

Cornville resident Nelson Candy Fundraiser reached out the Julian Payne about their chocolate bunny fundraiser.

9. Introduction of New Business

Valerie Coulombe asked if the Board would be reviewing Alice Training. Mr. Leavitt explained that the district had done this training with bus drivers.

Each Board member received an Aspire River Hawks plush, which will be distributed to PreK-2 students in the coming weeks.

Mark Bedard asked if plans are in place for the Eclipse on April 8th. Superintendent Moody shared that he will be attending a meeting with Somerset Emergency Management to discuss traffic flow. Eclipse glasses were purchased for students and the Eclipse will be an educational.

10. Adjournment

The Board adjourned at 8:44 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan Moody, Superintendent of Schools