

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
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The Gilford School Board held a regular meeting on October 1, 2007 at the Gilford High School Library, immediately following a joint meeting with Gilmanton. Present were board members Sue Allen, Paul Blandford, Derek Tomlinson, Kurt Webber, and Margo Weeks. Gilmanton Representatives were Cindy Hatch and Zannah Richards. Administrators present were Paul DeMinico, Scott Isabelle, Jim Kemmerer, Peter Sawyer, and Ken Wiswell.

OPENING Gilford School Board Chairperson Sue Allen called the meeting to order at 5:59 p.m., led the Pledge of Allegiance, and confirmed posting of the meeting.

Kurt Webber made the motion that the board approve the minutes, as amended, of the September 4, 2007 meeting. Margo Weeks seconded the motion and it was voted in the affirmative, with Derek abstaining.

REPORTS

Gilford High School

In addition to his written report (see joint meeting minutes), Ken Wiswell added that a senior class trip proposal will be ready for the November meeting.

Gilford Middle School

Jim Kemmerer submitted his report as written.

Gilford Elementary School

Sue Allen, noting that Sandy McGonagle was not present, indicated that the board would accept Sandy's report as written.

Meadows Advisory Committee

Sue related that the committee's last meeting was sparsely attended due to prior conflicts. An overview was presented to new members. She anticipates the committee moving "at full speed at our next meeting."

CORRESPONDENCE

Paul DeMinico acknowledged correspondence from David Horvath of Gilford Forest Estates Community Association, delineating areas of agreement concerning use and maintenance of an abutting softball field; and from Education Commissioner Dr. Lyonel Tracy concerning school safety.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered. Sue Allen acknowledged the presence of a new member of the press: Adam Drapcho from The Laconia Daily Sun.

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NELMS Recommendation Timeline

Jim Kemmerer presented a completed form of the NELMS Recommendations Timeline, a draft of which was presented in April. He noted that all facets fall well within the guidelines, and that the five-year plan emphasizes staff development, in terms of integration and differentiated instruction. This year the focus is on assessment, both in terms of measuring student progress and directing instruction. He is meeting with the student council on a weekly basis, seeking ways to incorporate the student council more broadly and give the students a more democratic voice. The document represents a template of "where we'd like to see the school go."

Kurt Webber inquired about the term PIAM electronic communication. Paul DeMinico replied that it is Parent Information Access Module.

Peter Sawyer elaborated that it is an on-line source for parents to access student attendance records, biographical data, and grades, representing a snapshot of current grades and attendance. It is a first step before Edline, and predates it somewhat. Currently implemented at the high school level, it is working its way

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down through the grades. Ken Wiswell added that it was implemented in 2004-2005 school year.

Sue commented that perhaps information could be published in The Aerie to inform parents.

Taylor Morrison advised that The Aerie might not be the most effective method, as it is available only on-line. She suggested including the information in some other publication or mailing.

Ken noted that many letters will be sent home this year, so the opportunity exists to include that information at little or no additional cost.

International Baccalaureate (IB) Review

Paul DeMinico advised that subsequent to Arthur Pontes' visit in August to discuss the IB program, he had received questions about next steps in investigating whether IB would be a desirable undertaking for Gilford High School.

He provided board members with a book entitled "Supertest" which describes the IB approach in greater detail. He indicated that he would like to hold forums with the "stakeholders" in the community, i.e., parents, students, and of course faculty; he wishes to provide not only written information, but perhaps invite Mr. Pontes back. Bedford High School is in process of becoming an IB school, and Paul advised that a representative from that school would be invited to discuss the process.

Paul noted that it should be emphasized that these forums and presentations are merely informational, a comprehensive review, so that when he brings the issue before the school board in June, sufficient feedback will have been gathered in terms of what the proposed startup and ongoing costs might be, the time lines involved, and similar issues. He invited the board's guidance before he undertook the effort further.

Paul Blandford acknowledged some discomfort. First, he agreed that it is important to make clear that this effort is a review process, "Is this something we'd like to do, is this the right step for Gilford?" Second, budgetary considerations are extremely significant, and merit in-depth discussion. Finally he added a concern about staffing and teacher training.

Paul DeMinico advised that "We're at about step four of a 27-step process; at around steps 12, 14, or 16, we'll have a clearer understanding of the costs are." At that point there will be more information available to address the question of whether the advantages of the IB program are worth the costs. He reminded that the review and information process is a year-long endeavor; the application process will take another year, at minimum.

Kurt Webber voiced his view that the teaching staff is already heavily burdened with issues such as curriculum, differentiated instruction, and the Danielson undertaking. He questioned whether the teachers will have enough time between now and June to learn about IB to make an informed decision.

Paul DeMinico replied that part of what the IBO will investigate is whether the school has a willing group of teachers who are interested in the undertaking. He suggested that the school as an organization can multi-task. Danielson will be well underway by the end of this school year; block scheduling will have completed a full year; competencies will be in place; curriculum is well under way; assessments will be in place. With the proper timing, IB implementation could well work within the minimum time frame; however the timing may not be optimal, which could be one reason why the school declines the IB program.

Zannah Richards inquired whether there have been informational meetings for the teachers. Paul replied that none have yet, but they are planned. Ken Wiswell added that some were invited to the summer session, the same day that Arthur

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Pontes was visiting.

Derek Tomlinson suggested that IB is an excellent fit for the Endowment Group to become involved with. He remarked that the group had been searching for a program or project to support, and IB is the first suggestion that “people in the community who have resources can get excited about.” He asked if Ken and the school could devise a marketing piece so that the Endowment Group could begin the process of promoting the idea. It could then come before the board in June with some idea of how much it could raise. He questioned that if the group could return in June and advise that it could raise a particular sum, would that help drive the program? The ideal approach would emphasize both IB’s increased rigor and how it will ease students’ ability to enroll in the college of their choice. “Something that would allow us to go out and do the campaigning to get money to support this idea of having Gilford be one of the best public schools in New Hampshire.”

Paul Blandford noted that funding, while important, is but one of the pieces that need to come together to make the program work: it will also require staff and community support. If funds are available from the Endowment Group, will they be enough to sustain the program; will they be enough to run the program for a year or two, which would subsequently require seeking funding from the budget; what would the cost be for 50 students? He opined that without staff or community support, then the Endowment Group’s efforts will have been to no avail.

Margo Weeks supported the idea of increasing course rigor, but was concerned that not enough was being done to optimize present programs. She questioned the value of investigating another program when present opportunities have not been maximized. She further pointed out that some AP courses were not offered due to lack of teachers, and that the second, or application, year will be a year of teacher contract negotiations. Margo amplified on Kurt’s concerns, pointing out that with NEASC, curriculum development, training teachers in assessment methods, and block scheduling, many programs have just begun in the past year or two that could well use time to refine and enhance. “We could take some time to improve on what we have.”

Zannah remarked that during the review year, the school board will be able to gauge teachers’ reaction to determine whether there is support on that level. To project long-term during the review process would likely spread more understanding of costs.

Taylor Morrison related that many students reject AP classes because of their difficulty: “A lot of people don’t think they’re smart enough,” so they will decline the challenge, and choose courses that are less difficult.

Kurt remarked that IB could meet some of the need to encourage students to take more challenging courses. He referred to end-of-year comments from faculty and staff whose consistent theme was “too much change.” While he supported the idea of the program, he was concerned that to add another burden to the teaching staff could cause them to be reluctant to support another new program.

Paul DeMinico agreed, noting that without faculty support, the application process would not begin. Ken remarked that there would be enough time between now and June at least for an initial presentation. The reaction of the faculty would determine whether the process moved forward.

Derek reiterated that IB is a strategic move for the district, a long-term undertaking that addresses directly the increased rigor. By 2009, Danielson, curriculum, and assessment should be well in hand. “This is the next big thing we can do that can really impact Gilford and the quality of its education.”

Margo likened the situation to upgrading computer equipment: upgrading equipment is unwise if the equipment is not presently being fully utilized.

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Paul DeMinico advised that the 2009 date is not an absolute date. He voiced his confidence that the faculty will give voice to its position. Danielson and block scheduling and NEASC should be well established by 2009; however only the teachers need to feel that they are established. He again inquired of the board whether it wished him to move forward or table the matter for the present.

Members' views were as follows:

Paul Blandford: the process should move forward next year.

Margo Weeks: it is too early; the program should be evaluated next year.

Kurt Webber: move forward, but carefully: ensure that staff are not burdened further; implement as soon as possible, but not necessarily by 2009, maybe 2010. Accurate cost figures are a must.

Derek Tomlinson: move forward this year

Zannah Richards: move forward this year, note the concern about timing and contract renewal.

Cindy Hatch: move forward this year. The timing issues will resolve based on the interest levels generated.

Paul thanked the board for the discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

SAU Office

Kurt Webber advised that on September 21, he and Sue Allen toured the Gilford Public Library with a view to having the SAU relocate there when the new library is finished. They concluded that it would be a most suitable facility; one concern was parking, which was later determined to be workable. Foremost among their minds was whether the heirs would approve of a new use for the library building.

Margo Weeks inquired how many heirs there are and where they might be. Kurt replied there are 11 heirs; Paul DeMinico added that Walter Mitchell, the town's attorney, would be better able to answer.

Paul Blandford inquired whether the facility is too big, being something the SAU would take only a portion of and leave the rest for another down department.

Sue Allen replied that the facility is not too large: the downstairs could be adapted for meeting space; the main floor could be partitioned into individual office areas, allowing some staff to be brought in-house, such as the curriculum coordinator, student services, and the like. Upstairs space could be used for storage or possibly a copy room.

Scott Isabelle advised that if the board gives approval, the next step would be to meet with Code Enforcement Officer Dave Andrade and the Fire Department to investigate what changes to the interior could mean for life safety issues. Further, there are new Building Officials and Code Administrators (BOCA) codes taking effect which would have to be considered. He pointed out that the existing ventilation system works well for an open space, however if the space were partitioned off, the system might need changes. Town Administrator Evans Juris will either attend meetings or otherwise be kept advised as to the findings.

Scott also noted that Mr. Juris indicated discussions were beginning with the heirs at present; the selectmen indicated that they need a decision by May or June in order to have a proposal for the heirs when the library moves to its new location.

Paul Blandford inquired whether the town has a desire to utilize the building. Scott replied that at the selectmen's latest meeting the subject was brought up about whether the school might be interested in occupying the building. There is an interest in having the SAU seek other quarters to accommodate the town's long-range planning purposes.

Derek suggested that the board investigate occupying the space with a minimum of capital expenditure. The space has been functional for the library for quite

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some time and has accommodated thousands of visitors. "We could redesign it and have it cost a fortune, or we could occupy it on a low budget." Paul DeMinico observed that making the building handicap-accessible and providing a sprinkler system, if required, would represent a large portion of any expenditure. Paul Blandford moved that the board move forward and begin an investigation about moving the SAU to the library. Kurt Webber and Margo Weeks simultaneously seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Approval of Grant

Paul DeMinico brought forward a Title II-A grant for literacy instruction at \$45,469.70.

Kurt Webber moved that the board approve acceptance of the grant. Derek Tomlinson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

Paul DeMinico advised the board of a new law requiring schools to have in place an Emergency Preparedness Plan. He introduced Debra LaLiberte, who has put together a draft of such a plan. He noted that he was not asking for board action. Deb Laliberte described the document, pointing out that many facets were already in place. She noted that it is a work in progress at all times.

Kurt Webber complimented Deb on the comprehensiveness of the plan. He inquired why there was a different organization for incident command for each of the buildings while there is also an overall incident command structure.

Deb replied that the plan would cover an emergency concerning an individual building, as opposed to concerning all three schools. The elementary school has its own medical team and protocols primarily due to the age of those students and the different medical issues that face them but not middle or high school students. Paul DeMinico added that he, Deb Laliberte, and the Gilford Police Chief will be attending a five-day training session on emergency preparedness, funded by grant money.

Deb noted that she had "received outstanding cooperation from local emergency providers," and noted that the County Prosecutor will be attending the session as well. "We are fortunate to have this community work so closely with us."

**NON-PUBLIC SESSION
RSA 91-A:3 II (a) (b)**

At 7:28 p.m., Margo Weeks made the motion to enter non-public session pursuant to the provisions of RSA 91-A:3 II, (e) and (c). Paul Blandford seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,

**Kurt Webber
School Board Secretary**