

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY MAY 5, 2008
GILFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PAGE 1**

The Gilford School Board held a regular meeting on May 5, 2008 at the Gilford Elementary School Tocci Library. Present were board members Sue Allen, Paul Blandford, Derek Tomlinson, Kurt Webber, and Margo Weeks. Representing Gilmanton were Russell Knowles and Zannah Richards. Administrators present were Paul DeMinico, Scott Isabelle, Jim Kemmerer, Sandy McGonagle, and Ken Wiswell. Student representative was Taylor Morrison.

OPENING

School Board Chairperson Sue Allen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., led the Pledge of Allegiance, and confirmed posting of the meeting.

Kurt Webber made the motion that the board approve the minutes of the April 7, 2008 meeting, with one correction to Page 2. Derek Tomlinson seconded the motion and it was voted in the affirmative.

REPORTS

Gilford Elementary School

Sandy McGonagle highlighted her report in three areas:

- The month of May is testing time for GES: Grades 2, 3, and 4 will be undergoing NWEA testing. Efforts have been made to ensure quiet to aid in focus and concentration. After a one-week interim, Grade 4 will undergo the rigorous NECAP science testing. The volunteer steering committee will provide bottled water (research indicates that having water available provides stimulus) while Hannaford has again offered to donate bagels and cream cheese. Articles in the Panda highlight some of the ways the school engages in test preparation and encourage parents to think about how they can promote testing awareness.
- A group of teachers participated in a science workshop at Prescott Farm, focusing on differences between hands-on and inquiry based programs, and how to convert a lesson so that it is more inquiry-based. The team will be sharing their experience at a staff meeting on Thursday.
- Sandy noted two items in support of the school's Goal Number 4 (Parent/Community): The family bar-be-que has been changed from Tuesday to Wednesday, and Sandy invited the board to attend. The kindergarten students hung May baskets on trees at the Village Knolls; today the Gilford Knolls residents sent over cookies to share with the kindergarten students.

Derek Tomlinson and Zannah Richards inquired about kindergarten attendance. Sandy replied that 56 new students and 3 returning students will comprise the fall 2008 kindergarten class. An average kindergarten class size is around 70; this year there were 69.

Derek also inquired about the change of math text. Sandy replied that the current text is 12 years old. She described the efforts of a committee to investigate textbook choices, with a view towards standards-based approaches in line with grade level expectations and frameworks. Of three finalist options, the enVision Math Series was chosen. A group of teachers will visit Litchfield Elementary School, which currently uses the series. Sandy noted that the series is accompanied with computer exercises, and the entire text is available on-line, a bonus for parents to use as a tool in support of their children. She thanked Sandy Drouin for her efforts.

Gilford Middle School

Jim Kemmerer highlighted his report as follows:

- Grade 7 student Sydney Strout and Grade 8 student Tyler Haddock are recipients of this year's NELMS Scholar/Leader awards, and will be recognized by Governor Lynch and other dignitaries at a reception with

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY MAY 5, 2008
GILFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PAGE 2**

REPORTS

their families on June 5 in Manchester.

- The Quebec City trip went extremely well, despite uncooperative weather. A total of 70 students (including 15 to 20 Spanish students) attended, and all returned with a greater appreciation of the history and culture of Quebec. Paul Blandford questioned whether the trips would skip a year, since the Grade 7 students will have already attended by the time they are in Grade 8. Jim replied that a trip to Montreal is being contemplated next.

Gilford High School

Ken Wiswell submitted his report as written. He asked that the board approve a gift from Belknap Landscaping of a tree in memory of Alex Rowson. Kurt Webber moved to accept the donation and Margo Weeks seconded the motion.

Paul Blandford inquired whether the gift of the tree included a plaque; Ken replied that the school would provide the plaque. The tree will be located just outside the auditorium. The motion passed unanimously.

Ken also outlined a funding and budget plan for the Robotics Team. He noted that their goal is to enter a second competition, likening the previous situation to training all season for only one game.

Student Report

Taylor Morrison reported that students are beginning to organize the upcoming blood drive; seniors had fun on their class trip, although Chinatown was a disappointment and some slept through Phantom of the Opera. Spring sports are well underway and seniors are afflicted with “senioritis.”

Endowment Report

Derek Tomlinson distributed a draft brochure, which offered a number of visual presentations and text. A focus is on higher academics, allowing more rigor by investing in programs such as those suggested by Ken Wiswell. Another possibility was in technology, perhaps having the high school science program develop an alternate energy source for the school or at the Meadows. It is important that readers understand that whatever money is invested will not go towards sports, extracurricular activities, or teachers. The group wants to “raise the bar with the high school” and will direct a major portion of funds toward that effort. The brochure still requires final approval of the endowment committee, which must then find a vehicle for printing and distribution. The committee is grateful for the volunteer efforts and offers from school staff. The immediate goal is to get the brochure published and distributed within the next month or two.

Meadows Advisory Committee

Sue Allen advised that the last MAC meeting was on April 16, with Paul DeMinico speaking about some ideas for the school’s use of the Meadows property for the future. The committee’s schedule includes

- Revisiting the locker room issue at its next meeting on May 20
- A presentation by Paul Fluet at the joint meeting on June 9 at Gilman Elementary School on the field space, after which the committee will seek the board’s endorsement of the fields plan
- A public forum, tentatively set for June 25 at 7:00 in the high school library, at which Mr. Fluet will give a presentation on athletic fields and Esther Kennedy will give a presentation on present uses of the buildings
- If the board gives its endorsement, the committee will then ask Mr. Fluet to file the application for the fields plan with DES after the public forum.

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY MAY 5, 2008
GILFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PAGE 3**

REPORTS

Fundraising Protocol for Football

Athletic Director Dave Pinkham reported that he had met with Lou Athanas and Norm Harris of Gilford Friends of Football on April 16 to discuss funding. He reviewed his written report. Dave indicated that Lou and Norm were confident that they would easily surpass their fundraising goal of \$7500. Brief discussion ensued concerning ticket prices for local students and others.

Testing Report (Part 3 of 3)

This report was not presented due to the unforeseen unavailability of its sponsor.

CORRESPONDENCE

Commissioner's Letters Waiving School Days

Paul DeMinico reviewed two letters from Education Commissioner Lyonel Tracy granting 1) a waiver to 175 days of instruction for seniors, thus allowing the planned graduation at Meadowbrook to proceed as scheduled and 2) a waiver of two days for grades K-12. The district's rationale behind the request was that the number of instructional hours far surpassed state requirements. Further, it was felt that June 23, 24, and 25 would have limited educational value. The last day of school will be June 20, 2008.

Paul went on to note that the waiver does not extend to teachers, as their bargaining agreement applies. However, between such demands as curriculum mapping, analysis of NELMS and NEASC test results, software training, and the like, there will be plenty to engage the teachers. Paul advised that GEA President John Lord concurs that there are a sufficient number of activities that the teachers can participate in, in a somewhat more relaxed atmosphere, all of which align with the district's Long Term Strategic Plan.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was offered or taken.

OLD BUSINESS

Sub-Committee Assignments 2008-2009

Sue brought forward the list of subcommittees to which board members had been assigned, which met with approval of all members.

NEW BUSINESS

Staff Resignation/Nomination

This item was moved to non-public session.

Summer Schedule for Board

After brief discussion, the board agreed on the following summer meeting schedule:

- Monday June 9, 2008 Joint meeting at Gilmanton
- Monday July 21, 2008 Meeting/Work Session at 5:00 at the Meadows
- Monday August 18, 2008 Meeting at 6:00 at GES Library
- Tuesday September 2, 2008 Meeting at 6:00 at GES Library

Gilford Republican Committee Request

Sue introduced a request from Skip Murphy, chair of the Gilford Republican Committee, that more information, particularly financial information, be posted on the board's website. Members commented as follows:

- Paul Blandford: The minutes are posted on the web after they have been approved by the board. Putting the request on the web could be a step in the requested direction.
- Sue Allen: Anyone wanting a copy of the minutes can obtain them from the SAU office. The letter refers to waiting for an annual audit to learn how much money was spent and how it is accounted for. However, budget drafts have that information included, and are available to the

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY MAY 5, 2008
GILFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PAGE 4**

NEW BUSINESS

- public.
- Derek Tomlinson: The issue spoken of in the letter is budget details, check registers and the like. The claim of “significant resources at the SAU” is not the reality. To convert the very large volume of information requested to electronic format will require a very large outlay of resources. “I don’t see any value in this: anybody that wants anything can fill out a sheet and get the information.” Simply listing the check, payee, and amount is not informative: one must make a telephone call or visit the SAU to gain more detailed information. “There are hours of detail that support every line item.” The amount of time and extra effort to provide the kind of detail that is requested is not justified by the value of the information provided.
 - Paul DeMinico: Skip does mention that the district has been very open in terms of sharing information. The district have never refused, rejected, or delayed a request, nor received any complaints about withholding information. The district has been more than transparent. It’s not clear what this will gain that we don’t already have. “I’m not sure what we’re fixing.”
 - Margo Weeks: The main concern is the amount of resources this undertaking will require. To put all of this information on line may equate to .25 of a FTE. “What’s the benefit to be gained? It’s not like this stuff isn’t already available to the public.” “I’m all for transparency and I think we are transparent. But going to this level, what’s the value?”
 - Kurt Webber: If the information is already being generated as an Excel spreadsheet, it is a simple matter to save as a web page. If the general trend is towards a “paperless office,” the district should try to obtain applications that allow it to perform all functions electronically, and thus make it easier to post the results on-line. “We should be moving in that direction as we try to automate our activities more.”
 - Scott Isabelle: Right now the capability does not exist with the present software. The current software is nine years old, and would cost \$70,000 to \$80,000 to replace. The proposed budget, the approved budget, and a list of expenditures, is posted every year. However, to find detailed information requires a telephone call or visit to the SAU. “We do not have easy capabilities of providing the detailed support.” Often, in-person requests result in questions by district staff that help to narrow the field such that extraneous information is not gathered or provided. The information provided in budget drafts is far more comprehensible than yearly audit results.
 - Zannah Richards inquired how many requests are filed monthly. Paul DeMinico replied that requests are seasonal and tend to cluster around budget time. Otherwise requests come perhaps monthly.

Sue gained the board’s consensus to respond with a letter thanking the committee for their letter, advising that the board is investigating the feasibility of putting the request form on-line. However, at this time the district does not have the capability or resources to comply with every element of the request. Taxpayers do have access to audits from prior years, and budget worksheets are available at budget time, which are much clearer than the audit. As the district moves into the future, it will look for ways to provide the requested capability. Paul DeMinico agreed to write a draft.

Acceptance of Donation

Ken Wiswell introduced a request from the Gilford Athletic Booster’s Club that the board accept a donation of \$900.00 toward the replacement of the pitching

**GILFORD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
MONDAY MAY 5, 2008
GILFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PAGE 5**

NEW BUSINESS

backstop on the softball field. Ken related that the current backstop is too small and presents a safety concern.

Kurt Webber moved that the board accept the donation. Paul Blandford seconded the motion.

Derek Tomlinson inquired whether the existing backstop could be used at the elementary school. Ken indicated that he would inquire. Scott Isabelle noted that the current backstop is cemented into the ground, but re-using it would otherwise be a good idea.

The motion passed unanimously.

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

At 7:11p.m., Margo Weeks made the motion to enter non-public session pursuant to the provisions of RSA 91-A:3 II (c). Kurt Webber seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,

**Kurt Webber
School Board Secretary**