

**Keene Board of Education
Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, October 11, 2011 6:30 PM

**Large Group Instruction Area
Keene High School, 143 Arch St., Keene, NH**

<p><u>Board Members Present:</u> Kathleen O'Donnell, Chair Neil Donegan Chris Coates Anne Szot Kris Roberts Carl Panza, Secretary Kristin Blais, Vice Chair John Stewart</p> <p><u>Board Members Absent:</u> Mark Nugent</p>	<p><u>Administrators Present:</u> William Gurney, Co-Supt. Wayne Woolridge, Co-Supt. John Harper, Finance Director</p> <p><u>Others Present:</u> Chris Weeks, Public Information Coordinator Members of the Public (about 7) Members of the Press (1) Britta Reida, Stenographer</p>
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Chair O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. She thanked Cheshire TV, the volunteers and Time Warner Cable.

1. Public Input

None.

2. Consent Agenda

--Agenda Item #3 – Approval of Minutes

--Approval of Keene School District Year End Financial Report dated June 20, 2011

MOTION: Mr. Donegan made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Mr. Coates seconded the motion.

Ms. Szot asked if the consent agenda included the report that was discussed in the Finance Committee for the Elementary Ad Hoc Committee. Mr. Harper replied no.

The motion passed by a unanimous vote of 8-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

--September 13, 2011

The minutes were approved in the consent agenda.

4. Report of Student Representatives

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--Jordan Hastings and Hannah Mansson

Mr. Hastings talked about the recent NECAP scores. This year KHS had 33% proficiency, which was a great improvement from last year.

Ms. Mansson reported on Spirit Week, including homecoming, the parade, and the game. She stated that there is controversy about the parade being on Friday this year, because there is less time to prepare for it. Mr. Hastings agreed, and urged the administration to make sure that next year the parade is changed back to Saturday instead of Friday. Ms. Mansson and Mr. Hastings reported that the administrators chose to have the parade on a Friday this year, without consulting any of the KHS student councils. The students really want the parade to be on Saturday. Chair O'Donnell agreed that having the parade on Saturday makes sense.

Chair O'Donnell asked the student representatives if they think that students take the NECAP test seriously, and why or why not. She continued that the Board often holds discussions this topic. It is important for students to do well; otherwise the schools get penalized.

Ms. Mansson replied that it is hard to say who takes it seriously and who does not, but both she and Mr. Hastings do. She continued that she and Mr. Hastings understand the impact the tests have on the school, as do incoming freshman, who understood the importance of the test while at KMS, but maybe the importance of it gets lost for sophomores and juniors. Many students strive to do well because it is like an internal competition. She does not know how educated everyone is about how the results of the tests are used - some students might think they are being tested just to be tested. Mr. Hastings added that students are motivated by incentives: receiving proficiency or greater gives you a parking pass or exemption from the final exam in the corresponding subject.

Chair O'Donnell stated that she encourages Mr. Hastings and Ms. Mansson, and any other students, to come to other meetings of the School Board such as the Education Committee. She continued that student input is important.

Ms. Mansson and Mr. Hastings also reported:

- PSATs are this Saturday.
- Tibetan Monks are coming to build a peace mandala with sand.
- The World Language Department is inducting students into their Honor Society.
- Mr. Hastings is a Student of the Month.
- Administration from Merrimack High School is coming on October 25 to look at KHS's advisory program and see if it is a good idea for them to implement. The Student Council and Renaissance folks will meet with them.
- The daily 12-minute Advisory (Homeroom) period helps give students a core group to be a part of. Students meet in the same group for all 4 years. Some freshmen are nervous coming into high school and this helps ease the transition.
- Godspell runs Nov. 3 through 5, 7:30 at the KHS auditorium. Comp tickets are available for Board members.

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5. Report of Board Chair – Ms. O'Donnell

Chair O'Donnell asked for a moment of silence for Steve Sawyer, who died from the injuries he sustained while working on the auditorium at the Keene Middle School.

Chair O'Donnell spoke about the need for people to serve on the Board. Elections take place every March, and members serve three-year terms. She encouraged people to run, and although it can be time-consuming, the work of the board is valuable and important.

Chair O'Donnell reported that the Board has been attempting to schedule a meeting with the City Council. Mr. Gurney replied that there are several possible dates and they will get consensus soon. It will take place some time in November.

**6. Co-Superintendents' Report – Mr. Gurney and Mr. Woolridge
-Elementary Ad Hoc Committee Report**

Mr. Woolridge reported that they hope to have an implementation task force in place in January. He continued that Mr. Remillard and the elementary principals are currently compiling and examining the information put together by the Elementary Ad Hoc Advisory Committee and Marinace Architects. Meetings will soon be held with all of the PTAs. A public forum is scheduled for November 30 in the KHS Auditorium.

Chair O'Donnell stated that to clear up misconceptions, implementation of the new school and grade span configuration would be 2014. Mr. Woolridge concurred. Renovations would begin July 1, 2013, and be completed by the first day of school in 2014.

Mr. Woolridge reported that they may know by October 2012 whether Building Aid would be available.

Ms. Blais stated that, also for clarification, the October 25 meeting is not when administration will announce which school to close. They will give recommendations to the Board as to which school to close. There will be an opportunity for public input at the forum on November 30; the Board will vote on the recommendation in December. Mr. Woolridge replied that the Sentinel erroneously reported that the Board would be making a decision in October, but the vote will actually be in December.

Mr. Woolridge reported that the Department of Education is working on a waiver request in regarding the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements. Hopefully, it will be done by February. He continued that the big difference is that Adequate Yearly Progress would be determined by a growth model, as opposed to the current model which requires a certain percentage of students to reach proficiency.

Mr. Woolridge reported on the application requirements for Building Aid, which he hopes the KSD can fulfill in order to get in the queue early. He continued that there is an A.R.E.A. meeting on Monday at the new SAU building, which will include a tour of the new middle school. He reminded the Board that the upcoming Delegates Assembly in

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January is their opportunity to influence legislature so they should make sure they are represented.

Mr. Roberts expressed concerns about the waiver of NCLB requirements. It may result in the KSD receiving less money from the State, and proficiency might be worth striving for, as opposed to growth. Mr. Woolridge replied with what he feels are benefits to the waiver, such as the fact that teachers want it, it provides better and more meaningful data, and the fact that the scores of students who are already are likely to make proficiency will count just as much as the growth of students who are not proficient. He stated that he understands that there will be some potential risk in the implementation of this waiver system.

Mr. Gurney gave an update on the goals the Board set for academics, organizational structure and efficiency.

Education:

- A group of administrators and Board members will be attending a Gifted & Talented conference this week.
- South Yali School in China sent administrators and students here for five days in September. It is hoped that student exchanges take place next summer.
- The process for developing modified block scheduling continues. Mr. Chmiel will update the Education Committee next week.
- The RTI plan is nearly finalized.
- Presentations from Franklin's recent open house are on the website.
- Wheelock is differentiating preparation for NECAP tests.
- KMS completed a draft of the process for giving students Individualized Action Plans. Staff received training on Tier II and III math.
- Study Island was successfully launched at KHS, thanks to a grant from an alumnus.
- Training on common assessments occurred yesterday. Assessments will be piloted this year. Principals trained staff in RTI, AimsSeb, NWEA, etc. KMS worked on Renzulli training (an online enrichment G&T program). KHS worked on curriculum updating. Music teachers met to complete their curriculum, which will be completed in November.

Organization:

- A contract has been signed with Halogen, for an electronic evaluation system. Training will begin this winter and implementation will be next fall.

Efficiency:

- Wheelock faculty accepted the challenge to cut the electric bill this year. It is going well.
- The Finance Committee will present a budget proposal tonight.

7. Report of Secretary – Mr. Panza

No report.

8. Reports – Standing Committees

--Building, Facilities, and Ancillary Services – Mr. Coates

Mr. Coates reported that the committee received an overview of KMS. The purchase of the former middle school and SAU buildings are on course. Discussion began about possibly having three lunches at KHS instead of four. Input was needed from people who were absent, so the discussion will continue next month. Ms. Szot asked about the status of the North Campus basketball court that the Academy Fund approved. Mr. Coates replied that he will find out and report back next month.

Mr. Harper reported that the former middle school is scheduled to be sold October 18. They are waiting to settle the tax rate because that has a big impact. He continued that the sale of 34 West Street is in the last stages of due diligence which is expected to be completed on November 7, and then move forward with a closing.

In response to Mr. Panza's question about tax savings, Mr. Harper replied that the sale of the building is just one part. Additionally, the budget itself did not go up much this year, and there was a significant surplus from last year. The school portion of the tax rate should go down 2.5%. Mr. Donegan asked what the total dollars are that we would be crediting ourselves. Mr. Harper replied that he does not have that figure.

--Education Committee – Mr. Nugent

Mr. Gurney replied that the upcoming meeting will include a presentation on enrollments and a timeline for modified block scheduling.

--Finance Committee – Mr. Donegan

MOTION: Mr. Donegan made a motion, on behalf of the Finance Committee, that the Keene School Board of Education authorize a budget transfer in the amount of \$11,629 to fund a community-based communications campaign related to the closing of one elementary school and realigning grade configurations in the remaining four schools, from a source to be determined by the business administrator and reported back to the Finance Committee. Mr. Panza seconded the motion.

Mr. Donegan explained that the Communications Group, which did a great job for the new KMS, would advance the information about the elementary school changes to the public. Ms. Szot asked if a Request for Proposals (RFP) had gone out. Mr. Harper replied no, administration feels that the Communications Group does a great job, knows the KSD well, and can be selected.

Chair O'Donnell expressed doubts about the necessity of hiring this group, stating that staff could handle the publicity.

Mr. Donegan spoke in support of the motion, stating that the variety and volume of publicity the Communications Group did regarding the middle school sale was very effective. He continued that many people do not currently know what is going on.

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Mr. Coates stated that the main content of the publicity would have to be done in-house, and questioned if administration thinks this can be done. Mr. Woolridge replied that he is not sure administration can replicate the effort relevant to outreach without additional financial support. He spoke in support of hiring the Communications Group, stating that the risk of not doing this right is too great. He stated that the motion specifies that “up to” that amount would be spent, and they would try to not spend it all. The expenditure could be reevaluated after the November 30 forum.

Ms. Blais stated that she shared Chair O’Donnell’s concerns. She is comfortable with the “up to” amount, and hopes that it will not all be spent. She believes this could be done in-house in terms of information reaching the schools. However, there is the risk of missing people in the broader community by not hiring Communicators.

Mr. Roberts spoke in favor of the motion, stating that if communication/publicity is inadequate, he does not think a bond would pass in 2013.

Ms. Szot stated that she would like an RFP, to keep the Communications Group honest and competitive.

Mr. Panza stated that the goal is to reduce spending, and although this means spending money, it will save money in the long run.

The motion passed with a unanimous vote of 8-0.

Mr. Donegan stated that he is taking the next motion off the agenda and bringing it back to the Finance Committee. The motion concerns a budget transfer from various tutor line accounts at Franklin and Wheelock Schools.

MOTION: Mr. Donegan made a motion, on behalf of the Finance Committee, that the Keene School Board of Education adopt a budget guideline in the amount of \$62,114,433 for the development of a 2012-2013 Keene School District budget, which represents a .8% from the 2011-2012 operating budget. Mr. Panza seconded the motion.

Mr. Donegan explained how the Finance Committee decided upon this budget, by adding two necessary items that voters had already approved. He stated that this is a strict budget and the net increase is manageable. The KSD will be returning about \$3,000,000 to the taxpayers this year, which is something to be proud of.

Mr. Roberts asked about the underspent money. Mr. Harper replied that the surplus was due to the spending freeze that Mr. Gurney imposed and over a million dollars of savings in Special Education. He stated that one difficulty on the horizon is that the increase in health insurance is not yet known. If health insurance went up 10%, it would be a scramble to make that money up within the existing budget.

Mr. Panza gave a PowerPoint presentation about the challenging economic climate. He stated that he wanted a 0% increase in the budget, but he will vote for the .8% increase

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because it is a small increase. He continued that in regards to adequacy, the KSD stands to lose millions from the State and a big challenge will be to identify where to get money instead. The tax rate is going down due to sale of the previous KMS building. He indicated bar charts that show the rise of home foreclosure sales in Keene and the rise in Keene tax delinquencies. He spoke of the Economic Cycle Research Institute's prediction that a new, worse, and unpreventable recession is quite likely to occur in the near future. The KSD can better prepare by minimizing its spending, and encouraging the City and County to cut spending as well.

Mr. Roberts stated that for clarification, the tax delinquency rate, while rising, may not be quite as high as Mr. Panza's graph indicates because some people respond to the notices they receive and do pay their owed taxes. He continued that he agrees with Mr. Panza that the economy is a serious problem. The .8% increase is reasonable and Keene is ahead of the curve.

The motion passed by a unanimous vote of 8-0.

Chair O'Donnell asked if the Finance Committee discussed the possibility of having families pay fees for their children to participate in extracurricular activities. Mr. Donegan deferred to Mr. Gurney. Mr. Gurney replied that there were meetings about this in the spring and summer and there will be another meeting on October 17. He continued that Mr. Coates has put together well-thought out, well-researched proposals for the committee to consider. They will be making recommendations as the budget process moves forward. The committee does not yet have a name.

--Personnel Committee – Mr. Roberts

MOTION: Mr. Roberts made a motion for the Keene Board of Education to approve Amy Chapman's request for her maternity leave extension under the Family Medical Leave Act. Mr. Donegan seconded the motion, and it passed by a unanimous vote of 8-0.

MOTION: Mr. Roberts made a motion for the Keene Board of Education to approve the request to extend the sick time to cover the days that William Hope will be in AZ for the adoption of his daughter. Mr. Donegan seconded the motion, and it passed by a unanimous vote of 8-0.

--Policy Ad Hoc Committee – Ms. Szot

--Second Reading of the following policies for approval:

BEDB – Agenda Preparation and Dissemination

MOTION: Ms. Szot made a motion for the Keene School Board of Education to approve Policy BEDB – Agenda Preparation and Dissemination. Mr. Donegan seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote of 8-0.

BGB – Policy Adoption

MOTION: Ms. Szot made a motion for the Keene School Board of Education to approve Policy BGB – Policy Adoption. Mr. Donegan seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote of 8-0.

Board Manual

MOTION: Ms. Szot made a motion for the Keene School Board of Education to approve the Manual of the Board of Education. Mr. Donegan seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote of 8-0.

--Second Reading of the following policies for approval for elimination:

#1411 – Day Care Programs

MOTION: Ms. Szot made a motion for the Keene School Board of Education to approve for elimination Policy #1411 – Day Care Programs. Mr. Donegan seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote of 8-0.

#4118 – Review and Control of Medical Records

MOTION: Ms. Szot made a motion for the Keene School Board of Education to approve for elimination Policy #4118 – Review and Control of Medical Records. Mr. Donegan seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote of 8-0.

#4133/#5145 – Smoking (new Policy ADC takes precedence)

MOTION: Ms. Szot made a motion for the Keene School Board of Education to approve for elimination Policy #4113/#5145 – Smoking. Mr. Donegan seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote of 8-0.

9. Reports – Special Committees

--NHSAU 29 School Board – Mr. Panza

Mr. Panza reported that they are creating a new evaluation system for Superintendents. He also reported that the meetings need more representation from other districts' schools and he encourages more participation.

--NH School Boards Association – Mr. Panza

No report.

--Liaison Reports

-Keene High School and North Campus – Ms. Szot

Ms. Szot reported that the Student Athletic Leadership Council recently implemented the Wall of Honor to honor KHS alumni. She continued that this year, a KHS student was the only NH winner of the writing competition sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English. North Campus is offering several new classes and experimental and adventure education and field trips, thanks to the Academy Fund. Data teams have met with faculty, in regards to implementing data from MAPs and NECAP tests. They also talked a little about modified block scheduling.

-Cheshire Career Center – Mr. Donegan

No report.

-Keene Middle School – Mr. Panza

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Chair O'Donnell reported that there was a very high turn out at an Open House last Thursday. Parents were impressed and proud. New technology was integrated effortlessly. The recent walk through also had a phenomenal turn out. There will be more similar events down the road. Mr. Coates added that he has heard positive feedback from families.

-Jonathan Daniels School – Mr. Nugent

No report.

-Franklin School – Mr. Stewart

No report.

-Fuller School – Mr. Roberts

Mr. Roberts stated that he attended the well-attended open house. He continued that he spoke with the principal and fifth grade seems to be going well. The school works with community organizations which had representatives available to speak with that night. He and Misty Martinez were able to get discounted school supplies from Target for Franklin, Fuller, and Wheelock. He would like to have a secretary write a thank you note to Target.

-Symonds School – Mr. Coates

Mr. Coates reported that he met with Mr. Cate this week, and will spend the morning in classes on Wednesday and attend staff meetings on Thursday. He will also attend a PTA meeting soon.

-Wheelock School – Ms. Blais

Ms. Blais reported that Open House for grades K-5 is Oct. 21, and the Preschool Open House will be Oct. 13. A fire truck is coming which will thrill the preschoolers. There are fundraiser plans for a field trip to Nature's Classroom. Kindergarten screenings, and MAPs testing for grades 1-5, have been completed. NECAP testing is in progress.

10. Old Business

11. New Business

Mr. Donegan congratulated the KHS golf team, indicating that they have been the State champions for two years running. He recently watched them in action and was very impressed.

12. Public Input

Chris Weeks, on behalf of the Paraprofessional Group, thanked the Board for supporting their successful training day yesterday. She reported that the morning session was on effective classroom behavior strategies, and the afternoon session was on learning disabilities and the special education collaboratives. The day was very well attended and there was great feedback from paras. The day provided them with seven hours towards certification.

13. Resignations

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14. Nominations/Elections of Staff

MOTION: Chair Roberts made a motion to accept the nomination of Pamela Rogers for Business Education Teacher at the Cheshire Career Center. Ms. Blais seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote of 8-0.

MOTION: At 8:19 PM, Mr. Donegon made a motion to enter non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 to discuss staff personnel, real estate, and negotiations. Ms. Szot seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous, roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted by
Britta Reida, Stenographer

Approved by the Keene Board of Education: November 15, 2011