

**Sebago School Department
School Committee
August 11, 2020**

There was a Regular Meeting of the Sebago School Committee on Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. in the Cafeteria of the Sebago Elementary School.

Call to order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Tina Vanesse, Chair, at 6:30 p.m. in the Cafeteria of the Sebago Elementary School.

Members of the Sebago School Committee present:

Tina Vanesse, Chair
Joseph McMahon
Donelle Allen
Audrey Schoolcraft
Wendy Newcomb

Administrators present: Marc Gendron, Superintendent of Schools.
Kirsten Goff, Principal

Guests present:

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| Allen Crabtree, Clerk | Claudia Lowe |
| Rachel Ladd | Chris Balchunas |
| Grover Newcomb | Michelle Vacchiano |
| Alex Terrio | Alicia Frechette |
| Meghan Terrio | Randa Viitala |
| Phil Lowe | |

In addition there were about 25 individuals who followed the meeting via the live-streaming video.

Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Adjustments

There were none.

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Minutes

- A motion was made by Audrey Schoolcraft, seconded by Wendy Newcomb, to approve the Minutes from the June 23, 2020 Sebago School Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.
- A motion was made by Donelle Allen, seconded by Joseph McMahon to approve the Minutes from the June 23, 2020 Sebago School Budget meeting. Motion carried unanimously.
- A motion was made by Audrey Schoolcraft, seconded by Donelle Allen, to approve the School Budget Validation Referendum Results. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments on Agenda Items

Phil Lowe and Grover Newcomb asked when comments would be taken on the reopening plan. Chair Tina Vanesse said that comments would be welcome at Item 8A, Action Items.

Presentations/Reports

There were none.

Superintendent's Report

- Maine Department of Education – Application for Food Service Equipment approved for a Vulcan Gas Range, to be reimbursed up to \$5,024.56
- Pre-K Capacity Issues – will be capped at 11 Pre-K students for the present
- ESSER Grant – The grant is a COVID-19 relief package and amounts to \$19,802. The grant is expected to be received by September 21.
- Cares Act (ECR) Grant – An application is being submitted for a \$142,000 grant, if approved the grant has to be spent by December 31, 2020.
- Staffing Report – Update. - The Guidance Counselor has resigned. An opening for a social worker has been advertised.

Principal's Report

- Our focus has been on reopening school, supplies, regulations, and the reopening plan.

Action Items

Approval of the 2020-2021 School Reopening Plan

Chair Tina Vanesse explained the proposed reopening plan. Students would attend all day on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, with a half day on Wednesday mornings. Students would wear masks, desks in classrooms will be arranged for social distancing. There are other requirements in the reopening plan intended to comply with DOE and CDC guidelines and to keep students and staff safe during the pandemic. Surfaces in the school and playground will be sanitized regularly during the day, and during Wednesday afternoons the school will be deep-cleaned.

There was a spirited discussion on the plan as follows:

- How does SES compare to other schools? Tina Vanesse replied that SES will be the only school in Cumberland County with a five-day/week reopening plan. Why? She replied it was based on the size of our student population, the number of people infected in town, and our very low infection rate. It was felt that the school could proceed with this reopening plan with full cautions.
- It was shared that a five-day/week plan is moving too fast. It would be better to have a hybrid approach for a few weeks. We need to be aware of the possibility of the community effect to spread infection to staff, children, and their families.
- A comment was made that the five-day/week plan is preferable to a 2-2-1 plan where kids would be going to day care on the days they were not in school, and the higher risks for infection there.
- A comment was made that kids going to before and after school care will have contact with others.
- A comment was made that parents have options with the plan – students can go to school or keep their children home and do remote learning with them.
- A comment was made - how will kids during remote learning keep up with kids in school? Principal Kirsten Goff said that a teacher will be hired to deal with remote learning students.

- A question was asked about the school budget and how the COVID-19 has affected it? Superintendent Marc Gendron said that the budget was tight at the end of the year, influenced more by special ed costs as much as anything. The Cares Act grant and ESSER grant will help address the additional costs of dealing with the pandemic. The budget will be tight this coming year but doable.
- Superintendent Marc Gendron said that SES is designated in the “green” zone by the Department of Education and CDC which address infection rates and risks. This means the school department can elect to open on a five-day per week plan. If SES were in the “yellow” zone, we would have a 2-2-1 plan. There are a number of full-time school reopening plans in Oxford and York Counties.
- He added that the reopening plan allows for parents to change the participation of their children, from in-school participation to at-home, or back again. All we ask is for parents to give us a commitment so that we can plan. The state is developing a plan for remote learning which will be on-line, computer-based.
- Two comments asked if the parent survey been sent out to ask what option parents will be taking with their children. Superintendent Marc Gendron said it would be sent out once the reopening plan is approved by the School Committee. There have been several opportunities for parents to learn about the proposed plan over the last few weeks.
- A question was asked if student temperatures would be taken. Superintendent Mark Gendron said that temperatures will be taken of every student at noon.
- A comment was made that it is hard to juggle family, kids, and jobs. “If you don’t have your health you don’t have anything!”
- A question was asked to see if there was an isolation space at SES for students who might be infected. Superintendent Marc Gendron said that part of the school nurses’ room is being set up as an isolation room.
- A question was asked about what the procedure would be if a student shows COVID-19 symptom. Would the whole class have to be quarantined for 14 days? Should students have a COVID-19 test before the student with symptoms can come back to school? Principal Kirsten Goff said if a student has COVID-19 symptoms they will be sent to the school nurse for evaluation first and again once the student comes back to school. Students would go to the School nurse for meds as they do now. School Nurse, Chris Balchunas, explained the medical check process.
- A question was asked if children could have a waiver to not wear masks.
- A question was raised about the number of students in classrooms. Superintendent Marc Gendron said that the average is 15 students per room, but the number varies by grade. Room sizes allow social distancing.
- A question was raised about lunch and the cafeteria. Superintendent Marc Gendron said that there will be three lunch periods, with two classes each, to allow for social distancing room in the cafeteria.
- A comment made praising the amount of work done by the School Committee, Superintendent, Principal, and staff to develop this plan in such a short time, to best deal with the challenges that our children, teachers, and staff will face. There was applause from the audience.
- Principal Kirsten Goff shared more details on the separate bathrooms assigned for classes. All students will be required to wear a mask during school except for when eating, outdoor classes, and for 15-minute “mask breaks” that teachers can call.
- Wendy Newcomb said that there is much energy in the plan and we all want the best for our kids. She wanted to know how many students will be coming back to school. The five-day/week is not a cautious approach. We should go more slowly. We should survey parents first before approving a plan to see how many children will be coming back to school, so the plan can be modified if necessary. Bridgton has taken the more conservative 2-2-1 approach through November. Sebago should also start slow.
- Audrey Schoolcraft commented that many schools with a 2-2-1 plan have done so because of limits to their transportation system. Principal Kirsten Goff said that our plan will have one child per seat and families can sit together. M.S.A.D. #61’s plan for 2-2-1 is dictated in part because of bus limits. Other districts also have larger class sizes, a problem that SES does not have.
- A question was asked if parents can drive their children to school. Principal Kirsten Goff said that is possible, just as it is now.
- A question was asked regarding why the School Department can’t wait on the plan. Tina Vanesse said that the School Committee could vote on the plan tonight, or a vote could be taken after the parent survey. If the plan is approved tonight it could be brought back at our next School Committee meeting on August 25, 2020. Principal Kirsten Goff added that parents have had several opportunities to review the plan – it should not be a

surprise. Tina Vanesse said that parents need to bear responsibility for reviewing the plan. The School Committee needs to make a decision on the plan.

- Wendy Newcomb spoke for having the parent survey first, then vote on the plan.
- Principal Kirsten Goff described the staggered start and reopening sequences for students coming back to school.
- A question was asked regarding what the rush was, why not slow down for a week or two.
- A comment was made that the School Committee is hired to make the best decision and parents are responsible for keeping up with what affects their children.
- A comment was made that the School Department should focus on education, mental health, and student health.
- A comment was made that parents have no information on our children when they are in day care and not in school.
- A comment was made that the five-day per week plan should be tried and see how it works.
- Wendy Newcomb expressed concern that the number of infections in Maine and in our community will go up with summer vacationers coming into the area.

- Superintendent Marc Gendron said that the plan will be reviewed on the first week of October and December to see how it is progressing and make changes as appropriate.

- Principal Kirsten Goff said that the comments on the plan made by parents and staff have been helpful, but we need action on the plan as soon as possible so staff can plan for reopening.

- Joseph McMahon asked if the SES teachers were comfortable with the plan. Superintendent Marc Gendron said yes.

- Tina Vanesse said it is time to take a vote on the plan and thanked everyone for their comments and questions.

A motion was made by Audrey Schoolcraft, seconded by Joseph McMahon, to approve the 2020-2021 School Reopening Plan. Voting for the motion were Donelle Allen, Audrey Schoolcraft, Joseph McMahon and Tina Vanesse. Voting against the motion was Wendy Newcomb. Motion carried with a vote of 4-Yes and 1-No.

Approval of the 2020-2021 School Calendar Adjustments

A motion was made by Donelle Allen, seconded by Audrey Schoolcraft, to approve the adjustments to the 2020-2021 School Calendar made to reflect the reopening plan. Voting for the motion were Donelle Allen, Audrey Schoolcraft, Joseph McMahon and Tina Vanesse. Voting against the motion was Wendy Newcomb. Motion carried with a vote of 4-Yes and 1-No.

Approval of the Transportation Manual

A motion was made by Audrey Schoolcraft, seconded by Joseph McMahon, to approve the Transportation Plan developed by Transportation Coordinator, Jay Sanborn. Motion carried unanimously.

Policies – Second Readings

A motion was made by Joseph McMahon, seconded by Donelle Allen, to approve the following policies as a second reading.

- 1) Student Fundraising Activities, File Code JJE
- 2) Management of Concussions and Other Head Injuries. File Code JJ
- 3) Suspension of Students, File Code JKD
- 4) Expulsion of Students, File Code JKE
- 5) Expulsion Guidelines, File Code JKE-R

- 6) Medication Administration on School Field Trips, File Code JLCD-E
- 7) Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect, File Code JLF
- 8) Use of Facilities Fee Schedule, File Code KF-E
- 9) Soliciting, File Code KHA
- 10) Advertising in the Schools, File Code KHB

Motion carried unanimously.

Board Reorganization

A motion was made by Wendy Newcomb, seconded by Audrey Schoolcraft, to elect Tina Vanesse as the Chairperson for the Sebago School Committee for the 2020-2021 school year. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Wendy Newcomb, seconded by Audrey Schoolcraft, to elect Joseph McMahon as the Vice-Chairperson for the Sebago School Committee for the 2020-2021 school year. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion Items

There were none.

Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items

There were none.

Information Items

Future Meetings

School Committee Meeting – August 25, 2020 – 6:30 – 7:30 p.m., SES Cafeteria. There will also be a live video feed for individuals to follow the meeting on-line.

School Committee Meeting – September 22, 2020 – 6:30 – 7:30 p.m., SES Cafeteria. There will also be a live video feed for individuals to follow the meeting on-line.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Donelle Allen, seconded by Audrey Schoolcraft to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Secretary

August 25, 2020
Date Approved