

ERVING SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Tuesday, September 19, 2023
7:00 p.m.

ERVING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FINAL MINUTES

Present- Mackensity Bailey, Chair; Jennifer Eichorn, Katelyn Mailloux-Little, Mark Blatchley, members; Jennifer Culkeen, Superintendent; Caitlin Sheriden, Director of Finance and Operations; Dr. David Krane, EES Principal; Elizabeth Desorgher, Catherine Glennon, Devon Gaudet, Chris Thurston, Mark Burnett, Brittanie Mimitz, Minute Taker.

Amended Minutes

A. The meeting was **Called to Order at 7:04pm.** by Mackensity.

B. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

C. Public Hearings -

- Devon Gaudet asked for updates regarding staff hires for posted positions at EES. The information will be shared in the Principal report which will be moved up in the agenda.

- Statement by Catherine Glennon-

Good evening. My family and I are new to town - we bought a house near the town hall in late June. As soon as we'd moved in, we got our boys registered for school. At least, we tried. We had heard great things about the Erving public school system from everyone we talked to about our move. It is our great hope that eventually, our son will be able to start attending.

Registration at Great Falls Middle School was a breeze. In Erving, however, we were told that the preschool was full and that we'd be put on a waitlist. This was quite confusing because all the information we'd read online, and in the registration forms, indicated that it was a PUBLIC preschool program. Two classrooms were listed on the website, no limits or enrollment deadlines were listed, and nowhere were we informed about a fee to attend. To me, as a public school teacher myself, "public" school means open to all residents and free. Based on this definition, and my ignorance of the recent school committee decisions, the waitlist didn't make sense, but we waited...

A few weeks later, we got a call from the school again - we were in! sort of... We learned that the School Committee had voted to reinstate a second preschool position and our little guy could go to school once there was a teacher hired. That was August 2. We went about the rest of our summer, feeling quite relieved about the whole situation. We returned from a family vacation a few weeks later expecting that we'd be hearing soon about the first day. Instead we learned that we'd been naive to trust what we'd been told, and instead needed to have been attending the

school committee meetings to keep up on the constantly changing status of the preschool teacher search.

Last weekend, after several more calls to the school about when we might expect our son to start, the soccer season started and finally met some of his peers. At their first practice, we learned that ALL of the other students are currently in PreK, 3 and 4. They're all getting to know each other and participating in the rituals of the new school year. In past school committee meetings, two students were mentioned as being waitlisted, but the superintendent explained that one had an IEP and would definitely be enrolled. By my count, that leaves only our son being excluded from PreK.

In the meantime, we're left completely in the dark. We learned about the fees from the debate over the late paying families. We're very lucky to be able to afford it if we're ever enrolled, and to accommodate the childcare necessary with our work schedules, but the socialization and skills that our son is missing out on are not easily acquired at home with just your Dad, or in playgroups with 2 year olds, instead of in school with the other kids your age.

Based on the numbers shared in past meetings, the ratio necessary in PreK is 10

students to 1 adult, and it was stated in that meeting that there is one teacher and 2 paras in the class. By my count, based on the information shared in previous meetings, there are 18 students in that one class. "There's not a set number" of students that can be in the classroom according to both school committee members

and the superintendent. Is my son really going to be the straw that breaks the camel's back with 3 adults in the room? How long is he going to be singled out for exclusion from school? Is he ever going to be included? I have no confidence that there will ever be a teacher hired based on what I've seen so far. What's to stop you all from changing your minds again? And all because three people were late paying a bill that they've presumably paid? Please help me make this make sense.

As a resident of the town of Erving, I believe that my son should be able to be enrolled in the public school system now and should not be the only child excluded from school while the teacher search continues.

Thank you.

- The Principal gave his report; see Principal Report below.
- There was some confusion on why the waitlist is still in effect for preschool due to the back and forth by the committee regarding a decision on whether there would be one or two preschool classrooms for this year.
- The waitlist was created last year when only one teacher was being funded due to enrollment and remained in place because the second teacher had not started. .
- The Final decision was not made until August to begin looking for a second preschool teacher.
- The Principal expressed his confusion about why it was now ok to have 20 children with one teacher and two paras in one classroom but was not previously acceptable.
- The Committee expressed that typically the class sizes for pre-k in the past did not exceed 15-17 students. That's where they liked to see it.
- **After the discussion the decision was made to immediately enroll the two students on the waitlist because it is known that a second teacher is coming; it'll only be a few weeks that they're all in one classroom. The Principal asked the family to come in for a meeting first thing the following morning to get started.**
- Mark Burnett then spoke and expressed his apologies for the Glennon family and how they were forced to go through this back and forth process to enroll their preschooler at EES. He was extremely disappointed and shocked by how the new Principal was treated; especially during his first meeting. He stated that the Committee needs to be clearer with their decisions and take ownership over the ones they have made.

D. Approval of Minutes from-

- A motion was made by Mackensity and seconded by Katelyn to approve the minutes from **August 22, 2023***.
- A motion was made by Katelyn and seconded by Jenn to approve the minutes from **August 30, 2023***.
- The Committee provided edits to the minutes. The changes will be made.
- A motion was made by Mark and seconded by Katelyn to accept the minutes from August 22nd and August 30th as corrected. AIF.

E. Warrants –

Payroll	Amount	Date	Vendor	Amount	Date
#105	\$93,565.94	08/31/23	#1005	\$915.88	8/24/2023
#106	\$97,067.13	09/14/23	#1006	\$24,933.79	9/7/2023

- A motion was made by Mark and seconded by Katelyn to accept the warrants. AIF.

F. Report of the Gill-Montague Representative- Gill Montague has a school committee meeting tonight. Negotiations are still going on. Many staff and former staff spoke about how low pay is and how much they really love the school district. The new handbooks for this year combined Great Falls and Turner Falls High School into one handbook and will be available online only. Enrollment is a total of 918 students. Great Falls Middle School has 242 students and Turner's Falls High School has 203 students. Interest is high in after school activities including theater and sports with over a hundred students participating last year in theater, a middle school component will be added. There are 166 students that went out for middle school and high school sports which is the highest since Adam Graves has become the athletic director.

G. Report of the Franklin County Technical Representative- Enrollment at the Franklin County Tech school is at 632 students including the Pre-employment program. There are 156 freshmen, 161 sophomores, 163 Juniors, and 152

seniors. 40 students; all seniors are out on Co-op and juniors can participate in this program in the spring. Freshmen are currently doing their exploratory where they're kind of trying out the different options and seeing which one they're going to like. Auto Technology has a new room that is being built with the help of the carpentry program. Mech Tech is building a time capsule along with carpentry for Northfield's 350 Year celebration. Programming and web design are doing drone exploration. The Vet Tech science program now has a vet assistant certification program. Health Tech students are visiting the senior center for Nail Care. A welding shop; including a robot and simulation trailer is almost ready to go. They have purchased handheld simulators for the students to use. A lot of students are participating in sports. They have 204 students participating; there are 38 playing volleyball, 12 doing golf, 28 doing girls soccer which is a co-op with Turners Falls High School, 28 boys Soccer, 13 cheerleaders; which is also a co-op with Turner's Falls High School, 17 field hockey players, and 68 football players. The veterinarian building should have occupancy in December of 2023. The aviation program is on track for starting next September in 2024; three of the FAA approved simulation tools have arrived and the road has been completed also the steel is on site. The education programs are really popular and doing well and filling up fast. Future Farmers of America is going to Nationals in Indianapolis. There are 12 students going to the skills USA leadership conference in Brattleboro and the tech is well represented for the size of the school. The homecoming dance is going to be on 10- 21-23. Shane Parker is the new carpentry instructor. There will be a new environmental science program in the next two years or so and they are on track for the Massachusetts School Building Association program for a new school. It should take a year to do a feasibility study and that's what they're working on now.

H. Report from the Erving Teachers' Association- No report at this time. Elizabeth intends to provide updates on what is happening in each class/grade moving forward.

I. Collaborative for Educational Services Report- Next meeting is September 27, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

J. Regionalization Update- Still in search of a representative to join the committee. There has been no new information on whether or not the member could be a towns person and not a committee member. Meeting was tonight.

K. Capital Planning Committee Update- A motion was made by Katelyn to move the Track (\$14,000) and Event Chairs (\$12,000) to the town floor. The motion was seconded by Mark. AIF. The committee is currently working on a 25 year plan. They would like to have an updated list by the October meeting, beginning on the first 10 years. Erik is working on an estimate for the window shades and will look into the skylight and roof but that is a much larger project

L. Superintendent's Report-

Overview:

District professional development
social justice and equity
the Science of Reading.

Leadership:

Leadership Team - annual two-day retreat

Topics - school safety planning with Jim Carmichael from the sheriff's department; planning for the upcoming school year; CPI training, Title grants; professional development planning; special education identification process for the 2023-24 school year; review and discussion of social justice standards; learning walks to include both literacy and equity

Community Events:

August 16th- press conference and family event to announce the FY24 Coordinated, Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grant

Union #28

Opening Day Convocation - District focus this year: Universal Design for Learning, Equity, Content (Literacy) and Co-teaching/Inclusion

District presentation from CES on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.

*Jen will reach out to the Principal about the handbook for the next meeting.

M. Director of Finance and Operations Report*

FY24 Improving Ventilation and Air Quality grant update

o DESE posted the FY24 Improving Ventilation and Air Quality grant earlier this month, and I applied for the grant last week through their new GEM\$ system. I asked for a timing update from the state and they reported that with the ESSA grants being due last Tuesday, they would likely not get to the IVAQ grants until later this week. I will report any information to the School Committee as I receive it

● Capital Improvements Plan Update

o Superintendent Culkeen, Principal Krane, Eric Harris our Head Custodian, and I met to review the 25 year Capital Improvement Plan and to prioritize currently funded projects. We decided to pare down the 25 year plan to an updated, cohesive 10 year plan. One of our top priorities is the

replacement of the window shades, which has a funding of \$30,000 available, and fixing the school roof and skylight, which was not part of the 25 year plan, and is currently unfunded.

- MASBO Bi-Monthly
 - I will be attending the MASBO Bi-Monthly Conference on Wednesday 9/20. The professional development topics on the agenda are the following:
 - Improving Dialogue with your School Committee
 - Classroom Observation: What Does Effective Instruction Look Like in 2023?
 - Open AI - Brave New World
 - Creating a Student Technology Team
 - The day ends with an update from DESE
- FY24 Improving Ventilation and Air Quality grant update.
- Capital Improvements Plan update
- Erving Elementary expenditures range to date
- Erving Secondary expenditures range to date

N. Principal's Report

Enrollment:

Gr 6 13
Gr 5 15
Gr 4 16
Gr 3 17
Gr 2 18
Gr 1 12
K 13
Pre 4 11
Pre 3 6
Total 121
Preschool Waitlist: 2 (PK-4)

Calendar of Events:

Oct 2 School Pictures
Oct 4 Open House 6-7pm
Oct 6 Curriculum Day
Oct 12 Fire Prevention Presentations

Hiring:

- Four paraprofessional positions remain posted, but unfilled, as does the additional School Psychologist position that was recently posted. The School Psychologist position has had no applicants, to date, and the Paraprofessional candidates are being screened as they apply, with no new applicants on School Spring.
- Librarian position was offered to a candidate and the offer was accepted September 15, 2023
- Preschool Teacher hiring is pending but hopefully will be starting at the end of this month.
- The Librarian candidate needs to be interviewed by Superintendent Culkeen as the next part of the hiring process, and it has been scheduled for next week.

O. Budget and Personnel Committee Report – none at this time

P. Union #28 Committee Report-

- Next Meeting Date – September, 2023 @ 6:30 p.m.

Q. Old Business

- Withdraw from U28 - A subcommittee is being created to investigate the pros and cons of withdrawing from U28.

R. New Business

- **Members for the subcommittee to investigate withdrawing from U28** - 7 member subcommittee will be voted on at the October meeting.
- **Create a Capital Planning Subcommittee and vote in members –**
 - A motion was made by Katelyn to nominate Jenn to the Capital Planning Subcommittee. The motion was seconded by Mackensity. AIF.
 - A motion was made by Mackensity and seconded by Katelyn to nominate Erik to the Capital Planning

Subcommittee. AIF.

- **PIEE Report** - The annual mum fundraiser was just successfully completed. The first meeting will be October 2, 2023 at 7p.m. A Bingo night is in the works for October and The Erving Apparel store will be opening in the beginning of November.

S. Policy Review and Update

Final Vote on:

- o DH – Bonded Employees and Officers*
- o DI – Fiscal Accounting and Reporting*
- o DJ – Purchasing*
- o DK – Payment Procedures*
- o KCD – Public Gifts to the School* (add L to all)
- o DIE – Audits*
- o JIC – Student Discipline*
- o GBA – Equal Employment Opportunity*
- o GCF – Professional Staff Hiring* (#4 Prior to the first day of employment)
- o JB – Equal Educational Opportunity*

A motion was made by Mackensity and seconded by Mark to **approve policies DH, DI, DJ, DK, KCD, DIE, JIC, GBA, GCF, and JB.** AIF.

T. Future Business

- **Next School Committee Meeting Date:** Tuesday, October 17, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.
- **Erving Policy Committee** – Tuesday, October 17, 2023 – 6:30 p.m.

U. A motion was made by Mackensity to **adjourn the meeting at 8:22p.m.** The motion was seconded by Mark. AIF.

* Enclosures