

**RSU 54/MSAD 54**

**Meeting of Board of Directors  
September 19, 2024, 7:00 p.m.  
Skowhegan Area Middle School**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Maine School Administrative District No. 54 was held on September 19, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. at Skowhegan Area Middle School Library.

**ATTENDANCE BOARD MEMBERS (820 present, 179 absent):**

Sarah Bunker (Mercer-16) PRESENT	Daniel Frey* (Smith-27) ABSENT
Janet Burrill (Canaan-43) PRESENT	Desiree Libby* (Norr-46) ABSENT
Mark Bedard (Skow-53) PRESENT	Peggy Lovejoy* (Skow-53) ABSENT
Samantha Delorie (Norr-46) PRESENT	Janice Malek* (Norr-46) ABSENT
Jeannie Conley (Skow-53) PRESENT	Timothy Williams* (Skow-53) ABSENT
Valerie Coulombe (Norr-46) PRESENT	
Karyn Curran (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Lauren Fox (Mercer-16) PRESENT	
Jean Franklin (Canaan-43) PRESENT	
Tanya Groce (Skow-53) PRESENT	*excused
Theresa Howard (Corn-30) PRESENT	
Michelle Kelso (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Michael Lambke (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Julian Payne (Corn-30) PRESENT	
Lynda Quinn (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Amy Rouse (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Sara Smith (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Michelle Taylor (Smith-27) PRESENT	

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

a. Flag Salute followed.

Chair Quinn asked for a moment of silence for John Domareki and Amanda Sandford.

2. Good News and Recognitions

There were no scheduled presentations.

3. Approval of the Minutes - 9/5/24

**ON A MOTION BY Michelle Taylor, seconded by Sarah Bunker, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the Board of Directors' meeting of 9/5/24 into the record. (820 yes)**

4. Communications

a. Letters

There were no letters to share

b. School Personnel

There were no school personnel who wished to speak.

c. Visitors

There were no visitors who wished to speak.

5. Committee Reports

a. Finance Committee

**ON A MOTION BY Jean Franklin, seconded by Theresa Howard, the Board voted to accept the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting of 9/5/24 into the public record. (820 yes)**

Jean Franklin, Committee Chair, reviewed the minutes. There were no recommendations.

6. Superintendent's Report

a. Vacancies, nominations, recommendations

Superintendent Moody reviewed vacancies and recommended the Board's approval of nominations.

**ON A MOTION BY Samantha Delorie, seconded by Lauren Fox, the Board voted to approve nominations pages one. (820 yes)**

Superintendent Moody recommended the Board's approval of students Sydalia Savage and Olivia Huff as Student Representatives to the School Board.

**ON A MOTION BY Janet Burrill, seconded by Theresa Howard, the Board voted to approve students Sydalia Savage and Olivia Huff as Student Representatives to the School Board. (694 yes, 126 no)**

b. Report on Assessments Payments to Date

Superintendent Moody shared that as of September 19, 2024, Canaan, Cornville, Mercer, Norridgewock and Smithfield were current on their monthly assessments. Skowhegan was outstanding for August and September. Assessments are due on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.

c. Update on New School Construction Building Project

Superintendent Moody shared that he met with a federal employee from the Department of Environmental Protection to review the Environmental Assessment portion of the 1.9 Million Dollar CDS Grant MSAD54 has been awarded for the building project. This grant will take significant administrative time to complete but once finalized, will allow the district to fully cover the budgeted cost of the new school with no impact to taxpayers.

The Superintendent also shared that the Building Better Beginnings Campaign Committee met on September 16<sup>th</sup> and shared that the campaign has raised \$3,315,228 (112% of their goal) for the Early Childhood Center as part of the new school building project. The Building Committee's next meeting is scheduled for October 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6pm at the SAMS Library, and in addition to an overall project update will review the donor naming information and discuss decommissioning of current buildings.

Support Services Manager, David Leavitt, reported that the new school building project is moving along with window installation beginning today and hope to install ten per day. Brick work should be completed by the end of October, and the bus garage teardown will begin next week.

Superintendent Moody reviewed the referendum vote on the bus garage, which would reduce the cost of the bus garage portion of the building

project and requested the Board's approval of the warrants for the November 5<sup>th</sup> Referendum on the Bus Garage location.

**ON A MOTION BY Amy Rouse, seconded by Michael Lambke, the Board voted that the warrant and notice of election of Maine School Administrative District No. 54 presented to the meeting be approved and that a referendum election for the District be called for November 5, 2024 for the purpose of approving the proposed change of location of the replacement bus garage, which was previously approved as part of the new Early Childhood through Grade 5 elementary school project as described therein.**

**FURTHER VOTED: That the Notice of Public Hearing presented to the meeting be approved and that a public hearing on the proposed change of location of the replacement bus garage, which was previously approved as part of the new Early Childhood through Grade 5 elementary school project be held on October 3, 2024 at 5:30 P.M. as provided therein. (820 yes)**

There will be a Public Meeting on the Bus Garage Location Referendum on October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 pm, at the Skowhegan Area Middle School Cafeteria, prior to the Personnel Committee and Board meetings.

d. Review/Update of Federal Projects

Finance Director Melannie Keister is closing in on the final ARP and Federal Funds reimbursement. The Superintendent will share an update on federal spending once the state has accepted and approved the district's final reimbursement.

The Finance Committee met to review the FY23 Audit Report and in addition to again showing strong fiscal management, the Auditors shared improvements that have been made with the addition of Melannie Keister as finance director.

Superintendent Moody shared that he anticipates a stretch of tough budgets over the next few years as rising costs (both inflation and legislation) impact the district budget. Unfunded state mandates will have a particularly challenging impact on this year's budget both in terms of mandated salary increases for support staff, as well as a 1% tax to provide staff with additional leave benefits. This will require a lot of work and likely some tough choices. The Superintendent indicated that

he will be meeting with staff about this year's budget earlier than in years past and that he will once again will work with administrators to bring forward a "status quo" budget to the board.

e. Start of School

Elementary Principals Christy Johnson, Deidre Mitchell, Robert Rodrigue, Myla Kreider and Erin Madore updated the Board on the opening of school in their buildings.

f. Revised 2024-2025 School Calendar

Superintendent Moody shared an adjusted calendar that removes eight early release days. A plan will be submitted to the DOE requesting the forgiveness of four days, which will result in the last student day of school being June 6<sup>th</sup>. Superintendent Moody requested the Board's approval of the adjusted school calendar.

**ON A MOTION BY Michelle Taylor, seconded by Sara Smith, the Board voted to approve the adjusted 2024-2025 School Calendar as presented. (820 yes)**

g. MSMA Fall Conference – October 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>

Superintendent Moody shared a preliminary clinic program for the Annual MSMA Fall Conference and encouraged any Board members Interested in attending to contact Tina to register.

h. Other

The Tennis Courts are complete and look amazing. Superintendent Moody reminded the Board that through their work leveraging the federal funding and state revolving renovation funds, the courts were completed with no additional impact to taxpayers.

The Superintendent shared that the Norridgewock Town Manager had requested that the district consider cancelling school or considering a remote school day for the November 3<sup>rd</sup> elections. Principal Robert Rodrigue shared with the Board what election day looks like at Mill Stream and what staff and the town has done to make the process work well for both voters and the school. Board members shared their thoughts regarding voting including what they have seen over the years.

Following comments, the consensus of the Board was that school should remain in session as a regular school day for students.

Superintendent Moody shared that following the Board's decision to post the position for internal candidates only he has had qualified applicants for both the Dean of Students position for the Margaret Chase Smith Community School as well as the Assistant Principal for the Canaan Elementary School. The Superintendent indicated unless the Board had concerns, he intended to move forward with hiring process for those positions from the available internal candidates. He anticipated having the hiring process complete by the beginning of November.

Current enrollment, as of 9/19/24, was 2,182 (last report – 2,191).

7. Assistant Superintendent and Support Services Manager

Assistant Superintendent Hatch reported that he attended the Annual Somerset Public Health Celebration. A number of our staff who work very closely with SPH and our high school group, Your Mind Matters, was recognized at the event.

Educational Policy/Program Committee will meet on Tuesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>. The Committee will hear update on summer programming and review policy on Return to Work/Light Duty. Our first early release day was very productive. Administrators focused on high impact literacy teaching strategies. Staff focused on best instructional strategies and practices, curriculum work and communicating home.

The Support Services Manager reported that all is going well.

8. Old and Unfinished Business

Julian Payne (Cornville) shared information and invited Board members to attend the Celebration of Life for Amanda Sandford, scheduled for September 28<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm in Athens.

9. Introduction of New Business

There was no new business presented.

10. Adjournment

The Board adjourned at 8:09 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan Moody, Superintendent of Schools