

## Newport City School Board Meeting Minutes November 2, 2015

### Present

#### **Board Members:**

Corinna Lancaster – Chair  
Vicki Lantagne\*\*  
Mary Ellen Prairie  
Karrie Briggs\*  
Jessica Ward\*

#### **Administration and Staff:**

John Castle, Superintendent  
Melinda Mascolino, Ass't Principal  
Glenn Hankinson\*\*, Finance Director  
Kathy Nolan\*\*, C & I Director  
Samantha Knight, Bookkeeper  
Kristen Morey\*\*, Teacher  
Nancy Griffith, Recording Secretary

\*\*Partial attendees

- I. LANCASTER called meeting to order at 5:05 pm.
- II. **Executive Session:** LANCASTER requested to move into executive sessions. **Motion** made to move into executive session to hold interim principal interviews at 5:06 p.m. inviting John Castle, Kathy Nolan and Melinda Mascolino. BRIGGS/PRAIRIE. Approved. Exited executive session at 6:35 pm. No action taken.
- III. **Additions or adjustments to the agenda:** none.
- IV. **Motion** to approve the minutes of October 5, 2015 and October 20, 2015 (attachment A) LANTAGNE/PRAIRIE. Approved.
- V. **Public comments, Communication with Parents/Staff/Citizens:** None.
- VI. **Financial report:** CASTLE mentioned that HANKINSON/KNIGHT met today to review auditor findings. HANKINSON pointed out that auditor's recommendations are for the year ending June 30, 2014. Some field work has been done for the year finishing June 30, 2015. Biggest finding from the FY14 audit was that "due to / due froms" have not been done for some time, which have an impact on all fund balances. If we go ahead and do all five pages of due to/due froms provided by the auditor now there will be a deficit for the end of FY15. It would be approximately a deficit of \$126,000, but there is a Special Education Reserve fund of around \$30,000 which would offset part of that. PRAIRIE asked if it was reserved specifically for Special Education and HANKINSON indicated he did not know. PRAIRIE is certain it was voted at Town Meeting to be used only for Special Education. HANKINSON discussed other fund balances that could be used against the deficit. Overall HANKINSON recommends that we do all adjustments after the FY15 audit is done. CASTLE asked when we anticipated the FY15 audit would be finalized. HANKINSON anticipated we will have a draft within a few weeks. CASTLE stressed that it would be useful to know actual fund balances when developing budgets in December.

CASTLE distributed a handout that was a copy of a document that was presented and discussed at the last SU Executive Board meeting. There is a sub-committee that has been working on the centralization of special education around the requirements of Act 153 and penalties of non-compliance of Act 46. The SU has figured out how to centralize these services, but there is still the problem of how you assess those costs. The sub-committee has been looking at different models. There are essentially two different models. One is direct costs. All costs associated to a school would be charged back to them. The other model is where you aggregate costs across the SU and assess the costs, which could be based on three different formulas (based on enrollment numbers, equalized pupils or child count numbers). There is also consideration of phasing those costs in over three years. The final determination will be made at the full SU board in December. HANKINSON mentioned that the handout estimates were based on FY17 figures from the service plans and that language from ACT 46 mentions that as an operating SU you must be concerned about all students, so he supports an aggregate cost calculation model. CASTLE indicated that his belief is that an aggregated model is best for the SU as well. The challenge is that this is a cultural shift in our SU. There has been practice of sharing some services, such as Central Office administrators, but never on such a large scale. Also, the reality is that all Special Education services decisions will be made at the SU board level, while still working closely with building administrators and individual boards. CASTLE's disposition is to look at the equalized pupil formula as that is a two year average. He is also supportive of a more unified approach that every student within the SU be treated evenly. MASCOLINO asked if any of these models would save money, but CASTLE indicated that no, centralization of the services won't necessarily save money overall, costs could be shifted around as Central Office analyzes services in each school. PRAIRIE asked about a penalty around Special Ed costs, HANKINSON mentioned that some of our schools have been identified as a high spending town, but that there is no penalty involved, you simply need to write a letter justifying those costs.

CASTLE asked HANKINSON to talk about the Mulkin Solar Project. The process is net metering. The solar project would make electricity that first of all would run a number of buildings that Mulkin owns. Any monthly energy excess would be sold to the school at 90% of the normal cost. HANKINSON mentions there is no risk to the school under the current contract. The 10% discount is not the best deal, but unfortunately the developer is not willing to negotiate. LANCASTER asked if there were any other developers in the area, and HANKINSON said not at this time. LANCASTER asked if there is an option to opt out once the contract was signed. HANKINSON indicated no, there was no opting out until the five year contract expired. **Motion** to opt to go with Mulkin Solar Project. PRAIRIE/LANTAGNE. Approved.

CASTLE indicated he has not met with KNIGHT and MASCOLINO to discuss budget needs. Major consideration at this time is about staffing around special education. CASTLE asked if the board had any budget considerations. MASCOLINO talked about needing another fifth grade teacher, but CASTLE mentioned they could pull from the sixth grade teachers as the group moving up is smaller. PRAIRIE mentioned facility needs are new front doors, new sound system within the building and the front walk repairs. CASTLE mentioned that we will have to be mindful of cost threshold limits in the budget development and a budget shell will be brought forward at the December board meeting.

MASCOLINO asked if anything had been decided on the bleachers. CASTLE indicated that a quote was received and that we are looking at a safety grant to help fund that, but also looking at other grant offers. CASTLE indicated the entire project was \$11,750. Option 1 was bleachers for \$4,125, option 2 was easy fit safety end rails for \$2,960 and option 3 was cutouts for \$5,970. There was a discount for putting them all together. CASTLE is waiting to find out about all funding available, but scheduling will need to be considered as they will have to shut the gym down, so the holiday break would be convenient. LANCASTER asked if there was a deadline to be compliant. CASTLE indicated that no, we were just put on notice that there was a deficiency. **Motion** to authorize CASTLE to accept bid to do all three components at once as soon as possible using the construction fund money, with the hopes of getting grant money to pay for half. BRIGGS/PRAIRIE. Approved.

- VII. **Continuum of Services Consideration:** CASTLE indicated that there are a number of students whose needs are not being met under the current model, which sometimes compromises the learning of other students. They are trying to determine how to increase capacity. There are students with true emotional disabilities. It is not a question of staff not performing; it is simply beyond the scope of the current systems in place. Administrators need to be responding to other things than behavior issues on a daily basis. This might be thru the reallocation of staff which already has been done with the Behavior Specialist as her time has been increased to three days a week, but this is not without cost. She is not only working with individual student needs, but working with administration and faculty to develop practices/processes. They are also looking at bringing in a behavior interventionist. That position would be hired as an SU employee, but for now would be deployed to NCES to get the Behavior Specialist back to what her role should be. Overall, he is proposing a “RESET” program which would be a more intensive program that is self-contained within the building. The goal would be always to try and transition the students that are placed into this “RESET” program back to the regular classroom. CASTLE would potentially look at reallocating a current Special Educator to be the case manager for that program. This could pose a bit of a challenge as we are down a special educator, even though we have a sub in three days a week. We currently have a classroom teacher that has expressed interest in transitioning to special education. Also the SU has a behavior specialist that has lots of experience in building these types of programs that could be re-allocated here two days a week. The hope is to try and not send students to outside programs. CASTLE was honest that this would not save the school district money. This is just an overview of a general concept, but he can come back in December with more specific costs. It was the consensus that board members want CASTLE and MASCOLINO to continue moving forward with this plan.

- VIII. **Superintendent report:** none.

**Principal Report:** MASCOLINO discussed current staff that is interested in the potential new “RESET” program. PRAIRIE asked if these new positions would need to be advertised. CASTLE mentioned that administration has the right of assignment, but would like to keep the board’s support and involvement in the process.

MASCOLINO expressed the staff's happiness with parent teacher meetings not having to be driven by grade discussions as report cards are now issued on a trimester basis. Also 92% of parents attended, which is great.

MASCOLINO discussed the possibility of a Farm to School grant to be shared with Derby Elementary. She indicated that the Farm to School grants will end in FY17, so decisions will need to be made around current programs that could be sustained without those funds. There are other grant funding opportunities available that they could look into.

MASCOLINO and NOLAN discussed how kids are at school so early which causes costs around supervision, increased possibility of behavior issues and the lack of getting the kids engaged in learning immediately. A more in depth look at busing schedules will need to be done and a recommendation brought forward.

MASCOLINO mentioned repairs needed on one of the buses, so discussion was had on how to get a temporary replacement. LANCASTER asked if Pepin garage was the only one in town to do repairs. MASCOLINO will get the exact diagnostic of the problem and then look at options.

IX. **Unfinished/New business:**

**Motion** to offer interim principal position to Nancy Frenette. BRIGGS/PRAIRIE. Approved.

CASTLE talked about how KNIGHT's job offer was to have two weeks' vacation at the start of the first fiscal year after her hire, and have one extra year over the vacation seniority grid. But no action was ever taken in the minutes. Discussion was had and it was decided to table it to the next meeting.

CASTLE discussed Donna Lee Burnside's retirement bonus request from FY15. The bonus is for those that have worked twenty years in a district, and is a \$1,000 payout. She originally was based at NCES as an SU employee before being hired as a NCES employee; both positions combined reached the twenty year mark. CASTLE indicates that legal counsel always states to not deviate from any contract. No action was taken.

CASTLE presented the snow bids that were received. Two were received and some discussion ensued. **Motion** to accept St. Onge's bid. BRIGGS/PRAIRIE. Approved.

**Motion** to accept to Cathline Coutu's resignation. BRIGGS/PRAIRIE. Approved.

Request to move to Executive session by LANCASTER at 8:30 pm. **Motion** to move into Executive Session. BRIGGS/Prairie. Approved.

Exited Executed session at 8:34 pm.

**Motion** to ratify Teacher's Collective Agreement. PRAIRIE/WARD. Approved.

Facilities update: CASTLE indicated they made the repair to the asphalt in front of the school.

MASCOLINO mentioned that the head cook wanted to introduce herself and her letter was handed out in regards to some changes in equipment she would like to see in the kitchen. CASTLE indicated that these changes could be discussed during the budget development process. He also proposed that she should be invited to come forward with quotes. So the issue was tabled.

LANCASTER asked if faculty was asked where Mr. Ladue's plaque should be placed. MASCOLINO indicated she had not discussed it with them, but would do so at this week's staff meeting.

- X. **Agenda Items for next meeting on December 1st, 2015:** CASTLE mentioned adding the principal search. He handed out a tentative timeline. PRAIRIE asked how many board members should be on the committee. CASTLE mentioned no more than 2, and 2-3 teachers, 1-2 support staff, 1-2 parents and lastly the Superintendent. PRAIRIE asked why he felt he should be on the committee and he indicated he had experience in getting the best candidates for positions.
- XI. **Financial Report: Motion** to approve warrants for October: Accounts Payable (Retirement) \$27,796.41. Accounts payable \$124,807.13. PRAIRIE/WARD. Approved. No financials were presented.
- Motion** to hire Kathy Menard in a long-term sub teacher position. PRAIRIE/WARD. Approved.
- XII. **Adjourn: Motion** to adjourn at 9:10 p.m. – PRAIRIE/WARD – approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Griffith

<b><u>Meetings:</u></b>	<b><u>Day</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Time</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>
NCSU Policy Committee	Thursday	November 19	5:30 p.m.	NCSU A219
NCSU Executive Committee	Thursday	November 19	6:30 p.m.	NCSU A209
NCES Board	Monday	December 1	6:00 p.m.	NCES