

RSU 54/MSAD 54

**Meeting of Board of Directors
December 7, 2023, 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 December 7, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at Skowhegan Area Middle School Cafeteria.

ATTENDANCE BOARD MEMBERS (795 present, 204 absent):

Mark Bedard (Skow-53) PRESENT	Janet Burrill* (Canaan-43) ABSENT
Sarah Bunker (Mercer-16) PRESENT	Samantha Delorie* (Norr-46) ABSENT
Jeannie Conley (Skow-53) PRESENT	Cheyenne Goodrich* (Norr-46) ABSENT
Karyn Curran (Skow-53) PRESENT	Bruce Hurley* (Mercer-16) ABSENT
Annemarie Dubois (Skow-53) PRESENT	Timothy Williams* (Skow-53) ABSENT
Jean Franklin (Canaan-43) PRESENT	
Daniel Frey (Smith-27) PRESENT	
Theresa Howard (Corn-30) PRESENT	
Michelle Kelso (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Michael Lambke (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Desiree Libby (Norr-46) PRESENT	
Peggy Lovejoy (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Janice Malek (Norr-46) PRESENT	
Julian Payne (Corn-30) PRESENT	
Amy Rouse (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Lynda Quinn (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.

2. Good News and Recognitions

At the direction of Music Teacher, Gail Kelly, the Middle School Band performed the Star-Spangled Banner, Little Drummer Boy, and a Holiday Jam Medley.

3. Approval of the Minutes – 11/16/23

ON A MOTION BY Jean Franklin, seconded by Theresa Howard, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the Board of Directors' meeting of 11/16/23 into the record. (795 yes)

4. Communications

a. Letters

Superintendent Moody acknowledged and accepted a letter of intent to retire from Kimberly Rickards, Custodian at Skowhegan Area High School, as well as a letter of resignation from Vanessa Thompson, Van Driver.

b. School Personnel

There were no school personnel who wished to speak.

c. Visitors

A visitor spoke and shared concerns on the display of flags in schools, specifically the Civil Rights Team flag displayed in the SAHS entryway.

5. Committee Reports

a. Personnel Committee – 11/16/23

ON A MOTION BY Theresa Howard, seconded by Sarah Bunker, the Board voted to accept the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting of 11/16/23 into the public record. (795 yes)

Theresa Howard, 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 Sarah Bunker, seconded by Michelle Kelso, the Board voted to approve nominations page one. (795 yes)

b. Report on Assessments Payments to Date

Superintendent Moody shared that as of December 7, 2023, Canaan, Cornville, Mercer, Norridgewock and Smithfield were current on their monthly assessments. Skowhegan was outstanding for November and December. Assessments are due on the 20th of each month.

c. Update on New School Construction Building Project

Superintendent Moody shared that many board members attended two scheduled tours of the building project site. Steel is going up and the buildings are beginning to take shape.

A notification from the State was received on Bond payments indicating a local only cost. Mr. Leavitt found a mistake based on what the state had agreed to in the spring of 2023; after meeting and working through the process to correct the error with state officials, the Superintendent was pleased to share that the State is paying 100% of payments from the October (2023) Bond. The District's portion of the remaining 14.5M bond (October, 2024) will include in local funding costs that were not able to be fundraised. The Superintendent shared that the Building Better Beginnings local fundraising goal of \$3,000,000 is within \$40,000 of meeting the goal. All but \$500,000 of the fundraising goal will be applied to reduce local-only costs to the taxpayers. The Superintendent shared that the architects are willing to match any donation by board members, administration, and school staff.

The CDS (Congressional Spending) funding process is moving forward with the House review and consideration after the start of the new year. The Superintendent shared that although Senators Collins and King, and Representative Golden have supported our request, and the request included in the bill passed by the Senate, if funds are not approved prior to February 24, the 1.9M in federal CDS funds will be reduced to only the percentage of the steel in the project (approx. \$250,000). If the federal House of Representatives fails to act on the CDS bill, local property taxpayers will be responsible for those costs not locally fundraised (as part of the aforementioned 2.5 million dollars raised). The Superintendent noted that regardless of CDS funds, fundraising efforts have significantly reduced the potential local-only costs that were approved by the voters in June of 2022, and will likely be significantly less by percentage than the costs incurred when the Mill Stream School was built (2008).

d. Review/Update of Federal Projects/Federal Funds

ESSER II funding grant reimbursements have been submitted and we are working through reimbursements for ARP grant. Federal COVID Relief funds end in September of 2024 but management and accounting of those dollars will continue for several years to come.

e. SRO Update

Superintendent Moody has had follow up conversations with the Skowhegan Police Chief, the Maine School Safety Center (MSSC) and the District Attorney (DA). The DA and MSSC agree and recommend that we hire an SRO from the Sheriff's Department in order to follow the letter of the law in regard to jurisdiction. This does not impact our current practice of sending a Skowhegan SRO out to neighboring towns to do well-child checks, etc. as explained, but instead would be a result of regularly assigning a SRO to a school not in SPD's jurisdiction (Mill Stream or Canaan). Various options, including cooperative agreements or deputizing were discussed. Following questions and comments, Superintendent Moody shared that he will continue to explore other District's SRO, including MSAD 49, as well as the liability of hiring a Skowhegan Police SRO.

Superintendent Moody acknowledged both the Somerset County Sheriff and Skowhegan Police in responding to yesterday's situation in Norridgewock that resulted in a lockout at Mill Stream Elementary School, as well as Principal Rodrigue and staff.

f. Other

The next Board meeting will be on January 4th. There will be one February meeting, on the 8th.

The Budget calendar timelines will be adjusted for the season taking into account a change to state law. The Superintendent anticipates having a full budget calendar out by the end of January. Administrators will be submitting their 2024-2025 budgets by December 22nd. A draft status quo budget is anticipated at the February 8th board meeting.

7. Assistant Superintendent and Support Services Manager

Assistant Superintendent Hatch made reference to the *School Talk* newsletter that was shared with Board members and mailed to households throughout the district.

Support Services Manager David Leavitt shared that crews are ready for winter.

8. Old and Unfinished Business

Skowhegan Director, Mark Bedard asked if there's an update on the baseball field. Skowhegan Select Chair Todd Smith shared that they have approved the design and will be moving forward with bid proposals and surveying.

Cornville Director, Julian Payne acknowledged the visitor who spoke on the matter of flags and requested a review of the policy.

Skowhegan Director, Michelle Kelso commented that her understanding is that the only flags that are legally supposed to be flown are the American flag and the State flag.

9. Introduction of New Business

Chair Quinn acknowledged that today was Maine Day and Mill Stream Elementary School celebrated by marching through the school with sixty floats that gathered in the gym.

10. Executive Session – Superintendent's Performance Assessment pursuant to Title I MRSA §405(6)(A)

ON A MOTION BY Theresa Howard, seconded by Sarah Bunker, the Board voted to enter into executive session at 8:18 pm to discuss the Superintendent's Performance Assessment, pursuant to Title I MRSA §405(6)(A). (795 yes)

The Board returned to regular session at 8:28 pm, and the following recommendation was made:

ON A MOTION BY Theresa Howard, seconded by Jean Franklin, the Board voted to extend the Superintendent's 3-year contract to June 30, 2027, subsequent to the terms of the contract and future negotiated salary and benefits. (795 yes)

11. Adjournment

The Board adjourned at 8:29 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan Moody, Superintendent of Schools