

Hermon School Committee
Minutes – Regular Meeting
Monday, October 3, 2016
Hermon High School Room #139

Providing Leadership to Enhance the Aspirations of our Children

Present

Mr. Anthony Reynolds, Chairperson
Mr. Ralph Carr, Vice Chairperson
Mrs. Debora Farnham
Mr. Ted Harris
Mrs. Debbie CoWallis
Mr. Michael Lana, Student Representative

Absent

Mrs. Anne Smith
Mrs. Shannon Knowles
Mr. Eric Byers, Student Representative

Staff: Mrs. Janice Clain, Mr. Jerry Kiesman, Mrs. Jenny Perry, Mr. Nate Petersen, Mr. Brian Walsh

Guests: Mrs. Donna Pulver

Item I: Mr. Reynolds, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item II: Agenda Adjustments

Mrs. Duran, Superintendent, requested two adjustments as follows: (1) under New Business, Part B, name a Delegate to the Maine School Board Association Fall conference, and at the end of the meeting to have an Executive Session.

Item III: Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of September 6, 2016.

Mr. Harris motioned, seconded by Mr. Carr, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of September 6, 2016, as presented.

Unanimous vote (5)

Item IV: PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATION

A. Public Comments*

Mrs. Janice Clain spoke on the history of the Spirit Club and Spirit Week in the fall, celebrating all sports and recognizing all students who participated in extra curricular activities. This year in response to a community group that wanted to establish a community homecoming event built around the school sports schedule, in particular one sport, student council agreed to plan a homecoming/spirit week in the first full week of the new school year. While students love the activities of spirit week, scheduling the event so early in the school year was detrimental to the school climate and jeopardized the transition to a new academic year with students and teachers distracted by daily dress up themes, emphasis on interclass competitions and changes to the daily schedule. Teachers did not have sufficient time to establish strong classroom expectations and routines, and students took advantage of those distractions. Teachers and administrators noticed serious disciplinary issues the following week and attributed them to new students, especially freshman, being caught up in the extracurricular focus of the previous week. This year has been an experiment and while HHS students participated enthusiastically in the events of homecoming spirit week, those who work in the schools that are charged with providing a quality education that prepares students for college, work and community recognizing the time and focus this year have not been beneficial to the school or to the students. Hermon High School will continue to hold spirit week and to celebrate all its students in the entire school program and the event will take place later in the school year when educational expectations have been well established and school organizations have had time to prepare optimally at the end of September and the beginning of October.

Item V: PERSONNEL

A. Resignations - None

B. Employment

Mr. Harris motioned, seconded by Mr. Carr, to employ both Hazel Chick, Ed Tech II at Hermon Middle School and Stephanie Campbell, Ed Tech III in the Pre-K Program.

Unanimous vote (5)

C. Extra Curricular Appointments 2016-2017

Mr. Carr motioned, seconded by Mrs. CoWallis to accept the High School Extra Curricular Appointments, as presented.

Unanimous vote (5)

Mr. Harris motioned, seconded by Mr. Carr to accept the Middle School Extra Curricular Appointments, as presented.

Unanimous vote (4)

Item VI: OLD BUSINESS**A. Excused Absence of School Committee Member/s**

Both Mrs. Knowles and Eric Byers sent emails stating that they had other obligations.

Item VII: NEW BUSINESS**A. HSC Goals and Objectives 2016-2017**

Mrs. Duran asked if the committee wanted to have a special meeting to talk about the goals and objectives for this year. Mr. Reynolds suggested receiving a copy of the goals and objectives from last year to see how many they did, and then if they have any new goals, they can be added.

B. Name a Delegate to the Maine School Board Association Fall Conference

Each year in November, we have the Maine School Board Association Fall Conference. We try to name a delegate who will vote and represent us when they vote on the proposed resolutions. A copy of the resolutions was shared. October 27th is the day the school board representative will vote, but the conference is on the 27th and 28th.

Mr. Carr motioned, and Mrs. CoWallis seconded to elect Mr. Harris as the representative at the conference.

Unanimous vote (5)

Item VIII: REPORTS**A. Principals**

Mr. Walsh mentioned that Mrs. Smith visited the three schools, and she was amazed with all of the changes since she had taught there. If any of the other Board members would like a tour, please contact him.

Mrs. Perry stated that last week they had their last curriculum night by grade level. In the past, the students were not involved, but this year they were included. It was an incredibly positive tweak to it. They were given a syllabus of what they are doing in each grade level classrooms, as well as some of the work that their children are doing. In Mrs. O'Clair's classroom, she had an experiment set up for where parents with their children had to work together and it was delightful to watch. Also, their students have reached their first 5,000 Hawk Wings goal, and this Friday, they will be doing a schoolwide community building activity.

Mr. Kiesman had nothing further to add.

B. Superintendent

Mrs. Duran spoke with Ed Marsh, and they both believe that they are all set to go to referendum. They have finished their work with WBRC. If we are approved at referendum, then we will go out to bid for a design, and perhaps a design build. We may need a construction manager to guide that process according to Mr. Marsh because we are still trying to lower several costs in this concept. The committee feels some costs are a little high yet, and they want to get as much for the taxpayers money as they possibly can. Once we have that, then we will be able to start presenting something to the community. At this point she will be forwarding to Mr. Kiesman and Mrs. Perry to put a notice to taxpayers in to the school newsletters letting them know we are asking for their support on this project on November 8th. She also has an article ready to go in to the Hermon Connection which will go out the week before the referendum. After some brief discussion, it was suggested to also request an article be put into the Bangor Daily News towards the end of the month, and coordinate with the town manager to give them a statement.

C. School Committee Follow-up and Request for Information

Mr. Harris had some questions relating to Powerschool updates and directions for logging on this year. He also inquired as to the change in the Propane service and responsibility for the propane cage.

Mrs. Farnham, Mrs. CoWallis and Mr. Carr had nothing further to add.

D. Other

Mr. Lana stated that last week there was spaghetti dinner and a silent auction fundraiser to benefit a student and her family after a fire at their house. He believes around \$2,000 was raised for the family. Also, there was a JROTC Penobscot River canoe trip last week and on Wednesday of this week. It was an educational trip with guides that spoke on the river's logging and native history, and the current status of it. They will also be visiting water treatment plants in Bangor and Brewer. Also last week there were freshman elections for student council representative and for class representatives.

Also introduced was Nathan Petersen, Middle School B Soccer coach.

Item IX: Mr. Harris motioned, seconded by Mr. Carr, to approve Special Warrant # 6 of September 14th, Warrant # 7 of September 23rd, and Warrant # 8 of October 7, 2016.

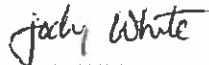
Unanimous vote (4)

Item X: Mr. Carr motioned, seconded by Mrs. CoWallis, to enter into Executive Session at 7:00 p.m. pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (A) to discuss compensation of employees.

Item XI: Mr. Carr motioned, seconded by Mr. Harris, to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

Unanimous vote (5)

Respectfully submitted,



Jody White
Recording Secretary

Janice Clain, teacher at Hermon High School since 1980 and co-advisor of Student Council since 2001.

Shortly after moving to this building and in response to a student editorial stating that school spirit was dead, one of our teachers established a spirit club and initiated a Spirit Week in the fall. That event celebrated all sports and recognized all students who participated in extracurricular activities, including sports and co-curricular organizations. When that teacher left Hermon High School, Student Council took responsibility for planning and carrying out Spirit Week. The Council has worked very hard to make the event memorable and all-inclusive, celebrating participation in all extracurricular activities, including sports, clubs, service organizations, JROTC and visual and performing arts. Graduating seniors routinely cite Spirit Week and Winter Carnival as highlights of their high school careers.

This year, in response to a community group that wanted to establish a community homecoming event built around the school sports schedule, and in particular one sport, Student Council agreed to plan a Homecoming / Spirit Week in the first full week of the new school year. The Council set about to prepare the fall events and reached out to incoming Freshmen in the spring, trying to prepare them for the traditional Spirit Week activities. But with nearly three months away from school and with new personnel in all the organizations that contribute to the week, Student Council, class officers, band, Key Club, JROTC, there were important pieces that weren't ready.

While students loved the activities of the Homecoming / Spirit Week, especially the rousing Friday afternoon assembly, scheduling the event so early in the school year was detrimental to the school climate and jeopardized the transition to a new academic year. With students and teachers distracted by daily dress up themes, emphasis on interclass competitions, and changes to the daily schedule, teachers did not have sufficient time to establish strong classroom expectations and routines, and students took advantage of those distractions. Teachers and administrators noticed serious disciplinary issues the following week and attributed those problems to students, especially the new Freshmen, being caught up in the extracurricular focus of the previous week.

I asked my Spanish 4 students to write their weekly composition on the difference between Spirit Week and Homecoming. They mentioned some of the following points: building the week around the schedule of one sport made players on other teams feel less valued; building the school schedule around community celebrations revived the town divisions between HHS students that the school has worked so hard to diminish. Some students looked up the word for homecoming and found the translation as "festival of former students," and noted that there were no events for former students and few for current students; in fact, with no communication between the community organizers and the school regarding their plans, current students didn't participate unless their organization had been invited to do so. One student did write: "It doesn't matter whether we call it Homecoming or Spirit Week, as long as students participate."

In conclusion, this year has been an experiment. While HHS students participated enthusiastically in the events of Homecoming / Spirit Week, those who work in the schools and who are charged with providing a quality education that prepares students for college, work and community recognize that the timing and focus this year have not been beneficial. Hermon High School will continue to hold Spirit Week and to celebrate all its students for their enthusiastic participation in the entire school program, and that event will take place later in the school year, when educational expectations have been well established, and school organizations have had time to prepare, optimally at the end of September to the beginning of October.