

**Revised**

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education met in regular session on Wednesday, February 10, 2021 at 7:00 PM remotely.

Board members present: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino

Board members absent: None

Administration present: Dr. Schuch, Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Neubig, Director of Finance and Mrs. DiMaggio, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Mrs. Keane, Director of Student Services and Special Education, Mr. Brough, Interim Human Resource Specialist, Mr. Falcone, Principal of CRHS, Mr. Ford, Principal of John Lyman School, Mrs. Melillo, Dean of Academic and Student Services at CRHS, Mrs. Murray, Principal of Brewster School, Mr. Pietrasko, Director of Infrastructure and Security Technology, Mr. Sadinsky, Principal of Strong Middle School and Mrs. Stone, Principal of Middlefield Memorial School

Mr. Moore called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Approval of Agenda**

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to approve the agenda, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried.*

**Public Comment**

None.

**CRHS Reporters - Jaden Astle, Cadence Hurlbert and Noelle Sorensen**

Noelle Sorensen wanted to let the board know how hard the teachers throughout the district have been working to keep learning at the level it's always been. She takes an AP psychology course and her teacher has done an amazing job. They do activities exemplify the materials. She feels that all of the teachers have gone above and beyond to make sure the students are still enjoying the learning process.

Jaden Astle wanted to acknowledge the work of the math teachers at Coginchaug. He is currently taking two math course, AP statistics and AP calculus. He has noticed that his teachers have been able to create an inclusive environment, for students in person and remote. They utilize different strategies to be sure the students at home have equal opportunities. One of the problems with online learning is students have trouble being engaged and included in the learning, however he feels that virtual students feel comfortable in both of his classes.

Cady Hurlbert reported that she has always taken academically-challenging classes and is taking a UCONN English course this year. They typically have a group discussion on the books they are reading, as well as connections to current events. They have just recently discussed The Scarlet Letter, Jekyll and

Hyde and The Stranger. She has found that the roundtable discussions are some of her favorite moments in classes. These discussions also allow the remote learners to engage as well. She wanted to acknowledge how hard all of the teachers have been working to provide the students with the best possible education and thanked them, from all of the students.

Mr. Moore asked if the students have decided where they are going to college and Cady stated that she is going to Oberlin in Ohio. Noelle is going to Susquehanna in Pennsylvania and Jaden has not decided yet.

Cady noted that the most difficult thing for her is keeping in touch with her friends who are remote. The discussions in classes have really helped with that.

### **Approval of Minutes**

#### **A. Board of Education regular session meeting - January 13, 2021**

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to approve the minutes of the Board of Education regular session meeting of January 13, 2021, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of the Board of Education regular session meeting of January 13, 2021, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried.*

#### **Next Board Meeting - February 24, 2021 at 7:00 PM**

### **COVID-19 Response Update**

Dr. Schuch continues to be impressed with the district's commitment to in-person learning and being able to do remote learning concurrently. More is being learned about the COVID variants, but there is positive news. In the local health district, the case counts declined in January for the third consecutive month, however they are in one of the highest case count seasons since the pandemic began. They do expect the decline to continue. Dr. Schuch asked that everyone stay vigilant with all of the protocols. He would also ask families and employees to make wise choices during the upcoming vacation time and to up-front with the district about any travel plans. Because of spread in the community, learning has been a little disrupted as has extracurricular activities. They did have to temporarily suspend the boys' basketball program as a result of some cases. They also had the entire eighth grade on remote learning and the school that has been hit the hardest has been Brewster which is now in their second week of fully remote learning. Dr. Schuch has been very impressed at how everyone involved has responded to the remote learning. This is occurring primarily because of the unavailability of staff. He sent his appreciation to families and staff.

Dr. Schuch also reported that the next phase of vaccinations begin tomorrow, with individuals 65 to 74 now being eligible. They will encourage all employees in that age group to get vaccinated at the earliest opportunity. They are also waiting for the decision about when front-line essential workers, including teachers and other school employees, will become eligible.

Lastly, Dr. Schuch and Mr. Falcone briefed everyone about winter sports at the last meeting but Dr. Taylor had asked that the topic be revisited. Dr. Taylor felt that the district got burned by the state's ultimate decision the last time around on sports. He still has misgivings about having sports that have a degree of contact between students, for both the sports activity itself and for the social structure around it

(including getting to and from the event). Dr. Taylor hopes that the district looks to continue mitigation processes.

## Committee Reports

### A. Policy Committee Meeting - January 20, 2021

#### 1. Vote to approve Policy Regarding Retention of Electronic Records and Information

Mr. Moore noted that the attorney talked with the committee about the retention of electronic records and information.

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hicks, to approve the Policy Regarding Retention of Electronic Records and Information.*

*In favor of approving the Policy Regarding Retention of Electronic Records and Information: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried.*

#### 2. Vote to remove Policy 6156 Program Choice

Mr. Hicks explained that the committee voted to strike the policy on program choice as it no longer seems necessary.

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to remove Policy 6156 Program Choice from the Policy Manual.*

Dr. Taylor asked if this would have any implication on choosing a school rather than the program or if that procedure would remain as it is. Mr. Moore stated it would be the same procedure with an extension of time. Dr. Schuch added that he and the principals have talked about a March 15<sup>th</sup> deadline for kindergarten choice.

*In favor of removing Policy 6156 Program Choice from the Policy Manual: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried.*

### B. Utilization Committee Meeting - January 21, 2021

#### 1. Vote on resolution to demolish Korn School building

Mr. Moore drafted a resolution on the demolition of Korn School and sent it to the attorneys. He had included options, including a date by which the town would take it over, a date that would allow the town to take over maintenance and/or demolition. The attorneys were not excited about that because there was too much that was conditional upon other people and would cause the district to vote every time there was a change. They suggested that the district authorize the Superintendent and Board Chairman to negotiate some of those issues and then have a resolution on closure.

Mr. Moore now drafted that “the Board of Education hereby authorizes the Superintendent and Chairman to negotiate with the Town of Durham the transfer of ownership and operation of the Korn School building to the Town of Durham by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Further, if the Town of Durham is unable to accept the

ownership or operation of the Korn School building by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the Board of Education shall pursue the demolition of the building and financing of such demolition.”

Mr. Moore talked with Laura Francis and she stated that there was no legal way that she could accept ownership of the building by March 31<sup>st</sup> so he felt that July 1<sup>st</sup> would be a good date. He also mentioned that they would not be able to get financing until sometime next year at the earliest.

*Mr. Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the resolution as stated above.*

Mrs. Booth stated that her only concern was that it will start to get moldy in the building once it starts to get warm, but Mrs. Neubig explained that the chillers are working. She added that they recently had to take a panel from Korn to put into another school which means they will lose control of air in two rooms.

Dr. Friedrich asked if the resolution could read does not, instead of is unable to. He thinks that is unable to invites interpretation. Mr. Yamartino accepted the amendment.

Mr. Yamartino added that if they are going to allow until July for a decision and/or transfer of ownership and expenses, that is it incumbent upon the Board of Education to include the full amount of the costs for the next fiscal year in the current budget. It also does not allow the district to put the authorization of capital for the demolition on the referendum with the budget. He asked if they would be looking for a special referendum between July and November or if they would wait until November. Mr. Moore felt they would wait until November.

Mr. Yamartino asked if Mrs. Francis had given any indication that Durham will have a referendum in May to say they are interested and Mr. Moore stated that she had not. Mr. Yamartino asked how Durham will make a decision by July 1<sup>st</sup> if it isn't on the May referendum. Mr. Moore did not know the answer to that.

Dr. Friedrich wondered why they can't put forth a bond for demolition expenses and Dr. Taylor agreed with both Mr. Yamartino and Dr. Friedrich. He felt that this has been pushed off for way too long. Dr. Taylor was hoping to move forward with a vote for demolition tonight, with the caveat that if the town wants to pick up the tab, they can do that. He hasn't seen any indication that the town is moving in that direction, so he would like to see bonding for demolition on the May referendum. Dr. Friedrich would like that also.

Mr. Moore stated that the Utilization committee had discussed not moving to demolition if the Town of Durham picked up the operating expenses or ownership of the building. They had not decided to just demolish the building. Mr. Yamartino believes that the Utilization committee wanted assurances that the town was moving forward with absorbing the costs of operating the building so that they did not have to continue to be in the district's budget and that was the purpose of the March 31<sup>st</sup> date. Mrs. Neubig stated it was in the high \$70,000s to \$80,000s to operate Korn School, including insurance. Mr. Yamartino reminded everyone that it has been more than five years that Durham has been looking at this. He felt that if Durham is not intending to include the expenses in their upcoming budget and have it voted on in May, then he doesn't see how they can make a decision by July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Dr. Friedrich felt that they were beginning a process to actually demolish the building since they have held off for so long. If they get the authorization to issue bonds and hire a demolition contractor, they can always build checkpoints in but something has to happen at some point. Dr. Friedrich also reminded everyone that the Town of Middlefield continues to foot the bill for this and that is completely wrong. He felt it would be quite reasonable to include the demolition bonding on the referendum in May.

Mr. Moore reiterated that he was just trying to follow the recommendations of the Utilization committee and everyone is certainly welcome to change the resolution.

Mrs. Booth also had hoped that this would be decided before July and thought that they had already given Durham a letter last year with a date. She would hate to see it pushed off any further.

Mr. Moore reread the resolution and Mr. Yamartino suggested that instead of notify, that be changed to notify its intent to and go back to the March 31<sup>st</sup> date. That would mean that actual ownership might take longer, but they would be able to put the expenses in this year's budget. It would also allow the district to move forward with a bonding referendum in May for the demolition. Dr. Friedrich felt that they should put out a bonding referendum in the spring. He added that they all agree that they will not move forward with demolition if the town relieves the district of the building.

Mrs. Booth asked if they had even decided to bond the demolition costs. Mrs. Neubig did solicit quotes and received one for \$750,000 to \$1 million depending on soil remediation and a quote from the architect of \$1 million. One option would be to bond the costs, another to break it up over three years in capital reserve (which would mean they couldn't save for anything else) and the last one would be to budget it all in one year which would be over a 2 percent increase in the budget. Dr. Friedrich stated that this should then be part of the board's budget discussion. Mr. Yamartino felt that they did not need to vote to go to bonding tonight as they are not sure how it will be funded, but the resolution, as amended, could be voted on.

Mr. Moore reread the resolution, "the Board of Education hereby authorizes the Superintendent and Chairman to negotiate with the Town of Durham the transfer of ownership and/or operation of the Korn School building to the Town of Durham by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Further, if the Town of Durham does not notify the Board of Education of its intent to take the ownership or operation of the Korn School building by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the Board of Education shall pursue the demolition of the building and financing of such demolition."

Dr. Friedrich felt that that meant that the town has to take ownership or undertake operation on March 31<sup>st</sup> and that was supposed to have been July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Roraback noticed that the administrators were present at the meeting and asked if they had any reports at this time.

Mrs. Booth asked what would happen if the town decided to pay for the operation of the building but then decides not to take ownership. Dr. Friedrich noted that that was why there were two deadlines, notification by March 31<sup>st</sup> and taking ownership by July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Yamartino noted that Dr. Schuch and Mr. Moore will be negotiating and can hopefully come up with what is mutually acceptable to both the town and the Board of Education.

Mr. Moore read the resolution once again, "the Board of Education hereby authorizes the Superintendent and Chairman to negotiate with the Town of Durham the transfer of ownership and/or operation of the Korn School building to the Town of Durham by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Further, if the Town of Durham does not notify the Board of Education by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021 of its intent to take the ownership or operational control of the Korn School building by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the Board of Education shall pursue the demolition of the building and financing of such demolition."

Mr. Yamartino felt that actual ownership should be July 1<sup>st</sup> and notification by March 31<sup>st</sup>. Mrs. Booth also asked if operational control meant payment and agreed that operational expenses would be better. Mr. Yamartino and Dr. Friedrich both agreed to that amendment as well.

*In favor of approving the resolution, as amended: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Mr. Moore abstained as he will have to do the negotiations. Motion carried.*

### **C. Student Achievement Committee Meeting - January 28, 2021**

Mrs. Petrella reported that Mr. Ford stated that the decision has been made to transition to a single-grade configuration at John Lyman School beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. It was felt that this configuration is best for the students and will allow teachers to focus on one grade level. The curricula and standards make a single-grade configuration the best option and there will be better alignment and more opportunities for integration of content units, NGSS science standards and new social studies standards. These changes will not mean a change in classroom or building culture and they remain committed to be a community of learners and having a strong belief in the Integrated Day and HOT philosophies and practices which are student-centered. Mr. Ford stressed that this decision is not a result of COVID. He plans to share this information with parents very soon and will report back. He does not feel that this will have any significant effect on instructional staffing since the school population will be essentially the same. Aspects of the Lyman culture have permeated throughout the district, with Brewster having assemblies and teachers-in-residence at Brewster, Memorial and Strong.

Dr. Friedrich added that there has been very rapid change in curriculum and it has been a huge challenge for teachers to keep up with that in two different grades.

The committee also talked about the Wednesday in-person student schedules and Mrs. Petrella reviewed the schedules at each level. There is no homework except for unfinished work. Mrs. DiMaggio has looked at teacher absences over the past four years and found that less teachers are out this year than in the last three years. This year, there were about 690 absences, not counting COVID-related, and in the same period last year there were 1,058 absences, 904 the year before and 1,025 the year before that. Half-day Wednesdays have helped with teacher well-being. They meet with small groups of students on Wednesday afternoons, especially cohort C at the elementary level. The related arts teachers are recording SEL videos for elementary students. PLCs with special ed teachers and interventionists are conducted on Wednesday afternoons and most SAT and PPT meetings are also held at that time. Professional learning activities are also conducted during these half-days. The two remaining professional development days have been moved to Wednesday afternoons so there are no additional early releases.

Mr. Yamartino commented that with all of the hand-washing and mask-wearing, cases of influenza are significantly down this year so there may be multiple reasons for the lower absences rate. Dr. Friedrich gave a shout out to the teachers and Mrs. DiMaggio had mentioned that this was evidence that the teachers know that it's tough, if not impossible, to get subs and they are more committed to coming to school. Mrs. DiMaggio added that teachers want to support their colleagues, but also be there for their students.

### **D. Well-Being Committee Meeting - February 2, 2021**

Mrs. Caramanello reported that their committee is growing and they now have a pastor as well as several members of the communities that have worked in the equity space. They also had several parents and students join the last meeting. The parents shared some experiences that their children have had and it

was a very open conversation. They decided that the first priority is to get a policy on diversity, equity and inclusion implemented and they will present it to the full board. Staff shared that they would like to have more professional development on this issue on an ongoing basis.

The students felt that all of their days are the same and they are looking for ways to possibly make more exciting events. A parent mentioned organizing a scavenger hunt.

Parents are very happy to have the committee as an outlet to share their thoughts and ideas and felt that they were being listened to.

Mr. Moore added that he will send out a draft policy to the board members. They are waiting for comments from the committee and will then forward it to the Policy Committee for review.

#### **E. Educational Resources Committee Meeting - February 10, 2021**

Mrs. Geraci reported that ERC met just before this meeting and discussed the budget process/timeline. It will likely follow the format that has been used in the prior years. The public hearing will be on April 7<sup>th</sup>.

The committee spent the majority of the time reviewing the analysis that Mrs. Neubig put together on the various scenarios and 10-year projected costs. That will likely go back to the Utilization Committee shortly. They did have a discussion about the best way for this information to be presented to the public.

#### **Communications**

Mr. Moore received communication from Rick Parmelee who asked that they not demolish the Korn School building.

#### **Superintendent's Report**

##### **A. 2021-2022 Budget Presentation**

Dr. Schuch has tried his best to become familiar with the details of the budget in the short time he has been here, but he is counting on Mrs. Neubig and the board to help him navigate the budget. The budget does face a major challenge this year, with very little fund balance available to offset expenses. Because of that, they have made a deliberate effort to reduce expenses.

Looking at the overall numbers, Dr. Schuch explained that the gross budget is actually down almost 1 percent from last year, but even with that decrease the net budget does increase almost 3.66 percent.

Mrs. Neubig began by reviewing the object details for expenditures. Most categories have decreased, though salaries have increased by 2.3 percent due to contractual obligations and a 96.5 percent funding level. Benefits also increased slightly and purchased services decreased. Buildings and grounds, operating services and supplies have also decreased. Capital increased by 6.36 percent because they fully allocated the 1 percent maximum for capital funding. Dues and fees decreased significantly as did debt service. Mrs. Neubig explained that some projects in the bonding package have been intentionally delayed to accommodate the energy project.

Moving on to the revenue side of the budget, the biggest outlier is the fund balance carryover. Last year was the first year the district applied the current-year surplus to the budget. Mrs. Neubig anticipates a

surplus this year and the board can discuss what will happen with that. She also pointed out that buildings and grounds revenue is down \$7,000 as the district is not renting out the facilities.

Mrs. Neubig then reviewed the fund balance numbers of what was applied to the 2020-2021 budget and what is available for this year's budget.

Mrs. Neubig pointed out the major budget drivers for this year, beginning with the fund balance. Salaries, health insurance and capital needs have all contributed to the increase. Salaries make up 56 to 57 percent of the total budget, with 16 to 17 percent for benefits. They are hoping to see some movement in health insurance as the loss ratio is down to 94. Decreases in this year's budget include debt service and a reduction of three FTEs.

Looking at mitigation strategies, Mrs. Neubig budgeted salaries at 96.5 percent this year as opposed to 95 which was more aggressive. Contracts are always negotiated to save the most money for the district. The energy conservation project is almost finished and they are starting to see some savings on the electric bill. Consortium supply and fuel purchasing continues through the CREC marketplace and a consortium for fuel as well. Obviously, they are actively seeking grant funds wherever possible.

Mrs. Neubig then went on to review the capital reserve and explained that this will be the last year for saving for the turf replacement. They hope to replace the turf in the 2022-2023 school year. They have been on a regular cycle for classroom furniture replacement as well as unanticipated building repairs and maintenance. The sprinkler system pump house on Pickett Lane is the last item and is basically the remaining funds possible to make up the \$360,000. This project has already been presented to the Building committee and the building will be moved above-ground and to the side of the driveway.

Looking at debt service, Mrs. Neubig reviewed the drop-off for next year and explained that the decrease is directly related to the intentional delay of some of the \$6.9 million bonding projects. The debt service steadily declines year after year and the existing debt drops off at the end of the 2024-202 year. She pointed out that the debt service will increase next year as the bonding projects will be underway.

Mrs. Neubig then showed a slide with the history of the budget. She pointed out the 2016-2017 year which had the largest decrease as that was when the Korn savings were realized. This year's decrease is really the largest decrease other than that year, but it is also the largest increase in the net budget.

Mrs. Neubig then reviewed the per pupil expenditure history and it is estimated to be \$22,712 in 2020-2021 and \$23,960 in 2021-2022. This is simply because expenditures are essentially remaining the same and enrollment is declining enough to make a significant impact.

Looking at the town allocation with this proposed budget, the population did shift a bit and Durham's percentage went up from 66.26 to 66.74 and Middlefield saw a decrease from 33.74 to 33.26. That leaves the budget proportion of \$23 million to Durham and \$11 million to Middlefield. The governor's recommended budget today showed the ECS grants at \$3,165,733 for Durham and \$1,837,504 for Middlefield. Comparing these budget numbers to this year, Durham will see an increase of \$1,013,983 and Middlefield will see an increase of \$262,735.

Mr. Yamartino asked about the health insurance and wondered what would happen if the increase did come in at 19.5. Mrs. Neubig explained that each point is around \$30,000, so it would increase it by another \$90,000. Mr. Yamartino also asked about the vacancy factor this year and Mrs. Neubig felt that there will be an overage of about \$200,000 but she is hoping that it will work itself out over the next few months. Mr. Yamartino asked if the insurance also includes the \$25,000 rider because Korn is now

considered a vacant building and Mrs. Neubig stated that she did not budget for that, but it would go under Property Insurance, under the Operating Services line. Mr. Yamartino also asked about the estimated fund balance and if all of that was being applied to the budget. She confirmed that it is being applied to the budget. She added that they allocated \$616,000 but the surplus was more in the area of \$750,000, so the additional amount did go to fund balance for next year. Mr. Yamartino's last question was about the current capital reserve balance and Mrs. Neubig stated it was about \$700,000 to \$900,000. He asked how much of that was allocated to end-of-life replacements in the coming budget year and Mrs. Neubig explained that that number does not have any of that as most of that was handled in the bonding. Mr. Yamartino asked if money allocated to a specific item can be moved mid-year to another item and asked if that were the case here. Mrs. Neubig explained that the money cannot be spent on operating expenses, but believes line items can be changed with board approval. Mrs. Neubig will research this further. Mr. Yamartino mentioned that if they were to take all of that money and put everything on hold, they could potentially fund Korn School next year but he is not advocating that. He also noted that John Lyman could face a catastrophic failure of a piece of equipment this coming year and the capital money could be allocated to fund that, but again he would not advocate for that. Mr. Yamartino wanted to go on the record with the fact that he is very uncomfortable with the district moving forward in this budget process without allocating money for the continued operation of Lyman School. Without a decision to close it, he feels that the district is obligated to keep it operating. Mr. Yamartino thanked Mrs. Neubig for a very thoughtful budget.

Mrs. Neubig will share the budget book with everyone and will make hard copies tomorrow. The proposed budget will be posted on the district website tomorrow and she will also send out a Google doc for questions.

Mr. Moore asked about the federal grants and Mrs. Neubig explained that they cannot be used to replace a budget item and they can only be used for other programs to enhance learning. As example, you cannot fund three existing teachers, but you can fund three new teachers.

Mr. Moore reviewed that the board will hold budget meetings every two weeks beginning on February 24<sup>th</sup> until April 7<sup>th</sup>.

## **B. Superintendent's Transition Update**

Dr. Schuch reviewed that he is working hard to build relationships and learn as much as he can about the district. He is really targeting three fundamental questions: the strengths, the challenges and the future direction of the district. He has met with more than 100 people and has received many emails as well. He has also made 16 school visits thus far and he will continue to do that. He has also attended two regular board meetings, one board retreat and six committee meetings in the past month or so. All of this is helping him understand how the organization is governed by the board. He does feel that his transition work will continue just as intensely for the next three months, culminating with a formal report to the board in May or June.

Mrs. Booth noted that her daughter was very excited to meet Dr. Schuch today. Mrs. Caramanello added that the Project Graduation committee met last night and a lot of the parents were very impressed with the groups that Dr. Schuch has been forming and how he has reached out to so many in such a short time.

## **C. Other (if applicable)**

Dr. Schuch added that they have committed to no early release on Wednesdays if there is a delayed opening. They have also adjusted Wednesdays to full days when they feel it makes sense, such as when

there are two other snow days in the week. They have also decided that Friday, March 12<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, May 11<sup>th</sup> will now be normal release days and the professional development will be held on the Wednesdays. Dr. Schuch also added that they feel snow days are behind them now and the responsible thing would be to have remote learning days moving forward. This will also make it easier to lock in a graduation date.

Dr. Schuch is proud to officially announce that Jaden Astle will be the valedictorian this year and Rhea Patel will be the salutatorian.

### **Director of Finance's Report**

Mrs. Neubig explained that MTA is at 35 percent expended and 46 percent of revenue received. The general fund is at 56 percent expended and 61 percent revenue received. Looking back to last year, the general fund was at 56 percent expended, with 62 percent revenue received. The district did receive the coronavirus relief funds which helped pay for all of the PPE and staff overtime. Mrs. Neubig is anticipating a surplus again this year, barring any unforeseen expenses.

The septic pump at Lyman was recently replaced (\$3,100), they removed a building automation panel was moved from Korn to the high school which removes the ability to control air in two rooms at Korn. A new one would have cost \$7,500.

The snow budget is two-thirds expended to date, having spent \$44,000 of the \$66,000 budgeted, and snow is expected again tonight.

The first wave of coronavirus relief funds were \$165,000 and Mrs. Neubig has applied for the second half which should be received soon. The ESSER2 funds are \$194,700 and the state has said they will open the grant application on February 22<sup>nd</sup> and the administrative team will have to determine how that money will be used. However, in the governor's budget released today, they show two payments over two years.

Mrs. Neubig asked the board to approve funding the loss in the food service which was \$101,000. The FEMA grant for \$76,000 was denied, however her contact at FEMA said that a lot of school districts have appealed that and there may be another opportunity.

Mrs. Neubig reiterated that the demolition costs for Korn School is still valid at around \$1 million. She also mentioned that the price of the bullet-proof glass for the security vestibules has increased by 80 percent and that will drastically increase the cost of that project. In addition, the last renovation of Strong School in 2002 included the doors and nothing less than 20 years old will be reimbursed. The state did say they would inspect and may waive that. She thought that the board may have to authorize more money for the vestibules which means she would have to pull the grant and reapply with a new rate or not move forward with the project. She hopes to have new numbers soon.

Mr. Yamartino felt that they would need a motion to transfer the funds, but because it is not on the agenda, it should wait until next meeting. Mrs. Neubig agreed that it can wait until then.

**New Business**

**A. Vote to set graduation date**

Dr. Schuch explained that graduation is proposed to be held on Thursday, June 17, 2021. He explained that he is used to a graduation date being fixed and never moving, but understands why it's different here and why the board needs to approve it.

*Mr. Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to set the graduation date for June 17, 2021.*

*In favor of setting the graduation date for June 17, 2021: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried.*

**Public Comment**

Jim Irish, from Middlefield, thanked the board for moving forward toward a deadline on the closure process for Korn School. He noted that Middlefield has been paying a third of the cost while waiting for Durham to take ownership. Mr. Irish also thanked Mrs. Neubig for a really nice job on the budget proposal.

**Adjournment**

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mr. Yamartino, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Education.*

*In favor of adjourning the regular meeting of the Board of Education: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Caramanello, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion carried.*

Meeting was adjourned at 8:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz  
Alwaz First