

Lisbon Board Of Education
Lisbon Regional School
Lisbon, New Hampshire

September 14, 2021
5:00 PM

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Owen Clark, Vice Chairman Bob Adams, Principal Jackie Daniels, Dean of Students Paula Frank, Superintendent Tari Thomas, Business Administrator Toni Butterfield, Board Members Arthur Boutin, Steve Sherry, Lori Williams, Nina Brown, Scott Peterson, and Mo Chandler.

Public attendees: Amy Aldrich, Diane Aldrich, Nikki Woods, Samantha Hudson, Jason Hudson, Jo Lee Horvath, Rebecca Metcalf, Maria Thuin, Anna Richardson, Megan Johnson, Savannah Mitton, Thomas Perry, Mellissa Burgess, Dani McDonald, Kimberly Stewart, Karen Superchi, Sheena Danforth, Traci Lockwood

Chairman Owen Clark called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

Chairman Owen Clark opened the meeting explaining this meeting was an emergency meeting due to positive COVID cases within the school.

Board member Nina Brown suggested making a motion for a mask mandate to all staff, students, and visitors explaining that data supports wearing a mask as it slows the transfer of COVID.

Maria Thuin began the public discussion by suggesting remote learning. Maria explained she feels remote learning should be offered if a mask mandate is ordered by the school board as she feels masks should be at the discretion of the parent.

Rebecca Metcalf stated that it looks as though a spread is happening and asked what the protocol is for remote learning.

Chairman Owen Clark explained there isn't a remote option, the mask mandate is an attempt to stop the spread.

Board Member Nina Brown explained the Governor did not give us a remote option for school opening.

Board Member Lori Williams asked if we, like other schools, could allow our nurse to conduct COVID tests like other schools.

Principal Jackie Daniels answered that we had not signed up for the in-school COVID rapid testing as a school.

Diane Aldrich shared 2 of her children, of different grades, have tested positive and she is still waiting on the test results of her other 2 kids that are also in different grades. Creating a possible exposure to 4 different grades. Diane expressed she is worried about the number of students who will come up positive from this spread.

Jason Hudson explained they have 2 kids with medical issues so there needs to be a remote option offered.

Some Public Attendees expressed it is a struggle for kids to wear masks.

Board Member Nina Brown explained most kids are fine with wearing masks. Board Member Brown voiced it's important our kids have to wear masks in school.

Rebecca Metcalf proclaimed, "I will not send my kids to school if masks are mandated."

Board Member Nina Brown explained wearing a mask helps prevent the spread of COVID.

Samantha Hudson reminded attendees Homecoming games are this weekend, there is a possible spread occurring in the school, there was a game last week played against another team. Samantha added one of Diane's children that tested positive for COVID is on this middle school sports team.

Diane Aldrich stated her daughter is in fact on the middle school soccer team.

Maria Thuin questioned if students can get mask exemptions for religious or medical reasons.

Board Member Nina Brown stated, "If you are that worried about your kids wearing a mask, you may need to find yourself a remote option."

Diane Aldrich wanted to add that eye symptoms or redness is another symptom her children had. The state had told her on the phone this was in fact a symptom of COVID. She wanted to share this as other parents may not know of this and that there are other symptoms as well.

Samantha Hudson explained her daughters have to get tested because of these positive cases. She stated she has students that are on IEPs and if she pulls her kids out for homeschooling they will lose services such as speech therapy.

Some Public Attendees expressed they feel the school should go remote while decisions are being made. They stated COVID is spreading.

Chairman Owen Clark explained if a child is already exposed, going remote won't prevent that kid from getting COVID.

Jason Hudson explained going remote could prevent the other students from getting COVID. He expressed the positive cases affect the sports teams as there were positive cases for players within the sports teams.

Principal Jackie Daniels expressed there have not been positive cases within high school sports teams for Lisbon at this time.

Samantha Hudson explained she cannot pull her kids out of school without their current services being taken away this is something the school told her before. She explained she found out through Facebook her daughter was exposed.

Some Public Attendees expressed their desire for remote options.

Board Member Nina Brown proclaimed according to the COVID-19 Interactive Map all counties with the exception of Sullivan County are red zones meaning they are in a substantial level of community transmission.

Maria Thuin asked if masks stop COVID then why were cases continuing when everyone was wearing masks everywhere.

Chairman Owen Clark explained if everyone wears a mask it helps prevent the spreading of COVID.

Board Member Nina Brown added wearing a mask also helps prevent you from contracting COVID.

Some Public Attendees asked what we would risk by closing the school for 2 weeks in order to clean.

Chairman Owen Clark explained if we close school for 2 weeks now we would have to add two weeks at the end of the year. The closing days are treated as snow days per the Governor.

Some Public Attendees discussed the frustrations as a parent when it comes to being a working parent with children who need to quarantine. Some families cannot financially survive with the loss of income that comes with staying home.

Chairman Owen Clark asked if there are any added expenses to the school going remote.

Principal Jackie Daniels explained last year the Governor offered funding/programs for remote schooling options. We no longer have that meaning the funding/programming would have to come from the school creating an added expense.

Jason Hudson suggested the school be shut down to allow for cleaning to occur and any added expenses should come from the unencumbered funds that have been said would go back to the town.

Some Public Attendees agreed and said a 2-week shutdown didn't seem like much.

Board Member Nina Brown explained if the school is masking there should be a parental effect of community masking outside of school.

Jackson Hudson proclaimed we cannot police the community, "close the school-save lives."

Maria Thuin suggested the school shut down in the past when there were cases.

Chairman Owen Clark explained the school board didn't shut the school down, the government did. There were logistics the board had to follow for when the school had to be shut down.

Some Public Attendees asked why students haven't been mandated to wear masks, the school hasn't been shut down, and classes aren't totally quarantined.

Chairman Owen Clark explained the school board had to gather for a meeting to discuss the recent cases, gather public input, and inquire what they have legal/state permission to do as a school board.

Some Public Attendees suggest again to close the school for clean up.

Chairman Owen Clark proclaimed the first case occurred from outside the school community.

Some Public Attendees discussing the positive cases and disagreements with where the cases originated.

Board Member Mo Chandler explained the board was given guidelines from the government they were required to follow. We are now figuring out what we as a school board are entitled to do as well as gathering input from the public. She asked to hear from Nikki Woods as she saw she had her hand raised through Google Meet.

Nikki Woods explained as a teacher she understands the concerns about remote learning as it wasn't the best fit for everyone; many kids fell behind. At this point, cases are only in a few rooms. Last year with masks COVID wasn't spread in school. We clean every day. Closing for 2 weeks takes a lot of time and prep getting devices to kids. Believes even though some may disagree, a mask mandate is beneficial.

Some Public Attendees explained their frustrations with finding out cases through community members' posts on Facebook as well as through tonight's meeting.

Principal Jackie Daniels expressed she is making notifications as fast as she possibly can.

Chairman Owen Clark explained the board members are learning of cases just as fast as the community members are as the updates are coming in fast right now. Chairman Clark asked what the protocol is for vaccinated individuals.

Principal Jackie Daniels while reading off the state-provided guidance diagram explained the protocol is if you have had close household contact with a COVID confirmed person and you are fully vaccinated you will test 3-5 days after the exposure.

Board Member Nina Brown explained that it is a 10-day quarantine after last known exposure to positive tested persons for exposed, unvaccinated individuals.

Chairman Owen Clark asked for clarification on VLACS classes as to whether a child could hop into one if quarantined or whether the class is a whole semester-long.

Principal Jackie Daniels clarified VLACS classes are not a drop-in, they are full semester.

Some Public Attendees questioned if student/staff screening has been taken place?

Principal Jackie Daniels answered that screenings had not been taking place. Through MyMedBot last year the screening was dependent on parent and student disclosure of symptoms as well as temperatures. There has been discussion about bringing screening back in some way.

Chairman Owen Clark questioned whether the board can override the state's decision on remote options.

Superintendent Tari Thomas explained families can choose to pull their children out to home school through a program of their choosing or VLACS or the school board can vote to allocate funds to offer remote through VLACS or other programs as last year.

Diane Aldrich expressed her concern about her children infecting other students as the State told her today her COVID-positive kids would have been infectious last week; meaning students were exposed last week. She has 2 other children waiting on test results. She feels as a school they're not being responsible for handling this.

Sheena Danforth mentioned she has 1 child vaccinated and 1 child unvaccinated. When she asked her pediatrician for their recommendation, they recommended keeping the unvaccinated child out of school and test that child after 7 days.

Board Member Nina Brown stated follow your doctor's recommendation.

Chairman Owen Clark asked Board Member Bob Adams if the board can go into a non-public session at any time.

Board Member Bob Adams explained he believed they could.

Board Member Nina Brown Explained the board shouldn't make further decisions tonight regarding remote options for the school, however, it is in the school's best interest to vote towards a mask mandate.

Principal Jackie Daniels suggested legal be contacted before making decisions on remote options.

Board Member Tucker Clark agreed the board needs to contact legal.

Principal Jackie Daniels explained to the board she would contact the Commissioner and Department of Education.

Some Public Attendees suggested sending out a parent survey.

Principal Jackie Daniels agreed a parent survey could be made.

Samantha Hudson inquired who she contact if she receives any positive results from her children's tests.

Principal Jackie Daniels suggested if your child tests positive for COVID to contact the school and the school will contact DHHS. Parents have to contact us as doctors' offices, emergency rooms, Convenient MD, etc. do not contact us to make us aware.

Diane Aldrich reminded community members there is a difference between the Rapid COVID test and the PCR test. When she went to the doctor she did not have symptoms so she had to do a PCR test as the doctors said only those with symptoms can do a rapid test.

Daniel McDonald asked why COVID contacts are being treated differently this year with quarantine requirements (or lack-there-of).

Principal Jackie Daniels explained the school follows the guidance from the state. The state had made changes since last year.

Daniel McDonald "If we don't nip this it will continue."

Some Public Attendees discussed frustrations towards the school board and the lack of wanting to shut the school down. Some Public Attendees explained they pay taxes to pay for this school and those in it.

Board Member Lori Williams explains she doesn't think masking is enough and suggests the school shut down. She also mentioned she is on the board and she too pays taxes.

Some Public Attendees agreed strongly with Board Member Lori Williams.

Chairman Owen Clark explained the board was told there would be no remote option from the state going into the school year. We were told if closures were going to happen then days would be added. Many members just found out the school had a positive basis and this decision cannot be made in 12 minutes. We need to look at this, figure out our options and what will work best, and contact legal advisement as well as the state.

Board Member Nina Brown explained in the meantime the board needs to vote in a mask mandate while a plan is being figured out.

Some Public Attendees argued a mask mandate isn't enough with 3 parents in this meeting having their kids tested, 2 of these kids being tested have Varsity soccer games. They suggest the school be shut down and cleaned up.

Chairman Owen Clark asked, "If you want us to shut down for 10 days, what is your basis for this?"

Tracy Lockwood explained kids had been in school for 11 days and there's already been a spread and this is why the school should shut down to clean now.

Chairman Clark added kids still got together any other time the school was shut down.

Board Member Nina Brown added, "If we shut down the school there will still be kids who develop symptoms and there will be kids who are asymptomatic".

A Public Attendee asked "Who is your contact through DHHS?" explained her sister works in infectious disease control in Rhode Island and asked permission for her to speak.

Natasha the Public Attendee's Sister "Are you in contact with Department of Health?"

Principal Jackie Daniels "yes".

Natasha the Public Attendee's Sister explained in Rhode Island contacts are considered all students in that positive cases classes.

A Public Attendee asked, "What if they share a lunchroom?"

Natasha the Public Attendee's Sister said, "Possibly, it depends on how closely they were sitting. You need to move fast."

Diane Aldrich explained she spoke with Dawn from DHHS and talked about her daughter discussing contact tracing. At that time Dawn didn't know about the other daughter's contacts. Diane explained Dawn asked her about the school, sports, classes, etc, and asked why the school hasn't been taking this into consideration.

Some Public Attendees added they have noticed some kids not wearing masks on busses when they're supposed to.

Kimberly Stewart mentioned both of their students in one of the classes tested positive at the same time and suggested this means another kid must have had COVID and been asymptomatic or otherwise in school with symptoms.

Diane Aldrich added that many people think of runny noses, headaches, fevers, etc, but there are many symptoms that people aren't realizing are COVID symptoms.

Chairman Clark, "Diane, you don't have to answer this, but may I ask, was your child wearing a mask?"

Diane Aldrich, "Yes, my kids were wearing masks"

Chairman Clark explained the board is gathering information now and does not have a stance currently on the remote options. The board isn't currently saying yes or no to remote, but rather discussing whether to mask mandate until remote options (or no remote) can be discussed as the decision involves other entities and takes time.

Board Member Mo Chandler added, "We appreciate everything you guys are giving us, some of us may agree with some of you. We are trying to get your input. Do you think all screening precautions from last year should be brought back?"

Some Public Attendees and members discussed screening precautions and that screenings do rely on parents and students both being truthful and fever-reducing medications not being used.

A Public Attendee asked what kind of timeline they could expect for a decision on remote learning or school being shut down.

Chairman Clark answered a decision would be made as soon as possible during this week, but the decision would not be made tonight, "Every time we went remote last year we went against the State's matrix. We never qualified for remote, but did it anyway at the detriment to the kids." "I have 3 kids, 2 still in Lisbon. I wouldn't do anything to harm my kids. I love my kids just as Sam or Jason love theirs. We are in a K-12 school where some of our grades are vaccinated and others aren't and COVID can spread through our school due to that."

A Public Attendee explained not every kid is a healthy kid. She explained she tried to keep her kids out of medical exemption but was told no.

Chairman Clark “We were told no, State didn’t give us an option-didn’t give Jackie an option”, added, “We can’t operate as we did last year. We need a better understanding of what is going on right now.”

A Public Attendee added, “Kids could be asymptomatic”

Karen Superchi explained the school board can’t shut down a school on what-ifs. The school board needs to do research; if you’re uncomfortable keep your kids home.

Jackie explained kids out for COVID tests, symptoms, quarantining will be excused absences.

A Public Attendee stated they won’t be sending their kids to school.

A Public Attendee stated their child wouldn’t be wearing a mask tomorrow.

MOTION MADE BY BOARD MEMBER NINA BROWN FOR FACE MASKS TO BE WORN BY ALL STAFF, STUDENTS, AND VISITORS ON SCHOOL GROUNDS STARTING TOMORROW 9/15. SECONDED BY TUCKER CLARK. ROLL CALL. ARTHUR BOUTIN, IN FAVOR; STEVE SHERRY, IN FAVOR; SCOTT PETERSON, IN FAVOR; BOB ADAMS, IN FAVOR; MO CHANDER, IN FAVOR; LORI WILLIAMS, NOT IN FAVOR. APPROVED.

Board Member Scott Peterson asked how long this mandate would be in effect.

Chairman Clark answered until cases prove we don’t have to be anymore.

Some Public Attendees requested remote learning while positive cases are in the school.

Board Member Tucker Clark, “All options will be considered, we can’t make this decision right now.”

Chairman Clark, “we should look into this decision more, while we have enough members tonight, but we should do more research first.”

Board Member Clark, “If a child is not in school it is up to the parent to get work for their child.”

Chairman Clark, “If you feel more comfortable keeping your kid at home at this point, Sam, That’s what you should do. Get your child’s work. I don’t think we will have a problem; Jackie I don’t think will have a problem.”

A Public Attendee added she told her daughter to wear her mask that morning with a note in her bag as well as her teacher allowed her to remove her mask.

Chairman Clark explained the board decided on mask optional. Teachers encourage the children, who parents deemed needed to wear masks, teachers would not be policing though.

Board Member Brown summarized there are confirmed cases in the school, we move to a mask mandate tomorrow, and students with symptoms should stay home.

Diane Aldrich added she appreciated the thoroughness with the State’s contact tracing and urged the school to be more proactive with their decision-making.

Board Member Brown added proactive meaning screening, masks, alternative hallway times, masks in halls, etc. Expressed it seems most people find all of this to be a heated discussion and recommends the board discuss this as well as the remote discussion. Do we agree we have taken all input? If so we can go from here about determining.

Board Members and Superintendent Tari Thomas discussed when this discussion can be had understanding the discussion has to be done with the public present and the board ban stop public input at any time. Through this online format, Public Attendees would have to be muted.

Principal Jackie Daniels added the DOE should be consulted for guidance if we could possibly regroup tomorrow.

Chairman Clark added he just doesn’t want what happened today to happen tomorrow such as the unprofessional manners of some public attendees swearing, talking over one another, yelling interrupting, etc.

Superintendent Thomas assured board members even through virtual meetings board members can make rules to conduct productive, appropriate business.

Principal Jackie Daniels assured she will spend as much time as possible tomorrow researching all information possible.

Board Members discussed the logistics of scheduling a meeting for tomorrow, 9/15 landing face-to-face at the school for 5:30 with a remote option.

MOTION MADE BY BOARD MEMBER BROWN TO HOLD AN EMERGENCY MEETING REGARDING REMOTE LEARNING ON 9/15 AT 5:30. SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER TUCKER CLARK. ALL IN FAVOR. APPROVED.

FINANCIAL:

No Report

BUILDING AND GROUNDS:

No Report

BUDGET:

No Report

POLICY HANDBOOK:

No Report

EXECUTIVE BOARD:

No Report

NEGOTIATIONS (PROFESSIONAL STAFF):

No report

NEGOTIATIONS (SUPPORT STAFF):

No Report

TRANSPORTATION:

No Report

TECHNOLOGY:

No Report

BROWN FUND:

No Report

LISBON EDUCATION FOUNDATION:

No Report

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT:

IMPORTANT DATES:

No Report

SUPERINTENDENT:

No Report

There being no additional business to come before the Board, MOTION MADE BY CHAIRMAN CLARK TO ADJOURN MEETING AT 7:02 PM, SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER TUCKER CLARK. ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis Blowey
Board Clerk