

# Croydon School District

## School Board Working Meeting: March 14, 2022

- A. Call to Order: Jody Underwood, 6:37pm
- B. Election of Officers
  - 1. Aaron nominated Jody for Chair, Kevin seconded, motion passed 3-0
  - 2. Jody nominated Aaron for Vice Chair, Kevin seconded, motion passed 3-0
  - 3. Jody nominated Kevin for Secretary, Aaron seconded, motion passed 3-0
- C. Roll Call
  - 1. Aaron McKeon, Kevin Morris, and Jody Underwood all present
- D. Changes to the Agenda
- E. Public Forum
  - 1. Tom asked where Frank Perotti (Superintendent) was – Jody responded Frank could not attend a meeting for a week and we felt we needed to meet sooner than that.
  - 2. It was asked when the next School Board meeting was scheduled for – the next meeting is currently scheduled for April 19 but given the change to the budget we will be adding additional working meetings between now and then, to be decided at the end of the meeting.
  - 3. On individual asked if the district has to tie the tuition to a particular school and, if so, does it need to be a public school? Jody replied that it does not, according to NH Department of Education legal counsel.
  - 4. How is a free and adequate education defined? The RSA's define the cost of an adequate education as being \$4,000.
  - 5. The feasibility of living within a budget of \$800k was raised and discussed.
  - 6. One member raised the following ideas:
    - i. Find a third-party education provider to operate the existing buildings (Montessori satellite school?)
    - ii. Add additional online learning options
    - iii. Hire subject matter experts instead of teachers
    - iv. Assert greater control over special education
    - v. Require part or full tuition refunds when students fail achievement tests
    - vi. Revisit Federal grants
    - vii. Raise donations from those who wish to contribute more to the education budget
    - viii. Expand accessibility of homeschooling by providing aid in weaker subject areas
  - 7. One member of the public indicated she has already gone to one of the area schools to see if they would take a reduced amount, to which they answered no. Jody replied that it may now be more difficult to negotiate with that school.
  - 8. Several members expressed their belief the budget vote was not taken in good faith.
  - 9. Jody mentioned learning pods as an option: Prenda Pod and Kai Pod are two such options.
  - 10. The cost of special education was raised and discussed multiple times.
  - 11. One members of the public asked if we can require children attend Mount Royal. The answer is no because it is religious. They further indicated that if Mount Royal could not be

- mandated and Montessori does not have capacity, that there is no way we can provide a paid option for education that isn't online in nature. The Board indicated they would attempt renegotiations with area schools and that hopefully they have an interest in maintaining revenue inflows from Croydon.
12. Another individual asked if we could look at grants for supplementing the approved budget. The Board agreed this could be an option to pursue.
  13. One individual indicated tweaking the budget won't work; big overhauls are needed.
  14. One individual indicated they love Newport for the athletics and the community. Another asked if kids can continue to do athletics where they are right now. The Board responded there are already mechanisms in place where students can participate in extra-curriculars without attending the school full-time. These would be options we could look further into.
  15. One member mentioned their child is expected to be picked up at 8:15am even though their school starts at 8:15am (Richard's School in Newport). Jody responded that bus service has been restored as of (today) Monday, March 14 and to check with the Principal regarding the conflict in timing so as to get it resolved.
  16. Kevin raised the topics of Education Freedom Accounts (EFAs), but indicated these are restricted to individuals below a particular income level (no more than 300% of the federal poverty level, or \$79,500 for a family of 4).
  17. An attendee from out of town reminded the audience how well they have it in Croydon, that in most districts across the state that School Boards do not even respond to public comment. Most Boards would not even have held a meeting such as they held tonight. He suggested the audience in general was treating the Board very poorly and that it would seem they don't actually want this budget to succeed. It is no one's responsibility but their own to be proactive in politics and not reactive, and he suggested they look into becoming an SB2 town if they aren't happy with the town meeting model.
  18. Kevin mentioned that if the people could find some reason that would compel the board to try and reverse the change to the budget that they would consider. Beth (Business Manager) indicated that the vote taken on the \$800k budget was legally binding. The only possible way of reversing the budget would be for the board to petition the Superior Court, demonstrate they could find no way to meet the budget, and therefore request emergency funding.
  19. A couple people called for the replacement of current board members and selectmen.
  20. One member of the public declared her daughter will be attending Sunapee and the town will be paying for it.
  21. One individual asked if the board members had prior knowledge of the measure that Ian had planned on bringing forward:
    - i. Jody indicated that Ian told her of the idea 2 days prior to the meeting.
    - ii. Kevin indicated he had no prior knowledge.
    - iii. Aaron indicated he heard from Joe Marko the day before that Ian was going to put forward something on the floor, but didn't give it much thought since Ian does this at most meetings.
  22. Aaron mentioned he believes it is possible to live within our \$800k budget because private schools and charter schools do it every day of the week in NH, and that immediately assuming we are incapable of doing the same is a failure of imagination. He indicated he would spend the next 18 days trying as hard as possible to come up with a budget that works within the new limit and that only after putting in this effort would he entertain the possibility that it isn't possible, not before.

F. Plan How to Meet the Revised 2022-2023 Budget

1. No productive work was able to be conducted, and the Board opted for allowing the public to express their opinions regarding the vote that had been taken at the District Meeting.

G. Establish Next Meeting Date

1. The Board will meet again on Thursday March 17 at 7pm and Tuesday March 22 at 6:30pm

H. Meeting Adjournment

1. Jody motioned to adjourn the meeting, Aaron seconded, meeting adjourned at 9:38pm