SALEM SCHOOL BOARD
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT #57
SALEM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Planning Session
January 19, 2016
7:00 p.m.
SHS TV Studio

MINUTES

Present:  Mr. Michael Carney, Jr., Chairman
          Mrs. Pamela Berry, Vice Chairman
          Mr. Peter Morgan, Secretary
          Mrs. Patricia Corbett, Member
          Mr. Bernard Campbell, Member

Also Present:  Dr. Michael Delahanty, Ed. D., Superintendent
               Mrs. Maura Palmer, Assistant Superintendent
               Mrs. Deborah Payne, Assistant Superintendent for
               Business Operations
               Mrs. Diana Darnstaeed, Director of Finance

Mr. Carney called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and introduced the people present.

AGENDA

Performing Arts Study
Dr. Delahanty stated that the charge of the Performing Arts Study was to review the program to
see if there could be an increase in opportunities for students to participate in chorus, band, and
theater. He then thanked the district staff who were involved in the process. The study was
conducted by Dr. Sandra Howard, Professor at Keene State College. He stated that though there
is not a formal theater program at the elementary schools, there are informal opportunities. It
was explained that the Opportunity to Learn standards indicate elementary students should have
90 minutes of arts classes per week in order for students to acquire necessary skills. He then
reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of the Performing Arts Program at the elementary level
and then introduced Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Claussen.

Mrs. Bailey thanked the board for taking on this goal, and for promoting the program and
encouraging student participation. She stated the music at Woodbury has a very strong schedule
that works for students. She explained that all students take music by participating in band,
chorus, or music appreciation. The classes meet every other day during all three years. Mrs.
Bailey stated Woodbury is fortunate to have two band directors and a chorus director who work
well together and share responsibilities. One strength of the band is that Woodbury is able to
expand instrumentation from the elementary schools. There is a large inventory of instruments
for students to try. As much as there are positives, Mrs. Bailey said one drawback at Woodbury
is the lack of a rehearsal schedule. She noted that prior to performances, the students as a whole
are only together twice, and that makes it difficult for students to see how it all works together.
Another drawback is that it is a forced choice for students to take either band or chorus, but not
both. Mrs. Bailey stated Mr. Kelly's main concern is chorus being taught in the cafeteria which
is a struggle with the noise and traffic.

Mr. Claussen thanked the board for taking the time to look at this and stated that he is thankful
for the great financial support from the district. He stated that the band has a very active parent's
music club willing to do anything to promote the program, and that he is excited about the new
strings program for the high school when it is developed. He stated a challenge would be a
combination of the freshman program and block scheduling, and it seems to hit harder during the
second semester. Mr. Claussen stated that with someone overseeing the whole department there
might be more communication district wide and between all grade levels.

Dr. Delahanty stated that Mr. Campbell had originally noticed that numbers had dropped more
than they would based on the overall decrease in enrollment. He stated block scheduling has
been in place for 20 years, and the freshman program since 2010, and there is no question that
numbers have been impacted. The freshman program does limit what freshman can take but the
program is in place in order to help students have a successful high school career. Dr. Delahanty
stated the need for an individual to manage the Performing Arts Center, and to coordinate and
direct the program. Further, he believes music does have an incredible value for students.

Mrs. Corbett asked if the state trend for participation in music has been looked at. Dr. Delahanty
answered that it has not been, but that he could investigate that trend. Mr. Campbell thanked
board members for supporting this effort and appreciates it being looked at. He questioned the
answer from the student survey of students saying that it would be too much of a "challenge" to
participate in the arts and asked for clarification. Dr. Delahanty stated students in that category
feel that the challenge they'd confront by enrolling in band was too great so they didn't
undertake it and accept that difficult task at this point in high school. Dr. Delahanty explained
that Dr. Howard observed the middle school band and chorus instruction and there were areas of
improvement pertaining to the schedule, but the instructors were found to be of quality and with
much knowledge.

Mr. Campbell stated that it seems to be the scheduling that is creating the decrease in
participation but he doesn't see any preliminary recommendations about changing it. He
suggested possibly changing the freshman program or retaining it along with a modified block
schedule, but changing it in a way that it would make the performing arts option more available.
Dr. Delahanty stated that he does not feel a schedule change is something that can be addressed
immediately as it could take several years to implement a new schedule.

Mrs. Berry stated she was surprised to see this report include so much information. She pointed
out that a lot of the surveys have student answers recorded as being uninterested in participation
so scheduling may not be the only issue. Mr. Campbell stated there has always been a
significant number who chose to not move on but the percentage is definitely higher when going
back about 7 to 10 years.
Mr. Carney stated that if and when a director is hired that it hopefully will bring focus to the arts, but that there has to be a commitment to put a priority there, or else hiring someone for that position would be pointless. He feels that the scheduling might have something to do with the downward trend in participation, but that the issue should be looked at globally because everything impacts everything else. He has noticed a decrease in participation even in sporting events and wondered if it was a generational trend.

Mr. Campbell asked if the participation in competitions is a requirement for band members. Mr. Claussen answered that students are involved in the music choices so it is music they enjoy and that competition band is a choice. However, right now there is only one student who does not choose to compete. He explained that the students love it.

2016-2017 School Year Calendar Proposal
Dr. Delahanty stated that there has been a lot discussed regarding next school year’s calendar. He reviewed the proposed calendar with the board members. He stated that there are normally two teacher days scheduled in March, that can be changed to a school day depending on the weather, and that has been changed to only one day. Dr. Delahanty recommended having the teachers return to work on August 24, for three days without students, making August 29 the first day of school for students. The delayed opening/early release day typically scheduled in September has been taken off the calendar, and there are now five of those days scheduled.

Dr. Delahanty discussed the federal election week in November, and stated that it will only be a two day school week because of how it falls with the holiday, teacher day, and election. He noted the winter and spring vacations in February and April have not been altered. This proposed calendar will be distributed to staff for feedback.

Restoration Plan
Dr. Delahanty stated the Municipal Budget Committee cut $229,115 from the board’s proposed operating budget. One specific item cut was the Director of Performing Arts position; however, the board agrees that this is a necessary position. There was also a random salary cut for two positions.

The board discussed the need of the Director position, and felt that the proposed budget was prudent and well thought out. The board members were all in favor of restoring the full amount of $229,115 to the proposed budget.

Motion by Mrs. Berry seconded by Mr. Morgan to support restoring the full amount of $229,115 to the operating budget.

Motion carried 5-0

Mr. Carney thanked Mrs. Darnstaedt, Mrs. Payne, Dr. Delahanty, Mrs. Palmer, and everyone else involved for their hard work on developing the budget.

Other
Dr. Delahanty stated that the new kindergarten online registration would begin tomorrow at 8:00 a.m. and that the link can be found under parent tab on the district website.
Adjournment

Motion by Mrs. Corbett, seconded by Mr. Campbell to adjourn.

Motion carried 5-0

The board adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Lani R. Leland
Recording Secretary, Salem School Board

January 19, 2016