

SPRUCE MOUNTAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS
The 12TH Regular Meeting of the Spruce Mountain School District Board of Directors
For 2016-17 will be held

Thursday, March 9, 2017 6:00 pm Spruce Mountain Primary School Gym
Policy Committee Meeting 5:00 pm Spruce Mountain Primary School Library
Finance Committee Meeting 5:30 pm Spruce Mountain Primary School Library

Present: Doug DiPasquale, Tammy Frost, Amy McDaniel, Michael Morrell, Shari Ouellette, Joel Pike, Cea Jay Pitcher, Holly Richards, Laurie Sanborn and Cindy Young.
Absent: Denise Rodzen, Jackie Knight, Darcie Calden
Absent: Trevor Doiron, Student Representative

~MINUTES~

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Morrell called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

3. ATTENDANCE

10 Present
3 Absent (Darcie Calden, excused; Jackie Knight, excused; Denise Rodzen, excused)
1 Student Representative Absent (Trevor Doiron)

4. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

5.1 January 26, 2017 – Board Meeting minutes

Motion by Cindy Young and seconded by Holly Richards to approve the minutes of January 26, 2017 regular Board meeting as amended.

Vote: 9 Yes 0 No 1 (Cea Jay Pitcher) Abstain

6. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

6.1 Letter from Eric Kobischen

6.2 Retirement of Gladys Russell, Spruce Mountain Primary School 2nd Grade teacher as of the end of the 2016/2017 school year.

Motion by Shari Ouellette and seconded by Cindy Young to accept with regret the retirement of Gladys Russell, Spruce Mountain Primary School Grade 2 Teacher as of the end of the 2016/2017 school year.

Vote: 10 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain

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- 6.3 Resignation of Jackie Knight from the RSU 73 School Board effective April 13, 2017.
Motion by Shari Ouellette and seconded by Cindy Young to accept with regret the resignation of Jackie Knight from the RSU 73 School Board effective April 13, 2017.

Vote: 10 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain

- 6.4 Resignation of Denelle Bryant, Spruce Mountain Primary School Grade 1 Teacher as of the end of the 2016/2017 school year.
Motion by Shari Ouellette and seconded by Cindy Young to accept with regret the resignation of Denelle Bryant, Spruce Mountain Primary School Grade 1 Teacher as of the end of the 2016/2017 school year.

Vote: 10 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

BOARD COMMENTS – Doug DiPasquale thanked Principal Hollingsworth for participating in the United Way challenge.

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

As of March 3, 2017 our student population is 1446 PK – 12, SMPS 454, SMES 293, SMMS 286, and SMHS 413. (-2 from last report - 43 from the beginning of the year)

I would like to acknowledge Gladys Russell who has submitted her retirement letter to us this evening. Gladys been teaching for over the last 15 years for our combined school districts and has positively impacted thousands of students in RSU73 and she will be missed for her love of teaching and students. I wish her well as she starts her new adventures beyond the classroom.

I would also like to acknowledge the resignation of Jackie Knight who will be stepping down from the Board of Directors after more than 12 years of combined service to the school districts of RSU 36 and RSU 73. Her cheerful personality and bright smile will be missed during future School Board meetings. I wish her good luck in her new job.

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I attended the State budget hearing concerning school funding in Augusta last Friday and was happy to see and hear the amount of passion our citizens and superintendent's have for public education and ensuring it is funded properly. Over 30 superintendents were in attendance.

I had the privilege of reading to Mrs. Russell's 2nd Grade class last Thursday as part of the Read Across America Program. I had a get time and would like to thank Mrs. Wiles for inviting me to participate and Mrs. Russell and her very lively group of 2nd graders. I will also be attending a budget workshop at the Civic Center tomorrow on impact the Governor's budget will have on schools.

Joel Pike asked about the request for the energy efficiency project. Superintendent Healey said we have been talking about finding some ways to be more energy efficient so we sent out an RFQ asking for plans to lower costs for energy for the whole district.

9. BOARD CHAIR'S - None

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS - None

11. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORTS

12.1 Amanda Hersey – Curriculum Coordinator

We have a teacher workshop day next Friday, March 17. There were a few requests from administration and teachers that we are able to offer, so we're looking forward to the professional development time. There was a request for training on the NWEA assessment that we use as a local assessment. A trainer will visit both the primary and the elementary schools to offer training on the new reports and planning tools that are available through NWEA.

Additionally, the unified arts curriculum team requested a workshop time geared for unified arts instruction. We have Beth Lambert, the Visual and Performing Arts Specialist from Maine Department of Education visiting our district that day and hosting a specialized workshop for unified arts teachers.

We will also be scoring writing prompts, conducting EmPower Me training, continuing curriculum work and NEASC work that day.

The elementary and middle schools are preparing for administration of the EmPower Me assessment. That will begin March 20 and extend through April 14. There is an additional essay assessment that will be given during two weeks in

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May. This is the second year of the assessment, which is an online assessment for all 3-8 grade students in the state.

12.2 TJ Plourde – SMHS

Student of the month for upperclassman, William Brenner and for underclassman, Callie Baker. Our Phoenix Award Winter was Bryce Chavez. This weekend we have the Drama festival at Skowhegan Area High School on Saturday at 3 pm. Robotics will be busy finishing up and starting preparing for the upcoming competition. I have begun meeting with seniors, I meet with each senior before graduation. Our Alpine Ski Team is the State Class B champion this year and in basketball Alex Bessey and Austin Darling were recognized by McDonald's All Star's and Alex Bessey scored 1000 points in basketball.

12.3 Scott Albert – SMMS

Congratulations to the February Students of the Month winners:

Grade 6	Ruby Spencer	Owen Schwab
Grade 7	Jayden Achorn	Ashlyn Condon
Grade 8	Sara Henderson	Megan Dodge

Congratulations to Kaila Godbey for qualifying for the State of Maine Geographic Bee. The bee will take place at UMF on March 31.

Congratulations to Madeline Labonte for qualifying to be a member of the Mid Maine Youth Orchestra. She performed with the Orchestra last Friday, March 3rd at the Messalonskee Performing Arts Center and again last Sunday, March 5th at the Mr. Blue Bjorn Auditorium. Way to go Madeline!

Shrek The Musical will be performed Thursday, March 23 at 9am for the Primary School students and at 7:00 pm for an evening performance for the public. On Friday, March 24 they will be performing at 9:00 am for the Elementary School, 12:45 pm for the Middle School and 7:00 pm evening performance for the public. Empower MEA testing will take place for Math and ELA starting on March 28th. There will be 4 days of testing.

12.4 Chris Hollingsworth – SMES

The students will be doing a lot of testing coming up. I have also passed out an invitation to all of you to participate in the Prosperity Summit on March 22, 2017 at Franklin Memorial Hospital from 1:00-5:00 pm. This event will build community capacity to better understand poverty in Franklin County and to support community members, neighbors and friends. This projected started with

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RSU 9 to look at poverty in our area. It has received grant money from different organizations. The presenter will be Dr. Donna Beegle. The summit will be video-taped so others can view.

- 12.5 Kevin Harrington - SMPS
Susan Wiles just finished up her K-12 Principal certification, congratulations. Read Across America went well, Wacky Wednesday has led to some unique outfits. We did receive a grant of \$1250.00, the tables you are sitting at are a part of that as well as changing tables in the men's and ladies rooms. Pre-K registration for the 2017/2018 school year will be held on April 5 and regular Kindergarten registration will be held on April 7. We will be sending home letters and reminders.

13. POLICY

- 13.1 First Reading of Policy AC – Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action
- 13.2 First Reading of Policy ACA – Gender Neutral Language
- 13.3 First Reading of Policy ACAA – Harassment and Sexual Harassment
- 13.4 First Reading of Policy ACC-R – Discrimination and/or Harassment Complaint Form

Tabled until March 23, 2016 Board meeting.

14. OLD BUSINESS

- 14.1 Budget Discussion

Superintendent Healey brought to the attention of the Board an updated projected 2017/2018 class size list for Spruce Mountain Primary School. It does improve the size of grade 1 classes and increases the size of kindergarten classes by 1 or 2 students. I also have provided you with RSU #73 organizational chart updated two days ago. The request for inventory of vehicles is also provided.

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These district budget proposals are coming from me, not from the building administration. I understand that digital arts is clearly a well-respected and loved program. If I had to choose an alternative to the digital arts program I would choose industrial arts program and as favorable as the audience spoke of digital art last week, next week the audience would speak just as favorably about industrial arts. Both are wonderful programs, my hope is that neither one of these programs be cut.

Michele Coates –On the first page of the handout I provided is a breakdown of how many positions have been cut since consolidation, there have been 27.08 cuts from 2011 through 2017. If you were to accept the additional proposed position reductions an additional 13.2 positions would be cut this year for a total of 40.28 positions. On the second page I realized that there really has not been a school budget increase in many years and I took it upon myself to see what a modest 2.3% increase per year would look like. Our budget should be \$21.4 million and we are asking for \$18.4 million.

Joel Pike asked for pupil count for each of the years represented.

Michele Coates said she could provide that information at the next meeting.

Michele Coates said she came across a PowerPoint that Dr. Wall had developed showing the history of school taxes by town and I added the last few years to it. There has been a reduction in Jay of \$2.6 million, Livermore \$200,000 increase, and Livermore Falls had a reduction of \$235,000. Last year the town of Jay received an additional \$635,786.12 in sudden and severe and it will carry to this year and will increase the state contribute and reduce their tax burden.

If the mill should close down what would that do to the 3 towns?

Michele Coates replied that the way that the local portion is calculated is based on town evaluation of the last 3 years. They can apply for sudden and severe more than once and they may be working on that for this year. Eventually the town evaluation would catch up. On the next page it does show the local share

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vs. State share and contribution percent by town from 2011 to this 2017/2018. It shows that the local contribution from Jay will go down. It depends on what the governor will do. I met with the Department of Education last Friday to review the ED279. They did not want to put out the ED279 but they did and it is preliminary. It does show the local contributions for all three town through 2015/2016. Sudden and severe and the funding formula change last year reduced Jay's portion of taxes for last year and increased the burden on the other 2 towns and this will continue for 2017/2018.

I have also passed out the information on the long-term debt and capital leases. You can see from the debt schedule that the middle school debt will be paid off in 2018. I was also asked for the number of positons over EPS by year, there are a lot of factors in that calculation, I would like more time to look at this and will be able to give you that information at the next budget meeting.

Doug DiPasquale asked do we have a timeline for ED279?

Michele Coates said we will provide it at the next meeting.

Holly Richards asked Mr. Harrington if there were going to be one literacy based classroom in Grade 1 and Grade 2.

Mr. Harrington replied that yes there would be.

Joel Pike asked I have not seen any mention of the unexpended balance, what happened to that?

Michele Coates said I think you are talking about undesignated funds from last year. What happened last year there was \$540,000 that we had over 3%, the board voted to put all of it in this year's budget. We were hoping that this year would not be as bad a year and to offset some of the pain, the over 3% now as of 2016 is \$24,000.

Julie Taylor asked I thought last year that the carryover was over was \$900,000.

Michele Coates replied that \$798,000 was anticipated as carry over outside of undesignated and between the two they totaled \$1.2 million. The

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\$964,000 was an example given to us by the auditors. Once the audit was complete, \$546,000 was how much we used out of undesignated.

Abby DiPasquale from town of Jay read a letter she sent to Mr. Healey and Tina Collins. I am a special needs mom and I am here about the proposed cut of a special education teacher at the elementary school. My daughter has moved 3 times in the last 4 years in the district. This proposal is unacceptable. Education for all is not a budgetary item. It is a right and something that must be protected. The proposal to cut the position and programming for the elementary school is unacceptable. A key part of student's education is integration with their peers, this is being destroyed with the proposed cuts. All students should receive a fair and equal education. My daughter would now be going to the middle school leaving her peers at the elementary school. The district would be transporting her to the elementary school for art and music which is ridiculous and takes away from precious learning time. Education is not a luxury it is a necessity. I know that there is a budgetary bottom line but that does not mean this is the right thing to do.

Tammy Frost said it was not clear to me how these cuts would affect things. Tina Collins can you speak to how this will affect the program.

Superintendent Healey responded that I hope you understand if I didn't have to we would not be proposing these cuts. We have been asked by the Board to cut the budget and what you are hearing tonight is how these cuts will impact the schools. The Board has made this decision and now they have to decide if this is what they want, you need to give me direction and I will follow that direction.

Tina Collins thanked Abby for her passionate letter. At the first meeting this was not part of the budget cut. It was a part of the second cut. Sharing teachers can work, it works well at the middle school and high school because they are connected. This proposed cut is harder because it leaves a building without a program and we fought hard to get that program there, but when cuts have to be proposed we have to bring it to you.

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Superintendent Healey said to the board you gave me a target to meet.

Tammy Frost asked if the cuts made at the last meeting were made because of the employee steps not being included in the budget.

Superintendent Healey replied that yes when the error was discovered I still had to meet the target.

Holly Richards asked Tina Collins can you remind what that savings is – salary and benefits for this position.

Michele Coates said she would find that information.

The question was asked that we have to look at cutting somewhere else.

Superintendent Healey replied absolutely but you will have the same concerns. Once some other area is proposed there will be a group of people very impassioned advocating for their program. If you ask me to cut more the only thing I could recommend was we could look at closing a building.

Amy McDaniel said that I guess for me what I have heard of for cuts I will not support. That takes away from high school students and I cannot. And special education students we all know those costs have to be made up, programming is going to demand that it comes back.

Shari Ouellette said my thoughts on this I would like to see if we could make other cuts other than special education. Is there something in administration I can look at, if you are looking at deeper cuts or recommending closing a building I would not recommend that.

Superintendent Healey replied that if your direction is to provide other cuts I will do that, personally I believe that the amount I would like to see it less, I would not like to have any of these positions cut. The board provided to me what was the financial reality, if your direction is to find it somewhere else I will do so.

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Joel Pike said, Ken I know it was an average for a budget cut we gave you. A lot of us were higher and lower. It is going to be a very interesting voting day. Do you have a sandbag list of positions? Do you have a list of things you didn't want to have to go to? If you had more flexibility to that number do you have a list of things? Superintendent Healey replied that I think we have as an administration a priority. The most recent cuts would be returned, if you gave me the flexibility I would keep special education, digital art and I would keep all of the athletic programs. That is where I would go, some of the greatest impact are enrichment and absolutely if you gave me greater latitude the A Team could give you a list. I wouldn't want to see anything cut, but we are where we are.

Tina Collins said your question was what it would look like, we would not have a life skills program at the 3-5 grade level, there is a potential in the middle school for those students to go. According to what we know we will have 5 kids in 6-8 and another 6 or so from grades 3-5. That is a way when you are looking at maximizing efficiencies to do it. We used to serve grade 4-8 in the middle school and it is not unusual in other schools to do this. We worked to try to make sure those 6 kids transition to the middle school early making it a 4-8 program and we would make sure they have access to their peers, but it's not perfect.

Superintendent Healey added that he would add one additional teacher to the primary school if you provided me with flexibility.

Joel Pike asked if there is a mechanism to have another line added to the article that would reflect the 5 or 6 things that had to be cut and leave it up to the voters to decide if they wanted those things back into the budget.

Superintendent Healey replied that the procedure is that you settle on a warrant. There is a mechanism that a motion can be made to increase or decrease an article during the district budget meeting. It could not be part of the article itself.

Mary Luce said I have not heard any mention of pay to play for sports that I mentioned last time. I expected some conversation about that and also

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looking at technology, it is just food for thought. Also could we find out what the mil rate is for the education portion on our tax bill?

James Black said I put out an email to schools in the KVAC and MVC about pay to play and about 80% do not have pay to play, the rest have some type of off shoot, my suggestions would be a flat fee for any co-curricular sport such as \$50 including drama, band, etc. This would generate about \$10,000. However, some of the kids do not have the money to play.

Shari Ouellette asked Superintendent Healey she would like him to look at a couple of positions, one is the second administrative assistant in the superintendent's office and the other is the administrative assistant to the principal at the elementary school.

Tammy Frost asked if we wanted to add something back in an amount would you be looking for a motion from the board.

Superintendent Healey replied yes.

Michele Coates said that the savings from the special education teacher would be \$67,800.

Doug DiPasquale asked if the middle school still had cross country.

Scott Albert replied yes, only JV sports were cut at middle school.

Jean Tardiff said that what I am hearing you say Ken is that if you didn't have to cut you would not. We have to look elsewhere for the cuts, I am hearing little bit of a threat with closing a school. There are a lot of places to cut that are not going to hit the kids. Sharing between middle school and high school, the libraries, for the younger kids the arts. I hate to say but at least they would be still be getting some of it. We have a nurse in every school, Superintendent Healey said that we only have 3 nurses. We have a nurse that is shared between the middle school and high school. Jean Tardiff said that we have one secretary at the elementary school and 2 at the primary.

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Superintendent Healey said that the primary school has almost twice the amount of students.

Jean Tardiff continued I am just hearing that some very important things for kids are getting cut, this is a very heavy administrative budget, we are top heavy and I ask you not to rush into this, even if we have to go through this a few times, we need to do what is best for the kids. There are a lot of places that can be cut other than the kids and the teachers.

Amy Byron –Livermore - I just want to clarify, a motion can be reduce the amount but cannot increase, it is against the law.

Superintendent Healey stated that we did indeed increase an article at the district budget meeting last year under our attorney's advice.

Amy Byron then shouted "then it was illegal".

Janet Daigle – teacher at elementary school, I would like to say the old adage that it takes a village to raise and a community to educate one child is true. They are all our children and ultimately the job of educating a child is ours. It falls to the teacher, please do not cut, look at different areas of the budget first. We hope that our children get the education they need and will return to the area to keep our town going.

Joel Pike asked are you going to show the reduction per child, I would like to see that the cost has gone down.

Superintendent Healey said that I would like to remind you that we have a budget meeting scheduled next Thursday the 16th at Spruce Mountain Middle School Café.

Joel Pike asked that for next meeting could you provide a short a la carte of items if the board was willing to give you certain thresholds of money.

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15. NEW BUSINESS

- 15.1 Presentation by James Black – transition from KVAC to the MVC athletic conference.

The KVAC has served our school well over the past several years and has been a great conference to compete in over the last three years. Unfortunately, with our declining student population (408) at the high school and the MPA's preliminary reclassification numbers many sports at Spruce Mountain High School will be reclassified in either class C or D. Traditionally the KVAC has been a conference that supports class A and B teams with several AA schools mixed in. If we continue to stay in the KVAC our opportunity to compete with schools with similar enrollment or classification will be severely limited. A switch to the MVC would allow our programs to compete against similar sized schools that share the same classification as us. I feel this is the right move in order to support our student athletes as enrollment continue to decline. This move would also be a financial benefit to the district as well, saving \$3-\$4,000 on transportation alone. Additional savings would occur through lower membership fees. I strongly feel that this is the right move for our school and from conversations I have had with many of our coaches, athletes and parents they also support this move. Our student athletes will be given the same opportunities that they currently have with the benefit of closer travel and equitability between programs. The reason I need some clarification is that the fall schedules for both conferences have been put out, the MVC needs answers soon.

Michael Morrell asked so you need a decision. J

James Black stated that I went to a meeting last week and if the board could make a decision tonight, I will let them know tonight, it takes a lot of time to make up the schedule. Because of previous snow storms and cancelled meetings I was unable to bring this request to you sooner.

Holly Richards asked so if this saves on transportation would we be add programs back.

James Black replied that we would try to reinstate some of the athletic programs.

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James Black said, I remember talking about this last year, what put us over the edge was new classification and student enrollment. I don't believe I have talked to anyone that wants to stay in in the KVAC.

Doug DiPasquale asked if we were looking to be independent and pick the schools we want to play.

James Black replied that the benefit of being in a conference is that you get games, if you go outside you might get 5 games. I don't know of any public school that is independent. You are not guaranteed a schedule.

Tammy Frost asked if football would still be in Campbell.

James Black replied yes.

A comment from a member in the audience was that in MVC the students will be on the bus a lot less time, I think it is a good move.

Mary Luce said I also have children in soccer, it was horrible my son's freshman year with KVC, I can just tell you that right now the other parents would love to see this, all the soccer moms would be for this.

James Black stated that this was not planned this way, it was not a rushed job, it is a result of the culmination of snow days.

Motion by Tammy Frost and seconded by Amy McDaniel to move sports from KVAC athletic conference to the MVC conference.

Vote: 10 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain

15.2 Consideration of bid for Livermore Falls Middle School.

Motion by Shari Ouellette and seconded by Cindy Young to accept the bid from Dana Cummings for \$5,500 to purchase the Livermore Falls Middle School.

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Superintendent Healey said that we have spent approximately \$2,000 in advertising and insurance costs about \$4,000 per year, although we recently received a discount. I do not know what the legal fees are but they will exceed the amount of the offer.

Cea Jay Pitcher asked for the lot size and what the plan was for the building.

Superintendent Healey said that it is the building and parking lot, I don't have the exact amount of land but it is represented in the cross hatch area on the map you have. I was told that they had planned on renovating and making it a veteran's home of some sort.

Joel Pike asked if we were covered for any easements or right of ways.

Superintendent Healey replied yes. Are there any issues for hazardous material or is everything being carried over to them. This is an as is sale. We will not have any issues once it is sold.

Doug DiPasquale asked what we were going to see for savings.

Superintendent Healey replied less than \$4,000 plus a little electricity cost.

Cindy Young asked if we will be able to use the parking lot.

Superintendent Healey replied that the parking lot will be theirs and they will decide if we can use it. We do not have a right of way to use it. The parking lot is being offered to them.

Board member asked if we could we look into making an amendment.

Superintendent Healey replied that the vote is for the offer as it is.

Amy McDaniel asked since we are not sure about the legal costs is there any way we could ask that they split legal costs.

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Superintendent Healey replied that that is not his offer. If you accept this we have to pay all the legal cost.

Cea Jay Pitcher asked if we considered a counter to them.

Superintendent Healey replied no this is a bidding process.

Doug DiPasquale said he would hate for someone to put up a fence.

Joel Pike said that in the grand scheme it is not costing us a lot, what are your personal concerns, what it means to us, we continue to have liability issues with it. Costs are insurance and potential damage.

Tammy Frost said I have been on the school board since consolidation, we have put a great amount of money into the Livermore Falls High School and some in the middle school, AYS is using the high school, the school needs to let go of it, this is the first offer we have had, I don't think it will get any better.

Vote: 10 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain

16. APPOINTMENTS - None

17. OTHER BUSINESS - None

18. CALENDAR/ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 16, 2017 – Budget Meeting – 6:00 PM Spruce Mountain Middle School Café
March 22, 2017 – Special Board Meeting – 6:00 PM Cedar Street Conference Room
March 23, 2017 – Board Meeting – 6:00 PM Cedar Street Conference Room

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Policy Committee Meeting 5:00 pm Spruce Mountain Primary School Library
Finance Committee Meeting 5:30 pm Spruce Mountain Primary School Library

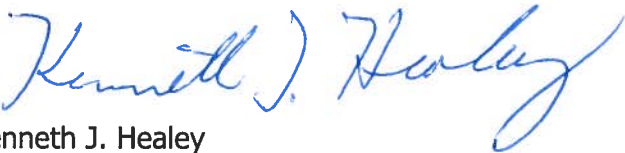
19. ADJOURNMENT

Michael Morrell said that before we adjourn there is a letter from Denelle Bryant please read at your leisure.

Motion by Shari Ouellette and seconded by Holly Richards to adjourn at 7:45 pm.

Vote: 10 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain

Respectfully submitted:



Kenneth J. Healey
Superintendent of Schools