

**SPRUCE MOUNTAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
 The 11<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of the Spruce Mountain Board of Directors  
 For 2018-19 will be held

**Thursday, March 14, 2019 6:00 pm Spruce Mountain Elementary School**  
**Policy Committee Meeting – 5:00 PM**

**~MINUTES~**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by School Board Chair, Robert Staples.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by everyone present.
3. **ATTENDANCE**

	PRESENT	ABSENT
1. Doug DiPasquale	Present	
2. Tammy Frost	Present	
3. Sara Hughes		Excused
4. Scott Jackson, Student Rep	Arrived 7:21 pm	
5. Steven Langlin	Present	
6. Dale Leblanc	Present	
7. Shannon McDaniel	Present	
8. Michael Morrell, Board Vice Chair		Excused
9. Shari Ouellette	Present	
10. Joel Pike	Present	
11. Phoebe Pike	Arrived 6:09 pm	
12. Denise Rodzen		Excused
13. Ann Schwab	Present	
14. Orion Schwab, Student Rep	Left 6:03 pm Returned 6:46 pm	
15. Robert Staples, Board Chair	Present	

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## 4. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

### **16.4 Amended and Restated RSU 73 403(b) plan**

*Joel Pike stated that this item should be under "old business" as it was tabled at the previous meeting, changing the Item # to 15.1, Bob Staples agreed. Item was added to agenda under "Old Business" as 15.1*

## 5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

### 5.1 **February 28, 2019 – Regular Meeting Minutes**

*Doug DiPasquale and Dale Leblanc mentioned that there were not a lot of notes taken from last time regarding the review of the budget items in particular. Doug stated that there were a lot of items mentioned that were not included in the minutes and he would like to see more detailed minutes in the future. Bob Staples reported that he thought some of the issue from last time was the fact that Laura was in the back and wasn't able to hear clearly as board members were talking.*

Motion made by SHARI OUELLETTE, seconded by TAMMY FROST to approve the Meeting Minutes of February 28, 2019.

8 Yes	0 No	2 Abstain Joel Pike Shannon McDaniel	0 Student Rep
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## 6. **COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE**

*Bob Webster spoke briefly about a letter received from Maine School Management regarding an unemployment refund the district would be receiving. The amount of the refund would be \$9,240, which would arrive at the end of the fiscal year.*

## 7. **PUBLIC COMMENTS - None**

## 8. **STUDENT PRESENTATION - None**

## 9. **BOARD COMMENTS**

*Joel Pike stated that the High School Robotics Team is headed to Reading, Mass. this weekend. Wanted to wish them well and good luck, and further stated that this was a big weekend for them. He will be joining them there.*

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*Bob Staples reiterated that the Ad Hoc Superintendent Search Committee would have a training on March 25<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm. This training will be facilitated by Maine School Management and will cover important information regarding the current Superintendent search. Meeting will be held at the Superintendent's Office, in the conference room.*

## **10. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

*Bob Webster reported that he had conducted 10 visits to our schools over the past couple of weeks, and just this afternoon finished the meet and greets, with staff in each building, finishing up at the Primary School. His visits over the past couple of weeks have been mostly at the High School and Middle School, but stressed that he hopes that this will continue in the future as he feels it builds strong relationships and fosters trust and open communication with staff, which builds morale.*

*Bob has set up dates to meet town officials to present the budget. These dates are:*

*Livermore: March 18*

*Livermore Falls: April 2*

*Jay: April 8*

*Kindergarten enrollment is high and we have classes that don't meet the State guidelines, therefore Bob has written a letter to the Commissioner of Education requesting a waiver for the remainder of this school year. This letter will be mailed out early next week, and he will keep the board informed with progress.*

*Bob corrected a statement that he made from the last board meeting. He stated that he had given the state subsidy for this year which was 51.21% instead of the state subsidy for the next budget year which if approved by the legislature will be 53.98%.*

*Bob Webster also stated that unless the board had any objections, that he and his office staff would prepare the budget warrants for the upcoming meetings. He stated that he has been doing this for many years, and didn't see a need to hire this out.*

## **11. BOARD CHAIR'S COMMENTS**

*Bob Staples reported that he had received two anonymous letters in his mailbox this week. Both were not signed, nor did they have a return address on them. He further stated that he wouldn't take any anonymous letters seriously. If they want to be taken seriously they need to identify themselves.*

## **12. COMMITTEE REPORTS - None**

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**13. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORTS**

**13.1 TJ Plourde – SMHS**

*TJ congratulated the Math Team for its recent performance at the last math meet. He reported that the Math Team finished 5<sup>th</sup> overall, and that the top 5 scorers received a \$75 cash award, high school student Abi Thurston placed 2<sup>nd</sup>. Abi also won raffle prizes for attending at least 3 meets this school year.*

*TJ also congratulated the SMHS Drama Club for placing 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Mt. Blue High School Drama Competition over the past weekend. The Drama Club presented a 40-minute play, which TJ attended and reported as being very well done. SMHS also had two students winning individual awards: Gabby Beaudoin for Stage Managing, and Anna Bradford for Hair and Makeup. TJ further stated that this play would be presented for the public and he would send out dates and times in the near future for anyone interested in attending. All- Star Cast Awards for acting were also presented to: Moreland Brochu, Natalie Luce, Garrett Smith and Hannah Coates. Congratulations to all!*

*Baseball and Softball will begin on Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup>. Gym will most likely need to be set up for practices as it may be a while before they can get on the outdoor fields.*

*Several students from the HS also met with College Representatives from Yale University and UMA. A large number of our HS students are planning on attending post-secondary schools and the Guidance Office is working diligently with our students to ensure preparedness.*

*Senior Chorus is also in the early stages of start-up. The Seniors are conducting weekly meetings in preparation for Graduation.*

**13.2 Scott Albert – SMMS**

*Scott congratulated the February Students of the Month:*

*Grade 6: Skylar Condon and Brandon Cooper*

*Grade 7: Mia Henry and Aubrey Kachnovich*

*Grade 8: Sam Perkins and Nora Castonguay*

*Mary Poppins Jr. will be performed for the public by the Spruce Mountain Middle School Drama program on Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup> and Friday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 pm in the SMMS Cafeteria. This will also be performed for all the schools.*

*EMPower testing will be taking place in the upcoming weeks at the Middle School. Dates scheduled are March 25, 26, and 27 as well as April 1, 2 and 3. The students will be testing for an hour and a half each day.*

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*Mrs. Fenalson and Mr. Labonte will be leading the way hosting the District 4 festival at the Middle School on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. There will be approximately 250 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> graders in attendance. These students will practice during the day and perform to a large audience in the afternoon, beginning around 4:00 pm.*

*The CTE pilot program has begun for 8<sup>th</sup> graders. All 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will do a couple of sessions on career exploration. Students have already completed interest surveys and from those surveys will now be able to partake in mini sessions for two different areas of interest, which will be presented by CTE educators. These mini sessions will take place during intervention time, as well as some after school sessions. This program is based on a state grant which everyone involved is hoping continues. Intervention time will be used instead of taking students out of regular classroom instruction time.*

*School Board Members asked that all administrators send out emails of upcoming events.*

### 13.3 **Chris Hollingsworth – SMES**

*Chris stated that the "Change Challenge" was a great success. Spruce Mtn. Elementary School won the trophy for Tier II, while Verso won the trophy for Tier I. SMES was in 1<sup>st</sup> place for the overall week one, but Verso decided to step up their game and get serious, which is when they took the lead. Everyone in the district should feel good that two teams from our area took 1<sup>st</sup> place for all of Franklin County.*

*Chris passed pictures around of himself being "pied" by his elementary students. Said it appeared the students were having a lot of fun with this, and thanked the custodians for cleaning up the mess.*

*Like the Middle School, the Elementary School will also begin taking the EMPower ME tests next week. The Elementary School will spread these tests out over the next three weeks, and do make-ups the week before April vacation. A big thank you to Dora, who has helped put together a kick off breakfast for the Elementary students on Tuesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>. Chris further stated that Elementary staff was working on activities which would hopefully boost the students interest in taking these tests, and keep them interested. Chris said that this year all the students will be taking the tests in their classrooms using their Chromebooks. This is the first year they have been able to do this.*

### 13.4 **Kevin Harrington – SMPS**

*Kevin spoke of the visiting Harlem Superstars, stating the students really enjoyed their Primary School presentation which took place on Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup>.*

*He also mentioned the PBIS Dance, which took place on Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>. (Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support)*

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*Kevin stated that Curt Jack would be presenting the "new" focus model of the PEPG Evaluation tool from Marzano on April 8<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm. This presentation would be at the Primary School and would include Administrators and Evaluation Team Members. Schools are currently using the Marzano evaluation tool, the presentation will be on the new focus model which is now available.*

*The Primary students will be watching a presentation of Mary Poppins Jr. on March 20<sup>th</sup>. This will be presented by the Middle School Drama Program.*

*Kevin reports that his staff is preparing for the WMEC Workshop which will take place on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.*

*Kevin outlined the Pre K Registration which will take place on April 24<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup> as well as Kindergarten Registration will happen on April 5<sup>th</sup>. He stated that flyers had been posted in the towns, as well as mailings sent home and sent to local day care centers for parents. This information has also been posted on the website.*

*Kevin is working with Chris at the Elementary School planning for Grade 2 step up day, he will keep us posted on any new information as the planning proceeds.*

*Kevin reported that the Primary School had been celebrating "March Madness" week, and the students and staff members have been actively participating in different events throughout the week. It's fun to see what the little ones come up with sometimes.*

*BYOC is continuing on Wednesdays, he and his staff are diligently working on this Curriculum.*

*NWEA testing window is now open for his Primary students, he reported that typically the only ones tested during the winter window were any new students, or any students that have been recommended by staff members as needing "data" on.*

## 13.5 **Amanda Hersey – Curriculum Coordinator**

*Amanda wanted to thank her Technology staff as they have been working hard on getting everyone ready for the EMPOWER ME testing that will take place over the next few weeks.*

*She handed out a short write-up for the WMEC March 22<sup>nd</sup> workshop which outlined the workshop details for next Friday. She further stated that 13 districts would partake in this workshop and the benefits from this would impact 14,000+ students. We do have presenters from our district; Chris Hollingsworth will present on "Literacy Based Classrooms" and Scott Albert on "Ravenous Readers".*

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*The remainder of the content area curriculum meetings are coming up. Each content area has met three times already and each will meet two more times before the end of the school year. Teachers and administrators have given excellent feedback which will give insight for the next steps taken for curriculum.*

## 14. POLICY

- 14.1 Second Reading of Policy EFD – Meal Charging
- 14.2 Second reading of Policy JL – Wellness
- 14.3 Second reading of Policy JLCAA – Wellness Procedures
- 14.4 Second reading of Policy ADC – Tobacco Use and Possession, Tobacco Free Campus

*Bob Staples requested that these policies be grouped together for approval. All other board members agreed.*

Motion made by PHOEBE PIKE, seconded by DALE LEBLANC to ACCEPT THE SECOND READING OF THESE POLICIES. (Policy EFD – Meal Charging, Policy JL – Wellness, Policy JLCAA – Wellness Procedures, and Policy ADC – Tobacco Use and Possession, Tobacco Free Campus.)

10 Yes	0 No	0 Abstain	1 Student Rep Yes Orion Schwab
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## 15. OLD BUSINESS

### 15.1 **Amended and Restated RSU 73 403(b) plan.**

*Bob Webster stated that this plan had been reviewed by Drummond and Woodsum and although the tighter constraints were being followed by payroll the actual plan had not been updated with guideline changes therefore this plan is catching up with the current guidelines.*

Motion made by SHARI OUELLETTE, seconded by DOUG DIPASQUALE to ACCEPT THE AMENDED 403(b) PLAN AS WRITTEN.

9 Yes	0 No	1 Abstain Joel Pike	1 Student Rep Yes Orion Schwab
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## **16. NEW BUSINESS**

### **16.1 Draft 2019/2020 School Year Calendar**

*Bob Webster stated that the calendar draft is based on the RSU 9 calendar. Due to the fact that the Department of Education puts constraints on how many days can differ among the districts in a CTE Region.*

*Doug DiPasquale questioned the calendar and whether we could possibly take days from April vacation because it seems we always use too many snow days.*

*Tammy Frost stated that she didn't think shrinking April vacation was a possibility because of contractual agreements already in place.*

*Tammy Frost asked about moving the first day to the 26<sup>th</sup> of August instead of waiting until September to begin. Bob Webster stated that he would contact RSU 9 and open up a conversation regarding FY 20 school calendar.*

*Public Comment indicated a general concern regarding snow days and how they are made up. A concern is always that seniors graduate without enough school days. It's a good idea to have a plan in place before the school year begins to ensure this doesn't occur. Julie Taylor further stated that she thought this should be a statewide conversation because it seems that every year this is an issue.*

*Joel Pike pointed out that in fine red print at the bottom of the calendar it stated June 6, which is incorrect. Laura had corrected this, but not before the packets to the board went out in the mail on Friday.*

*Doug DiPasquale stated that he thought more days should be built into the calendar to accommodate for snow days.*

*Dale Leblanc agreed with Doug's statement and asked that we be proactive and build ten snow days into the calendar.*

*Bob Staples asked that we re-work the calendar with some other options, including building snow days in.*

### **16.2 FY 20 Audit Bid**

*Bob Webster stated that the Audit Bid package was included in the originally mailed packet from Friday. He thought it would be beneficial for the School Board to send out the audit bid package as he thought we could save money by doing so. Bob W stated that he had researched costs of audits for other districts that are of the similar size, and believes that our district could save money by sending audit services out to bid.*

*Shari Ouellette asked if Bob Webster had contacted other school districts to see who they use. Bob W stated that he had not contacted other districts, but rather contacted auditors that he knew and had worked with in past years.*



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*Dale Leblanc asked if Bob Webster would make a recommendation after the bid process was complete. Bob W stated he would be glad to do so.*

*Bob Staples asked if the bid package included references for the Audit Firms from other school districts. Bob W stated that yes, the bid package does require that references be included in their bid proposals.*

*Bob Webster further stated that it didn't look like this had been bid out since 2011. The question was asked if we had to take the lowest bid, and the answer is no. The bid package specifically states that we do not have to accept the lowest bid package.*

*Doug DiPasquale asked if there were other services that we should be looking at doing the same thing with in order to save additional money? Bob Webster stated that food supplies, heating oil and bus fuel are typically bid but would check on bidding legal services.*

Motion made by DOUG DIPASQUALE, seconded by SHARI OUELLETTE to AUTHORIZE BOB WEBSTER, INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT TO SEND OUT AUDIT BID PACKAGE.

10 Yes	0 No	0 Abstain	1 Student Rep Yes Orion Schwab
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## 16.3 **FY 20 Budget Discussion**

*Bob Webster reviewed with School Board the handouts for the meeting regarding the budget. One of the handouts shows that RSU 73 is operating efficiently for the most part when looking at the state average of per pupil costs. A few cost centers are higher and most are lower.*

*Bob Webster reviewed the current deductions under the new proposed budget handout.*

***Ed Techs** had been increased to work 6.5 hours across the board. This increased that line by over \$40,000 and Bob thought it was better to budget for what they are currently working. We have some Ed Techs that work 6 hours and some that work 6.5 hours. This doesn't decrease the amount of time working, but rather leaves the Ed Techs as they are.*

*Phoebe Pike stated concern that student needs wouldn't be met if this happened, but it was further explained that we weren't taking services away only leaving them as is.*

*Tammy Frost reported that there are still increases where needed, just not across the board (not everyone).*

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***Debt Service** on renovation project. Bob Webster had contacted the current bank to discuss options. He was surprised to learn that we could refinance without hurting the districts credit and that the initial balloon payment would be removed and the current interest rate would remain the same. There would be no penalty for doing this but there would be additional interest which would be approximately \$23,000 more.*

*A new payment schedule was sent out to board members from Bob via email. This repayment schedule reflects about a \$175,000 relief in the two "balloon" payments.*

*Doug DiPasquale stated that he would like the opportunity to review the new payment schedule and that he was concerned with future debt service payments.*

*Bob Webster also had a handout that compared "flat funding" budgets vs. "actual" budgets over four years for RSU 73. This comparison shows that, by reducing the budget the district has saved the towns \$8,313,849 over the past four years, pending FY 20 budget approval. Bob stated that he thought the district had done very well in saving money but ongoing budget reductions would be very hard to continue.*

*Orion Schwab stated that he didn't see a benefit in decreasing the budget, and asked if there was indeed a benefit. Board members stated that educationally "no" there wouldn't be a benefit, but financially "yes" there is a benefit because it is saving money.*

*If the School Board agreed to the current proposed budget with the current cuts there would be approx. a 2.8% increase vs. a 4% increase. This is with the Ed Tech hours being figured as actual hours and the debt service payment being refigured as well as cutting the Administrative Assistant for HR in Central Office to half time with no benefits.*

*Shari Ouellette stated that she thought the Finance Committee needed to meet and review the proposed budget.*

*Dale Leblanc thanked Tina Collins for the decrease in her budget line, but it was stated that this was due to the Ed Tech hours being figured at actual and not at 6.5 hours per day across the board. He still thanked whoever was responsible for that decrease.*

*Tammy Frost questioned whether this budget included adding a teacher at the Primary School due to the already large numbers there. There was much discussion regarding this, and Kevin Harrington stated that he didn't feel the need to add a position at the Primary School as long as his current staff stayed at the Primary School. Scott Albert and Chris Hollingsworth interjected with the fact that if SMPS kept its current staff a teacher would need to be added at the Elementary level due to the fact that the current second grade class is too large to be accommodated by the current number of teachers at the elementary school.*

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*Discussion continued around this topic and the current enrollment numbers. A consensus of School Board members would like to see one teacher added into the budget for next year.*

*Kristal Flagg stated that adding one teacher at \$60,000 would put the budget increase at 3.11% roughly.*

*Dale Leblanc asked Kevin about Pre K and Kindergarten registration again and when those figures would be available. Kevin reiterated the registration dates and asked that those numbers don't always reflect accurately as registration and withdrawals are constant.*

*Doug DiPasquale also asked about the analysis of enrollment figures for next year.*

*Chris Hollingsworth spoke about the difficulty the elementary teachers would have if another teacher wasn't added to the budget, especially with the literacy based classrooms. General classrooms can have 19-20 students, but he finds the literacy based classrooms are more effective with a cap of 16 students.*

*Scott Albert stated that another teacher could always be added to the contingency line of the budget, that way if one was needed those funds could be used elsewhere if needed.*

*Shari Ouellette thought it was a good idea to add another teacher into the budget for FY20.*

*Dale Leblanc brought up Ken Vining's budget and how he has a plow truck and school bus in his budget for next year. Dale questioned whether we really needed to keep both of those in the budget as he remembers Ken stating that if we have to live without then we have to.*

*School board members continued to discuss these items. Bob Webster stated that he didn't think it was a good idea to take either out as it would disrupt the school bus purchasing schedule, and it was also his understanding that the current truck which would be replaced with the new one is on its last leg. He further stated that taking the plow truck out would only save approximately \$10,800 in lease payments for next year. Phoebe Pike stated that she didn't think Ken's budget should be on the table without Ken there to answer any questions they may have.*

*Doug DiPasquale disagreed with taking the plow truck or school bus out of the budget because the single bidder continues to increase the price every year.*

*Joel Pike stated that he was "good" with the budget at this point. He wanted one teacher added under the contingency budget, and to leave the plow truck and bus in the budget. But also wanted to remind Board Members that they were there to ask the voters what the district felt necessary for the budget, and to not cut too deep before a town vote. After the town vote, if they vote the budget down, then that is the point where the Board would make more cuts.*

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*Dale Leblanc then withdrew his request to take the plow truck out, but agreed that adding a teacher to the contingency plan felt like a good idea.*

*Anne Schwabb questioned if maybe we should be adding two teachers to the budget, as we know that we will need at least one more at the elementary level. Her thought was to add one teacher at the elementary level and another to the contingency plan.*

*There was a question about the new proposal regarding "new" teachers having a minimum salary of \$40,000. Scott Albert spoke up that his understanding is that this would not be enacted for the FY 20 year, but rather for the FY 21 school year, and he thought that we currently had 6 teachers that this would effect.*

*Tammy Frost also added that the governor's proposal when enacted would offer more money to districts to help alleviate this cost increase.*

*Doug DiPasquale also added that he remembered Denise Rodzen questioning the HS Guidance Department, he couldn't remember her exact question and she is absent, but he remembers that she questioned this line.*

*Bob Webster stated that at this point he didn't have anything report on this, but he'd been working on issue.*

*TJ Plourde spoke about the Guidance Department and how he has seen a lot of improvement. They are doing better and helping students more than in previous years. The Naviance program is still a work in progress, but they are hoping to have it up and running full force for next year. The Registrar's position will be a big part of this program and implementing it with the students.*

*Julie Taylor (Public comment) also stated that maybe the district would have some savings in retirements this year. She wasn't sure how many staff members were retiring, but thought that maybe those who were would save us money in salaries and benefits.*

*Dale Leblanc thanked the Administration for working so hard on putting the budget together with savings in mind. He thought they did a great job.*

*Doug DiPasquale also asked about fuel costs savings, but Ken Vining wasn't present to speak to this possibility.*

***Summary:*** *Bob Webster and Kristal Flagg will add one teacher to the budget for the elementary school. The School Board will review the repayment schedule for the debt service and most other lines look good to go. The finance committee will meet next week before the board meeting to review the budget. On the agenda for next week will be approval of the budget articles / warrants.*

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## **17. APPOINTMENTS**

*No appointments. Bob Staples reminded everyone that the Superintendent Advisory Search Committee need names for those interested in being on this committee. And reminded those interested that there would be an MSMA Training at 7:00 pm on March 25<sup>th</sup> in the Conference Room at the Superintendent's Office.*

## **18. OTHER BUSINESS - None**

## **19. CALENDAR/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- March 21, 2019 – Finance Committee Meeting  
5:00 PM Spruce Mountain High School
- March 21, 2019 – Budget Meeting – Board Vote on Warrant  
6:00 PM Spruce Mountain High School
- April 4, 2019 – District Budget Meeting  
6:00 PM Spruce Mountain Middle School
- April 11, 2019 – School Board Meeting  
6:00 PM Spruce Mountain Middle School
- April 23, 2019 – District Referendum Meeting
- April 25, 2019 – School Board Meeting  
6:00 PM Spruce Mountain Primary School

## **20. ADJOURNMENT**

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Motion made by SHARI OUELLETTE, seconded by PHOEBE PIKE to ADJOURN THE SCHOOL BOARD MEETING OF MARCH 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2019 AT 7:40 p.m.

10 Yes	0 No	0 Abstain	2 Student Rep Yes Orion Schwab Scott Jackson
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Any individual who needs special accommodations to enter the building or assistance to attend this public meeting, must contact the Superintendent's Office at least five (5) days in advance of the meeting (A.D.A.)

Respectfully submitted:



Robert Webster  
Interim Superintendent of Schools