

**JOINT MEETING
SANBORN REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD
FREMONT SCHOOL BOARD**

MEETING MINUTES

October 27, 2020

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School Board Videos under the School Board menu**

A Joint meeting of the Sanborn Regional School Board and Fremont School Board was held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday, October 27, 2020. Chairperson Jim Baker and Chairperson Greg Fraize (Fremont) called their respective meetings to order at 6:05 PM. The following were recorded as present:

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS: Jim Baker, Chairperson
Tammy Mahoney, Vice Chair
Peter Broderick
Dawn Dutton
Jameson Fitzpatrick
Larry Heath
Charles Melvin (Excused)

FREMONT BOARD MEMBERS: Greg Fraize, Chairperson
Amy Leslie, Vice Chair
Sharon DeVincent
Gordon Muench
Emily Phillips
Brittany Thompson

ADMINISTRATORS: Thomas Ambrose, Superintendent of Schools
Matthew Angell, Business Administrator
Allyn Hutton, Superintendent-Fremont
Susan Penny, Business Administrator- Fremont

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Baker called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM and read *A Checklist to Ensure Meetings Are Compliant With the Right-To-Know Law During The State Of Emergency*.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Chair Baker.

3. ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE

Chair Broderick welcomed the SAU 83, Fremont School Board members and administrators to the meeting and called for a Roll Call attendance asking participants to identify their location and also identify who may or may not be at the location with them. All participants responded.

4. SCHOOL RE-OPENING PLANS

4.1 Sanborn Regional School District-Superintendent Ambrose reported we are doing great. We've had two full days of school, in-person and synchronous. Brian Stack will give a longer up-date a little later. We are working on the drop-off and pick-up situation. We've had to stagger some things as it was just getting way too long. Our families have been absolutely fantastic about driving kids to school which limited the bus ridership but conversely caused a bottleneck for drop-offs and pick-ups. I want to publically thank our four Administrators; Brian Stack, Christine Desrochers, Ryan McCluskey and Chris Snyder. I got a call from the Newton Chief of Police this afternoon with the good news that Memorial School completely fixed their pick-up at the end of the day and it ran super smoothly, instead of having people lined up all the way past *Acios*. I have been to all the classrooms in the district for two days in a row and I was really impressed by how our staff and students have been handling themselves. They've done a fantastic job. Thank you to our teachers who have worked tirelessly to prepare for this social distancing, handling the kids with regard to masks and the opening of the school.

4.2 Fremont School District- Superintendent Hutton said, Fremont opened school for students on Wednesday, September 9th. At that time, we gave families an option to return in-person or to choose remote instruction and about 75% of our families chose to have the students return to in-person learning at Ellis School. So, we started on September 9th with several safety precautions in place; I am sure as everyone is doing there is temperature and health checks before the students arrive at school, face coverings are required of all students unless they are medically excused. Social distancing has been done throughout the building keeping students 4-6' apart within the classroom. We did have to purchase additional desks to make that happen because like most schools we had moved to tables for group activities but are now back to desks and chairs. Like Superintendent Ambrose mentioned, parents have been wonderful in assisting. We have after almost two months, the drop-off and pick-up down to a science. It is working very well but it does take time, so hang in there. The first few days are tough. Students do remain with their cohorts and we have a very succinct method of contact tracing. So when and if there are cases, we are able to report exactly who has been in touch with whom. Early on when the weather was nice, we really encouraged students and classes to go outside to learn and it was a joy to see them socially distancing outside and learning. In Fremont, we gave them a six week time slot which means after six weeks, families could say, OK, I've tried remote learning or I've tried in-person learning and I now would like to try the other option. So, in mid-October, we did a second survey to parents and at that time we had 84% of our students' then return to the building. So, we feel it has been a successful start. I need to say school is not the way school used to be and while everyone is working hard to make it work, I do think there is staff and students who wish it could be the way it used to be. So, we are encouraging people to hang in there, to be vigilant because our staff is going on to months of this now and we can feel the fatigue setting in. But it is important that we maintain our social distancing, our hand washing, our face covering to the greatest extent possible and keep everyone safe. The staff has done an amazing job and parents as well, both by transporting students and by providing lunch to students that allowed us to open and be successful. We appreciate all of that support.

5. CAPITAL COSTS AND TUITION ESTIMATE FOR FY 2022- Mr. Angell reported that per Section 7 of the 2003 Agreement with Fremont and the Sanborn Regional School

District, those numbers are going to be available on November 1st. That happens to fall on a Sunday, so I am going to be delivering it to the School District on Monday.

Superintendent Hutton said, I look forward to receiving that on Monday and the only thing I would say is we had a conversation last year about Capital Costs and how a portion of the building is now being used for Middle School expenses so Fremont would hope that the Capital Costs would remain constant because the Middle School is still using that portion of the building as they were last year. I can relate to Matt and Tom's challenge in building a budget as we are. Ours need to be presented to the Board on Monday night so the sooner you can get me that on Monday, the better off I will be. The scenario we are in now, it is important that we build a budget that can support learning whether students are remote or in school, whether we are in the current situation or in a different situation. It is very challenging to consider all the moving variables as we prepare the budget. Our goal is to bring in as flat of a budget as we possibly can because taxpayers are challenged at this time. We will do our best, but we can only do so much.

6. COURSE OFFERINGS FOR 2020-21 VERSUS LAST YEAR- Mr. Stack said, I am going to talk about some of the new course offerings and changes we have for this year. Our program of studies is a process that goes all year. It starts about this time of the year as we work with our staff and students to put together some new course ideas and program ideas. We roll out a program of studies sometime in January and give students a couple of months to make selections and choices, a process they do with counselors. We get into late February, early March and make decisions based on student input and student interest on which courses we are going to run in our schedule and which ones we are not and then we have to make staffing decisions by early April based on that. From there, we make the schedule and start fitting the students into classes and give them their schedule by summertime so they can make changes. We start the year and they make a few more changes and then we start the process again so it really is a year-long process. We're always looking to do better and to meet students' needs.

Some of the courses we are running this school year that are new from the previous school year; we received a 10K Grant from the NH Charitable Foundation geared towards advanced manufacturing and looking at ways we could increase the number of students that look at that career field. What we have done is created a couple of courses with our Shop teachers called, *Survey of Vocational Careers* and *An Introduction of Vocational and Technical Learning*. These are ½ credit classes that go together and they give students some advanced certification in OSHA, Blueprint Reading and some other general skills that would help them in this area. We are adding an option for students to take some college credits through the NH Community College System. We also have a class that we run every four years which is very successful and has been

running for quite a long time a Sanborn called, *Elections and Civic Engagement*. This course follows the Presidential Election and students have the opportunity to role play the candidates and go through debates. We hold a town hall rally for students and it ultimately ends in a vote by all the students. The class then switches gears and does Civic Engagement topics the rest of the year. So, despite COVID we will be running that big event for students in a virtual format and that happens this Friday. We have a couple other ½ credit classes; both project-based in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) area which is a two course sequence in aviation. Funds from Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) assisted with this *Intro to Flight* and *Intro to Aircraft Systems*. This gives students a taste of what those fields look like. There are many different careers in Aviation. We have had some great community partnerships in helping with that particular program. It is nice to see something hands-on that is unique for this area. The only other school offering this in the area is Winnacunnet with a small program and then Manchester Schools would be the next area. We brought back our Foods and Nutrition program which was on hiatus after the Health teacher retired and we are excited to be able to start that again with one of our and there are a few sections this year. We had a couple of electives that did not have enough students to run; they were Social Studies which centered on classic culture, the roots of democracy, civil liberties and civil rights. This happens every year where we don't have enough students to run all of the classes and we'll go back and retool to see if there is a better way to offer that next year, perhaps in a broader sense.

Our biggest program increase (and this has been the case for several years) is in our Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) program. We have the ability for students to earn credits for learning that occurs outside of the classroom and that can mean different things; students doing an independent project with another teacher or a community member outside or otherwise it could be an internship or some other kind of experience that a student is doing. It almost always involves a community partner, for any length of time with different credits earned depending on the circumstances. We have grown to about 125 students taking ELOs which is phenomenal from where we were 6-7 years ago with half a dozen. The obvious advantage with an ELO is that students are able to design their own program exactly as they want it so they're highly motivated to have it be successful. We have a Business Technology teacher designated as the Career Pathways Coordinator and having her in this role has helped us raise the rigor for a lot of these ELOs. She will work with any of the community partners that sign on to work with our students to help build a learning program for that student that will be rigorous and meet their needs.

Chair Fraize asked about the ELO and how students are connected with their community partners.

Principal Stack responded, we keep a list of community partners and are always looking for new people. Sometimes we have unique community requests that come in before we have the students. The other day I received an email about an opportunity for a

student to work for NASA doing an ELO at the center in Concord on a project connected with NASA. That could be a cool fit for one of our kids. ELOs happen all times during the year.

Chair Fraize asked what the biggest lessons were in having the Middle School students housed at the High School.

Mr. Stack responded, some of you may remember that 5-6 years ago the Middle School spent a calendar year at the High School due to a roof issue but that was 8th grade and it was temporary but it helped us learn how to share space. The most important thing is, #1, can we all fit without having to reduce or change any of the programs at the High School and the answer was yes we can. So it is identifying the appropriate space for the Middle School, so they can have as much of their own personal experience as possible in a building that you can't completely separate. They operate out of 1.5 classroom wings and the High School operates out of most of the rest of the building. We share common facilities like the gyms, the library, the cafeteria and the auditorium. Our schedules are separate except for the last part of the day after lunch where we share staff in Unified Arts. I work closely with the Middle School Principal Christine Desrochers. We do some things together if they are campus specific and others are separate. I would venture to guess that most High School students will say that they don't even notice that the Middle School is there.

Mr. Fraize commented it is great that both schools benefited from the merger.

Mr. Stack agreed that maximizing the resources is always a win in the game.

7. FREMONT HIGH SCHOOL SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE- Superintendent Hutton said, when we began our search a year ago, I may have shared with you that the decision was made to look at area schools to try to determine what would be the most appropriate school for placement of Fremont students when our contract with Sanborn expires. At the time that we started looking and doing our visits last fall, people thought we were way ahead of the game as the contract doesn't expire until 2026 and asked why we were looking now, etc. We didn't have a crystal ball but suddenly things got put on pause (due to COVID) and thank goodness we were able to do all six site visits before March when things changed dramatically for all of us.

Following those six visits, the High School Study Committee now needs to come back together. They are preparing for a presentation to the School Board and the public about what we learned from our visits to those six schools. We will give highlights of what we learned and what we thought were advantages from each of those schools and challenges as well. We will be sharing that information with the School Board this fall; I don't have an exact date. The Committee is

coming together in early November. They had intended to do this work in March and April but will pick that back up and make a presentation to the Board. I anticipate the Committee will be making some recommendations. Our goal would be to reduce the number of possible high schools from six to three. We would ask the Board to take input from the Administration and perhaps the public and make that decision in late fall of 2020. Then we will dig deeper into the selected finalist schools and have an in-person or virtual visit to address follow-up questions with administration, teachers and students. We would like to move forward and make a decision by the end of the school year or next fall. That is a timeframe I am thinking about but it may be different based on what the School Board wants us to do once they've narrowed down the schools.

We do know that our decision has a direct effect on Sanborn because if our students are not there, you need to know as soon as you possibly can.

Superintendent Hutton asked Emily Phillips who is on the Committee for any thoughts she would like to share as well.

Ms. Phillips responded, you said it perfectly Allyn. We were told by many of the schools that we were premature in reaching out and a lot of them were confused about our timeline, thinking we wanted to place students this fall. Then COVID hit and everything stopped so I am glad we got to visit all six schools. There will need to be follow-up visits as there are questions related to the administration changing or how schools are handling COVID. No one knows how long this is going to last. But I feel good and we will reconvene the original committee which includes parents, administrators, community members and me, then present to the Board and have a definitive timeline.

Chair Baker said, I assume you will keep our Superintendent updated?

Superintendent Hutton said, yes, he is on my speed dial.

Mr. Ambrose said, yes, we talk and we understand the timeline. Thank you to the Fremont Board for recognizing the programmatic effect that (should they decide to leave) this will have on us since it is 1/3 of our students. So, we would need that time to plan accordingly and begin a transitional process. But I am not worried. We hope to woo you with good vibes and reasonable budgets and we hope the combination will help. Please reach out if there is anything we can do to support you.

Mr. Stack said, I look through the lens of what the students will need to go through this process. You have to make the decision that is best for you. I spent six years on the Timberland School Board myself and I completely get how that angle works. I want you to know we will be hyper-focused on making sure that if the choice is not Sanborn, that all of the Fremont students that we serve at

Sanborn have the experience they need to finish out their time at Sanborn and transition to whatever else that looks like. We have become a pretty close school community that includes three towns that share a lot of things with the kids. The kids are one community so that is certainly an important piece that we will want to unpack with everyone so we can do it appropriately with the kids.

Chair Fraize asked about the budget we have prepared and corresponding goals.

Superintendent Ambrose said, we are not sharing anything on the budget before it is presented on November 4th. We obviously want to reduce our cost per pupil which has a direct effect on you. Our reorganization has been incredibly effective, probably even more so than I thought in the initial analysis. We are very optimistic that we will continue to reduce our cost-per-pupil while offering an even better program than we had before which is very exciting. We hope you tune in to this important meeting which is available on YouTube as well.

Chair Fraize said, we appreciate you sharing the videos with our local cable station in Fremont. They are popular and widely watched, so thank you.

Superintendent Ambrose said, transparency and trust have been my two biggest goals since I came onboard, so thank you Greg.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

8.1 The next Sanborn Regional School Board meeting will be a Joint Meeting with the Budget Committee on Wednesday, November 4, 2020 at 6:00 PM in the Gymnasium at Sanborn Regional High School.

9. ADJOURNMENT- Chair Baker adjourned the meeting at 6:42 PM.

Minutes respectively Submitted by:

Phyllis Kennedy
Secretary