

# Mt. Blue Regional School District



COMMUNITY | CULTURE | CURRICULUM

*"Working together to provide high-quality educational opportunities for all."*

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Chesterville | Farmington | Industry | New Sharon | New Vineyard | Starks | Temple | Vienna | Weld | Wilton

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## Board of Directors Board Meeting Agenda Notes

**DATE:** November 12, 2024  
**PLACE:** Mt. Blue Campus Forum  
**TIME:** 6:30pm  
**LIVESTREAM LINK:** <https://boxcast.tv/channel/unvoa3ijkfnyp9oufole>

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**Members present:** Dina Spenciner, Gwen Doak, Wayne Kinney, Rich Ruhlin, Dee Robinson, Jeff Barnum, Katie Martikke, Kyle Fletcher, Greg Kimber, Scott Erb (arrived at 6:32), Amanda Caruso, Gerry Provencher, Gloria McGraw, Will Jones

**Members absent:** Debbie Smith, Josh Robbins

**Student members present:** Addie Collelo, Rowan Shanti, Julian Reynolds

**Student members absent:**

**Staff present:** Chris Elkington, Monique Poulin, Alison Gamache

**Other staff members present:** Kevin Bremner, Mary Redmond-Luce, Cynthia Bernstein, Mike Hanson, Joel Smith, James Black, Cyndi Pratt, Galen Dalrymple, Carol Kiesman, Nichole Goodspeed, Tracy Williams

- I. **Call to Order** - Chair Robinson
  - A. Meeting called to order at 6:30.
  
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance**
  
- III. **Adjustments to the Agenda**
  - A. None
  
- IV. **Report of the Chairperson** - Chair Robinson
  - A. [Code of Ethics](#)
    1. N & O
  
- V. **Communications**
  - A. Superintendent's Newsletter - [10/23/2024](#), [11/1/2024](#)
  - B. Storm Closing-Delay Memo - [10/28/2024](#)
  - C. [Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan \(MJRP\)](#)
    1. Review - Not really a grant, but a yearly allowance which we always accept.
      - If there are excess funds, they are available for those who apply. It is more of an allocation which we always apply for.

**VI. Good news stories from the Board or Administrators**

- A. MBC-Totally Trades took place last week with a collaboration with the National Guard and a Black Hawk helicopter; a student recognition assembly was held last week; staff and students responded well to an evacuation and a hold in place as expectations that are practiced were followed.
- B. Western Maine United Soccer-community youth soccer celebrations went well!
- C. MBMS and Mallett - Participated in a Veterans' Celebration on 11/12-the Farmington Chief of Police led the parade of 30 vehicles. It was well received and one of the warmest events in a long time.
- D. MBMS-they are laying the new hardwood floor in the gym, getting closer to completion.

**VII. Public Comment**

- None

**VIII. [Superintendent's Report](#) - Christian Elkington**

- A. New Hires, Transfers, Resignations, and Retirements
  - 1. Retirements accepted now are typically meant for the end of the school year.
- B. Openings as of 11-12-2024
  - 1. Cut in half from this same time in 2023
- C. Turf Committee Notes
- D. The Cost of Being Poor is Rising
  - 1. Excellent article about the difficulties many have. Relevant to our times.
  - 2. GIS putting out a report that will help to give context to our population.
- E. RSU 9 Social Worker & BCBA Office Hours
  - 1. This has been put in place to support both staff and their students.
- F. The Mission at the Eastward
  - 1. FCTEC is working with them to look at ways to have both programs benefit each other.
- G. Superintendent & Director of Finance meet w/Weld Selectmen
  - 1. They will meet on Wednesday night to answer questions.
  - 2. Presentation will be shared with the full board.

**IX. Administrator Reports**

- A. [Technology](#) - Director Kevin Bremner
  - 1. Report highlights were reviewed.
    - iPads-Grades 6-12
    - ACTEM conference
- B. [Athletics](#) - Director Cynthia Pratt
  - 1. Thanks to Mother Nature for the wonderful fall weather.
  - 2. Report highlights were reviewed.
    - Sportsmanship Awards-Cross Country Boys and Girls, Golf
    - Student Leadership Conference
- C. [Special Services](#) - Director Cynthia Bernstein
  - 1. Shared demonstrations of props used in Occupational Therapy.
  - 2. Report highlights were reviewed.
    - Trainings
    - Openings
    - Advisory Committee
    - 10/11 Workshop Day
  - 3. Questions:

- Program space is tight in some school buildings given the nature of the disabilities of our students. However, we are able to work with the space we have.
- Support for new teachers- Coordinators and Clinical Coordinator are closely supporting them. As needs arise, we are able to respond quicker than ever.
- Evaluating data for those who move into our district- There was a reminder to share this data next time.

## X. Presentations

### A. [Turf Committee Recommendations Report](#)

1. Review of the Turf Committee's purpose
  - Explore best surface for replacing current field
  - Wide variety of representation on the committee
2. Highlights of report
  - Lots of discussion: experts on both sides of the topic were invited to present; articles were shared; process was informative
  - Pros and cons were reviewed.
  - Overall recommendation of the committee was to move forward with turf
3. Questions
  - There was discussion around the actual life of turf fields.
  - Activitas- would pick grass, but due to where we live, there will be a better chance to have the use we need by accessing turf.
  - Temperature of turf (heat island)- there are steps already put in place for heat concerns by the MPA and officials for student needs, helps us in the spring to melt off snow quickly
  - What sports? Field hockey, Lacrosse, Soccer, Football, PE classes
  - PFAS- Many discussions were had, but as we learned about PFAS, it is being regulated by the state and the expectation by the state is zero PFAS by 2029. Companies are taking steps to get rid of PFAS; microplastics will be present for the foreseeable future.
  - Pros and cons of grass-mowing, fertilizing, cost of grass to keep at playable; amount of time you can be on it; need two competition fields to use it like you would a turf field; multiplies cost.
4. Vote to support Sports Booster Turf fundraising
  - Motion
  - Discussion
    - (1) January of 2029- State of Maine- no PFAS
    - (2) Reps on Boosters- committed to fully fundraising the amount
    - (3) Turf fields are costly to replace and have potential health and environmental risks due to microplastics. While they offer maintenance savings, these don't outweigh the replacement costs. Our school doctor expressed concerns over the field's possible toxicity. More research is needed to fully understand the long-term impacts of microplastics.
    - (4) Boosters- they are confident that they can raise the funds with the possibility that the National Guard would do the site work.
    - (5) There are no turf products that can be installed in ME unless they disclose that there is PFAS.
    - (6) Trust the people responsible for our students to take safety into account and make a reasonable, balanced fashion.

<p><i>Motion to support Sports Booster Turf fundraising.</i></p>	<p><i>Yeas: Dina Spenciner, Gwen Doak, Wayne Kinney, Rich Ruhlin, Dee Robinson, Katie Martikke, Kyle Fletcher, Scott Erb, Amanda Caruso, Gloria McGraw, Will Jones</i>  <i>Nays: Jeff Barnum, Gerry Provencher, Greg Kimber</i>  <i>Abstain:</i>  <i>Student Yeas: Adeline Colello, Rowan Shanti, Julian Reynolds</i>  <i>Student Nays:</i>  <i>Student Abstain:</i>  <i>801/146/0</i></p>	<p><i>Motion: Rich Ruhlin</i>  <i>Second: Wayne Kinney</i>  <i>Motion: Passed</i></p>
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B. Connectivity Grant - Mary Redmond-Luce

1. Review of Grant Expectations/Purpose/Community Partner Sharing

- Awarded 1.6 million to purchase Ingalls Building
- Jessica Perez-Grants Manager-Reviewed Community Hub grant-80 organizations applied; RSU #9 had an excellent application, and they are the right organization to reach those impacted by the digital divide.
- The presentation was reviewed.
- Matt Rodrigue, alumnus from 2000, owns the building and has been working closely with Mary to support non-profits.
- Sarah Beach-Interim Executive Director of Franklin and Somerset Counties-expressing support for the project; appreciate the collaboration.
- Bill Crandall-Interim Executive Director-Western Maine Community Action-serving low income families in several counties-expressing support for the project.

2. Questions

- Commend for the effort; have heard about the needs for a long time.
- Concerns-
  - (1) RSU #9 taking on all of these grants and extra space
  - (2) Who is going to oversee all facets of what goes on in the space?
  - (3) If some other agency were the lead person, I would be in full support.
  - (4) Have we accepted this or not? There is a 90 day window, if the board does not accept the grant, they will seek another project. Will have to go to the voters to be approved if approved by the board first.
  - (5) It was relayed that there is no impact to taxpayers now or over time based on full occupancy. The costs to run the building would be covered by rental/leasing.
  - (6) The building has sprinkler systems and an elevator.
  - (7) Mary will send the inspection report to Chris to be forwarded.
  - (8) Are there projected grants to support ongoing expenses-what is the likelihood of collecting them?
  - (9) Can we see the building and have more concrete experience? Matt is happy to set a tour; bones are good.
  - (10) Technology-install internet and phones? Custodians? Plowing?
  - (11) We just bought a building and added oversight. If we start to have to look at budgets, we need to consider costs.

3. Next Steps

- Additional info requests
- Approval Vote to be held at the Dec 10th Mtg.
- Motion to extend 15 minutes

<p><i>Motion to Extend the meeting by 15 minutes.</i></p>	<p><i>Yeas: Dina Spenciner, Gwen Doak, Wayne Kinney, Rich Ruhlin, Dee Robinson, Katie Martikke, Kyle Fletcher, Scott Erb, Amanda Caruso, Gloria McGraw, Will Jones, Jeff Barnum, Gerry Provencher, Greg Kimber</i>  <i>Nays:</i>  <i>Abstain:</i>  <i>Student Yeas: Adeline Colello, Rowan Shanti, Julian Reynolds</i>  <i>Student Nays:</i>  <i>Student Abstain:</i>  <i>947/0/0</i></p>	<p><i>Motion: Rich Ruhlin</i>  <i>Second: Wayne Kinney</i>  <i>Motion: Passed</i></p>
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**XI. Consent Agenda**

- A. New Hires/Resignations etc.
- B. Board Minutes - [10.22.24](#)
- C. Committee Report Outs and Minutes
  - 1. Operations Committee - None
  - 2. Personnel & Finance - None
  - 3. Educational Policy - None

<p><i>Motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.</i></p>	<p><i>Yeas: Dina Spenciner, Gwen Doak, Rich Ruhlin, Dee Robinson, Jeff Barnum, Katie Martikke, Kyle Fletcher, Greg Kimber, Scott Erb, Amanda Caruso, Gerry Provencher, Gloria McGraw, Will Jones</i>  <i>Nays:</i>  <i>Abstain:</i>  <i>Student Yeas: Adeline Colello, Rowan Shanti, Julian Reynolds</i>  <i>Student Nays:</i>  <i>Student Abstain:</i>  <i>863/0/0</i>  <i>Wayne Kinney had left the room.</i></p>	<p><i>Motion: Rich Ruhlin</i>  <i>Second: Gwen Doak</i>  <i>Motion: Passed</i></p>
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**XII. New Business**

- A. [Cooperative Hockey Proposal](#)
  - 1. Review
  - 2. Questions/Discussion
  - 3. Motion
  - 4. Vote

<p><i>Motion to approve the cooperative proposal as presented.</i></p>	<p><i>Yeas: Dina Spenciner, Gwen Doak, Rich Ruhlin, Dee Robinson, Jeff Barnum, Katie Martikke, Kyle Fletcher, Greg Kimber, Scott Erb, Amanda Caruso, Gerry Provencher, Gloria McGraw, Will Jones</i>  <i>Nays:</i>  <i>Abstain:</i>  <i>Student Yeas: Adeline Colello, Rowan Shanti, Julian Reynolds</i></p>	<p><i>Motion: Gloria McGraw</i>  <i>Second: Gwen Doak</i>  <i>Motion: Passed</i></p>
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	<p><i>Student Nays:</i>  <i>Student Abstain:</i>  863/0/0  Wayne Kinney had left the room.</p>	
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B. FY 26 Budget

1. [District Timeline draft](#)

- Review
  - (1) Adjusting process to start sooner
- Questions/Discussion
  - (1) Balance forward-
    - (a) 2 million this year
    - (b) A large balance forward stresses the budget. We cannot keep applying balance forward year after year. Could lead to program reductions
    - (c) March 18th not 19th-adjustment to the timeline
- Changes?
- Motion
- Vote

<p><i>Motion to approve the District FY26 Budget Timeline as presented with adjustments to March 18 Tuesday</i></p>	<p><i>Yeas: Dina Spenciner, Gwen Doak, Wayne Kinney, Rich Ruhlin, Dee Robinson, Katie Martikke, Kyle Fletcher, Scott Erb, Amanda Caruso, Gloria McGraw, Will Jones, Jeff Barnum, Gerry Provencher, Greg Kimber</i>  <i>Nays:</i>  <i>Abstain:</i>  <i>Student Yeas: Adeline Colello, Rowan Shanti, Julian Reynolds</i>  <i>Student Nays:</i>  <i>Student Abstain:</i>  947/0/0</p>	<p><i>Motion: Rich Ruhlin</i>  <i>Second: Gwen Doak</i>  <i>Motion: Passed</i>  <i>Unanimous</i></p>
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2. District priorities

- Discussion
  - (1) Budget Challenges:
    - (a) Maintaining the current budget without additional positions would lead to a 12.8% increase for local communities.
    - (b) A 1% increase to our local communities equates to an additional \$150,000.
    - (c) Salaries and benefits are projected to increase by \$1.3 million without new positions or present one-year contracts.
    - (d) Reducing the balance forward from \$2 million to \$1.2 million is one consideration.
  - (2) Budget Reduction Strategies:
    - (a) Departments are being asked to identify potential budget cuts.
    - (b) A zero-based budgeting approach is being explored to justify every expense.
  - (3) Budget Proposals:

- (a) A 5%, 3% or 1.5% overall budget increase was proposed.
- (b) A max 6% increase to communities was also proposed.
- (4) Strategic Priorities:
  - (a) Alignment with the strategic plan is expected by the Board.
  - (b) Prioritizing student-focused programs.
- (5) Community Concerns:
  - (a) New Vineyard and Chesterville rejected last year's budget.
  - (b) Increased scrutiny, for good reasons, from our local communities needs to be expected.

- Motion

<p><i>Motion to ask all departments to consider the impact of cutting if applying 5/8/10% reduction to budgets</i></p>	<p><i>Yeas: Jeff Barnum, Katie Martikke, Greg Kimber,</i>  <i>Nays: Dina Spenciner, Gwen Doak, Wayne Kinney, Rich Ruhlin, Dee Robinson, Kyle Fletcher, Scott Erb, Amanda Caruso, Gerry Provencher, Gloria McGraw, Will Jones</i>  <i>Abstain:</i>  <i>Student Yeas:</i>  <i>Student Nays: Adeline Colello, Rowan Shanti, Julian Reynolds</i>  <i>Student Abstain:</i></p> <p>105/842/0</p>	<p><i>Motion: Katie Martikke</i>  <i>Second: Jeff Barnum</i>  <i>Motion: Failed</i></p>
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- Further discussion:

- Budget Focus: Instead of focusing on department cuts, consider the overall budget.
- Dual Approach: It's possible to combine budget cuts and increased funding for towns.
- Information Gathering: No need for a formal vote at this stage. Gathering information and discussing options is sufficient for the superintendent.
- Town Allocations:
  - A 6% increase to towns might be too low for our overall student needs.
  - A 12.8% increase is deemed too high for many communities.
  - The goal is to find a percentage that works for most towns.

<p><i>Motion to direct the superintendent to allow no more than 6% increase to the towns.</i></p>	<p><i>Yeas:</i>  <i>Nays:</i>  <i>Abstain:</i>  <i>Student Yeas:</i>  <i>Student Nays:</i>  <i>Student Abstain:</i></p>	<p><i>Motion: Gloria</i>  <i>Second: Rich</i>  <i>Motion: PENDING</i></p>
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- Motion

<p><i>Motion to extend the meeting by 15 minutes</i></p>	<p><i>Yeas: Jeff Barnum, Katie Martikke, Greg Kimber, Gwen Doak, Wayne Kinney, Rich Ruhlin, Dee Robinson, Scott Erb, Gerry Provencher, Gloria McGraw, Will Jones</i>  <i>Nays: Dina Spenciner, Kyle Fletcher, Amanda Caruso</i>  <i>Abstain:</i>  <i>Student Yeas: Adeline Colello, Rowan Shanti, Julian Reynolds</i>  <i>Student Nays:</i>  <i>Student Abstain:</i></p> <p>715/232/0</p>	<p><i>Motion: Wayne Kinney</i>  <i>Second: Greg Kimber</i>  <i>Motion: Passed</i></p>
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- Further discussion
  - Need Flexible Budget Options: Provide a range of potential budget cuts.
  - Realistic Range: Ensure the range is feasible and considers service impacts.
  - Multiple Options: Present various options to the Budget Committee.
  - Superintendent judgment: Empower the superintendent to make decisions within the range.
  - Target for Towns: Provide a target figure for the Budget Committee.
  - Property Tax Focus: Demonstrate commitment to minimizing property tax increases.
  -
- Motion

<p><i>Motion to call the question</i></p>	<p><i>Yeas: Dina Spenciner, Gwen Doak, Wayne Kinney, Rich Ruhlin, Dee Robinson, Jeff Barnum, Katie Martikke, Kyle Fletcher, Greg Kimber, Scott Erb, Amanda Caruso, Gerry Provencher, Gloria McGraw, Will Jones</i>  <i>Nays:</i>  <i>Abstain:</i>  <i>Student Yeas:</i>  <i>Student Nays:</i>  <i>Student Abstain:</i></p> <p>947/0/0</p>	<p><i>Motion: Amanda Caruso</i>  <i>Second: Scott Erb</i>  <i>Motion: Passed</i></p>
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Unanimous

- VOTE

<p><i>Motion to direct the superintendent to allow no more than 6% increase to the towns.</i></p>	<p><i>Yeas: Gloria McGraw, Will Jones, Rich Ruhlin, Greg Kimber</i>  <i>Nays: Dina Spenciner, Gwen Doak, Wayne Kinney, Dee Robinson, Jeff Barnum, Katie Martikke, Kyle Fletcher, Scott Erb, Amanda Caruso, Gerry Provencher,</i>  <i>Abstain:</i>  <i>Student Yeas:</i>  <i>Student Nays: Adeline Colello, Rowan Shanti, Julian Reynolds</i>  <i>Student Abstain:</i></p> <p>247/700/0</p>	<p><i>Motion: Gloria McGraw</i>  <i>Second: Rich Ruhlin</i>  <i>Motion: Failed</i></p>
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- Further discussion:
  - Budget Increase Proposals:
    - Wayne and Greg proposed three options for increasing the overall budget: 1.5%, 3%, and 6%.



- The 6% increase would have a significant impact on towns, translating to a 16% increase.
- Voting Procedure:
  - Voting would be on the overall budget increase percentage, not on specific allocations to towns.
- Amended Proposal and Voting:
  - Wayne and Greg amended their proposal to options of 1.5%, 3%, and 4%.
  - Discussion on not doing this ensued.
  - Wayne and Greg retracted their amended proposal.
- It was determined that the board trusts the superintendent and the budget committee to come up with a plan to share with the board.

- Vote

	<i>Yeas: Dina Spenciner, Gwen Doak, Wayne Kinney, Rich Ruhlin, Dee Robinson, Jeff Barnum, Katie Martikke, Kyle Fletcher, Greg Kimber, Scott Erb, Amanda Caruso, Gerry Provencher, Gloria McGraw, Will Jones</i> <i>Nays:</i> <i>Abstain:</i> <i>Student Yeas:</i> <i>Student Nays:</i> <i>Student Abstain:</i>  947/0/0	<i>Motion:</i> <i>Second:</i> <i>Motion: Passed</i>
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**XIII.** Adjourned without objection at 9:00.

**NEXT SCHEDULED BOARD MEETINGS**

- December 10, 2024 - 6:30pm - The Forum, Mt. Blue Campus
  - *Board Reports - Adult Education, Transportation*
- January 15, 2025 - 6:30pm - The Forum, Mt. Blue Campus
  - *Board Reports - AHS, GDCS, CCHS*

**NEXT SCHEDULED COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

- Operations - November 19, 2024 - 5:00pm - The Holman House
- Personnel & Finance - November 19, 2024 - 6:00pm - The Holman House
- Educational Policy - November 19, 2024 - 7:00pm - The Holman House