

Revised

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Policy Committee met in Regular Session on Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 4:00 PM in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Committee members present: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy (remote), Mr. Moore and Mr. Roraback
Committee members absent: Mr. Mennone
Board members present: Mrs. Petrella
Administration present: Dr. Schuch, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Moore called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Roraback made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Dahlheimer, to approve the agenda, as presented.

In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore and Mr. Roraback.

Approval of Minutes - March 20, 2024

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roraback, to approve the minutes of March 20, 2024, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes of March 20, 2024, as presented: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore and Mr. Roraback. Motion passed.

Review of 900 Series Policies (Bylaws of the Board)

Mr. Moore explained that they left off on policy 9323, Construction of the Agenda. He felt that the current policy is very limited and the Shipman policy allows for other people to add to the agenda. Dr. Schuch was concerned about the 72-hour limit and Mrs. Dahlheimer was okay with taking that out. She would also like to take out the part about the general public being able to add to the agenda. It was agreed to remove the optional sections from the Shipman policy.

Moving to policy 9210, Duties of the Chairperson, Mr. Moore recommended they replace the current policy, along with 9211, with the Shipman policy about duties of the chairman, secretary and treasurer. Mrs. Dahlheimer noted that several districts have changed to chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer as an executive committee. She would like to add a vice-chair.

Mr. Moore reviewed the duties of the chair in the Shipman policy. Dr. Darcy didn't feel strongly one way or the other about adding a vice-chair. They then reviewed the requirements of the secretary and treasurer. As for the vice-chair, they would have to adopt the policy and then vote to establish the position. Everyone agreed that the executive committee was a good idea as they can have meetings without them being posted.

The Shipman policy includes everything in 9327, electronic participation at board meetings, plus other things. Mr. Moore reviewed what is included in the Shipman policy. Dr. Darcy asked if the policy states how people must identify themselves during public comment. Mrs. Dahlheimer noted that the policy says all speakers must identify themselves by name and address. Dr. Darcy did not blame anyone for not giving their address and wondered if they wanted to make it name and town. She felt that they need to change the policy to match the practice. Dr. Schuch asked about the votes taken when someone attends the meeting remotely and felt that having a roll call is only necessary when a vote is not unanimous. He added that they do, in fact, need to hear from everyone. Mr. Moore added that people should be aware that an abstention goes with the prevailing vote. They agreed to keep timekeeper and boisterous comments in the policy.

Mr. Moore went on to the policy about actions by the board and Dr. Schuch did not recommend they delete this but wasn't sure if they actually follow the two-thirds vote to amend the agenda. Mr. Moore noted that they already adopted that in a prior policy and it was agreed to delete this policy as it seems redundant.

Looking at public meetings and executive session, the Shipman policy was recommended as it is more up to date. Dr. Schuch found that item B defines the term "meeting" and explains it in more detail. Mrs. Dahlheimer stated that she met with Tom Hennick about what is actually a meeting and noted that they just cannot discuss board business.

Mr. Moore felt that public participation has already been covered in other policies. Mr. Moore felt that the Shipman policy gives the board the authority to make minutes narrower and Dr. Schuch felt that the current minutes are transcriptions, not minutes, and they also post videos. He felt that the minutes go well beyond any statutory requirements and could lead to discrepancies. The board could pay someone to watch the meeting and just do minutes, rather than transcription. Mr. Moore felt that if they change the minutes, people will think they're hiding something. Mrs. Dahlheimer added that the Westbrook board does not record meetings, does not stream and their minutes are just their votes. Dr. Schuch stated that minutes are established to make sure that votes are recorded properly and capturing details goes way above and beyond. He felt that minutes are an expense for the district while they are already putting money into recording and streaming. Mrs. Dahlheimer was not opposed to changing the minutes, but did not want to be the chair when they are changed. Mrs. Petrella added that she is able to go back to prior minutes and get details that she had forgotten. Mr. Roraback appreciated the detailed minutes when the Board of Finance sent an email inquiring about the bus expense.

Mr. Moore went on to policy 9321, Time and Place, Notice of Meetings, and noted that the Shipman policy was a little more specific. Dr. Schuch felt that they are currently operating under a 24-hour posting but Mr. Moore felt the Shipman policy addresses electronic meetings. The last policy in this section is about officers, which has already been covered. It was noted that the Shipman officer policy was different from the other policy. Dr. Schuch stated that they would need to add vice-chair to this policy. This policy also states that it doesn't need to be done annually, but they can limit terms. Mrs. Dahlheimer did not like that idea and would like it to remain as is.

Dr. Schuch explained that the last two policies are Shipman recommendations of policies that do not currently exist, including removal of board officers. It was agreed to add that as a new policy. Mr. Moore felt that the policy on transaction of business has already been covered. Dr. Schuch felt it was a further definition of roles and reinforces that decisions have to be made at board meetings, but wasn't sure it needed to be a policy. Mrs. Dahlheimer and Mr. Moore did not like the policy and it was agreed to not include it.

Mr. Moore went on to the policy on filling vacancies and noted that the Shipman policy is correct. It was agreed to adopt the Shipman policy. Policy 9010 already exists and Mr. Moore felt it was redundant and no longer needed. It was agreed to delete this policy. Methods of Operation was also recommended for deletion. Number of Board of Education members is covered by statute and not needed. Mr. Moore wasn't sure orientation was needed and Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that it wasn't a policy. The state requires that that be done, but it is not enforceable. It was agreed to keep the policy. It was agreed to add the Shipman policy about reimbursement and the last policy about the superintendent was adopted on June 7, 2023.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore to adjourn the meeting.

In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Dahlheimer, Dr. Darcy, Mr. Moore and Mr. Roraback. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

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Alwaz First