



## DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Workshop #1  
 Meeting Location: Room 305 McConnell Center  
 Meeting Date: **Tuesday, January 13, 2015**  
 Meeting Time: **6:30 pm**

A workshop session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Amanda Russell on Tuesday, January 13, 2015, at 6:34 p.m. in Room 305 of the McConnell Center for the purpose of training and questions and answers with NHSBA Attorney Barrett Christina.

**A. ROLL CALL:** Members present were Amanda Russell, Betsey Andrews Parker, Sarah Greenshields, and Kathy Morrison. Doris Grady, Carole Soule McCammon and Michelle Muffett-Lipinski were excused.

Also present were Elaine Arbour, Superintendent and Dover citizens Rick and Mary Hebbard.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Sarah Greenshields led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. CITIZEN’S FORUM:** Mary Hebbard, 97 Spruce Lane, spoke in support of training the Board on the Constitutions of the US and NH. She added that School Board rules do not supersede Constitutional rights. She recommended review of Roberts Rules of Order. She feels trust has been lost with this Board and major work needs to be done.

Rick Hebbard, 97 Spruce Lane, spoke against behavior of the Board. He spoke in support of a change in executive Board members and stated the citizens of Dover are the employers of the Board.

**D. SCHOOL BOARD TRAINING AND Q & A WITH NHSBA ATTORNEY BARRETT CHRISTINA:** Ms. Russell introduced Mr. Christina and asked him for his plan for the evening.

He commented that he sent articles on Board culture and roles and responsibilities and preferred to let the Board read those on their own. He asked Board members to write their goals for the School District, goals for the School Board and goals for this meeting.

The following are the answers from Board members in attendance:

**Goals for School District**

- Betsey Andrews Parker: Education quality, new/renovated high school.
- Amanda Russell: Provide every child with a quality education, modernization of school.
- Kathy Morrison: Best quality of education.
- Elaine Arbour: High quality of education for all students, operate effectively and efficiently as an organization.
- Sarah Greenshields: Offer children access to most innovative to their unique needs, revamp high school to be center of community.

**Goals for the School Board**

- Sarah Greenshields: Forward thinking and positive communication.
- Elaine Arbour: Govern operations efficiently and effectively and act as role models in the community.
- Kathy Morrison: Bring School Board together in a constructive manner.



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Amanda Russell: Find ways to disagree without disagreement being interpreted as disrespect.

Betsey Andrews Parker: Stop focus on negative and focus on good work already done and budget that meets the needs of the district.

Mr. Christina asked for examples of the good work, to which Ms. Andrews Parker stated that hiring of a superintendent, formation of a JBC, relationship with City Council. She feels that much of this gets pushed aside when there is an issue.

Board members asked Mr. Christina to help them to clear the air, improve and clarify use of Robert's Rules, and try to make the best of different personalities.

Ms. Andrews Parker had requested this meeting and commented that all Board members are not in attendance so she is unsure if anything will be accomplished at this meeting. She would like the Board to be more effective in the future.

Ms. Greenshields agreed that it would be important to have a frank discussion with all Board members.

Mr. Christina noted that he lives close and would be happy to return for another meeting when all Board members are available.

Ms. Morrison commented that it is upsetting when people become angry at meetings. She added that she believes that singling out specific people is not right. By-laws state that individuals should not be addressed.

Mr. Christina responded that situations like that are part of the territory for an elected official. Community members have differing opinions and are able to voice them.

If comments are affecting the School Board's ability to work effectively and efficiently, practices should be reviewed.

Dr. Arbour asked if there are additional tools that people in attendance can use to help with effective communication.

Ms. Greenshields wants to be sure that the District is doing due diligence with "bullying". She asked if it's the job of the School Board to find the answer. She believes there needs to be a direct conversation regarding the bullying. She feels it is a liability because the word "bully" has not been defined.

Ms. Andrews Parker stated her concern for having a conversation without all parties not in attendance. She doesn't believe the issue will be resolved without a meeting with everyone present, although she feels that the Roberts Rules part of the meeting will be beneficial.



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Mr. Christina asked if there had been attempts at resolution or team building. Ms. Andrews Parker responded that she had tried to have a conversation and had also tried to apologize for impact of words and she had no intent to harm or hurt anyone.

Ms. Andrews Parker would like the Board to move forward even though they may not agree on everything or even like each other.

Mr. Christina asked if the issues are impeding the Board ability to get work done.

Ms. Russell responded that it depends on the agenda item or a particular meeting. Some feel more passionately about certain issues than others.

Mr. Christina thought that there may be some benefit to a training on how to run a more effective meeting.

Ms. Greenshields felt that there would be low attendance at a meeting on that topic. She added that she thought an investigation on bullying should occur, but not sure on specifics. It could provide clarity.

Ms. Russell disagreed stating that she didn't feel there was enough to warrant an investigation and was unsure as to who would do it. With no examples, it would be difficult to investigate.

Ms. Andrews Parker provided background on a past incident and the outcome involving an investigation.

Ms. Christina stated that an investigation would be costly and the Board should focus on getting information on the good things accomplished by the Board out to the public.

Ms. Greenshields asked if the School Board should adopt a policy for bullying. Mr. Christina responded that there is already a Board Code of Conduct. Dr. Arbour added that there is not a standard for bullying of adults. Mr. Christina provided further clarification stating that as a matter of law, adults cannot bully each other.

Mr. Christina stated that he would send Dr. Arbour a document that she can share with the Board on effective meetings. He provided a few tips for running an effective meeting one of which was that no one at the table speaks twice until everyone has had an opportunity to speak. He added that the Board should not lock themselves into specific rules. Roberts Rules should be used only as a guide. Ms. Russell read language from Dover policy BA –By-laws regarding Roberts Rules and Mr. Christina felt that it was too restrictive and he offered to help craft alternative language that would be more user-friendly. Mr. Christina stated that the one rule of order that should be followed is that majority rules.

Dr. Arbour suggested adopting a modified Roberts Rules procedure. She asked Mr. Christina for clarification on the process of "tabling" vs. "postponing" an item on an agenda to a known later



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date. Mr. Christina stated that it is a distinction without a difference. He continued to say that as long as the intent is known to all Board members; it's acceptable to do either.

Ms. Russell should respond to a motion with a clarifying question as to the purpose of the motion. She cannot assume that she has the same understanding of the motion as other Board members.

Ms. Greenshields would like everyone to have one opportunity to speak before others talk a second time. Mr. Christina reminded the Board to call the question, when the discussion becomes repetitive.

Ms. Andrews Parker reviewed the discussion process.

1. Motion
2. Second
3. Discussion by Board members
4. If no one else would like to speak, is there anything new to add?
5. If not, move the question

School Board Chairperson should be last to comment. Practice of the Dover School Board for Chair not to make motions. After point has been made, others should be given the opportunity to speak.

Other options for discussion include the pro/con tactic which is alternation of discussion between for and against points of view. This sometimes is helpful in balancing the discussion.

Mr. Andrews Parker asked for the next step. It was determined that the process changes should be added to an agenda for discussion. It will most likely be added to the March agenda for discussion.

Ms. Andrews Parker asked for the process if a statement is inaccurate. It was determined that the Chairperson has the responsibility to respond. Mr. Christina added that the Board has an obligation to ask for verification of the statement.

Dr. Arbour recommended that during the rules of order conversation which will occur at the March meeting, it is included as part of the conversation. If a statement is made, it is an expectation that the Board member be able to provide the resource that supports the statement. A point of order can be called if any Board member would like supporting documentation for a statement.

Ms. Russell believes that this subject should be discussed again when all members are in attendance for more input. Mr. Christina will look into this and follow up with the Board so that it can be addressed in March.

Ms. Russell stated that it is difficult to ask questions when actions are interpreted negatively. She believes that another chairperson would have similar issues.



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Dr. Arbour added that she uses Norms of Collaboration at Administrative meetings. They give frames for disagreements and respectful discussion. A process observer collects data and anyone from the team can call someone out. Team members need to have equal responsibilities for calling out behaviors.

Ms. Greenshields stated that she feels she isn't as perceptive as others because she doesn't feel the conflict or turmoil that has happened in the past few months. She stated her frustration with the media component.

Ms. Greenshields asked if a positive marketing campaign would be helpful. Mr. Christina responded that it would be possible if necessary and very inexpensive. Social media is accessed by many and can get information to the public.

Dr. Arbour asked for clarification on the approval process for a policy. In her previous district, a motion is needed to approve a first read of a policy. In Dover, it is tabled or postponed for the next meeting. Mr. Christina noted that there is no legal requirement for adoption. The first read is generally for a new policy or for significant changes in the policy. The second reading is to make sure that all are on the same page with the changes. If changes are minor, Boards shouldn't get bogged down with readings. Mr. Christina confirmed that "tabled" or "postponed" is acceptable for a motion after a first reading.

Ms. Russell concluded the meeting by stating that all members of the Board need to move forward. She added that media is unproductive and those who keep issues in the forefront need to own this. It is her hope that all can see that this is unproductive and creates tension and drama which is unnecessary. On some occasions, it prohibits work of the Board.

**E. ADJOURNMENT:** Sarah Greenshields moved, Betsey Andrews Parker seconded, to adjourn at 8:20p.m. An oral **VOTE PASSED 4/0**.

Respectfully submitted,

ROBIN LAFLEUR, Recording Secretary  
Dover School Board