



## Winchendon Public Schools

Date Approved/Released

6/6/24

Date Approved/Hold

School Committee Chair

**Emergency School Committee Meeting**

November 30, 2023 – 4:00 pm  
2nd Floor - Town Hall Auditorium

## Attendance:

Karen Kast – McBride, Anthony Findley, Adam LeBlanc, Anthony Findley, David LaPointe, Ruthann Petruno-Goguen, Interim Superintendent

1. **Call to order**
2. **Director of Finance & Operations Update – Vote**  
A. Findley motions to approve the recommendation of the Superintendent for the Business manager position. Second by A. LeBlanc. Vote it unanimous.
3. **Public Comment:**

Parent – Thanks everyone involved in that has been handling the situation at Murdock. Clarify the hours of the high school. If starting late, why are they not staying late? How did the hours come about?

Dr. Goguen – The days are shortened, to make sure the elementary school students are not impacted by the crisis at the High and Middle School. According to DESE you have to be in school for at least three hours for it to count as a full day. Principals are working on the schedules and there will be specials for the students.

Middle School Parent – How long as the boiler been having problems? When was the last time it was fixed? I heard the school asked for a new boiler a couple of years ago and were denied. Is the town going to help with the now cleaning a rushing this boiler to get delivered? Has the boiler been ordered?

B. Croteau – This was a fully functioning boiler that was cleaned twice a year and had no issues. If there was a plan in place to replace a boiler with previous administration, I did not know I that plan until now. I am currently putting a plan in place to rectify this. My plan is not to put an oil-fired hot water tank back in, it will be an electric hot water tank which will ensure us that this will never happen again from a hot water tank. The hot water tank has not been ordered as the current hot water tank is under investigation by our insurance company. With it being in the winter we are lucky we are making hot water though our boilers. We have a 200-gallon super store that provides hot water to the buildings. The boiler that is in play is a “summer boiler” because we don’t run our boilers during the spring and summer, because we do not need heat. This is not a boiler it’s a hot water tank which provides hot water the students in the kitchen to the staff during the springtime and summertime. Then, in the fall we go back to the hot water through the boilers.

Middle School Parent – Why aren’t we putting our kids into Memorial and Toy Town Schools? Are they going to be making up these half days? Is the committee looking into more long-term situation if the does not get resolved in a timely fashion?

Middle School Parent – Are the Chromebook being cleaned? Are they being brought to Elm Street and put on WIFI so that they're still able to do their work or are we now switching gears to pen and paper? What happens for the remainder of the year if they are falling behind on the Summit platform? Questions and concerns about the buildings, what kinds of cleaning products are being used? Are we going to be shown the air quality test before the kids are put back in that building? Heard that some beams in the basement of the building that the fire coating was burnt off. Are these going to be address and fixed before our kids are back in the building?

Dr. Goguen – Most of the damage was done in the middle school, Brian can speak about the specifics. The learning platform, the computers are fine and will be delivering them to Elm Street for the kids to use. There will be a modified schedule for the specials. I don't foresee this being a long-term solution and see us going back into the building within two weeks. The cleaning products that are being used are safe for schools and have 50 to 100 people on site. Had an air quality test done Monday in the High School and it came back fine but do not want to have the students back in the building until both builds are at 100%.

Parent – was the auditorium, costume room, props costumes, music room equipment affected?

B. Croteau – All doors were shut, the auditorium, the back room none was affected. With the doors being fire proof doors and having them shut it keeps fire and smoke out. Thanks, his staff for making sure this was done.

Resident – Did you do a air quality test for the Middle School?

B. Croteau – We did not because we are still cleaning but we did this morning and should have the test results tomorrow.

Resident – You have 60 of them going but it's still two weeks to get them students back in there? Do your guys think it's really two weeks or do you guys feel that it's going to go much longer and that we need to get a plan in place to go longer?

K. Kast-McBride – We would like to get them back sooner, that is the goal. We need the air quality tests to come back and show 100% before putting the students back in to the building.

Resident – If it goes longer than two weeks are we making a plan for longer than tree and half hour days?

Dr. Goguen – In terms of the schedule the principal at the high school was meeting with the staff today. They are trying to prepare a schedule that gives structure to the students. The Middle School principal and Dean are working on the schedule for the Elm Street and will share that tomorrow.

High School Teacher – Boilers don't just blow up, also discussed that she received a letter about the fire alarms not working and she was unaware of this. She asked when the boiler blew up did an alarm go off or did somebody stumble across it?

B. Croteau – I came across it, you would not have received an alarm in the basement because there are no smoke detectors within the boiler room. That was what the code was at the time the building was built.

High School Teacher – When you say air quality, what are your reading? Carbon monoxide on of them?

B. Croteau – Everything – takes 25 different factors, carbon monoxide is one of them.

High School Teacher – Voices her concerns on carbon monoxide and if this happened 24 hours earlier, does not agree that they are doing a great job and that it'll will take two weeks to fix it when the boiler hasn't been ordered yet. She will be teaching in a church will limited resources to make copies and do not have textbooks. Is the MCAS Test date going to be changed are we going to waive the date? Has concerns for the High School building if she can not get her items from her classroom but is being told the building is safe.

B. Croteau – Discuss the CO meter alarm in the basement and the steps taken to track air quality.

**4. Murdock Middle and High School Discussion**

Discussed the water tank that exploded and the clean up that needs to be addressed and how it was discovered.

Request was sent in to DESE to give a waiver for this week of missed school – waiting on answer Re located the Middle School at Elm Street in Gardner and Cornerstone Church for the High School.

Student's schedules will be modified and students and parents will be informed of the schedules. Discussing bus schedules and meals for students.

Clarification of the boiler did not explode, there was a malfunction with the boiler.

**5. Adjournment**

A. LeBlanc motions to adjourn. Second by A. Findley. Vote is Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted:



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Darcie Morin, Payroll & Data Specialist

Documents Attached: None