

**KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR meeting of
Wednesday, October 27, 2021
Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Chambers**

CALL TO ORDER; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; ROLL CALL

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough Board of Education met in regular session on the 27th day of October 2021, in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Chambers. Board President Kim Hodne called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The following members were present to establish a quorum and due notice had been published: Board President Kim Hodne; Board Vice President Diane Gubatayao; Board Clerk-Treasurer Bridget Mattson; and Board Members Jordan Tabb; Paul Robbins Jr., Nicole Anderson; and Douglas Gregg. Student Board Member Braxton Zink was also present.

Administrative staff present included Interim Superintendent Melissa Johnson; Business Manager Katie Parrott; and Board Clerk Kerry Watson.

RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS

Board Member Diane Gubatayao recognized outgoing board members Kim Hodne and Douglas Gregg for their work on the Board.

OATH OF OFFICE

Nicole Anderson, Stephen Bradford and Keenan Sanderson took an Oath of Office as newly elected School Board members and were seated at the Board table.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

Interim Superintendent Melissa Johnson briefly described the procedure for election of officers.

Election of the President of the Board

Interim Superintendent Johnson invited nominations for the office of Board President.

Paul Robbins was nominated.

Stephen Bradford was nominated.

There were no other nominations.

Board Member Bridget Mattson asked, with concurrence by the Board, for nominees to briefly describe what they would bring to the role.

Mr. Robbins and Mr. Bradford each spoke about why they were interested in the position.

Board members then cast their votes by confidential written ballot. The votes were tallied by Board Clerk Kerry Watson and verified by Superintendent Johnson.

Stephen Bradford received the majority of votes in the balloting, securing the position of **President**.

Election of Vice President

New Board President Stephen Bradford invited nominations for the office of Vice President.

Keenan Sanderson was nominated.

Paul Robbins Jr. was nominated.

There were no other nominations.

Each nominee spoke regarding the position.

Board members then cast their votes by confidential written ballot, and the votes were tallied.

Keenan Sanderson received the majority of votes in the balloting, securing the position of **Vice President**.

Election of Clerk-Treasurer

Board President Bradford invited nominations for the office of Clerk-Treasurer.

Diane Gubatayao was nominated.

Bridget Mattson was nominated.

There were no other nominations.

Each nominee spoke regarding their interest in the office.

Board members cast their votes by confidential written ballot, and the votes were tallied.

Bridget Mattson received the majority of votes in the balloting, securing the position of **Clerk-Treasurer**.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda for the regular meeting of October 27, 2021.

Moved by: TABB; Second by: SANDERSON

VOICE VOTE: PASSED

PUBLIC RECOGNITION

Red Ribbon Proclamation - A proclamation regarding Red Ribbon Week was read by newly elected Board President Stephen Bradford. It was presented to Deb Asper, the Wellness Coalition's Drug Free Coordinator, who distributed red ribbons to the School Board.

National Principals Month Proclamation - A proclamation regarding National Principals Month was read.

CITIZEN REMARKS

Shelby Reese, parent of four children in the school district, spoke of the detriment to her children's education when they had to be out of school due to being close contacts. Ms. Reese said she implored the Board to make mask-wearing optional for students at school.

Sheryl Yeisley expressed her opposition to "forced" mask-wearing and vaccines. She said parents should have the right to choose whether their child would wear a mask, not the school district or the school board.

Angela Putrino thanked the new Board president for acknowledging the parents that evening, noting this is her third meeting in a row to speak to the Board. She asserted she'd seen Board members choosing not to wear masks and that the district had not been following its plan. She said wearing masks should be optional and left up to the parents.

Ketchikan Education Association president Gara Williams introduced herself and briefly explained the bargaining units that KEA represents, for the benefit of the new Board members. She spoke about the difficulty this year in finding qualified staff for open positions and said the Board should look at how to attract and retain skilled staff. She also commented on the financial impact and effect on the classroom when staff have been out sick with COVID.

Grant EchoHawk said that a children's advocacy center will soon be launched in Ketchikan. He is the coordinator of this project, which falls under the WISH (Women in Safe Homes) umbrella, he said. He described the center's function to provide services for child victims of abuse or neglect under one roof. Currently the closest child advocacy center is in Juneau.

Christy Willis said that 87 Ketchikan students, possibly more, had participated in a “walk out” from school on October 18. She said she had promoted participation in this national event, which she described as standing for medical choice and protesting COVID mitigation steps. She said that 76.6 percent of respondents to a district survey wanted masks to be optional at school. Ms. Willis said the Board needed to vote on masks.

Parent Louise Loretan called for masks to be a choice. She spoke of a situation in the classroom she said had happened to her daughter regarding her mask. She also spoke about vaccinated and unvaccinated students; and asked that students who have to stay home receive more support with class work from their teachers.

Kayhi senior Avery Thomas spoke of the difficulty wearing a mask at school presents to her as a visual learner. She also commented on the contrast between mitigation measures at school and what students do outside of school. Ms. Thomas also commented on students’ mental health being affected by the mitigation efforts, and her disappointment in not being able to have an audience at performances, such as for the Kayhi dance team. She said students should have the choice to wear masks or not.

Brock Thomas, also a senior at Kayhi, spoke about what occurs with the mask requirement in his physical education, auto shop and wood shop classes, and potentially dangerous situations.

Liz Thomas asserted that fear and trauma were being perpetuated through COVID mitigation efforts, such as masking. She spoke of the risk of severe COVID to children being miniscule; while students’ mental health was being impacted. She said the number one cause of death for Alaskans is suicide. Ms. Thomas said that many positive and healthy things for students such as pep band, senior carnival and various other activities had been taken away. She urged the district to focus on both physical and mental health. She said that parents and families have the choice of whether or not to wear masks.

Douglas Gregg told the Board that a bill had been introduced in the state legislature to re-institute an education tax. It could produce revenue of up to \$64 to \$68 million, he said; and recommended supporting the initiative. He also said the health insurance reserve is complicated and multifaceted, and that the teachers’ negotiated contract is not the cause of its deficit problems. He commented further on associated issues for the Board to consider moving into negotiations with employee groups.

Lewis Amundsen asked what had happened with a parking issue at the Revilla and Houghtaling schools that he had spoken to the Board about previously.

Rob Sanderson Jr. introduced himself as the president of the local Tlingit and Haida Community Council. He noted the various tribal government positions he’d held in the past; and that currently he serves as the chairman of an addiction task force for the National Congress of American Indians. He said that within the last 3 days two people have died in Ketchikan due to fentanyl. The drug pandemic has killed more people in the state of Alaska than COVID, said Mr. Sanderson. He also spoke about suicide and mental health. He has lost over 50 family and friends to suicide, stated Mr. Sanderson. He urged working with other entities on helping youth battle mental health issues. He congratulated the new Board members, including his son Keenan, who he stressed is his own man.

Student Lucas Ramsey stated there should be more options for kids who are dealing with drugs, alcohol, or nicotine.

Tristin Dalin, sophomore, spoke about some students having health risks associated with wearing masks, and being afraid to speak up.

Recess

At the conclusion of the Citizen Remarks, the Board took a break in the meeting from 7:45 to 7:55 p.m.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Curriculum committee - Bridget Mattson reported that the math curriculum committee was hearing presentations on math products each Monday. The group also met recently to discuss surveying teachers on their interest in other math programs than the one currently being used in the district.

Policy committee - Paul Robbins Jr. explained why it was being suggested that the Board re-address the policy on agenda-setting. He also reported that the policy template regarding domestic violence at the workplace was placed under discussion on that evening's agenda.

Board Member Diane Gubatayao thanked the board for its support of her seeking a Board of Directors seat for the Association of Alaska School Boards.

Start Strong Committee - Board Member Nicole Anderson reported that the Start Strong committee met on the 19th and discussed reviewing the Start Strong plan with the School Board.

CLAIMS FOR INFORMATION - *Claims of October 15, 2021.* - There were no comments or questions.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Student Member's Report: Student Member Braxton Zink reported first on current and upcoming extracurricular activities, including the Regional Swim dive competition to occur in Ketchikan that weekend. In addition, Ketchikan was host for the Southeast Honor Music Festival earlier that week. Braxton described the School Spirit week organized by Pep Club, and the Senior Class' upcoming Halloween fundraiser on October 31 in lieu of the usual Senior Carnival. Braxton also reported he'd participated recently in a virtual conference for the Alaska Association of School Government, with other student government representatives from around the state.

Superintendent's Report

Interim Superintendent Melissa Johnson gave a brief highlight of her recent activities, as also noted in her written report in the packet. These included:

- Attending a drum ceremony at Tongass School of Arts and Sciences to honor Kevin Clevenger and his work with that school;
- That the district is entering negotiations with the district technology staff; and
- The Start Strong plan will be presented to the Board on November 10 to inform the new Board members about the plan and update the entire members.

In response to Ms. Gubatayao, Ms. Johnson said the logistics are being worked out regarding a COVID testing program for staff.

Ms. Johnson then asked Business Manager Katie Parrott to provide financial reports.

Financial reports

Business Manager Katie Parrott first reported that she plans to give an overview of the audit at the Board's next meeting. It is being readied for the auditors' final review and then submission to the state. She explained one change in the audit will be in how club accounts and student activities are classified in the budget.

Ms. Parrott went over the end of fiscal year '21 fund balance report with the Board. She explained the main funds and restricted funds, and spoke to the recommended amount of unreserved fund balance that the district should retain. For the financial health of the district, she said she feels comfortable with \$1.1 million, but the district is below that at this point. She also reviewed the first quarter of this fiscal year's "Budget versus Actual" report.

****PUBLIC HEARING - POLICY**** - *Procedure (1) Citizens may give public comment regarding the subject of the hearing; (2) the public hearing is closed; (3) opportunity for Board discussion and decision.*

Motion to approve a new Board Policy 1420 - Relations between Sovereign Nations in second reading.

Moved by: MATTSON; Second by: ROBBINS JR.

Public Hearing

There were no members of the public who spoke during the hearing.

Board Discussion

Ms. Mattson said she is thrilled to have this policy as part of policies going forward. She asked that the Board encourage the Board President to start scheduling government to government meetings.

Board Member Keenan Sanderson said he is a representative on the Tlingit and Haida Community Council, and that entity may be working with the Board in future meetings. He commented that the Board needs to make a valid attempt to meet with the tribal entities.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE

ROBBINS JR., ANDERSON, GUBATAYAO, MATTSON, TAB, SANDERSON, BRADFORD - ALL AYES

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion to approve revisions to Board Policy 6115 - Ceremonies and Observances in second reading.

Moved by: ROBBINS JR.; Second by: MATTSON

Public Hearing

There were no public comments on the policy.

Discussion

Board Member Anderson noted that a newspaper article had suggested that the use of “half-mast” in referring to flags on land was incorrect. Board member Robbins said that both terms half-mast and half-staff are acceptable for the purposes of the policy.

Ms. Gubatayao noted that at the recent death of Colin Powell, the President had ordered the lowering of U.S. flags; and said hopefully this policy gives guidance.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE

GUBATAYAO, ANDERSON, ROBBINS JR., MATTSON, TABB, SANDERSON, BRADFORD - ALL AYES

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion to approve revisions to Board Bylaw 9322 - Agenda/Meeting Materials in first reading.

MOVED BY: MATTSON; SECOND BY: TABB

Public Hearing

No citizens spoke during the public hearing.

Board discussion

Mr. Robbins Jr. explained why the proposed additional language in this policy was being brought back to the Board.

Ms. Gubatayao stated why she didn't feel the proposed language was necessary. She commented that she didn't feel directives had been given during the agenda setting meetings. She said that having three board members at the agenda-setting sessions was beneficial.

Ms. Mattson disagreed, arguing in favor of the included the language that: “agenda setting is not a meeting of the Board.” She also commented that Board training would be helpful. Every board member has the ability to place an item on the agenda, as does the community, said Ms. Mattson.

Mr. Tabb said that board business should be conducted with the most transparency and he felt the proposed language was appropriate. He expressed concern that determining potential agenda items during agenda setting or requesting information of staff might deprive the full Board from having the opportunity to discuss those subjects.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE
MATTSON, ROBBINS JR., SANDERSON, TABB, BRADFORD - AYES
ANDERSON, GUBATAYAO - NAYS
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MOTION PASSED

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion to approve the Consent Calendar of October 27, 2021 (consisting of the following):

- a. *Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of October 13, 2021.*
- b. *Motion to approve the offer of a long-term substitute teaching contract to Gerald Boatwright.*
- c. *Motion to approve a professional services contract with Lianna Bodine for speech language services in an amount not to exceed \$56,100.*

Moved by: SANDERSON; Second by: MATTSON

VOICE VOTE - PASSED

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to approve the 2022-2023 school year calendar.

Moved by: ROBBINS JR.; Second by: MATTSON

Discussion

There was no discussion.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE
TABB, ANDERSON, ROBBINS JR., SANDERSON, BRADFORD, MATTSON, GUBATAYAO - ALL AYES

MOTION PASSED

Motion to approve the application and receipt of ARPA homeless children and Youth Relief funds in the amount of \$10,612.47.

Moved by: TABB; Second by: GUBATAYAO

Discussion

Ms. Gubatayao spoke about how this funding will help the community.

Board Member Tabb asked if there were specific designated uses of these funds. Business Manager Parrott said the allowable uses are flexible and the district is seeking input from various agencies in addition to the principals.

In answer to Mr. Bradford, Ms. Parrott also explained the criteria used by the state to determine its funding to the various districts.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE
GUBATAYAO, ANDERSON, ROBBINS JR., MATTSON, TABB, SANDERSON, BRADFORD - ALL AYES

MOTION PASSED

Motion to approve the purchase and travel for CPI training in the amount of \$26,449.

Moved by: ROBBINS JR.; Second by: GUBATAYAO

Discussion

Board Member Tabb asked to hear from staff regarding the training, and its intent with the crisis intervention program.

Director of Special Services Derek Meister said that this model and training program will be a more efficient and better model for staff and students than what previously occurred in the district. He said that the program's emphasis is on avoiding a crisis. He answered some additional questions from the Board.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE

ROBBINS JR., GUBATAYAO, TABB, MATTSON, ANDERSON, SANDERSON, BRADFORD - ALL AYES

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion to approve a contract with Access Behavioral Services for BCBA behavioral and social-emotional services and training in an amount not to exceed \$37,800.

Moved by: GUBATAYAO; Second by: SANDERSON

Discussion

Ms. Gubatayao said that Ms. Johnson had served the school district in the past, and she appreciates her knowledge. She also said the expenditure for this contract comes from the district's special education grant.

ROLL CALL

Student Member Braxton Zink (preferential vote) - AYE

SANDERSON, GUBATAYAO, TABB, ROBBINS JR., MATTSON, ANDERSON, BRADFORD - ALL AYES

MOTION PASSED

DISCUSSION

AASB Resolutions: Board members provided comments on AASB resolutions for Ms. Gubatayao to relay at the upcoming Association of Alaska School Boards annual conference.

Drug abuse intervention and prevention resources; Narcan availability and training - Discussion on how the Board could support efforts to counter the community drug issues. Board Member Tabb will reach out to the public and get their ideas for ways the Board could be involved and report back to the body.

Draft policy regarding domestic violence and the workplace - Legal concerns have been expressed with some of the language in the policy template. Appropriate language could be added to some of the district's existing policies.

BOARD COMMENTS

Ms. Anderson congratulated Mr. Sanderson and Mr. Bradford to the Board. She asked that a discussion be held on the Strong Start plan at the next meeting. She stated that the availability of vaccines to younger children was encouraging, and that it might bring some normalcy back. Ms. Anderson also commented on activities provided during Red Ribbon Week encouraging kids to be kids, without drugs.

Student Member Zink congratulated Mr. Bradford on being chosen as president of the Board. He reported in his government class' mock election, the same three individuals had been selected who were actually elected to the School Board in the municipal election. He gave a "shout out" to the wrestling team who recently competed in Petersburg. He said it is important to acknowledge the activities which are able to occur at Schoenbar and Kayhi, even with the COVID impact.

Mr. Sanderson stated it was an honor to be sitting on the Board, elected by 945 Ketchikan individuals. He said he believes he can be an example as a young, indigenous man and encouraged others to get involved. He remarked that the comments related to mental health and drug and alcohol abuse had hit home. Mr. Sanderson also stated he hoped the school district and school board can work closely with Mr. EchoHawk on the child advocacy center.

Ms. Gubatayao said that the child advocacy center is something this community has needed. She said it was frustrating to not be able to respond to public comments; but assured the speakers that the Board was listening. She said she looks forward to a deep dive into the Start Strong plan on the 10th.

Mr. Robbins said he appreciated the three newly elected board members. He said he is proud of the community and efforts to come together to support addicts, by recognizing they need help. He stated interest in remaining on the policy committee, and said that the current members make an effective team.

Mr. Tabb said he is encouraged to hear about the child advocacy program coming to Ketchikan and explained the purpose of the centers. Turning to public comment, he said he appreciated Ketchikan citizens for being civil while talking about strongly held beliefs. Mr. Tabb said it is important that students have a right to a fair and equal discussion and that all children have a right to school. Stating that a child can go somewhere else if not feeling safe at school is a non-starter for him, he said.

Addressing that evening's public comments, Ms. Mattson said she especially appreciated the students who spoke, recognizing it is difficult to speak in public, in front of a governing body, and with peers potentially watching. She said she shares many of the concerns of those who spoke, including students' health and mental health. Compromises were made on the Start Strong plan in order to get school started, she said; and the plan will be continually reviewed. Board Member Mattson also addressed the issue of students' mental health, and said that many people in Ketchikan care about the youth and keeping them safe.

Mr. Bradford said he welcomes public comment and that the Board wants to hear what the public has to say. He cautioned the Board to resist the inclination to respond to the comments. He also said that he hopes to see continued parental interest in the school district beyond COVID.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded for adjournment. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

Minutes approved as distributed at the November 10, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Education.