

Approved: October 14, 2009

HOLLIS SCHOOL BOARD

AUGUST 12, 2009

MEETING MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Hollis School Board was held on Wednesday, August 12, 2009 at 5:36 p.m. in the Community Room of Hollis Town Hall.

Chairman Jim McCann presided:

Members of the Board Present: Bill Beauregard, Vice-Chairman  
Rich Manley

Members of the Board Absent: Susan Benz  
Alison Haytayan, Board Secretary

Also in Attendance: Susan Hodgdon, SAU41 Superintendent  
Elizabeth Allen, Principal, HPS  
Karen Kelley, Interim Assistant Principal, HUES  
Dawna Duhamel, Business Administrator  
Christopher Siegfried, Director of Maintenance  
Mary Lou Noonan, HUES Summer Camp Coordinator

AGENDA ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Mr. Beauregard noted the need to discuss a response to the communication received from the Budget Committee regarding a departmental briefing.

PUBLIC INPUT- None

APPROVAL OF SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES

Hollis School Board ..... May 18, 2009  
**(Goals Workshop)**

***Acceptance of meeting minutes held.***

Hollis School Board ..... July 8, 2009

*The following corrections were noted:*

Page 7, line 41 "me" should read "be".

Page 7, heading should be added to discussion of tuition.

Page 8, first sentence under the heading Analysis Metrics should read: "Mr. Beauregard would like to know the plan for analysis metrics (provided by him in an e-mail) to see if there are efficiencies to be found within the budget."

Page 9, under the heading Budget Guidance, should read "electronic" not "hard" copies.

Under Action Items, Director Kelly, the action item relating to discrepancy model should read: "Obtain legal opinion on conflict between state and district language surrounding the discrepancy model versus the Response to Intervention (RTI) model to be used for children with disabilities."

**MOTION BY MEMBER BEAUREGARD TO APPROVE AS AMENDED  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANLEY  
MOTION CARRIED**

1 **3/0**  
2 Hollis School Board – Non-Public . . . . . July 8, 2009

3  
4 **MOTION BY MEMBER BEAUREGARD TO APPROVE AS WRITTEN**  
5 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANLEY**  
6 **MOTION CARRIED**  
7 **3/0**

8  
9 Hollis School Board – Non-Public . . . . . June 10, 2009

10  
11 ***Acceptance of meeting minutes held.***

12  
13 Hollis School Board – Non-Public . . . . . June 18, 2009

14  
15 ***Acceptance of meeting minutes held.***

16  
17 CORRESPONDENCE

18  
19 Budget Committee

20  
21 Mr. Beauregard explained the Budget Committee is conducting sessions with each department to gain a better  
22 understanding of their needs. Their communication provided a format for presentation of information being sought. He  
23 remarked the information being sought is information the school board tends to discuss during the budget process such  
24 as services provided, information that is included in the FTE report, etc. There is also the question of, if reductions had to  
25 be made, what items would be reduced and at what impact. The Hollis School Board has been scheduled to appear  
26 before the Budget Committee at their September 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

27  
28 Chairman McCann questioned how the presentation would relate to guidance being provided. Mr. Beauregard responded  
29 they had asked the Budget Committee to defer on guidance, which they would normally do at their August meeting. Chris  
30 Hyde, Budget Committee Chairman, is looking to separate out regular education from special education. He is also  
31 looking for an update on where we stand with contract negotiations.

32  
33 Mr. Beauregard suggested it is up to the Superintendent and the Business Administrator to determine what kind of  
34 response should be provided since it will fall upon them to prepare the information. Superintendent Hodgdon stated she  
35 might have a conflict on the 22<sup>nd</sup> as she believes there is a Brookline School Board meeting scheduled for that evening.  
36 Chairman McCann and Vice-Chairman Beauregard would present the information if necessary.

37  
38 With regard to the amount of information being requested and the time required to fulfill the request, Mr. Hyde's opinion  
39 had been that department heads likely have the information either in their heads or readily available. He did not see this  
40 as a tremendous exercise in information gathering. Mr. Beauregard had spoken with department heads and was told the  
41 time spent preparing their presentations was approximately 20 hours.

42  
43 Mr. Beauregard commented the Budget Committee intends to vote on guidance the evening of September 22<sup>nd</sup>, and it  
44 would be in the district's best interest to be able to present information that will assist in their decision making process.

45  
46 Superintendent Hodgdon commented she hopes it is recognized if Ms. Duhamel has to be brought back, some kind of a  
47 per diem rate would need to be paid. Mr. Beauregard remarked Mr. Manley had made a good point in reminding the  
48 board, at the last meeting, its job is that of student advocates and they need to build a budget that the principals can run  
49 the schools with. He suggested any information that can be provided concerning a preliminary budget, i.e. identifying all  
50 of the things that have been done to make sure the schools are running efficiently, would be helpful so that the cost  
51 increases coming up are taken into consideration when setting guidance.

52  
53 Superintendent

54  
55 Superintendent Hodgdon informed the board of a letter of resignation, dated July 16<sup>th</sup>, from Nichole Gott-Hart. Ms. Gott-  
56 Hart is resigning from her music position at HPS effective 2009/2010 school year.

57  
58 **MOTION BY MEMBER BEAUREGARD TO ACCEPT, WITH REGRET, THE RESIGNATION LETTER FROM NICHOLE**  
59 **GOTT-HART**

1 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANLEY**  
2 **MOTION CARRIED**  
3 **3/0**

4  
5 Superintendent Hodgdon informed the board she received a packet of very nice letters from parents of students in Mrs. Dwyer's second grade classroom. The letters stated a desire for the administration to know what an amazing teaching job she did.

8  
9 Principal Allen added Ms. Dwyer was a one-year interim teacher covering a maternity leave. She has been hired to return as a para-professional, and will remain with the district.

11  
12 ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

13  
14 Principals – Staffing, Class Sizes, Enrollment, HPA Assistant Principal Search Update

15  
16 Principal Allen remarked the items related to staffing, class sizes, enrollment, and the update on the assistant principal were covered in her report (copy attached).

18  
19 Spoke of the efforts of the maintenance staff and Director Siegfried. Remarked they are light years ahead of where they were last year in terms of building maintenance and readiness for the new school year. As early as three weeks ago, teachers were able to get into their classrooms. Two thirds of the building is complete, the gym floor is complete, and the finishing touches are being put on the hallway.

23  
24 Staffing

25  
26 Mr. Beauregard questioned if a talented, ambitious candidate were presented who was lacking credentials, could that individual be accepted on an interim basis assuming they were moving towards gaining credentials and if they were willing to commit to stay in district for some period of time after gaining those credentials.

29  
30 Superintendent Hodgdon responded the state has expectations that credentials will be in place for a person to step in and do administrative work and are quite firm about that. That is very much in keeping with the Hollis District standards and certainly SAU wide standards. That situation has occurred in the past and they found ways to keep that person in place working but didn't move them to the administrative level because of the standards. Credentials make a difference in terms of the person's performance. For example, if the person weren't credentialed in the area of teacher evaluation then the burden would fall upon the Principal.

36  
37 Principal Allen commented if she were looking for an Assistant Principal five years ago, when there was a curriculum team in place, she would be looking for a different candidate. What she needs now is an individual who is not only credentialed but also skilled in curriculum administration as well as our Danielson model.

40  
41 Summer Program

42  
43 Mr. Beauregard questioned whether all eligible students took advantage of the summer program and if not are we aware of whether families had plans to do something similar specifically in terms of the students being successful in school and comfortable with the rest of their classmates moving ahead and also with the school's need to make AYP. Principal Allen responded she could get that data. The Leap Ahead program is for regular education students and they do maintain a database of those invited. This year enrollment was lower perhaps due to economic climate.

48  
49 This year they conducted a combined camp in reading, writing, and math. They looked at each individual child to see strengths and weaknesses and looked to tailor the program to them and maintain skills in all areas.

51  
52 Ms. Kelley informed the board Mary Lou Noonan was in charge of running the camp. There was a different population at HUES than at HPS, which has been the case since the program began. Of the 60+ students invited from HUES 17 enrolled. Of those 17, 7 were special education students. Of those children that were not ESY students, 4 of them were given scholarships. Principal Allen added HPS sent out over 60 invitations. She would have to look to see the actual number in attendance.

56  
57 Karen and Jamie Pelletier taught the program, did centers every 15 minutes, a variety of activities, kept it fun and interesting, and the kids had a great time. Ms. Noonan remarked not all students were enrolled for the entire four weeks. She had one student who only attended the last week.

1  
2 Principal Allen touched on the incredibly supportive parent community that requests materials, works with the children and  
3 participates in reading activities. On top of that, the media specialist provides summer reading lists.

4  
5 Mr. Manley questioned whether the focus of the camp is enrichment or remediation and was told the focus was  
6 remediation. Ms. Kelley suggested a discussion could be had on whether the program should be opened up to average  
7 students. The cost of the program was \$25 a session (3 hours). Offered was a four week course consisting of 12  
8 sessions. This year the sessions were three hours a day for three days. Had considered if a child needed remediation in  
9 both reading and math that meant the family was obligated to 5 days a week. The decision was made to go to a Tuesday,  
10 Wednesday, Thursday schedule creating a more condensed experience to see how that worked.

11  
12 Mr. Beauregard suggested if it were known how many of those invited attended camp and how many requested materials  
13 the board would have a better sense of how many out of the 120 or so students that could really use the extra work  
14 received it.

15  
16 Mr. Manley questioned whether the program was self-sustaining and was told it is, although it can be a challenge to get  
17 enough attendance to cover the expenses. Principal Allen remarked she understood from the start that the requirement  
18 was for the program to be self-funded. Mr. Beauregard commented with 765 students coming in the fall, the 120  
19 invitations sent out represents roughly 20% of the student body, and that the district is fortunate to have teachers willing to  
20 participate in such a program. He is, however, concerned with the level of turnout. Chairman McCann commented with  
21 the size of the population invited to participate, a case could be made that it should be funded to some degree. Mr.  
22 Beauregard stated the need to acquire data on the reasons behind non-attendance.

23  
24 Ms. Noonan was asked to gather the requested information and report back to the board in October.

25  
26 Mr. Manley questioned whether the commitment of four weeks was too much and if consideration should be given to a  
27 shorter period with higher attendance so that other summer activities do not prevent attendance. Principal Allen  
28 commented some parents would like to see the program last longer to increase the length of exposure during the summer  
29 months.

30  
31 Mr. Beauregard suggested the board consider focus groups of parents to gain a sense of why some did and did not  
32 participate and to ascertain what would make the program more attractive. Mr. Manley thought a brief survey could be  
33 beneficial. Mr. Beauregard suggested the district could open the program to other communities. Ms. Kelley remarked  
34 perhaps it could be opened to more of the students in Hollis as well. Principal Allen stated, when space is available, the  
35 program is offered to all children at HPS. She can check the number to see how many others participated.

36  
37 Class Sizes

38  
39 Mr. Beauregard remarked he is truly an advocate for students and the district, but in this time, the board members have  
40 the focus on the budget. Looking at the class sizes for both HPS and HUES, he sees four classes where we could  
41 potentially do with one less class; 6<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades. There is an understanding of why we have to have six  
42 sections in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. May eventually have to do something as enrollment declines.

43  
44 Principal Allen stated she intentionally left the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class with multiple sessions due to the extensive number of  
45 children with significant needs. Multiple children have intensive IEPs and would be difficult to educate in the same room.  
46 Mr. Beauregard requested more specifics around the rationale since the cost of a teacher could represent \$50,000. Three  
47 classes, at \$150,000, represents 1% of the budget.

48  
49 Principal Allen stated the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class has 85 students and the specification for Hollis is 20 per class. Mr. Beauregard  
50 commented our specifications are considerably lower than what the State either recommends or is targeting. Even with a  
51 substantial number of IEPs in the room, he is assuming we have not correspondingly reduced the number of paras.  
52 Principal Allen stated that particular grade level in her building has the most intensive because of the nature of the  
53 disabilities. Mr. Beauregard continued if we have those para-professionals that would then mean that we could go with  
54 the slightly larger class sizes. Principal Allen reiterated she has some children with unique needs. Grouping them  
55 together socially and could be quite disruptive to other children. Therefore, they need to be spread out.

56  
57 Mr. Beauregard stated he spoke with Ms. Benz who had noticed the class size issue for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. With 16 students in  
58 one class that could have gone into the other four sections and still kept numbers at or below specification. Although it is

1 not within the purview of the board to set class sizes for a given year, it is within the board's purview to set the policy and  
2 specification.

3  
4 Mr. Manley stated his belief the issue is moot for this school year. Mr. Beauregard suggested it is not. Mr. Manley stated  
5 each of the numbers represents a signed contract at this point. Mr. Beauregard's response was even with a signed  
6 contract the master contract provides for layoffs if necessary.

7  
8 Superintendent Hodgdon commented "It sounds like we need to have conversations so that we can provide you with  
9 detailed information."

10  
11 Chairman McCann felt it was a discussion for the fall with regard to the following year. Stated it had been discussed in  
12 the fall at budget season and this is where we ended up with numbers. He does not believe making changes less than  
13 three weeks before school starts is the way to approach the issue as it would be pretty disruptive, i.e., all of the kids and  
14 teachers are assigned to classes. A salary would not be lost unless a RIF was done. He questioned whether there had  
15 been indications from the Budget Committee that would be something they would be looking for in the current year.

16  
17 Mr. Beauregard responded, because of declining revenues and the budget, the town ended up with over a 5% increase in  
18 the tax rate. The discussion with the Budget Committee was to look at where the NESDEC numbers are, and we are right  
19 on specification with each of the classes, but with 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> grade the enrollments haven't materialized. It is a lot of  
20 money and he would like to understand how to defend it.

21  
22 Principal Allen remarked last year, during the summer, they picked up 23 students at HPS. They have not seen that this  
23 year (5 in July). There had been no way of knowing if the increased enrollment was a one-time occurrence or something  
24 new.

25  
26 Mr. Beauregard commented the budgeting the board did was based on that kind of data; the NESDEC forecast and the  
27 data that Principal Allen had from the previous year. Chairman McCann commented the NESDEC forecast is just that a  
28 forecast and he tends to rely more on our own information for hard numbers. He commented if the meeting with the  
29 Budget Committee were focused on this issue it would be unproductive. Mr. Beauregard explained it would likely come  
30 up. We had these hard numbers, we had the NESDEC forecast saying there would probably be more than these  
31 numbers, and we had Principal Allen's experience from last summer where we had last minute enrollments. The Budget  
32 Committee was asking during the public hearings are you going to drop any sections, and we were saying at the time  
33 based on this, this, and this, we don't think we can. He understands there is pain here, but there is also a substantial  
34 expense to the taxpayers for supporting 3 additional classes.

35  
36 Superintendent Hodgdon remarked she does not know the exact details around the various student profiles and would be  
37 concerned if she had to provide a response without that information especially given it may be that we are balancing what  
38 currently exists with not having to do an out of district placement or hire a special education teacher for one student like  
39 we did in January of last year. Mr. Beauregard felt it to be an issue for discussion in the June timeframe so that, going  
40 forward, decisions could be made, on a yearly basis, on what direction to go in.

41  
42 Principal Allen added other changes would have to occur such as determining classroom assignments in August rather  
43 than June. She added, there are 5 grade levels of students to place, teachers to match, testing to do, and profiles to look  
44 at. That process starts in April and is not done in isolation. It is done with teaching staff and special educators/specialists.  
45 It is a grueling process to ensure children are placed in classrooms that are the best fit for them. It is important to know  
46 who the staff is. Contracts are signed in June. Chairman McCann reiterated those are some of the reasons why making  
47 a change now would not be in the best interest of the students.

48  
49 Mr. Beauregard stated, for the meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, it would be important to have the support to provide insight into the  
50 process, the unknowns, the timing and interdependencies, and then the consequences of pulling the trigger in August. It  
51 may be that we don't provide certain teachers notice that their contracts are solid until August and they look elsewhere  
52 because of the uncertainty.

53  
54 Principal Allen touched on the need to have hard philosophical discussions on how education looks in Hollis as we  
55 approach the new budget season.

1 HUES

2  
3 Ms. Kelley informed the board two additional students have been added to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. All positions are fully staffed.  
4 NECAP testing will be performed differently this year and in conjunction with how HPS is performing the testing. Grades  
5 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> will be testing at the same time all doing reading and math rather than the 4<sup>th</sup> grade testing one week, 5<sup>th</sup>  
6 another, and 6<sup>th</sup> another.

7  
8 Remarked if the schedule for the summer camp were altered, it would have to be coordinated with maintenance staff as it  
9 is not until the conclusion of summer camp that the 4<sup>th</sup> grade wing is prepared for the new school year. It would be the 1<sup>st</sup>  
10 grade wing that would be affected at HPS.

11  
12 Focus

13  
14 Ms. Kelley stated Principal Fowler's focus has been on report card updates and scheduling the evaluation and goal  
15 planning schedule for staff, her opening PowerPoint for the faculty meeting at the beginning of the year, and working on  
16 getting the new math program off and running.

17  
18 She has performed some research on the digital license for EnVision, which is currently at \$8/student. However, the  
19 district has the licensing at no charge for the first 5 years.

20  
21 Chairman McCann touched on the note concerning the backordered **enVision** materials. Ms. Kelley responded the  
22 classroom teachers are ready to go and she believes the backordered items might be going to specialists that are using  
23 the program. Mr. Beauregard hoped information would be tracked on how students and parents take advantage of the  
24 digital licensing to determine whether it is an item to be budgeted for in future years. Principal Allen added digital  
25 licensing would be useful especially when you are looking at replacing tattered and torn workbooks. Ms. Kelley informed  
26 the board the math committee made the decision not to purchase workbooks as they were only geared to the middle of  
27 the road student. The option exists, in the math program, for remedial work, the average student, and extension, and with  
28 flexible grouping not all of the workbooks would be used. They will either be used digitally or they will run off whatever is  
29 needed for copies.

30  
31 Business Administrator - SAU Lease Update, Lunch Price Review

32  
33 Ms. Duhamel remarked the SAU Lease is in the possession of Attorney Drescher, and we are waiting to hear back.

34  
35 Lunch Price Review

36  
37 Ms. Duhamel informed the board this year the food service program was self-supporting thanks to the efforts of Amy  
38 Cassidy. The program ended with a surplus of approximately \$210. Suggested for the program to continue to be self-  
39 supporting a price increase will need to be put in place for the coming school year as wages and the price of food have  
40 increased. Her recommendation was to price lunch at \$2.45. She expressed a concern for whether that would be  
41 sustainable or if prices would have to continue to increase.

42  
43 She commented, in the coming year, we should be analyzing our staffing. Brookline uses a contract service, Café  
44 Services, which staffs based on number of meals. That is something that will be looked at for Hollis to determine if it is  
45 applicable. She also suggested the possibility of offering breakfast. Since staff is present in the morning there would be  
46 no additional staff time required. She felt the program could be implemented mid-year if it could be worked out with the  
47 principals.

48  
49 Chairman McCann questioned whether the increase could be avoided. He understood an expense reduction of 1.5% is  
50 assumed and that they are trying to cut \$1,200 from the cost of the program. At a price of \$2.45, additional revenue  
51 would be approximately \$2,000. Questioned if breakfast were instituted on January 1, 2010 and other feasible changes  
52 made would it be possible to keep the price static. Ms. Duhamel felt it would be wiser to increase the price to \$2.45 and  
53 look for breakfast to add revenue so that prices do not have to be increased in the next year. Two of the neighboring  
54 communities have their lunch prices at \$2.65 and \$2.40 for elementary schools. The directive was for the program to be  
55 self-supporting. It was commented the price had remained static for several years prior to its increase last year, and now  
56 administration has a better handle on the program. Chairman McCann was agreeable to the price increase to \$2.45 for  
57 the coming school year with the desire to keep it flat the following year.

1 Mr. Beauregard touched on the idea of the cooking for the two buildings being performed in one. Ms. Duhamel responded  
2 they had not considered that. At this time, both schools have a kitchen, and there are a lot of new guidelines such as  
3 lunch having to be served within so much time of preparation, etc.

4  
5 **MOTION BY MEMBER BEAUREGARD TO ACCEPT THE BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S RECOMMENDATION TO  
6 INCREASE THE SCHOOL LUNCH PRICE TO TWO DOLLARS AND FORTY FIVE CENTS (\$2.45), EFFECTIVE AT  
7 THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR, IN ORDER TO KEEP THE PROGRAM SELF-SUPPORTING. A REPORT  
8 SHALL BE PROVIDED TO THE BOARD AT ITS DECEMBER MEETING**

9  
10 ON THE QUESTION

11  
12 Mr. Manley questioned if the solution was to keep raising prices. Ms. Duhamel remarked the program is not sustainable  
13 and this is the year to look at raising prices to avoid asking for increases in each year of the program. Superintendent  
14 Hodgdon reminded the board they came close to setting this same price last summer with the understanding  
15 administration would come back with better information for this year.

16  
17 Mr. Manley did not believe \$2.45 to be unreasonable, but wanted to understand the plan for stabilizing the cost. Mr.  
18 Beauregard added the price increase would buy the board a year to formulate that plan. He remarked there have been  
19 significant changes in the past year and Ms. Cassidy will be reviewing Brookline's model to determine whether there is  
20 anything we can take from that. Chairman McCann remarked what is not being addressed is the need for capital  
21 equipment, which at this time comes out of the general budget.

22  
23 Mr. Manley questioned an attrition rate of students dropping out of the lunch program due to increased rates. Ms.  
24 Duhamel responded she did not see that last year. Mr. Manley felt the issue was not as much of price as it was about  
25 putting off further what needs to be done in terms of sustainability. Ms. Duhamel responded in year one the district went  
26 from \$11,000 in the hole to a surplus of \$210.

27  
28 *Ms. Cassidy will provide the board with information at its December meeting.*

29  
30 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANLEY**  
31 **MOTION CARRIED**  
32 **3/0**

33  
34 Maintenance Director - Expendable Trust Update and Policy Recommendation

35  
36 Director Siegfried informed the board he and John Gray have been working on the water system, seeking information as  
37 to how much of the water pump house the school district owns and where the town takes over. He has spoken with  
38 Skillings & Sons and reviewed the report received from Mike Cullinan. Everything in his report is exact on our current  
39 status for pipes, deterioration, plastic (up from the pump house to the buildings is pretty much PVC on HPS and HUES  
40 sides). He needs to acquire additional information from the town.

41  
42 Mr. Beauregard touched on the need to provide an as built report to the State. Ms. Duhamel remarked the request for an  
43 as built was not sent to the school, but perhaps to the town. From the school, the state is requiring water samples and  
44 they have been provided.

45  
46 Mr. Beauregard remarked it seemed to him there was an additional requirement that the owners/managers of a water  
47 district had the responsibility to provide an as built or status of the entire system. Director Siegfried stated the  
48 questionnaire from the State has questions he cannot answer. He and John Gray are working with the town to provide  
49 further information. He has spoken with the State to inform them of progress. We have asked for an extension in time to  
50 complete the questionnaire. There are a lot of engineering questions that cannot be answered by Skillings & Sons.

51  
52 Mr. Beauregard questioned whether DPW had been approached for engineering assistance. Director Siegfried  
53 responded he has received paperwork from the town as far as what has and has not been done in the past. He has not  
54 spoken with them concerning engineering. Mr. Beauregard felt the administration should be looking for more active  
55 involvement by the town.

56  
57 Mr. Beauregard stated his desire for answers to the question of risk. Chairman McCann remarked the town is responsible  
58 from the town buildings up to the gate. After the gate, the responsibility shifts to the school district (up to Farley building).  
59 He believes the town has good knowledge of their side of the water system but perhaps little of the school's side.

1 Director Siegfried remarked, on the school side, the district is the owner of the Rocky Pond Well. It is a water system.  
2 There are people that maintain water systems. We are not capable in-house. Mr. Manley questioned what was at issue.  
3 Director Siegfried responded the Hollis School District is the owner of the well and cannot distribute water as a license is  
4 required. Skillings & Sons is the distributor.  
5

6 Mr. Manley commented we have a well and a distribution system. We supply water to area homes and town offices. This  
7 system has been in place for a number of decades. He questioned what the issue was at this time. Director Siegfried  
8 stated school ownership is an issue as well as monitoring and maintaining the system and to what point.  
9

10 Mr. Manley questioned whether there are outstanding issues. Mr. Beauregard responded the middle school has terrible  
11 pressure. The pump is pumping 100 gallons per minute, yet ½ a mile up the road the middle school has terrible pressure.  
12 HPS has good pressure and is about the same distance away. Chairman McCann added it is suspected the lines are  
13 leaking and freeze in the winter.  
14

15 Mr. Beauregard stated when he came on the board three years ago, there was nobody really paying attention to this. We  
16 have made several upgrades that were necessary such as a backup pump. He added we have a responsibility, as a  
17 utility, to provide a reliable utility. It was not clear who owned what, what the state of maintenance of this utility was, and it  
18 wasn't clear if there were any unknowns, what the risk was and what the recommendations were from the experts in how  
19 to go about either assessing or remediating the risks. What we were trying to get to is an as built drawing of the system  
20 and some data around, for each segment, what we know about it and for the stuff we don't know, what is the  
21 recommendation on how to lower the risk by knowing more about it.  
22

23 Principal Allen questioned whether the work was budgeted. She stated a responsibility for wear, tear, damage, etc. Mr.  
24 Beauregard responded a year ago the Budget Committee was looking to have a joint capital asset planning meeting  
25 between the COOP, the Town, and the Hollis School District to try to space out major requests to the taxpayers.  
26

27 Ms. Duhamel suggested, since the district does not have in-house expertise, perhaps the town could take over the utility.  
28 She suggested an exploratory committee could be formed. Mr. Beauregard questioned when delivery will be made to the  
29 state and when the board would have the information it needs to sit down in an inner-board planning meeting to lay out  
30 the risks, costs, timeframe, and determine which budget year the expense should be allocated.  
31

32 He remarked, at this time, we are not charging anyone for managing this system. If the only real unknowns are the line  
33 between Rocky Pond and the middle school then there should be some shared responsibility with the COOP. This is  
34 something the Budget Committee has brought up in the past. Until we know what the potential costs there are in the  
35 sections that are feeding the COOP, we cannot go to them.  
36

37 Chairman McCann remarked whether or not we transfer ownership, we don't have the expertise to maintain it. That same  
38 expertise that could maintain it for us could also investigate it to some extent.  
39

40 Director Siegfried will update the board on his meeting with the town before the next board meeting.  
41

42 Chairman McCann volunteered to be the board's representative to the maintenance committee.  
43

44 **MOTION BY MEMBER BEAUREGARD THAT THE BOARD GO INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION PURSUANT TO RSA**  
45 **91-A:3 II (d) CONSIDERATION OF THE ACQUISITION, SALE OR LEASE OF REAL OR PERSONAL PROPERTY**  
46 **WHICH, IF DISCUSSED IN PUBLIC WOULD LIKELY BENEFIT A PARTY OR PARTIES WHOSE INTERESTS ARE**  
47 **ADVERSE TO THOSE OF THE GENERAL COMMUNITY**

48 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANLEY**

49 **MOTION CARRIED**

50 **3/0**

51 *The Board went into non-public session at 7:11 p.m.*  
52

53 *The Board came out of non-public session at 7:45 p.m.*  
54

55 **MOTION BY MEMBER BEAUREGARD THAT THE BOARD, BY ROLL CALL, SEAL THE MINUTES OF THE NON-**  
56 **PUBLIC SESSION UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE MAJORITY OF THE BOARD VOTES THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE**  
57 **CONFIDENTIALITY WOULD NO LONGER BE SERVED**  
58



1 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANLEY**

2  
3 *A Viva Voce Roll Call vote was conducted, which resulted as follows:*

4  
5 Yea: Jim McCann, Bill Beauregard, Rich Manley  
6  
7 Nay: 3  
8 0

9 **MOTION CARRIED**

10 Maintenance

11  
12 Director Siegfried informed the board the gym/cafeteria floor at HPS has been re-tiled, waxed, and is ready to go.

13  
14 The additional security for HUES is 98% complete. The door is in place and painted. Waiting for new door lock and  
15 hardware. Crash bars will be placed on the doors after classes start.

16  
17 Bathroom Partitions

18  
19 When asked for the cost per partition, Director Siegfried responded each bathroom is laid out differently. We have 18  
20 stalls at HUES with 6 screens and 16 stalls with 4 screens ay HPS. Quotes were gained from three different vendors for  
21 hard plastic, metal, and phenolic. The board's choice was metal. Chairman McCann remarked the total for the metal  
22 partitions is \$22,500 (includes installation). Budgeted was \$24,000. The metal partitions come with a one-year warranty.  
23 No additional board action is required. Delivery time is 3 weeks with 2-3 days for installation. Installed will be scheduled  
24 during a school break.

25  
26 Director Siegfried informed the board the Rocky Pond pump house roof is installed and looks great.

27  
28 He stated a concern with the ramp outside the handicap access area at HPS stating it is deteriorating quickly and a patch  
29 job will no longer work. Replacement needs to occur prior to the start of the school year. Mr. Beauregard questioned if  
30 it's deterioration was related to the repair of the HPS wall. Director Siegfried suggested it might have been installed  
31 poorly initially. Mr. Beauregard stated his desire for a vendor to take responsibility by providing a warranty. Director  
32 Siegfried will obtain quotes on the ramp replacement. Mr. Beauregard suggested the chosen vendor be asked for an  
33 opinion as to why the ramp failed.

34  
35 *When asked, Ms. Duhamel stated the Hunter Maintenance Check List would be passed out prior to the September*  
36 *meeting for review.*

37  
38 Mr. Beauregard stated the need to receive the list of maintenance items at the SAU building. The Budget Committee  
39 wants to know the number that will be set for rent. Director Siegfried will submit a list complete with estimates to Ms.  
40 Duhamel. Mr. Beauregard questioned whether a thermal scan was being performed on the SAU Building to see where  
41 insulation or roof problems exist. Director Siegfried will look to determine timing and price so that consideration can be  
42 given to whether the current budget could support the expense.

43  
44 Superintendent Hodgdon – Business Administrator Preliminary Transition

45  
46 Superintendent Hodgdon stated she had hoped to have a better opportunity with the board chairs to bounce some ideas  
47 off of them regarding transition. She remains hopeful time will open up next week.

48  
49 There are three areas of planning she has already done, not a lot of specificity in those three areas, but there are three  
50 big chunks that everyone needs to be mindful of; one is to establish a timeline and a process for replacement. What has  
51 prevented her from doing anything specific around that has been the opportunity to look at the position, the amount of  
52 work the position currently assumes, and consider redefining the position. She had some discussion about that with  
53 board chairs last week. That conversation needs to continue so that we advertise appropriately and so that we have  
54 enough time and awareness as to the type of qualifications when establishing the search process and timeline. She  
55 reminded the board Ms. Duhamel's last day is September 9<sup>th</sup>.

56  
57 She has had discussions with Ms. Duhamel around having an interim person on board. There are companies that do that  
58 sort of work; provide individuals who will come in and do Business Administrator work and who have experience with  
59 local, municipal, and the school side. They are aware of an individual who is available. They hope to meet **him** next week

1 to gain a sense of what he could do, how many days we would want and need that person to be in the chair, and when we  
2 would want to bring that person on board. She believes it would be best to have that person on board prior to Ms.  
3 Duhamel's departure.

4  
5 The third area she and Ms. Duhamel are working on is identifying key projects and work that needs to be done, to be  
6 focused on those, and to say this is not the time for new projects to come into play. Ms. Duhamel is working on the audit,  
7 which is followed by a period of state reporting.

8  
9 Mr. Beaugregard questioned whether any of the audit work could be delegated. If the interim person could start  
10 immediately he/she could work closely with Ms. Duhamel, and she should schedule that person's work in a way to make  
11 him/her familiar with the operation. Ms. Duhamel, who has the greater experience, we leverage her remaining time in the  
12 highest-level work.

13  
14 Expressed concern the existing work product she generates for the district not get lost, i.e., monthly reporting during the  
15 budget process. Ms. Duhamel has built models in the past for negotiations that outline salaries and benefits. These  
16 models allow for input of known information such as salaries and for input of information such as benefits to be plugged in  
17 when known.

18  
19 Superintendent Hodgdon remarked the auditing phase is coming to an end. Ms. Duhamel will be busy with state reporting  
20 until the end of the month. Ms. Duhamel felt that to be an item that could be delegated to an interim person. Chairman  
21 McCann questioned the anticipated length of employment for the interim person. Superintendent Hodgdon remarked that  
22 conversation has not yet been had with the board chairs. She also has not yet met with the individual to determine to  
23 what degree they want to fill in; could be 3 days a week. Two people may be needed. At the moment they are only aware  
24 of one available individual. It is anticipated the interim person will be on board a minimum of 2-3 months.

25  
26 When questioned whether the Assistant Business Administrator could be of assistance. Superintendent Hodgdon stated  
27 the division of work within the business unit is such that the Asst. Business Administrator is already at capacity.

28  
29 It was noted the three areas the individual would have to be best trained in are; budget, negotiations, and  
30 reporting/management.

31  
32 Mr. Beaugregard touched on the importance of prioritizing the work to be accomplished such as considering where on the  
33 list the issue of alternative healthcare pricing would be. That information could be beneficial to the COOP as well.  
34 Chairman McCann commented although the board believes having the different healthcare options is critical, it could be at  
35 the risk of overwhelming the new person. We have to look hard at what is important.

36  
37 The background expectation is that the interim person be a CPA, can make financial models, etc, in order to ensure a  
38 smooth transition. Ms. Duhamel will list the critical items she feels need to be accomplished prior to her departure and  
39 provide it to the board for their concurrence.

40  
41 Mr. Beaugregard remarked, assuming Ms. Duhamel is willing he would support whatever stipend would be necessary if her  
42 assistance was required beyond her departure date. Mr. Manley questioned if the administration was confident there  
43 would be a plan and a person in place. Ms. Duhamel responded of the two firms that specialize in the municipal  
44 environment, one believes they have an individual who would work 3 days a week and the other is scouting for another  
45 individual.

46  
47 Mr. Manley questioned whether the district would advertise the position or hire a headhunter. Superintendent Hodgdon  
48 responded they would define the position and advertise. Both she and Ms. Duhamel are confident with the two firms they  
49 are dealing with and will move as quickly as possible to get someone on board. In response to Mr. Beaugregard's request  
50 that a proposal be presented to the board chairs, Chairman McCann stated that had occurred as part of the initial phase  
51 of their discussions and will be expanded upon. Superintendent Hodgdon will send out a preliminary proposal prior to the  
52 SAU meeting.

53  
54 SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT

55  
56 Superintendent Hodgdon recommended the .6 position of Extended Day Kindergarten (replacing Susan Louis) be filled  
57 with Marie Pimley. She has a wealth of experience, comes from the Nashua School District from which she retired. She  
58 has a BS in Early Childhood Education from Salem State, which she received in 1974, a Masters of Education in

1 Curriculum & Instruction from Lesley College, which she received in 1994, and an additional 30 hours from Salem State in  
2 graduate work. She has 30+ years of experience. The position would be at Masters +30, Group 2 at a salary of \$41,809.

3  
4 **MOTION BY MEMBER BEAUREGARD TO ACCEPT THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION FOR MARIE  
5 PIMLEY AS THE EXTENDED DAY KINDERGARTEN TEACHER AT A MASTERS PLUS 30, GROUP 2 AT A SALARY  
6 OF FORTY ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINE DOLLARS (\$41,809)**

7 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANLEY**

8 **MOTION CARRIED**

9 **3/0**

10  
11 Superintendent Hodgdon informed the board of a candidate for the music position, Christine Wysokowski. Christine  
12 comes with a Bachelor in Music from UMass Amherst, which she received in 2006 and a Master of Music Education from  
13 Gordon College, which we anticipate she will have completed by the Fall of 2010. She has 4 years of teaching  
14 experience. Once the grades are received she will be at Bachelor +15 at a salary of \$41,738.

15  
16 **MOTION BY MEMBER BEAUREGARD TO ACCEPT THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION FOR  
17 CHRISTINE WYSOKOWSKI AS THE MUSIC TEACHER AT BACHELOR PLUS 15 AT A SALARY OF FORTY ONE  
18 THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY EIGHT DOLLARS (\$41,748)**

19 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANLEY**

20  
21 ON THE QUESTION

22  
23 Mr. Manley questioned receipt of grades. Superintendent Hodgdon responded Ms. Milkoswki finished her courses last  
24 week and she is awaiting tangible documentation. As it generally takes a few months, acknowledgement of her grades  
25 has been requested from her professor.

26  
27 Mr. Manley responded we would be hiring someone on a credential point that is not there. Superintendent Hodgdon  
28 believes, technically, the applicant has met the credentials as she finished the course work and is in good standing. Mr.  
29 Beauregard added the board has already authorized the Superintendent to hire subject to approval at a later meeting.  
30 The board could forego approval until September, however, he was confident the Superintendent has done her  
31 homework.

32  
33 Mr. Manley re-stated what is typical is for the SAU to receive a transcript prior to a salary placement. He expressed a  
34 concern with setting precedent in accepting credentials in this fashion. Remarked an individual could be hired knowing  
35 he/she would reach that level once the credentials have been received. As an example, say Teacher X comes in next  
36 week and says I have completed the coursework and you will be receiving the information shortly so you need to change  
37 my contract. Superintendent Hodgdon stated they often times accept student-supplied transcripts and wait for the official  
38 transcript to follow.

39  
40 Chairman McCann suggested modifying the motion to have it clearly state this as an exception based on the  
41 recommendation of the Superintendent and not precedent setting. Mr. Beauregard added there is no language in the  
42 contract that would restrict the action. Principal Allen commented the increase could be retroactive.

43  
44 When asked, Ms. Kelley stated when an individual is hired he/she is hired at their step. If there is an existing staff  
45 member that is taking a summer course they can present just a grade (do not need official transcript) to move a lane.  
46 This person would be able to present their grade and move to that 15 lane. She has until October 15<sup>th</sup> to do this. By  
47 doing that you don't create any union issues.

48  
49 Superintendent Hodgdon reiterated she anticipates receiving the grade. It could be received as early as the next day.  
50 Mr. Manley responded the Superintendent would then have the authority to make that adjustment. There would be no  
51 disadvantage.

52  
53 **AMENDED MOTION BY MEMBER BEAUREGARD TO HIRE CHRISTINE WYSOKOWSKI FOR THE POSITION OF  
54 MUSIC TEACHER AT THE HOLLIS PRIMARY SCHOOL AT BACHELORS STEP 5 AT A SALARY OF FORTY  
55 THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED EIGHTY NINE DOLLARS (\$40,689)**

56 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANLEY**

1 ON THE QUESTION

2  
3 Mr. Manley questioned what the procedure would be for the teacher to present the transcript for salary increase.  
4 Superintendent Hodgdon responded the e-mail (including the information that would appear in a grade report) would be a  
5 placeholder until the official transcript arrived.

6 **MOTION CARRIED**  
7 **3/0**

8  
9 Superintendent Hodgdon informed the board she took another look at additional candidates for the Assistant  
10 Principal/Special Education Coordinator position. She has engaged in contract negotiations, as discussed at the last board  
11 meeting for, an interim position. She will meet with the candidate next Friday to conclude the contractual details. As the  
12 board has provided her with the authority to move forward, she will report on the details at the September meeting.

13  
14 POLICY UPDATES – Part I (1<sup>st</sup> Reading 1-14-09/2<sup>nd</sup> Reading 5-13-09)

15  
16 IHBAA, DFA, EBBC, GBAA, JBAA, JICK, GBCD, JLC, ILBA, JLDBA, IJOC, EEAEA

17  
18 Expandable Trust Policy

19  
20 Ms. Duhamel stated she has received no word back from the state.

21  
22 Chairman McCann explained the Expendable Trust Fund is a vehicle used to bring monies across budget years to  
23 accumulate as a savings mechanism for large maintenance needs. At this time, there does not seem to be a mechanism  
24 in place to return surplus back to the taxpayers. Ms. Duhamel had suggested a policy whereby a band is established  
25 determining where the balance should be at any given time. Once the amount of funding is outside of that band a  
26 procedure would be in place to either return any surplus to the voters or seek additional funding.

27  
28 Mr. Beauregard remarked without a crystal ball, the board has no way of knowing what will happen with the CPI and the  
29 projects they are saving for are multi-year projects with escalating costs. He feels the board does the best job it can  
30 estimating the cost of future projects. His concern was that setting such a policy would place the board in the position of  
31 giving money back to the voters one year and asking for additional funding the next. He does not see a problem now that  
32 would warrant such a policy. He did agree with Chairman McCann's concern that the board would not want to see the  
33 fund grow to where there were monies in search of projects.

34  
35 Chairman McCann touched on his concern that could happen. Stated it may be more of perception to be concerned  
36 about, but he feels it necessary to have a mechanism by which surplus goes back to the voters when it should, and when  
37 we need to get it back we will ask for it. Mr. Manley commented, when considering long-term stability, perhaps the fund  
38 should be maintained to avoid a spike in funding requests when other projects come up. If it were a large amount then  
39 the board would have to consider adjusting it, but if it were a moderate figure within an identified project, it would be  
40 prudent to retain the funds.

41  
42 Chairman McCann restated his belief there needs to be a mechanism that returns money back to taxpayers if the fund  
43 exceeds whatever is set as a band. Mr. Beauregard agreed and remarked part of that mechanism is already in place  
44 because every year when we estimate what we will need we adjust it based on projects that are done or have received  
45 updated quotes. In the three years we have had this expendable trust, every year we have needed to ask for money.

46  
47 Superintendent Hodgdon remarked the buildings are aging. Mr. Beauregard stated he believes a safety margin is built  
48 into the Warrant Article request process every year that should account for any surplus. He does not see where that  
49 process would not cover the concerns expressed. He further stated he believes the board is doing a great job of  
50 managing the taxpayers' money although, philosophically, he agreed with the Chairman one hundred percent.

51  
52 PUBLIC INPUT - None

1 NON-PUBLIC SESSION

2  
3 **MOTION BY MEMBER BEAUREGARD THAT THE BOARD GO INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION PURSUANT TO RSA**  
4 **91-A:3 II (a) THE DISMISSAL, PROMOTION OR COMPENSATION OF ANY PUBLIC EMPLOYEE OR THE**  
5 **DISCIPLINING OF SUCH EMPLOYEE, OR THE INVESTIGATION OF ANY CHARGES AGAINST HIM, UNLESS THE**  
6 **EMPLOYEE AFFECTED REQUESTS AN OPEN MEETING AND PURSUANT TO RSA 91-A:3 II (d) CONSIDERATION**  
7 **OF THE ACQUISITION, SALE OR LEASE OF REAL OR PERSONAL PROPERTY WHICH, IF DISCUSSED IN PUBLIC,**  
8 **WOULD LIKELY BENEFIT A PART OR PARTIES WHOSE INTERESTS ARE ADVERSE TO THOSE OF THE**  
9 **GENERAL COMMUNITY**

10  
11 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANLEY**

12  
13 *A Viva Voce Roll Call vote was conducted, which resulted as follows:*

14  
15 Yea: Jim McCann, Bill Beaugard, Rich Manley  
16  
17 Nay: 3  
18 0

19 **MOTION CARRIED**

20 *The Board went into non-public session at 9:29 p.m.*

21  
22 *The Board came out of non-public session at \_\_\_\_\_ p.m.*

23  
24 **MOTION BY MEMBER BEAUREGARD THAT THE BOARD, BY ROLL CALL, SEAL THE MINUTES OF THE NON-**  
25 **PUBLIC SESSION UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE MAJORITY OF THE BOARD VOTES THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE**  
26 **CONFIDENTIALITY WOULD NO LONGER BE SERVED**

27  
28 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANLEY**

29  
30 *A Viva Voce Roll Call vote was conducted, which resulted as follows:*

31  
32 Yea: Jim McCann, Bill Beaugard, Rich Manley  
33  
34 Nay: 3  
35 0

36 **MOTION CARRIED**

37 ADJOURNMENT

38  
39 **MOTION BY MEMBER \_\_\_\_\_ TO ADJOURN**

40 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER \_\_\_\_\_.**

41 **MOTION CARRIED**

42  
43 The Hollis School Board meeting of August 12, 2009 was adjourned at \_\_\_\_\_ p.m.

44  
45 Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
46

1 **ACTION ITEMS**

2  
3 **Superintendent Hodgdon**

4  
5 Updated job descriptions to be made available (5-13-09) (Due: **9-9-09**)

6  
7 Compile a list of FY11 budget discussion items to include: (5-13-09)

- 8  
9 - full-day kindergarten  
10 - potential for yearly allocation towards digital licensing fee of enVision program (if cannot be purchased on a yearly  
11 basis) (6-10-09)

12  
13 Provide proposed contract wording changes and/or other suggestions (Due: **9-9-09**)

14  
15 Forward to the Board an electronic copy of the application for the travel plan associated with Safe Routes to School (7-7-  
16 09)

17  
18 Discuss the standard tuition rate with the non-resident staff member who has requested his child be enrolled in the Hollis  
19 School District. If the request remains open, bring forward a specific proposal inclusive of a recommended tuition rate (7-  
20 7-09) (Due: **8-12-09**)

21  
22 Obtain legal opinion from Tom Flygare, Esq. as to what CBA salary numbers could be used as placeholders in the  
23 proposed budget. (7-8-09) (Due: **9-09-09**)

24  
25 Provide a preliminary proposal of the planned transition for the Business Administrator prior to the SAU meeting (8-12-09)

26  
27 Report on the details of contract negotiations with the candidate for the Assistant Principal/Special Education Coordinator  
28 position (8-12-09) (Due: **9-9-09**)

29  
30 **Dawna Duhamel, Business Administrator**

31  
32 Status of scanner software (25 policies require placement on the web site) (5-13-09)

33  
34 Provide a ballpark figure for the cost of snaking the water lines (6-10-09)

35  
36 Provide a response, via e-mail, to the Board on the questions raised concerning the Expendable Trust Statement dated  
37 July 6, 2009 (specifically the \$25,000 contingency amount and the amount allocated to the bathroom partitions) (7-7-09)

38  
39 Provide revenue information as it relates to the FY10 budget (7-8-09)

40  
41 Provide preliminary budget numbers (7-7-09) (Due: **9-09-09**)

42  
43 Provide the Board with a timeframe when information will be available to conduct a discussion on possible cost savings  
44 gained by efficiencies in the FY10 budget (7-8-09)

45  
46 Distribute the Hunter Maintenance Check List to the board prior to the September meeting. (8-12-09)

47  
48 Provide prioritized list of items to be addressed prior to departure from district (8-12-09)

49  
50 **Director Kelly**

51  
52 Update on items being applied for under stimulus funding (5-13-09)

53  
54 Obtain legal opinion on the incorporation, by reference, of procedural detail in KED Policy (5-13-09)

55  
56 Obtain legal opinion on conflict between state and district language surrounding the type of model used for children with  
57 disabilities (5-13-09)

1 Provide write-up of pros and cons for each of the models, which could be used for determining whether a child has a  
2 specific learning disability with respect to best practices web sites sighted in public correspondence dated November 2008  
3 (5-13-09)  
4

5 **Director Mace**

6  
7 Provide status update indicating what National Math Advisory Panel Report recommendations  
8 have been implemented to date and a prioritization for implementing additional recommendations (6-10-09)  
9

10 **Director Siegfried**

11  
12 Ascertain pricing for thermal scan of SAU Building to see where insulation or roof problems may exist (8-12-09)  
13

14 Update the board on meeting with the town regarding the water system (8-12-09)  
15

16 Provide the list of maintenance items at the SAU building complete with estimates to Ms. Duhamel (8-12-09)  
17

18 **Principal Allen**

19  
20 Provide proposed contract wording changes and/or other suggestions (Due: **9-9-09**)  
21

22 **Principal Fowler**

23  
24 Provide proposed contract wording changes and/or other suggestions (Due: **9-9-09**)