

Board of Education
December 8, 2020 – Regular Meeting
Zoom Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Mary Tomasi, Vice Chair Chris McGlynn, Amy Domeika, Suesen Hickey, Jessica Morozowich, Joanne Rose at 6:47 pm. and Student Member Shannon Hickey.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mitch Koziol,

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Superintendent Jeffrey Burt, Bacon Academy Principal Matt Peel, Colchester Elementary School Principal Judy O'Meara, Jack Jackter Intermediate School Principal Elise Butson, Director of Teaching and Learning Charles Hewes, Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Kathleen Perry, Director of Education Operations Mario Hurtado, Director of Human Resources Shannon Ramsby, Director of Technology Darren Smith, Chief Financial Officer Maggie Cosgrove.

OTHERS PRESENT: Board of Selectmen Liaison Denise Mizla, Board of Finance Liaison Mike Eagan, John Butson AIA, Senior Program Manager, Arcadia US, Inc.

1. MEETING OPENING

1.1 Call to Order

Chair Mary Tomasi called this meeting to order at 6:02 pm with a roll call to establish a quorum.

2. ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

None requested.

3. RECOGNITION/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Chair Tomasi gave the following statement:

“On behalf of the BOE, I wish to thank all our school employees: teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, nurses, custodians, office and cafeteria workers. You have diligently strived through these unprecedented times.

Ten months ago, on March 13, the message came out, “Schools will be closed until further notice.” Since that day, you have all stepped up to the task of educating and providing for our town’s children.

We switched from in-class learning to on-line learning to hybrid learning. Something never done before in our public schools. It was and is a daunting task. Our work continues. For this, the BOE is deeply appreciative for all your efforts.

And, finally, I want to thank the BOE for their support to our schools and our community. Given this crisis and through all the countless meeting we’ve had, we as a board are determined to continue to move forward. Hopefully, year 2021 will be better and brighter.”

C. McGlynn added that we all appreciate that these challenging times are definitely unprecedented and there are many members of the district who go above and beyond on a daily basis and juggle multiple tasks, personally and professionally, Thank you everybody for everything you do every day in the district.

3.1. Recognizing the LMS Team and Live-Stream Pilot Group

Dr. Hewes said the two groups mentioned below had extra work and difficult tasks in providing an extra layer of support for families.

We would like to acknowledge the following CPS staff members for their outstanding contributions to educational excellence:

Library Media Specialist Team

Karen Groves, Barbara Gabriel, Kim Hebb, Barbara Johnson, Michele Lane, and Geri Dineen. Our extremely dedicated library media specialist team performed an incredibly heavy lift this fall to support our district transition to a one-to-one learning plan K-12. Working with the IT team, the LMSs helped organize and deploy over 1,000 devices district-wide. Many of the devices that were deployed were going to families whose children had never used an iPad or Chromebook as a daily learning tool. In addition to spending countless hours coordinating software and managing users, the LMSs served as our point of contact for families who were struggling to get their students online. Colchester Public Schools is indebted to this team who insured that, on September 8, all of our students could begin learning in a hybrid environment.

Live-Stream Pilot Group

Dawn May, Jen D'Aiuto, Jen DelSesto, Jennifer Archambault, Jill Levasseur, Melissa Elliot, Marinne Cheney, Jennifer Welborn, and Jeanne Bussiere were members of our live-streaming pilot group. These teachers tested-out technology to live-stream and also provided feedback to the District so that we could learn and implement at a faster rate. This team was courageous enough to try something completely new during a time that was marked by uncertainty and disruption. These teachers went above and beyond to explore new technology and pedagogical practice to support the district transition to continuous learning 5 days a week. By January, the majority of our staff at the MS and HS will be able to use the technology to provide instruction to all students whether those students are in-class or at home.

3.2. HOBY Leadership Award Recipients – Bacon Academy

Principal Peel noted the award recipients and will present them each with Certificates of Recognition.

The 2021 HOBY (Hugh O'Brian Youth) Leadership Award recipients from Bacon Academy are sophomores Ryan Moores as HOBY Ambassador and Grace Gorreck and Theresa Mathieu as HOBY Representatives.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Jennifer Cox asked the Board to consider a temporary policy change to give students who have chosen to do at home learning during the pandemic access to school programs and accounts. Superintendent Burt invited J. Cox to the Policy meeting next week where this will be discussed.

5. REPORT FROM SUPERINTENDENT

5.1 Communications

A letter has been received from Matt Dittmann regarding school attendance during the pandemic.

There have been numerous communications in support of what is being done in reference to the pandemic and a few that are concerned about the uptick that is happening.

5.2 2021-2020 Budget Updates

Superintendent Burt met with the Board of Finance (BOF) last week to give an update and discuss the budget for next year. At this time, the amount is in the range of \$600,000 to bring the budget to its former level in the capital improvement fund, the long range technology plan, curriculum implementation, custodial supplies and general instructional supplies. These are not additional expenses, these are absolutely necessary to run the district. This is a 1.4% increase over the current fiscal year budget. There is very little in new initiatives, just looking to maintain current level of staff, especially support staff, may need additional substitutes for additional learning time, looking to strengthen practices and meet the needs of the students. Superintendent Burt will be meeting monthly with BOF.

March 9, 2021, is the date for a full presentation to the BOF. This is a difficult financial year with a difficult school year so the budget process is starting earlier than usual.

5.3 Current Instructional Model Update

The elementary school students are full day model with WJMS and BA using the hybrid model.

5.4 Update on Voluntary at-Home Learners Program

Superintendent Burt and Dr. Charles Hewes, Director of Teaching and Learning, provided an update on the Voluntary At-Home Learners Program. Faculty are teaching elementary students every day. There are 254 voluntary at home learners, an increase recently of 13 students. Sixty-four students have gone out for home schooling. Most of the voluntary at-home learners have indicated that students will return to school when circumstances improve.

5.5 Pandemic Update

There have only been three in school transmissions of the virus over 60 days of school days. There is more control in school and that is a good reason to keep the students in school. Superintendent Burt feels it is relatively safe decision as they are able to enforce rules of hygiene.

The schools received a grant of \$150,000 from the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) for cleaning supplies.

Principal Butson and Principal O'Meara responded to a question about recess. The students are out for recess as much as possible. They come well prepared for the weather and storage for those items is working out. Toys in the lower grades are being changed out regularly. Large spaces are doing double duty.

6. POLICIES/REGULATIONS FOR FIRST READING

6.1 4118.234P Psychotropic Drug Use

6.2 5139P Participation Fees for School Activities

6.3 4112.18P Nepotism

6.4 5145.15P Student Directory Information

As this is the first reading, no action was taken.

J. Rose joined this meeting at this time.

7. PRIORITY DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

7.1 WJMS Building Project Closure

John Butkus, owner/representative of Arcadia, Inc. noted that this was a financially successful project and came in under budget by \$4,730,000.

Motion by: S. Hickey

to accept as complete State Project number 028-0043, the Renovation of William J. Johnston Middle School and State Project Number 028-0044 the Pupil Services project and approve the projects being submitted to the State for audit.

Second by: A. Domeika.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

7.2 Diversity Committee Discussion

Tabled until the January Board meeting.

7.3 Budget Calendar Approval

Superintendent Burt presented a revised version of the budget calendar.

Motion by: J. Rose

to approve the revised budget calendar.

Second by: C. McGlynn.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

7.4 Proposed School Year 2021-2022 Calendar

Superintendent Burt submitted a revised 2021-2022 School Calendar.

Motion by: A. Domeika

to approve the revised 2021-2022 School Calendar.

Second by: S. Hickey.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

7.5 Continuation of Board Goals Development Discussion

The Board Goals Development Discussion will be after the first of the year.

8. GRANTS/OTHER FINANCIALS

8.1 Budget Transfer Over \$5,000

Motion by: J. Morozowich

to approve the request for a budget transfer in the amount of \$21,031 for non-union merit pay.

Second by: C. McGlynn.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

9. CURRICULUM/INSTRUCTION/ASSESSMENT

9.1 Recovering the Learning

Dr. Hewes gave a presentation for Recovering the Learning that will cover the next two months. There have been fewer instructional days as well as interrupted days such as online interruptions, this instruction is new and different. Teachers are learning new ways and all students were not prepared for online learning. This plan will look to the core of the subjects.

10. POLICIES/REGULATIONS FOR A SECOND READING

- 10.1 4000.2T Employee Use of District's Computer Systems and Electronic Communications
- 10.2 5000.5T Use of Private Technology Devices by Students
- 10.3 5000.6T Use of the District's Computer Systems and Internet Safe
- 10.4 4113.4P Job Sharing
- 10.5 5141.22P Communicable/Infections Diseases
- 10.6 5145.11P Questioning and Apprehension
- 10.7 5145.6P Student Grievance Procedures
- 10.8 9132 Bylaw: Guidelines on Ad Hoc Committees

Motion by: S. Hickey

to approve the above policies.

Second by: J. Morozowich.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

11. NON-SUBSTANTIVE POLICIES

- 11.1 4111.2P Vacancies
 - 11.2 5145.12P Search and Seizure
- No action needed.

12. CONSENT AGENDA

- 12.1. Approval of November 10, 2020 BOE Meeting Minutes
- 12.2 Approval of November 10, 2020 BOE Special Meeting Minutes
- 12.3 Approval of December 1, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes
- 12.4 Addendum to Minutes of October 13, 2020 BOE Meeting

To add to the minutes of the October 13, 2020 meeting minutes the attached report:
Town of Colchester ad hoc Committee for Diversity and Inclusion: First meeting was 9/8/2020. The purpose of the meeting was to establish a Chair and Vice Chair. Purpose of the Committee is to develop a recommendation to the Board of Selectman regarding the purpose and make up of a Commission. Next meeting is 10/27/2020 at 6:00pm. Information is on the Town Website.

School Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee: School personnel, parent, student representation and one representative from the BOE are on the steering committee. This committee meets every two weeks. The Committee is in the process of developing a Mission Statement. Parent and Student focus groups were held in each school for the past two weeks. - with questions developed by the Committee. The Committee will review the feedback at the next meeting on 10/27. At today's meeting, the Committee met with representatives from the National Conference for Caring and Justice reviewing a possible partnership utilizing Title 4 funding. Will also review a proposal from GSP. submitted by Joanne Rose.

- 12.5 Bacon Academy Request for Disposal
- 12.6 CES Request for Disposal

Motion by: J. Morozowich

to approve the Consent Agenda with the amendment to Item 12.4.

Second by: J. Rose.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

13. REPORTS FROM BOARD COMMITTEES

13.1 Policy – C. McGlynn said the committee will meet Monday at 5:30 pm and will be working on completing the 5000 series.

13.2 Budget – J. Morozowich stated there have been no significant changes since last month. There is an approximate \$36,000 loss to the Cafeteria Fund. This is a country wide situation and will impact the budget. Summer meals program has been extended through June. Claims for them Cares Act are being reviewed. Special Education Access cost expenses are being reviewed.

13.3 Personnel – A. Domeika has met with Human Resources (HR) Director S. Ramsby for an update on vacant positions and new hires. There is a new HR system that is streamlining functions. Policies are being reviewed and will be sent to Policy Committee with recommendations. Goals for 2021 were discussed.

13.4. Ad-Hoc Curriculum – No report.

14. REPORTS FROM BOARD LIAISONS

14.1 Town Diversity and Inclusion Committee

J. Rose – “Diversity and Inclusion” ad hoc Committee: November 24,2020

The purpose of the Committee is to establish recommendations to be forwarded to the Colchester Board of Selectman regarding the establishment of a Town Commission. At the November 24, 2020 meeting; two individuals were invited to the meeting, Shannon Ramsby, Director of Human Resources, Town of Colchester and Chuck Maynard, President of the Colchester Business Association. Each were invited to meet with the Committee to discuss ways to improve “Diversity and Inclusion” in the Town of Colchester as related to their roles as a Town employee or in Mr. Maynard’s case, as the president of the CBA.

Shannon Ramsby spoke about his role as HR director; (as related to “Diversity and Inclusion”). Mr. Ramsby spoke about Training, Recruiting, Hiring and Conflict Resolution. Mr. Ramsby said that the Town of Colchester does not have an affirmative action plan. He was able to describe for the Committee what the establishment of an Affirmative Action Plan would entail. Mr. Ramsby also discussed Recruitment efforts, Work Harassment Policy, and “On-Board” Training. He spoke about an area of need; having a “core set” of trainings for Town Employees. His vision for the HR Department is to be completely compliant with State standards.

Chuck Maynard said that the CBA has not historically acted on a “proactive side” with regards to recruiting for a more diverse business environment. The CBA has acted more on the “backside”, supporting existing businesses in the Town. The CBA has been somewhat involved with the Economic Development Commission. The Committee questioned – how can we help facilitate that interaction?

Other areas of Committee discussion; what would be the recommendation for long term goals: Where do we want to be? Do we want to attract “targeted groups”? Do we want housing to be more inclusive? If people have “blue collar” level jobs, can they afford to rent in Colchester? Do we have businesses that would meet their needs? The Committee also spoke about “Sewer and Water” being an issue with business development.

Next steps; Invite the Sergeant from CT State Police to meet with the Committee. Invite Patty Watts, director of the Colchester Senior Center. Talk about recommendations for

the Commission; how many people to serve on the commission, alternates for the Commission. Next meeting is 12/22/2020. This is a public meeting, held virtually. Submitted by Joanne Rose BOE member to the Board of Ed 12/8/2020

Report to Board of Education regarding the CPS “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion” Committee
Two Committee meetings have occurred since the last BOE meeting in 11/10/ 2020.

At the 11/24/2020 Committee meeting; the committee members reviewed and updated the Committee’s Mission Statement and Goals; The Mission Statement was shared with Board Members at the 12/8/2020 BOE meeting. The Committee established three sub-committees: Training, Curriculum and Hiring/Recruitment. All three have Chairs appointed.

In addition, at the 11/24/2020 Committee meeting, it was decided to choose “National Conference for Community and Justice” as a “partnership agency”. The Chairs of the Committee will reach out to NCCJ to obtain specific proposals/costs regarding what they can offer and in what ways the Committee wants to partner. Once the proposals are received, the Committee will start to discuss/decide the focus/work of the Committee bearing in mind the Mission Statement and the Goals. Joanne Rose spoke to the Committee about the BOE Training funds and the BOE potentially receiving training from CREC.

At the 12/8/2020 Committee meeting; the proposal from NCCJ was reviewed. The contact person is Lisa Tatko. Options are for NCCJ to conduct a survey, review results of the survey, conduct trainings and a monthly consultation. The monthly consultation may include working with school curriculum and or developing an action plan and ongoing conversation. Lisa Tatko will be a guest at the Committee at the next meeting on 12/22. Subcommittees were discussed; the Committee chairs and leaders in each of the CPS schools will reach out to personnel for interest. Joanne Rose will reach out to BOE members. Subcommittees will be firmed up before the winter break with the first meetings taking place January 4 – 15. Superintendent Burt asked that BOE members who would like to join a sub-committee contact him directly.

Also discussed; how to share the work of the Committee with Parents and specifically individuals who participated in the “focus” groups. It was decided to share with “digital backpack” and emails to individuals who participated in focus groups. Joanne Rose shared that the BOE is in discussion with NCCJ regarding utilizing BOE training funds.

At the 12/8/2020 Board of Education meeting, Joanne Rose shared opportunities for training with NCCJ and costs. The specific proposal will be forwarded to the Board Chair, Vice Chair and Superintendent Burt.

Submitted by Joanne Rose, Board of Education member

S. Hickey – C3 has updated their mission statement and tag line. Youth First is sponsoring an Elf on the Shelf scavenger hunt with local businesses. The Youth Upright Group is having a social media campaign for mental health information. The Resolution Road Race for January 1st will be a virtual race. Youth Services is selling hand crafted ornaments.

A. Domeika left the meeting.

15. BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS and INFORMATION ITEMS

15.2 Next Meetings

MEETING	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Policy Committee	12/14/2020	5:30 PM	Virtual
Budget Committee	1/7/2021	9:00 AM	Virtual
Board of Education	1/12/2021	6:00 PM	Virtual
Personnel Committee	3/1/2021	5:30 PM	Virtual

15.3 Approved Committee Meeting Minutes

15.4 Monthly Budget Reports

15.5 Cafeteria Fund

15.6 Budget Transfers Under \$5,000

15.7 School Readiness Council 2020-21

15.8 Regulations (None at this time)

Information only, no action.

Item 18 was moved to this point in the agenda as the Executive Session is closed to the public.

18. PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were received.

16. EXECUTIVE SESSION

16.1 Request for Leave of Absence

Motion by: J. Morozowich

to go into Executive Session to discuss a request for Leave of Absence and invite Superintendent Burt and Human Resources Director Shannon Ramsby into the session.

Second by: S. Hickey

Vote: Unanimous to approve by those present. Time: 8:38 pm.

Chair Tomasi brought the Board out of the Executive Session at 8:44 pm.

See below for action.

17. POSSIBLE ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEM

Motion by: J. Morozowich

to approve the request for leave of absence.

Second by: S. Hickey.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

19. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Tomasi adjourned this meeting at 8:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jane Slade
Recording Secretary