



COLCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Colchester, CT

REGULAR BOARD MEETING - BOE BUDGET WORKSHOP

HYBRID

Tuesday, February 23, 2023

6:00 PM

The Commons (Black Box Theater)

William J. Johnston Middle School

360 Norwich Avenue

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Alexander Oliphant, Vice-Chair Mary Tomasi (via Zoom), Secretary Margo Gignac, Donna Antonacci, Rosemary Gignac, Michelle Millington, Christopher Rivers

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Superintendent Daniel P. Sullivan, III, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Charles E. Hewes, Principal of Jack Jackter Intermediate School Elise Butson, Principal of Bacon Academy Amy Begué, Principal of Colchester Elementary School Judy O'Meara, Principal of William J. Johnston Middle School Christopher Bennett, Bacon Academy Assistant Principal Melissa Cyr, Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Amy Emory, Assistant Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Elisa Fabiszak

OTHERS PRESENT: Business Director Rachel Linkkila, District School Resource Officer Corporal Craig Scheel

1. **MEETING OPENING**

1.1 Call to Order

Chair Alexander Oliphant called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM

1.2 Roll Call

Chair Oliphant conducted a roll call. Donna Antonacci and Christopher Rivers joined the meeting after the roll call was conducted.

1.3 Pledge of Allegiance

2. **BUDGET DISCUSSION**

2.1 Initial Questions and Discussion on the 2023-2024 School Year Budget

None.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

3.1 For Public Comments, Please See Bylaw on Meeting Conduct

Michael Dubreuil, 180 Woodbine Road. Mr. Dubreuil spoke of decreasing the Superintendent's recommendation budget. Mr. Dubreuil stated he would like to see a ten percent decrease. He also spoke to a possible error on the CES Roles and Responsibilities report.

Ashley LaParre, 74 McDonald Road. Ms. LaPare thanked the Board for their hard work. Ms. Lapare spoke to supporting teachers and not making a reduction in staff.

Barbara Johnson, School Librarian at Jack Jackter Intermediate School. Ms. Johnson spoke to the great things that school libraries are doing in the district. Ms. Johnson said that students will be impacted by any cuts to paraprofessional positions in the Library Media Centers.

Samantha Van Zilen. Ms. Van Zilen spoke to concerns about cutting the Board of Education budget. Ms. Van Zilen said that past reductions from the recommended budget and any further reductions this year would put the district in a dangerous place.

Margo Gignac read public comments submitted via email to the Board from Lynette Dimock, Kristin Putorti, Laurie Buyniski, and Erin Kaiser who all spoke in support of the recommended education budget but against staff reductions.

Taras Rudko, 71 Jurach Road. Mr. Rudko spoke to decrease enrollment but there have been increases to the Board of Education budget. Mr. Rudko also spoke in favor of remote learning for Colchester students.

Jeremy Ames, 41 Skinner Road. Mr. Ames spoke to remote learning and stated that remote learning would still require teachers at home to teach the students. Mr. Ames said it is important to the kids and staff that the education budget is supported.

4. *PRIORITY DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

4.1 *Discussion and Possible Action on the 2023-2024 School Year Budget

Discussion was had on the Superintendent's recommended budget for the 2023-2024 school year.

Superintendent Sullivan spoke to remote learning for high school students. He stated that although this is an option, the district is still required to have the same options in person and adding remote learning would actually increase the budget.

Superintendent Sullivan spoke to groundskeeping, snow removal and shared services with the town. Superintendent Sullivan said that he and the First Selectman met and they will maintain the status quo for the upcoming school year but ongoing conversations will occur in regard to services the Board of Education provides to the town and vice versa

Further discussion was had on the shared health insurance reserve fund, staffing, and sunseting grant funding. The Board discussed returning the Business Teacher and Spanish

Teacher at Bacon Academy, the Physical Education Teacher at William J. Johnston Middle School, the three library paraprofessionals and two custodian positions back into the budget.

Motion by: C.Rivers

To accept the 2023-2024 School Year budget in the amount of \$46,157,862 that represents a 9.83 percent increase from last year which means adding back the Business Teacher, Spanish Teacher at Bacon Academy, PE Teacher at the middle school, three library paraprofessionals and two custodians.

Seconded by: M. Gignac

Roll call: All in favor. None opposed. None abstaining.
Motion carried.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Oliphant adjourned the meeting at

Motion by: C.Rivers

To adjourn the meeting at 7:36 PM

Seconded by: M. Gignac

Roll call: All in favor.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather R. Petit

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Clerk