



COLCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Colchester, CT

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

6:00 PM

The Commons (Black Box Theater)

William J. Johnston Middle School

360 Norwich Avenue, Colchester

MINUTES

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Superintendent Daniel P. Sullivan, III, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Charles E. Hewes, Bacon Academy Principal Amy Begué, William J. Johnston Principal Christopher Bennett, Jack Jackter Intermediate School Assistant Principal Jennifer Reynolds, Colchester Elementary School Principal Judy O'Meara

OTHERS PRESENT: Business Director Rachel Linkkila, Director of Digital Learning and Innovation Darren Smith, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Clerk Heather Petit

1. MEETING OPENING

1.1 Call to Order

Vice-Chair Mary Tomasi called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM

1.2 Roll Call

Vice-Chair Mary Tomasi conducted a roll call of the Board.

1.3 Pledge of Allegiance

2. STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS REPORT

2.1 Student Board Member Report

Ryan Moores said he wanted to recognize Bacon Academy students for putting together end of year celebrations including yard games, an assembly and grad walk through other schools in the district. Mr. Moores said the Student Council voted on the upcoming Junior student board member for the Board of Education and it will be announced soon. Mr. Moores stated he knows that they will serve the student body and Board well.

3. *ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

3.1 New Agenda Items
None.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

4.1 For Public Comments, Please See Bylaw on Meeting Conduct
None.

5. REPORT FROM SUPERINTENDENT

5.1 Honoring Colchester Public School Retirees
Judy O'Meara, Colchester Elementary School Principal, recognized Donald Levine and Kathy Sheehan for their years of service to Colchester Public Schools, the students and community.
Jennifer Reynolds, Assistant Principal of Jack Jackter Intermediate School, recognized Kathleen Brandon and Alisa Barnett for their years of service to Colchester Public Schools, the students and community.
Christopher Bennett, Principal of William J. Johnston Middle School, recognized Janice Passacantando and Nancy Condon for their years of service to Colchester Public Schools, the students and community.
Amy Beguè, Principal of Bacon Academy, recognized Elizabeth Rusconi, Amy Hopkins, Kellie Cirillo, Pauline Hyla, Christopher Petersen, and Paula Tamborra-Berglund for their years of service to Colchester Public Schools, the students and community.

6. *CONSENT AGENDA

6.1 *Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes of May 23, 2023

6.2 *WJMS Material Removal Request - Outdated Library Books

Motion by: M.Gignac

To approve the consent agenda as presented.

Second: R.Gignac

Roll call: A.Oliphant, M.Tomasi, M.Gignac, R.Gignac, M.Millington, C.Rivers in favor;
D.Antonacci abstained

Vote: Motion carried

7. *PRIORITY DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

7.1 *Revised 2023-2024 School Year Calendar

Superintendent Sullivan discussed the recommended revision to the school year calendar which will allow staff adequate time to work with special education staff on services for children; to decision making on unit planning, interventions, etc. Dr. Hewes stated that in addition, there is an increase in required training from the State for educators by almost 125% and the updated calendar allows educators time to participate in and complete this training.

Donna Antonacci asked about Veterans' Day on November 10, 2023 and if there had been any discussion about observing Veterans' Day on that day during school instead of students having the day off from school. Dr. Hewes stated there had been conversation about this in years' past and recommended that the district meet with different groups in the community to gauge interest.

Motion by: M.Gignac

To approve the revised 2023-2024 school year calendar as presented.

Second: M.Tomasi

Roll call: All in favor.

Vote: Motion carried.

7.2 *AP Science Textbook Approval

Donna Antonacci stated that the College Physics book was vetted by the Curriculum Committee. Ms. Antonacci said that there are funds to buy the textbooks this year and this is the second version.

Motion by: M.Tomasi

To approve the textbook College Physics for AP Science

Second: M.Gignac

Roll call: All in favor

Vote: Motion carried

7.3 *Director of Instructional Technology Job Description

Superintendent Sullivan said with the decision to outsource the infrastructure side of technology with Apex, it now allows the Director of Instructional Technology to really focus on how to utilize technology in the classroom to best support teachers and students. Dr. Hewes said that the position will help enhance student skill in academics and career choice.

Motion by: M.Gignac

To approve the Director of Instructional Technology job description as presented

Second: D.Antonacci

Roll call: All in favor

Vote: Motion carried

7.4 *Assistant Superintendent Job Description

Superintendent Sullivan said he was asked often about the administrative transition from a Director of Teaching and Learning to an Assistant Superintendent role and he is concerned that there is a lack of understanding between the jobs, the importance of the role, and how it serves the district. Mr. Sullivan said that the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent are necessary complementary roles. The Assistant Superintendent role allows a partner in administrator evaluation, a role in Special Education and in building and District level oversight.

Mr. Rivers asked Superintendent Sullivan to explain how the position translates for better outcomes for students in the classroom as he feels there is a lack of understanding of what a superintendent and assistant superintendent do to facilitate outcomes for children in the classroom. Mr. Sullivan said there are a multitude of ways that the Assistant Superintendent is working in the District modifying, creating and enhancing curriculum, and working to make sure the District has the best outcomes for kids. Mr. Sullivan stated that the District needs an assistant superintendent who has the ability to evaluate administrators and hold them accountable if necessary and that the role also helps to make better teachers and administrators.

Dr. Hewes said that when he came into the District there was no expectation to work on learning to effectuate change. Dr. Hewes took it upon himself with the support of an unbelievable administrative team to work on school improvement. Dr. Hewes said that although the administrative team is outstanding, anyone working with administrators on school improvement needs to have authority if there ever was an issue. Dr. Hewes said that this position has the authority to effectuate that change.

Ms. Antonacci stated that the EEO paragraph on the bottom of page three needs to be on each job description. Dr. Hewes said the updated version of the descriptions will all include the new EEO language.

Motion by: R.Gignac

To approve the Assistant Superintendent job description as presented

Second: M.Gignac

Roll call: All in favor.

Vote: Motion carried.

7.5 *Solar Opportunity

Mr. Sullivan said the opportunity the district was asked to be the entity for the Silver Brook solar project which allows them to take advantage of the reduced rates that comes

with solar. In turn, the company will refund the district. Mr. Sullivan stated that if the Board chooses to move forward, they have the opportunity to either be paid out in a lump sum or through an annuity (smaller payments over 20 years). Ms. Tomasi said she would like to find out from the Board of Finance where the money would go; to the town or to the District. Mr. Rivers said that the annuity (20 year payment) would allow the District to do some real strategic planning and the annuity helps not to create a fiscal cliff. Michelle Millington and Ms. Antonacci agreed with Mr. Rivers.

Ms. Antonacci asked if the Board of Selectmen needed to approve as well to move forward. Mr. Sullivan said that the town can choose a lump sum refund and the Board can choose annuity (20 year payments) or vice versa; either would work.

Motion by: Christopher Rivers

To accept and approve the 20 year annuity approach and contract with Silver Brook Solar.

Second: M.Millington

Roll call: All in favor

Vote: Motion carried

7.6 *Tuition Fees

Superintendent Sullivan said that the Board made the decision previously to change the tuition rate for students coming from other districts to the per pupil expenditure (PPE). Mr. Sullivan stated that Norwich has made the decision to not maintain Bacon Academy as a secondary option due to many factors. Mr. Sullivan said that since that time, the administration has presented Bacon Academy as an option to Franklin and on August 1, will be presenting to Bozrah. Mr. Sullivan believes it is valuable to the Board to reevaluate the cost of tuition in regard to help bring in more students to the district as well as a benefit to staff who send their students to Colchester schools. Mr. Sullivan stated that staff choosing to send their children here is a high compliment and allowing them to do so helps retention. Mr. Sullivan said that at the Policy Committee this was discussed and \$12,900 seemed to be palpable.

Mr. Rivers asked that we set the tuition rate every year in the fall prior to budget season. Superintendent Sullivan said the month the Board did that this past year in November is a good time to look at that.

Motion by: M.Tomasi

To set the tuition rate for the 2023-2024 school year as \$12,900.

Second: D.Antonacci

Roll call: All in favor.

Vote: Motion carried

7.7 *Budget Transfers Over \$5,000

Mr. Rivers discussed the budget transfers over \$5,000 and the reasons and rationale are all included in the request.

Motion by: C.Rivers

To approve the budget transfers over \$5,000 as presented

Second: M.Gignac

Roll call: All in favor

Vote: Motion carried

7.8 Legal Cost and Options

Superintendent Sullivan stated that it was a request from some Board members to add legal cost to the agenda for discussion. Mr. Rivers stated that the Board recently received a renewal notice from Shipman & Goodwin with increased rates. Mr. Rivers said that as fiscally responsible Board members, it is important to see what the options are. Ms. Antonacci said it is good to look elsewhere as well because Shipman & Goodwin is in conflict with the town. Ms. Millington said this would be a responsible way to save without affecting students directly. Mr. Rivers said Attorney Anne Littlefield has been great and is in no way due to her services.

Mr. Sullivan confirmed that the Board would like him to let Attorney Littlefield know about the discussion tonight and do his due diligence to explore what other legal options are out there; to which the Board agreed. Mr. Sullivan said he will plan to report back to the Board in August.

8. POLICIES – FIRST READ

8.1 9130 Committees

8.2 9131 Standing Committees

8.3 9132 Guidelines of Ad Hoc Committees

8.4 9325.1 Quorum

8.5 9325.2 Order of Business

8.6 9325.3 Parliamentary Procedure

Ms. Antonacci reviewed the potential update to Bylaw 9130 Committees, and the proposed removal of 9131 and 9132 as they would be included in 9130. In addition, Ms. Antonacci proposed that Bylaws 9325.1, 9325.2, and 9325.3 be removed as they have been included in 9321 Time, Place and Notice of Meetings.

9. *POLICIES - SECOND READ

9.1 *3542.4 Meal Charging

9.2 *9321 Time, Place and Notice of Meetings

Ms. Antonacci spoke to the legal update required in 3542.4 Meal Charging and the update to 9321 Time, Place and Notice of Meetings.

Motion by: M.Tomasi

To approve the revisions to policies 3542.4 and 9321

Second: M.Gignac

Roll call: All in favor

Vote: Motion carried

10. REPORTS FROM BOARD LIAISONS / COMMITTEES

10.1 Reports from Board Liaisons

- Board of Selectmen: Donna Antonacci
Ms. Antonacci said they interviewed candidates for the water and sewer commission. Ms. Antonacci stated that the Board of Selectmen discussed the creation of a public safety subcommittee; however, Mr. LaChappelle did not agree with the way the bylaws were worded as they gave the superintendent and other non-elected town staff the ability to speak as part of the committee.
- Board of Finance: Christopher Rivers
Mr. Rivers encouraged everyone to vote in the referendum.
- P&R Commission: Margo Gignac
None.
- PTO Collaborative: Margo Gignac
None.
- C3 Collaborative: Rosemary Gignac
None.
- Commission on Aging: Mary Tomasi
Ms. Tomasi said there would a forum on aging in place at 4pm on 6/14/23.
- Youth & Social Services: Michelle Millington
None.

10.2 Reports from Board Committees

- Budget Finance Committee
Nothing further to report.

- Policy Committee
Nothing further to report.
- Curriculum Committee
None.
- Facilities Committee
Mr. Rivers asked for reformatting of technology plan and capital plan which the administration has done. The committee will walk the buildings and grounds with the professionals in charge of the buildings and help the committee get a true state of facilities and make a three year plan. Ms. Gignac said that to make the Central Office more efficient and practical for training there will be a slight redesign of office space to accommodate a conference room.

11. BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION ITEMS

11.1 Next Meetings

- Budget Finance Committee: Wednesday, July 12, 2023
- Policy Committee Meeting: Tuesday, July 13, 2023
- Policy Committee Meeting: Thursday, July 18, 2023
- BOE Regular Meeting: Tuesday, August 22, 2023
- Curriculum Committee Meeting: Monday, October 16, 2023

11.2 Personnel Report

Superintendent Sullivan stated that in the packet are the new retirements/resignations as well as new hires as this is a busy time for school districts

11.3 Enrollment Report

The District currently has 2253 students enrolled.

11.4 Notices of Retirement/Resignation

Jennifer Major
Christine Hupfer
Jennifer Merkent
Julie Pelland
Nancy O'Neil
Debra Stevenson
Karla Staubach
Maddie Cutler
Knikka Wetzel
Megan Farrington

11.5 Budget Transfers Under \$5,000

Mr. Rivers said these transfers were discussed in the Budget Finance Committee and is for informational purposes for the full board.

11.6 Donation to Bacon Academy Robotics Team of \$500 from Rand-Whitney

11.7 Donation to BA Life Skills Program of \$1,000 from Aline and Robert Dubiel

11.8 Donation of \$18,495.06 from Ahold Delhaize (Stop & Shop)

Mr. Rivers asked that we help send information out to families in regard to signing up for the Stop & Shop program.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT

12.1 For Public Comments, Please See Bylaw on Meeting Conduct
None.

13. *EXECUTIVE SESSION

13.1 *Discussion and Possible Action on Non-Union Salaries for 2023-2024
(discussion proposed for executive session)

Motion by: M.Tomasi

To go into executive session at 7:31 PM inviting Superintendent Daniel Sullivan for the purpose of discussing non-union salaries for 2023-2024.

Second: M.Gignac

Roll call: All in favor

Vote: Motion carried

Returned to public session at 8:58 PM

Motion by: M.Gignac

To approve the Business Director contract as discussed.

Second: M.Tomasi

Roll call: All in favor

Vote: Motion carried.

Motion by: M.Gignac

To approve the Assistant Superintendent Contract as discussed.

Second: R.Gignac

Roll call: All in favor

Vote: Motion carried.

Motion by: M.Gignac

To authorize the superintendent to finalize non-union contracts for the 2023-2024 school year.

Second: R.Gignac

Roll call: All in favor

Vote: Motion carried

14. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by: M.Gignac

To adjourn the meeting at 9:05 PM

Second: C. Rivers

Roll call: All in favor

Vote: Unanimous