

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING
HELD IN TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON APRIL 22, 2021 AT 7:30 PM**

Board Members Present: Anthony Perugini-Chair; Adam Grippo-Vice Chair; Kathryn Hallen-Secretary; Faith Ham, Anne Harrigan, Andrew Martelli, Timothy White

Board Members Absent: None

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer

Public access made available through live streaming the Cheshire Public School's YouTube Channel at www.youtube.com/cheshirepublicschools . Public comments were accepted at CPSCovid19@cheshire.k12.ct.us .
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1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:36 P.M.

- A. Roll for Quorum. The roll was called and a quorum determined.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.
Mr. Perugini led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
- C. Student Representatives. Lucy Helene and Josh Goldstein, student representatives for the 2020/2021 school year, reported on recent events at Cheshire High School. They reported that spring sports is underway with teams playing a full schedule. There will be a college signing day in May, and CIAC chose Cheshire High School as a location to film athletic awards. In addition they reported on Peer Health Leadership conferences, a virtual book talk, and informed the Board that the spring musical, Little Women, is complete. Mr. Perugini said it was really great to see the reps in-person.

2. AUDIENCE

Dr. Solan reported that an email was sent from Mr. John Bestor to all Board Members, regarding student reading via technology. In the email, Mr. Bestor encouraged the Board to read a new book by Dr. Naomi Baron entitled *How We Read Now*, which provides an overview of current research findings relative to reading hard copy versus digital texts versus audio and video presentations of informational materials. A copy of the email is on file.

3. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A. CURRICULUM

I. Report on Meeting Held April 19, 2021.

Ms. Ham reported that, at the meeting, the Committee heard presentations from the Cheshire Curriculum Council (CCC). The first presentation was regarding the Academically Gifted Program (AGP). Ms. Lori Holm, Academically Gifted Program teacher, gave an executive summary of the

AGP presentation to the CCC on March 17, 2021. In addition, Mr. Tim Galvin (CHS Social Studies Department Chair), Ms. Kristen Giuliano (Dodd Social Studies Division Leader), Ms. Jeanne Monti (Norton RAM), and Mr. Kevin Hanlon (K-8 Curriculum Coordinator) gave an executive summary of the Social Studies presentation to the CCC on April 6, 2021. The Committee heard an update on professional development from Mr. Hanlon. Ms. Silano provided an overview of plans for a summer transition program for our current remote learners. The program is planned for two weeks in mid-August and designed to help students, who have been remote since March of 2020, to transition back into the buildings for the beginning of the 2021-22 school year. Mr. Ham noted that the Committee also discussed the upcoming Dodd Middle School field trip to Washington, DC on May 26-28, 2021. Mike Woods, Principal of Dodd Middle School, gave an overview of the planned trip. The itinerary is similar to previous years and will include a host of safety precautions due to COVID-19.

Mr. White said, as a follow up to a question he had a few months ago, he did not know that George Washington was not included in the early elementary curriculum. Dr. Solan said that the topic of George Washington is not a social studies standard, but is important in our history. He said we have many books that feature many famous and prominent people who are included, not only in Social Studies curriculum, but also our English curriculum. Ms. Silano added that there are biographical books in the first grade classrooms and George Washington is included in those books as well as other books in the other grades.

B. FINANCE

I. Report on Meeting Held April 22, 2021

Mr. Grippo reported that the Finance Committee met this evening prior to this meeting. At the meeting, Dr. Solan gave a presentation on grant funding, reviewing the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) I and II Grants as well as the American Rescue Plan Grant. Due to time constraints, the Committee agreed to discuss the second agenda item, the Blum Shapiro quote for the auditing of school activity accounts, during this business meeting. Over a million dollars of cash and cash equivalents pass through these accounts each year. He said they asked the Town to get a quote for an all-inclusive internal operational review of the student activity accounts. At the time, the quote was \$20,000 and the Finance Committee recommended to the full Board to have the audit done. Since that time, the quote has been reduced to \$12,000. Mr. Grippo said it was never officially voted on by the Board. Mr. Grippo asked if we would pay that or if the Town would pay it. Mr. Masciana said he has not spoken to the Town about paying for the audit, but the

Board pays for their prorated portion of audits. When Blum Shapiro won the bid for the Town and School Audit, they quoted the \$12,000 as a “not to exceed” amount for an operational review/audit of student accounts. He said they can allocate \$12,000 for the additional service. If the Board wants to move forward, we should encumber this amount and pay for it.

Mr. Perugini noted there is no action listed on the agenda for this item and the next business meeting is in May. He said it would be good to have this review done before the Policy Committee reviews the policies regarding student accounts. Because this quote from Blum Shapiro is from July, he asked Mr. Masciana to verify the amount is still correct.

II. Finance Report.

Mr. Masciana reported that they have expended and encumbered \$67,020,544, or 89.8% of our \$74,593,926 operating budget for 2020-21. He said they are releasing 80% of non-payroll accounts. He feels very confident that they will meet this year’s operating budget. The only surprise they had this year were COVID related expenses.

Ms. Ham asked if they will keep the mitigation protocols in place now that the CDC has confirmed that COVID does not spread on surfaces. Mr. Masciana said they will continue cleaning practices that are in place for the remainder of this year. For next year, in the COVID budget, the expenses will be covered by the grants we will be receiving. Because we don’t know what will happen next year, for the fall we built-in intraday cleaning in the schools and tent rentals, but not for the spring. If those items are not needed, the funds can be used for expenses such as learning loss.

III. Medical Benefits Update.

Mr. Masciana reported that claims for the month of March were \$1,011,502. We did receive stop loss reimbursements of \$188,124 in March and in addition, we received prescription rebates in the amount of \$391,241. The Medical Trust Fund balance as of March 31, 2021 is \$1,591,365, 1.53 claim months of reserve.

C. PERSONNEL

I. Report on Meeting Held April 7, 2021.

Mr. White, Chair of the Personnel Committee, reported that the Committee met in Executive Session on April 7, 2021 to discuss the Superintendent’s annual review and succession planning.

II. Non-Renewal of Interim Contract Teachers

Dr. Solan explained that tonight's motion to non-renew Interim Contract Teachers in the Cheshire school district is a procedural occurrence and is not in any way a reflection on the teachers. Because of the way the law is written, and to assure that we comply with State Statute 10-151, it is incumbent on the Board of Education, prior to May 1st, to assure that there will be no renewal of their contracts by making the motion to formally notify these people their contract will terminate at the end of this year.

MOTION by Mr. White, seconded by Ms. Harrigan.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education, pursuant to C.G.S. 10-151, authorizes the Superintendent to non-renew the teacher contracts of all certified, professional employees, serving under an interim contract subject to C.G.S. 10-151 at the end of the 2020-2021 school year.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

III. Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Teachers

Dr. Solan said he is recommending a motion for the non-renewal of teachers in their first or second year of service who are non-tenured. Given there is much uncertainty going forward in terms of the budget, it is advisable to take this action to protect the Board of Education should it need to make a reduction in staff as a result of the financial situation next year. Pursuant to Section 10-151 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Board of Education may, prior to May 1st, authorize the Superintendent not to renew the contracts of certain non-tenured teachers.

MOTION by Mr. White, seconded by Ms. Harrigan.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education, pursuant to C.G.S. 10-151, authorize the Superintendent to non-renew the teacher contracts of all non-tenured, certified, professional employees that are in the first and second years under contract for the Cheshire Public Schools subject to C.G.S. 10-151 at the end of the 2020-2021 school year, and further to authorize the Superintendent to communicate written notice of such non-renewal to the affected teachers.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

D. POLICY

I. Report on Meeting Held April 7, 2021.

Mr. Grippo, Policy Committee Chair, reported that at the April 7, 2021 meeting the Committee reviewed policies for a first and second reading. In addition, the Committee discussed auditing the student activity accounts and updating the policies surrounding those accounts.

II. First Reading of Policies.

After a review by the Policy Committee, Mr. Grippo gave a first reading of Policy 6159 Instruction – Individualized Education Program/Special Education Program. The revision updates the policy per a State of Connecticut court decision, that all students with disabilities who have not yet turned 22 years of age, and who have not received a regular high school diploma, remain eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) up until their 22nd birthday.

III. Second Reading of Policies.

There being no changes since the first reading, Mr. Grippo gave a second reading to Policies 3170 Business – Budget Implementation, 3300 Business – Expenditures, Expending Authority, Purchasing Guides, 3326 Business – Paying for Goods and Services, 3326.1 Business – Payroll Procedures and Authorized Signatures, 3541.45 Business – Student Transportation Insurance.

E. SCHOOL MODERNIZATION COMMITTEE

Mr. Martelli reported that the last time the Committee met was March 17th. At that time, the Committee narrowed their recommendations to two options. There was a joint meeting of the Board, Town Council, and School Modernization Committee on April 4th where the options were presented. They will be setting a Board of Education Planning Committee of the Whole meeting next week to determine the next steps. Mr. Perugini said they need to discuss land options. He noted that the referendum is in November, so they will need to have everything ready in August. Mr. White commented that he hopes that Chapman is looked at separately.

F. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES

None.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Ms. Harrigan, seconded by Ms. Ham.

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the minutes from the meeting held on March 18, 2021.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

5. **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

6. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Solan reported there have been two resignations and two retirements to date. He doesn't anticipate many more retirements this year because there was an incentive offered last year of which many teachers took advantage. He reported that Madeleine Diker, Director of Food Services, is retiring after 18 years. Mr. Masciana said she has done an outstanding job, including the grab-and-go plan during this pandemic. She did an excellent job with all of the challenges of the pandemic. He said we have hired Erica Biagetti to replace Madeleine after a thorough interview process. Erica comes to Cheshire after working in Milford, and most recently, Guilford Public Schools. She has a B.A. in Food Services from Johnson and Wales. Erica is a strong believer in the importance of school nutrition for students and is currently serving as the President of the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut.

Dr. Solan reported that the Department of Public Health, through a program called Every Smile Counts. The program will send hygienists to visit Highland School next year and will provide exams to Kindergarten and Grade 3 students. Schools are selected randomly throughout the State to examine the oral health status of students.

The Superintendent provided a quick COVID overview. Currently, there has been a significant uptick in positive students over April break due to social gatherings. As of today, there are 17 positive students and 61 students in quarantine. There are very few cases across the rest of the district. As of today, there are 740 remote students. Principals have been contacting families encouraging students to return to in-person learning. Some students at the high school have recently chosen to switch to remote learning to lessen their exposure so they are not exposed and quarantined, which would prohibit them from taking the in person AP exam. Dr. Solan gave an update of the Dodd Washington DC trip and reviewed steps being taken for the safety of the students. Regarding vaccinations, over 500 Cheshire Public Schools staff were vaccinated. There is a student vaccination option for families of students age 16 and older on Wednesday, April 28th. The high school has been systematically adding students. All families who wish to attend 4 days per week may do so effective Monday. Wednesdays will continue to be remote learning days for all students.

Dr. Solan noted that he distributed a book called "The Strategy Playbook for Educational Leaders" to all Board Members tonight. He said this year they had planned on revamping the Strategic Plan before the pandemic hit. He hopes to begin discussions with the Board this summer about long-term planning for our district.

The Superintendent also reported that:

- The Office of Civil Rights has announced a comprehensive review of “New” Title IX regulations.
- CHS Football, Wrestling and Cheerleading, along with central office staff, were part of a group of Cheshire and Southington communities who raised \$92,000 for YMCA Camp Sloper and other summer camps as part of the Polar Plunge in February.
- The CHS Math Team had its highest finish ever in the State math meet. Their 5th place performance qualified them for the New England Championships.
- The Cheshire High School Marching Band has been nominated to participate in the 2022 National Memorial Day Parade.
- There will be in-person proms and graduation this year, but they are still working out the details.

Audience via CPSCOVID19@cheshire.k12.ct.us

None.

7. OLD BUSINESS

None.

8. NEW BUSINESS

- **Chairperson’s Update.**

Mr. Perugini announced upcoming Board meetings as well as upcoming CABA webinars that Board members can attend.

9. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Ms. Harrigan and seconded by Mr. Grippo, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Perugini, Board Chair

Attest:

Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Filed at the Town Clerk’s Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: May 7, 2021.