

Chariho School Committee Meeting
Regular Session Minutes – October 10, 2023

Committee Members Attendance: Chair Catherine Giusti, Vice Chair Karen Reynolds, Donna Chambers, Tyler Champlin (arrived at 7:00 PM), Kathryn Colasante, Polly Hopkins, Craig Louzon, Linda Lyall, Andrew McQuaide, Larry Phelps, Patricia Pouliot and Jessica Purcell.

Administrators and Others Attendance: Superintendent Gina Picard, Assistant Superintendent Michael Comella, Director of Administration and Finance Ned Draper, Systems Administrator Eric O'Brien and School Committee Clerk Donna Sieczkiewicz.

I. Meeting Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Silent Meditation

Chair Catherine Giusti called the meeting of the Chariho School Committee, held in the Chariho High School Library, to order at 6:30 PM. She asked all to please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

II. Motion/Vote to go into Executive Session

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Craig Louzon and it was

VOTED: That the School Committee go into executive session and close the meeting to the public under the authority of R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(2) for the purpose of discussion pertaining to litigation/legal update (1. The Robinson Green Beretta Corporation v. Chariho Regional School District, through its Chair, Linda Lyall – C.A. No. PC-2021-06474); under the authority of R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(3) for the purpose of discussion regarding the matter of security including but not limited to the deployment of security personnel or devices (1. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of September 26, 2023 - Memorandum of Understanding Between the Chariho Regional School District and the Charlestown Police Department Pertaining to the School Resource Officer Program (SRO Body Cameras); and under the authority of R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(8) for the purpose of reviewing and/or approving matters which relate to the privacy of students and their records (1. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of September 26, 2023 – Approval of Home Instruction Requests and 2. Approval of Home Instruction Requests); any persons to be discussed have been so notified. In favor: Unanimous (Champlin was not in attendance for the vote).

III. Reconvene Open Session/Pledge of Allegiance/Silent Meditation

Chair Giusti reconvened the meeting at 7:04 PM and asked all to please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

IV. Closing/Sealing of Executive Session Minutes

1. Superintendent Picard recommended that minutes pertaining to litigation/legal update (The Robinson Green Beretta Corporation v Chariho Regional School District, through its Chair, Linda Lyall – C.A. No. PC-2021-06474) remain sealed.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was

VOTED: That minutes pertaining to litigation/legal update (The Robinson Green Beretta Corporation v Chariho Regional School District, through its Chair, Linda Lyall – C.A. No. PC-2021-06474) remain sealed. In favor: Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds. Abstained: Champlin. The motion carried by a vote of 11 in favor with 1 abstention.

2. Superintendent Picard recommended that minutes pertaining to the privacy of students and their records (Approval of Home Instruction Requests) remain sealed.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was

VOTED: That minutes pertaining to the privacy of students and their records (Approval of Home Instruction Requests) remain sealed. In favor: Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds. Abstained: Champlin. The motion carried by a vote of 11 in favor with 1 abstention.

V. Disclosure of Executive Session Votes

Vice Chair Reynolds reported there were eight votes taken in executive session. The first vote, to table legal update, passed unanimously with 10 votes with Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds voting in favor.

The second vote, approval of executive session minutes of September 26, 2023 – Memorandum of Understanding with the Charlestown Police Department pertaining to SRO Body Cameras, was unanimous with 10 votes with Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds voting in favor.

The next vote, approval of executive session minutes of September 26, 2023 – Approval of Home Instruction Requests, passed unanimously with 10 votes with Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds voting in favor.

The next vote, approval of Home Instruction Requests, was unanimous with Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds voting in favor.

The next vote, to recess executive session, was unanimous with 11 votes with Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds voting in favor.

The next vote, concerning The Robinson Green Beretta Corporation, passed unanimously with 11 votes with Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds voting in favor.

The next vote, regarding an RGB subcommittee, passed unanimously with 11 votes with Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds voting in favor.

The last vote, to return to regular session, was unanimous with 11 votes with Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds voting in favor.

VI. Recognition – The following were congratulated:

1. October is National Principals' Month – a tribute to the pivotal role principals/directors play in leading our schools and reshaping the future of our students. Our sincere thanks and appreciation to High School Principal Andrea Spas, High School Assistant Principal Jean Bradanini, CTC Director Gerry Auth, CALA Director Brian Tetreault, Middle School Principal Greg Zenion, Middle School Assistant Principal Mary Beth Florenz, Charlestown School Principal Jen Poore, Richmond School Principal Sharon Martin, Ashaway School Principal Jeff Scanapieco and Hope Valley School Principal Joe Gencarelli.

2. High School Senior Chaia Elwell set a new program mark for career assists in Field Hockey at 27 breaking the mark of 26 previously set in 2015.

VII. Public Forum

Louise Dinsmore from Richmond asked the School Committee if they would consider enacting a change in policy regarding the multiple notifications that Chariho parents, school stakeholders, teachers, staff, former parents and school alum receive prior to a school budget vote. In 2022, she asked how many notifications these voters and stakeholders received reminding them that a budget vote was coming up. Ms. Picard was kind enough to document those forms of communications received. Stakeholders received six notifications via newsletters, text messages, robo calls and emails all to inform folks that the budget vote was coming up. She doesn't know about others but she doesn't think people need six reminders for any topic never mind a school budget vote. She would characterize these notifications as excessive and a potential abuse of personal data. Moreover, if taxpayers are paying for robo calls and text messages to be sent by the school department, she would say that this is a potential misuse of taxpayers' money. She would suggest that perhaps two reminders is sufficient, one being a week before the school budget vote and the other the day before. She would ask the Policy Subcommittee to meet and evaluate this practice, get a clear understanding as to how much this is costing to notify

people, and develop a formal policy that steers clear of the excessive use of personal data. All taxpayers and voters, regardless of whether or not they have a child in the District or work for the District, should receive an equal number of such reminders. Knowing that this isn't possible, it is time to take steps to level this playing field. She would kindly request that, in the future, may she be notified by one of the Richmond School Committee Members when such a meeting takes place to discuss this topic. Thank you for your consideration and have a great night.

VIII. Business

A. Field Trip(s) – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the following contingent upon compliance with policy:

1. Request of Cosmetology Teacher Gina Morgan for 22 students and 5 chaperones to travel to the Javits Convention Center, New York City, NY on March 4 (Professional Day) or March 5, 2024 (Student Day). They would prefer going on March 4th but that will be up to Javits to confirm the date.

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Craig Louzon and it was

VOTED: To approve the request of Cosmetology Teacher Gina Morgan for 22 students and 5 chaperones to travel to the Javits Convention Center, New York City, NY on March 4 (Professional Day) or March 5, 2024 (Student Day). In favor: Unanimous.

B. Memorandum of Agreement with RIDE – Distribution of Categorical Funding Pursuant to R.I.G.L. 16-7.2-6 – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and Chariho Regional School District regarding distribution of Categorical funding pursuant to R.I.G.L. 16-7.2-6. Craig made a motion, which was seconded by Andrew, to approve the Superintendent's recommendation. Larry asked if there was any cost to taxpayers to which Gina explained that there is a federal funding formula that RIDE uses every year. Kathryn noted that the MOA states that each recipient is required to submit an annual expenditure report detailing how funding was invested and waiver requests could be submitted to RIDE. Why would anyone want to request a waiver? Ned replied that he is not aware of any reason why anyone would request a waiver. RIDE uses AcceleGrants and we post everything there. Kathryn commented that it is not the District's practice to request a waiver to which Ned responded that it is not our practice and the only reason he could think of why a waiver would be requested is COVID. Pat asked who determines the breakdown. Gina explained that RIDE has a formula we have to follow with a breakdown by program. Louise stated that it looks like the District will receive \$245,920; is that more or less than last year? Gina replied that it is just about the same.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was

VOTED: To approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and Chariho Regional School District regarding distribution of Categorical funding pursuant to R.I.G.L. 16-7.2-6. In favor: Unanimous.

C. Facility Use Policy as it Relates to Outside Organizations During the Custodial Shortage – Superintendent Picard noted that the District's Use of School Facilities Policy which requires a custodian be present for both safety and liability concerns, but also due to prior litigation, was included in the packet. As was done with the Towns at the last meeting, outside organizations would like to work with the District to develop an option to continue offering their programs to community youth. In order to implement these plans, the School Committee will need to authorize outside organizations to assume the liability of Section II-E. Section II-D will still apply as the District must retain control of building access at all times to ensure routine operations continue and that access may be rescinded at any time. Andrew made a motion, which was seconded by Polly, to authorize outside organizations to assume the liability of Section II-E of the District's Use of School Facilities Policy. Karen wanted to insure that part of the Facility Use requirement is that the organization must submit an insurance binder to which Gina replied "yes". Jessica questioned if there was an end date to which Andrew noted that he would include this in his motion. Ned commented that he is meeting with the Towns tomorrow to begin planning. He heard at the last meeting about volunteers and sub custodians and he feels that sub custodians would get more traction because they would be trained and paid by the District. He is going to mention this to the Towns tomorrow and once they get a structure with the Towns, he will reach out

to volunteer groups. Kathryn asked why religious groups were singled out in section I-F. Gina replied it is for clarification as some districts have tried to exclude things like the Good News Club. It was also noted that St. Mary's Church, prior to building their own community center, rented the Middle School auditorium for its religious education program.

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Polly Hopkins and it was VOTED: To authorize outside organizations to assume the liability of Section II-E of the District's Use of School Facilities Policy through the end of this school year. In favor: Unanimous.

D. ESSER III Amendment – Superintendent Picard stated that copies of the ESSER III original Budget and the Budget Amendment were included in the packet. She recommended approval of the ESSER III Amendment. Andrew made a motion, seconded by Tyler, to approve the ESSER III Amendment. Polly commented that it seems to be that kids lost a lot of learning skills with COVID and she heard that an elementary school is not offering extra help. Gina stated that she will discuss Polly's concern with her as the elementary schools are offering extra help. Polly then noted that the volunteer therapy dogs went down from \$20,000 to \$10,000. She was concerned with the cost of \$2,000 per visit. The Superintendent explained that the \$10,000 fee is not a per visit fee. We will have a therapy dog onsite as this was requested by the students. This amount is for the training of the dog (\$7,000) and related services. The litter was born a few weeks ago and a female will be selected. If all goes well, the selection is scheduled for the 20th. One of our administrators will be the trainer. Kathryn wondered why, if the District was already getting free volunteer visits with therapy dogs, would we purchase a dog. Gina explained that this will provide more consistency as the dog will be onsite for all schools. The volunteer therapy dogs only came when the owner was available to visit. Donna added that this is grant-funded so it is not out of their operating budget. Gina stated the requirements of the trainer would be 18 months of training and they must remain in District for at least two years after. Linda Lyall noted that other districts are already doing this. She requested that the changes from the original budget to the amended budget be highlighted. The Superintendent explained that the two documents are not the same so they could not be used for comparison. They had to pull information off a dashboard.

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Tyler Champlin and it was VOTED: To approve the ESSER III Amendment. In favor: Unanimous.

E. Commitment of FY23 Funds – Superintendent Picard recommended the Committee commit the funds effective June 30, 2023 as noted in the memo from Ned Draper dated September 22, 2023. Andrew made a motion, which was seconded by Linda, to commit the funds effective June 20, 2023 as noted in the memo from Ned Draper dated September 22, 2023. Tyler stated that he hates this memo. He saw it in the Budget Subcommittee meeting and it doesn't read well. The only funds they are asking be committed are the top four. The others are what has already been committed in the past (minus the last one). He requested that Ned make the memo clearer going forward. Larry asked why the half a million dollars didn't come out of the FY24 budget. Ned, using as an example DCYF potential litigation and tuition discrepancy, stated that these bullets are associated with the operating budget. We paid DCYF what we thought we owed them. We paid the general education rate; they charged us the special education rate. Newport fought this and won but DCYF is appealing it. We could be on the hook for the additional fees. If we get a bill, it won't come out of the FY24 budget. This is why we had money left in the FY23 budget. Kathryn questioned if they don't have to use this money, could they make a motion to return the funds to the general budget? Ned noted this was an excellent question. After the audit is complete, 2-4% is what we need to keep per policy. We will put whatever is left over into a reserve. Gina added that during the audit, the auditors will explain why the District needs to keep between 2-4%. Kathryn clarified – so what she is asking for the District already has a process in place to which Ned replied "yes". Louise asked if this was the sheet that was presented during the Budget Subcommittee Meeting to which it was noted it is. Louise commented, just for the record, the leftover balance from a level-funded budget was \$1.6 million is that right Ned? Ned responded that he thinks the balance will actually come out closer to \$2.6 million over but that is because of adjustments that go through the audit. Louise, just to reiterate, again mentioned this is on a level-funded budget. Jessica stated that is also a balance we are required to have. That is something we have to have. It is not money that is leftover, is it? Ned replied, to answer that question, \$1.2 million is the basement – the

School Committee requirement. We are supposed to have roughly \$1.2 million remaining when you complete the year. Andrew did not want to go down this rabbit hole too much but to Louise's wanting to usurp that this was a level-funded budget is really not doing a service to anyone when we contextualize what that balance is. That is what we talked about with the Budget Subcommittee and he thinks they need to add this as a future agenda item so they aren't flippant to say that was a level-funded budget. There is rationale as to why they saw the savings they saw. They have been dealing with some of those this evening – vacancies we have had. Particular are vacancies in maintenance. Those are all savings. We realize savings by all of those vacancies because, yes, a level-funded budget we had anticipated for. Tyler called for a point of order and cautioned all that they were straying from the agenda item. It was noted that they were getting off topic so Chair Giusti called for the vote.

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Linda Lyall and it was

VOTED: To commit the funds effective June 20, 2023 as noted in the memo from Ned Draper dated September 22, 2023. In favor: Unanimous.

F. Approval of Superintendent's Goals – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of her goals. There are three of them. She would be happy to answer any questions. Jessica noted that she doesn't really have a question, but she would like for Gina to explain a little more about her Student Education Advisory Panel. Gina noted that she meets monthly with students in grades 4-12; there are about 30 students involved who are nominated or selected by her. The purpose is to elevate their voice. They share what is going well in their schools and one thing that came out of their discussions last year was the need for a therapy dog. This year they would like to focus on anti-bullying prevention – spreading kindness. The group shares ideas and is an opportunity for them to provide updates. She will shout-out the panel with parent permission. They all participated in Strategic Planning Meetings and are on School Improvement Teams. Donna commented that this is a wonderful process and she should keep this up. This is democracy. Kathryn noted that, in the spirit of democracy, what if students elected who they wanted. Gina replied that they do elect who they want for student councils or class officers but this is a specific purpose. Kathryn stated she would rather see them elected by their peers. Gina responded that there is a criteria that must be met and as a team, administrators select who best fits the criteria. It is not a popularity contest; they have a very specific role. Kathryn personally felt that students should be selected by their peers. Andrew appreciated the general buckets responded to with these goals but it is evident there remains a critical need for our facilities to be a goal. He recognizes that it is not the Superintendent and her alone but she does help navigate this and he would like to see a goal that is more specific to this; mainly at the elementary level. He would be comfortable with wherever that lands and the language as she is already doing that work. Gina replied that these goals are to highlight priorities and are not inclusive of all she does. Andrew noted that he could make a motion to which Gina responded that she understands what Andrew is saying. Jessica suggested that they might consider adding to Goal 3 - #1 – Continue to publicize, grow, and support initiatives that enhance opportunities for families to access opportunities in school and the community to support their children's needs and the needs of the schools in our District. Gina agreed with Jessica that this would be the appropriate place to add Andrew's suggestion. The Committee was unanimously in favor of the Superintendent's goals as revised.

G. Educators' Use of Personal Funds for Classroom Expenses – This item was on the agenda at the request of Andrew McQuaide. Andrew stated that others have heard him talk about this during the budget cycle. We know we have educators who purchase core supplies on their own and ask families to purchase core supplied. He suggested the Budget Subcommittee could do the initial gathering of information and work with the Superintendent to establish an annual survey, beginning this year, of the fiscal impact of personal and parent funds being used to provide core supplies. He wanted to know the direction the Committee may want to go as they do not have a line of sight as to the total. The Policy Subcommittee can review the practice of the purchase of supplies and develop a policy maybe stating educators should not use personal funds to purchase core supplies. This is not intended to be punitive. We should fund supplies at the appropriate amount. He would like to be very clear – educator wants versus core supplies (needs). The Committee needs to focus on core materials. This is not reflective of an educator's wish list. Linda asked what was meant by core supplies to which Andrew replied pencils, pens, paper, folders, etc. Kathryn, speaking as a former student and parent, can remember

shopping to get these things. This is a bit confusing and she would like clarification. Gina has very clearly told us how she comes up with the budget. She doesn't expect teachers to pay for supplies; this is between the School Committee and parents so she is not sure why it is an issue. Andrew stated that he doesn't disagree that a list is given to students noting what is needed for them to prepare for school but not all families can afford what is on the list. Regardless of a parent's ability to pay, it should be the responsibility of the school district to pay for these supplies. It is common practice (baked in) that other school districts manage this differently. We want educators to be assured that they will have access to core supplies; he does not think that the budget has ever accurately reflected what the cost is for core supplies. Educators have purchased them from approved vendors. If they can purchase something for less elsewhere, they will pay out of pocket. If the practice works well, this shouldn't happen. Karen noted, as an educator, she sends home a list and then buys what is on the list for those who cannot afford it. She does purchase other classroom supplies and doesn't know of too many other people who bring supplies to work other than educators. Polly wondered what the role of PTOs is. If teachers can't afford basic necessities for students, that is a problem. At \$20,000 a student, we should be able to purchase needed supplies; look at what we are spending on chrome books. Jessica felt there was value in asking teachers to keep track of their cost for the year, then collect the data. Craig stated he is glad Andrew brought this up as he has complained for years but he thinks they are beating a dead horse. We add this money to the budget then we cut the budget and guess what is the first to be cut – supplies! Tyler noted that they did not cut supplies this past year to which Craig responded that they have been cut every other year. Andrew stated his intent, in reference to Jessica's comment, is not to wait until the end of the year to determine what they spend. Maybe do this quarterly. They need to be thoughtful and make it anonymous. That is why the Budget Subcommittee can design this. He noted that when they have a difficult budget year, they go back and forth over what to cut. He is choosing to believe that if the School Committee had better information, they could choose to change this culture. Chair Giusti suggested that the Policy Subcommittee could discuss this and draw up a policy after the Budget Subcommittee defines it. Donna noted that it could definitely be looked at by the Policy Subcommittee; she is not sure about the budget. When she was in a classroom, she had a supply place she would go to. They could do something like a food drive only make it a supply drive. She asked if the teachers had the capacity to store additional items, they could potentially have a drive. There are many ways of doing this. Kathryn stated she was 100% in favor of Andrew's intent but looking at the per pupil cost, why can't we afford pencils. It is human nature to waste when things are readily available, like pens and paper. Things disappear. Churches collect supplies, Staples donates supplies, plus the PTOs help out. She would prefer instead of doing data mining to explore different ways they have a collection. Maybe suggest to Churches just what is needed. Andrew noted his interest in this is not to minimize donations; he wants to be able to organize it better. He wants to find out what is needed prior to teachers just buying supplies. Tyler noted that Andrew is on both subcommittees so he could take this and run with it. Polly suggested they reach out to PTOs as they know what their teachers need. If the PTOs hit a wall, they can come back to the School Committee. Linda felt the information was useful but PTOs should be raising money to provide students with enrichment opportunities. Basic supplies should come from the School Committee's budget. Jessica stated that PTOs frequently get requests from teachers for events. She is on Richmond School's PTO. Another good point for data collection is to ask the PTOs how much they have been doing. Craig, speaking on behalf of Charlestown School's PTO, they know their school's needs but it is not the School Committee's place to give them marching orders. Chair Giusti commented on the robust discussion and summarized that it is Andrew's intent that this be brought to both the Policy and Budget Subcommittees.

H. RICAS Letter to Governor and Commissioner – This item is on the agenda at the request of Andrew McQuaide for review of the letter regarding release of RICAS data and if approved, all Committee members will need to sign it. Andrew thanked the Superintendent and noted the substance and tone of the letter were exactly what he was looking for. Andrew made a motion, which was seconded by Craig and Donna, to send the letter regarding the release of RICAS data to the Governor and Commissioner and those copied on the letter. Jessica stated that she proofread the letter and added a couple of edits but if everyone is in favor of the letter as written, there is no need to change it; maybe just remove the negative tone. Tyler felt the negative tone was what the Committee wanted. He does not want to soften the tone to which Chair Giusti agreed. Gina stated that she has been invited to a meeting next week and she believes they may release the data a week later, around the 1st week of

November. Pat asked if Gina was aware of how many others have sent a letter to which Gina replied that she is not aware of any other letters being sent but this letter is going to all the School Committees in the State so they may jump on board. Polly felt they were leaving the Governor an open window as the letter just states "over the summer". She would be more inclined to put a date in there. Jessica commented that other School Committees may not want to use this tone in their letter. She had one suggestion for an edit. She would change the letter to read, *"Every April RI students in grades 3-8 take the RICAS English Language Arts and mathematics assessments. However, our school districts do not receive the data until late fall. For a state that has specific targets for education along with goals for student achievement, it is disheartening that our educators must tolerate such a prolonged waiting period in regards to state assessment data. Rhode Island school districts deserve timely access to test data."* Andrew stated that he is not opposed to any tweaks but wants to get the letter out ASAP to which Tyler agreed. Kathryn noted that RIASC basically teaches at their meetings to which Chair Giusti stated that RIASC will forward this letter to all the other School Committees. They cannot compel them to act on it. Kathryn commented that she would like to see a direct letter to each School Committee. Louise stated that she agrees with Polly that a date should be included in the letter.

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Craig Louzon and Donna Chambers and it was VOTED: To send the letter regarding the release of RICAS data to the Governor and Commissioner and those copied on the letter. In favor: Unanimous.

I. Metalmark Equipment Pilot Agreement – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the Equipment and Material Transfer and Evaluation Agreement with Metalmark Innovations, PBC for use of their air purification system with no cost to the District as this equipment is on loan for evaluation. The Agreement has been reviewed by Attorney Anderson. Craig made a motion, which was seconded by Andrew, to approve the Superintendent's recommendation. Larry stated that he was disturbed by language on page 5 (6.2, 6.3 and 6.4) which reads, "Recipient understands and acknowledges that the equipment and filter material are experimental and may have unknown characteristics or be otherwise hazardous." Ned explained that it is his understanding of the technology that whatever is collected goes into the filtration system. It collects those materials and evaluates them. We currently use hepa filters which are taken out of a device and thrown away. This is designed to assess and get data back to us. Gina added that there are no filters to remove. This system destroys what is collected immediately. Ned noted that it is a self-cleaning unit. We have tried different ones and the units that were given to us have a life expectancy of 3-5 years plus the extra cost to replace the filters. This unit uses less outside air so there is less heat loss. Karen stated that she noticed it can detect vaping. Is this time sensitive? Ned responded "yes". This was a sideline when we were discussing this. We couldn't find anything reliable that would detect vaping. Tyler asked where else is this in place to which Ned replied he would ask the National Institute of Health for a specific list. Polly wondered if there was any OSHA information to which Ned replied he would ask about that as well.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was VOTED: To approve the Equipment and Material Transfer and Evaluation Agreement with Metalmark Innovations, PBC for use of their air purification system with no cost to the District as this equipment is on loan for evaluations. In favor: Unanimous (Lyll was not in attendance for the vote).

J. Clean Ocean Access MOU – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Chariho Regional School District and Clean Ocean Access, which covers the Lunchroom Composting Initiative, by introducing and establishing a lunchroom waste management program with grant funding and support towards compliance with Rhode Island State Law Ch 23-18.9-17 which requires composting of kitchen waste. Lunch fund proceeds will assist with the costs with costs being assessed each year. Jon has reviewed the MOU. Andrew made a motion, which was seconded by Tyler and Donna, to approve the Clean Ocean Access MOU. Tyler asked Ned how often would the collection bin be cleaned out to which Ned responded every couple weeks depending on the level of waste. That will be assessed. Tyler then asked what kinds of bins would be used as he does not want to invite other problems into the District. Ned noted that vermin came up in their leadership meetings but we have to comply with RIGL. If this creates another problem, we will question it. Gina added that an assessment was done last year and we have to comply. Polly questioned which

lunchroom to which Gina responded all schools. Polly wondered if they had spoken with cafeteria workers as she talked with one who did not know anything about this. Gina explained that all Chartwell management staff were involved in the discussions. We will have a team at each school to oversee this. They will be trained and the kids will learn what they need to do. Polly felt this was putting extra work on staff and teachers to which Gina replied that we have to work with the law and if we have issues, we will tell them. We have to, at the very least, give it a try. Pat had similar questions to Polly. She wondered if this could be linked to the Richmond garden. If not, what are the facility costs? Gina noted that the State has informed them that we need to transport to a certain facility. Larry felt there would end up being a rodent problem. Will this just be for food the kids throw away or all leftovers? Gina noted that it is her understanding that it is just the trash kids are throwing out. Craig asked if the District had to do the transporting to which Gina responded that we don't transport; we have to call and someone else transports. Craig asked if it becomes a safety issue with roaming animals, would the District have the autonomy to shut it down. Gina noted that if there is a safety issue at all, we will stop. Jessica added another concern, other than animals or rodents, would be flies and their babies. This is gross. Kathryn commented that it appears that this is the only way we can go as we have to comply with the law so we have no choice. Tyler asked what if the School Committee voted this down to which Gina responded the State would probably withhold funding.

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Tyler Champlin and Donna Chambers and it was VOTED: To approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Chariho Regional School District and Clean Ocean Access, which covers the Lunchroom Composting Initiative, by introducing and establishing a lunchroom waste management program with grant funding and support towards compliance with Rhode Island State Law Ch 23-18.9-17 which requires composting of kitchen waste. In favor: Unanimous.

K. Moving 'Transfers' from Consent Agenda to Business as a Recurring/Standing Item or Focus on FY25 Budget Updates Per Agreed Upon Timeline/Schedule – This item was on the agenda at the request of the Budget Subcommittee for discussion and possible action. Tyler stated that he understands Transfers are on Consent Agenda and they can pull this for discussion but discussion is limited. Gina noted that discussion is limited for FYI items but not Consent Agenda Items. Tyler noted in the spirit of transparency with the community, he would like to see Transfers as a standing item each month under Business – maybe the last item. Andrew added that the Budget Subcommittee is looking for a variety of things like FY Budget, coupled with Transfers, whatever the fiscal year is they are in as a standing item as well. Administration provides us with this information and they are looking at how they can refine the process. This provides additional transparency for the community. Donna appreciated and understood their rationale but she served with a person who discussed every item and while she appreciates transparency, she would rather just have a report from the Budget Subcommittee. Kathryn noted that she also appreciates this and anything that can be added to the document to provide a little more information would address Donna's concern. Jessica commented that in FYI they can see the running total for Transfers; she would like to see the whole year. Chair Giusti asked if they make this change, will it change how they do Business. Gina explained that it will add time. We have to balance the fact that we have day-to-day job responsibilities in Central Office and it will take time away from other duties to do this. If we keep adding these items, what are we hoping to accomplish? We have to balance staffing to provide this support. Andrew responded that this is not intended to be an agenda item that takes them to 11:00 PM. Second to academic outcomes of our students, the budget is the next priority. He feels it is appropriate for them to just submit a report with the probability that the greater public will be informed. Gina stated if it is the Transfers as we provide, that is fine but if we have to add to it that will take time. Tyler agreed. He does not want to be at meetings late. Their request is just what Ned has already provided to them. If we are going to go through a budget process again and again with a community that is sometimes less than receptive, the more transparency we can give as a School Committee, he believes is part of their job. Ned noted that he typically provides the Account Status Report and the Transfer Sheet to which Andrew responded that at the Budget Subcommittee Meetings, Ned has offered data and anecdotally things we are watching. He wants to offer space at least once a month to get this report out. You can do whatever you like but I say let's give it a try and after a few months if we all hate it, we can either tweak it or go back to past practice. Transfers and Update on existing fiscal year. Ned wondered if a memo with context will tie this together to which

Andrew replied “yes”. Craig commented that it is amazing how over a decade this has evolved and because some of the members did not have the decency to call Ned during the day to ask him questions, the meeting went on for hours but he 100% agrees with transparency. Chair Giusti also agreed with seeing how this plays out. But for the matter of transparency, this sticks in her craw. We are extremely transparent. If we are taking the next step, people have to accept this transparency. We tried this last year with providing the public with the number we thought we needed to run the next school year and then all she heard was this number repeated over and over again even though they pared it down. Andrew stated that they need to start doing things differently. This is their starting line, not a finish line. Donna did not think this would make a difference with the budget. She does not see how they can be more transparent. Andrew made a motion, which was seconded by Tyler, that Transfers and FY Budget Update become standing agenda items once monthly as Business items. Jessica stated that she would like notes to which Craig added that it does not have to be a long discussion. It was mentioned that people will veer off the agenda item so the Committee has to ensure this doesn't happen to which Donna agreed. She is not for this as people will go off topic. Chair Giusti noted that is where she will have to stop the discussion. She suggested they do one motion for Transfers and one for Budget Update. Andrew replied that he will keep the motion as it is. If the School Committee can't have a once a month discussion about a FY update, what are we doing? We have to self-police. If he sees us going down a rabbit hole, he will suggest that the discussion be put on a future agenda. You have heard him call for a point of order. We need to have a little faith that they can navigate this together. We have to start somewhere.

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Tyler and it was
VOTED: That Transfers and FY Budget Update become standing agenda items once monthly as Business Items. In favor: Champlin, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds. Opposed: Chambers and Phelps. The motion carried by a vote of 10 in favor with 2 opposed.

L. Request to Add Line Item for Legal Fees Beyond the Flat Rate – This item was on the agenda at the request of Kathryn Colasante. Kathryn felt this was self-explanatory. Since the new legal contract, she would like to see the charges over the flat rate delineated. Personally, if she hires a lawyer, she keeps track of each item separately. Chair Giusti questioned if there was an easy way to do this with UCOA. Ned responded that he spoke with his team and they can make two separate line items by adding a couple numbers to one. He would refer to these as Retainer Services and Non-Retainer Services. Donna clarified that these two line items would be in the budget to which Ned replied “yes, there would be two separate line items in the budget.” Kathryn made a motion, which was seconded by Andrew, to add the line item as described by Ned Draper to our budget so they can delineate the legal fees that are incurred in addition to the flat rate (Retainer Services and Non-Retainer Services). Craig asked Ned if this is a line item they can take from to which Ned replied “yes”. Craig then commented that they just voted in executive session and while he won't go into detail, this vote will add to his fee and we approved that. Kathryn replied, obviously, if we are making decisions and are making them as a body, then we are obligated to the decision that we make and so that is not at all her intent. Her intent is just a matter of keeping track, like she said, just like she would do personally. She is not going to hire a lawyer for something and not keep track of the expense. So that's it, that's the intent and she thinks it's sensible. Jessica stated that one can look at the budget and see what amount is over the retainer fee. You can figure that out as it is right now. Donna noted the same concern as Craig. They don't know next year what they may be facing with legal expenses. Gina explained that they can look at it like transportation. We have separate line items for in-district, out-of-district, Statewide and DCYF transportation fees. Polly stated that there are things Jon won't be able to handle if there is a conflict with another District so she is in favor of this for future record keeping. Craig commented that he is not saying this is a bad idea but he does not want to cut anyone off at the knees. He questions some motives with this request to which Kathryn responded that she appreciates that motive not being questioned by Craig because that was not her motive. She is not in disagreement that when you, like tonight, authorize something, you are obligated to pay for that. She just wants to keep track of it. That's it.

Kathryn Colasante made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was VOTED: To add a line item as described by Ned Draper to our budget so they can delineate the legal fees that are incurred in addition to the flat rate (Retainer Services and Non-Retainer Services). In favor: Champlin, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds. Opposed: Chambers. Abstained: Louzon. The motion carried by a vote of 10 in favor with 1 opposed and 1 abstention.

IX. Consent Agenda Items

Chair Giusti asked if any items needed to be pulled. Tyler pulled A-1 and Craig pulled C – Bills. Craig acknowledged the donations and thanked the donors.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Tyler Champlin and it was VOTED: To approve the remainder of the Consent Agenda Items. In favor: Unanimous.

- A. Minutes – Approved the following:
 - 2. Regular Session Minutes of September 26, 2023.
- B. Transfers – Approved.
- D. Permission to Issue Bids/Request Quote – None at this time.
- E. Permission to Award Contracts – None at this time.
- F. Home Instruction – Action taken in executive session.
- G. Grants – None at this time.
- H. Donations – Accepted the following:
 - 1. Donation from Howard and Helen Bentley, Shannock, RI of footballs, valued at @ \$250.00, to the Richmond Elementary School.
 - 2. Donation from Sharon and Frank Forleo of Charlestown of \$200.00 to the Charlestown Elementary School Lunch Fund.
 - 3. Donation from Gladys Bowen, Bradford, RI, of two backpacks filled with supplies, valued at \$54.00, to Richmond Elementary School.

A-1. Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was VOTED: To approve the Executive Session Minutes of September 26, 2023 – Approval of Executive Session Minutes of September 12, 2023 (minutes not sealed). In favor: Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds. Abstained: Champlin. The motion carried by a vote of 11 in favor with 1 abstention.

C. Bill Review – Craig stated he pulled this to see how quick they could do this. Craig made a motion, which was seconded by Linda and Andrew, to accept the Bill Review reports. Louise noted that she had questions about some bills. The first, Macmaux Septic Pumping work done at Ashaway and the Middle School. The cost at Ashaway was over \$3,600 and the Middle School was over \$7,200. This seems like a lot to have septic pumped. Ned noted that this is done a couple times a year and the price is per gallon. Louise then referred all to page 17 of 20 – North Kingstown Tuition at \$17,797. If this is for a CTC program, why are we paying almost \$18,000 when we have one of the best CTCs in the State? Gina responded that it is for a CTC program and we are required to pay it. One Committee member noted that this had to do with athletics although this is not the reason given. Louise then asked about the Audubon Society of RI bill of \$1,620 on page 8 of 17. Gina replied that this is a fee for the program Dan Potts does with his Science class. Louise's last question pertained to page 13 of 17 – Rhode Island Attorney General Purchased Service Fee of \$190. Ned explained that this cost was for Background Checks.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Linda Lyall and Andrew McQuaide and it was VOTED: To accept the Bill Review reports. In favor: Unanimous.

X. Reports

A. Subcommittee Reports

- 1. Budget Subcommittee has a meeting scheduled for October 16th at 6:00 PM in the Administration Building Conference Room. Attached were the minutes from their August 16th meeting.

2. Health and Wellness Subcommittee will meet on Tuesday, October 10th at 4:00 PM in the High School Library. Attached were the minutes from their May 9, 2023 meeting.
3. Policy Subcommittee will meet on Tuesday, October 10th at 5:30 PM in the High School Library Conference Room. Attached were the minutes from their meeting on September 12, 2023.
4. Audit Subcommittee has a meeting scheduled for October 25th in the Administration Building Conference Room.

B. Superintendent's Report

1. Richmond Elementary School Recognition – Spotlight Celebration by RIDE and the State – The Superintendent reported that a celebration was held today highlighting the work of Richmond School with health and wellness. The celebration was also in honor of Paige Leddy who was selected as a Milken Award winner. The Superintendent shared Paige's accomplishments and she was congratulated.
 2. Necessity for School Construction Update – We are waiting for legal to finish its review of the Architect Bid and then it will go out. Craig questioned the deadline for submission to which the Superintendent noted it is June 2024 but they are hoping the State will extend the date for proposals.
- C. Coming Events were highlighted.

XI. School Committee Requests for Future Agenda Items or Legal Opinions

Larry noted a request he sent via email that has been mentioned twice by Tyler. Chair Giusti responded that she answered Larry's email and this will be a future agenda item.

Larry asked for an update on grants (safety film). He would like a breakdown of what was received and what was not spent to which the Superintendent responded that all grant money is spent. Chair Giusti asked that he be more specific regarding his request to which Gina added that there are many grants, such as Title grants, AcceleGrants, grants that our Development Officer, Katie Kirakosian applies for. Kathryn stated that basically they are asked to approve grant applications and they would like an update on whether or not the District received the grant. Chair Giusti asked if Larry wanted this in FYI and that he please email her with a more specific request.

XII. Adjournment

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Tyler Champlin and it was
VOTED: To adjourn at 9:15 PM. In favor: Unanimous.

Donna J. Sieczkiewicz, Clerk