

# Consent Agenda Items

# Enclosure **XL A-1**

Chariho School Committee Meeting  
Executive Session – September 17, 2024  
**Approval of Executive Session Minutes – Minutes not sealed.**

Committee Members Attendance: Chair Catherine Giusti, Vice Chair Karen Reynolds, Donna Chambers, Laura Chapman (replaced Andrew McQuaide), Kathryn Colasante, Polly Hopkins, Craig Louzon, Linda Lyall, Larry Phelps, Patricia Pouliot and Jessica Purcell. Absent: Tyler Champlin.

Administrators and Others Attendance: Superintendent Gina Picard, Assistant Superintendent Michael Comella, Acting Director of Administration and Finance Greg Zenion and School Committee Clerk Donna Sieczkiewicz.

II-1. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of August 20, 2024 – Approval of Emergency Operations Plans – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the executive session minutes of August 20, 2024 – Approval of Emergency Operations Plans.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Linda Lyall and it was  
VOTED: To approve the executive session minutes of August 20, 2024 – Approval of Emergency Operations Plans. In favor: Unanimous.

II-2. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of August 20, 2024 – Appeal of CTC Admission Denial - Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the executive session minutes of August 20, 2024 – Appeal of CTC Admission Denial.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Linda Lyall and it was  
VOTED: To approve the executive session minutes of August 20, 2024 – Appeal of CTC Admission Denial. In favor: Unanimous.

II-3. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of August 20, 2024 – Approval of Home Instruction Requests – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the executive session minutes of August 20, 2024 – Approval of Home Instruction Requests.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Linda Lyall and it was  
VOTED: To approve the executive session minutes of August 20, 2024 – Approval of Home Instruction Requests. In favor: Unanimous.

The Committee moved to approval of Home Instruction Requests.

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Donna J. Sieczkiewicz, Clerk

# Enclosure **XL A-2**

## Chariho School Committee Meeting Regular Session – September 17, 2024

Committee Members Attendance: Chair Catherine Giusti, Vice Chair Karen Reynolds, Donna Chambers, Laura Chapman (replaced Andrew McQuaide), Kathryn Colasante, Polly Hopkins, Craig Louzon, Linda Lyall, Larry Phelps, Patricia Pouliot and Jessica Purcell. Absent: Tyler Champlin.

Administrators and Others Attendance: Superintendent Gina Picard, Assistant Superintendent Michael Comella, Acting Director of Administration and Finance Greg Zenion, Ashaway Principal Jeff Scanapieco, Special Education Director Jennifer Durkin, Systems Administrator Eric O'Brien, Charlestown Town Council President Deb Carney 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 6:45 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

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Linda Lyall 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)(3) for the purpose of discussion regarding the matter of security including but not limited to the deployment of security personnel or devices (Approval of Executive Session Minutes of August 20, 2024 - Approval of Emergency Operations Plans) 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 August 20, 2024 - Appeal of CTC Admission Denial; 2. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of August 20, 2024 - Approval of Home Instruction Requests; 3. Approval of Home Instruction Requests and 4. Rescinding of Home Instruction Requests); any persons to be discussed have been so notified. In favor: Unanimous.

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

Chair Giusti reconvened the meeting at 7:00 PM. She asked all to please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silent meditation.

### IV. Closing/Sealing of Executive Session Minutes

1. 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 Karen Reynolds and it was

VOTED: That minutes pertaining to the privacy of students and their records (Approval of Home Instruction Requests) remain sealed. In favor: Unanimous.

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

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Karen Reynolds and it was

VOTED: That minutes pertaining to the privacy of students and their records (Rescinding of Home Instruction Requests) remain sealed. In favor: Unanimous.

### V. Disclosure of Executive Session Votes

Vice Chair Reynolds reported there were seven votes taken in executive session. The first vote, approval of executive session minutes of August 20, 2024 – Approval of Emergency Operations

Plans, passed with 11 in favor with Chambers, Chapman, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds voting in favor.

The second vote, approval of executive session minutes of August 20, 2024 – Appeal of CTC Admission Denial, passed with 11 in favor with Chambers, Chapman, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds voting in favor.

The third vote, approval of executive session minutes of August 20, 2024 – Approval of Home Instruction Requests, passed with 11 in favor with Chambers, Chapman, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds voting in favor.

The next vote, approval of a home instruction request, passed with 10 in favor and 1 abstention with Chambers, Chapman, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot and Reynolds voting in favor and Purcell abstaining.

The next vote, approval of home instruction requests, passed with 11 in favor with Chambers, Chapman, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds voting in favor.

The sixth vote, rescinding of home instruction requests, passed with 11 in favor with Chambers, Chapman, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds voting in favor.

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

#### VI. Recognition

Superintendent Picard noted the very exciting recognitions this evening.

1. The Chariho Regional School District is proud to announce Cheryl Lightfritz as the recipient of the 2025 Teacher of the Year Award. Cheryl was asked to please stand to be acknowledged. This prestigious honor recognizes Ms. Lightfritz' exceptional dedication, expertise, and tireless commitment to her students and the broader Chariho community. Since joining Chariho in 2006, Ms. Lightfritz has demonstrated unparalleled expertise in working with students in our Adaptive Daily Living Skills program. Her work spans both the middle and high school levels, where she has consistently shown an extraordinary ability to connect with and communicate effectively with all of her students. Ms. Lightfritz holds both a Bachelor's and Master's in Education from Ohio University and her diverse experiences range from elementary education to special education across the PreK through high school settings. Her proficiency in implementing evidence-based practices – such as visual supports, structured routines and sensory accommodations – has created a learning environment that promotes engagement, independence and success. Ms. Lightfritz extends the classroom into the community by creating opportunities for peer interaction and communication skills development, helping students build meaningful relationships and navigate social situations with confidence. Her dedication is reflected in her efforts to actively involve her students in extracurricular activities. Her main goal is to foster independence and enhance daily living skills through real-world experiences, thereby promoting inclusivity and diversity within our school. It is with great pleasure that we celebrate Cheryl Lightfritz as the Chariho District 2025 Teacher of the Year. Her dedication, compassion and innovative approach to teaching truly embody the spirit of this award and we are honored to recognize her outstanding contributions to our District. Cheryl will be celebrated this Saturday during the Waterfire Educator Recognition event in Providence. Cheryl was asked if she wanted to say a few words. She went to the podium and stated that she is standing here because she was supported by administrators who allowed her to say "this is what we need to do for our kids. Here is what is working in other schools." So this past year, Jennifer (Durkin) and she worked really hard on a Transition Academy. Basically we're taking our Chariho students age 18-22 out into our community. She just went and hit businesses and places and said that our kids need to be out; they need to be working; they need to be with children their own age as young adults and we made that happen.

We go to the Preserve on Tuesdays and Thursdays and they do a variety of work activities. Mondays we go to Mystic Aquarium where we have a beautiful Chariho community classroom set up. Wednesdays we go to URI and we either work in the Athletic Department or we work in the Dining Hall and that truly to her is one of her favorites because that is our kids being on a college campus with their peers. We had lunch last Wednesday up in the Rams' Den and one of her students said "are these kids my age" and she said "yeah, you are sitting with your peers." On Fridays we either go to the Community Center in Charlestown and serve lunch or we go to the new food pantry in Bradford. So she is fortunate enough to have been supported by administrative people to do what she likes to do. Cheryl was thanked and congratulated.

2. The Chariho Regional School District is proud to announce Melissa Carrier as the 2025 Support Professional of the Year. Melissa was asked to stand to be acknowledged. She has served as a teaching assistant at Ashaway School since 1993 and exemplifies the dedication, hard work and unwavering commitment that define this prestigious award. Whether assisting with small group instruction, providing individualized support or stepping in to help wherever needed, Melissa's contributions are invaluable. Her uplifting and positive attitude has made her a beloved figure among students, parents, and colleagues alike. Melissa's genuine care for the students she supports is apparent in her everyday interactions. From supervising the morning program and student drop-off, where she greets each child by name and engages warmly with families, to offering support during lunch and recess, Melissa's presence is a reassuring and joyful part of the school day. Her proactive approach and readiness to volunteer her time are evident in her support of school-wide activities and initiatives. Having worked in the Chariho District since 1989, Melissa began her career as a part-time teaching assistant at the Middle School before becoming a full-time assistant in 1990. Her extensive experience includes supporting students in Extended School Year (ESY) programs and even contributing as a summer custodian and painter last year to preparing the school environment for the new school year. Her unwavering commitment to enhancing the educational experience for all students is why we were so excited to give her this award. Melissa was given the opportunity if she wanted to speak but she chose not to. Both Melissa and Cheryl were celebrated at Convocation.

3. Superintendent Picard noted that she now has a very special recognition and she is going to start with Catherine Giusti. Chair Giusti thanked the Superintendent and stated that as many of you know, this is Donna Sieczkiewicz' last meeting with us in her role as Clerk. She doesn't think they can overstate the impact that Donna has had on our community. She has had the privilege of knowing Donna for 11 years. She was the first person to offer her a kind word and encouragement as the parent liaison. Donna has always been a fierce advocate for children, both personally and professionally. She has worked with three Superintendents providing knowledge, support and the history of Chariho. During School Committee meetings, we've all relied upon Donna to help us stay on the right side of Robert's Rules of Order and the only time we've seen Donna get irritated is when someone is rude or churlish during a meeting through actions or words. Chair Giusti noted she loves a good Donna clap act as it is always well deserved. Donna has been the backbone of various Chariho School Committees for likely longer than she wanted to. Her knowledge, intelligence, and unparalleled notes will be missed but what she will miss the most is her unwavering commitment to help the Superintendent and School Committee serve "All Kids...All the Time". She congratulated and thanked Donna for all she has done. Superintendent Picard stated that she wanted to take a moment to recognize and express her deep appreciation for Donna Sieczkiewicz, who has been a valued member of the Chariho family since 2002. Over the years, she has continually amazed us with her dedication, efficiency, and unwavering hard work. Whether tackling complex tasks or handling the daily hustle with grace, Donna's ability to stay on top of everything is truly remarkable. Beyond being an extraordinary employee, Donna brings humor, positivity and a warmth to the office that makes every day better. Her laughter and light-hearted spirit keep us grounded and reminds us of the importance of connection and joy that is so important when we all work together. Her contributions have left an indelible mark on our team and as she steps into this new chapter of life. Thank you, Donna, for all that you have done. You are truly the heart of our team and we are so fortunate to have had you with us. To honor Donna's incredible contributions, we would like to present her with a service award recognizing all of her hard work and dedication over the years. The following is inscribed on her award: *In recognition of your outstanding dedication and invaluable contributions to the Chariho Regional*

*School District from 2002-2024. Your unwavering commitment for both students and staff have set a benchmark of excellence and inspired everyone around you. Thank you for your years of service and your remarkable impact on our community. Enjoy your retirement!* Linda Lyall stated that she had a little something from all of the Committee to celebrate Donna's next chapter. It is probably not enough for all she has done for them and they will miss her. Donna commented that she has loved every minute – well maybe not every minute. She stated that she has worked with incredible people and she thanked them for making her life over the past 22 years so wonderful. She also noted that she will miss Jeff's calls every Friday at 4:00 PM.

3. Superintendent Picard stated that when they do the Teacher of the Year and Support Professional of the Year there are nominees and it is very difficult because they are all excellent. She wanted to share all the nominees for these awards: Certified Staff - David Bannister, Kevin Hooper, Kristina Sparfven. ESP Staff - Christine Miguel and Suzanne Winchell.

4. High School Girls' Soccer Team – Winners of the Piver Cup Tournament for the third consecutive year. They beat Westerly by a score of 3-1. Westerly had their 16-game winning streak snapped dating back to last year's Piver Cup Championship game won by Chariho 4-0.

5. High School Boys' Soccer Team – Winners of the Piver Cup Tournament. They beat Fitch by a score of 2-0. The Tournament is played in honor of 1996 Stonington High Graduate Josh Piver who played soccer for the Bears. Piver, for whom the Stonington Boys' soccer field is named, worked at Cantor Fitzgerald on the 105<sup>th</sup> floor of the World Trade Center and died in the 9/11 attacks.

## VII. Public Forum

There were no requests to speak.

## VIII. Business

A. Field Trips – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the following contingent on compliance with policy:

1. Request of SkillsUSA Advisor Robert Wild for 1 Chariho student (8 students statewide) and 3 chaperones (statewide) to travel to the SkillsUSA State Officer Conference in Washington, DC from September 21, 2024 to September 25, 2024.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Karen Reynolds and it was

VOTED: To approve the request of SkillsUSA Advisor Robert Wild for 1 Chariho student (8 students statewide) and 3 chaperones (statewide) to travel to the SkillsUSA State Officer Conference in Washington, DC from September 21, 2024 to September 25, 2024. In favor: Unanimous.

2. Request of SkillsUSA Advisor Robert Wild for @15 students and 4 chaperones to travel to the SkillsUSA National Championship in Atlanta, GA from June 22, 2025 to June 28, 2025. Exact number of students will be determined after the State Competitions in spring 2025 and complete itinerary will be forwarded to the Superintendent once all plans are finalized. Linda questioned why this was being presented now to which the Superintendent explained that she has asked that the field trip requests be submitted as early as possible.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Karen Reynolds and it was

VOTED: To approve the request of SkillsUSA Advisor Robert Wild for @15 students and 4 chaperones to travel to the SkillsUSA National Championship in Atlanta, GA from June 22, 2025 to June 28, 2025. Exact number of students will be determined after the State Competitions in spring 2025 and complete itinerary will be forwarded to the Superintendent once all plans are finalized. In favor: Unanimous.

3. Request of Coach Bill Haberek for 35 athletes and 7 chaperones to travel to the Manhattan College Invitational, Van Courtlandt Park, NY from Saturday, October 12, 2024 to Sunday, October 13, 2024. Craig stated that he has gone on this field trip six times and it is a great time for all.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Karen Reynolds and it was

VOTED: To approve the request of Coach Bill Haberek for 35 athletes and 7 chaperones to travel to the Manhattan College Invitational, Van Courtlandt Park, NY from Saturday, October 12, 2024 to Sunday, October 13, 2024. In favor: Unanimous.

B. Virtual Learning Day Plan – The Superintendent stated that the Plan is the same as last year and she recommended approval of the Virtual Learning/Distance Learning Plan for 2024-2025 that will be submitted to RIDE for its approval. Administrators, School Improvement Teams, STEM & Humanities Specialists, District Math Specialists, Academic ELA Fellow and Teacher Induction Coach have reviewed this plan. She noted that one of the requirements for a Virtual Learning Day is that teachers are required to have three hours of live instruction. She will try not to use these days because of outages in some areas that will prevent students from receiving live instruction. She has built in extra days in the calendar as we exceed the required daily/yearly minutes of instructional time. Craig made a motion, which was seconded by Linda and Karen, to approve the Virtual Learning/Distance Learning Plan for 2024-2025. Karen commented that the links were not live to which Gina noted that she will share them. When information is downloaded, this sometimes occurs. Larry questioned if blocks could be put on computers as he noted that his grandson liked to play games on the computer during COVID when he should have been learning. Eric replied that there are blocks when students are in school but not when they are home. Gina added when they are in school, we know instantaneously when a student is playing games.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Linda Lyall and Karen Reynolds and it was

VOTED: To approve the Virtual Learning/Distance Learning Plan for 2024-2025 and submit it to RIDE for approval. In favor: Unanimous.

C. Commitment of FY24 Funds – Superintendent Picard recommended the Committee commit the funds effective June 30, 2024 as noted in the memo from Ned Draper dated September 11, 2024. Craig made a motion, which was seconded by Karen, to commit the funds effective June 30, 2024 as noted in the memo from Ned Draper dated September 11, 2024. Larry asked how much is left over to which Gina responded she would have to look. She can send this information out tomorrow as she does not have the budget with her this evening. Jessica questioned capital projects not completed to which Gina noted that a lot of those have been predetermined. Those that say "School Committee approved" you have already approved. As for the line for tuition discrepancy and potential litigation, we are under protest to pay for students who choose to go to another CTC and are taking a program that we offer here when we are rated higher than many other schools. Kathryn asked about the "Funding Potential Litigation" line to which Gina explained that this would be for things like the RGB lawsuit we had last year. This is not for Jon's salary; this is for overall litigation. Laura wondered if this is a % to which Chair Giusti questioned how is this figure calculated. Gina replied that it is an average of prior years – past practice.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Karen Reynolds and it was

VOTED: To commit the funds effective June 30, 2024 as noted in the memo from Ned Draper dated September 11, 2024. In favor: Unanimous.

D. Next Steps as they Relate to Elementary School Planning and the Phase-Out of Hope Valley Elementary School – This item will be included on each agenda as the Committee will need to determine if further action will be taken in regards to Hope Valley School as we prepare for the FY26 budget season. Gina noted that she has received the following questions from members: 1) It would be helpful if she addressed, in the most specific way possible at this time, the length of time students presently attending Hope Valley Elementary School would be on the bus should they be attending another school if Hope Valley closes. She responded that Hope Valley School is three miles from Richmond so the time spent on a bus would be dependent on the number of stops, speed limits, etc. but the new lines bring students to the closest school. Charlestown has the longest bus rides. 2) As a way to foster relationships is there a way to have children from the same town be in the same classes whenever possible? Placing students in classrooms with

teachers involves many pieces of data. Our teachers and administrators consider learning styles, personalities, strengths, teaching styles and classroom environments. The goal is to ensure we think about the whole child to bring out their best potential. A child's address is not a factor we consider when planning our student rosters. The process involves gathering a lot of information about each student. It's a thoughtful, deliberate process that can significantly impact a student's educational experience. Teacher input is also noted in our teacher contract, ensuring a balance of needs. We must help all our families understand that we are a regional school district and separating students based on their neighborhood or town is not something we would want to promote. We focus on all of them being Chariho students. Kathryn asked if there was a law regarding the longest time a child could be on a bus to which Gina responded there is no law but the recommendation is under an hour. The beginning of a new school year is not a good barometer as there students who are new to a bus, drivers who are new to the District or new to a route. There are a number of factors involved in timing. Ocean State Transit does a really good job. We look at times and efficiency of our routes in mid-September and adjust them if needed. Karen questioned if there was a plan for moving Preschool from Hope Valley. The Superintendent noted that based on the new lines and number of students, Charlestown School could house Pre-K if Hope Valley School closed. We receive guidance from RIDE regarding parameters around room size, etc. It can be done but at a cost. Laura asked what seems to be the biggest issue or length of time noted from the feedback of parents. Gina responded that feedback from parents indicate they want the School Committee decision to be out there; just close it or phase-it out. Enrollment at Hope Valley for grades 1-4 is 131 with 98 more in Preschool. Laura asked if there was a budgetary cost breakout to which Gina explained that Preschool has special needs students so cost is associated with this. The other grades at Hope Valley have two classrooms. Jessica felt the agenda item needs to be more structured. What was the capital improvement process over the past five years and what are the budget reductions as a result of removing Kindergarten. She would like a cost analysis of a slow phase-out versus closing the school. Preschool is her major concern. She wants to meet all the requirements. Could they stay at Hope Valley or can an addition be put on another school? She noted that a bus was added back to which Gina replied that nothing was added to the budget. We had one cut to the budget to which Jessica thought they cut two. Gina asked that all requests please be forwarded to her ahead of time like the others have done so she can be prepared with answers. Jessica asked what was the average K size to which Gina replied they run from 19-22. Jessica wondered if they could add a K classroom. Gina noted the largest class sizes are Ashaway Grade 4 at 23 and Charlestown Grade 3 at 23, 23, 22. Richmond's K classes are 19-21-22-22. She stated there are impeding factors to adding another classroom. We have two curricula that need to be added; two out of district students at \$100,000 that we just got and we have two contracts that need to be negotiated. What data do you want brought forth? She needs clear direction. If we put too much data out it is overwhelming to parents. Jessica made a motion, which was seconded by Linda and Karen, to have the Superintendent supply the Committee with a cost benefit analysis of a slow phase-out of Hope Valley School versus closing the school next year. Chair Giusti asked if they wanted this with PreK included. Pat asked if it would be possible to shut down just part of Hope Valley to which the Chair asked if she could hold on this until after they vote on the motion.

Jessica Purcell made a motion, seconded by Linda Lyall and Karen Reynolds and it was VOTED: To have the Superintendent supply the Committee with a cost benefit analysis of a slow phase-out of Hope Valley School versus closing the school next year. In favor: Unanimous.

Jessica made another motion, seconded by Linda, for a cost analysis of keeping just PreK open at Hope Valley versus moving it elsewhere. Pat asked how the heating was zoned and if it is possible to just shut down part of Hope Valley. Gina responded that she does not believe they can shut down part of it based on the boiler but she would ask Jason. Larry noted that they will still need to heat the rest of the building. Gina commented that a facility review was just done and the company will come back with demolition of the building or a complete overhaul based on the comments that were made. Craig questioned the dynamics of PreK to which Gina replied there are three half-day programs (or 6 classes) and one full-day program for those with additional



needs. Not all those students will continue with us next year. Ashaway's current enrollment with K is 211; with CALA included there are 36 seats available per RIDE regulations for instructional spaces enrollment capacity. Charlestown currently has 246 students with 197 seats remaining. Richmond's current enrollment is 370 with 162 seats remaining. She asked a clerk to look at current enrollment and if we close Hope Valley, determine which school these students would go to. It was noted that more students would go to Richmond School so that is why she is recommended PreK go to Charlestown. Craig asked the number of classrooms that would be needed for PreK to which Gina noted at Hope Valley we currently use four classrooms. Craig stated that if they consider leaving PreK at Hope Valley and moving the other grades, they will have to maintain more than heat. They will need custodians, etc. Gina added that in moving PreK they have to consider IEP accommodations; they have to have separate playgrounds and bathrooms in the classrooms. Polly asked if they had considered moving the Ashaway CALA to Hope Valley to which Gina replied 'yes'. Mr. Scanapieco and Mr. Tetreault are reviewing this and will provide her with a recommendation. Chair Giusti asked Gina if she understood what was being asked of her. Gina reviewed the request and noted that when she provides enrollment numbers, they are projections. Kathryn stated that the cost comparisons Jessica has requested will be different if the enroll projections change. A change in enrollment will have an impact on the overall cost. Gina noted that once she gets the Veritas Report, she will bring it before the Necessity of School Construction Committee for review. Kathryn felt that some parents from Hopkinton may choose private PreK if we move this program to Charlestown as they may not want to transport there to which Gina commented that the majority of our PreK families right now are from Charlestown and Richmond and they travel to Hope Valley. Kathryn stated that she just wanted to throw that out there. It is important to realize this may impact a family's decision. Craig noted that when they shut down a school, it goes back to the Town. What investment do we have to make to the facility? Gina replied that she plans to put this in her report. Laura asked how will they know if a PreK student will go on to one of our K classes to which Gina responded that we will ask. If not, we will get a request from a private school for records. Laura asked if the Towns let the Committee know if more housing is projected. Gina replied that typically they do let us know. We have seen a decrease in enrollment; we are now down to 3,084 students.

Jessica Purcell made a motion, seconded by Linda Lyall and it was

VOTED: To request from the Superintendent a cost analysis of keeping just PreK open at Hope Valley versus moving it elsewhere. In favor: Unanimous.

Greg Avedisian from Hopkinton stated that he hadn't heard any discussion about a complete closing of Hope Valley School. Is there something that is initiating this? Gina explained that conversations began last year; actually they began in 2005 with Superintendent Ricci. Her recommendation was a phase-out as they were trying to pass the bond. The bond was unsuccessful and the Committee is looking and needing to find ways to keep the budget down. The classes at Hope Valley are small. Greg asked if this has anything to do with the recent inspection by Veritas to which Gina replied it does not but they have heard that this District cannot build to it. Is it unsafe – no – but it will take a lot of money to keep it going. It is not ADA compliant which they have been able to work around for students but if a parent needs to get to the second floor, there are no accommodations in place. The enrollment is decreasing. Greg asked if they close it all at once, what will the class sizes be in the other schools? Gina noted that she doesn't base projections on the maximum but she plans for 22 in a class. That would be her max. We typically look at patterns and trends and she had a clerk look at the impact to the other schools if Hope Valley were to close. There are currently 34 students at Hope Valley who would shift to Ashaway; no children are anticipated to enroll in Charlestown 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grades from Hope Valley and Richmond would see 22 in 1<sup>st</sup> grade that would be entering 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 29 in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade entering 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and 28 in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade entering 4<sup>th</sup>. Richmond as noted, has a current enrollment of 370 with a capacity of 532 and Charlestown has a current enrollment of 246 with a capacity of 443. Linda commented that class sizes may not be impacted as they would also have teachers shifting from Hope Valley School to the other schools. Greg Zenion stated that as the former Chair of the Building Committee, when they consider the closing of Hope Valley, the discussion has to be done with consideration to the other facilities. Kathryn requested, at the last meeting,

the maximum amount in each school to which Gina provided the following: Richmond's capacity per RIDE requirements is 532 but per the fire marshal, it could be over 1,000; Charlestown's capacity per RIDE requirements is 443 but per the fire marshal, it could be 700; Ashaway's capacity per RIDE requirements is 258, but per the fire marshal, it could be 500 and Hope Valley's capacity per RIDE requirements is 303 but per the fire marshal, it could be 500. Pat noted they needed to be clear about the Chariho Act as it pertains to matriculation to which Gina explained that, in using the Middle School as an example, when we moved grade 5 out of the elementary schools the 4<sup>th</sup> graders could no longer matriculate because there was no grade 5 in that school. If a building closes, the students would be moved to other schools. Chair Giusti stated that they will not be making any decisions until they see the numbers and the budgetary impact.

E. Budget Transfers – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the Transfers for September 17, 2024.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Linda Lyall and Karen Reynolds and it was VOTED: To approve the Transfers for September 17, 2024. In favor: Unanimous.

F. FY24 Budget Update – This item is on the agenda as requested by the Budget Subcommittee. Jessica commented on the five-year budget forecast to which Gina responded that it is always posted on the website and sent to the Committee. It can also be found on the RIDE website. There were no other questions pertaining to the documents provided.

#### IX. Consent Agenda Items

Chair Giusti explained the process to the new member. If a Committee member needs to pull something as they may need to abstain or recuse from voting on an item, the item is pulled and voted on separately. All other items are voted on together. There were no items pulled. Craig acknowledged the donations and thanked the donors.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Linda Lyall and it was VOTED: To approve all the Consent Agenda Items. In favor: Unanimous.

A. Minutes – Approved the following:

1. Regular Session Minutes of August 20, 2024.

B. Bill Review – Accepted.

C. Personnel Actions – Rescinded the non-renewal of the following:

| First Name | Last Name | FTE as of 9/1/23 |
|------------|-----------|------------------|
| Kathryn    | Loiko     | 1.0              |
| Meghan     | Recupero  | 1.0              |

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. A \$200.00 donation from James Ricciardone, Ocean Springs, Mississippi, to the CTC Electrical Technology Program in honor of his father, Frank Ricciardone who is 103 years old and had a heating business for income while raising his family of six children.
2. Donation from Riverhead Building Supply (Michaela Maurio, NY and Todd Phelan, Westerly/Richmond) of school supplies, valued at @ \$500.00, to Chariho students.
3. Donation from Abby Rogers (Richmond – Chariho Senior and former Richmond School student) of art supplies, valued at @ \$75.00, to Richmond Elementary School.
4. Donation from Ready & Sons Excavating, Charlestown, RI of 5 yards of loam, valued at \$150.00, to Charlestown School's Outdoor Learning Garden.
5. Donation from Carpenter's Farms, Matunuck, RI of 2 yards of mulch, valued at \$80.00, to Charlestown School's Outdoor Learning Garden.

6. Donation from Teolis Landscaping (Jason Teolis), Charlestown, RI of two hours of machine time, valued at \$200.00, to Charlestown School's Outdoor Learning Garden. A special thanks to Special Educator Vanessa Freelove and her family for all their work on the Garden project.

#### X. Reports

##### A. Subcommittee Reports

1. Audit Subcommittee will meet on September 24<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-6:30 PM in the Administration Building Conference Room

##### B. Superintendent's Report

1. School Opening Updates – The Superintendent noted that the opening of school has gone very well. We do have less flexibility with transportation. Safety is always our top priority but we do have fewer individualized stops and can no longer accommodate a child riding more than one bus. We have had several leadership changes – Greg Zenion will assume the position of Director of Administration and Finance; Joe Gencarelli has requested a move to the position of Middle School Principal; Jeff Scanapieco will assume the role of Hope Valley Principal along with some administrative duties and all of these changes will occur once we hire a new Ashaway Principal. We have twelve applicants as of today.

2. Opportunities for Parents and Community Involvement – ESS Virtual Parent Workshops are open to all.

C. Coming Events were highlighted. The Superintendent noted one change – Hope Valley Open House will be held on September 25<sup>th</sup> for all grades.

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

Larry asked if they could get a monthly report of all maintenance projects done. Gina explained that we do not have anyone in Ned's position right now; we do not have the staff to pull together such a report. You are asking for every single thing that is done every month such as changing light bulbs, etc. We do not keep a running account of things like that. Larry commented that Ned used to provide this to which Gina replied not a report that listed every maintenance item addressed each day. If he could send an email to Chair Giusti narrowing his request, she will see what they can do.

Craig questioned the evaluation that was just done on Hope Valley School. Gina explained that the company that is reviewing our facilities will send a report to RIDE, on the same idea as the Jacobs Report. They will report on the condition of all of our schools and submit it to RIDE. RIDE will then send it out to the districts. Once she gets it, she will share it.

Donna wondered if Gina knew if any of the Ashaway Principal applicants were in-house to which Gina replied that she did not know.

Jessica shared that she went to Richmond School to see the Waste Warrior Program and wondered if they could bring this to a School Committee meeting. Gina noted that she and two students will be on WBLQ reporting on this program.

Polly questioned the CTC Roof project – is it complete? Gina responded that the report on the CTC Roof Project was included in FYI. It was a partial repair which was completed on time and under budget.

#### XII. Adjournment

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Karen Reynolds and it was  
VOTED: To adjourn at 8:11 PM. In favor: Unanimous.

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Donna J. Sieczkiewicz, Clerk