

Chariho School Committee Meeting
Regular Session Minutes – December 14, 2021

Committee Members Attendance: Chair Linda Lyall, Vice Chair Catherine Giusti, Donna Chambers, William Day, Gary Liguori, Craig Louzon, Lisa Macaruso (arrived at 6:36 PM), Linda McAllister, Karen Reynolds and endawnis Spears. Absent: George Abbott and Ryan Callahan.

Administrators and Others Attendance: Superintendent Gina Picard, Assistant Superintendent Michael Comella, Director of Administration and Finance Ned Draper, Assistant Director of Administration and Finance Gail Wilcox and District Clerk Donna Sieczkiewicz.

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

Chair Linda Lyall called the meeting of the Chariho School Committee, held in the Chariho Middle School Auditorium, to order at 6:32 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was followed by a moment of silent meditation.

II. Motion/Vote to go into Executive Session

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Linda McAllister and it was

VOTED: That the School Committee go into executive session under the authority of R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(2) for the purpose of discussion and/or action pertaining to collective bargaining (1. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of November 9, 2021 - NEA Certified Staff Contract Negotiations; 2. NEA Certified Staff Contract Negotiation Update and 3. NEA ESP Contract Negotiation Update); 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 (Approval of Executive Session Minutes of November 9, 2021 – Approval of Home Instruction Requests). In favor: Unanimous (Macaruso was not in attendance for the vote).

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

The Committee returned to open session at 6:52 PM and Chair Lyall 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 collective bargaining (NEA Certified Staff Contract Negotiation Update) remain sealed until such time as an agreement has been reached.

Catherine Giusti made a motion, seconded by Gary Liguori and it was

VOTED: That minutes pertaining to collective bargaining (NEA Certified Staff Contract Negotiations) remain sealed until such time as an agreement has been reached. In favor: Chambers, Giusti, Liguori, Lyall, Macaruso, McAllister, Reynolds and Spears. Recused: Day and Louzon. The motion carried by a vote of 8 in favor with 2 recusals.

2. Superintendent Picard recommended that minutes pertaining to collective bargaining (NEA ESP Negotiation Update) remain sealed until such time as an agreement has been reached.

Karen Reynolds made a motion, seconded by Catherine Giusti and it was

VOTED: That minutes pertaining to collective bargaining (NEA ESP Negotiation Update) remain sealed until such time as an agreement has been reached. In favor: Chambers, Giusti, Liguori, Lyall, Macaruso, McAllister, Reynolds and Spears. Recused: Day and Louzon. The motion carried by a vote of 8 in favor with 2 recusals.

V. Disclosure of Executive Session Votes

Vice Chair Giusti reported there were three votes in executive session. The first vote, approval of Home Instruction Minutes of November 9, 2021, passed with Chambers, Day, Giusti, Louzon, Macaruso, McAllister, Reynolds, Spears and Lyall voting in favor and Liguori abstaining.

The second vote, approval of executive session minutes of November 9, 2021 – NEA Certified Staff Negotiation Update, passed with Chambers, Giusti, Macaruso, McAllister, Reynolds, Spears and Lyall voting in favor and Liguori abstaining.

The third vote, to return to open session, was unanimous with Chambers, Giusti, Liguori, Lyall, Macaruso, McAllister, Reynolds and Spears voting in favor.

VI. Recognition – Chair Lyall noted this is the best part of the night. The following were congratulated:

1. High School Girls' Tennis Team made it to the Quarterfinals – Post-Season Awards: Kylee Whelan (Sportsmanship and 2nd Team All-Division); Emily Ballard (3rd Team All-Division Singles); Kaitlyn Daniels and Faith Owren (3rd Team All-Division Doubles) – Coaches Marc Fain and Stephen Blessing.

2. High School Girls Volleyball made it to the Semifinals – Post-Season Awards: Jenna Loring (American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) All-Region I, 1st Team All-Division II, All-Tournament); Alexis Cole (3rd Team All-Division II); Hannah Jackson (4th Team All-Division II) – Coaches Shawn Cole and Kathy McGeehan.

3. High School Football Team advanced to the Super Bowl but, unfortunately, lost to Narragansett. Post-Season Awards not yet announced.

4. High School Girls' Cross Country Team – Erin von Housen finished 39th at the New England Championships (2021) and was State Champion in Track – 3000m last year (due to COVID, meetings were virtual so she was not recognized yet for this). Post-Season Awards: Erin von Housen (1st Team All-Division, 2nd Team All-Class, 3rd Team All-State); Anna LaCroix (2nd Team All-Division, Academic All-State); Catherine Allenson (3rd Team All-Division, Academic All-State); Julia Fortune (Academic All-State); Maria Mykhaylyshyn (Coach's Award) – Coach Scott Fortune.

5. High School Boys' Cross Country Team – Joe Golas finished 87th in the New England Championships (2021) – Post-Season Awards: Joe Golas (1st Team All-Southern Division, 2nd Team All-Class B), Cole Rinne (3rd Team All-Southern Division, 2nd Team All-Class B), Kyle Ackroyd (3rd Team All-Southern Division, 3rd Team All-Class B), Austin Thorp (3rd Team All-Southern Division, 3rd Team All-Class B). Coach Bill Haberek.

The Team won the Class B Championship in 2020 (due to COVID, meetings were virtual so the team was not invited to a meeting – some athletes are in attendance) - Team Members and Post-Season Awards: Sullivan Cummins (1st Team All-State, 1st Team All-Class B, 1st Team All-Southern Division), Joe Golas (1st Team All-Class B, 1st Team All-Southern Division), Finn Weeden (1st Team All-Class B, 1st Team All-Southern Division), CJ Elwell (2nd Team All-Class B, 3rd Team All-Southern Division), Kyle Ackroyd (3rd Team All-Class B), Cole Rinne (3rd Team All-Class B), Micah Nilsson, Will Steere (alternate) – Coach Bill Haberek.

6. High School Field Hockey Team - Division III Champs and DIII State Championship Runner-Up – (in attendance): Emily Jeffrey (2nd Team All-Division, All-Academic), Lia Kelvington (2nd Team All-Division), Molly Juenger (All Academic), Madison Dachowski (Honorable Mention All-Division), Megan Henry, Grace Gillett, Taylor Lambert, Laurel McIntosh (2nd Team All-Division, Division 3 Leading Scorer – tied with Chaia), McKenzie Allen (1st Team All-Division, All-Tournament Division 3), Chaia Elwell (1st Team All-

Division, Division 3 Leading Scorer – tied with Laurel, All-Tournament Division 3), Kaitlin Wojcik (1st Team All-Division, All-Tournament Division 3), Maya Weathers (All Rookie All-Division), Hannah Smith, Liliana D'Alfonso, Sarah Wojcik, Madelyn Lussier, Madeleine Barrette, Grace VanDale, Brogan Manni, Victoria Barrette, Sophia Gagner, Sierra Sorrentino, Rachael Barrette, Caitlyn Courtemanche, Emerson Flynn, Elinor Hammett, Hayden Norris, Janelle Parilla – Coaches Mariah Northrop, Ally Bobbin and Sarah Doyon.

7. High School Unified Volleyball won the Division 6 Championship – (in attendance): Grace Gagner, Mimi Cole, Gianna Pizzi, Joe Parrillo, Josephine Gladu, Jesse Rawlinson, Gavin Rawlinson, Cameron Randall – Coaches Gabe Dadamio, Pam Miller and Kim Rondeau.

Our High School Girls' and Boys' Soccer Teams have accomplished something that is very rare to achieve – both took the Division II Titles.

8. High School Girls' Soccer - Division II Champions (in attendance) – Team Roster and Post-Season Awards: Grace Abbott (2nd Team All-Division, Alice Sullivan Perseverance Award), Anabelle Pezzullo, Eva Simmons (1st Team All-Division and All-Academic), Bailey Patton, Althea Grandchamp, Brianna Denecour, Kali Romans, Lacy Miguel, Greenlee Stets, Brooke Kanaczet, Kaitlyn Rousseau, Tessa Azzinaro (3rd Team All-State, 1st Team All-Division), Noella Salaun, Mya Toro, Gabrielle Macaruso, Rachael Abbott (1st Team All-Division), Catalina Grandchamp, Tori Babineau (2nd Team All-Division), Riley Matarese, Reid DosSantos (3rd Team All-Division), Amanda Way, Elena DeAngelis, Ashley Simmons, Keira Pearce (2nd Team All-Division), Madison Richardson, Fiona Rocha, Emily Brown, Charlie Edmunds, Ella Dachowski, Ryann Denecour (1st Team All-State), Lindsay Maine, Sarah Viveiros, Fiona Mulligan, Makenzie Toro, Hazel O'Brien – Coaches Brittney Godbout, Jessica Hannegan, Scotty McGuire.

9. High School Boys' Soccer – Division II Champions (in attendance) – Team Roster and Post-Season Awards: Trevor Crowley, Corey Rainey (1st Team All-Division and All-Academic), Jason Nilsson (1st Team All-Division), William Edmunds, Ian Clark, Ethan Knowles, Mason Fortin, Mitchell Daniell, Seth Dube, Brendan Allamby (2nd Team All-Division), Logan DeGiacomo, Nathan Allen (2nd Team All-Division), Canyon Krom, Brandon Knowles, Dylan Blackburn, Kody Poplaski, Braydon Simpkins, Christian Resinger, Richard Lambert, Christopher Niziolek (3rd Team All-Division), Drew DeNoncour, Jack McCallig, Jakob Bennett, Guy Jakob Browning – Coaches Lester Ahern, John Linacre, Brittany Faragalli; Manager Riley Reed.

Chair Lyall thanked all for attending. Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Lisa Macaruso and it was VOTED: To take a 10-minute recess. In favor: Unanimous.

Chair Lyall reconvened the meeting at 7:40 PM.

VII. Public Forum

Chair Lyall informed all that this is when the public has the chance to speak on items that are not on the agenda tonight. She asked all to be considerate of others and please keep their comments to two minutes.

Michael Chambers from Charlestown thanked the Committee for giving him the opportunity to be heard. He asked, How many times does the School Committee have to say that CRT is not being taught in the classroom before people listen? How many times did the School Committee have to explain that the mask regulations come from the State before people listen? How many times does the Chairperson have to inform the audience about policies and procedures before people listen? Why do some people think their political agenda is more important than school business at School Committee meetings? During the past two meetings, the public had their say and then left en masse when the School Committee started to discuss school business. Some of them said that they could watch the rest of the meeting on YouTube. They said that they would not be able to speak during the rest of the meeting, but they were wrong. At the

last meeting, the public who stayed spoke on the agenda items. Maybe some people are just not prepared to listen to and discuss school business. Thank you for listening.

Tyler Champlin from Hopkinton informed the Committee that he was notified there is no sound on the video recording. Tyler was thanked for letting the IT person know.

VIII. Business

A. Acceptance of District Audit – Jim Wilkinson from Marcum was in attendance to explain the audit and answer questions. They are waiting for approval on the State's portal at which time he is prepared to submit a clean opinion. He was happy to report that they received complete cooperation from management; all requests were fulfilled in a timely manner. They are recommending improvements in cyber security but found no significant deficiencies or weaknesses. Tyler Champlin questioned the unassigned \$3.2 million which exceeds the District's policy. Can this money be moved elsewhere? Ned explained what has happened each year in Chariho. When the year concludes, they take this number and recycle that money that is left after the policy is covered and use it to offset the cost to the towns. We can have between 2-4% in the fund balance. When they come back to the School Committee, they will recommend how much to rollover to offset next year's budget. Jim added that once the budget is approved, this becomes part of the committed budget. He thanked management and the Audit Subcommittee for their time and assistance. The Superintendent added that the Audit Subcommittee has met and approved the District Audit. She recommended that the Committee accept the audit and place it on file.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Catherine Giusti and it was
VOTED: To accept the audit and place it on file. In favor: Unanimous.

B. Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Results – Dr. Comella noted that the results were released about three weeks ago. The tests assessed grades 5, 8 and 11; this year's data is only the second year of data. There was about a 6% drop but we outpaced the State by about 16% of those meeting or exceeding. Grade 11 had a 3.8% increase in students meeting or exceeding. We will be implementing a new science curriculum in 2025 per the State. Linda McAllister noted that the grade 11 results are definitely something to celebrate. She would like to see a list of other districts and how they did. Mike noted this is on the RIDE portal; Gina stated that she will include the link in her Friday update. Donna asked if this is conducted every year to which Mike replied "yes" but it is hard to judge just on two interrupted years of data. Karen wondered if it was a new text format. Mike responded that it was computer-based text to which Karen questioned if the entire test was computer-based including experiments; is this the normal practice? Mike explained that some labs were online but students are transitioning back to live labs. Linda McAllister noted that the 11th graders have the benefit of years before the pandemic but not so much for the younger students. Lisa asked if they would be meeting with the teachers as she would love for them to come back and share with the Committee. She questioned if security was provided around the labs as she would like to make sure the quality of work was their own. Mike said that he would check with Shawn but he believed the browser was locked down. Bill noted a concern about the 2025 date for the new science curriculum. Is the State telling us that ours is lousy and they will pick it as we are forced to follow the State's guidelines when we have had better curriculum than the State. Mike responded that he district will have to choose from the State list; it has to be vetted through the State. It is the same process as with ELA and Math. Gina added that we will be able to continue to work with Gems Net at the elementary level. Gary stated that he would be interested to see which students in the High School were in-person versus DL. He noted that the New York Chancellor stated that 65% of students of color never met reading levels and the State of New York finds that acceptable. He is not happy with that nor is he happy that 50% of our kids are meeting standards; 54% is not good to him. Gail from Ashaway asked what this is attributed to. Gary replied that it is difficult to answer as we have only two data points to work with but he will investigate. This is a problem nationally not just here. Our High School numbers are quite good compared to the rest of the State. Gail stated that she feels the internet is the downfall; she would prefer they were looking in a book. Dr. Comella was thanked.

C. ESSER III Plan – Superintendent Picard presented a draft copy of the plan. She outlined the process she followed which included reaching out to stakeholders to see what their preference was. She also met with the three towns and School Improvement Teams for feedback on the \$2.6 million we will get. She will be submitting the plan to the State and expects to receive feedback from them in January. The highest priority will be Math and student services. She would like to move the plan forward. Craig made a motion, which was seconded by Catherine, to accept the plan as presented for submission to RIDE. Lisa asked that Gina explain what ESSER is to which Gina replied that ESSER stands for Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief. Lisa asked that she talk to them about what funds in this plan point to the data they just discussed and improvement. Gina pointed out where funding is being requested for instructional strategies to build up math instruction. They will do this by utilizing math specialists. Craig asked what the difference was between the first copy they received and the revised copy to which Gina noted that the revised copy includes one position for student support. There is an increase of 5.9 FTE in ESSER which is part of the budget. Craig asked that this be explained to the Town Councils to which Gina responded that we actually have cuts in staffing. Craig wondered what happens when the federal money dries up; will these positions dry up as well. Gina replied that the District will have funds till 2024. The funds will be used to build capacity of school-based teams – instructional strategies. This is kind of like our Fellows which change. We will prioritize based on our needs. Bill wondered if the numbers were hard and fast; can they only be used for these sections to which the Superintendent replied that they can make an amendment if prices/costs are different. Lisa noted that she absolutely supports the choices. Craig commented that he feels the smartboards are antiquated and questioned the life expectancy of the Promethean to which Gary replied that he just researched it; they can expect 10 years of life. Tyler asked if the District has the funds through 2024. Gina explained that they must be spent by September 2024 to which Tyler asked if this is the total cost over three years; is this what the school would be budgeting over the next three years? He requested a breakdown of what is a need versus what is a want – would this be coming out of the budget? The Superintendent explained that she could do this at a budget meeting in January. Almost all is a need. This will accelerate the work we were going to do because we will have money sooner. Tyler thanked the Superintendent and Committee.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Catherine Giusti and it was
VOTED: To accept the plan as presented for submission to RIDE. In favor: Unanimous.

D. Chariho/Hope Valley Pre-K Tuition Rate Increase – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the Chariho/Hope Valley Pre-K tuition rate increase per the memo from Ned Draper dated December 2, 2021. Craig made a motion, which was seconded by Gary, to approve the Superintendent's recommendation. Lisa noted she has concerns. There was a time when they discussed including preschool in their budget. She has a problem raising rates for families as she does not want families to not be able to send children to preschool. Gina noted that she completely understands this but we have been supplementing the program from the budget. Ned added that they implemented a discount program for payment to help take the sting out. To make the program more sustainable, we have to increase the rates. Compared to the community and the outstanding service we provide, we are still reasonable. Lisa replied that the District has had to send some to collections. Our paying students are models; these kids are providing a service. She will not support the increase and would like to wait and see if they can find the money. Gary asked when was the last time rates were increased to which Ned responded more than four or five years ago. Gary stated that he completely understands Lisa's concerns but at the same time there are operational cost increases. He would like to see more data; number of families receiving assistance and information on delinquent payments. They need to tease through the data; who struggles versus those who can pay and just don't. He oversees a similar program at URI. All programs like this have a price increase every year so they should look five years ahead and project operational costs. endawnis stated that she respects the request for more data. Linda McAllister commented that she could not find information on public preschools when she researched this. She does feel for these families but she did find that the lowest rates in the State were \$3,000 a year with the highest at \$37,000 a year so at \$2,400 a year we are reasonable. She agreed more information would be good. Bill noted that they will need to pass a budget and we are doing the best we can. It has been at least four years since there was an increase. Gary made a good point; do a five-year plan. He is not sure how we would fund this program

when it is not yet mandated. Go forward with the increase tonight and work on a five-year plan. endawnis added that she, too, would be happy with going forward with a five-year plan; she supports learning at the youngest age possible. Chair Lyall recommended that the Committee consider tabling this item. Tyler questioned if the District currently had projections. If you are talking a 10% increase, \$4,000 won't offset our budget much. He has two kids who attended Hope Valley Preschool and it was phenomenal. We can't compare it to a private school as we do not have separate building costs to pay for. Mr. Liguori's point is excellent; do it over five years. It is important to have fiscal data. Ned projected the cost to be around \$50,000 next year to which Tyler responded that \$5,000 won't offset our budget – look at a long-term plan. Craig rescinded his motion and Linda McAllister rescinded her second.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Lisa Macaruso and it was VOTED: To table this item for a future agenda. In favor: Chambers, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Lyall, Macaruso, McAllister, Reynolds and Spears. Opposed: Day. The motion carried by a vote of 9 in favor with 1 opposed.

IX. Consent Agenda Items

Chair Lyall requested clarifying questions or items to be pulled. Craig pulled A-1, A-2 and A-3. He then acknowledged the donations and thanked the donors.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Catherine Giusti and it was VOTED: To move the balance of the Consent Agenda Items. In favor: Unanimous.

- B. Transfers – Approved.
- C. Bill Review – Accepted.
- D. Budget Summary – None at this time.
- E. Balance Sheet – None at this time.
- F. Personnel Actions – Staff Updates included in FYI.
- G. Permission to Issue Bids/Request Quotes – None at this time.
- H. Permission to Award Contracts – Awarded the following:
 - 1. Middle School Gym Air Handling Unit (AHU) Replacement to Automatic Temperature Controls (RI Master Price Agreement (MPA) vendor #136) using \$175,000 in ESSER II Funds (subject to amendment approval) and at least \$17,000 in capital budget funds (capital budget funds will be used for what ESSER II does not fund) per the memo from Ned Draper dated December 9, 2021.
- I. Home Instruction – Action taken in Executive Session.
- J. Grants – None at this time.
- K. Donations – Accepted the following:
 - 1. Donation from SeaScape Lawn Care, Inc. of \$200.00 to the High School Floral Design Program for supplies.
 - 2. Donation from Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (Madison Burke, Education and Outreach Manager) of three (3) compost bins to Richmond School.
 - 3. Donation from Riverhead Building Supply (Kevin Muise, General Manager, Richmond) of miscellaneous building supplies/lumber, valued at \$1,025.37, to the CTC Construction Program.
 - 4. Donation from Westerly Home Depot of \$1,000 to the Hope Valley School Gingerbread Express Program.

A-1. Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Catherine Giusti and it was VOTED: To approve the Executive Session Minutes of November 9, 2021 – Approval of Executive Session Minutes of October 26, 2021 (minutes not sealed). In favor: Chambers, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Lyall, Macaruso, McAllister, Reynolds and Spears. Abstained (due to absence): Day. The motion carried by a vote of 9 in favor with 1 abstention.

A-2. Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Catherine Giusti and it was VOTED: To approve the Executive Session Minutes of November 9, 2021 – NEA ESP MOA – Minutes unsealed November 9, 2021. Chambers, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Lyall, Macaruso, McAllister, Reynolds and Spears. Abstained (due to absence): Day. The motion carried by a vote of 9 in favor with 1 abstention.

A-3. Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Catherine Giusti and it was VOTED: To approve the Regular Session Minutes of November 9, 2021. In favor: Unanimous.

X. Reports

A. Subcommittee Reports – None at this time.

B. Superintendent's Report

1. Champlin Grant – Superintendent Picard reported that the District received the Champlin Grant - \$67,209 for the renovation of the High School Band Room. Hats off to all involved – Katie, Susie and the High School Team.

C. Coming Events were highlighted. The Superintendent noted that there were 330 at the last vaccination clinic. The High School Chorus Concert is this Friday. Those planning to attend should register with Ms. Dowding.

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

Lisa stated that she would appreciate it if they could have preschool data for one of the budget workshops.

Bill noted that he requested the SAF Report at the last meeting. He hasn't gotten it yet so he is requesting it again. He would like to have this by the January meeting.

Craig asked Ned if he could provide information on what Charlestown has paid towards the Campus 2010 Bond compared to what the town would have paid if they paid based on student enrollment and not a three-way split.

XII. Adjournment

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Linda McAllister and it was

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 8:52 PM. In favor: Unanimous.

Donna Sieczkiewicz, District Clerk