

Chariho School Committee Meeting
Regular Session Minutes – April 12, 2022

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

Administrators and Others Attendance: Superintendent Gina Picard, Assistant Superintendent Michael Comella, Director of Administration and Finance Ned Draper, Attorney for the School Committee Jon Anderson accompanied by Attorney Andrew Lentz and School Committee Clerk Donna Sieczkiewicz.

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

Chair Lyall called the meeting of the Chariho School Committee, held in the Chariho High School Library, to order at 6:00 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 Ryan Callahan 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)(1) for the purpose of discussion and/or action pertaining to an individual's job performance or character (Superintendent's Evaluation); under the authority of R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(2) for the purpose of discussion and/or action pertaining to litigation/legal update (1. Superior Court CA No. WC-2020-0213 – Kelsey Zell v. Chariho Regional School District et al., 2. C.A. No. PC-2019-10870 – Town of Barrington, et al. v. Barrington School Committee et al., and 3. RGB) 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 Home Instruction Requests and 2. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of March 22, 2022 – Approval 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

The Committee returned to open session at 6:51 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 an individual's job performance or character (Superintendent's Evaluation) remain sealed.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was VOTED: That minutes pertaining to an individual's job performance or character (Superintendent's Evaluation) remain sealed. In favor: Unanimous.

2. Superintendent Picard recommended that minutes pertaining to litigation/legal update (Superior Court CA No. WC-2020-0213 – Kelsey Zell v. Chariho Regional School District et al.) remain sealed.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was VOTED: That minutes pertaining to litigation/legal update (Superior Court CA No. WC-2020-0213 – Kelsey Zell v. Chariho Regional School District et al.) remain sealed. In favor: Abbott, Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Lyall, Macaruso and Spears. Recused: Reynolds. The motion carried by a vote of 10 in favor with 1 recusal.

3. Superintendent Picard recommended that minutes pertaining to litigation/legal update (C.A. No. PC-2019-10870 – Town of Barrington, et al. v. Barrington School Committee et al.) remain sealed.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was VOTED: That minutes pertaining to litigation/legal update (C.A. No. PC-2019-10870 – Town of Barrington, et al. v. Barrington School Committee et al.) remain sealed. In favor: Unanimous.

4. Superintendent Picard recommended that minutes pertaining to litigation/legal update (RGB) remain sealed.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was VOTED: That minutes pertaining to litigation/legal update (RGB) remain sealed. In favor: Unanimous.

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

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was VOTED: That minutes relating to the privacy of students and their records (Approval of Home Instruction Requests) remain sealed. In favor: Unanimous.

V. Disclosure of Executive Session Votes

Vice Chair Catherine Giusti noted the first vote taken in executive session, approval of executive session minutes of March 22, 2022 – Home Instruction Requests, passed with Abbott, Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Lyall, Macaruso, Reynolds and Spears voting in favor.

The second vote, approval of Home Instruction Requests for tonight, passed with Abbott, Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Lyall, Macaruso, Reynolds and Spears voting in favor.

The final vote, to return to open session, was approved with Abbott, Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Lyall, Macaruso and Spears voting in favor.

VI. Recognition – The following were congratulated:

1. 2022 SkillsUSA State Competition Winners: Gold Medals: Donato Cabral, Gary Gardiner, Zain Harrington, Sean von Housen (TeamWorks); Hannah Dion (Welding Sculpture); Adriana Abby (Architectural Drafting); Edmund Comire (Firefighting); Fiona Smith (Criminal Justice); Trey Lazauskas (Welding); Noah Dinucci (Carpentry); James Harding (State Pin Design).

Silver Medals: Danielle Aubee (Criminal Justice); Elena DeAngelis (Job Skill Demonstration A); Caleb Caswell (Carpentry); Bethany Chace, Ava Dower, Nickolas Fox, Alanna Healy (Health Knowledge Bowl); Trevor Crowley, Kelly Bentzel, Shea Smith (Crime Scene Investigation).

Bronze Medals: Lindsey Petit (Medical Math); Cole Rinne (Marine Service Technology); Matthew Beaudry (Technical Drafting); Mitchell Daniell (Industrial Motor Control); Elijah Henley (Electrical Construction Wiring); Kaitlyn Burns (Advertising Design).

2. Emma Elderkin, Chariho High School Mental Health Club organizer, on being recognized by Channel 10 for sharing her experiences and supporting others through the formation of this Club. Bill Day noted that he watched Emma live and was very impressed with the way she handled herself. Her parents and the community should be impressed.

VII. Public Forum

Jim Sullivan from Charlestown noted the great job the School Committee is doing. The school system is great. He was a former teacher and School Committee member and he is asking the public whether or not he should run again for the School Committee. This is a unique request to the community and he would welcome their input. Please email him if you support his decision. He has his email noted on flyers he brought. He wants to keep CRT out of the school system. There is no problem yet and he doesn't want it to happen. He wants to foster collaboration. Parents are not domestic terrorists and they should not be made to feel this way in this critical time in a child's

development. CRT is apparently not taking place here and he is proud of those who have kept it out. He hopes he gets feedback. God Bless America and our school system.

Etta Zasloff from Hopkinton stated she is a retired Chariho teacher and is here this evening representing the League of Women Voters. Graduation requirements are under review by RIDE. On April 21st the League is sponsoring a meeting as people complained that the closest hearing was in Potter Hall at URI and there is no parking there. There are many issues the communities need to be involved in. She shared a hand-out and noted that the League of Women Voters is about educating the community and they will have information from RIDE.

Richmond resident Goldie Williams stated there is CRT and gender issues here at Chariho. Special needs students just get pushed out to graduate before they are ready. It happened to her sons.

VIII. Business

A. K-8 Mathematics Curriculum Revision – Superintendent Picard noted that this item was discussed at the last meeting and a vote should have been taken to approve the K-8 Mathematics Curriculum Revision. She recommended approval of the K-8 Mathematics Curriculum revision.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was
VOTED: To approve the K-8 Mathematics Curriculum revision. In favor: Unanimous.

B. RIDE Kindergarten Jumpstart 2022 Summer Enrichment Grant Application – The Superintendent stated that enclosed in the packet was a draft copy of the application Katie Kirakosian is in the process of submitting for approximately \$19,942.28. As applications are due April 29, 2022 and our next meeting is not until May 10th, she recommended approval to submit the RIDE Kindergarten Jumpstart 2022 Summer Enrichment Grant by the application deadline.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was
VOTED: To approve submission of the RIDE Kindergarten Jumpstart 2022 Summer Enrichment Grant by the application deadline. In favor: Unanimous.

C. RIDE CTE Teacher Grant for LEAs with RIDE-Approved CTE Programs – The Superintendent reported that Director Auth and Katie Kirakosian received notice that RIDE has decided to leverage part of the secondary Perkins V Reserve Funds to support the certification and training of CTE teachers. LEAs may apply for these funds to pay for the costs associated with providing professional learning for CTE teachers and for reimbursing teachers for the cost of certification to teach their CTE programs. The deadline for submission was Friday, April 8, 2022. She recommended approval of the submission of this application to RIDE. Chair Lyall questioned if Districts normally get this to which the Superintendent responded that they did put it out last year. We do not always get what we ask for.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was
VOTED: To approve submission of the RIDE CTE Teacher Grant Application for LEAs with RIDE-Approved CTE Programs. In favor: Unanimous.

D. Allocation of Seats on the Chariho School Committee – Superintendent Picard stated that this item was requested by Bill Day. We have received an analysis and legal opinion from Attorney Andrew Lentz (associate of Jon Anderson). She concurs with Attorney Lentz and recommends that the allocation of seats on the Chariho School Committee should remain at twelve with four (4) seats for Hopkinton, four (4) seats for Richmond and four (4) seats for Charlestown, in order to yield the most equal representation in proportion to population for all three (3) towns in the District based on the data gathered by the federal decennial census from 2020. Attorney Lentz reviewed all of the calculations and both he and Jon Anderson have confidence that the mathematical calculations are correct. He sent a copy of the letter to each Town Solicitor. Richmond concurred with their analysis,

Hopkinton had no issues with the calculations and the Charlestown Town Solicitor declined to comment until after the Town Council could review and discuss it. The statute requires no lower than ten and no greater than fourteen. He reviewed and explained the maximum deviation and the lowest deviation and it was not difficult to see that the number should be the same as it is now – twelve. Bill noted his appreciation to Attorney Lentz and Attorney Anderson for taking the time on this for the sick lawyers who took this on. We have worked together as a Committee since he has been on but there are people who live and die by the Chariho Act. This was required and he sympathized with both attorneys with the amount of time that was spent on this. Donna noted her appreciation to Bill for bringing this to their attention. When she first came on it was 4, 4 and 3 and they made a decision to equal it out. It was a gentleman's agreement. Bill clarified Donna's comments. It was a lawsuit brought on by the Town of Richmond and had nothing to do with the Chariho Act. The problems with the Chariho Act fall back on the Towns. Donna noted that if the population shifts, they could go back to unequal representation to which Attorney Lentz replied that the statute requires that after every census (10 years) there is a stipulation that this be done. If a town wants it done sooner (5 years), that town would get the bill if there is no material difference in the towns.

E. FY23 Budget Adjustments – Superintendent Picard stated that on April 5th the voters let us know that the budget was too high. She has provided a list of cuts with some items moved to ESSER III. ESSER will sunset with the science curriculum being mandated so we will have to fund this. She also made a shift in capital projects and will monitor the Charlestown School floor. She removed the Ashaway playground from the list as it was less of a priority. She also removed the Richmond fence as the town is putting in a rotary and the fence would have had to be moved so she is holding on this. Both items will be considered next year. She has spoken with Rep. Kennedy who has worked tirelessly to restore our Transportation Categorical Aid funding. He is pretty sure it will be put back in the Governor's budget but we will not know until June. She will review her list of proposed adjustments and suggested the Committee begin discussion on cuts. If cuts are made, she recommends that the Committee recess so that Ned can calculate the final numbers. She reviewed the list of proposed adjustments. Technology shift of \$50,000 to ESSER III, reduce labor addition by \$80,000, move .5 CMS Dean to ESSER III, reduce capital investment of \$68,473 to FY24, reduce 1 late bus/bus at a cost of \$64,800, reduce a .5 TA at CMS for \$21,081, reduce the substitute allocation by \$24,500, move Math Specialist services to ESSER III for a total of \$120,607, reduce two teaching positions (one at Richmond grade 3; one at Charlestown grade four) for \$160,000, reduce two additional teaching positions for a total of \$160,000, reduce the cost of living adjustment (COLA) by \$230,000. Catherine questioned the move of .5 dean to ESSER; will this bring a whole dean to which Gina replied "yes". Karen clarified that the dean will now be fully funded by ESSER so we are just pushing it off. The Superintendent commented that she is putting a band-aid on it. If the dean is essential, we will have to fund it the following year. She does not want to do anything that will impact the safety and well-being of children. She recommended the Committee consider the items up to and including moving the Math Specialist into ESSER and hold on the other items unless we are level funded. She would like to safeguard staff and programs. None of these cuts were easy but we have to consider the reality of level funding. Donna noted that they still could have one more referendum to get to level funding so she would like to not cut everything tonight. We can hopefully get voters out for the new budget. Ryan questioned the background on how this list was made. Gina replied that they have already cut supplies by 10%. ESSER funding is a gift and it has enhanced our programming. They looked at enrollment and with inflation, we are already too tight. Fund balance has been cut down to bare bones and is at the minimum allowable amount. It will be tougher next year. Bill stated that they do not want to take a chance on insulting voters by not listening to them. The Superintendent is comfortable with these cuts. Richmond had more voters than ever out and Hopkinton has never passed a budget. Charlestown usually supports it but they did not support this one like they have in the past. Everyone is hurting. We should take the Superintendent's recommendation. We will get through this. Yes, we are kicking the can down the road but if the State would give us what we are supposed to get, we would probably not need to cut anything. We have had over \$800,000 in transfers since school started. We have the ability to move money

around. We need to get a budget passed this time around. He did not support the last budget and can't support this one if they don't cut at least \$500,000 per the Superintendent's recommendation. Donna did not feel like she was insulting voters. We acted upon a recommendation from the public. We have a bare bones budget and will be looking for money. We can cut some but she does not want to penalize teachers. We need to operate the district while maintain the quality. There was a major campaign to vote the budget down. Craig stated that the voters in Charlestown passed the budget by a 2:1 margin so he will listen to them. He will honor whatever the Committee decides to do but when the ESSER money dries up, we will have to fund these things out of taxpayer money. We need to use wisdom in our choices here. Catherine explained the issue with transportation categorical aid. When Chariho fully regionalized, we were offered a bonus, then the State took this money away. In its place, they gave us transportation categorical aid determined by a formula and they keep taking money away from this. We need to contact the other elected officials to help secure this money for us. It belongs to us. Jeremy Palmer from Hopkinton feels his opinion is just as important as everyone else's. He is given one opportunity to provide a quote to someone; the District has numerous attempts to pass a budget. A lot of taxpayers have their minds made up. It is too late. Goldie Williams from Richmond commented that there is a reduction in students so why are you asking for more money. Kids are leaving and going to Charter Schools; the education is a lot better so parents are considering it. Tyler Champlin from Hopkinton stated that he has been in contact with Ned this week. This is what he does for a living – numbers, taxes. The e-code breaks done the budget by every line item; forty-nine pages. He sympathizes with the District. Inflation is hurting everyone. He looked at the last three years. He looked at the approved budget to what was actually spent and found an \$850,000 variance (underspent). We are out 8 months of this year so he can understand being under by \$415,000. Staffing should be the absolute last place to go. You are over in Rubbish Removal, Workshops, Conferences – nothing spent in this item the last three years. Don't cut teachers. They do a phenomenal job. He will gladly sit down with anyone and show where money can be found. You could save \$1.5 million; just look a little harder. Ned suggested people go to the website. They put out a pdf of a list of budget items that vary by 10% or greater (i.e. conferences, student activities funds). There has been next to no travel the last two years because of COVID. Also unique to Chariho, if for some reason there is money left over at the end of the year, it is recycled (rolled over) to the next year. That is why we were comfortable going to 2% in the fund balance. There is a lot of criticism about healthcare. We usually budget for family plans. We have gone to this line item and transferred funds to take care of our increase in fuel oil. Gina added that she put a freeze on the budget. She would be happy to sit with Mr. Champlin as she appreciates the extra eyes. Tyler did note one item over budget was tuition for special education students; there is a 50% increase in two years. Jon Anderson explained that there are some students placed out of district by Chariho but DCYF decides to move children and the school district has no control over that. All it takes is one child. He has one district where a child was moved by DCYF to a boarding school out of state and the cost is over \$400,000 for this one child. Tyler questioned how do districts budget for this and Jon replied it is a huge problem in this State for every district. Massachusetts picks up the tab after a certain amount but Rhode Island does not. Gina added that tuition is often paid at the end of the year so that is why it looks like there is a huge surplus. Bill commented that some people are talking about cutting teachers but he wants it out there that they are not advocating to cut teachers. He wants to clarify that the \$500,000 in cuts does not affect staff. He will not support cutting teachers. Tyler commented that the Committee makes a cut of \$500,000 and it goes back to the towns, gets defeated and it is then level-funded. Why go back to the well? Make the cuts in other places than staffing and level fund it now. George clarified that he worked for DCYF and his practice was to just bill districts for the regular education rate. Gary felt the speaker made a good point. The recommendation is to cut \$500,000 – up through the Math Specialist line item and if the budget doesn't pass on May 5th, the next move would be to level fund. We need to be clear that the budget going forward, if all the recommended cuts are approved, does not cut staff. Lisa suggested they start by making motions for cuts. Catherine made a motion to reduce the budget by \$50,000 by shifting technology. Lisa seconded the motion. Christine Austin, a resident of Hopkinton, stated her hand was up for public comments and she was not called on. She has

something she wants to say. Ryan called for a point of order as there is a motion on the floor. Christine was asked to hold her comments until after the vote and she will be allowed to speak.

Catherine Giusti made a motion, seconded by Lisa Macaruso and it was VOTED: To reduce the budget by \$50,000 by shifting technology to ESSER III. In favor: Unanimous.

Christine noted that she was a former teacher at Chariho for twelve years. The public has spoken. Even though you are proposing a cut of \$500,000, if the budget goes down you will cut from the children. Not one cut has been made from the top down. How many deans are needed? The amount of administrators in the District is insane. Where are the cuts from the top? That is why we are voting no. Goldie Williams added that the District fights with parents of kids with special needs. The parents know more than the Director of Special Education. Catherine made a motion, which was seconded by Ryan, to move .5 of the dean position, a total of \$89,597, to ESSER III. endawnis commented that considering the mental health issues, she will vote against moving this money to ESSER. She applauded the student who has advocated for the mental health club. Bill noted that they are not removing it, just funding it differently.

Catherine Giusti made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was VOTED: To remove \$89,597 from the budget by moving .5 of a dean position to ESSER III. In favor: Abbott, Callahan, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Lyall, Macaruso and Reynolds. Opposed: Chambers and Spears. The motion carried by a vote of 9 in favor with 2 opposed.

Catherine made a motion, which was seconded by Donna, to reduce the budget by \$68,473 for capital projects that can be moved to FY24 or funding has been secured for the purchase. Lisa noted the following are to be moved: Ashaway playground, Richmond fence and the CTC compressor. She questioned if the fence was a safety issue to which the Superintendent responded that it is but she wants to wait until the rotary is done as it would have to be removed while this work was in progress. CTC found money to purchase the compressor.

Catherine Giusti made a motion, seconded by Donna Chambers and it was VOTED: To reduce the budget by \$68,473 for capital projects that can be moved to FY24 or funding has been secured for the purchase. In favor: Abbott, Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Lyall, Reynolds and Spears. Opposed: Macaruso. The motion carried by a vote of 10 in favor with 1 opposed.

Catherine Giusti made a motion, seconded by Lisa Macaruso and it was VOTED: To reduce the budget by \$64,800 by cutting one bus or late bus. In favor: Unanimous.

Catherine made a motion, which was seconded by Ryan, to reduce a .5 TA position at the Middle School, a savings of \$21,081. Lisa questioned if this was actually a vacant position that just won't be filled to which the Superintendent responded "yes".

Catherine Giusti made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was VOTED: To reduce a .5 TA position at the Middle School, a savings of \$21,081. In favor: Unanimous.

Catherine made a motion, which was seconded by Ryan, to reduce the substitute allocation by \$24,500. Catherine questioned if the District would be reducing the amount that is paid to subs or a reduction by hiring less. Gina replied that the District will not be reducing the amount we pay; we anticipate a reduction in hiring. Donna asked, even though they raised the amount, are we still not getting subs because we aren't competitive? The Superintendent responded that we are competitive; other districts are not getting them either. Gary questioned the line item being assigned to the Middle School, will this be the only school cut to which Gina answered that this is not just a

cut to the Middle School; it is district wide. Ned added that he assigned the cut to that line item because it was much larger than the others but they will reduce where needed. Ann Marie Louzon from Charlestown questioned if building subs would be cut to which Gina replied “no”.

Catherine Giusti made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was
VOTED: To cut the substitute allocation by \$24,500. In favor: Unanimous.

Catherine made a motion, which was seconded by Ryan, to reduce the budget \$120,607 by moving Math Specialist services to ESSER III. Donna requested an explanation; is this a new service to which the Superintendent replied that it is not. We already have Math Specialists. We won't get three additional, only two and will maintain one with ESSER. When you have something in a federal grant, you pay higher retirement costs. Donna felt she would be voting against this if the Superintendent is not comfortable with it. Lisa clarified that they are keeping Math Specialists just changing the funding source. She asked where they might be able to recover this. Gina responded that she hopes, in essence that we can think differently if we get kids back to where they need to be. George asked for an explanation on the fringe benefit at 27% to which the Superintendent noted that this is the federal requirement. George wanted to make sure there was no increase in any account. Craig stated that he is not a proponent of kicking the can down the road. Years back they kicked the can down the road for Ashaway windows and we paid higher utility costs because they were older windows. We need to get the Transportation Categorical Aid that is due us. Gina noted that Rep. Kennedy feels good about the conversations he has had but the check is not signed. Best case scenario is we would know by the end of May. Donna noted her confusion – we will have to find funding for this next year. Bill replied that they have transferred over \$800,000 this school year. We have the flexibility. Let's not nitpick to the point that we lose the budget vote. We voted for the Superintendent; let's support her and hope that the taxpayers will support us. George asked if ESSER funds maintain the maintenance of effort to which Ned responded that they do not require maintaining the maintenance of effort.

Catherine Giusti made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was
VOTED: To reduce the budget \$120,607 by moving Math Specialist services to ESSER III. In favor: Unanimous.

Bill made a motion, which was seconded by Ryan, to remove \$80,000 from the budget by reducing the labor addition. Lisa asked what the impact would be to which Superintendent Picard explained that the \$80,000 was placed in the budget for any elementary staffing needs that might arise. Donna added that it addresses the need at the elementary level to maintain smaller classes. Lisa clarified that they are not reducing any current staff if we cut this \$80,000. The Superintendent noted that if this cut is approved, a total of \$519,000 will have been cut from the budget.

William Day made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was
VOTED: To remove \$80,000 from the budget by reducing the labor addition. In favor: Unanimous (Abbott was not in attendance for the vote).

Bill made a motion to cut the budget by \$50,000 for field trips. Ryan seconded the motion for discussion purposes. Catherine asked if this cut would mean that children will not go on any field trips to which the Superintendent commented that they will keep the K-5 required field trips but this will remove SkillsUSA and FBLA trips. Catherine noted that she will not support this. Christine Austin agreed with Catherine. These experiences are priceless. Ryan noted that he will not support the removal of \$50,000 for field trips.

William Day made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was
VOTED: To cut the budget by \$50,000 for field trips. In favor: None. Opposed: Unanimous. The motion failed.

Discussion then centered on giving up School Committee stipends. Ryan stated that they cannot vote on their own stipends to which Jon Anderson explained that the problem is you cannot vote them back in as you cannot vote yourself a raise. Last time this was done you had to wait four years before they could be put back. Ryan asked how much is the total of their stipends to which Ned responded just over \$24,000. Louise Dinsmore from Richmond thanked the Committee for the hard work they are putting in. She is a part of the Richmond Republican Town Committee and she voted down this budget. Giving the District three times to bring a budget to voters is ridiculous. She is really flabbergasted as to why no cuts have been made at the top of the totem pole. The School Committee should be asking for cuts at the top. She does not want to see teachers or field trips cut. You have to look at everything. Work with vendor contracts. We do not want cuts that will change the student experience. There are responsible things to look at – everything from the top down. Betsy Alvarez from Ashaway noted that she is both a parent and a teacher and she is speaking as a parent to talk about administration. We work together as a team and administrators are always available. They work long hours. Even through conflicts, we all work together. Administrators are needed and we are at bare bones with staff. The make-up of schools has changed. Donna noted her appreciation for what Betsy said. It is insulting to think of anyone cutting a salary or job. She would not consider cutting one cent from any administrator. Bill added that he has been here a long time and the staff is no larger than when he started on the School Committee. In fact, it is less. What a lot of individuals don't understand is there are a lot of state regulations we have to abide by; so many guideline impediments. If we were overstaffed, he would be the first one to tell the public this as he tells the truth. Other school districts change classifications of people. He takes exception to anyone who thinks we are overstaffed; they should not make statements they cannot support. Louise noted her thanks but asked that they look at level-funding their positions. Craig stated that elections or votes are a roll of the dice. You came out in force but half the room here tonight thinks the opposite. Some of us have a belief that it will get passed. We have the luxury to get another shot. I represent Charlestown who voted 2:1 in favor of the budget. Christine Austin replied that Charlestown taxes of half of Richmond's and Hopkinton's to which Craig responded that we chose to live in Charlestown because of the taxes. He has fought for good budgets and has watched his two northern neighbors do nothing about their problem. Catherine asked if they should recess to which the issue of School Committee stipends returned. Ned stated that the total is \$24,250 to which Ryan made a motion, seconded by Gary, to cut School Committee stipends from the budget for a total of \$24,250. Lisa commented that a positive impact of this \$24,250 is that their 1/12 is taxed so they only get about \$1,300. When we put it back in for the kids, they get the full \$24,250. Bill noted that the motion will impact 8 new individuals in this election cycle. We are having trouble getting people to run. The Town Councils have no problem keeping theirs and they do half the work. We need to think about future members. He feels this is short-sighted as people are not beating the doors down to take the disrespect they have been taking. Donna stated that she believes that for the 8 people wishing to run, if the \$1,300 is the incentive, she is not sure we want them on the School Committee. She does not believe they are there for the stipend. This shows a good faith effort so that people will support the budget. Craig noted that he said the same thing two years ago. What if they take the money and donate it back yourself to which Jon explained that he served 11 years on the School Committee in Pawtucket and did not take the stipend. He is concerned, however, that if a person takes it and gives it back, the person will still have to pay taxes on it. It is a better way to just cut it. Gary commented that when he ran, he did not realize there was a stipend. He also did not think he would get a MacBook Air. He has one at home he can use. We can give these back to which the Chair replied that keeping school-related issues on a personal computer is a problem. Jon noted that he, too, would express concerns with this.

Ryan Callahan made a motion, seconded by Gary Liguori and it was

VOTED: To remove School Committee stipends and cut the budget by \$24,250. In favor: Abbott, Callahan, Chambers, Giusti, Liguori, Lyall, Macaruso, Reynolds and Spears. Abstained: Day and Louzon. The motion carried by a vote of 9 in favor with 2 abstentions.

Gary suggested the district downgrade to Chromebooks to which Gina responded that the computers are leased. Our CTE pathways require us to purchase Apples as by the time we add all we need to on a Chromebook, the cost would be about the same. We have a Technology Committee that is chaired by Shawn Cole and they just met again for analysis. Ryan asked how many open positions remain. The Superintendent replied not many certified and maybe three custodial and a few teacher assistants. Lisa asked what the \$230,000 cost of living impact would be on staff. Ned noted the District has two significant union contracts up for negotiation and it will impact staff.

Catherine Giusti made a motion, seconded by Donna Chambers and it was
VOTED: That the Committee recess at 9:16 PM to allow Ned time to recalculate figures. In favor: Unanimous.

Chair Lyall called the meeting back to order at 9:35 PM.

F. Adoption of FY23 Budget – Superintendent Picard recommended adoption of the FY23 Budget in the amount of \$68,911,694 (total budget including operating, capital, special revenue, enterprise and debt service expenditures, but does not include revenue of \$11,612,622) with the member towns' contribution to be \$55,230,097, an increase of 0.96% with the impact to each town as follows: Charlestown - an increase of 1.74%, Richmond – an increase of 1.2%; and Hopkinton – an increase of .21% (before state aid). After state aid, the impact is: Charlestown – an increase of 1.92%; Richmond – an increase of 1.32%; and Hopkinton – an increase of .29%. Chair Lyall stated that total cuts this evening amount to \$543,308 and she noted her appreciation to the Committee and Administrators for all their work. George questioned what would happen if it is rejected again to which the Superintendent responded that, per the Chariho Act, the School Committee has one more time to go back to the voters before July.

Ryan Callahan made a motion, seconded by Catherine Giusti and it was
VOTED: To adopt the FY23 Budget in the amount of \$68,911,694 (total budget including operating, capital, special revenue, enterprise and debt service expenditures, but does not include revenue of \$11,612,622) with the member towns' contribution to be \$55,230,097, an increase of 0.96% with the impact to each town as follows: Charlestown - an increase of 1.74%, Richmond – an increase of 1.2%; and Hopkinton – an increase of .21% (before state aid). In favor: Unanimous.

G. All-Day Budget Referendum Date – Superintendent Picard recommended holding the All-Day Referendum on Thursday, May 5, 2022. She noted that we have confirmed this date with the three Town Clerks to ensure there are no conflicts.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was
VOTED: To hold the All-Day Budget Referendum on Thursday, May 5, 2022. In favor: Unanimous.

IX. Consent Agenda Items

Chair Lyall asked if there were any items to be pulled. Craig pulled A-1 and A-2. He acknowledged the donations and thanked the donors.

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

- B. Transfers – Approved.
- C. Bill Review – Accepted.
- D. Budget Summary – As per enclosed.
- E. Balance Sheet – As per enclosed.
- F. Personnel Actions
- G. Permission to Issue Bids/Request Quote – None at this time.

H. Permission to Award Contracts – Awarded the following:

1. Delivery and Installation of Dur-A-Flex Hybri-Flex System Epoxy Flooring to Above All Epoxy Flooring LLC in the amount of \$27,268.00. The District has chosen not to award the alternate (removal of existing carpet) but to have the work done by the District's maintenance department.
2. Rubbish Removal and Recycling Bid to MTG Disposal, LLC for the 2022-2023, 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 years using the rental and pickup rates as listed on the enclosed. MTG will extend their pricing to the municipalities of Charlestown, Richmond and Hopkinton along with the Hope Valley-Wyoming Fire District, if they choose to participate.

I. Home Instruction – Action taken in executive session.

J. Grants – None at this time.

K. Donations – Accepted the following:

1. Donations from the following to the Richmond School Garden:

- Top of the Line Landscape (Josh Hall), Chepachet, RI – miscellaneous supplies (300 various sized pots, chicken wire, shovels, rakes, pitch fork, hoe, clippers, lobbers, tiller roller, pick axes (various), plant stakes, burlap pac, large wooden planter box, hose, vegetable baskets, large resin white trellis, metal and wooden shelf racks), total value \$1184
- Adler Brothers, Greenville, RI – large round outdoor planters and 7 yards of loom, total value \$396
- Chepachet Hardware, Chepachet, RI - \$25 Gift Certificate and 1 bale PROMIX, total value \$83
- The Town Trader, Chepachet, RI – large galvanized basin – total value \$35
- Lightening Ridge Farm, Harmony, RI – five (5) 8'x4' sections of fencing – total value \$200
- Hill Top Firewood & Lumber, Burrillville, RI – welding of shelves – total value \$150
- Reel New England, Smithfield, RI – newly-made wooden cable spools (3) – total value \$450
- Victory Supply – Harrisville, RI – case of garden pots – total value \$75
- Pro-Septic (Joe Procopio), Johnston, RI – four (4) hours excavation time and weed removal – total value \$1,000
- Zack Paone-Hart, Hope Valley, RI - two (2) hours removal and dumping of yard waste from Greenhouse – total value \$250
- Landworks (Joe Procopio), Johnston, RI - Transport of Compost from RIRRC (RI Resource Recovery Corp) to Richmond School – total value \$200
- RIRRC, Johnston, RI – ten (10) yards of compost – total value \$350
- Mike Videtta, Country View Golf Club, Harrisville, RI – Driving Range Net to protect the garden from balls from the softball field – total value \$1,500
- Eagle Scout William Bryson, for his Eagle Project, raised funds and donated the internal beds to the school greenhouse and he and his troop, Richmond Boy Scouts Troop 1 donated their time installing cedar-raised beds inside the greenhouse, clearing and leveling the ground outside, assembling and installing two (8x8) butterfly garden shape structures, filling all of the beds with compost and weeding inside the greenhouse.

2. Special thank you to Nancy Pirnie and Katie Kirakosian for organizing a Prom Dress Drive in the Administration Building which resulted in the collection of 26 prom gowns/dresses from the following:

- Pam Chatell, Chariho Support Professional
- Jennifer Durkin, Special Education Director
- Marilyn Grant, Hopkinton
- Mary Ippolito, Charlestown
- Kathy Koziol, Chariho Administrative Assistant
- Gina Picard, Chariho Superintendent
- Corinne Pirnie, Richmond School Teacher
- Jacki Pirnie, Charlestown
- Kristi Provuncher, Charlestown
- RICAN

A-1. Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was VOTED: To approve the Executive Session Minutes of March 22, 2022 – Approval of Executive Session Minutes of February 8, 2022 (minutes not sealed). In favor: Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Lyall, Macaruso, Reynolds and Spears. Abstained (due to absence): Abbott.

A-2. Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was VOTED: To approve the Regular Session Minutes of March 22, 2022. In favor: Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Lyall, Macaruso, Reynolds and Spears. Abstained (due to absence): Abbott.

X. Reports

A. Subcommittee Reports – None at this time.

B. Superintendent's Report

1. ESSER II/III Update – Superintendent Picard reported that last month there was discussion around our bullying report numbers and she mentioned that we would discuss ways in which we are providing for and using ESSER funds to build in our needs regarding student services. In order to deepen this work, we are using ESSER to hire two Student Service Specialists who will work with our school teams to implement the state SEL standards in response to the increased mental health needs as a result of the pandemic. These specialists will provide ongoing coaching, modeling and professional development to assist classroom teachers. We are also working to pilot an animal-assisted education (pet therapy) to support student mental health. We have begun to plan for the Peer-to-Peer Mentoring program that was presented at the last Health & Wellness Subcommittee Meeting. We are working in partnership with the Chris Collins Foundation which will pay for the cost of training, travel, etc. We have written several grants to support the work in this area.

C. Coming Events were highlighted.

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

Bill asked about a meeting on RIDE proposals to which Gina replied that she did include this in her April e-Update and Andrea has put it on her Blog. Bill asked if there is a requirement that students fill out a loan application; Gina explained they will be required to complete a FAFSA form.

XII. Adjournment

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was

VOTED: To adjourn at 9:51 PM. In favor: Unanimous.

Donna Sieczkiewicz, District Clerk