

Chariho School Committee Meeting
Regular Session Minutes – May 9, 2023

Committee Members Attendance: Chair Catherine Giusti, Donna Chambers, Tyler Champlin (arrived at 6:07 PM), Kathryn Colasante, Polly Hopkins, Clay Johnson, Craig Louzon, Linda Lyall, Andrew McQuaide, Larry Phelps, Patricia Pouliot and Karen Reynolds.

Administrators and Others Attendance: Superintendent Gina Picard, Assistant Superintendent Michael Comella, Director of Administration and Finance Ned Draper, Systems Administrator Eric O'Brien, NEA Chariho President Vin Levcowich, NEARI Representative Leslie Florio 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 6:00 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 Andrew McQuaide 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)(1) for the purpose of discussion and/or action pertaining to an individual's job performance or character (1. Review of Superintendent's 2023-2024 Goals and Evaluation and 2. Review of Superintendent's Contract); 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 April 25, 2023 – NEA Certified Staff Contract Negotiation Update and 2. NEA Certified Staff Contract Agreement Review); under the authority of R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(3) for the purpose of discussion regarding the matter of security (1. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of April 25, 2023 - Discussion with Richmond Chief of Police Johnson on School Security/Alice Training and 2. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of April 25, 2023 - Discussion on the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Chariho Regional School District and the Town of Richmond Pertaining to the Funding for a School Resource Officer) 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 April 25, 2023 - Home Instruction Requests and 2. Approval of Home Instruction Requests); any persons to be discussed have been so notified. In favor: Unanimous (Champlin was not in attendance for the vote).

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

Chair Giusti reconvened the meeting at 7:09 PM. She apologized for the Committee's late start. All were asked to please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

IV. Closing/Sealing of Executive Session Minutes

1. Superintendent Picard recommended that minutes pertaining to an individual's job performance or character (Superintendent's Goals and Evaluation) remain sealed.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was VOTED: That minutes pertaining to an individual's job performance or character (Superintendent's Goals and Evaluation) remain sealed. In favor: Unanimous (Champlin was not in attendance for the vote).

2. Superintendent Picard recommended that minutes pertaining to collective bargaining (NEA Certified Staff Contract Agreement) remain sealed until such time as an agreement has been reached.

Tyler Champlin made a motion, seconded by Linda Lyall and it was VOTED: That minutes pertaining to collective bargaining (NEA Certified Staff Contract Agreement) remain sealed until such time as an agreement has been reached. In favor: Chambers, Champlin, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Johnson, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot and Reynolds. Abstained: Louzon and McQuaide. The motion carried by a vote of 10 in favor with 2 abstentions.

3. 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 Andrew McQuaide 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

Chair Giusti noted the first vote, approval of executive session minutes of April 25, 2023 – Discussion with Chief Johnson on School Security/Alice Training, was approved by Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Johnson, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot and Reynolds.

The next vote, approval of executive session minutes of April 25, 2023 – Discussion on the SRO Agreement, was approved by Chambers, Champlin, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Johnson, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot and Reynolds.

The next vote, approval of executive session minutes of April 25, 2023 – Home Instruction Requests, was approved by Chambers, Champlin, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Johnson, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot and Reynolds.

The next vote, approval of home instruction requests for this evening, was approved by all with Chambers, Champlin, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Johnson, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot and Reynolds voting in favor.

The next vote, approval of executive session minutes of April 25, 2023 – NEA Certified Staff Contract Negotiation Update, was approved with Chambers, Champlin, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Johnson, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot and Reynolds voting in favor and McQuaide abstaining.

The last vote, to return to open session, was unanimous with Chambers, Champlin, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Johnson, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot and Reynolds voting in favor.

VI. Recognition – The following were congratulated/thanked:

1. Erin von Housen finished 1st in the 2,000 Steeplechase in the New York Relays with a time of 7:10.93 which qualifies her for the Nationals in June. Jared Peltier finished in 9th place in the Boys' Invitational in the New York Relays with a time of 7:05.28. As both athletes were the first Chariho competitors at this race, their times have set a school record.
2. Chaia Elwell scored her 100th goal in High School Girls' Lacrosse and was named *The Westerly Sun's Athlete of the Week* for the week ending April 22, 2023.
3. High School sophomore Brandon Thorpe's artwork 'Reverence' was chosen as one of two Senator Reed Staff Picks in the 2023 High School Art Competition.
4. Weeko Thompson won the discus and was second in the shot put at the High School Girls' Track and Field Southern Division Championship.
5. Eli Sposato placed 1st in the 400 (improving his own school record) and Ian Clark placed 1st in the 200 and 2nd in the 100 at the High School Boys' Track and Field Southern Division Championship.

VII. Public Forum

Jessica Purcell from Richmond was speaking on behalf of the Friends of Chariho. They have decided to do a fundraiser, as a result of the last cut for library books, to raise money for this purpose. They will not choose the books. The money will go to the District and the librarians and appropriate staff will select the books. The fundraiser will be open until August. She referred all

to the donation page. The other thing she would like to say – he just left the room – but Larry Phelps is wearing a shirt that says “There are only 2 genders”. I don’t think a School Committee member should be wearing a shirt that says anything. I think it is inappropriate. I don’t think this is the forum to be making a public statement with a T-shirt. Thank you.

IX. Business

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

1. Request of SkillsUSA Advisor Lt. Robert Wild for 12 students and 3 chaperones to travel to the SkillsUSA National Championship in Atlanta, GA from June 16, 2023 to June 24, 2023. SkillsUSA medal winners will be in attendance at the next meeting for Recognition. Polly questioned if the students had proper funding for meal plans or are the parents expected to pay for this. Gina replied that meals are included in the trip. Anything extra, the parent or student would pay for. Polly stated that she was just wondering if the School Committee can give a gift certificate for them to go out to eat. Gina responded that they (chaperones and students) would like more money but there is no money to give. Polly suggested that maybe, in the future, seeing the SC doesn’t get a stipend, this money could go towards this trip. Chair Giusti noted that the topic is approval of the field trip so this request should be addressed outside of the meeting.

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

VOTED: To approve the request of SkillsUSA Advisor Lt. Robert Wild for 12 students and 3 chaperones to travel to the SkillsUSA National Championship in Atlanta, GA from June 16, 2023 to June 24, 2023. In favor: Unanimous.

B. NEA Chariho Certified Staff Contract Agreement Ratification – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the NEA Chariho Certified Staff Contract Agreement for 2022-2025. She thanked Vin, Leslie, the subcommittee and all who worked hard on this. Linda made a motion, which was seconded by Karen, to approve the NEA Chariho Certified Staff Contract Agreement for 2022-2025. Clay stated that given the economic conditions, he is concerned about a three-year contract plus the fact that the contract is coming out just after passing a budget. For these reasons, he will not support this. Kathryn shared her feelings that the health benefits are way more generous than the private sector which is paying for this benefit. She will vote “no”. Linda commented that Chariho has the best teachers. There is a teacher shortage and we could lose teachers to other districts. They deserve this contract and she thanked the subcommittee and all involved for a very long year of negotiations. Tyler stated there are things he does not like about this contract but this District has great teachers and we will lose our teachers. RIDE just held a Job Fair and it was not well attended. He will support the contract as it is fair and fiscally responsible. Donna noted that she, too, will fully support this contract not because we will lose teachers but because we have the best and the best deserve this. Craig added that he has not been involved in this whole process for eleven years as he hasn’t been able to participate. Both sides came in with what they wanted; neither side got all they wanted. It is called negotiations.

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

VOTED: To approve the NEA Chariho Certified Staff Contract Agreement for 2022-2025. In favor: Chambers, Champlin, Giusti, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide and Reynolds. Opposed: Colasante, Hopkins, Johnson, Phelps and Pouliot. The motion carried by a vote of 7 in favor with 5 opposed.

C. Superintendent’s Contract – Chair Giusti strongly recommended approval of Superintendent Gina Picard’s contract. There were no comments or questions.

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

VOTED: To approve Superintendent Gina Picard’s contract. In favor: Chambers, Champlin, Giusti, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide and Reynolds. Opposed: Colasante, Hopkins, Johnson, Phelps and Pouliot. The motion carried by a vote of 7 in favor with 5 opposed.

D. Request to Name the Richmond Elementary School Softball Field after Ralph Woodmansee – Superintendent Picard reported that the District received a letter from Richmond Town Administrator Karen Pinch referencing a request from the Richmond Town Council to name the Richmond Elementary School softball field after Ralph Woodmansee who recently passed away. We have also received permission from his family to grant this request which is in compliance with the “Naming of School Facilities” Policy. She recommended approval to name the Richmond Elementary School Softball Field after Ralph Woodmansee. Craig made a motion, which was seconded by Karen, to approve the naming of the Richmond Elementary School Softball Field after Ralph Woodmansee. Chair Giusti commented that she did not know if anyone had read Mr. Woodmansee’s obituary but his impact on the community was immense. She has had interactions with him which were always construction. She feels this was an excellent request. Polly asked if there were any plans to erect a plaque or have a ceremony to which the Superintendent replied that usually if approval is granted, the next step would be to meet with the family to determine what they would like to do.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Karen Reynolds and it was
VOTED: To name the Richmond Elementary School Softball Field after Ralph Woodmansee. In favor: Unanimous.

E. Necessity for School Construction Committee Vacancy – The Superintendent noted there is a need for a School Committee member to fill the vacancy that exists on the Necessity for School Construction Committee. This committee is required by RIDE. This is not the Building Committee which is required by the Chariho Act. That committee will be established if it is determined that the District intends to move forward with a building or renovation plan. Craig questioned if it had to be a Richmond resident to which Tyler noted that Richmond is not represented. Karen stated that she would volunteer if the meetings are not held during the day. Craig replied that the group, in the past, has always met at night.

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Craig Louzon and it was
VOTED: To appoint Karen Reynolds to fill the vacancy on the Necessity for School Construction Committee. In favor: Unanimous.

F. School Improvement Teams Membership Review – Superintendent Picard reported that she has reviewed the list and has found that each school’s membership adheres to the policy. She recommended approval of the School Improvement Team Membership for 2023-2024. Tyler noted there are business and/or community members on the list. Do they volunteer? Gina noted they are volunteers. Linda asked if these were public meetings to which Gina responded they are.

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Craig Louzon and it was
VOTED: To approve the School Improvement Team Membership for 2023-2024. In favor: Unanimous.

G. Request to Form a School Committee Subcommittee (or Task Force) to Review the District’s Curriculum – This item is on the agenda at the request of Polly Hopkins. Polly stated she thinks the School Committee should form a subcommittee as they are tasked to do this. Our District curriculum is relevant to our District; this is one of the reasons she was elected. Chair Giusti noted that the request is to form a School Committee subcommittee for curriculum. Polly added that she can see this subcommittee fielding questions from the public. She has had parents reach out to her. Andrew commented that at the last School Committee meeting, they established a Budget Subcommittee which included a scope of work/charge for this subcommittee. He is uncomfortable with an open-ended subcommittee. What is the scope? Linda agreed with Andrew. She did some research in surrounding districts and did not see anything. She didn’t know if Polly had done any research with outcomes. She is not an expert on every single curricula in the District. She would have a hard time answering a question say on 8th grade Biology. This is the responsibility of the professionals. Polly should ask those who are approaching her to go

talk to teachers or administrators. She is not saying “no” entirely but she thinks this should be researched more. Donna stated when they had the Anti-Racism Task Force, this was not School Committee members. The Task Force approached the curriculum through the lens of racism; they had one specific purpose. She feels this request is way too broad and it should be left up to the professionals. Chair Giusti asked Polly how would she want to narrow the focus. Polly replied that the Anti-Racism Task Force claimed that, for instance – at this point Chair Giusti stopped the dialogue and asked all to please stick to the agenda item. Donna noted that she just used this as an example that there was a review of curriculum through one specific lens and it was very difficult. You are requesting something very broad and she does not think they have the expertise. Polly responded that they had a beautiful curriculum and it was the Anti-Racism Task Force that made her dig into that curriculum. There were things that were not addressed. There were two pages in there, for example, of Native American curriculum, specifically designed around the Narragansett Tribe, museums, historical societies, where they could go but teachers weren’t utilizing them. We had the resources in our curriculum for students but teachers weren’t implementing it and she thought this odd because there should be a way to ensure that our students get a nice rounded curriculum, a nice rounded education. They should be able to take advantage of all those things. She contacted the historical society, the person that runs it and these resources aren’t being used. There is no enforcement method. We should be able to review the things that aren’t being used and make suggestions. When RIDE came down with their curriculum designations for the schools all over the State, the Anti-Racism Task Force had Narragansett literature. It was already there, but not being used. It was a weird situation. She thinks they should be using these resources. Chair Giusti stated that Gina has asked for an opportunity to clarify some comments, then she will go to Andrew. Gina wanted to make sure the public understands that RIDE does not have vetted curriculum resources for Social Studies. That is not part of the High-Quality Curriculum Education Accountability Act; it was for Mathematics and English Language Arts. That is completed through the General Assembly Education Accountability Act. Our curriculum is written by our educators; our parents and students are part of that feedback piece, along with the Assistant Superintendent and our District Curriculum Planning Council (DCPC). She wanted to take a second and read about the DCPC. The DCPC is comprised of 17 permanent members which include the Assistant Superintendent, the Director of Special Education, an elementary school administrator, a Middle School administrator, a High School administrator, one teacher from every elementary school, two teachers from the Middle School, two teachers from the High School, one teacher from the Career and Tech Center, two adult community members and two students with the representation of the subject area task force added to that committee based on the curriculum. So her wonder is we have a Special Education Advisory Council that has a School Committee liaison, we have the Health and Wellness Subcommittee that has a School Committee liaison, we have the District Strategic Planning Committee that has a School Committee liaison, maybe its adding a School Committee liaison to the DCPC. The DCPC is where all the questions come up. They meet four to five times a year depending on the level of work. But the implementation of their teaching it or not teaching it is an administrative role and she does not believe it is the School Committee’s role. She thinks a liaison to the DCPC would be a welcome add because the District is always looking for more feedback. Andrew noted that he does agree in terms of the context of this work. They could have a School Committee liaison or liaisons. This is the direction he would like to see them move. Craig added that is why Gina had such positive reviews. That is a great recommendation and he agrees with Andrew. They are paid professionals and that is what they are paid for. Kathryn stated that she liked the idea of getting more involved and she likes the idea of School Committee liaisons to the DCPC. She is not sure if this is what Polly had on her mind. She asked Polly if this would serve her purpose. Polly replied yeah, there was something along that line of liaisons but what if there is a problem down the road with curriculum. That leaves the School Committee open to that now they will need to form a subcommittee. At least for the School Committee to be part of that process, having liaisons will satisfy the needs of the public and parents out there who have questions. The School Committee becomes more knowledgeable in it. There is no other way to become more knowledgeable until they get involved in the process. Chair Giusti provided a hypothetical situation – what if I am a parent and I am not liking what is being taught. Gina replied that the District has a policy. The parent should first reach out to the teacher (it usually does not

go beyond that). We will make accommodations. Nancy Pirnie, Dr. Comella's Administrative Assistant, has not received any official concerns. Any member of the community can go through the Appeal's process. Parents can go through this process if they have objections to curriculum. Chair Giusti stated that she prefers a liaison to an already established committee. We have policies and procedures in place right now. Parents should talk to the teacher. There is a misconception in the public; they go right to the School Committee. We are more of a policy body. Gina noted that the School Committee also has to adhere to Article 9 (Curriculum Development) of the contract. This is negotiated so we have to comply. Donna totally agreed with the Chair. She thinks what Polly is recommending is not their role – to tell teachers what to teach or how to teach. If we have questions, concerns, comments we have the DCPC. Chair Giusti stated that she did not want to put words in Polly's mouth. She was just giving an example (a hypothetical). Andrew made a motion, which was seconded by Tyler Champlin and Polly Hopkins, to appoint no more than three (3) School Committee liaisons to the DCPC. Polly asked if this would require one person from each town to which Andrew responded that it doesn't have to be. He just didn't think they needed more than three. Craig asked for clarification – they get no more of a vote than anyone else on that committee? Tyler commented that they wouldn't vote as they are liaisons. Polly noted that she understands a parent can contact a teacher but some do not feel comfortable so they reach out to her. She wants to be knowledgeable so she can answer them. Kathryn felt like the motion got thrown out there before she got to ask a question. How is it determined the curriculum they will discuss? Michael noted there is a revision cycle. The next one coming to the School Committee is Math. We have a plan that these are reviewed every five years; sometimes more – it depends on the plan or requirements. You can still ask a parent to follow the chain of command. Gina added that often times there is a study and review of the standards. The DCPC recommends what the best fit is for our students. She cannot imagine there are hundreds of parents who don't want to speak to teachers. If what you want to do is to vet resources, that is RIDE. Kathryn replied that she just wants to see what the curriculum is. Chair Giusti summarized that it sounds like they will look for liaisons for the DCPC. Craig questioned when the DCPC meets. Is it during the day? Dr. Comella responded that they meet at 3:45 PM to accommodate teachers.

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Tyler Champlin and Polly Hopkins and it was VOTED: To appoint no more than three (3) School Committee liaisons to the District Curriculum Planning Council (DCPC). In favor: Champlin, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Johnson, Louzon, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot and Reynolds. Opposed: Chambers and Lyall. The motion carried by a vote of 10 in favor with 2 opposed.

Kathryn, Polly and Craig volunteered.

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Polly Hopkins and it was VOTED: To appoint Kathryn Colasante, Polly Hopkins and Craig Louzon as liaisons to the District Curriculum Planning Council (DCPC). In favor: Champlin, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Johnson, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot and Reynolds. Abstained: Chambers and Louzon. The motion carried by a vote of 10 in favor with 2 abstentions.

X. Consent Agenda Items

Chair Giusti asked if any items needed to be pulled. Craig pulled H-1 and Polly pulled A-1.

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

- A. Minutes – Approved the following:
 - 2. Regular Session Minutes of April 25, 2023.
- B. Transfers – Approved.
- C. Bill Review – Accepted.
- D. Revenue/Expenditure Account Status Report – None at this time.
- E. Student Activity Fund Balance – None at this time.

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

First Name	Last Name	FTE as of 9/1/22
Ellen	Tiexiera	1.0
Cassie	Iacona	1.0
Scott	Burns	1.0
Zachary	Folsom	1.0
John	Haas	1.0
Christopher	Cobain	1.0

G. Permission to Issue Bids/Request Quote – None at this time.

I. Home Instruction – Action taken in executive session.

J. Grants – None at this time.

K. Donations – None at this time.

1. Approval of Minutes – Polly pulled these as she had a question about the Policy Subcommittee Minutes; Kathryn Colasante was not in attendance. It was explained that the School Committee is voting on the Executive Session Minutes of April 25, 2023 – Approval of Executive Session Minutes of March 28, 2023 (minutes not sealed); they do not vote on subcommittee minutes. Polly withdrew the question.

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

VOTED: To approve the Executive Session Minutes of April 25, 2023 – Approval of Executive Session Minutes of March 28, 2023 (minutes not sealed). In favor: Unanimous.

H-1. Permission to Award Contracts – Craig pulled this as he had a question for Ned. Did the vendors not understand what they were bidding on as the bids are very different? Ned responded that it looks like there was a factor off.

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

VOTED: To award the Grounds Maintenance Bid Alternate I and II to TruGreen L.P. for the amounts listed for Season I in the memo from Ned Draper dated April 27, 2023 with the option of awarding Seasons II and III at the discretion of the District. In favor: Chambers, Champlin, Colasante, Hopkins, Johnson, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot and Reynolds. Opposed: Giusti. The motion carried by a vote of 11 in favor with 1 opposed.

XI. Reports

A. Subcommittee Reports – None at this time.

B. Superintendent's Report

1. K Registration Update – Superintendent Picard provided an update and noted that all schools, with the exception of Richmond, tend to be where they normally are at this time (Hope Valley is just a little less than normal). Richmond historically gets late registrations.

C. Coming Events were highlighted.

XII. School Committee Request for Future Agenda Items or Legal Opinions

Andrew noted that the District had a need to open another Pre-K class at Charlestown School to which Gina added that the plan is to fold this into a Special Education Kindergarten Class. Andrew requested an update on the supports that will be in place to ensure they are getting the most support they can get.

XIII. Adjournment

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Karen Reynolds and it was

VOTED: To adjourn at 8:06 PM. In favor: Unanimous.