

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING
HELD VIRTUALLY ON JUNE 29, 2020 AT 7:30 P.M.**

Board Members Present: Anthony Perugini-Chair; Adam Grippo-Vice Chair; Kathryn Hallen-Secretary; Faith Ham, Anne Harrigan, Andrew Martelli, Timothy White

Board Members Absent: None

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer

Public access made available through live streaming the Cheshire Public School's YouTube Channel at www.youtube.com/channel/UCULDbVCqppiY_3egBVDA-mw . Public comments were accepted at CPSCovid19@cheshire.k12.ct.us .
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1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:30 P.M.

- A. Roll for Quorum. The roll was called and a quorum determined.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.
Mr. Perugini led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Chairman Perugini stated tonight's meeting is driven due to the school opening guidelines recently received. Superintendent Solan and his team will begin deliberating opening guidelines. There is a great deal of discussion and work to be done over the next few weeks.

In addition, he spoke to a public matter concerning Coach Drust. He thanked everyone who has contacted the Board and administration. He said this is a personnel matter between the administration and Coach Drust. He said there is incorrect information in the public news, the matter has not come before the Board of Education. Because it is a personnel matter, the Board cannot comment on the issue. He said in addition to the numerous outpourings of support, there is also a great deal of speculation and there have been attacks against town council members and their families. He said this is uncalled for, unfair and unfounded. He asked the public to let this play out and be respectful.

2. PRESENTATIONS

A. Recognition of Retirees.

Dr. Solan reported that since the June 4th meeting where some retirees were recognized, additional teachers have announced their plans to retire. He presented a video recognition of the following retiring teachers:

Name	School	Years of Service
Lisa Pattin	Doolittle	18
James Zagres	Humiston	21
Theresa Averack	Doolittle	26
Patricia Sciascia	CHS	28
Donna Bates	Dodd	31
Debra Sawicki	Highland	32
Patricia Ianniello	Highland	34
Michael Earley	CHS	38
Thomas J. Kotulski	Dodd	46

Dr. Solan noted that there is 274 years of service retiring with these teachers and 425 years of service when you add the retirees recognized at the June 4th meeting.

3. AUDIENCE

Dr. Solan noted that there were hundreds of emails received in support of Cheshire High School Football Coach Don Drust. In addition a petition with over 500 signatures was received.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Solan reported that over 600 parents signed up to participate in Google Meets to provide feedback on remote learning. He thanked all of the parents who participated in these 38 meetings and also those parents who sent emails with their feedback.

He noted this is a very fluid process, which makes the situation very challenging. Just today they received a 50-page document from the State with guidance on reopening. A reopening committee will be meeting four times over the next two weeks to learn about the demands of the State and understand what the CDC is recommending. They will discuss options to be given to the community so that the administration can receive feedback from families. Dr. Solan said they want to provide in-school instruction to the greatest extent possible and to also be able to provide for those students who require remote learning. The Superintendent said the goal is to provide every student with what they need.

Mr. Perugini thanked Dr. Solan and Ms. Silano for facilitating the parent feedback meetings. He also thanked the 600 families who participated. He asked if there will be additional meetings for parents to attend. The Superintendent replied that no more meetings will be held, but the community is encouraged to email comments or feedback.

Superintendent Solan said the reopening committee meetings will be recorded and presented at a later date. He said he hopes to be able to report back to the Board in two weeks.

Mr. White noted that the American Academy of Pediatrics has said that based on the nation's experience, remote learning is likely to result in learning loss and social emotional issues. They strongly advocate for having students physically present in school.

On a motion by Mr. Perugini and seconded by Mr. Grippo, the Board adjourned into Executive Session, including Dr. Solan at 8:25 p.m. to discuss the Superintendent's evaluation.

The Board reconvened their Special Business meeting at 9:40 p.m.

MOTION by Mr. White, seconded by Mr. Perugini.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education extends the contract of Jeffrey Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools for the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2023.*

Discussion

Mr. White explained that the Superintendent has what is described as an "evergreen" contract. Basically, each year an additional year is added so it is always a three-year contract.

Ms. Ham said she will be voting against this motion only because she does not support an extension and would like to see the Board move to a "clean" contract with defined terms.

Ms. Harrigan said she will be voting in support of adding the third year to the contract as it sends a strong message of support to the Superintendent who does not have the security, as does the faculty with tenure. She said she wants to send a clear message she would like him to stay on and that he is doing good work.

Mr. Grippo said he will not vote in favor of this motion for the same reasons as Ms. Ham and said that he would like to see a contract with set terms and when it gets closer to the end, it can be renegotiated. He realizes that that is not the practice for this field, but it could be advantageous for both parties. Mr. Grippo added that it has been an incredibly

challenging year and Dr. Solan has risen to the challenge in this incredibly difficult time. He said not voting for the extension is not meant to be non-supportive, it is just that philosophically he does not support “evergreen” contracts.

Mr. Perugini said this has been an unprecedented school year with the pandemic. Many districts were not prepared to take on this challenge. One of the reasons we were able to meet the needs of our students and staff is because of Dr. Solan. He said the Superintendent has led his team through this and we need his leadership for the fall reopening of schools. Regarding the contract length, we will have conversations regarding that in the Personnel Committee in the upcoming school year.

Mr. White said regarding remote learning, he gives the Superintendent an A for effort. Our academics are strong. He said he appreciates the work Dr. Solan is doing and will support this motion.

VOTE: The Motion passed 5-2 (Mr. Grippo and Ms. Ham opposed)

MOTION by Mr. White, seconded by Ms. Hallen

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education approve a base salary of \$195,520 effective July 1, 2020, for Jeffrey F. Solan, Superintendent of Schools.

Discussion:

Mr. White explained that the Superintendent has received a tuition reimbursement for the last few years as he earned his doctorate. In lieu of a percentage raise, the amount of the tuition reimbursement will be added to his current salary for a total of \$195,520.

Mr. Perugini explained that the Committee has been meeting over the last few weeks to discuss the Superintendent’s review. He said he cannot support this motion in light of the fiscal situation. This has nothing to do with the Superintendent’s performance, but there are too many fiscal unknowns this year and we can better address it at a later date.

Ms. Harrigan said she is in favor of rolling the \$10,200 tuition reimbursement into the base salary. Dr. Solan has achieved all that he can as far as his education goes. He needs to be rewarded for that. She said he has brought our school district from a very good district to a top school district in the State of Connecticut.

Ms. Hallen said the performance numbers of our student achievement say it all. Our focus for the Board of Education should be what is best for our students and what will help them achieve at the highest level. Dr. Solan has shown himself to be talented and led his team to the point where we are the top performing district in Connecticut. He has focused on our important goals of complex thinking and social emotional learning and we have gotten great results from that. This is the time to celebrate the Superintendent. She

would have been in favor of a percentage increase in addition to the tuition reimbursement.

Mr. White said he wants to show the Superintendent that they appreciate him. He noted that the Superintendent is one of the lowest compensated Superintendents in our district reference group, but he cannot support a percentage raise in this fiscal climate. He would like to recognize Dr. Solan for his degree and supports adding the tuition reimbursement to his base salary.

VOTE: 4-3 (Perugini, Ham and Grippo opposed)

5. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. Hallen and seconded by Ms. Ham, the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Perugini
Anthony Perugini, Board Chair

Attest:

Carol K. Jesensky
Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Filed electronically with the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: July 10, 2020 .