

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING  
HELD AUGUST 22, 2019 AT 7:30 P.M. AT TOWN HALL-COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

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Board Members Present: Kathryn Hallen-Chair; Anne Harrigan -Vice Chair; Anthony Perugini-Secretary; Adam Grippo; Richard Gusenburg; Marléna Soble; Neeta Vatti

Board Members Absent: None.

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Superintendent of Schools, Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer

**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.

Ms. Hallen led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Ms. Hallen welcomed Mr. Richard Gusenburg who was appointed to fill Ms. Hellreich's seat on the Board when she resigned. She noted Mr. Gusenburg has over 30 years of experience in education in the roles of principal, assistant superintendent and business manager.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Approval of Minutes of the Board of Education (Business) Meeting held June 6, 2019.**

MOTION by Ms. Soble; seconded by Ms. Harrigan.

*MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the minutes of the Board of Education Meeting held June 6, 2019.*

VOTE: The Motion passed 6-0-1 (Mr. Gusenburg abstained)

**B. Approval of Minutes of the Board of Education (Fiscal) Meeting held June 28, 2019**

MOTION by Ms. Soble; seconded by Mr. Perugini.

*MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the minutes of the Board of Education Meeting held June 28, 2019.*

VOTE: The Motion passed 5-0-2 (Ms. Harrigan and Mr. Gusenburg abstained).

**C. Approval of Minutes of the Board of Education (Special) Meeting held July 2, 2019**

MOTION by Ms. Harrigan; seconded by Mr. Grippo.

**MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the minutes of the Board of Education Meeting held July 2, 2019.

**VOTE:** The Motion passed 6-0-1 (Mr. Gusenburg abstained)

**D. Approval of Minutes of the Board of Education (Special) Meeting held July 10, 2019**

**MOTION** by Ms. Harrigan; seconded by Ms. Soble.

**MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the minutes of the Board of Education Meeting held July 10, 2019.

**VOTE:** The Motion passed 5-0-2 (Ms. Vatti and Ms. Harrigan abstained)

**E. Approval of Minutes of the Board of Education (Special) Meeting held August 6, 2019**

**MOTION** by Mr. Perugini; seconded by Ms. Harrigan.

**MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the minutes of the Board of Education Meeting held August 6, 2019.

**VOTE:** The Motion passed 4-0-3 (Ms. Vatti, Mr. Gusenburg and Ms. Soble abstained)

**3. CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

**4. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Superintendent Solan reported that the first day of school is August 29<sup>th</sup> and we are ready to go. Today was the first day for Kevin Hanlon, K-8 Curriculum Coordinator. He explained the NEASC accreditation at Cheshire High School is completed. Now they are going through the NAEYC accreditation for Darcey. He explained they are in year two of a four-year process and there will be site visits at Darcey this winter. Mr. Solan announced administrators will be at the Cheshire Fall Festival on September 14<sup>th</sup> and encouraged everyone to stop by. He reported the follow-up forum for school climate will be held on September 16<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm with the location to be reported soon. He noted that there has been positive news on our SAT scores. In addition, our school and district ranked very highly on Niche.com. High school SAT scores went up by 13 points in math and 16 points in ELA. The Superintendent said our students ranked 13<sup>th</sup> in the State of Connecticut.

5. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**MOTION** by Ms. Fabiani; seconded by Ms. Soble.

**MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education approves the Consent Calendar as presented.

**VOTE:** The Motion passed 5-0-1 (Ms. Vatti abstained).

The following were Consent Calendar items:

A. **Approval of Statement on Class Size Policy**

In accordance with the *Agreement between the Cheshire Board of Education and the Education Association of Cheshire*, Article XXIII, the Board of Education hereby publishes and provides to the Association its policy relating to class size:

*"That the Board shall endeavor to maintain class sizes consistent with proven educational practices which require that various learning situations may alter the number of students per class. The Board, through its committees, shall study and make recommendations concerning personnel and space requirements based on all factors affecting class size."*

B. **Approval of ACES Annual Membership Agreement**

Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES) is a Regional Educational Service Center, pursuant to Section 10-66a of the Connecticut General Statutes, which acts as a voluntary association of member Boards of Education establishing a cooperative arrangement to provide services, programs and activities for the education of children. Each year, participating Boards of Education must renew their participation in ACES by (a) carrying out its responsibilities as described in the Membership Agreement, (b) paying an assessment fee of \$250, and (c) appointing Board of Education Members to serve as Representative and Alternate to the ACES Governing Board.

*"That the Cheshire Board of Education agrees to participate for the 2019-2020 school year in Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES) as set forth in the ACES Annual Membership Agreement and appoints a Representative and Alternate to the ACES Governing Board."*

C. **Appointment of Hearing Officer**

Cheshire Board of Education Policy #5114 permits the Board of Education to appoint a hearing officer to preside over matters pertaining to student discipline and school accommodations. This individual does not preside over a matter unless the Board of Education opts to permit such a hearing to take place. For the

past fourteen years, Attorney Athan Mihalakos has served as the hearing officer for the Cheshire Board of Education.

*“Move that the Cheshire Board of Education reappoint Attorney Athan Mihalakos of Willinger, Willinger & Bucci, PC as hearing officer for the 2019-2020 school year.”*

## 6. **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

### A. **FINANCE**

#### I. **Financial Report**

Ms. Soble said our fiscal year began July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Masciana noted that the 2019-2020 budget has been entered into Munis. As it is the first month of the budget, there is no news to report.

#### II. **Medical Benefits Update**

Mr. Masciana reported on the June 30<sup>th</sup> final report of the fiscal year. June claims came in higher at \$1,054,069. He noted that his is typical of June. We ended the year with \$3,680,706 in the trust fund which is about 5.08 months of claims reserves. He noted that as of July 1, claims were moved from Anthem to Cigna.

### B. **PLANNING**

#### I. **Report on Meeting held July 10, 2019**

Ms. Hallen reported that Sean Kimball, Town Manager, and Jim Jaskot, Finance Director, attended the meeting and provided information on the Town's debt service and bond rating. She said it was a very informative meeting. Mr. Perugini added that it was important to understand the ceiling of the bonding and it will be good to know what that limit is when determining the modernization of our buildings. Ms. Harrigan said it was enlightening to see how deferring the maintenance on our buildings has been pushed out to future years and how the debt service has been accumulating.

#### II. **Report on Status of Construction Projects & Summer Maintenance**

Mr. Masciana reported briefly on the major capital projects done over the summer, noting he will go into more detail at the September meeting. Projects included Doolittle lavatory project, removal of oil storage tanks at Dodd and Humiston, band and weight room roof replacements and partial roof replacement at Norton. He said the Cheshire High School storage building is complete. All but one old storage trailers have been emptied and disposed of. Energy improvements at Cheshire High School, utility tunnel steam piping upgrade, LED lighting upgrades, updated refrigeration will save \$20K per year, and several school security upgrades have been made, such as numbering all classrooms consistently at all schools. In

addition, they ran ALICE training over the summer and will continue to train staff throughout the school year. Video surveillance has also been upgraded at schools.

Ms. Hallen noted that she was very impressed with the ALICE training. She said the program gives our teachers greater skills to be prepared, if ever needed.

### **III. Update on Capital Budget**

Mr. Masciana referred to the updated report to Board members. Changes include eliminating a \$110,000 request for electrical improvements at Cheshire High School that it was determined were not needed. A new request for \$150,000 to fund a new school modernization study was added. He reviewed the remainder of the items with the entire amount adjusted being \$3,560,000. They had a meeting with the Town Council who will be voting on the Capital Budget on August 27<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Perugini asked why another Master Plan? Ms. Hallen said it is not the same as what was previously done. The Town Council thought it would be prudent to include this amount to bring on a consultant to review and possibly offer new perspective and options. The idea would be a committee comprised of Town Council and Board members as well as others to come together and determine the scope of work that will be done. Mr. Perugini said he thinks this is a great idea, but they won't be able to tell us whether a grade 6-8 middle school is the correct approach. Ms. Hallen agreed. She said last time the Board was in agreement on the grade 6-8 middle school, but they should revisit the topic to see if Board members still feel the same.

Mr. Grippo asked if the Planning Committee will be establishing the timeline for the new firm and specifications. Ms. Hallen said she is not anticipating that the Planning Committee will be doing that. It would most likely be a mix of Board and Town Council members along with others from the community to bring expertise to vet the firms and offer a wider perspective. Mr. Grippo asked if there will be an intensive process during the fall so we can have a process in the spring. Ms. Hallen said she would like to start this process soon so they can bring something to the public in the spring. Mr. Grippo asked if Ms. Hallen has envisioned how this committee will be constructed. She said at the next Planning Committee meeting, possibly a Planning Committee meeting of the whole, they can brainstorm the composition of the committee. She said they would like input from the entire community. Ms. Soble encouraged the board to be open to the ideas from the consultants even if they are different than what was originally envisioned. Mr. Perugini said this is a positive step and he is looking forward to this.

**C. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES**

There were no other committee reports.

**7. AUDIENCE**

Jami Ferguson, 105 Copper Beach Drive. Regarding the committee that will be formed, she thinks it is important to include members of organizations such as the Parks and Rec and maybe offices in the Town Hall. The Board should not make the decision of what would happen with empty buildings. It would be great for some of the offices in town hall that are crowded to move. She said there are more needs than just the schools. There are so many volunteers in the community that work with our children and we should have their input.

Ms. Hallen responded that they are not just envisioning just the Board and Town Council involved. The last time they went through this process there were many public meetings where different groups focused on different issues. She also noted that the Board has no say with what happens to any of the town buildings.

**8. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Ms. Harrigan, and seconded by Ms. Soble, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathryn Hallen, Board Chair

Attest:

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Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Filed at the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: 9/12/19.