

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING
HELD OCTOBER 17, 2019 AT 7:30 P.M. AT TOWN HALL-COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

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, Marlene Silano Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer; Mary Joscelyn-Gadd, Principal-Cheshire High School; Scott Jeffrey, Principal-Highland Elementary School; Marie Broadway, Supervisor of Secondary Special Education; Kelly Lenz, Coordinator-School/Community Relations

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.
- C. Student Representatives

Isabel Orozco and RJ Streator, student representatives for the 2019/2020 school year reported on recent events at Cheshire High School. The reps said there was a student twitter account regarding things such as drug use, wellness and student involvement and asked about possible future forums with the Board and students. Board members responded that forums should be coordinated through Dr. Gadd, their principal and that students are welcome to email any Board member or attend Board meetings. In addition, the students reported on a recent anti-vaping presentation, French and German exchange students, and the alumni fair.

2. PRESENTATIONS

A. School Partnership Award – Highland School

Mr. Gusenburg, the Board of Education representative to Highland, introduced Keri Banack. He reported that Keri is a parent of three and a dedicated volunteer at Highland School. She is an active member of the Highland PTO serving as the Cultural Arts Coordinator. Keri is also responsible for facilitating the visiting author program. In addition to Keri's dedication to the cultural arts and visiting author programs, Keri is a literacy volunteer working with students in our primary grades helping them to become stronger readers. Keri is a former public elementary school teacher who generously offers her skills to our Highland students. Keri continues to reach out by taking on leadership roles on various committees. Keri will be leading the Veteran's Day Honor Walk and Breakfast in November. Highland School is so grateful for Keri's dedication to their school community. The Board presented Keri with a certificate and small gift, and thanked her for going above and beyond for the students of Cheshire.

B. Instructional Assistant of the Year.

Superintendent Solan called on Marie Broadway to introduce Joseph “Andy” Veres, Cheshire’s First Instructional Assistant of the Year recipient. Andy is also nominated for the State of Connecticut Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year award. This award honors a paraeducator who demonstrates exceptional skill and dedication in the performance of his or her job. Mr. Veres wrote that helping every student in the classroom creates a safe space for the special education students. Students describe him as “the teacher who walks around and helps kids” not helps “special education kids” but just “helps kids.”

C. Board Member Recognition

Ms. Hallen, Board Chair, called Ms. Cathy Hellreich to the podium to be recognized. Ms. Hellreich was on the Board from 2005 through 2009 as Board Secretary and again from 2011-2019. She served as Board of Education Chair from December 2015 through December 2018. Ms. Hellreich worked tirelessly for the students of Cheshire. She was a strong proponent of full day kindergarten and a driving force behind the introduction of world language in sixth grade. Ms. Hellreich has been a consistent voice in advocating for modernizing our building facilities. Ms. Hallen said Ms. Hellreich will be missed. The Board thanked Ms. Hellreich for her service and presented her with a gift of recognition.

Ms. Hellreich thanked her fellow Board members, the administration and Mrs. Jesensky. She says our school system is in great hands.

D. Cheshire High School NEASC Presentation

Mr. Solan introduced Mary Gadd, Principal of Cheshire High School, who gave a presentation to Board members on the NEAC accreditation at Cheshire High School. Every 10 years, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges evaluates member schools for accreditation. The faculty at Cheshire High School completed a self-study, and tonight's summary of the decennial visit reflected the key commendations, recommendations and five year ongoing improvement plan based on the visit and report. Cheshire High School received 38 commendations and 32 recommendations across the 7 Standards. Notable areas of commendation for Cheshire High School are in our development and commitment to our Core Values, School Culture and Leadership, and School and Community Resources for Learning. Areas of recommendation are in the instructional core: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. The Board thanked Ms. Gadd for her presentation

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**A. Approval of Minutes of the Board of Education Meetings Held September 16, 2019, September 19, 2019 and October 3, 2019**

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

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the minutes of the Board of Education Meetings held September 16, 2019, September 19, 2019 and October 3, 2019.”

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Perugini reported the Board received correspondence from Mr. Waitkus. He said he cannot read the email into record as it contains non-disclosable information but he heard what he wrote and asked Mr. Waitkus to contact him again if there is no resolution.

5. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

The Superintendent said at the last meeting when he reported on school climate data, he was asked to put that information into a presentation and he has done that for tonight’s meeting. He reviewed the information and reminded the Board that this information is also available on the website.

6. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A. FINANCE

I. Financial Report.

Ms. Soble reported there are no significant budget concerns to report at this early point in the fiscal year and they are projecting to end the fiscal year in balance.

Mr. Grippo asked Mr. Masciana if he could add a “percentage spent” column to the Finance Report. Mr. Masciana said he will add it to next month’s report.

II. Medical Benefits Update

Mr. Masciana reported that claims for the month of August were \$707,439. The trust fund balance as of August 31, 2019 is \$3,791,772 which is 5.23 claim months in reserve.

B. PERSONNEL

I. Approval of Contract between the Cheshire Board of Education and UPSEU Local 424 Unit 19 – Custodial and Maintenance Employees

Mr. Masciana reported there are 24 Custodial and Maintenance employees who are represented by the United Public Service Employees Union (UPSEU). The key terms of the proposed successor agreement that have financial impact are as follows:

- Four-year term retroactive to 7/1/2019 through 6/30/2023.
- Medical Benefits:
 - HSA Plan deductibles remain at \$2,000/\$4,000 (Single/2-Person & Family). HSA is the base plan and employees must pay the full cost difference to buy-up to the PPO or HMO Plans.

- The co-share rate paid by employees for the HSA Plan will increase from 9% in 19-20 to 10% in 20-21, 11% in 21-22 and 12% in 22-23.
- The Board's contribution to the employee's HSA account will remain at \$2,000/\$4,000 (Single/2-Person & Family).
- Wage Increases:
 - 2.50% in 19-20, 2.625% in 20-21, 2.75% in 21-22 and 2.75% in 22-23.
 - On Call Pay for Inside Maintenance Men II staff will increase from \$200 to \$300 for each 7 consecutive day period.
 - Shoe allowance will increase from \$150 to \$175 annually
 - High School Lead Man pay differential will increase from 7% to 10%

Mr. Masciana said they appreciate the efforts of the negotiating team members; namely Liz Ditman of UPSEU, and our employees – Patrick Cruess, Scott Libengood, and Vincent Sita. He thanked all the members of the Maintenance Staff for the hard work and the great job that they do to keep our buildings and grounds clean, safe and properly maintained and for all that they do for the students and staff of the Cheshire Public Schools.

MOTION by Mr. Perugini, seconded by Ms. Harrigan

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education approves the collective bargaining agreement with UPSEU Local 424 – Unit 19 for the Custodial and Maintenance Employees for the period from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2023. Further that the Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to sign the contract on its behalf.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

II. Approval of Contract between the Cheshire Board of Education and the Cheshire Educational Secretaries and Technicians United

Mr. Masciana reported there are 50 employees who are represented by the Cheshire Educational Secretaries and Technicians United including 10 and 12 month secretaries, media technicians, technology assistants, our benefits specialist and payroll supervisor. They voted on October 16, 2019 in favor of ratifying a successor agreement to their contract with the Cheshire Board of Education that expired on June 30, 2019.

The key terms of the proposed successor agreement that have financial impact are as follows:

- Four year term retroactive to 7/1/2019 through 6/30/2023.
- Employee Benefits:

- HSA Plan deductibles remain at \$2,000/\$4,000 (Single/2-Person & Family). HSA is the base plan and employees must pay the full cost difference to buy-up to the PPO or HMO Plans.
- The co-share rate paid by employees for the HSA Plan will increase from 9% in 19-20 to 10% in 20-21, 11% in 21-22 and 12% in 22-23.
- The Board's contribution to the employee's HSA account will remain at \$2,000/\$4,000 (Single/2-Person & Family).
- Wage Increases:
 - 2.50% in 19-20, 2.65% in 20-21, 2.75% in 21-22 and 2.75% in 22-23.
 - Payments to retirees with a minimum of ten years of service will increase from a total of \$7,500 paid over 5 years to a total of \$7,800 paid over three years.
 - Longevity incentive for employees with 10 to 14 years of service will increase from \$500 annually to \$525 annually in 2019-20 and \$550 annually in 2021-22. Longevity incentive for employees with 15 or more years of service will increase from \$550 annually to \$650 annually in 2019-20 and \$750 annually in 2021-22.

Mr. Masciana said they sincerely appreciate the efforts of the negotiating team members; Eric Brown as Union Counsel, and employees Sharyn Joaquim, Jan Guererra and Lori Braun. He said they thank all 10 and 12 month secretaries, media technicians, technology assistants, benefits specialist and our payroll supervisor for their dedication and the great job that they do to keep our schools organized and running as efficiently as possible.

MOTION by Ms. Soble, seconded by Ms. Harrigan

MOVED *that the Cheshire Board of Education approves the collective bargaining agreement with Cheshire Educational Secretaries and Technicians United for the period from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2023. Further that the Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to sign the contract on its behalf.*

There was discussion regarding longevity stipends and steps.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

C. POLICY

I. Report on Meeting Held October 7, 2019

Ms. Vatti reported on the policies that were reviewed for a first, second and third reading.

II. First Reading of Policies

Ms. Vatti reported the following policies are being brought forward for a first reading:

5144.4 Students – Discipline - P.A. 19-173 expressly allows boards of education to offer an additional amount of time for undirected play in public elementary schools beyond current law's required minimum of 20 minutes of daily physical exercise. The following language is added to the policy, "*The Board requires that each student in elementary school shall have not less than twenty minutes daily in total devoted to physical exercise, except that a Planning and Placement Team may alter such schedule for a child requiring special education and related services. Further, the Board permits, in its elementary schools, including an additional amount of time, beyond the required twenty minutes for physical exercise, devoted to undirected play during the regular school day, subject to the approval of the building administration.*" It also requires boards of education to adopt a policy, by October 1, 2019, to address any school employee who prevents an elementary school student from participating in the period of undirected play as a form of discipline during the regular school day.

4112.2 Personnel – Certified – Certification - This policy is being updated to conform to current state statute. Language is added to address lapse in certification and the "Distinguished Educator Designation." Ms. Vatti noted it is already in place, but is just being codified.

4131 Personnel – Certified – Staff Development - This policy language will now state that the professional development program shall include: "*training in culturally responsive pedagogy and practice.*"

6159 – Individualized Education Program - Districts are now required by law to have a Board policy regarding IEP's. Any child, whether a student of the school district, of pre-school age, or between the ages of three and 21 years of age, inclusive, but not attending district schools, who is identified as being in need of a special program, shall be referred to a "special education planning and placement team" (PPT) which shall make an evaluative study to determine whether the child is a child with a disability as defined in state and federal statutes, and if special education is required, to establish the scope of the special education program.

III. Second Reading of Policies.

Ms. Vatti reported on the policies being brought forward for a second reading. No substantive changes were made since the first reading.

- 1331 Community Relations Smoke Free Environment

- 4112.51/4212.51 Personnel-Certified/Non-Certified Employment Reference Checks
- 4118.51/4218.51 Personnel-Certified-Non-Certified – Social Networking
- 5114 Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process

IV. Third Reading and Approval of Policies

Ms. Vatti gave a third reading to Policy #6146 Graduation Requirements. Revisions to the policy are pursuant to changes in state law. Commencing with the graduating class of 2023 (beginning with the incoming class of 2019-2020) and for each graduating class thereafter, in order to graduate and be granted a diploma, students must satisfactorily complete a minimum of twenty-five (25) credits, including not fewer than:

- Nine (9) credits in the humanities, including civics and the arts;
- Nine (9) credits in science, technology, engineering and mathematics;
- One (1) credit in physical education and wellness;
- One (1) credit in health and safety education;
- One (1) credit in world languages and
- One (1) credit mastery-based diploma assessment/senior experience
- Three (3) Electives

MOTION by Ms. Vatti and seconded by Mr. Grippo.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education give a third and final reading to policy #6146 Graduation Requirements and direct the Superintendent to put said policy into immediate effect.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 7-0

Ms. Vatti reported that the Committee also discussed Mr. Grippo's transparency document, and agreed that the next steps are to wait for final legislation to be enacted, and then review our current policies to be sure they conform to the statutes.

In response to a question from an in-town organization regarding their request to ban out-of-town groups from distributing flyers to our students soliciting their out of town programs, the committee discussed this topic and came to the conclusion that we will continue to distribute flyers from any non-profit organization whose programs potentially benefit our students whether they are located in Cheshire or in surrounding towns.

D. CALENDAR COMMITTEE

I. Formation of the Calendar Committee

In accordance with Policy 6111, the school calendar shall be drawn up by a committee composed of the Superintendent of Schools or his designee, the

Chairman of the Board of Education, a member of the Board of Education chosen by the Chairman, a teacher who may be chosen by the president of the Education Association of Cheshire, an administrator who may be chosen by the president of the Cheshire Administrative Personnel, and a parent who may be chosen by the president of the Townwide PTA Council.

Ms. Hallen will announced that Mr. Grippo will be the Board of Education member to serve on the Calendar Committee. A meeting of the committee will be set in the next few weeks and held in the Humiston Board Room. At this meeting, the 2020/2021 proposed calendar will be discussed and formally recommended for adoption and the 2021/2022 proposed calendar will be drafted.

E. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES

There were no other committee reports.

7. AUDIENCE

None.

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Resolution in Support of School Modernization

Ms. Hallen reviewed that the Town Council has established a School Modernization Committee and stated she would like to propose the following resolution:

RESOLUTION by Ms Hallen, seconded by Mr. Grippo.

Be It Resolved, that the Cheshire Board of Education fully supports the establishment by the Town Council of a collaborative study group to be known as the School Modernization Committee, charged with developing a modernization plan for the Cheshire Public Schools' facilities and made up of three members of the Town Council, three members of the Board of Education and seven members of the community, and the appointment by the Town Council of the following individuals to the School Modernization Committee:

From the Town Council: Paul Bowman, Sylvia Nichols, Peter Talbot

From the Board of Education: Kathryn Hallen, Anne Harrigan, Anthony Perugini

From the community: Jen Bates, Matt Bowman, Cathleen Devlin, Richard Gusenburg, Ann Marie Kemp, Rene Martinez, Charles Neth

Discussion:

Board members all voiced their support of the joint committee.

VOTE: The Resolution was approved 7-0.

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

Regarding the correspondence Mr. Perugini mentioned, Mr. Grippo asked if there were any policies that needed to be reviewed. Superintendent Solan said there was nothing in the letter that required immediate attention, but he would discuss it with Ms. Vatti prior to the policy committee meeting.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Ms. Soble, and seconded by Ms. Vatti, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Hallen, Board Chair

Attest:

Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Filed at the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: 10/31/19.