

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING
HELD FEBRUARY 20, 2020 AT 7:30 P.M. AT TOWN HALL-COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Board Members Present: Anthony Perugini-Chair; Adam Grippo-Vice Chair; Kathryn Hallen-Secretary; Faith Ham, Anne Harrigan, Andrew Martelli, Timothy White (arr. 7:35)

Board Members Absent: None

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Superintendent of Schools; Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer; Tracy Hussey, Director, Pupil Personnel Services; Michael Woods, Principal-Dodd Middle School; Diana Burns, Principal-Chapman Elementary School; 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.
Mr. Perugini led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
- C. Student Representatives. Isabel Orozco and R.J. Streater, student representatives for the 2019/2020 school year, reported on recent events at Cheshire High School. They provided an update on athletics, noting teams are going into postseason play. Sixteen student athletes have committed to colleges, two students were named Southern Connecticut Conference Sports winter Scholar Athletes, the cheer team competed with the unified cheer team, a Coaches vs Cancer event was held and the boys ice hockey held a hat, mitten and scarf drive. The reps also reported that the February addition of Rampage came out and the Cheshire High School choir will be performing at Elim Park on February 28th. The newly formed Leukemia and Lymphoma Society is raising funds to help fight blood diseases. The National English Honor Society is holding a Blind Date with a Book, where students pick a book without seeing the cover. The Penguin Plunge, sponsored by the Peer Health and Special Olympics clubs, raised over \$3,000. Students recently traveled to Washington and Baltimore for debates and to a mock trial in Hartford. The Student Senate will sponsor a spring fling dance and lastly, the spring play, Beauty and the Beast will be held on 4/2 and 4/4.

2. PRESENTATIONS

- A. School Partnership Award - Chapman.
Ms. Harrigan, the Board of Education representative to Chapman, introduced the school's recipient, Tina Kurtz. Chapman Principal, Diana Burns, wrote that most think that Tina Kurtz is on the payroll of Chapman School because there are very few days you will not see her there! Tina has volunteered her time at Chapman School over the past 8 years. When at Chapman, you may see her volunteering in the library, running the school store, organizing events for our students and much more. Tina has given her time over the years as the PTSA president. In this role, she organized countless events for the school, raised funds to support various

needs, and created a strong bond between families, the community and the school. Chapman learned that Tina does not know how to say the word “no.” Whenever you reach out to her for anything, she cheerfully says “yes, I’ll be there, or sure, no problem, I can do that.” Everyone can count on Tina! Tina often acts like a magical elf that sneaks in at night and leaves treats. Throughout the seasons, she skillfully fills our entrance way flower boxes and planters without anyone seeing her. She also makes beautiful plants and flowers appear on the stage for our promotion ceremony and other special assembly events. Tina is extremely humble. Not only does she give her time, but may have (although I cannot confirm) donated anonymously and insists that she never be recognized for all that she does and gives. This makes honoring her, and her willingness to be honored as the 2019-2020 School Partnership Award Recipient so special to everyone at Chapman School. Cheshire Public Schools is a special place because of individuals like Tina. She has helped us touch the lives of so many children and made their journey of learning and growing more joyous.

School Partnership Award – Dodd

In Ms. Hallen’s absence, Ms. Harrigan introduced the school’s recipient, Jen Bates. Mr. Woods, Dodd Principal, wrote that the Parent Teacher Association is an important and integral part of every school, and the support the Dodd PTA contributes to its faculty and families is both unparalleled and appreciated. The Dodd family has been very fortunate to have the wonderful assistance of the PTA as it has provided abundantly for items and experiences that have benefited the students. Recently, under the leadership of Jennifer Bates, the PTA has established mini-grants for faculty to be used for a variety of reasons. A form is completed by a Dodd teacher detailing the item or items needed, how the purchase will benefit the Dodd community, and the cost. Proactively, the PTA informed Mr. Woods that they had a budget for such items and invited the faculty to request money for their wish list items. Through these mini-grants, a number of items were purchased totaling \$9,000. These included bus transportation for both a Teal Team community field trip and for a Culinary Club field trip, as well as various consumable supplies for Special Education classes and the extracurricular Makerspace program. In addition, books, coffee carafes and an ice maker were purchased for the Life Skills program. The amount of \$1,500 was given to PPS to create a Zen Den for students and another \$4,400 to the Math Coach for room furnishings. In November, the entire Dodd community celebrated Veterans Day by honoring and interacting with a dozen US veterans. With one of the PTA mini grants, Dodd was able to provide breakfast for our panel of speakers and purchase a customized banner welcoming and thanking the veterans. No matter how small or large the purchase, the Dodd community greatly benefits from the generosity of our extremely supportive PTA. Dodd PTA mini-grants is just one example of the initiatives Jen Bates has created. Dodd is so very appreciative for the PTA leadership of Jen Bates and her ability to guide the PTA in supporting staff and students.

3. **AUDIENCE**

Diane Visconti, 795 Devonwood Drive. Ms. Visconti encouraged the Board to continue looking into earlier start times at Cheshire High School. She said her son graduated 14 years ago and she still recalls that it was very difficult getting him up in the morning. She knows the Board is busy, but she suggested a study group be created. She presented an article regarding the town of Guilford which just recently changed school start times. She said it took Guilford three years to complete the process so the sooner Cheshire gets started the better. Science is clear that teenagers do better when they get enough sleep.

Mr. Perugini responded that the Board has discussed this issue and is trying to figure out where they can fit this initiative in, priority-wise, because it will impact not only students, but their parents, transportation and traffic.

Meredith Nielson, 317 Spruce Street. Ms. Nielson said she was there to speak about the impacts of the proposed bill HB 5044 that removes religious exemptions for vaccines and said there are significant concerns for the district if this bill is passed. She provided background on the bill and how it could negatively impact our community if it is passed. She handed out documentation by Deborah Stevenson for the Board to review.

4. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

I. **Healthy Food Certification**

Connecticut General Statutes requires that all Connecticut public school districts that are eligible to participate in the healthy food certification take action to certify whether all food items sold to students will or will not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. It is the recommendation of Administration that the Board vote that they will meet Connecticut Nutrition Standards for the 2020/21 school year.

Motion #1 (For Healthy Food Option)

MOVED that Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Cheshire Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or by non-school organizations and groups.

Motion #2 (For Food Exemptions)

MOVED that the Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the food sales.

Motion #3 (For Beverage Exemptions)

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education will allow the sale to students of beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the beverage sales.

MOTION by Mr. Martelli; seconded by Mr. Grippo.

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

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 4-0-1. (Ms. Harrigan abstained)

5. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A. CURRICULUM

I. Report on Meeting Held February 10, 2020.

In Ms. Ham’s absence, Ms. Harrigan reported on the meeting held February 10, 2020. Artur Branco, World Language Department Chair, and Carolina Borchert, Elementary World Language Teacher, provided an update regarding the World Language program in Cheshire Public Schools. The presentation included a review of the World Language Task Force from the 2014-15 and 2016-17 school years. Ms. Silano presented the Next Generation Accountability Report for the 2018-19 school year. Cheshire Public Schools overall index on the report has improved each of the last two years. Areas of strength from the report include achievement

and growth in Math and ELA performance. Areas for continued growth and effort include reducing Chronic Absenteeism, and improving performance on the Physical Fitness state assessment. Ms. Silano reviewed information regarding the current travel advisory related to the Coronavirus for school groups traveling abroad. She told the Committee that Cheshire Public Schools is monitoring the advisory where it relates to upcoming out-of-country trips.

B. FINANCE

I. Financial Report

Mr. Grippo reported that updated projections through January 31, 2020 reflect some developing negative trends that they will adjust for over the coming months to end the year in balance. Instructional Programs will exceed budget by a net total of \$65,074 due primarily to Tuition Outplacement costs for special education which are projected to exceed budget by \$150,000 for the year. The budget overage in Tuition Outplacements is partially offset by reductions that will be made in the Instructional Supply, Textbook, Library and Curriculum accounts in order to meet our overall budget. He reported they are projecting Support Services to be below budget by \$80,000, due primarily to lower than budgeted costs for copier rental/printing services, student transportation and bus fuel. Operations and Maintenance costs are projected to exceed budget by \$14,926 with higher than budgeted costs for maintenance supplies being partially offset by lower than expected heating costs and maintenance repairs. Currently, there is a district-wide expenditure limit of 70% of non-payroll accounts for our schools and departments.

II. Medical Benefits

Mr. Masciana reported that he only has a preliminary report through the month of January. Claims did decrease but they are still high at \$881,000, due to several very high claims in our claim pool. He said they ended the month with \$2,578,000 in the reserve or 3.44 months of claims. He explained that the estimated claims per month that were averaging \$750,000 are currently averaging around \$883,000. He explained that they did receive \$95,000 in stop loss reimbursements.

III. Comprehensive Audit Report

Mr. Masciana reported that the Town Council Audit Committee meeting was held on January 28, 2020 with Scott Bassett from RSM, the auditing firm that was hired to do the annual independent audit. There are two items, the comprehensive annual financial report, and also the federal and state grant programs received by the Town and Board of Education. All of the audits reflected clean opinions with no material findings. There were no management recommendations that came out of the review. He noted this is the fifth year there have been no findings. There was one piece of business advice that the auditors offered; that the pension rate of return

assumption of 7.5 percent is higher than towns similar to Cheshire and higher than recent investment performance. Their advice is to decrease the rate of return assumption to 7 percent. The Town Council will be taking up the matter based on the actuarial work that was done. The impact is that we will have to place additional dollars into the fund. The budget for the pension is about \$927,000. If a change is made to the return assumption, we would have to adjust for the increase. The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report is available on the Town's website.

Mr. White asked what the composition of the fund is. Mr. Masciana said he doesn't know the exact composition; the fund is managed by the retirement board. In no year was it even at 10 percent; they are managed very conservatively.

C. **PLANNING**

I. **Report on Meeting Held February 13, 2020**

Mr. Martelli reported that the Board of Education and Public Building Commission have been assigned all districtwide projects that were approved in August 2019 totaling \$3.5 million. That money will be allocated to districtwide security enhancements, acoustic tile replacement, millwork and flooring, districtwide bathroom upgrades, cafeteria renovations at Norton, window replacements, stadium lighting and HVAC improvements at Cheshire High School, HVAC at Dodd, Chapman and Highland, and replacement of the boiler at Doolittle, parking lot and paving improvements. Mr. Masciana said some of these projects have to go out to bid and won't be started until next year. Some, such as the boiler project, are high priority and will be started as soon as possible.

Mr. Martelli said that the State of Connecticut Department of Administrative Services has approved the final plans for the Code Compliance project at Cheshire High School. In addition, the Committee reviewed the proposed Capital Plan expenditures for 2020-2021 totaling \$585,000.

The Committee discussed solar energy. A consultant from ECG group will be speaking with members of the Planning Committee on Monday, February 24th.

Ms. Harrigan asked why the 2020-2021 budget is so much lower than previous years. She is concerned with the conditions of our buildings and feels there is not enough funding allocated. Mr. Martelli said this year is for planning for the upcoming four years. Mr. Masciana added that the cycle for the Capital Plan has been changed so it has only been six months since the last request. He said they are certainly asking for what they need to supplement what was requested six months ago.

II. Approval of Five-Year Capital Plan

Mr. Martelli gave a brief overview of the Capital Plan and advised that the complete Plan is available on the district website.

MOTION by Mr. Grippo, seconded by Mr. White.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education approves the Five Year Capital Expenditure Plan for fiscal years 2020/2021 through 2024/2025, in the total amount of \$25,787,500, with annual allocations as follows:*

2020-21 - \$585,000

2021-22 - \$7,240,000

2022-23 - \$5,150,000

2023-24 - \$8,325,000

2024-25 - \$4,487,500

Ms. Harrigan said she cannot in good conscience vote for this because each year we keep putting off projects.

VOTE: The Motion passed 4-1. (Ms. Harrigan opposed)

D. POLICY

I. Report on Meeting Held January 27, 2020

Mr. Grippo, Policy Committee Chair, reported the Committee met and discussed a number of policies.

II. First Reading of Policies

Mr. Grippo brought forward the following policies for a first reading.

Bylaw 9130 - Committees. A draft policy includes a section entitled “Standing Committees” with descriptions of the various committees. They will continue their review of this policy at their next meeting. Other additions to this policy include adding a “Public Comment” section to each committee agenda, and adding that the committee will make reasonable efforts to provide for video broadcast and/or recording of meetings whenever possible and permissible. Mr. White suggested merging some of the Committee, such having Transportation as part of Personnel.

Bylaw 9321 - Time, Place, Notification, Type of Meetings. The Committee read through this bylaw. The only change to this policy is to note that the Board Secretary shall supervise meeting notifications.

III. Second Reading of Policies

Mr. Grippo brought forward the following policies for a second reading.

4118.5/4218.5 Personnel - Responsible Use Policy – Computers, Network, Accounts, and Related Technology. This policy was reviewed and is recommended by the district's Technology Committee regarding employee use of the district's computer systems and electronic communications.

5112 Students - Ages of Attendance. Changes to this policy are a result of changes to Public Act 19-179 concerning homeless students. Regarding proof of residency, if the student claims that he or she is homeless, then the party claiming ineligibility has the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that the student denied schooling is not homeless in accordance the federal law.

5118.2 Students - Homeless Students. Changes to this policy are also a result of changes to Public Act 19-179 concerning homeless students. Language states that any homeless child or youth denied school accommodations shall continue in attendance or be immediately enrolled in the school selected by the child in the school district. The district must provide a written explanation of the reason for the denial along with information regarding the right to appeal.

6142 Instruction - Basic Instruction. The Committee continued their review of this policy. Changes to this policy include adding computer science to the program of instruction.

IV. Third Reading and Approval of Policies

Mr. Grippo brought forward the following policies for a third reading and approval. He noted there were no substantive changes since the first and second readings.

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."

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."

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.

6159 Instruction - 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 twenty-one 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 and to establish the scope of the special education program.

MOTION by Mr. Grippo, seconded by Mr. White

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education give a third and final reading to Policies 5144.4 Students – Discipline; 4112.2 Certification; 4131 Staff Development; and 6159 Individualized Education Program, and direct the Superintendent to put said policies into immediate effect.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

V. Rescindment of Bylaw #9326.1

Mr. Grippo explained that his Bylaw regarding tape recording of meetings is outdated and it is recommended that it be rescinded.

MOTION by Mr. Grippo, seconded by Mr. Martelli

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education rescinds Bylaw #9326.1 Recording of Board Minutes.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

E. SCHOOL MODERNIZATION COMMITTEE

Mr. Martelli provided an update on the School Modernization Committee. There have been two meetings since the last board meeting. One meeting was held at Cheshire High School on February 3rd, where Committee members were led on a

two-hour tour throughout the building by Dr. Principal, Dr. Mary Gadd. He said it was amazing to see how much activity takes place at the school after hours. The Committee got a good idea of the work that needs to take place at the school.

Last night, the Committee visited Chapman School. He said, having never been in that school, that he was shocked to see how severely antiquated the school is. There is no elevator for students who may need to get to the lower level. He said in spite of the old building, they are the highest performing school in New Haven County. He noted that it has been eye opening for him to see the buildings. They are all clean and in good repair and Mr. Masciana has done a great job identifying what needs to be done in the next five years, as they determine what will be done in the future with the buildings.

The Committee as a whole has put together an RFP for an Owner's Representative for the School Modernization Plan. It was decided that this would be the best way to help guide and figure out the best steps moving forward. The RFP is due back on March 12th.

Mr. Martelli noted there are three committees that meet the RFP Committee, a Committee that is traveling to out-of-district schools for tours and a Committee that is visiting our schools to tour and speak with staff. The next meeting will take place on March 2nd at Highland Elementary School at 7:30 p.m.

F. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES.

None.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Board of Education (Business) Meeting Held January 16, 2020
- B. Board of Education (Special) Meeting Held January 23, 2020
- C. Board of Education (Special) Meeting Held January 28, 2020
- D. Board of Education (Special) Meeting Held February 5, 2020

MOTION by Mr. Grippo, seconded by Mr. White

That the Cheshire Board of Education approve the minutes of the Board of Education Meetings held January 16, January 23, January 28 and February 5, 2020.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Solan gave a presentation on the Vision of Schools, a collective vision for how they continue to move forward and excel as a school district (copy on file). Mr.

Solan reviewed Cheshire's "Vision of the Graduate," Performance Standards, future learning environments, and faculty impressions on needs in the district. He also discussed the programmatic vision to better provide powerful learning opportunities in industry that leverage traditional classroom learning into deep application. Lastly, he shared a video on the internship program at Cheshire High School.

9. **OLD BUSINESS**

A. **Facilities Fees and Scheduling Update**

Mr. Masciana reported that they have been meeting with representatives from Parks and Rec, Public Works, Town and Cheshire Public Schools staff. He said the biggest factor is that there is more demand than space and time available, not only for buildings, but also school and town fields. He said they have been coordinating for spring use for fields and summer work that might affect the Park and Rec programs. There is also a need for staff training for Park and Rec staff that monitor or supervise activities in our buildings. They are trying to find alternate space for Cheshire Cheer and looking at requests from travel basketball and the YMCA, and are looking at alternate staffing options. Mr. Masciana said they are making some real progress.

10. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Discussion/Possible Action Regarding Career and Technical Education Secondary Supplemental Enhancement Grant**

Ms. Silano reported that the purpose of the grant is to prepare the next generation of students with the knowledgeable skills to compete in the global economy. The Carl Perkins grant is a federal grant designed to provide resources to support career and technical education. Each year we participate in the Carl Perkins Grant. This request is a Supplemental Perkins Grant, done on a competitive basis. The timeframe for this application is very short. The grant was issued on January 30th and is due by March 2nd. This particular grant application is requesting equipment to support coursework for a clear pathway in manufacturing. The equipment will provide direct hands-on, skills-based training on the equipment travel for the training, and curriculum writing. There are two pieces of very expensive equipment. One is a Trak Knee Mill and the other is the CNC Mill. This grant would help support the work begun by Shawn McKeown and the team at Cheshire High School to create associations and course articulations with Naugatuck Valley Community College and Tunxis Community College. It would add onto an existing course in CAD and another in research design.

Mr. Solan introduced Mr. McKeown, the Department Chair for Career and Technical Education at Cheshire High School. He has done a lot of work to prepare by visiting a number of manufacturers whether here in town or throughout the region.

Mr. White asked if there would be related costs. Mr. McKeown said the costs not covered by the grant would include the rigging of the machine from a loading dock in either Waterbury or Middletown to the back door at his lab at Cheshire

High School. Additional costs would also include some incidental travel costs and an electrical drop. The grant request is for \$49,718. Mr. McKeown explained the equipment in more detail. He said there would be hundreds of students that would want to be involved with this equipment. Mr. White said it sounds like a fantastic project.

Ms. Harrigan thanked Mr. McKeown for all of his hard work. This is something we want to be moving towards for all of our students. Mr. Martelli thanked Mr. McKeown for doing the research. He noted his family had a manufacturing business in town and he understands the importance of this equipment. Mr. McKeown noted that there is a very high demand for tool and die makers right now. Mr. Grippo said he is enthusiastically supporting this motion to apply for this grant. Mr. Perugini said he also will support this motion. He said there are a number of people in Cheshire who have asked for more technical programs in this town.

Mr. McKeown thanked everyone for their support and said this will help a number of students who may have never known how talented they are in this area.

MOTION by Mr. White, seconded by Ms. Harrigan.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education supports the submission of the Career and Technical Education Secondary Supplemental Enhancement Grant.*

VOTE: The Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Perugini stated he did not have an update for this evening. He read the upcoming Board and committee meetings.

11. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Ms. Harrigan, and seconded by Mr. Martelli, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Perugini, Board Chair

Attest:

Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Filed at the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: _____.