

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING
HELD APRIL 23, 2020 AT 7:30 P.M. (Held Virtually)**

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

Board Members Absent: Kathryn Hallen-Secretary

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Marlene Silano, Assistant 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.
Mr. Perugini led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

2. AUDIENCE

None.

3. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A. CURRICULUM

I. Report on Meeting Held April 22, 2020.

Ms. Ham, Committee Chair, reported that the Curriculum Committee met the previous evening. Tim Galvin, Cheshire High School Teacher, introduced a new textbook, *Essentials of Comparative Politics with Cases*, which is being recommend for review for the new course, AP Comparative Government. Next, the Committee reviewed how they are progressing with distance remote distance learning. The Committee learned that College Board testing for the SATs, as well as AP testing will be open book and taken at home.

B. FINANCE

I. Financial Report

Mr. Grippo asked Mr. Masciana to review the Finance Report. Mr. Masciana reviewed the estimated dollar impact of COVID-19 remote learning, as of April 20, 2020, assuming traditional school starts on June 1, 2020. This would be about 2.5 months of savings (a copy of the detailed report is on file with the minutes).

Certified Salaries	(\$255,000)
Classified Salaries	(\$ 58,000)
Employee Benefits	\$ 92,713
Instructional Program	(\$110,970)
Support Services	(\$266,516)
Operations & Maintenance	<u>(\$ 18,237)</u>
Total Estimated Savings	(\$666,478)

Mr. Masciana cautioned the Board that there will be additional costs not reflected in this estimate to provide additional special education services. That amount will offset the total savings.

Mr. Grippo asked about an increase in the line item for unemployment expenses for substitute teachers. Mr. Masciana explained that most are per diem, but under the new pandemic laws, they are eligible for unemployment benefits. He said they are considered employees of the district, but are not under contract.

Mr. Perugini noted that we will need to pay compensatory expenses for special education services during the summer. He asked if we will be able to receive Excess Cost Reimbursements because it will take place after the school year ends. Mr. Masciana said he does not know, but he will get that information for the Board.

II. Medical Benefits Report

For the month of March, claims were \$765,401. Year-to-date we have received \$168,604 in Stop-Loss reimbursements. Claims for the month of March were \$765,401. As of March 31st, the balance in the trust fund is \$2,511,620, which is 2.93 months of claims reserves. As of now, we are not aware of any other COVID-19 related expenses.

Mr. Masciana summarized the Grab and Go Meal Program. As of April 23rd, they have served 66,478 meals and the expected reimbursement is \$176,407. The reimbursements cover the actual cost of the food and also include a set-rate allowance for labor costs. He reported they are now on a 2-day per week distribution plan. Distribution is on Mondays and Thursdays, and they continue to serve 7 days of breakfasts and lunches. They reduced pickup by one day to try to minimize the virus exposure to staff. Mr. Masciana thanked all of the kitchen managers for their efforts to make this a success.

Mr. Grippo noted the number of meals has stabilized in the 800 range. He asked if this number is consistent with the number of children who participate in the food assistance program. Mr. Masciana answered that Cheshire has about 600 students who are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program, so we are serving more students during the pandemic. He said now that there are more people unemployed or on HUSKY, the free and reduced number may increase when we get back to school.

Mr. White asked for the total cost-to-date for the program, excluding labor. Mr. Masciana said the costs are to purchase food and bags and the labor to prepare and distribute the food. Our Food Services Manager is

working on that calculation, but the food cost will fall below the reimbursement revenue.

Mr. Grippo reported that there will be a Finance Committee meeting next Monday, April 27, 2020 at 7:00 pm.

C. PERSONNEL

Dr. Solan explained he is presenting two motions this evening to non-renew teacher contracts. The action being taken happens every year, but the situation we are experiencing sensitizes the process this year.

I. Non-Renewal of Interim Contract Teachers

Pursuant to Section 10-151 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Board of Education may, prior to May 1st, authorize the Superintendent not to renew the contracts of Interim Contract Teachers.

MOTION by Mr. White, seconded by Ms. Ham

“That the Cheshire Board of Education, pursuant to C.G.S. 10-151, authorizes the Superintendent to non-renew the teacher contracts of all certified, professional employees, serving under an interim contract subject to C.G.S. 10-151 at the end of the 2019-2020 school year.”

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 6-0.

II. Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Teachers

The second motion is Pursuant to Section 10-151 of the Connecticut General Statutes, which states that the Board of Education may, prior to May 1st, authorize the Superintendent not to renew the contracts of certain non-tenured teachers. This year, because of budgetary concerns, it has reluctantly been recommended that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent not to renew the contracts of all first and second year non-tenured, certified, professional employees subject to the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act. Superintendent Solan said that the goal is to hire all teacher back once the budget is passed.

MOTION by Mr. White seconded by Mr. Grippo

“That the Cheshire Board of Education, pursuant to C.G.S. 10-151, authorize the Superintendent to non-renew the teacher contracts of all non-tenured, certified, professional employees that are in the first, second and third year under contract for the Cheshire Public Schools subject to C.G.S. 10-151 at the end of the 2019-2020 school year, and further to authorize the

Superintendent to communicate written notice of such non-renewal to the affected teachers.”

Discussion:

Mr. Grippo asked why we did not include third year teachers as well. Dr. Solan answered that it does produce a great deal of anxiety for the teachers. He noted that there are 37 first and second year teachers who received the letter and he cannot see any situation where we would not renew more than 37 teachers. In the last 4 years, we have not had to eliminate any positions.

Mr. Perugini said this is not an action that the board is anticipating. They will not start budget deliberations with Town for a few weeks. This action gives the board some flexibility and one avenue to look at to reduce the budget if it becomes necessary. He said this is not a precursor, but only a standard operating procedure.

Mr. White asked if non-renewal letters have gone out to the teachers. Dr. Solan replied that principals met with each of the teachers to notify them that the letters would be coming. They have received a letter saying that the action was being presented to the Board this evening.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 6-0.

D. POLICY

I. Report on Meeting Held February 24, 2020

Mr. Grippo reported that he is reporting tonight on a meeting that was held on February 24, 2020. At the meeting the Committee had reviewed policies for a second and third reading by the Board.

II. Second Reading of Policies

The Committee has reviewed Bylaw #9130 - Committees and Bylaw # 9321 - Time, Place Notification, Type of Meetings and recommended these bylaws to the full Board for a second reading. There were no significant changes since the first reading.

III. Third Reading and Approval of Policies

After a thorough review, the Committee has recommended the following policies for a third reading and approval. There were no significant changes to these policies since the second reading.

- 4118.5 - Responsible Use Policy
- 5112 - Ages of Attendance
- 5118.2 - Homeless Students
- 6142 - Basic Instructional Program

MOTION by Mr. Grippo, seconded by Mr. Martelli

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education give a third and final reading to the following policies and direct the Superintendent to place said policies into immediate effect:
#4118.5 - Responsible Use Policy; #5112 - Ages of Attendance;
#5118.2 - Homeless Students; #6142 - Basic Instructional Program.

VOTE: The Motion passed 5-0-1 (Mr. White abstained)

E. SCHOOL MODERNIZATION COMMITTEE

Mr. Martelli reported the Committee will meet virtually on May 4th. At that meeting, they will meet via Zoom with the two firms that submitted bids for the Owner's Representative. Mr. Martelli said they would like to keep the process going forward.

F. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES

None

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes of the Board of Education (Business) Meeting Held April 6, 2020.

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

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the minutes of the Board of Education Business Meeting held April 6, 2020.

VOTE: The motion passed 6-0.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Solan introduced Mr. Masciana who gave an update on technology and technology support.

- We are supporting 3,300 remote learner students in grades 3-12
- Of the above total, the number of district-owned devices is as follows:
 - 2,151 are grade 7-12 students who were already 1:1
 - Since going to remote learning, 310 additional district devices have been provided to elementary students.
 - 26% of students in grades 3-6 are using a district device as of 4/22. (297 devices of the 1,147 students in these 4 grades)

- Expansion of google classroom and use of video will likely increase demand for additional Chromebook devices and technical support.
- Support level is very high with 274 tickets/support calls logged plus emails to which non-tech staff are responding. Support requests are generally closed same-day with most handled immediately upon request.

Mr. Masciana thanked families who are using their own devices. This enables the district to continue to provide devices to students who do not have access.

Mr. Perugini said the tech team is doing a great job and they have received a great deal of positive feedback from parents regarding tech support. Mr. Perugini asked what percentage of our internal technology staff is providing services versus APEX. Mr. Masciana replied that we only go to APEX when we need support at the network level or for something more serious. He said when he refers to our technology staff, he is referring to our Technology Manager, our Technology Supervisor and five technicians, and all district staff.

Mr. Grippo asked if students who are using an iPad or PC have the same protections and lockdowns, if they were to exit out of the Google Classroom, as they do while they are logged in under their student ID. Mr. Masciana said approximately 74% of students in grades 3-6 are using their own devices at home. If they are logged into Google Classroom, they get protection. If they are on their own home device and not logged into the Cheshire.k12.ct.us google account, we cannot offer protection.

Dr. Solan said, when remote learning first began, many districts went to programs such as Zoom and quickly retracted the program due to privacy concerns. Dr. Solan said we are very deliberate in how we deliver video to students. They are just now turning on the cameras for students.

Mr. White asked if teachers are supposed to be making themselves available via video on a weekly or daily basis. Ms. Silano said today they enabled the cameras for students in Grades K-6. This does not require a teacher to do synchronous teaching (the entire class together at the same time). They can offer one-on-one support or small groups. She said teachers can control the meetings; they can mute or “kick-off” a student. She said this is an additional tool they can use, not a requirement. Dr. Solan added that there is also a social element to this, an opportunity to connect our students and staff.

Ms. Ham asked how a teacher is managing the entire classroom in these meetings. Ms. Silano said they are not recommending entire class teaching over video. The synchronous piece is being added in slowly.

Mr. Perugini added that if you are in in a Cheshire Public Schools program, you are protected, if you open another tab and navigate away, you are not protected.

Mr. White said he thinks the social emotional part is very important. He said the quicker they can get the video portion going, the better, the interaction is needed to add a little normalcy to their life.

Ms. Silano said the next step will be to open up the cameras for middle and high school students, but they want to make sure it is working for the K-6 grades first.

Dr. Solan continued with his report saying they are paying attention to the unemployment rate. Cheshire has a 2.5% rate right now but they will continue to monitor it as it relates to food services and the social emotional wellbeing of our students.

Mr. Grippo asked if we have a program in place to supply internet Wi-Fi hotspots, should families find themselves in need going forward. The Superintendent answered, yes, we have supplied the service for some families in need already. He also mentioned that they have not yet committed to synchronous learning, or the entire class together at the same time, because home lives are so variable right now.

Ms. Ham asked if we have seen students transfer out of Cheshire because their families have had to move. The Superintendent answered that our enrollment has been very stable.

Mr. White asked if there has been an issue with students not logging-in who would normally come to school. Dr. Solan answered that we have emphasized engagement. Staff members have been asked to be sensitive to this issue and to monitor who is engaging. That information is filtered through the guidance counselors who will make connections with the students along with the teachers. They are trying to make sure all students are engaged because this can be an emotionally difficult time.

The Superintendent said graduation is a sensitive topic now for the class of 2020. He said the team has a desire to make graduation as special and memorable as possible. They have met with seniors, trying to solicit student ideas. He said he will keep the Board informed.

Lastly, the Superintendent shared a card from elementary teacher, Deb Manke, who said *"...it is hard but she feels supported, she is being pushed into places she might not have gone, and that it good. It will be awesome when we can finally get back into class. I miss the spontaneous action that can only happen in a classroom, but for now health and safety is our priority – we got this."*

Mr. Perugini suggested that anyone who would like more in-depth information on remote learning should watch the video from the Curriculum Committee meeting the previous evening.

7. OLD BUSINESS

None.

8. **AUDIENCE – VIA CPSCOV19@CHESHIRE.K12.CT.US**

No Emails Received.

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Grippo noted that he and Mr. Perugini appeared on “The Cheshire Cast” and had a 60-minute conversation on their podcast. They talked about technology being utilized and some other issues that are going on in the school system.

A. **Chairperson’s Update**

Mr. Perugini agreed with Mr. Grippo about their interview. It was a very positive conversation with questions from a community perspective.

He reported that he has regularly participated in CABC’s Board Chair discussions. He noted that all districts are facing the same challenges we are with items like contract negotiations, such as our Dattco contract per the Governor’s Executive Order. He said some towns and cities are already thinking about being asked to reduce their budget request. Districts were asking if the Governor’s Executive Order protects next year’s budget. Mr. Perugini said districts are also asking if there are penalties or repercussions if we do not negotiate contracts. Mr. Perugini said he is not suggesting it, but asked Dr. Solan what happens to our district if we do not negotiate the bus contract. Dr. Solan said that has not been delineated. He is not sure what would happen if we did not follow the Governor’s Executive Order.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Mr. Grippo, and seconded by Ms. Ham, the meeting was adjourned into Executive Session, with no action to follow, including Superintendent Solan and Chief Operating Officer Vincent Masciana at 9:11 p.m. Executive Session adjourned at approximately 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Perugini

Anthony Perugini, Board Chair

Attest:

Carol K. Jesensky

Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Electronically filed at the Town Clerk’s Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: 5/1/2020.