

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING
HELD MAY 7, 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

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@chshire.k12.ct.us.

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.

Cheshire High School Student, Katherine Fleury led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

1. High School Showcase

Special Educators led by Pupil Personnel Services Director, Tracy Hussey, presented on the Dodd to Cheshire High School transition and the continuum of services provided to students at the high school level.

Special Education Instructional Leader at Cheshire High School, Deb Bottaro, provided an introduction of the services and supports at Cheshire High School and the transition from Dodd.

Secondary Supervisor of Special Education, Marie Broadway, provided an overview of the specialized programs: New Start/RISE; ICAN; Oasis; and the Life Skills Program.

Tracy Hussey, Director of Pupil Personnel and Principal of Humiston School, along with Amanda Giacondino, Social Worker at Humiston, shared a video of interviews of students and their parents.

Special Education Teacher, Kelly Rollo, gave a presentation on the transition services for students ages 18 to 21.

Mr. Perugini and the other Board of Education members thanked the teachers for their presentations and for their dedication to the students.

2. Superintendent's Update

The Superintendent said the Governor extended campus closure for the rest of the school year. While they were expecting this announcement, it was emotionally disappointing.

They -will have an update on end-of-year plans soon. Also, CIAC cancelled spring sports for the remainder of the year.

The Superintendent reviewed the latest parent survey results. To date, there are 967 responses with the majority of parents indicating they are happy with remote learning. He said he is happy with the number of responses and it is a good representation of all parents.

Ms. Silano said they are happy with the number of responses. They want to continue to improve the remote learning program especially since they do not know if they will be in school full time in the fall. This summer her team will be working on improvements. Based on the results they received from the first survey, they opened up Google Classroom to the younger grades. She explained ways teachers have adapted to remote learning, such as using Screencastify, because they do not have access to all of the tools of their classroom to demonstrate and instruct. They have turned on camera access for students and teachers and it has been very helpful for instruction. In the last 5 days, they have had 4,497 Google Meets. They strive to get things right. She said this has been a difficult time for everyone. They are working hard at making improvements.

Superintendent Solan said that the Governor has been very clear that there will not be in-person graduations in June. He and Principal Mary Gadd have looked at many options, but they are waiting for state guidance. They are discussing the massive end-of-year exchange of materials between our students and our schools. They are determining how to do this in the most safe and responsible way. He said they are also discussing how to support students who may have fallen behind after June 1st. There will be individual conferencing with students in early June.

Discussion

Ms. Harrigan asked about the team putting together scenarios and asked if they have estimated how much extra time teachers will have to spend learning the new technologies that they were thrown into midyear. The Superintendent answered that their goal is towards continuous improvement. Once students turn-in their Chromebooks and textbooks, they want to provide an opportunity for debriefing with teachers to find out what they need to move forward. They will also be working on summer curriculum writing.

Mr. White asked how the surveys were sent to parents. Ms. Silano answered that they were emailed to the parents and parents were asked to complete one survey for each child in their home. Mr. White said that is about a 25% response rate, but he wonders about the parents who did not respond. The Superintendent said they are happy with the number of responses and thinks they are valid responses.

Mr. Grippo noted how the seniors are losing out on so many things. He hopes the Governor allows them to have some sort of graduation and closure. He asked about the transition to next year and when they will start to transition the students into the next year's curriculum. Ms. Silano said they are sticking to this year's curriculum and

students are getting everything they need to advance to the next grade level. When they come back next year, they will assess the students and provide what they need. They will also have transition meetings for special education students.

Ms. Hallen thanked Ms. Hussey and the special education educators for their presentation and said she is always impressed with the work they do every day. She also thanked the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for the incredible job they have done to stay connected to the students and families. She said they are very fortunate to have them working for our district.

Mr. Perugini said there is a great deal more going on behind the scenes. He was hoping for more parent feedback and suggested in the future adding more descriptive questions. He said that parent input really matters. As far as a fall opening, the State is already talking about social distancing, masks, etc. They will be talking to the Town Council to let them know there may be additional costs. He said he too is hoping we can do something for seniors for graduation. He is also suggesting some type of community task force to allow the public to give input regarding opening in the fall. He thanked the educators for their presentations for this evening.

Mr. Solan noted that the parent survey is still open for parents to complete if they have not done so already.

3. Public Comment via CPSCovid19@cheshire.k12.ct.us

There were no emails received during the meeting. Mr. Solimine confirmed there were 22 viewers.

4. Executive Session to discuss Bargaining Unit Negotiations and the Transportation Contract with Possible Action to Follow.

MOTION by Mr. Grippo and seconded by Ms. Hallen

MOVED that the Board of Education adjourn into Executive Session, to include the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Chief Operating Officer and Town Attorney, Al Smith to discuss bargaining unit negotiations and the transportation contract with possible action to follow at 9:15 p.m.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

The Board of Education reconvened their business meeting at 10:29 p.m.

MOTION by Mr. White and seconded by Ms. Hallen

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to enter into an agreement, subject to final modifications and review by the Town Attorney, with Dattco, Inc. to pay a

reduced rate toward their contract, per their Covid-19 Pupil Transportation Funding Agreement proposal dated April 24, 2020.

Discussion

Mr. White said school is out and we have an existing contract that goes until the end of the year. In accordance with the Governor's Executive Order, we are working with Dattco to make some amendments to the contract.

Mr. Masciana said the Governor's Executive Order 7R requires school districts to enter into an agreement to pay their bus contractors enough to cover the wages and benefits for their drivers during this period. They have been negotiating with Dattco who made a proposal that we would pay them for 59 days of school, the remainder of the contract. This would be at a reduced rate of 80% for only the daily bus rate for regular and special education runs, no charters or field trips. The reduction, along with savings for fuel, saves \$315,840 for the period of March 16th through the last day of school. Dattco is being paid about 70.9% of the contracted cost of what they would have been paid. His opinion is that this is a reasonable agreement and in-line with what other districts are paying. This same offer has been made to all the other school districts that Dattco services.

Mr. White added that we have to do this because of the Governor's Executive Order but he feels it is also important to get people off of unemployment and back onto payrolls. He supports this motion.

Mr. Perugini said the Board and administration have been discussing this with legal counsel for a few weeks. He said he will support this motion.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

5. Adjournment

On a Motion by Ms. Ham the Board agreed unanimously to adjourn at 10:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Perugini, Board Chair

Attest:

Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Electronically filed at the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: 5/19/2020.