

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING
HELD VIRTUALLY JANUARY 21, 2021 AT 7:30 PM**

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

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 Schools YouTube Channel at www.youtube.com/cheshirepublicschools. Public comments were accepted at CPSCovid19@cheshire.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.
Mr. Perugini led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
- C. Student Representatives. Lucy Helene and Josh Goldstein, student representatives for the 2020/2021 school year, reported on recent events at Cheshire High School. Lucy reported the winter sports season started this past Tuesday with the State approving participation in the following sports: boys and girls basketball, boys and girls ice hockey, boys swimming and boys and girls alpine skiing. Cheerleading can participate as a sideline cheer only, however competitive cheer and wrestling have not yet been approved for competition, only for conditioning. Over 5,000 pounds of food items were donated to the food drive that was held on January 19th. The holiday drive-through was held in December. 326 cars participated. They raised over \$900, hundreds of food items for the Cheshire Food Pantry, and hundreds of books for Re-Read bookstore. Lastly, the representative reported rehearsals have begun for the spring musical, Little Women. There will be a performance of some type;, they are just not sure what type of performance will take place.

2. AUDIENCE

None.

3. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A. CURRICULUM

I. Report on Meeting Held January 11, 2021.

Ms. Ham reported that the Cheshire Curriculum Council (CCC) gave an overview of the Music Executive Summary. Key items in the report included experiences for students in elementary, middle, and high school relative to national music standards. An Evaluation presentation and report to the Cheshire Curriculum Council from November, 2020 was also shared.

They next heard the Library Executive Summary. Key items in the report included goals to align new curriculum and assessment to the 2018 American Association of Librarians (AASL) standards. The staff is continuing to seek opportunities for Librarians to collaborate with one another and classroom teachers, and finding meaningful ways to integrate library and core class skills and work.

Mr. Hanlon presented an annual report of the Grade 6 Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT). He also gave a report on the test administration of the LAS Links, the state assessment for English Learners. The test has four parts: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This year, the administration window is from January 4 - March 31, 2021. The administration of the assessment this year includes procedures for assessing students who are remote learners.

II. Approval of Textbook

Based upon its review and following the public viewing period, the Curriculum Committee recommends to the Board approval of the purchase of the following textbook:

Textbook	Publisher	Grades
College Accounting: A Practical Approach, 14th Edition	Pearson	10-12

MOTION by Ms. Harrigan and seconded by Ms. Hallen.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the purchase of the textbook: College Accounting: A Practical Approach, 14th Edition.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

B. FINANCE

I. Finance Report

Mr. Masciana reported this year’s budget is \$74,593,926. A total of \$62,331,075, or 83.6% of the budget, has been expended and encumbered through the first six months of the year, including the encumbrances for our largest account categories, namely the payroll and transportation accounts. They have now concluded the first half of the year, and while there continues to be variables and unknowns, particularly related to the pandemic, they fully expect to meet the 2020 budget. This is based on the assumption that we receive the \$706,075 allocated to Cheshire in Coronavirus Relief Funds from the State (it has been approved), use the

\$200,000 available in the Unexpended Education Funds Account, and aggressively manage our non-payroll expenditures, as explained below.

II. Report on 202/21 Budget Meetings

Mr. Grippo said they had a Finance Committee of the Whole meeting on January 19th as part of the budget review process. He noted that a video of the meeting is available on the district's YouTube channel.

III. Medical Benefits Update

Mr. Masciana reported that the claims for the month of December were \$1,033,664. For the first six months, medical claims averaged \$1,086,385 per month, well above the expected \$800,000. The Trust Fund Balance as of December 31, the Reserve Fund, which began the year at \$2,817,007, has a balance of \$970,187. If the claims continue to be this high, which they do not expect, they would run out of funds by March. If that happened, they would use what they could out of the Operating Budget and speak with the Town Council. Mr. Masciana spoke with the Town Manager and they agreed to have a joint meeting. The Town is also having high claims so their reserve is being depleted as well.

Mr. White asked if our budget is still frozen at 40% and said he would like to do everything on the Board-side before we go to the Town. Mr. Masciana answered, yes, it is still frozen. If it weren't for medical benefits, we would have raised it to 60% by now. It will depend on the next couple of months of claims.

Ms. Ham said her concern is that we may start to get higher rates because people have delayed care due to the pandemic. She asked Mr. Masciana ask CIGNA if they have an insight as to how this delay may affect our future claims. Mr. Masciana said our higher claims are normally associated with diabetes and hypertension.

C. PLANNING

I. Report on Meeting Held January 11, 2021.

Mr. Martelli reported that Mr. Masciana presented a request for the Five-Year Capital Budget. The funding request for 2021-22 is \$5.2 million. The Planning Committee asked Mr. Masciana to go back and see which projects are immediately necessary for the first year of the plan as they move forward with School Modernization Committee (SMC). The Committee will be holding another meeting on January 28th at 6pm with a revised proposal that will take the \$5.2 million and reduce it to \$2.6 million the first year, postponing other projects to the next year. What will not change is the overall five-year amount.

D. POLICY

I. Report on Meeting Held January 5, 2021.

Mr. Grippo reported that the Committee continued their review of Policy 4000.1/Personnel Certified/Non-Certified / 5145.44 Students – Title IX. Mr. Grippo said Ms. Hallen reviewed the policy in detail and offered her analysis of problems and questions. The Committee agreed they will table this policy until they receive clarification from the Federal Government. Ms. Hallen added that the district is already complying with the law, although the paper policy has not been approved.

The Committee continued their review of two Bylaws regarding electronic attendance. One bylaw was fueled by the Governor's Executive Order, which the Board must follow. The Committee deemed it unnecessary to adopt a temporary policy that will be rescinded once the Executive Order has expired. The next Bylaw #9325.43 was in regard to allowing members to attend meetings electronically after the Executive Order has expired. The Committee agreed that this policy needs to be reviewed in more detail before it is moved forward.

E. SCHOOL MODERNIZATION COMMITTEE

Mr. Martelli shared the matrix as presented to the SMC. Their timeline is to have a recommended Plan to the Town Council and the Board of Education by March 1st in order to get it to referendum by June 30th. Mr. Martelli said that if they don't meet the June 30th deadline, they will miss the funding deadline for an entire year.

Mr. Martelli shared why they will not be starting with a high school project, noting the projected increase of elementary enrollment and need for additional space. Mr. Martelli said they were told that if they moved forward with the high school project, the State might not reimburse the Town for the project. Mr. Perugini added that when the committee scored all options, 12 out of 13 members did not choose to start with Cheshire High School.

Mr. White said a large part of the decision is predicated on the assumption of increasing enrollment. He asked if we know the basis of that assumption. Dr. Solan answered that the assumption is predicated by the work of two different demographers. They study student birth rates, housing trends and labor markets. He said they also had a similar study done a few years ago with similar projections. Dr. Solan said he would share the link to the meeting where the enrollment study was discussed, as well as the 2016 study that was done by Ergonomics. Mr. Martelli said there are two additional sub-divisions that are being discussed in Town that were not even taken into consideration when this current study was done.

Mr. Martelli shared the options (on file) and how they were ranked by SMC members. The Board discussed the different options. Ms. Harrigan explained a survey that will be put out to the community. The survey will be conducted over the phone and internet. Mr. Jaskot, Town of Cheshire Finance Director will be at the next meeting on January 27th to discuss the financial impact of the various projects.

F. **OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES**

None.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the minutes of the Board of Education Meetings held December 17, 2020, January 5, 2021, and January 14, 2021.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

5. **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

6. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

The Superintendent said regarding the teacher and staff vaccinations, they are hoping to have a clear plan and clear direction through consultation with the State, on when vaccinations will be available. At a clinic at the pool today, the Health Department had 20 surplus vaccinations, allowing for 20 of our staff members who are older or medically compromised to receive their first dose.

Cases are down from last week. Dr. Matt Carter, State Epidemiologist said that according to data, schools are proving to be one of the safest places. Students with special needs are now attending school four days a week.

Dr. Solan reminded the Board members that the CABA Legislative Breakfast is tomorrow am at 8 a.m. for those members who are participating.

ACES Open Choice Program.

Dr. Solan reported that we must inform ACES (Area Cooperative Educational Services) of seats available in Cheshire to be offered to New Haven children through the states Open Choice program. Open Choice is a program that was instituted to reduce racial and economic isolation for students from urban communities as part of the response to the Sheff v. O'Neill lawsuit. The benefit for the community is great in providing a diverse school enrollment for our community, and the funds received from the State have helped

offset district literacy support program costs over the past few years. This year, we have 34 Open Choice students enrolled in our schools.

Audience via CPSCOV1D19@cheshire.k12.ct.us

None

7. **OLD BUSINESS**

None

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

Chairperson's Update.

Mr. Perugini informed the other members that there are a few CAFE programs coming up in February. In particular, there is a seminar on policy and also the fourth session in diversion, equity and inclusion.

He noted that there has been a lot of chatter from school districts about the fact that teachers were not part of 1b for the vaccinations. He has heard they may be eligible right after the over-75 year olds.

He said he met with members of the Cheshire Coalition Group. He said he is looking for a date in February for Board members to meet with the group.

Lastly, Mr. Perugini reported that he had the privilege of being interviewed on the Cheshire Cast last week. He said he gave an update of everything that is going on. He said they were very complimentary of the Board and what the Board has accomplished.

Announcement of Upcoming Meetings.

Mr. Perugini reviewed the upcoming budget and committee meetings.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Ms. Hallen, and seconded by Mr. Grippo, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 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: February 17, 2021.