

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING  
HELD VIRTUALLY MAY 20, 2021 AT 7:30 PM**

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

Board Members Absent: Faith Ham

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 <a href="http://www.youtube.com/cheshirepublicschools">www.youtube.com/cheshirepublicschools</a> . Public comments were accepted at <a href="mailto:CPSCovid19@cheshire.k12.ct.us">CPSCovid19@cheshire.k12.ct.us</a> .
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**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 2020/21 school year, reported on recent events at Cheshire High School. They reported on spring sports, state ranked scholar athletes, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> college signing day. Nine seniors signed letters of intent. They reported on the CHS Leadership conference which 60 junior and senior students attended, NextGen testing, a virtual talent show and the scheduled screening of the senior play, Little Women, on Friday. They also mentioned that the junior and senior proms will take place during the first week of June.

**2. AUDIENCE**

- 3. Dr. Solan reported that an email was received from Emily Danese who “wanted to congratulate the whole Cheshire school system for selecting options for schooling to mitigate risk and stress during the pandemic.” She thanked staff and others for making many options available while keeping it orderly. She noted that many schools are not back per the news, but we kept it going in one form or another, and for that “you should be applauded for your leadership, flexibility and for front-line bravery.” She also asked if our district will require students to be vaccinated. Dr. Solan replied that the State of Connecticut designates which vaccines are required and, to his knowledge, there is no effort to make this vaccine mandatory.

The Superintendent said he received about 20 form emails from the parents of seniors asking for in-person graduation. He reported that they met with Chesprocott today and were given the approval to hold an in-person graduation.

**4. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**A. Approval of Grants Resolution.**

In accordance with Board Policy 3290 – Business and Non-Instructional Operations – Grants and Other Revenue, the Board of Education, by resolution, shall authorize the Superintendent to apply for and accept any and all grants as

may be determined appropriate by the administration. Therefore, the Superintendent shall:

1. Investigate new sources of revenue whether local, state, or federal;
2. Propose new revenue sources and associated programs to the Board of Education for approval;
3. Implement measures necessary to apply for/receive additional revenues.

In accordance with this policy, the Superintendent or his designee is authorized to sign all required forms for State and Federal programs. In addition, the Superintendent shall inform the Board of the activity of all grants applied for and received with the exception of those pursuant to Chapter 1973 of the Connecticut General Statutes. At tonight's meeting, under the Report of the Finance Committee, Assistant Superintendent Marlene Silano, will provide the Board with a report of all grant activity in the 2019/20 academic year.

**MOTION** by Mr. White, and seconded by Ms. Hallen

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

**VOTE:** The Motion passed unanimously 6-0.

## 5. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

### A. CURRICULUM

#### I. Report on Meeting Held May 10, 2021.

In Ms. Ham's absence, Ms. Harrigan reported that Ms. Leslie Paier, Cheshire High School Business Department Chair, presented an update to the textbook request for the Advanced Personal Finance course. The text covers the same essential material that Tunxis Community College does. They are using this textbook for Advanced Personal Finance and will continue to pay for the text for Cheshire students enrolled in the course.

Ms. Silano, Assistant Superintendent, gave an update on the state of field trip requests for the district. There have been several requests for trips to places like Camp Sloper. The emphasis of many of these trips is to help foster team-building and bring students together in a way that has been difficult this year.

Dr. Mary Gadd, CHS Principal, shared an update on the Cheshire High School schedule for the 2021/22 school year. This past school year, CHS moved to a block schedule consisting of 80-minute periods where students meet on alternate days. Moving forward for the 2021/22 school year, CHS will continue to use a block schedule on a 4 day rotation. This schedule will allow for four lunch waves to accommodate a reduced number of students with increased space between students in the cafeteria. The

schedule also allows for two support periods (two 40 minute time slots) within one block, as well as allowing for an advisory period without otherwise changing the schedule.

Ms. Lisa Bernabe, Mr. Stephen De Falco and Mr. John Redford gave a summary of the Algebra II textbook selection process and recommendation. The selection committee identified needs to align to the Common Core and the newly revised SAT, meet the needs of 21st century digital learners, and include formative and summative assessment data resources.

Ms. Leslie Paier shared an executive summary of the Business presentation to the Cheshire Curriculum Council (CCC) on April 6, 2021. Some key points of emphasis included how business classes support complex thinking and social emotional learning through real world business experiences. Three courses in the Business department will be offered for college credit through Tunxis Community College beginning in the 2021/22 school year.

Ms. Harrigan said the Committee also discussed revisiting the topic of later start times for students.

## **B. FINANCE**

### **I. Finance Report.**

Mr. Grippo asked Mr. Masciana to provide the report. Mr. Masciana said, with 10 budget months completed and the risk of large variables and unknowns now diminished, particularly related to the pandemic, we are confident that we will meet our 20-21 budget. He said, during the month of June, they will be focusing on open purchase orders and closing those not needed for next year. Schools will be entering supply needs for next year and other end-of-year procedures. He said we are in very good shape to close the year.

Mr. Masciana reported that they received \$439,559 in ESSER II Funding. There has been a change in the amount of funding we will receive under the American Rescue Plan (ARP). The amount was decreased from approximately \$190,000 to \$898,147. These funds will be used over the next 3 years. He reviewed that the original \$439,559 will be used primarily for Learning Loss, such as school transition for remote learners, tutoring, administrator coaching support, certified math tutors, teacher, staff and administrator training. He next reviewed the expenses they anticipated being covered by the ARP Funding through September 2024.

### **II. Medical Benefits Update.**

Mr. Masciana reported that claims for the month of April were \$1,032,083. This month, an additional \$73,122 was received in stop loss

reimbursements, bringing the total for the year to \$415,599. The net decrease to the account was \$228,936, leaving a fund balance of \$996,706, which is 1.25 months of claim reserves. Although it is not formally approved, the Town Council is planning to contribute \$1.5 million directly to the reserve fund balance so that if claims are not meeting the budget, there will be an adequate fund balance as we go through next year and we have the funds to meet the claims. He said they are having an analysis done by CIGNA and USI to look further at what drove the high claims this year.

Mr. Perugini asked if Mr. Masciana could arrange for our broker to present to the Board to review the analysis. Mr. Masciana said they can arrange for reps from USI and CIGNA to present to the Board or Finance Committee after we receive the year-end numbers.

Ms. Harrigan asked for clarification on how the Council will fund the trust fund. Mr. Masciana explained that we requested \$2 million to increase our contributions for claims in our operating budget. The Council discussed at their meeting that they will reduce that by \$1 million. That is \$1 million less than we need to keep up with our expected claims. To offset that, the Town Council will take \$1.5 million and put it directly into the reserve fund. Our Operating budget will go down from our request, so we won't be funding contributions to equal claims, but the reserve balance will increase by \$1.5 million. Mr. Masciana said this is not a bad solution, but it will just put us in the same position next year. He added that the \$1.5 million is being funded by the Town's grants related to COVID. By doing it this way, the Town Council can keep the budget down and the mill rate lower. Mr. Perugini noted that if claims stay in the \$1 million range, we may be talking to the Council about additional funding.

### **III. Town Audit Report.**

Mr. Masciana reported that the annual audit was completed. Blum Shapiro, now called Clifton Larson Allen, or CLA, are the Town's new auditors. On May 11th, the Town Council voted to accept the audit report for the 2019/20 audit year and also voted to appoint CLA as the auditors for the 2020/21 year. Overall, the Town received a clean audit opinion. He said there were two findings in the Federal grant audit on the BOE side. There were two recommendations; one has to do with the IDEA grant, which is used to pay salaries for Special Education staff. They found that the formula used for the allocation needs to follow a universal guidance. He said they did not find us non-compliant, but would like the Director of Pupil Personnel Services to look at our procedure periodically to be sure the employees providing services are doing so based on their allocation. The second item had to do with procurement procedures that are followed. There was new uniform guidance that was passed of which we, along with the Town, were not aware. We received a list of guidance

rules we need to follow which we will be working with the Town staff to implement. The Management Letter issued listed some additional recommendations, which included adding a fraud tip hotline and a fraud risk assessment and the development of an accounting procedures manual. He said the Board and Town staff will be working together on these recommendations.

Mr. White asked who would normally give guidance on updated guidelines. Mr. Masciana said normally, it would be from the audit firm.

**IV. Student Activity Operational Review Proposal.**

Mr. Masciana reported that, at the Board's request, he spoke with an auditor with CLA regarding the scope of a student activity review. They had provided a quote not to exceed \$12K. The firm will look at policy and controls; a review of controls of bank reconciliations is done. They would look at the school size, size of bank balances, number of transactions and how funds are collected, tracked and monitored. It is an estimated four-week process. The first week would be at the schools, then the balance would be testing and further review. Mr. Masciana asked the Board how they would like to proceed.

Mr. Grippo asked if the Board has the authority to engage the auditors. Mr. Masciana said he believes the Board can arrange to have this done and the report would go back to the Board. It doesn't have to be a Town initiative.

Mr. Masciana said they do not need to vote on the expenditure, but the Board should vote on the engagement of CLA. Mr. Perugini said we will put it on the June 3rd business agenda.

**V. Report on Grant Activity for the 2020/2021 School Year.**

Ms. Silano reported on Grant Activity for the 2020/21 School Year. Total Grant awards in the 2020/21 school year were \$2,076,041, compared with \$1,591,276 last year. Grant awards were as follows:

Consolidated Grant	\$ 197,741
Carl Perkins Career & Tech Ed., Act	\$ 30,621
IDEA – Individuals w/Disabilities Ed. Act	\$ 973,424
IDEA – Preschool Handicapped	\$ 31,414
Open Choice	\$ 99,000
Adult Education	\$ 28,138
Peck Jones	\$ 27,000
Smart Start	\$ 150,000
ESSER – The Cares Act Grant	\$ 99,144
ESSER II – The Cares Act Grant	\$ 439,559

**C. PLANNING****I. Report on Meetings Held April 29 and May 6, 2021.**

Mr. Martelli reviewed the list of Capital Projects scheduled for this summer that were discussed at the April 29<sup>th</sup> Committee of the Whole meeting. Mr. Masciana discussed the contract extension with Performance Environmental for 2021/22. They have been cleaning the Cheshire Public School facilities since July 1, 2014. They performed excellent service throughout the pandemic. The increase for 2021/22 is \$38,000 in the base contract, which came to a total of \$757,784, or a 5.3% increase. An increase was requested by Performance due primarily to their increased cost of COVID-19 effective disinfecting supplies and cleaning protocols, as well as the fact that the minimum wage in Connecticut is rising. The \$38,000 increase will be offset by expected billing credits of \$56,784, resulting in net contract costs for 2021/22 totaling \$700,910. A motion to approve the extension passed 6-1. Ms. Ham and Mr. White asked Mr. Masciana to discuss a two-year extension with Performance and report back to the Board.

Mr. Masciana added that, since that meeting, he did speak with the leadership at Performance and will be bringing forward information to the Board at the June 3<sup>rd</sup> business meeting.

The last item that was discussed at that meeting was School Modernization and what the next steps were to be. They discussed having a series of public outreach events to gauge the community and explain where we are with the process.

At the May 6<sup>th</sup> Planning Committee meeting, the committee heard a presentation from ECG Engineering. They reviewed the sites with potential ground mount installations, no roof mounts are planned on any of the buildings in the district. They focused on carports at Highland and also Doolittle along the driveway.

Since that meeting, Mr. Masciana reported that he contacted JK Energy Solutions who have done significant projects in our schools. They do have experience with solar projects. They wanted the site at Highland and Doolittle. They will report back within the next week with a total cost to install the solar arrays, solar carports, show how much electricity will be generated, show what a 20-year power-purchase agreement would look like, and estimate what our cost per kilowatt would be if we entered into the 20-year agreement. Once the information is received, Mr. Masciana will pass it over to the Planning Committee. The application is due June 14<sup>th</sup>. There is no cost or obligation to submit the application. Dr. Solan added that they need to look at the aesthetics and cost, among other things. Mr. Masciana shared photos of where the arrays could be placed. Mr.

Martelli said they will discuss this further at the next Planning Committee meeting and will bring it to the full Board.

**D. POLICY**

**I. Report on Meeting Held May 4, 2021.**

Mr. Grippo reported that at the meeting, the Committee reviewed policies for first, second and third readings.

**II. Review Policies for a First Reading.**

Dr. Solan introduced revisions to Policy #5141 Student Health Services. He noted that revisions being made are in regard to sports physicals for students. Beginning next year, we will require sports physicals before a sports season begins and they would need to last for the entire season. In addition, our District Nurse Coordinator reviewed this policy and is recommending changes to bring it up-to-date with State statute.

**III. Review Policies for a Second Reading.**

Mr. Grippo reviewed Policy #6159 Individualized Education Program/ Special Education Program for a second reading. There were no changes since the first reading. Changes to this policy are the result of a State of Connecticut court decision, which states that all students with disabilities who have not yet turned 22 years of age and who have not received a regular high school diploma remain eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) up until their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday. Previously, the exit age of these students was 21.

**IV. Review Policies for a Third Reading.**

Mr. Grippo noted that there were no changes to the following policies since the first reading. After a careful review, the Committee has recommended these policies for final reading and approval.

- 3170 – Business – Budget Implementation
- 3300 – Business – Expenditures, Expending Authority, Purchasing Guides
- 3326 – Business – Paying for Goods and Services
- 3516 – Business – Accident Prevention and Reporting
- 3541.45 – Business – Student Transportation Insurance

**MOTION** by Mr. Grippo and seconded by Mr. White.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education give a third and final reading to Policies 3170 Budget Implementation, 3300 Expenditures, Expending Authority, Purchasing Guides, 3326 Paying for Goods and Services, 3326.1 – Business – Payroll Procedures and Authorized Signatures, 3541.45 Student Transportation Insurance; and direct the Superintendent to put said policies into immediate effect.*

**VOTE:** The Motion passed unanimously 6-0.

**E. SCHOOL MODERNIZATION COMMITTEE**

Mr. Martelli reported that the Town Council extended the Colliers services. He said they are waiting for a date to have a joint meeting with certain members of the Board and Town Council. One major items that needs to be done is the test fits for the properties, as discussed previously. Colliers is scheduling a series of community engagement sessions on June 7th, 8th, and 9th. Mr. Martelli noted he has begun a series of Facebook posts on the Community Forum.

**F. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES**

None.

**6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION** by Mr. Grippo and seconded by Ms. Harrigan.

***MOVED** that the Board of Education approve the Minutes from meetings held on April 22, 2021 and May 6, 2021.*

**VOTE:** The Motion passed unanimously 6-0.

**7. CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

**8. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

**A. Audience via [CPSCOV19@cheshire.k12.ct.us](mailto:CPSCOV19@cheshire.k12.ct.us)**

Ms. Tricia Rowald asked about the 80-minute block scheduling at Cheshire High School and if it will eliminate the need for science labs. Dr. Solan said the short answer is yes.

Dr. Solan noted the passing of two former Cheshire Public Schools educators, Judy DiDimizio, a former Teacher of the Year, and Jim Trifone, a long-standing Biology teacher at Cheshire High School.

The Superintendent provided a COVID-19 overview. Quarantines and positive cases are very low. There are only 412 remote students who have not been in school since March 2020. Spring events happening are the Dodd Washington, D.C. trip, the junior and senior proms, as well as promotions and CHS graduation. Promotions will be scaled back to comply with COVID-19 protocols. The high school graduation ceremony will be held on June 16<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm. There will be one ceremony held outside, one ceremony for all students. The All Night Graduation Party will follow.

Dr. Solan reported that we have vaccinated more than 500 employees, all interested students aged 16-18 have received their second dose, and approximately 500 students aged 12-15 are scheduled to receive their second dose on Saturday, June 5, 2021.

Dr. Solan reported that it was announced at the School Business Partnership meeting that Richard Chevrolet received the CAS Distinguished Friend of Education Award.

Dr. Solan announced the School Modernization engagement sessions will be held June 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at Norton School, June 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at Chapman School; and June 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at Dodd.

9. **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

10. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Chairperson's Update**

Chairman Perugini reported that there is a Legislative Wrap-Up meeting through CABE that he would recommend Board members attend. Chairman Perugini said that he and Dr. Solan have been discussing a Board Retreat for team-building and goal setting with the Administrative Team. They hope to set a date over the next few weeks.

B. **Announcement of Upcoming Meetings**

Mr. Perugini announced upcoming meetings:

6/1/21 Policy

6/3/21 Business Meeting

6/14/21 Curriculum

6/30/21 Fiscal End-of-Year

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Ms. Hallen, and seconded by Mr. Martelli, the meeting was adjourned into executive session to include Dr. Solan, to discuss the Superintendent's evaluation, with no action to follow at 9:45 pm. The Motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

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Anthony Perugini, Board Chair

Attest:

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Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Filed at the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: June 2, 2021.