

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING
HELD IN TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON AUGUST 12, 2021 AT 7:30 PM**

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

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/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.

2. PRESENTATION

A. OPENING OF SCHOOL

Dr. Solan said we are eagerly awaiting for all students to be in school all day, every day. Tents are set up at the schools, there will be social distancing and intraday cleaning and seating on busses will be reduced. He said masks will be required at all schools to comply with the Governor's Executive Order that is in effect until September 30, 2021. Dr. Solan introduced Maura Esposito, Health Director from Chesprocott to answer questions.

Ms. Ham said, according to the Department of Public Health (DPH), Cheshire COVID cases are 17.3 per 1,000. She asked how many were in the prison, to which Ms. Esposito answered, none. Ms. Ham recited figures from websites regarding deaths and children being infected, and she asked if the data taken from the John Hopkins website regarding COVID in Connecticut is accurate. Ms. Esposito said she could not speak to that site. Ms. Esposito said she was provided national information stating that 90% of the people who are in the hospital with COVID are unvaccinated. They are predicting the numbers will rise. Ms. Ham said there are parents in the audience who are concerned with the mask mandate. She said this virus is not killing people as it once was. Ms. Esposito noted that these mandates come from the Governor's Executive Order. The Delta variant is the predominant virus now, and they are learning a great deal from other states where there is a large number of unvaccinated and infected people. Ms. Esposito said in the earlier variants, there were not many children affected. With this Delta variant, they are seeing many children affected, not in Connecticut yet, but they are trying to avoid this situation. She said they are all about prevention. Ms.

Ham asked if we will have to start “masking up” for croup and RSV. Ms. Esposito said that is not a decision she would make. She said croup and RSV have been around for a very long time and they have a great deal of data on those illnesses. They are learning new things every day about the Delta variant.

Mr. Grippo clarified that the order to “mask the children” comes directly from the Governor through the health department because of a health emergency. Ms. Esposito agreed and stated that until they can slow and stop the spread by doing health mitigation strategies, the health emergency will continue. Mr. Grippo said we always want to hear from parents, but the Board does not have the authority to rescind the Governor’s order.

Mr. Perugini added that they received information from their attorneys today that the mandate is the rule of law, and they must follow the law.

Mr. White said he keeps hearing about surge and contagion. He is concerned with hospitalizations and deaths, but if a virus only leads to runny noses, as a parent, he is not that worried about it. He asked Ms. Esposito to compare the number of children who die from the flu to the number of children who have died from Coronavirus. Ms. Esposito said she does not have that data. She said the flu does have child fatalities. She said that is why they push for prevention mitigations with the flu, not masking in our culture, but they do mask in other cultures. She added that this is a novel virus that is mutating. She said they are taking day by day data and examining what is happening in other states. There is a much higher incidence of hospitalizations of children with the Delta variant in other states. She said we do not want to get to that point in Connecticut. Mr. White asked if masking mitigates the virus. She said that masking is a public health mitigation strategy. She said the masks protect your coughing particles from spreading and protect you from others who are infected. Masks are a good strategy, but the bigger goal is vaccination. Mr. White said that he is not crazy about masks, but he would rather avoid the risk if the masks do in fact mitigate. He asked Ms. Esposito what are the drawbacks to children wearing masks. Ms. Esposito said that health experts say they don’t see any reason why people should not be able to wear a mask.

Mr. Perugini said last year there was a mask policy. He asked, when she was doing contract tracing, was there any situation where the virus spread in the classroom. Ms. Esposito said there was only one possible case in the Cheshire Public Schools where there might be a connection out of about 2,000 total cases. Usually, it was a direct relative who spread the virus to children. Mr. Perugini said he did not get complaints from families regarding masks. Dr. Solan said there were very few, if any, concerns that were raised by parents.

Ms. Ham asked about children who need to see facial expressions and what type of exemptions there are. Dr. Solan said it is incredibly rare for a child to be

exempted. He said that Mr. Masciana was able to find clear masks for students where speech was a significant issue. Mr. White asked about athletics. Dr. Solan said they are waiting for updates, but right now students do not need to wear masks for outside sports.

Ms. Harrigan asked if there are extra face masks in the classroom. Dr. Solan answered yes, but most kids like to wear their own masks.

3. **AUDIENCE**

Mr. Perugini read Bylaw #9325 to the public. The Chairman made a MOTION, and Ms. Ham seconded, to extend the time limit for audience comment from 15 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes. The MOTION passed unanimously.

Tucker Deming, 230 Oregon Road. Mr. Deming said the mask mandate is diabolical silliness. He said the CDC performed studies on the efficacy of masks, and they were found to be not effective at all. He said masks do more harm than good. Our community wants the Board of Education to stand up and say no to the State. He also said the inventor of the MRNA vaccine said it is gene therapy, and he feels there is great harm and risk in getting the vaccine.

Rob Brucato, 1146 Wolf Hill Road. Mr. Brucato said he is against a mask mandate. He asked that Board of Education members respond with their personal choice. He said the Governor passed this mandate down to the Board of Health and this town does not have to follow it. He said mask-wearing should be the parents' choice. Masks don't work and they cause issues. He said this is a Republican town that should be standing up for our free rights. If anything, he believes we should force teachers to wear masks, not the children.

Olympia Brucato, 1146 Wolf Hill Road. Mrs. Brucato is against a mask mandate. She said she encourages the Board to talk to a lawyer to help them explore the statutes because it gives a legal foundation to push back on this. She said she misses the days of common sense, and she compared this virus to a stomach bug in years past where they cleaned the schools and told parents to keep kids home if they were sick, and soon everyone was back in school because of herd immunity. She is concerned masks are immunosuppressant against our children. She doesn't want our constitutional town to lose our freedom because of fear. She said masks have a terrible effect on children's breathing and their hearts. She is concerned that masks are causing depression and suicidal thoughts.

Mr. Perugini thanked Ms. Brucato and told her he will talk to our attorneys.

Sonia Brucato, 1146 Wolf Hill Road. Ms. Brucato is an elementary school student in Cheshire. She said her class had to run laps with masks on and kids with masks on looked more tired and it seemed like they had a harder time breathing. She said she kept

hers under her nose so it was easier to breathe. She said she had trouble wearing the mask in class and got a migraine and had to go home.

Mike Repetsky, 855 Ives Row. Mr. Repetsky is against a mask mandate. He said his son will be in the Special Education Preschool program this year and he is afraid the mask will hinder his learning. He wants teachers and peers to be able to read his expressions. He said the Governor left this up to the towns, and numerous other towns, such as Wolcott, have declared masks are optional. Mask wearing should be a parent's choice.

Toni Spera, 40 Burton Drive. Ms. Spera is against a mask mandate and said that science shows children are not affected by this virus. She said, in Connecticut, the number of deaths of people ages 0-17 was four, and in the entire United States, only 337 deaths have occurred between the ages of 0-17. She said masks do not prevent our kids from contracting viruses, but rather prevent the children from breathing fresh air, and a mask is a Petri dish of bacteria. She said this virus is not going away. She said parents should be able to choose for their children, and she will not consent to allow her children to be masked for 6 hours a day, five days a week.

Amy Bahadosingh, 455 Budding Ridge Road. Ms. Bahadosingh said she asked her pediatrician if she could give her any data that she could share that showed that masks protected children from the virus, and was told no. She said she looked for data and everything she found about mask-wearing is negative. She said her kids came home with headaches from wearing masks and her daughter stopped talking because people couldn't understand her.

Chris Constanti, 978 Marion Road. Mr. Constanti asked, in regards to the executive order, if our kids go back with no masks on, will the police arrest our kids? He said he has emailed the Governor and the Superintendent with no response. Mr. Constanti asked why we don't have an option to send our kids back with no masks. He said when the Health Department comes to his restaurant and tells him to wear a mask and he doesn't, there is nothing they can do because it is an executive order, not a law. He asked if the town gets money to follow mandates and the Superintendent answered, no. Mr. Constanti asked why parents can't make the decision. He said if Wolcott has decided it is the parents' choice, Cheshire should too.

Amy Bourden, 35 Pehr Lane. Ms. Bourden said she is in favor of parents' choice. She asked why Wolcott has an option for masking and Cheshire does not. She questioned surgical masks and asked why we are not being told to wear N95 masks by the government. Why are we telling kids to wear surgical masks that do not protect them against the virus? She said they complied with wearing masks and it did not make a difference with the virus; it is still here. But, she said, the masks have made a difference in households where kids are coming down with strep, impetigo, fevers, and RSV. She said they will be filing a Freedom of Information request in conjunction with the Superintendent, Board of Education, Department of Public Health, and Department of Education for anything that has been discussed about masks. She asked if there is a

policy or procedure in place to roll out the mask mandate, and read the medical field's requirements for surgical masks and asked if those procedures are being followed. She asked who will be enforcing the mandate, will their children be sent home if they don't have a mask on at school?

Kalin Coutinho, 118 Birch Drive. Mrs. Coutinho is an emergency room nurse. She said she followed procedures when the virus first began. She asked Ms. Esposito how she determines whether it is the Delta variant. Ms. Esposito said she receives reports and those reports show that the variant has been increasing steadily. Mrs. Coutinho said health professionals wear N95 masks for the virus. She said with this virus, some people die, but people die every day. It comes down to the elderly, the vulnerable population, and people who just don't take care of themselves. She said most healthy patients recover and move on. She said those people who wish should get the vaccine and wear a mask, but it is not okay to keep masking the children. She said, as a mother and essential medical employee, she is demanding that masks be made optional, and as Americans, we have that choice.

Michael Sheehan, Harrison Road in Cheshire. Mr. Sheehan thanked the Board for their hard work over the last year and a half. He cited Bylaw #9030.1 Relationship Between Parents and Schools. He said parents have the primary responsibility for the upbringing of their children. He said he delegates some of the educational duties to teachers, but not all. Lately, he has become concerned because surrounding districts are having wars of words of critical race theory. He stated that he does not want this for his child or this community. He hopes that Cheshire Public Schools promotes open, multi-faceted conversations on this subject.

Mr. Perugini said there will be a Curriculum Committee meeting of the Whole to discuss this subject and to discuss how this will be implemented in Cheshire Public Schools.

Megan Jones, 925 East Johnson Avenue. Ms. Jones said her daughter has myopia and takes her glasses off all day because they fog up while wearing a mask. She said children are not getting sick from this virus. She said there is no data saying that healthy kids are dying from this virus.

Matt Long, 50 Autumn Court. A recent Cheshire graduate, Mr. Long said he is happy to see so many people in attendance who care about their children and their classrooms. He said it is the Board of Education's job to look at all evidence and all data and come to the best decision for the students. He said he hopes that the public will trust them, even if a decision is reached that not everyone here will like. He urged all to follow science and hopes it will lead to healthier students and a healthier town.

Mark Edwards, 35 Williamsburg Drive. Mr. Edwards said he is shocked that Ms. Esposito and the Board members came to this meeting tonight with no data for Cheshire. He said there is no science showing that kids get sick. He said he doesn't care what is happening in other states, only in Cheshire, and the Board should know what that data is,

otherwise they cannot make an educated decision. He asked what the legal right is for our children, and if you don't know you shouldn't be on the Board. He said masks should be the parents' right. The Board is there to make sure parents have choices.

Rob Brucato, 1146 Wolf Hill Road. Mr. Brucato said the state wants everyone to get vaccinated. He said masks are not going to get rid of the virus. He urged people not to be afraid of the virus, live with it, and when you get it, it will create herd immunity. People are better off getting it and moving on. He said you can get a \$100 fine for violating the mask mandate. He said to take the fine money from the \$40 million dog park they want to put on the Chapman property. Regarding critical race theory and other curriculum, Mr. Brucato said he would like to see the Board put in their bylaws that any new book or curriculum item will receive public notice in the paper and on the website.

Tina Ruddy, 168 Sloper Lane. Ms. Ruddy said we are in week 72 of flattening the curve. Now, parental rights are being taken away. Mask wearing is a health decision that belongs to parents, not the Board of Education, Superintendent, or Governor. Medical professionals tell us masks work, yet we also have medical professionals saying it is not healthy for kids to be in masks all day. Per the CDC, there were 543 deaths for children ages 0-17. She said 477 children died from the flu in 2018/19, yet we didn't mask the students. She told the Board members that they work for the citizens who elected them, not the Department of Public Health, and asked if they are prepared to deny a student a public education if unmasked. She urged them to allow parents to assess the risk for their children.

Meredith Nielson, 317 Spruce Street. Ms. Nielsen said she vehemently opposes putting masks on children. She said, last year, some schools did not make their students wear masks. She said she would like to see this district stand up for what is in the best interest of the students. She said masks are not good for kids, and healthy students should not be forced to cover their mouths for an education. Regarding vaccines, she is not happy that only unvaccinated students have to quarantine after being contract traced, and she believes it could cause bullying. She said the vaccine cannot stop transmission. She was also upset about a recent video sent by the Superintendent that encouraged vaccines. She said the person who invented the MRNA technology has pointed out the dangers of how this vaccine is being used. She asked where the critical thinking is in this, and she questions if the Board is truly interested in advocating for our children. She asked if the district would lose money if they do not follow the mandate.

Dr. Solan said he is not aware of any schools not following the mask requirements. He said he is not aware if we would lose money if we don't follow the mandate. Mr. Perugini said he does not know what would happen if we did not follow the guidance.

Mandy Sweet, 165 Country Club Road. Ms. Sweet is said she is requesting that our children be given the right to either wear or not wear masks, regardless of their vaccination status. Alarming evidence shows that masks are ineffective and can do harm.

She asked if the Board is willing to face legal action for mandating masks. She said the Board has zero authority to force her child to do anything.

Jane Bate, 454 Riverside Drive. Ms. Bate said she taught instrumental music in this district for two decades. She is against mandatory masking and vaccines. Everyone must have the freedom to make these decisions for themselves and their children and anything else is tyranny.

Name Inaudible. A Cheshire resident stated that he is a research scientist. He said we need a couple of years to get FDA approval; this was too quick. People are told it is safe, but under what time frame? Many side effects won't show up and can cause birth defects in kids. He said he doesn't want to see the Board of Education make a mandate; it should be a choice.

Someone in the audience asked Board Members to state where they stand on the mandate. Mr. Perugini asked Board members to respond.

Mr. White said that if this virus is akin to the flu, he doesn't want to be wearing masks, but we just don't know, and he needs more information. He said he feels masks are a mitigating factor, but for his son at preschool, they are not wearing masks appropriately. He doesn't want to go down a path where masking and public health take over for a flu-like virus.

Mr. Martelli said, during the pandemic, he watched his daughter, who was involved in many activities at school, be stripped of that as she sat at home all day. As Board members, they did everything they could to keep the students in school. He said he wants his daughter to be in school all the time and be able to participate in all activities, but we need to base decisions on data and facts from the Cheshire community. He said he wants kids in school and to be safe, but it should be the parents' decision.

Ms. Ham said she is concerned that our Public Health Director does not have data or arguments ready at hand to support the mask mandate. She said the data does not support it and fear is driving the community. She said parents have the right to raise their children as they see fit, and she encourages parents to read Policy #9030.1. She hopes the Board will ask the attorneys what obligations they have. She applauds parents for attending this meeting and speaking out. She said they are your children, and you have the right to raise them, and if something is happening that you don't like, you have to make a hard choice. She said the Governor's mandate was challenged and it was tossed out by the Supreme Court. Right now, the Supreme Court isn't even supporting choice in the State and she hopes someone challenges it. She fears a breakdown in the rule of law. Ms. Ham said the Board's hands are tied and she is not happy about it. If this is not in your child's best interest, you have to ask yourself what you have to do to act on it.

Mr. Christo yelled from the audience, what happens if they send their kids to school with no masks? Who will enforce it? If he drops his kids off, will they send them home? He said if so, the schools will have to send a tutor to his house or give him his taxes back.

Mr. Perugini said he doubts anyone will arrest the children. Dr. Solan said they will need legal guidance on what they will do if someone does not follow the mandate.

Mr. Grippo said the unfortunate reality is that Government Lamont's orders are the force of law and our hands are tied. He said, when he ran for the Board four years ago, he thought he had more power than he does. He said he will continue to fight to give as much parental choice as possible. As Chairman of the Policy Committee, he has learned that all policies are based on State law. He said he is there to help the parents and will continue to help, but at this moment, this is where they stand. We now need to research what we need to do as a Board.

Ms. Harrigan said one of the reasons she loves Cheshire is that concerned parents express views and desires and are involved in what goes on in the schools. She said she extends deep gratitude to Maura Esposito, our local Health Department Director, who is working very hard every day. Her goals are the same as all of our goals, to keep our community safe; it is not fear-mongering. Ms. Harrigan said she is vaccinated, not only to keep herself safe, but to keep her community safe. As parents, we are responsible for our children. As Board of Education members, they are responsible for 4,500 children, all of Cheshire's children, and they are doing their due diligence. She said she continues to mask up, not because it is mandated, but because she wants to do what she can for our community.

Mr. Perugini said he is a supporter of parents' choice. He said the mandates are getting ridiculous, and if he wasn't on the Board, he would be right there with the parents in the audience. He said he doesn't want to fight the State. He said he can't always tell the public what they want to hear, but he fights for them. They are getting legal advice and they are not going to arrest kids, but they may send them home. There will be guidance before the first day of school. Parents' voices are being heard and are having an impact. He said Dr. Solan feels very strongly about the safety of our children. If masks were useless, he wouldn't be recommending them. He said, with all due respect to Ms. Esposito, she and Chesprocott were a tremendous help to the school system last year and because of them, we were able to keep our kids in school.

Mr. Perugini called for a MOTION for a ten-minute recess at 9:50 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 10:00 p.m.

Reconvened at 10:00 p.m.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

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

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

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously by those present.

Items in Consent Calendar:

● **Approval of Statement on Class Size Policy**

In accordance with the *Agreement between the Cheshire Board of Education and the Education Association of Cheshire*, Article XXIII, the Board of Education hereby publishes and provides to the Association its policy relating to class size:

"That the Board shall endeavor to maintain class sizes consistent with proven educational practices which require that various learning situations may alter the number of students per class. The Board, through its committees, shall study and make recommendations concerning personnel and space requirements based on all factors affecting class size."

● **Approval of ACES Annual Membership Agreement**

Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES) is a Regional Educational Service Center, pursuant to Section 10-66a of the Connecticut General Statutes, which acts as a voluntary association of member Boards of Education establishing a cooperative arrangement to provide services, programs, and activities for the education of children. Each year, participating Boards of Education must renew their participation in ACES by (a) carrying out its responsibilities as described in the Membership Agreement, (b) paying an assessment fee of \$250, and (c) appointing Board of Education Members to serve as Representative and Alternate to the ACES Governing Board.

"That the Cheshire Board of Education agrees to participate for the 2021/22 school year in Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES) as set forth in the ACES Annual Membership Agreement and appoints a Representative and Alternate to the ACES Governing Board."

● **Appointment of Hearing Officer**

Cheshire Board of Education Policy #5114 permits the Board of Education to appoint a hearing officer to preside over matters pertaining to student discipline and school accommodations. This individual does not preside over a matter unless the Board of Education opts to permit such a hearing to take place.

For the past seventeen years, Attorney Athan Mihalakos has served as the hearing officer for the Cheshire Board of Education. The Superintendent recommends that the Board re-appoint Attorney Mihalakos.

“Move that the Cheshire Board of Education reappoint Attorney Athan Mihalakos of Willinger, Willinger & Bucci, PC as hearing officer for the 2021/22 school year.”

5. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A. FINANCE

I. Finance Report

Mr. Masciana said the approved budget for the 2021/22 fiscal year is \$77,001,052. While we have expended and encumbered \$49,899,683 through the first month of the year, which includes our payroll encumbrances, we have not yet entered the full value of our encumbrances for transportation or grants. At this time, there are no major variance concerns. There is, however, uncertainty as to the extent of COVID-19 pandemic-related expenses; however, we do have \$1,337,706 in ESSER funds that can be used for safety and health devices, if needed, but right now those funds are targeted for learning loss.

II. Medical Benefits Update

Regarding Medical Benefits, the budget for this year for contributions is \$815,000 per month. Claims are expected to be \$900,000 per month meaning they were underfunding by \$85,000 each month; however, the Town Council made a direct contribution of \$1.5 million into the medical benefits reserve. This month's claims were \$1,040,191, which were higher than expected. We are ending this month with \$2,089,564 in the medical benefits reserve, which is 2.32 months of a reserve balance.

Ms. Ham said she is concerned that we are consistently missing the mark on expected claims and asked why. Mr. Masciana said this is from some really large claims, and he added that claims are not controllable.

B. PERSONNEL

I. Report on Meeting Held August 10, 2021.

Mr. White said the Committee met to continue their discussion regarding the addition of an administrative position.

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

MOVED *that the position of Family and Community Engagement Coordinator be added to the contract between the Cheshire Board of Education and the Cheshire Administrative Personnel.*

Discussion:

Mr. White explained that this is a position of a person who is retiring. The position is being tweaked with some changes of responsibilities. Mr. White said one of the responsibilities will be to assist high school students in seeking internships, including the trades, which he believes are very important.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously by those present.

C. PLANNING

I. Report on Meeting Held on July 27, 2021.

Representatives from Energy Resources were in attendance to provide the Committee with the update from the ZREC applications that were recently filed with Eversource for potential solar energy installations at Highland and Doolittle Schools. The applications were approved. Mr. Martelli noted that, due to the high cost of materials and construction at present (rolled steel and copper were specifically mentioned), installing solar carports is not a financially viable option.

Mr. Masciana said that two potential solar arrays could work with one at Doolittle and one at Highland. The next step in the process, which the Committee agreed to move forward, was to lock a contract for these ZREC projects at Doolittle and Highland, which means they will have the right to take advantage of the financing program. They have until April 2023 to complete the installation. The school district has a lot of flexibility around what gets installed. Eversource requires the payment for a Performance Assurance Bond, which is \$2,120 for the Doolittle ZREC and \$2,992 for the Highland ZREC. If the project is completed, the performance assurance amount paid is refunded to the district. He said they now can continue the discussion and design phase.

II. Report on Status of Construction Projects and Summer Maintenance

Mr. Masciana said, in the interest of time, he will only report that there are many summer projects still being completed, but none will prevent students from coming back to the buildings. He will provide a much more detailed report at the Opening of School meeting.

D. SCHOOL MODERNIZATION COMMITTEE

Mr. Martelli reported that the Town Council continues to review the report from the Committee, and town staff continue to review the financial implications of the preferred Scenario 6.

Mr. Martelli introduced Mr. Jim Jinks, Town Councilor and School Modernization Committee member, who presented an additional option to be

considered to the Board. He had previously reviewed this option with the Town Council. Mr. Jinks said this is a hybrid plan, called the Casertano Field Campus Proposal, which addresses some of the negatives from the other scenarios. It includes a second 6-8 middle school as well as a new Chapman School, both at Jarvis and Marion Road. The main highlight of the plan includes that the first phase, the 6-8 middle school, would cost about \$75.5 million based on estimates from Colliers, which is about \$12-\$13 million less than the current preferred two-large-elementary-school plan. The second phase is also about \$20 million or so less, and the overall scenario is about \$26 million less. The middle school plan includes a modern sixth through eighth grade middle school curriculum. He feels this proposal will address the capacity issues that the district may face. He said it is a short-term and long-term solution. He reviewed the other phases of the plan including moving Central Office and possibly the Yellow House and Artsplace into the renovated Dodd Middle School.

Dr. Solan thanked Mr. Jinks for his support of this process. He said when he reviewed this proposal with administrators and teachers, there are reservations about two 6-8 middle schools, as they would prefer keeping the students under one roof. Board members thanked Mr. Jinks for his presentation and asked for clarification on some points.

E. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES

None.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Mr. Martelli and seconded by Mr. White.

MOVED that the Board of Education approve the Minutes from meetings held on June 3, June 10, June 23, and June 30, 2021.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously by those present.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

Chairman Perugini noted that the Board received many emails on the subject of masks. He summarized three emails into the record; a copy of the entire emails are on file with the minutes.

Rob Brucato wrote that masks are ineffective and they are in favor of parent's choice.

Mandy Sweet wrote that she is against masks and only she can make decisions regarding her child.

Kristin DeFrancesco is in favor of parents' choice and included that her children are not the property of the Board or the State.

Mr. Perugini said they also received many emails from parents asking the Board to please follow scientific data and to keep the mask mandate. He said they are not choosing sides, and will trust the Superintendent to make the correct decision for all students.

MOTION by Ms. Harrigan to extend the meeting to 11:15 p.m.

Mr. Grippo seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Solan said, this year, they will be reviewing district goals. More information will be forthcoming. He noted that we received many emails regarding mask-wearing. He thanked Maura Esposito for attending this evening and said she received some "jabs" tonight that were not fair. He said, after working with her this past year, he cannot overstate how much he appreciates everything she has done for the Cheshire School district. She is the main reason why we were able to be in-person in school this year. He said it is not the Board's responsibility to monitor daily health data, but he does and he will continue to do so. He repeated that it is his goal to keep all students in school every day, safely.

9. OLD BUSINESS

None.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Perugini read the upcoming meetings with the next Board meeting being the Opening of School showcase meeting on September 2nd.

11. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. Perugini, and seconded by Mr. Martelli, the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 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: 9-3-2021.