

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING
HELD IN TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON DECEMBER 9, 2021 AT 7:45 PM**

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

Board Members Absent: None.

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 – 7:45 P.M.

- A. Roll for Quorum. *The roll was called and a quorum determined.*
- B. New Board Member Introduction

Mr. Perugini welcomed newly elected Board member, Samantha Rosenberg. Ms. Rosenberg conveyed her deepest gratitude to the citizens of Cheshire and said she is excited and grateful to serve our community as a member of the Cheshire Board of Education. She looks forward to applying her years of experience as a parent, passionate educator, and involved community member, to her work on the Board, and she is committed to collaborating with her fellow Board members.

Mr. Grippo and Mr. Perugini both thanked the citizens of Cheshire who voted this year. Mr. Perugini also thanked his fellow Board members for re-electing him as Board Chair.

The Superintendent called for a moment of silence for Mrs. Patricia Ianniello, a former teacher at Highland School, who passed away that week.

2. PRESENTATIONS

A. School Partnership Award – Chapman School

Ms. Harrigan, the Board of Education representative to Chapman School, introduced Erin Mutty, the School Partnership Award recipient for Chapman School. According to Ms. Diana Burns, Chapman School Principal, most think that either Chapman has a resident artist or Martha Stewart swings by once in a while to set up beautiful displays at their school functions or to create knock-your-socks-off showcase exhibits, their secret is Erin Mutty. Ms. Mutty has been an active member of the Chapman PTSA board, as well as a constant volunteer at Chapman. Chapman has been fortunate to be on the receiving end of her incredible calligraphy skills and artistic talent. Before one has a chance to reach out to Ms. Mutty to ask if she could help with a program or a function, she beats you to the punch every time and offers her talents and help. The best part of Erin Mutty is getting to know the lovely and kind person she is. Everyone loves to

converse with her and enjoy her warm company. Individuals like Ms. Mutty not only brighten Chapman School, but they bring the school community together. The Cheshire Board of Education thanked Erin Mutty for going above and beyond for the students of Cheshire Public Schools and presented her with a small gift and certificate.

3. **AUDIENCE**

None.

4. **STANDING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

Mr. Perugini announced the Standing Committee Appointments for the 2021-2023 term as follows:

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Subcommittee*	Chairperson	BOE Members
Curriculum	Faith Ham	Anne Harrigan, Anthony Perugini
Finance	Adam Grippo	Faith Ham, Sam Rosenberg
Legislative	Tim White	Faith Ham, Anne Harrigan
Liaison	Anne Harrigan	Andrew Martelli, Tim White
Personnel	Tim White	Anne Harrigan, Anthony Perugini
Planning	Andrew Martelli	Tim White, Sam Rosenberg
Policy	Adam Grippo	Tim White, Sam Rosenberg
Public Information	Andrew Martelli	Faith Ham, Anne Harrigan
Transportation	Tim White	As needed
School Modernization	Joint BOE & TC Committee	Anne Harrigan, Andrew Martelli, Anthony Perugini

- The Board Chair shall serve on all subcommittees as ex-officio.

EDUCATION LIAISONS

Organization	BOE Member
ACES	Anthony Perugini
Cheshire Education Foundation	Adam Grippo
Adult Education	Anne Harrigan
CABE	Anthony Perugini
Calendar Committee	Anne Harrigan
Cheshire PTA Council	Sam Rosenberg
Advisory Council	Anne Harrigan
Professional Development Committee	Faith Ham
School/Business Partnerships Council	Andrew Martelli/Tim White
Teacher Evaluation Committee	Tim White
Town Council	Anthony Perugini
Planning and Zoning	Andrew Martelli
Public Building Commission	Adam Grippo

SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES

School	BOE Member
Chapman	Anne Harrigan
CHS/Humiston	Anthony Perugini
Darcey	Adam Grippo
Dodd	Sam Rosenberg
Doolittle	Faith Ham
Highland	Andrew Martelli
Norton	Tim White

5. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A. FINANCE

1. Finance Report

Mr. Grippo asked Mr. Masciana to report. Mr. Masciana said there are no major budget variances at this point in time. At the last Board meeting, the increase in fuel prices was discussed, but it won't have a detrimental impact because it is a relatively small portion of the budget. He said they continue to invest as needed to end the learning loss. He explained they have extended the intraday cleaning in all schools through the month of January. While they were expecting to end this service in December, with the increase in the number of COVID cases, they thought it best to continue. Mr. Masciana reported that they are continuing to work on the Operating Budget in addition to working on the Capital Budget. The Board will need to approve two budgets. The Capital Budget is due in January, prior to the due date of when the Operating Budget is submitted to the Town Council. At next week's Planning Committee of the Whole, he will bring forward the preliminary version of the Capital Budget. Mr. Perugini reminded Board members to notify Dr. Solan or Mr. Masciana if they have any ideas regarding the budget. He said during the month of January, the Board will be holding Finance Committee Meetings of the Whole to discuss the budget.

B. SCHOOL MODERNIZATION COMMITTEE

There was no update for this Committee, but Mr. Masciana noted the Planning Committee Meeting of the Whole will be held on December 16th at 7 pm to discuss school modernization.

C. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES

There were no other committee reports.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

MOVED that the Board of Education approve the minutes from the meeting held on November 18, 2021.

VOTE: The Motion passed 6-0-1. (Ms. Rosenberg abstained)

7. **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

8. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Solan said he was excited to participate in the CHS Supermarket Challenge earlier this week at the ShopRite in Southington. Twenty-three CHS teams competed, including a team with Dr. Solan, Dr. Gadd, Mr. Trifone, and Mr. Tartarelli. He reported that 1,800 pounds of food items worth more than \$2,300, were donated to the Cheshire Food Pantry through the effort. He thanked Dan Lee and all of the folks at Cheshire High School who contributed their time and energy to make this fundraiser possible. Dr. Solan reported they had a very successful winter concert series at Dodd this week. The event was open to people to attend in person while socially distanced. The event was streamed simultaneously and had over 800 views online. Next, the Superintendent reported that the Cheshire Education Foundation, a philanthropic group that was formed more than 20 years ago to support the Cheshire Public Schools is soliciting mini-grant applications from teachers. They are a dedicated group of individuals who really have one focus, to improve the educational experience for our students by supplementing resources. They are encouraging staff to apply for a grant.

Response to CPSCOVVID-19 emails.

There were no emails received.

COVID-19 Update.

Dr. Solan reported that the vaccination status of our students is very high in our community and he is grateful for the support that is provided by Chesprocott. The 12 to 17 year old population has a 66.7% vaccination rate. In the 5 to 11 year old population, 26.4% are fully-vaccinated. Because many students received shots just this past weekend, they will not be fully vaccinated for two weeks. The COVID rate in the community, just like across Connecticut, has risen since Thanksgiving. Unfortunately, there was also a youth athletics incident that had a substantial negative impact on our COVID rates. Our data is available on the Cheshire Public Schools website under COVID information. On December 9, 2020, there were 124 students who were not able to attend school because of COVID, and there were a large percentage of students who were remote learners at that time. Obviously now, all of our students are in school, with 117 students unable to attend due to COVID related issues. Quarantines at this time last year were 94 compared to 68 this year. There is a spike at Highland, but in reviewing the cases, there is no indication that it is from in-school spread. Positive students, in almost every case can be linked to a parent, a sibling, or to somebody in their community who is COVID positive. In other COVID related information, we decided to permit fans to attend athletic events, if masked, this winter season. Dr. Solan noted they can certainly change this if need be, but right now we are on track to have people in attendance at our games and have them be

somewhat normal. He reported we do have some staff who are quarantined and we have permitted them to teach from home rather than just take sick time if they are healthy enough to do so. He said we certainly believe that is in the best interest of our kids. The Superintendent reported there continues to be a substitute shortage and said he has once again solicited our alumni to apply. To date, we have over 25 applications.

Mr. Grippo asked if the classrooms are utilizing the in-room technologies to allow the teachers to better communicate. Dr. Solan responded that the best-case scenario is when the teacher is able to use the amplified audio. He said they currently have 60 classrooms with the equipment and those are distributed equitably across the district.

Mr. White asked if there have been hospitalizations since the virus started. Dr. Solan said there have been families that have been impacted by the virus. Mr. White asked if there is anything the Board could do to bring the vaccination rates up. Dr. Solan said that our vaccination data is deceptive because many students have had their first shot and are waiting for their second. He said we have one of the highest rates of vaccination in Connecticut.

Ms. Ham asked the Superintendent how many teachers have received the boosters and if he has heard if the DPH is going to make it mandatory. Dr. Solan answered that he has not heard that they will make boosters mandatory. The FDA just approved the booster for 16-17 year olds so it is a very small percentage of our students who have received it.

Ms. Ham asked if there is a way to detect asymptomatic individuals. Dr. Solan, answered that asymptomatic cases are impossible to detect. That is the reason that we need to be vigilant with notifications when people are in contact with a positive individual, and that we follow the steps that are recommended by our medical professionals. If you have a positive child at home, and your child is not vaccinated, then there is one set of rules. If they are vaccinated, there is another set of rules. We encourage parents to check with their school nurse. Dr. Solan stressed that our nurses have been extraordinary. Throughout this process, they have had to juggle frequently changing rules and regulations. He said as a parent, he appreciates that it is very hard when the school nurse says your child is demonstrating COVID symptoms and you need to have them tested before they can return to school. The school nurse is only following the guidance. I understand it is hard to keep your child home. I would argue that our school system has done more than most to make sure that our kids have access to school as much as possible. Moreover, I hope that people can demonstrate some patience and respect for our school nurses.

9. OLD BUSINESS

None.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Perugini reported that he, Dr. Solan and Ms. Rosenberg attended the CAGE Leadership Conference. He and Dr. Solan led a discussion on Civility in Divisive Times. He noted that our district is not alone and many districts are facing public criticisms. He said unfortunately, many Board members from other districts have reported incivility

within their own Boards. Other topics discussed were additional funding and the mental health of students and the issue of not enough mental health professionals available. He said that remote learning is being analyzed by State legislatures. He encouraged other Board members to take advantage of the various seminars offered by CAFE. Mr. Perugini announced that he is now on the CAFE Board of Directors. Mr. Perugini said we are hoping to engage our Public Information and Legislative Committees to help with funding and School Modernization and meetings will be scheduled for those committees in the near future.

Mr. Grippo noted that when they attended the CAFE Convention in November, he attended a workshop on legislative issues where he spoke about our new technology and remote learning and many other districts were interested in learning about what we have done.

Ms. Ham said she read that the State is actually looking at remote learning as a viable alternative to in-person learning. She said, when we finally meet with our legislatures, she would like to ask them to back off of this because we are seeing so much fallout from remote learning. She asked if CAFE could also reinforce that we have seen very little good come out of remote learning, and should dissuade legislators who somehow think this might be another way to teach. She said it should only be used as a last resort. Mr. Perugini said, it is actually hybrid learning, not remote learning, and the use of technology. He said CAFE has not yet taken a stand on this.

Mr. Grippo said he misspoke earlier when he said remote learning, he meant to say synchronous learning, not remote learning. Other Boards are interested in using the amplification technology to reach out to more students.

Mr. Perugini reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule.

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Mr. Grippo, and seconded by Ms. Rosenberg, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 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: 1/6/2022 1/21/2022 .