

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING
HELD IN TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON NOVEMBER 17, 2022, AT 7:30 PM**

Board Members Present: Adam Grippo-Vice Chair; Anne Harrigan-Secretary, Andrew Martelli (arr. 8:10 p.m.), Samantha Rosenberg, Timothy White

Board Members Absent: Anthony Perugini-Chair; Faith Ham,

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer

1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:33 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.
In Mr. Perugini absence, Mr. Grippo led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
- C. Student Representatives. Michael DeJoseph, student representatives for the 2022/2023 school year, reported on recent events at Cheshire High School. Michael reported that Monica was unable to attend this evening because she was performing in the Cheshire High School play. Michael reported that Cheshire High School has had a very successful sports season with seven SCC Championship wins. CHS girls fall sports teams consisting of soccer, field hockey, volleyball, swimming dive, and cross country, which is every girl fall sport at CHS, won their SCC championship. He added that this is the first time in SCC history that every fall girls sport has won their SCC title. He reported on upcoming tournaments. Cheshire High School was awarded the Michaels Cup for leadership and sportsmanship. He reported that CHS students collected over 5,000 pounds for the Cheshire Food pantry. Other events included senior raking project, Lights of Hope, and Veteran’s Day ceremonies. He encouraged all to attend the senior play happening this weekend.

2. PRESENTATIONS

A. School Partnership Award – Highland School

In Mr. Martell’s absence, Ms. Rosenberg introduced the School Partnership Award recipient for Highland School, Cecile Wilson. Ms. Wilson was nominated by Scott Jeffrey, Highland School Principal. Cecile has volunteered in the Highland library for the past four years. She has been a consistent and dependable member of the Highland community by providing support to our staff and our students. Highland Elementary School is grateful for Cecile’s contribution that helps to keep our library organized and inviting, and for always helping students find great books. Highland School and the Board of Education thank Cecile for going above and beyond for the students at Highland School.

B. School Partnership Award – Dodd Middle School

Ms. Rosenberg, the Board of Education representative to Dodd Middle School, introduced the school's recipient, Keri Banack. Keri was nominated by Michael Woods, Dodd Middle School Principal. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is an important and integral part of every school, and the support the Dodd PTA contributes to its faculty and families is both unparalleled and appreciated. The Dodd family has been very fortunate to have the wonderful assistance of the PTA as it has provided abundantly for items and experiences that have benefited the students. The PTA has gone above and beyond in showing their appreciation to the Dodd staff. During the American Education & Teacher Appreciation Weeks as well as different times throughout the school year, Keri Banack has coordinated several events to make sure that the Dodd Staff feels appreciated. From snacks and treats throughout the year, staff lunches, and a specialty coffee truck Keri has made staff feel appreciated and valued for all the hard work they do for our students and community. Dodd Middle School thanks Keri for her extreme thoughtfulness in recognizing our staff.

3. AUDIENCE

Sharon Hauck, 424 Cardinal Lane. Mrs. Hauck said she has two issues of concern. The first is that she does not agree that students watch CNN 10 in class at Dodd. The second issue has to do with transgender students and the rights of their parents and other non-transgender students.

4. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**A. CURRICULUM****I. Report on Meeting Held November 14, 2022 .**

In Ms. Ham's absence, Ms. Harrigan reported the Committee reviewed changes to the Cheshire High School Program of Studies. Ms. Harrigan reviewed the changes. Ms. Silano shared an overview of the CT Right to Read Legislation. The overview included the current timeline established for districts to indicate the approved instructional materials they will implement beginning in July 2023 and opportunities for districts to submit a waiver should they not plan to use one of the approved programs. The waiver would have to indicate that a district's curriculum is evidence-based and scientifically-based. Mr. Hanlon provided the annual report on the number of multilingual learners in the district. As of the October 1, 2022 PSIS enrollment report, there are 124 multilingual learners in the district. Last year there were 93 multilingual learners and in 2016-17 there were 38 multilingual learners. Ms. Silano provided the regular update on coaching in the district. In addition to sending additional teachers and administrators to training related to coaching, all members of the high school Science Department will participate in 3 coaching cycles with coaches from the Mandell Academy at the Connecticut Science Center. Lastly, Dr. Gadd reviewed a letter being sent to families regarding

the new CAAP program provided by the state. CAAP offers students automatic admission to participating Connecticut Colleges and Universities based on high school grade point average and/or percentile class ranking, both calculated using the College Board's formula. If students meet the state criteria, they will receive a letter indicating their acceptance to the participating colleges.

B. FINANCE

I. Finance Report

Mr. Masciana reported there are no significant changes since the October meeting. They will continue to hold the 40% cap on non-payroll expenditures through December 2022. Other than inflation and an increase in energy prices, the budget is sound. He added that they are in the throes of preparing the 23-24 operating budget to be presented in early January.

II. Medical Benefits Update

Mr. Masciana reported that the claims for the month of October 2022 were \$1,022,439, which fall within our budget of a million dollars per month. During the first four months of the year, three of the four months, claims were lower than the prior month. On a year-to-date basis, our average monthly claims are about \$1,179,300, a little over 10% above the expected budget. He reported that there are some relatively large claims that are going to hitting that are included in these numbers, for which we will be receiving Stop-Loss reimbursements. Unfortunately, the large claims then drive the Stop-Loss premiums that we have to pay the subsequent year. As of October 31, 2022, the Medical Reserve Fund is \$1.269 million which covers 1.27 months of claims.

C. PLANNING

I. Report on Meeting Held November 10, 2022.

Mr. Martelli reported the Committee met to discuss the proposals received from the RFP issued for space needs at our elementary schools. The referendum for new schools has passed, but there may still be needs prior to the opening on the new schools. They have prioritized looking at Highland and Doolittle Schools as locations for temporary classrooms or for space analysis to determine how to fit more students in the schools if needed over the next few years. Interviews were held with the following three firms: Antinozzi Associates; Silver Petrucelli and Associates; and Friar Architecture, Inc. At the conclusion of their discussions, the Committee asked Mr. Masciana to inquire with Antinozzi Associates to determine if they would be willing to provide pricing on a per-school basis instead of the all-inclusive quote they provided for all four schools. Mr. Masciana said that Antinozzi came back with a price of \$6,500 per school for Highland and Doolittle.

Ms. Harrigan asked if redistricting could be part of the plan. Dr. Solan responded that it could always be part of addressing enrollment issues, however, that process is pretty painstaking for both families and school systems, and it would not resolve the problem as all of the elementary schools are nearing capacity.

Mr. Martelli noted that although there is no formal vote required, and in the spirit of time, if other members agree, he would like to move forward with Antinozzi. Board members verbally agreed.

D. PERSONNEL

I. Report on Meeting Held November 3, 2022.

Mr. White said the Committee met in executive session to discuss Dr. Solan's goals. Mr. White said Dr. Solan had a number of good specific goals to achieve this year. But more broadly, we were discussing it in the context of the school's overarching priorities, social emotional learning, complex thinking, and then the third big one, which we now have, is two new schools, to look at other space needs with Highland and Doolittle right now, and keep the conversation going on the entire school system.

E. POLICY

I. Report on Meeting Held November 15, 2022 .

Mr. Grippo reported the Committee devoted over an hour and 45 minutes to a presentation by our attorney with a question and answer session by the members of the subcommittee in the scope of learning about what a transgender policy for Cheshire Public Schools would look like. They discussed State and Federal law and through correspondence from a parent, and through the scope of the of the proposed policy written by case, they also covered parental rights pertaining to transgender issues, as well as just overall parental rights inside of a public school system. Mr. Grippo encouraged anyone with an interest in the topic to watch the meeting video that was recorded and posted on YouTube. It was one of the most comprehensive presentations received by a Board on the topic. The attorney answered a lot of questions from committee members, as well as a question from correspondence received from one parent questions that Board members have received from their constituents over the last year.

The attorney also discussed our current nepotism policy. The Committee will make revisions to the policy to keep intent of the policy that was revised and approved in 2019.

Ms. Harrigan asked if there is professional development for teachers on how to handle issues related to transgender students. Dr. Solan responded

that we treat sexual expression, the same way we treat every other protected class. All of employees receive annual training on discrimination, which includes sexual expression, gender identity. We do have students that are transgender in the school system, but it's not the majority of our students by any stretch. And so we provide more targeted professional development to those people who need it. There are certainly opportunities for those that want to pursue more information if they wish.

II. **First Reading of Policies**

Mr. Grippo brought forward policy #5141.213 – Administering Medication - Opioid Overdose Prevention (Emergency Administration of Naloxone.) Naloxone, or Narcan is a powerful counteractive drug for opioid overdose, including fentanyl. We were directed, through the State Department of Health, that we should have a policy in place.

III. **Second Reading of Policies**

There being no changes from the first reading, Mr. Grippo brought forward Policies # 3453 School Activity Fund and 9321.2 Electronic Board of Education Meetings for a second reading.

IV. **Third Reading and Approval of Policies**

Mr. Grippo brought forward Policy #3542.43 Food Service Charging Policy for a third reading and approval. There were no changes since the first and second readings. This policy is being reviewed due to a change in the law. The main revision states, *“In order to sustain the District's food services program, the District cannot permit the excessive charging of student meals. Therefore, if a student's account reaches a balance equal to 30 days of a student charging negative, the balance and student information will be referred to the homeless liaison.”* The liaison will reach out to the family to be sure there is not an underlying concern.

MOTION by Mr. Grippo and seconded by Mr. Martelli.

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education give a third and final reading to Policy # 3542.43 Food Service Charging Policy, and direct the Superintendent to put said policy into immediate effect.”

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

F. **OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES**

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOTION by Mr. White, seconded by Mr. Martelli.

MOVED *that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the Minutes from meetings held on October 20, 2022, and November 3, 2022.*”

CORRECTION: Ms. Harrigan noted that here name was spelled incorrectly as “Harrington” on the November 3, 2022 minutes.

VOTE: The Motion was approved 5-0.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

Dr. Solan said he received an email during this meeting asking about the progress toward establishing access to gender neutral bathrooms and our current schools and what plans will be considered for these bathrooms going forward and building the new schools.

He answered that it is required that there is a gender neutral bathroom in each school. They are easily accessible through a handicap bathroom at the high school in middle school, and elementary schools are using the nurse's office at this time. However, in the construction of new schools, they will certainly be implemented

7. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Dr. Solan noted this is the first opportunity he has had to address the public since the referendum was passed. He thanked the community for voting. He also thanked the Board, Town Council and School Modernization Committee. He thanked Doolittle parent and PAC Chair, Matt Colehour who worked extremely hard and was an incredible asset and also Mike Federico the PAC Treasurer. Dr. Solan thanked the Cheshire Chamber for their early support. Lastly, he thanked Chief Operating Officer Vin Masciana for his extensive work behind the scenes.

The Superintendent said that the Town Council created a School Building Committee for the project. He said there is a lot of work ahead.

He also reported that the Cheshire Board of Education will receive a CABA Board Leadership Award at the CABA/CAPSS annual conference this Friday.

Mr. White said CNN has been mentioned a few times at our meetings. Dr. Solan explained the students at not watching CNN. There is a packaged program, available for all to watch on YouTube, called CNN10. It is a non-partisan program that contains brief clips of current events. He said they recently changed their rating to 13 plus age group. He said he emailed them to ask why they changed their age rating and has not heard back yet. He encouraged everyone to review the program.

Ms. Rosenberg thanked Dr. Solan for the tremendous amount of work he did to get this referendum passed.

8. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Grippo announced upcoming Board and subcommittee dates.

10. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. White, and seconded by Ms. Rosenberg, the meeting was adjourned into Executive Session at 8:54 p.m. including Superintendent Solan, to discuss the Superintendent's evaluation with no action to follow.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam. Grippo, Board Vice Chair

Attest:

Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Filed at the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: November 29, 2022.