

**MINUTES OF CHESHIRE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING
HELD IN TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON MAY 18, 2022 AT 7:30 PM**

Board Members Present: Adam Grippo-Vice Chair; Anne Harrigan-Secretary; Faith Ham, Andrew Martelli, Samantha Rosenberg, Timothy White (7:34)

Board Members Absent: Anthony Perugini-Chair

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer, Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Robin-Anne Carey, Director, Pupil Personnel Services; Mary Jocelyn-Gadd, Principal-Cheshire High School; Mike Woods, Principal-Dodd Middle School; Kelly Grillo, Principal-Norton School Kevin Hanlon, K-8 Curriculum Coordinator; Ryan Murphy, Community Engagement Coordinator

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. Grippo led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
- C. Student Representatives. Michael DeJoseph, student representative for the 2022/2023 school year, reported on recent events at Cheshire High School including spring athletics, the junior and senior proms and Unified Theatre. Upcoming events include the awards and scholarship awards and B1 Day.

2. PRESENTATIONS

- A. National Merit Scholar – Sagarika Srinivasan
Dr. Gadd introduced Sagarika Srinivasan who was selected as a winner of the National Merit \$2500 Scholarship. Sagarika is now recognized among some of our nation’s most academically talented students. The Board congratulated Sagarika and presented her with a certificate.

- B. CABE Student Leader Awards
Dr. Solan stated that the CABE Student Leadership Awards Program was developed to give local Boards of Education a chance to reward student leadership potential. Students are selected from among their peers for exhibiting leadership qualities as defined by a list of criteria developed by a subcommittee of CABE’s Board of Directors. This year’s award recipients are:

Nathaniel Nolte	Dodd Middle School
Diana Byers	Dodd Middle School
Michael DeJoseph	Cheshire High School
Monica Ghaly	Cheshire High School

Because this is such a busy time of year for students, only Michael DeJoseph was available to attend tonight's meeting. The other students will attend the June 1 Board of Education meeting.

C. Antinozzi Associates Presentation

Antinozzi Associates presented the results of their study on potential classroom expansion options for Highland and Doolittle Schools. The need for this study was driven by the high rate of enrollment growth experienced over the last two years in our elementary schools. The goal of the study is to provide the Board of Education with potential expansion opportunities, if they are needed, and includes the use of portable classrooms, with an estimate of probable costs. They provided potential costs for new units installed, of approximately \$1 million for new units, depending on the options chosen.

Mr. White noted that they may have to go to a referendum with this fairly quickly to finance this project if they want to start next year. Mr. Masciana noted that \$300,000 was included in the Capital Budget for next year for portables and \$250,000 for the following year. He said there are other options that the Planning Committee will need to review. We now have a starting point for the cost if we wish to install something permanently. Board members discussed costs and options available including buying used or leasing to keep costs down. The Planning Committee will continue to review this project and report to the Board. The presentation is on file.

D. Presentation by Tecton

Tecton Architects provided their first of many anticipated updates to the Board of Education on the New North End and Norton Elementary Schools projects. They reported that work has been ongoing and they have had four working group sessions. They will have a prep session with the state on June 7. In addition, they will be having "think tank" sessions at the end of the month. They reviewed the design schedule through the middle of next year. Right now, they are in the middle of schematic design, which not only involves a lot of high level discussions regarding programming, adjacencies, building, building layout concepts, but also a lot of the site due diligence. Next phase would be design development and constructions documentation. The architects shared the project work and meeting schedule through December.

3. AUDIENCE

Tucker Demining, 230 Oregon Road. Mr. Deming brought up the Safe School Climate survey that was administered a few months back. He said he has an issue with students being questioned about their genders. He said there are only two genders, and the confusion is causing mental illness and damage to young children.

Sharon Hauck, 38 Carter Lane.

Mrs. Hauck brought up her concern that we do not have security officers in all our buildings. She questioned why we never filled the Security Director position that was in the 2019 budget.

Jane Bate, 44 Riverside Drive. Ms. Bate talked about her concern with schools suggesting children can change their gender.

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 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.

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

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

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 6-0 by those present.

5. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A. CURRICULUM

I. Report on Meeting Held May 8, 2023.

Ms. Ham reported on the meeting held May 8th where the Committee discussed a new math textbook for grades 6 through 8. The book, iReady Classroom Mathematics, will be on display for public review and comments for two weeks. The text will then be brought forward to the full Board for approval at the June 1 Board of Education Meeting. The

Committee also heard details of an Out-of-Country Field Trip to Italy in 2024. The Committee voted to bring the field trip to the full Board of Education for approval.

The Committee received an overview of PASS, a survey for students in K-12, which provides information on students' feelings about school, perceived learning capability, self-regard, preparedness for learning, attitudes to teachers, general work ethic, confidence in learning, attitudes to attendance, and response to curriculum. Lastly, the Committee heard a summary of the 2023 ELA Cheshire Curriculum Council report.

II. Notice of Textbooks on Display

In accordance with Board Policy, the following textbooks will be available for public viewing in the Cheshire Public Library and the Office of Curriculum and Instruction at 29 Main Street from Wednesday, May 10, 2023 through Wednesday, May 31, 2023 and slated for approval and adoption at the Board of Education meeting on June 1, 2023.

Textbook	Publisher	Grade
iReady Classroom Mathematics	iReady Classroom	6-8

III. Approval of Out-of-Country Field Trip

Board of Education policy requires that out-of-country field trips receive permission from the Board of Education. Cheshire High School teacher, Josephine Countryman has requested permission to take students to Italy from April 4, 2024 through April 14, 2024. Superintendent Solan recommends approval of this request and reminds the Board that the Superintendent reserves the right to cancel the trip should national security or health issues warrant.

MOTION by Ms. Ham, seconded by Dr. Harrigan.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the participation of Cheshire High School students in the educational field trip to Italy from April 4, 2024 through April 14, 2024, with the understanding that there is no cost to the Cheshire Board of Education.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 6-0 by those present.

B. FINANCE

I. Financial Update

Mr. Masciana reported everything is lining up quite nicely. We have a fiscal year end meeting scheduled for June 30 to do the final transfers. They are well underway, preparing for the year-end close.

II. Report on Meeting Held May 18, 2023

Mr. Grippo reported that the Finance Committee of the Whole met this evening and approved additional reductions to the budget increase for the 2023/2024 Operating Budget in the amount of \$364,693.

III. Approval of the 2023/2024 Board of Education Budget

MOTION by Mr. Grippo, seconded by Mr. White.

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education approves an Operating Budget for the fiscal year 2023/24 of \$84,993,429 as appropriated by the Town Council, representing, a reduction of \$364,692 from the Board of Education's Recommended Budget of \$85,358,121.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 6-0 by those present.

IV. Medical Benefits Report

Mr. Masciana reported that April's claims were \$849,984, lower than expected. They also receive stop loss reimbursements of about \$50,000. As of April 30, the reserve fund is \$1,821,892 or 1.8 months of claims reserves.

V. 2021-2022 Audit Report Results

Mr. Masciana reported that the Town Council Audit Committee and the Town Council met on April 9, and reviewed the results of the audit for the year ending June 30 of 2022. He said he is pleased to announce that they received a clean audit. CLA, the auditing firm, does a comprehensive audit of all the books and records of the Town including the Board of Education. There are also separate audits done of federal grants and state grants. All audits were clean. Mr. Grippo congratulated Mr. Masciana and his team on the audit.

VI. Report on Grant Activity for the 2022/2023 School Year

Ms. Silano reported on the grants that were received for the 2022/2023 year and provided an explanation on where the funds were spent.

C. **PERSONNEL**

Mr. White explained that the Superintendent has recommended administrative personnel moves that the Board will be voting on this evening. Dr. Solan briefly explained the shift in positions.

Mr. Mike Woods, our current Dodd Middle School Principal will be appointed to the position of Assistant Director of Operations and Community Engagement. Mr. Woods has been a member of our administrative team for a decade. He will engage with parents and students, who attend our schools through Open Choice, support our multi language learners, manage visibility of curriculum through the CPS website, manage all facets of summer school, and complete special projects. In addition, he will be working on our school security issues, and efforts that we make in that area

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

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education appoint Michael Woods to the position of Assistant Director of Operations and Community Engagement, effective July 1 2023. Further, that Mike Woods is compensated in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement between the Board of Education and the Cheshire Administrative Personnel.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 6-0 by those present.

Mr. Ryan Murphy is being named Assistant Principal at Dodd Middle School. Mr. Murphy has been with CPS now for about a year and a half, and in that time, has been a tremendous asset to our students and school system.

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

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education appoint Ryan Murphy to the position of Middle School Assistant Principal, effective July 1 2023. Further, that Ryan Murphy is compensated in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement between the Board of Education and the Cheshire Administrative Personnel.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 6-0 by those present.

Kelly Grillo will be named Principal of Dodd Middle School. Ms. Grillo is currently a very successful principal of Norton Elementary School.

MOTION by Mr. White, seconded by Dr. Harrigan.

MOVED *the Cheshire Board of Education appoint Kelly Grillo to the position of Middle School Principal, effective July 1 2023. Further, that Kelly Grillo is compensated in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement between the Board of Education and the Cheshire Administrative Personnel.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 6-0 by those present.

Dr. Solan said he can not remember a time in his career where there were opportunities that were so obvious to support and benefit our school system in as many ways as making these three moves. He said he thinks today is a proud moment because they can look into the future and see a lot of bright skies based on the work that these people do. Board members congratulated the administrators on their new appointments.

D. POLICY

I. Report on Meeting Held May 16, 2023.

Mr. Grippo reported at the meeting they discussed the Transportation Policy and agreed to revisit in the fall. In addition, they reviewed an Equity and Diversity policy written by staff and will also be reviewing the CAFE policy. The Committee reviewed a Civility Policy directed towards school students and parents visiting schools. In addition, they discussed a policy that would cover international travel for the Superintendent. They reviewed Policy #6159.1 Instructional Arrangements-Teacher Aides. The Committee will continue to review this policy as well before it is brought forward for a first reading.

II. First Reading of Policies

Mr. Grippo brought forward Policy #6162.51 Survey of Students (Student Privacy) for a first reading. Some additional language will be added at the next meeting to cover the Safe School Climate Survey.

III. Second Reading of Policies

Mr. Grippo gave a second reading to policies #4222 Teacher Aides/ Paraprofessionals and #6172.3 Educational Instruction under Parental Direction (Home Schooling). There were no changes since the first reading.

IV. Third Reading and Approval of Policies

Mr. Grippo, brought forward policies #6140 Curriculum and #6142 Basic Instruction for a third reading and approval.

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

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education give a third and final reading to #6140 Curriculum and #6142 Basic Instruction and direct the Superintendent to put said policies into immediate effect.

Discussion:

Ms. Ham said she understands the revisions are being made to comply with State law but she would like to go on record as saying the recent results from the NAEP test demonstrates that something is seriously wrong in our history and civics instruction. She said she contends it is the bifurcation/trifurcation mincing of our history at an early level. She said she feels we are losing sight of what history instruction should be at the K-12 level. She thinks these topics should be dealt with at the college level. The tests demonstrate our children do not know our history. She said she will be voting against these policies.

VOTE: The Motion passed 5-1 (Ms. Ham opposed)

E. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES

None.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Mr. Grippo, seconded by Ms. Rosenberg.

MOVED that the Board of Education approve the minutes from the meetings held on April 20, 2023 and May 4, 2023.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 6-0 by those present.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Solan reported that about six weeks ago, a number of folks representing the trades, came to talk about the extensive shortages within the trades and what can we mutually do to support that and support our students. He put out a survey earlier this week and has already had 36 students in grades 7, 8, and 9 who expressed interest in doing some sort of shadow or learning experience over the summer in the trades. Dr. Solan reported that on Wednesday, we held a meeting with 30 realtors from Cheshire. We had the opportunity to engage with the realtors and talked about the residential development in the community and what we could do to support realtors and what information was helpful to them.

Dr. Solan said we believe there has also been an ever-shrinking global economy that our students, and our families that live in this community, are engaging with people from outside the United States on a more regular basis than we probably ever have in our lifetime with the acceleration of technology and travel. We think it is important to connect with other cultures and have an understanding globally of what's going on to give our students the best opportunity for success when they leave the Cheshire Public School system. He was contacted by the Office of Education in South Korea, who was interested in partnering with an exchange of ideas. And so, we will have visitors, the Deputy Superintendent of Education from South Korea will be here next Wednesday and Thursday with a small team to observe the instruction in Cheshire public schools. We will explore the potential for a partnership with them, if we find that it can be mutually beneficial and helpful for our students and staff.

Mr. White mentioned that Mr. Masciana organized an event today to have DATTCO, our school bus service provider bring one of their eleven electric school buses to the central offices. They brought a propane-powered school bus as well, however, guests rode on the electric school bus. He said it was silent when it came on and it was a fantastic ride.

Mr. Martelli noted that the Superintendent gleaned over all the other work he is doing out in the community. Not only is the Superintendent running this school system, but he is also meeting with realtors, attending the economic commission meetings, and doing a great deal.

9. OLD BUSINESS

None.

10. NEW BUSINESS

None.

11. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Ms. Ham, and seconded by Mr. White, the meeting was adjourned at 10:19 p.m.

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: _____.