

**MINUTES OF CHESHIRE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING
HELD IN TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON APRIL 10, 2025 AT 7:30 PM**

Board Members Present: Samantha Rosenberg, Chair; Anne Harrigan, Vice Chair; Adam Grippo, Secretary; Anne Marie Cullinan; Mark Ecke

Board Members Absent: Anthony Perugini; Timothy White

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; Kevin Hanlon, Principal, Cheshire High School; John Perosino, Athletic Director, Cheshire High School

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.
Ms. Rosenberg led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
- C. Student Representatives. Malakhi Beyah and Lydia Ghaly, student representatives for the 2024/2025 school year, reported on recent events at Cheshire High School.

2. PRESENTATIONS

1. CT Science & Engineering Honors

Cheshire High School Science Department teacher, Julie Barker recognized three of her students who participated in the Connecticut Science and Engineering Fair. Two students were selected as finalists, and one received third honors: Suchita Srinivasan (First Honors Finalist); Adwitha Gadhachanda (Second Honors Finalist); Wendy Cai (Third Honors)

Mr. Perosino, Cheshire High School Athletic Director, introduced the teams and coaches being recognized this evening.

2. Fencing Team

The Board recognized the Cheshire Fencing Team for their fantastic season. Four squads qualified to participate in the CT High School State Team Tournament. Men's epee defended their 2024 title and placed 1st again for 2025. Women's Sabre placed 3rd, women's foil placed 6th and men's Sabre placed 7th. The team thanked the Board for allowing them to become a varsity team last year.

3. Cheerleading Team

The Cheer team, along with their Assistant Coach, Jill St. Jernquist, were recognized for having the best season in school history. The team was Class L Runners-Up, the best finish in school history, which qualified them for the New England Championships. At the New England Championships, the team placed 3rd.

4. National High School Athletic Coaches Association Inductee

The Board recognized Barbara Hedden, Head Coach of the Girls' Track and Field Coach. The CT High School Coaches Association (CHSCA) notified us that Ms. Hedden will be inducted into the National High School Athletic Coaches Association (NHSACA) this June 2025 in Rapid City, SD. at Cheshire High School.

3. AUDIENCE

Aline Nichols, 35 Currier Way. Ms. Nichols announced that her daughter, Victoria, has been invited to fence in Brazil and Spain.

4. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A. CURRICULUM

I. Safe School Climate Update/Action.

MOTION by Ms. Cullinan and seconded by Mr. Ecke.

***MOVED** That the Cheshire Board of Education approves the survey questions as recommended by the State Department of Education.*

Discussion:

Ms. Cullinan noted that there are three surveys that will be going out to staff, parents and students.

Ms. Silano added that the surveys will be going out after April Break. The student survey is going to go to students in grades three through 12, and that will be done in the classroom. The parent survey will be sent directly to all families via Parent Square. In addition, because this is a student survey, a letter will be going home to all families, letting them know about the survey, giving them a PDF copy of the survey, and as with all surveys, giving them an opportunity to opt their child out of the survey, if they would like. After we get those survey results back, we analyze them at the district level, and they are also analyzed at the school level by each individual Safe School Climate Committee at each of the schools.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

B. FINANCE

I. Finance Report

Dr. Harrington reported we have expended and encumbered \$82,109,965 during the nine months of the fiscal year, which includes encumbrances for the largest accounts, namely payroll and transportation.

Mr. Masciana added we are still holding at 70% of non-payroll expenditures in light of the discussions around the 2025/26 budget where we may need to contribute \$200,000 from this year to next year. We will keep the 70% hold in place for at least another month until we are comfortable that we will be able to meet that \$200,000 requirement.

II. Medical Benefits Update

There was no medical benefits report.

C. PLANNING

I. Energy Performance Contract Update.

Mr. Masciana reported that the interviews with the three firms that submitted proposals, Ameresco, Johnson Controls and Honeywell, were completed last week with the working group that includes Mr. White from the Board. On April 21 we have scheduled a working group meeting to select the firm to go forward and take us to the next step, which is a very thorough investment grade audit. We should have the results of that audit in the early fall.

D. POLICY

I. Report on Meeting Held April 7, 2025.

Mr. Ecke reported that the Committee talked about the Regulation #1330 Community Relations Use of School Facilities. Emily Taylor shared a revised regulation regarding fees that haven't been updated in quite some time. The Committee reviewed Policy #5131.81 Electronic Devices language was added regarding AI glasses. Per advice of our attorneys, there are two policies that have been tabled, 5131.911 School Climate and 5111.3 Undocumented Students.

II. Second Reading of Policies

Mr. Ecke gave a second reading to Policy # 5131.81 Electronic Devices and explained that they added information regarding AI powered glasses and deep fakes. Dr. Solan shared a video with the Committee on some dangers of AI Glasses.

Ms. Rosenberg asked if it might be a better solution to have a separate policy for Artificial Intelligence. Dr. Solan said it is evolving so fast that there are no laws yet. We are conscious of the issue, and we do talk about it a great deal including a professional development last month for our staff to understand what the capacity is, but I think they also better recognize what our students are doing, and that will help to form our policy.

E. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES

None.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOTION by Dr. Harrigan and seconded by Ms. Cullinan.

MOVED *that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the Minutes from the Showcase and Business meetings held on March 20, 2025.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

6. **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

7. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Solan reported that new school construction is moving along. Mr. Solomine uploaded great video footage of the schools. The underground utilities are being installed. Concrete is being laid at both locations to fill out the foundation and create the floor. Next month steel will be delivered, and they will start erecting the actual structure, the actual skeleton of the building.

Dr. Solan reported that the YMCA purchased the church across the street from Norton school. He said we are hopeful that we can use that space for parking in the fall of 2026 when we are demoing the existing Norton building. He said he and Mr. Masciana are working closely with Mark Pooler and Doug Levins from the YMCA to see what we can do toward that end.

For a budget update, the Superintendent said the Town Council asked him to present what our budget would look like with a \$2.2 million reduction. He has shared very detailed information with the Board and the community of what that may look like.

Regarding school start times and a redistricting update for 2026/2027, not 2025/2026, we will certainly require not just redistricting but tweaking the start times for each school. Dr. Solan credited Emily Taylor, who spent a lot of time analyzing different options. She was instructed to include every option, and we will methodically work through those options to determine the logistical and financial feasibility of each option. We met with folks from the YMCA. Luther Miller, our Transportation Coordinator and Marlene have been very involved. We look at things such as if high school starts late, who will cover aftercare at the elementary grades if they start early? Because many of the Y's staff are our high school students. What are the sports implications? What are the childcare implications, before and after care? It is important for us to do our diligence so that when we do present publicly later in the spring or early summer, it has been well vetted.

There was continued discussion around school starting times. Dr. Solan noted that in the legislature this year there was a bill submitted requiring later start times for high school

students, but it was put on hold. He said the district will have to make a decision instead of waiting for the State. He said that is why they will be looking at every possibility.

8. **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Chairperson's Update**

Ms. Rosenberg thanked the community for coming out in support of the Board of Education budget. She announced all the upcoming meetings.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Ecke, and seconded by Ms. Cullinan, the meeting was adjourned into Executive Session, to include the Superintendent of Schools, to discuss the Superintendent's Evaluation at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Rosenberg, Board Chair

Attest:

Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Filed at the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: _____.