

**MINUTES OF CHESHIRE BOARD OF EDUCATION
FISCAL/BUSINESS MEETING HELD IN THE BOARD OF EDUCATION CENTRAL
OFFICE BOARD ROOM ON JUNE 30, 2025 AT 7:30 AM**

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

Board Members Absent: Anthony Perugini

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

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.

2. AUDIENCE

None.

3. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A. FINANCE

I. Approval of 2024/25 Year-End Budget Transfers

Mr. Masciana explained that Board of Education policy and state statute requires that the Board of Education approve line-item transfers. The line-items defined in the Board's Policy are Salaries, Employee Benefits, Instructional Expense, Support Services, and Operations & Maintenance.

He reported that we are successfully ending the 2024-25 fiscal year with a remaining balance of \$255,933.31. As was previously agreed upon by the Board of Education and the Town Council, we made a concerted effort to close the fiscal year with a remaining balance of \$250,000 or more that would be placed in a carryover fund to supplement next year's budget. The following are some of the more notable items for the fiscal year and the year-end budget closing:

He said that overall, we are closing the year with 99.7% of our \$89,542,609 budget expended and placing the remaining unspent balance of \$255,933 into a carryover fund.

This year's budget challenges were not marked by any one factor as compared to recent prior years meaning that we didn't have to contend with a pandemic, runaway electricity, bus fuel or heating oil prices, or

extraordinarily high special education costs. As noted in the highlights below, some of the positive variances helped to offset the negative variances and by managing our non-payroll expenditures carefully throughout the year, we were able to achieve a successful close. Energy costs and a relatively mild winter combined with favorable price locks for heating fuels (natural gas, propane & oil) and transportation fuels (diesel & unleaded) enabled us to end the year \$293k below budget for those commodity purchases.

- Special Education - Outplaced Tuition and Consulting Fees – we are pleased to report that these two budget categories, which have proven to be challenging in past budget years because student enrollment and specialized needs are not always predictable, finished just below the allocated budget.
- Teacher Salaries and Substitute Costs – Teacher salaries finished below budget by 2.4%, or \$881,525, which was driven by savings from 13 teacher retirements versus the 6 that were planned as well as a high number of teacher leaves and several open positions during the school year. This surplus was partially offset by the \$593,559 overage in the cost to place substitutes to cover for teacher absences.
- Student Transportation – finished over budget by 11%, or \$473,455, which was driven by a number of factors including the addition of a Type 1 bus route, additional special education routes that were added to accommodate specific student needs, as well as an increased number of bus aides.
- Unpaid Student Meals - balances owed by families for student meals were once again very high by historical standards. Thanks to the efforts of our food service staff in collecting as much as reasonably possible the unpaid meal ending balance was \$24,639.54. In accordance with CT State law, we reimbursed the Food and Nutrition Services for the \$24,639.54 balance which is accounted for in our year-end close. (By comparison, we reimbursed Food and Nutrition Services \$18,043.64 in 2023-24 and \$3,890 for unpaid student meal purchases in 2022-23.

While we did have to make reductions to the requests received in order to end the year with the \$255,933 carryforward for 25-26, we successfully managed our expenditures to allow for sufficient funding to make our required year-end school equipment, technology and replacement furniture purchases. We also will fund summer maintenance projects needed to help keep our schools looking good and operating as effectively as possible. Mr. Masciana reviewed the planned year-end maintenance and technology projects, many of which are already well underway. There was discussion

regarding the turf field replacement. Mr. Masciana said the replacement is in the Capital Budget and on everyone's radar.

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

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education approve line-item transfers for the 2024-2025 fiscal year-end as follows, with the remaining balance of \$255,933.31 to be placed into a budget carryover fund to be used in 2025-26 in accordance with Section 7 of Public Act 24-25.

Fiscal Year End Balances	TO	FROM
Salaries		\$413,370.95
Employee Benefits	\$71,862.09	
Instruction		\$245,565.59
Support Services	\$519,239.67	
Operations and Maintenance		\$188,098.53
	\$591,101.76	\$847,035.07
Remaining Balance to be transferred to Carryover Account to be used in 2025-26: \$255,933.31.		

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Dr. Solan thanked Mr. Masciana for all of his work as this will be his last end of year fiscal meeting.

II. Medical Benefits Update

Medical claims for the year through May were 7.8% higher than expected at an average \$1.297 million per month, versus the \$1.118M budgeted, but were partially offset by higher than budgeted prescription rebates and lower than budgeted administrative costs. While we do not have June claims as of this report, we expect that our Medical Benefits Reserve will end the fiscal year at \$2.3M, which is in line with what we expected based on our budget.

The final closing entry to end the budget year was a contribution to the Medical Benefits Reserve Fund of \$136,586.49.

Mr. Masciana reviewed the Health and Wellness program that is offered to employees.

B. PERSONNEL

I. Possible Approval of Contract between Cheshire Board of Education and CSEA/SEIU, Local 2001/760.

This agenda item is POSTPONED until a future meeting because the union has not yet ratified their contract.

C. POLICY

I. Report on Meeting Held June 17, 2025

Mr. Ecke reported that the Committee met and reviewed a number of policies pertaining to legislation that goes into effect on July 1, 2025. Some policies are being recommended to be “fast tracked” because laws go into effect July 1.

II. First Reading and possible adoption of Policy #6163.32-Service Animals in Schools

Dr. Solan explained the Americans with Disabilities Act requires all public entities to allow service animals. A service animal is defined as either a dog or a miniature horse. A service animal is different than a therapy animal. There are very strict definitions about what a service animal can do and how they're trained. this policy follows the law. Dr. Solan said this is a law that we have not had a policy for because until this year, there was no need. Adopting this policy will be a helpful guide for staff and families as it outlines everything that the law indicates that we must do. He noted that Mr. Grippo has questions about allergies and handlers. He said our goal would be to try and educate everybody where the dog will be present and give them as much advance notice as possible so that we can work out any issues like that which arise. We are adopting this policy in order to make sure that everybody is clear and we can have something to point people back to. We will have a service animal in the district, effective the start of next year with very limited use. Even if we don't have a policy, we're required by law to permit service animals.

III. Second Reading of Policy #5114 Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process

The only change is the definition of bullying. It's been refined to state that bullying means unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades K-12 inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. That is the whole definition. This law goes into effect on July 1.

IV. Third Reading and Approval of Policy #5131.911 School Climate

This new replacement policy was developed to provide districts guidance on recent revisions to Connecticut's school climate law, Public Act 23-167. For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, each local and regional board of education shall adopt and

implement the Connecticut School Climate Policy. He said it is our job to create a safe learning environment that is emotionally and intellectually safe, a positive learning environment for every student.

MOTION by Mr. Ecke and seconded by Dr. Harrigan

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education waive the second and third reading of policy #6163.32 - Service Animals in Schools.

VOTE: The Motion passed 5-1 (Mr. Grippo opposed).

MOTION by Mr. Ecke and seconded by Dr. Harrigan

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education waive the second and third reading of policy #5114 Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process.

VOTE: The Motion passed 6-0.

Discussion:

Mr. Grippo said he thinks it is a poorly written law. The responsibility is placed on the minor student. He said he thinks it should be reviewed and tightened up. Dr. Harrigan said the minor children are highly trained with their service animals. Dr. Solan said his biggest concern is others wanting to engage with the service animal. He said he is working with the principal to work on educating the school community.

MOTION by Mr. Ecke and seconded by Dr. Harrigan

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education give a final reading to Policies #6163.32 - Service Animals in Schools, #5114 Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process, and #5131.911 School Climate, and instruct the Superintendent to put said policies into immediate effect.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously 6-0.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Solan shared the draft survey on school start times that was given to parents, staff, students in the secondary grades and the community. He said we don't adhere well to our current schedule because of transportation times in town as things have evolved on route 10, etc. so we know we must make changes. He said there are time implications and cost implications to the various proposals. He shared the four most viable plans that they

could potentially execute. He said they will make sure the families know they are putting out this survey for feedback, not a decision. Board members discussed the various proposals and the pros and cons of each. Dr. Solan said they will receive the feedback and review the information with the Board.

Dr. Solan also shared that we are facilitating more trades information sessions at some of our trade's partners in town.

5. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. White, and seconded by Mr. Grippo, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 a.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: _____.