

**MINUTES OF CHESHIRE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING
HELD IN TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON OCTOBER 9, 2025 AT 7:30 PM**

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

Board Members Absent: Anne Harrigan, Vice Chair; Anthony Perugini

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Emily Taylor, Chief Operating Officer; Vincent Masciana, Chief Project 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.
- C. Student Representatives. Matalyn Tabor and Connor Rayball, student representatives for the 2025/2026 school year, reported on recent events at Cheshire High School. They announced that Cheshire High School athletics receiving the Michael's Jewelers Achievement Cup which recognizes character on the field, in the stands and in the community service within the sports world. The Girls cross country team placed first in the SCC Divisionals. They reported on the accomplishments of that two athletes, Wyatt Jalowiec, a member of the baseball team recently completed his Eagle Scout project, refurbishing the baseball stands at Cheshire High School and softball pitcher Jenica Matos, who was recently recognized nationally by CBS mornings. Jenica has been one of the top pitchers in the state, and she was recognized for not only her dominance on the mound, but for the fact that she is legally blind. They also reported on a recent blood drive, visiting German exchange students, PSATs, Music In Motion and upcoming school events.

2. AUDIENCE
None.

3. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A. FINANCE

I. Finance Report

Ms. Taylor reported that the budget for this fiscal year is \$93,124,314. As of September 30, we've spent \$68 million of that \$93 million, which is about 73.6%. This includes expenses from our largest accounts, including payroll and transportation. At this time, no variances of concern have been identified. Strategic preparations for the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Operational Budget are well underway.

Ms. Taylor noted they are currently conducting detailed building walkthroughs and assessments across the district to accurately evaluate facility needs, identify technology priorities, and finalize key operational initiatives.

She said the expansion of the Connecticut Paid Leave and CT Family Medical Leave Act to cover all non-certified school employees (such as paraprofessionals, custodians, and transportation staff) went into effect October 1, 2025.

Ms. Taylor reported that the District Repair and Improvement Project (DRIP) Program, a new state-funded program that allocates \$60 million in funding over two fiscal years to provide reimbursement grants for minor capital projects like HVAC, plumbing, or roofing repairs in public schools. Cheshire is eligible to apply for a total grant of \$180,583. Although the grants are scheduled to be issued annually by June 30th, the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) has not yet provided clear information on the application process for districts.

Currently, our propane cost is approximately \$2.29 per gallon. The current annual propane budget allocation of approximately \$35,000 is associated with Darcey School. With the planned closure of the Darcey School in the upcoming year, our annual propane expenditure is projected to decrease to approximately \$3,000.

II. Medical Benefits Update

Ms. Taylor said the medical benefits information for September is not yet available and will be provided at the next Board meeting.

Mr. White asked if we will still be using Darcey going into the next fiscal year. Ms. Taylor responded that we're going to be meeting with the town, in the next few weeks to talk about carrying costs for Darcey and Chapman. The plan is to transition from the Board of Ed over to the town. But obviously, when we have the buildings, which will likely be into the fall of 2026 we are going to have to keep minimal heat running.

B. POLICY

I. Report on Meeting Held October 6, 2025.

Mr. Ecke reported that Jodie Goeler from CABA joined the meeting to talk about best practices. He made some suggestions that Dr. Solan will be adding to our existing Bylaws and presenting to the committee for review. Mr. Ecke asked Dr. Solan to report on the policies that are up for a first reading.

First Reading of Policies

Dr. Solan said they reviewed four policies all with changes that are driven by changes in legislation and have very little impact on our daily practice but legally hold every district to the same standard with which we do most of our business.

5114 Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process – the changes outline the age and consequences for kids in PreK through Grade 2 which would be very limited for us. Require behavior intervention meetings. Puts in place protections for children who are homeless. We would have to ensure if a person is suspended or expelled it is not a function of their homelessness. PreK to Grade 2 expulsion is limited to 5 days and only for violent or harmful behavior. Much of the information in this legislation either rarely impacts us or is something that we already do. The policy protects due process for providing supports for students in juvenile detention.

6171 Special Education – The committee reviewed this replacement policy. The significant change is around the section around the evaluation of special education program. This is new and the vast majority of districts haven't completed this yet. Dr. Solan said they just met with Shipman Goodman last week who provided a lot of direction around a report that the superintendent is supposed to provide to the Board of Education. He said he will update the Board next month. He said there are three elements in this report. The first is the number and names of all community-based organizations with whom the board of education has executed a formal memorandum of understanding, memorandum of agreement, or contract to provide support services to students in the school district, disaggregated by school and type of support service provided. The second is the workforce development programs offered by the board of education to students in which the board has partnered with an outside entity, including, but not limited to, cooperatives, internships, in-school job training programs provided by businesses, and in-school workforce board presentations, and lastly, attrition data for certified and noncertified staff, disaggregated by school and subject, not including in-district transfers.

6159 Individualized Education Program (IEP) – Dr. Solan said changes to this policy are not significant to what we currently practice. He reviewed some of the changes. With an initial evaluation, the school district currently has a 45-day timeline that begins after we receive the referral and it is now increased to 60 calendar days for completion. It states we have to provide parents with Connecticut State Department of Education information resources as soon as the child is identified as needing special education which we already do. For PPT meetings, we must offer a meeting with the parents prior to the initial PPT to review the process and the concerns. The policy outlines responsibilities for the District

Transition Coordinator, which we've had for years. There is emphasis that the districts provide support for students with more significant needs, up to the age of 22, starting in sixth grade. It also provides a lot of provisions for things like when kids leave the school system, either to go to a tech school, or students receiving IEPs.

5118.1 Educational Opportunities for Military Children

Dr. Solan noted that when we get students, whether their families in the military or not, we are very expedient about, facilitating records and facilitating placement in the school. And this policy outlines, requirements that districts have. We have to honor the placement of students in all courses from the sending school. If the student was in honors or the AP, we have to bring them into AP in our school too.

The last item discussed was menstrual products in schools. Dr. Solan said he has been working with Mr. Masciana and Mr. Clavet to begin putting dispensers in all of the schools. He noted there was price gouging when the law first was passed. Currently the products are only available in the nurse's office.

Mr. Grippo noted that they did also discuss the lack of open women's bathrooms in the school. He said that he receives calls about this frequently.

C. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES

None.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Mr. Grippo and seconded by Mr. Ecke.

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education approves the minutes from the meeting held September 18, 2025.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Solan said he was just made aware this week that as part of IDEA, the Special Education Grant, as a district who receives funds, we are subject to periodic, or as they call it, systematic approach to integrated monitoring, which means that several times throughout the course of this year we will have people come and evaluate our special

education delivery to make sure that we're integrating our services as we're supposed to. It could begin this month through May 2026.

Dr. Solan reported that last night, the Chapman Elementary School held their first SEL Social Emotional Learning night and had good attendance. They discussed intellectual habits, framework, Responsive Classroom. They called it Growing Great Kids, Social Emotional Learning.

The Superintendent reported that he, Ms. Silano, Ms. Redzic and a number of other leaders from across the Cheshire Public Schools had the opportunity to attend The Science of Reading Master Class. He said we pride ourselves on, and our data certainly reflects, that our students are doing a good job mastering reading, but part of the reason that we're successful is because we're always aspiring to be better. Reading experts will present over the course of five different sessions throughout the year. Cheshire is partnered with Danbury. Groups will be called affinity groups where we are assigned a reading coach and a leadership coach to support the integration of the science of reading into what we do. It is something that we had already committed to well before science of reading was popular. Dr. Solan said they were asked to write a goal, and ours is the validation that our reading program is tightly aligned to The Science of Reading, and the confidence to ensure that all those working with students in K through 3 have the confidence to ensure that all students can read successfully.

Dr. Solan reported he has made inquiries with principals about when he can attend a PTA meeting at the elementary schools to talk about redistricting. He said he knows this topic brings a lot of anxiety for some families and he would like to hear their concerns. The most frequent question he receives is if families can stay at their school after redistricting and the answer is no. Our focus in these meetings is not so much about what can I do to not make my child move, but what can we do to support your child in a positive transition?

7. **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Chairperson's Update & Announcement of Upcoming Meetings**

Ms. Rosenberg reviewed the upcoming meetings. Due to a scheduling issue in Council Chambers, the Open Forum meeting will now be held on October 15th. In addition, the November 20th meeting will be held on November 6 along with the Middle School Showcase meeting and the joint NGSBC meeting.

Mr. Masciana provided an update on the Energy Performance Contract. He said the town continues to make progress on its energy and school construction initiatives. Discussions are ongoing with the School Building Committee to finalize the placement of solar arrays. At Norton, panels will be installed on the rooftop, while Barnum will feature both rooftop and ground-based installations,

including a solar carport. The next meeting with the committee and Johnson Controls is scheduled for October 23.

Several incentive applications have been submitted. The NRES applications for six solar projects are pending review, with decisions expected by mid-October. A separate application for a fuel cell at Cheshire High School should receive a decision by early November. Additionally, they have begun submitting school construction grant applications—a process expected to take time and require close coordination with the state and Johnson Controls. Efforts are also underway to secure the Investment Tax Credit (ITC) for the new solar arrays in addition to the geothermal systems already submitted. This work is being done in partnership with Johnson Controls, the town's owners' representative, and CLA, the auditors engaged for this project.

Financing for the Energy Performance Contract through Bank of America has been approved, with closing set for October 31. A conference call involving the town's finance director, town manager, bond counsel, and Bank of America has confirmed that the process is on track.

Priority has been given to "Fast Track" renewable projects, including solar and the high school fuel cell, to ensure the town captures all eligible incentives before they expire. In parallel, other energy conservation measures are in progress with Johnson Controls. These include full HVAC upgrades and roof replacement at Doolittle School (in preparation for future solar installation), window replacements, building management system upgrades across municipal buildings, replacement of boilers at the police station (a town priority), and installation of a fuel cell at the wastewater treatment plant. The second round of energy conservation project details is expected by mid-November. Overall, the project remains on schedule, and updates will continue to be provided as progress is made.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Mr. Grippo, and seconded by Mr. White, the meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Rosenberg, Board Chair

Attest:

Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

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