

Ashford Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes – December 1, 2022
7:00 pm

Meeting Held in Person and Electronically Via Zoom

Note: Per CGS 10-218, Board of Education Meeting Minutes are provided in a draft format within 48 hours of the date the meeting was held. With the exceptions of motions and votes recorded, the minutes are unofficial until they have been read and approved by a majority vote by the Board. Should edits be necessary, they will be made at a regularly scheduled meeting, noted in the meeting minutes, and so voted upon.

Call to Order

Chair Jane Urban called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. Present were members Jennifer Leszczynski and Kim Kouatly; Tess Grous and Meghan Smith were present via Zoom. Unable to attend were members Marian Matthews and Al Maccarone Also present was Interim Superintendent Cynthia Ford, Business Manager Deana Chrzan, Principal Polly Borysevicz and AEA members Joshua Carpentier, Jennifer Lindsay and Samantha Makuch. There were three members of the school community and two members of the public in attendance via Zoom.

Pledge of Allegiance

All present recited the pledge.

Board Chair Comments

Jane Urban commented on the Board of Finance meeting calendar for the FY 24 budget, noting that it would seem the BOE's budget is due in January which is earlier than it has been in the past. Mrs. Ford stated that the January date is for departments within the Town to share their budgets. The BOE's budget would be presented in March and would be due to the Board of Finance two weeks prior to presentation. Mrs. Urban thanked Mrs. Ford and Ms. Chrzan who have held two public budget input sessions. The board will continue to solicit public input going forward.

The order of the meeting agenda was changed by mutual consent out of courtesy to the teachers who are here to present to the board, and to allow them to participate in Curriculum Committee break out session on Language Arts. The presentation will be followed by the committee breakout sessions.

Presentation – Language Arts

Ashford teacher Jennifer Lindsay and Reading and Language Arts Consultant Samantha Makuch provided an informative and detailed overview of language arts, reading and writing instruction which they called “*Where do We Grow from Here*”? A great deal of time and energy has been directed to identifying strengths, weaknesses and challenges in language arts. The teachers have been a big part of the process of improving language arts instruction through summer meetings, using those identified areas to see what works best for their students. The state has approved a limited number of reading programs for Connecticut schools. Our current reading series, Wonders, is not on the approved list, therefore we must choose a new reading series. The state is emphasizing phonics instruction in grades K-3 based on post pandemic scientific data. Sample materials and workbooks were shared with the board. Ashford is going back to basics after COVID to ensure that all students are able to master identified fundamentals of grammar, vocabulary, narrative writing, phonics and ultimately make a smooth transition to high school.

Committee Break Out Sessions (*Finance and Curriculum*) 7:50 pm

- a. Discuss FY 24 Budget (Finance)**
- b. Language Arts (Curriculum)**

The board reconvened at 8:23 pm

Present in the Curriculum Committee session were Tess Grous, Jane Urban (ex-officio), Polly Borysevicz, Jennifer Lindsay and Samantha Makuch. Tess Grous reported that items of discussion were curriculum syllabus, grade 3-8 test scores, where we are now and better strategies for the future on how to address needs. Grade 5-6 programs and a request to split grade 7-8 language arts into 2 sections, reading and writing, were also discussed.

Present in the Finance Committee session were Kim Kouatly, Meghan Smith, Jennifer Leszczynski, Cindy Ford, Joshua Carpentier and Deana Chrzan. Kim Kouatly reported that Mrs. Ford, Mrs. Borysevicz and Ms. Chrzan are taking a “deep dive” into budget, examining needs, what is being used and what is being considered. Discussed calendar dates to work on budget, and possible additional meetings in order to be ready for the presentation to the Board of Finance.

Communications (Secretary)

None

Opportunity for Public Comment

None

Old Business

a. FY 24 Budget

Addressed earlier during board chair comments.

b. Facilities Update

Mrs. Ford reported that the roof project was passed by Planning and Zoning, the next step is for the Board of Finance concerning funding and then to the Board of Selectman to schedule a town meeting. A meeting was held with Bill Falletti, Joe Kalinowski, Mike Mellady to discuss ordering of the replacement UST (underground storage tank) in collaboration with Amy Maguire of Service Station equipment who is the chosen project vendor.

c. BOE Vision, Mission, Goals

The board had a final review of the document. Discussion followed and one final edit will be made. Jane Urban will make that edit and redistribute the document. Upon receipt, Jen Truax will post the approved document to the district website.

New Business

a. Certified Staff Resignation (Jessica Bernardi, School Counselor)

The board expressed its appreciation to Ms. Bernardi and wished her good luck.

Motion made by Kim Kouatly to accept the resignation of Jessica Bernardi. Motion seconded by Jennifer Leszczynski and carried unanimously.

b. Certified Staff Appointment (Justine Meyer, School Counselor)

Motion made by Kim Kouatly to approve the appointment of Justine Meyer, School Counselor to the staff of Ashford School, motion seconded by Jennifer Leszczynski and carried unanimously.

Ms. Myer is expected to begin on January 3, 2023.

In light of the time, public comment was moved ahead of the mid-year superintendent evaluation which will be in executive session.

Opportunity for Public Comment

At this time, there was one member of the school staff present and one by Zoom and one member of the community present via Zoom. There were no comments.

Superintendent Evaluation – Mid Year (Executive Session)

Motion made by Kim Kouatly (8:36 pm) to enter into executive session for the purpose of evaluation of the superintendent. Motion seconded by Jennifer Leszczynski.

Present in executive session: Kim Kouatly, Jennifer Leszczynski, Meghan Smith, Tess Grous, Jane Urban and Interim Superintendent Cindy Ford. All exited executive session at 9:51 pm. There was no action taken.

Adjournment

Motion made by Kim Kouatly to adjourn the meeting at 9:51 p.m. Motion seconded by Tess Grous and carried unanimously.

Recorded by: Jennifer Truax

Zoom Recording Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/o2cQGI30oyLHZYO7WA0S4GzeUqvtKV3Stay5AceswObXUgAAWj29rj1F7BxbW-DQ5.b5V0MulWh3xUYs7G>

Passcode: k8KiedQ&