

Ashford Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes – May 4, 2023
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 7:23 pm. Present were members Jennifer Leszczynski, Kim Kouatly, Marian Matthews, Al Maccarone and Meghan Smith. Also present was Superintendent/Director of Pupil Services Cynthia Ford, Principal There was 1 member of the school or community present via Zoom. Unable to attend was member Tess Grous,

Chair Jane Urban made a motion to add item 5d to the agenda, “Selection of Graduation Speaker”. Motion seconded by Kim Kouatly and carried unanimously.

Pledge of Allegiance

All present recited the pledge.

Opportunity for Public Comment

An email communication was received from Jen Truax informing the board that its annual yearbook message to the graduating 8th grade class has been placed. Jane Urban expressed her thanks to the voters and those who volunteered at the polls. There were no other communications or comments from the public.

Old Business

a. Facility and Capital Updates

Mrs. Ford updated the board on the following:

- Generator Replacement: The first selectman has placed the order for the replacement generator. It was necessary to wait to do so until the FY 24 budget had passed at referendum.
- The town building committee met earlier today to go over next steps for the roof project. A meeting to discuss/create an RFP for architect services will be on the agenda. Dennis Stanavage who oversaw the Region 19 roof project has been very helpful in this process. Also discussed was the hiring of a “clerk of the works”, the need to keep MRH Solar involved to ensure structural solar compatibility, and researching if the current roof has had a load test.
- The UST project will begin after the close of the student school year.

New Business

a. Approval of 2023-2024 Healthy Foods Certification

Jane Urban provided members a bit of background on the board’s options with respect to the Healthy Foods Certification information provided in the agenda packet. Lengthy discussion followed between members and Mrs. Ford including but not limited to the definition of an unhealthy beverage, the differences between foods and beverages available for school sponsored activities during the school day versus those that may be available or donated after school hours, i.e., at community events.

Motion made by Jennifer Leszczynski that pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Ashford Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups. Motion seconded by Meghan Smith and was carried unanimously.

Motion made by Kim Kouatly that the Ashford Board of Education will allow the sale to students of beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at

the location of the event; and 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the beverage sales.
Motion seconded by Meghan Smith and was carried as follows: Yes – Urban, Smith, Leszczynski, Kouatly; No-Matthews; Abstain: Maccarone

b. Staff Resignations (Katherine Roque – Music; Jennifer Turner – Special Education)

Letters of resignation were received by Ms. Roque and Mrs. Turner. The board wishes them both well in the future.

Motion made by Kim Kouatly to accept the resignations of Katherine Roque and Jennifer Turner. Motion seconded by Meghan Smith and carried unanimously.

c. Distribution of April 2023 Financial Report and Quarter 3 Grants Report

The reports from the Business Manager were included in the board’s agenda packet and will be on the next agenda for discussion and approval. Member were directed to reach out to Deana Chrzan with any relevant questions prior to the next meeting.

d. Selection of Graduation Speaker

Mrs. Urban shared her experience as last year’s speaker and noted that a brief address to the graduates is the general protocol. After brief discussion, Al Maccarone will be the commencement speaker for the Board.

Committee Breakout (TBD at Meeting)

No committee sessions had been determined at the time of the agenda being posted. Future committee meetings of the Building and Grounds and Curriculum. Committees were mentioned. The cafeteria committee will be meeting on June 1st with Karen Samperi attending.

Opportunity for Public Comment

None

Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items

The next meeting is May 18th. Items for the agenda: consent agenda, superintendent evaluation, curricular presentation (math), Bicknell Trust scholarship awards and facility update (roof RFP). Extended school year will be on the June 1st agenda.

Superintendent Evaluation (Executive Session Anticipated)

Mrs. Ford opted to review her updated goals report in public session (attached). She noted that student SBAC test scores would not be available by the June 30 end of this evaluation cycle, she will adjust her goals accordingly. Mrs. Ford reflected on several parts of her written report, she noted that communication around any new programs will be improved in the upcoming years.

Motion made by Meghan Smith to enter into executive session (8:38pm) for the purpose of evaluation of the superintendent and to invite Mrs. Ford to this session. Motion seconded by Marian Matthews and carried unanimously.

Present: Meghan Smith, Jennifer Leszczynski, Al Maccarone, Jane Urban, Kim Kouatly, Marian Matthews, Cindy Ford.

The board and Mrs. Ford exited executive session at 9:25 pm. There was no action taken.

Adjournment

Motion made by Marian Matthews to adjourn the meeting at 9:26 p.m. Motion seconded by Al Maccarone and carried unanimously.

Recorded by: Jennifer Truax

Zoom Recording Link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/qGztPcemxQET4_y81AcTSP8amYWFII9ISqTdO6920aNJ26m-nGxaK-t8lx9fdjek.9t0EjyukHgCSsVGP
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