

Ashford Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes – September 7, 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

Vice-Chair Marian Matthews called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. Present were members Jennifer Leszczynski, Al Maccarone, Meghan Smith and Tess Grous (via Zoom). Also present was Superintendent/Director of Pupil Services Cynthia Ford and Principal Polly Borysevich. Unable to attend were members Jane Urban and Kim Kouatly.

Pledge of Allegiance

All present recited the pledge.

Opportunity for Public Comment

None

School Opening Report

Mrs. Ford stated that school opening went well. She asked that Mrs. Borysevich and Mr. Eichorn report on the opening of school and that she would follow with an update on the After School Care Program.

- Mrs. Borysevich echoed that opening went very well. She noted that there had been a few issues with PM transportation at the beginning of last school year; this year K-2 students are wearing stickers that have their bus letter dismissal as we begin the year. They are lining up by bus letter to board the PM buses. This will continue until September 30th. Mr. Eichorn noted that 1 or 2 students missed their bus to go home on the first day of school. Students are following a Monday-Friday schedule this year as opposed to Day 1-4 in prior years. This allows for more time to schedule intervention and service provider interactions. Staff had input into the schedule planning, so far, it is going well; minor adjustments are to be expected.

Brief open dialogue followed about traffic during afternoon parent pick up and assurance that school meals are being served on early dismissal days.

- Mrs. Ford noted that the After School Care Program began on 9/5/23 and that we have a very low enrollment. After much research by the town, it had been decided to charge \$100 per child per week for this service. This has proven to be cost prohibitive; therefore, the current enrollment is only 4 students, the maximum enrollment is capped at twenty. Mrs. Ford said she and the first selectman have discussed resources to supplement or offset this cost for this year. She reminded the BOE that the new Reading Program was scheduled to be purchased with ESSER III funding, but was purchased using budget funding instead. She and Mr. Falletti have discussed directing ESSER III/ARP grant funding to this first year of this program. This would be approximately \$40,000 and would meet the grant use requirements for social emotional learning, homework support, etc. This will be discussed at the next BOS meeting. Mrs. Ford is seeking the support of the BOE to fund this year's initial program with these grant funds. This is necessary in order to determine if this program can be sustainable going forward; with such low enrollment, it would not be a viable program. All agree that this program is much needed due to the lack of daycare facilities in town.

Discussion followed concerning the number of program staff, operations on days of emergency school closures and dismissals.

Motion made by Meghan Smith to utilize ESSER III/ARP funding to fund the cost of the After School Care Program for the 2023-2024 school year. Motion seconded by Al Maccarone and carried unanimously.

Old Business

a. Facility and Capital Updates

Mrs. Ford distributed the most recently updated version of her living document or log of facility improvements, repairs and information. The board thanked her for keeping this information up to date.

- The RFP for architectural services for the roof replacement is complete. A walk through was held, the building committee will meet to interview vendors on 9/24 and recommend a vendor.
- The UST replacement is complete, however, there is a section of the concrete that is ponding, this will be corrected in October. The asphalt was replaced by Krukoff Construction, they did a great job.

- Work on the new intercom system for classrooms is nearing completion, this will allow for bell tones in the middle school.
- This week's weather caused many very hot classrooms and areas in the building. There were collaborative discussions amongst area superintendent concerning the decisions to announce early dismissals for health and safety reasons for students and staff.

Members discussed new windows, indoor air quality and state mandate for HVAC improvements, however, Mrs. Ford noted that we must complete our roof project prior to such improvements.

New Business

a. Review of FY 23 Year End Financial Statement

A working draft of the FY 23 statement was sent by email to members prior to the meeting for review. There were no questions at this time.

b. Authorization of FY 23 Q4 and Year End Budget Transfers

There were no transfers presented at the meeting as the FY 23 audit is currently in progress.

Motion made by Jennifer Leszczynski to table item 6b. Motion seconded by Meghan Smith and carried unanimously.

c. Approval of SY 23-24 School Medical Standing Orders

The standing orders are confidential in nature. Mrs. Truax intended to provide Mrs. Ford a copy to review with the BOE for an approval, however it was not provided.

Motion made by Jennifer Leszczynski to table item 6c. Motion seconded by Meghan Smith and carried unanimously.

d. Approval of Staff Appointment – Michael Zambo, Custodial/Maintenance

A custodial/maintenance position had been posted and the committee interviewed three candidates. Mr. Zambo has worked as a substitute custodian in the past.

Motion made by Meghan Smith to approve the appointment of Michael Zambo to the position of custodial/maintenance. Motion seconded by Al Maccarone and carried unanimously.

Opportunity for Public Comment

There were no comments from the public. Ms. Matthews offered some thoughts on play time activities for the after-school program. Tess Grous noted that she had participated in the PTO's back to school breakfast for the first time and that it was a good experience and that she is excited for the coming school year. Jennifer Leszczynski commented on the message board to students in the main office display case. Thank you to Pam King for setting this up, it's awesome.

Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items

Agenda items for next meeting on 9/21: School security assessment and, medical standing orders (executive session), curriculum presentation, committee break out (cafeteria and one other) sessions, facility update.

Adjournment

Motion made by Meghan Smith to adjourn the meeting (8:01 pm). Motion seconded by Jennifer Leszczynski and carried unanimously.

Recorded by: Jennifer Truax

Zoom meeting link: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/9BXweLv-IBFteOcJ95kVD1e6c3CJqUz86TQbKIRe4GXomQjEWtp_ejssqieN7fVS.ZJA-rplzq5_R8bRf

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