

Board of Education Minutes

August 23, 2023

DRAFT

A Regular Meeting - Hybrid Format of the Board of Education was held in a hybrid format on August 23, 2023, beginning at 6:30 PM in the North Stonington Education Center. Present were Dr. Towle-Weicksel, Mr. Mastroianni, Mrs. Mazzella, Mrs. Wagner, and Mr. Karpinski. Mr. Burdick joined the meeting via Zoom at 6:47 p.m. Also present, were Mr. Hopkins, Superintendent, Mr. Merrill, Business Manager.

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Dr. Jaime Towle-Weicksel, Stephanie Mastroianni, Lisa Mazzella, Christine Wagner, And Alex Karpinski. Absent: Chet Stefanowicz and Phil Mendolia. Joined via Zoom at 6:47 pm Bryan Burdick

3. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

4. Public Comment

As a reminder, all BOE members and Central Office staff are not allowed to respond to public comments during the scheduled BOE meeting time. In order to protect privacy, public comments are not to mention the names of any students or staff members or specific issues regarding students or staff members. Comments are limited to 3 minutes and each person can only speak once during each public comment session.

Motion to add 9.a. Before and After Care Review; 9.b. Playground update; 9.c.

Discussion on Agenda Format and 10.a. Board Member Comment. This motion, made by Mrs. Wagner and seconded by Mrs. Mastroianni, Carried.

5. **Presentations**

5.a. Facilities

Presentation by Facilities Director, Randy Rumrill. Will review some items that Facilities has been working on. The soccer field will be ready for the Fall. We are

maintaining the lawns and will start mowing the field twice a week. The lawn is looking rather good. As far as other landscape equipment, we have the storage container and it's working rather well to our benefit so we don't have to go to the bus yard to get the equipment. After we are done with the mowing season, we will swap equipment and bring over the snow equipment and keep it on this side of the building. In the Spring we will swap the equipment once more. Playground, pre-k area, the border near the swings is four feet and they should be six feet. We will be putting new borders approximately six to seven feet away. Spoke to Playground Medic who did the preventive maintenance and check of all the playground equipment and they informed us that everything looks good. Started to lay out woodchips along the cross-country track in the back and on the soccer field. Spoke with the fire Marshall and will be doing the inspection of the schools on Monday, August 28th. Will also inspect the woodshop area and will be open for the first day of school. The guard for the woodshop has been ordered and we also have been doing repairs to get that back up and running. Questions were asked and answered.

6. Administrative

6.a. Approval of Minutes - none

6.b. Correspondence - none

7. Reports

7.a. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Hopkins submitted his report ahead of time. Reported on the faculty that has been hired for this coming Fall. We had a donation from Christopher & Sarah Nelson, that has allowed us to add the Anonymous Alert App. In addition, an App can be downloaded. Currently, all administrators are receiving alerts as a safety net. We have now developed a Community Support Hallway and worked with Mr. Bob Carlson, which is housing the Food Pantry and the Giving Closet. This can also be accessed from the outside of the building. We will have a Therapy Dog, Molly. Molly will join the Alternative Ed Program. I will be holding Coffee Chats for the Community. The first one has been scheduled for Tuesday, September 26 from 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. The convocation will be on August 28th. The Board is welcome, we

will serve breakfast starting at 7:30 a.m. and Convocation will start at 8:00 a.m. A draft BOE meeting dates were distributed.

7.a.i. Staffing – included in the Superintendents report

7.a.ii. Goals – reference Superintendent’s report.

7.b. BOE Chairman's Report

Mrs. Wagner reported that received the STEAP and got the information in, just in time. We are currently working on the administrators contract which is due for next school year.

9/9 Community conversation @ 9:00 a.m.

CABE Conference on November 17th & 18th.

7.c. Student Ambassador's Report – none.

8. Consent Agenda - none

9. Old Business

9.a. Before & After Report presented by Dr. Towle- Weicksel gave an update. Met with the Rec Commission. Good discussion and looked into what we wanted to propose. Lot of discussion about how to pay for this director so that we could go ahead and hire one. \$800/per week position. We have received fifteen applicants and we have some great candidates. The committee is asking for an appropriation of \$13K to start the program. Questions were asked and answered.

9.b. Playground Update – Items have been ordered but the items have not arrived yet. Will call and check on the status of the playground equipment.

9.c. Discussion on Agenda Format – It was suggested to add language for public comments. Will help guide the public as to the process. Mrs. Mastroianni had a bit of a reaction to the current language. Proposed to revise the language to reflect a more welcoming language.

10. New Business

10.a. Board Member Comment – There was discussion on this item. This will be added as an item prior to Public Comment at every meeting. Mrs. Wagner asked if the Board felt they are receiving enough information. Mrs. Mastroianni thanked that the BOE packet was emailed and posted ahead of time.

11. Facilities and Finance

Motion to accept the July financial report. This motion, made by Mr. Karpinski and seconded by Mrs. Mazzella, Carried.

11.a. Accept monthly report

Mr. Merrill would like to see the Board review and discuss the monthly reports during the first meeting and to have a Committee Meeting, to review it ahead of time and to have enough time to answer questions, ahead of time. More detail at each month. In general, over the summer, the accounting office was busy in the summer. State Report due on September 1st which we report to the State the prior fiscal year. Changes in Payroll, for every teacher, deductions, checking and verifying and making sure that when we get to the first teacher's payroll it is correct. July are all the memberships that happen every year, annual expenses. Quarterly expenses, such as the Worker's Comp Insurance. The school and the Town are on the same insurance policy it's the whole town policy we are on the same liability policy. On the lunch program we still need to keep track of who qualifies, everyone no matter what the status gets a free breakfast, and for lunch, if a student qualifies as free or reduced they receive a free lunch. A family still needs to fill out the application form. Some of the things we have been working on, HR the new handbook has gone out to all employees, when school starts we will do a benefits fair, to update the beneficiary on life insurance, change the beneficiary to their TRB, and personnel files are being updated to look what it is supposed to be. For any major expense, we had one rooftop HVAC unit to fix over the summer. School secretaries had no issues with the ordering to be ready for the school year. Questions were asked and answered.

12. Policy First Read

It was suggested to reword Policy First Read to Policy Handout. The Policy Handout at the second meeting, then discussion at the workshop meeting at the first meeting, and then Policy Approval.

6153 – Policy 6153 will be reviewed in September.

5132 - The dress code policy will also be reviewed in September.

Will also review the bylaws.

13. Policy Approval

14. Calendar

September 11 - Triboard Meeting at 6:30 p.m.

15. Public Comment

My name is John Gatson and I have a question about your statement discussed earlier.

When will you give an answer to a public comment? Mrs. Wagner responded that depends on the basis of the question. The Board will not react to public comment but will address the issue as quickly as possible.

Judy Main – would like to know if the new policy for kindergarten cutoff date, is the exception only for next year or is it for any year moving forward? Mr. Hopkins responded that it seems it's moving forward but it's a process that is yet to be developed.

16. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:16 p.m. This motion, made by Karpinski and seconded by Mastroianni, Carried.

Respectfully submitted by
Irma Wilhelm
Recording Clerk