

Board of Education Minutes

June 14, 2023

DRAFT

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education was held in a hybrid format on June 14, 2023, beginning at 6:30 PM in the North Stonington Education Center. Present were Mr. Burdick, Mr. Karpinski, Mrs. Mastroianni, Mrs. Mazzella, Mr. Stefanowicz, Dr. Towle-Weicksel, and Mrs. Wagner. Also present were Mr. Troy Hopkins, Superintendent, Mr. Bill Merrill, Business Manager, Ms. Madison Wagner Student Ambassador, and Mr. Jon Anderson, Student Ambassador.

1. Call to Order

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

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Public Comments

None.

4. **Reports**

- 4.a. Superintendent Report

Mr. Hopkins thanked Ms. Madison Wagner and Mr. Jon Anderson for being on the board this year. It's been great having them participate and report about all the good stuff going on at the schools. They have added a lot to the Board and the Board experience. Mr. Hopkins praised his administrative team and indicated that we are fortunate of having these four individuals. They are up to speed on best practices in education and they focus on individual kids. Whether it's helping kids with behavior, or helping them academically or emotionally they are accommodating to individual needs; but at the same time, they hold students to behavioral and academic standards. Parents, students, community members, and the Board should have trust in this outstanding administrative team. I have not seen administrators handle issues as thoroughly as they do. I am thankful because I think it builds trust. They have empathy and honesty and they help kids develop understanding and skills that they need to be

successful. I have praised my central office all year long and I thank Bill and Irma who have a great deal of school experience and knowledge. I could not have been as successful as I have been without both of them. Alycia as well, who was really quick at picking up and learning Infinite Vision. Everyone is doing an exceptional job, while trying to be more efficient in the use of Infinite Vision and Frontline. I wanted to mention that Indoor Air Quality – testing should not be the first move. There are no standards for schools. If we test we're probably not going to find much. I am not sure if we want to pay for something that is not needed.

I am excited about some new hires for next year. Sean McCormick, a UConn graduate will teach music. We are really excited to bring him on board as he has experience with different musical ensembles. Nina Reardon - has several years of experience in full-time social work at EASTCONN her certification is actually School Counseling but a School Counselor is qualified to do everything a Social Worker does. She has the experience and she was at the top of the candidate pool. We have also hired, Bernadette Macca as a Special Education Teacher, for the Alternative Program.

Silly Sounding Sentences ABC Phonics Fun - we have a published author on staff who just got this book published - Wendy Arruda is the author. Wendy is a paraprofessional at the elementary school.

4.b. Chairman's Report

Mrs. Wagner indicated she didn't have a lot. Most of her reporting will come throughout the agenda. Mrs. Wagner reported that she, Mr. Hopkins, and Mr. Merrill have been meeting with the town on a regular basis to make sure that we're all on the same page for getting our reports where they need to be. Working with iVisions has been a rewarding challenge but they're getting there. Mr. Merrill has been meeting with the town weekly to go through what they need to get to be ready for the audit.

Mrs. Wagner reported that a new Bill just got passed, which is nice to see that we're already doing so much of what it's asking regarding restorative practice tracking and reports, which is everything the administration is already doing. It's something to be commended for all their hard work. June 21st is the graduation for the Class of 2023. Let Ms. Cara know if you are going to be there and if you need a robe.

4.c. Student Ambassador's Report

Ms. Madison Wagner indicated that this was hers and Jon's last meeting until next year where they will train two juniors who will take their place once they graduate. This experience has taught them a lot about the inner workings of the school and taking into consideration the betterment of the school, so thank you for this opportunity. Senior projects were presented last Friday and they went really well. Got to see the one with the concrete 'W'. It was cool to see the whole process. Also got to see the veterinarian project and it was really cool to see their projects. Mr. Jon Anderson continued reporting, that prom was this past weekend and everything went well. The awards night was Monday and the 8th-grade promotion is June 20th at 10:30 a.m. Field day is tomorrow; the 6th-grade promotion is on Friday, June 16 at 9:30 a.m. The parent survey went out, and ASBAC testing is finished. There will be a Pre-K, See How We've Grown Production, for their little graduation ceremony. Mr. Anderson also expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to be part of the Board.

5. **Old Business**

5.a. Grounds Study Report

Motion for Mr. Merrill to create an RFP for the replacement of two pumps and the replacement of valves and install a control system for the current water system. This motion, made by Mr. Stefanowicz and seconded by Mr. Burdick, Carried.

We met with Wayne Coats and he did the grounds for us for about fifteen-plus years and he had a lot of great input. We had a very good conversation. The layout is how the layout should be. He was able to get those fields in good condition and it should be someone that will take ownership. Discussion followed. Questions were asked and answered.

5.b. Playground Discussion

Motion to approve up to \$70,000 for the playground equipment from non-lapsing funds. This motion, made by Mr. Stefanowicz and seconded by Mr. Burdick, Carried.

A plan was presented for the needs of the playground equipment. The playground was originally initiated by an external group of parents who raised funds and installed what is there now. As a Board now, we need to finish the playground and then pass the project on to the School for maintenance, and compliance.

6. **New Business**

6.a. School Security - Allison Reyes

Mrs. Allison Reyes, Assistant Principal at Wheeler High School, presented at a conference that she attended regarding School Security. The conference was presented by the U.S. Secret Service. Mrs. Reyes shared the research and analysis as well as the recommendation on the Prevention of targeted school violence. There were two reports - the first one is a report of 41 incidents of targeted school violence. The second was a report regarding averting school violence. The priority at Wheeler is the vestibule reception window. The second is to determine a method of anonymous reporting.

6.b. July BOE Workshop

July 26 for the BOE workshop at 5:30 p.m. CABE could come in and help us define our roles in the community and move our goals forward.

7. **Facilities and Finance**

7.a. Present May Finance Report

We are purchasing the reading program and everything else will be added to the non-lapsing. We put a pause on the shed because we wanted to look at the funding source. We have completed a building permit with the town to get a storage structure that is not permanent.

7.b. End-of-Year Spending

Nothing to discuss. No need to approve transfers, therefore no need to meet again before the end of the fiscal year. Come July we'll do the necessary approvals and

7.c. Non-Lapsing

No discussion.

8. Public Comments*

None.

9. Proposed for Executive Session

Superintendent's Evaluation

Out of Executive Session

Motion to move into executive session made by Mr. Stefanowicz and seconded by Mr. Burdick.

10. **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the Board meeting at 8:57 p.m. made by Mr. Karpinski and seconded by Mr. Burdick. Carried.

Respectfully submitted by
Irma Wilhelm
Recording Secretary to
The Board of Education