

Ashford Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes – October 3, 2013
7:30 p.m.

Note: Per C.G.S. §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 exception of motions and votes recorded, these minutes are unofficial until they have been read and approved by a majority vote of 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

Chairperson D. Wesson called the meeting to order at 7:34 pm.

Board Present

Present were members D. Wesson, K. Rourke, J. Rupert and K. Warren. Also present were State Rep. S. Belsito, Superintendent Dr. J. Longo and recording secretary J. Barsaleau. In the audience was resident G. Leedie. Unable to attend were board members B. Supina, J. Lippert and L. Donegan.

Persons to be Heard

a. Guest – Representative Sam Belsito

State representative Belsito introduced himself and thanked the board for inviting him to this meeting. He began by acknowledging the board for their willingness to serve, and of the struggle members face in providing the best education for children, while balancing financial responsibilities to the town. Rep. Belsito addressed a number of subjects important to state and local education. They included declining enrollments, budgets and capital improvements, the need for more family participation in the education of children, hours and days of instruction in the United States as compared to other countries and the need for early world language instruction. He stated that UCONN has received funding for expansion and he has prepared a bill that would make the very first building a Special Education Technology center that would take students with disabilities, and give them the tools needed to succeed in society. Members J. Rupert and D. Wesson asked if it were possible to expand that bill to include a similar provision of educational opportunity for those identified as gifted and or talented, that cannot receive advanced or specialized instruction at the local level. Member K. Warren shared her frustration concerning state and federal funding of smaller towns. The board agreed, stating the formulas create imbalance with larger towns and small cities receiving far more funding and grant opportunities than towns like Ashford. Rep. Belsito thanked the board once again and asked that they contact him at any time with any thoughts or concerns. Rep. Belsito left the meeting (8:06 pm).

Communications

None

Approval of Minutes: 09/12/2013; 09/19/2013

Motion to approve the special meeting minutes of 09/12/2013 made by K. Warren, seconded by K. Rourke and carried unanimously.

The minutes of 09/19/2013 are tabled until the next meeting due to lack of a quorum present eligible to vote on them.

Committee Reports

There were no committee meetings held prior to this meeting. The chair reminded members that the regularly scheduled October 17th meeting would now be dedicated to teacher negotiations. A special meeting has been scheduled for October 24th at 7:30 pm to address regular meeting agenda items as a result of this change. The Personnel and Finance committees will meet at 6:30 pm on October 24th.

Administrative Reports/Summary (reports may be distributed at meeting)

a. Superintendent

Dr. Longo reported that Kevin Chambers of the State Department of Education contacted him after review the annual ED012 filing (minimum budget requirement or MBR). Mr. Chambers informed Dr. Longo that Ashford is out of compliance with the State of Connecticut minimum budget requirement as a result of changes made during the town's FY 14 budget process concerning the application of funds received for the excess cost of special education and for Regional District #19 transportation. These changes have resulted in a reduction of the Ashford Board of Education budget over the prior fiscal year. Mr. Chambers indicated that the fact that the BOE was comfortable with these changes does not alter the fact that it creates a compliance issue. He stated that such a reduction is not allowed per the CSDE. Dr. Longo will be receiving a letter citing that action will be required by the town to appropriate sufficient funds to meet Ashford's minimum budget requirement. The Board of Finance chair has been notified verbally of the MBR compliance issue and will be provided a copy of the letter upon receipt.

Old Business

a. FY 13 Budget – Audit Update and Discussion of Budget Transfers

The auditors are scheduled to be in the district office on 10/7/13. Dr. Longo has a note that November 7th is tentatively scheduled as the auditor presentation to the Board of Finance. He directed J. Barsaleau to confirm this date with the auditor, as November 7th is a scheduled board of education meeting date.

Members expressed concern about adjusting/changing it's regularly scheduled meeting date of November 7th to accommodate the presentation. Teacher negotiations will have commenced and Board counsel has proposed tentative dates between October 17th and November 26th for negotiations, inhibiting the board's ability to reschedule the November 7th meeting if confirmed.

Per board policy, first quarter object budget transfers for FY 14, if any, are to be reviewed and made in October. This is scheduled for the agenda on 10/24. In the event there is no quorum on that date, any transfer action will have to be tabled until the next full board meeting. With the pending conflict of November 7th mentioned earlier, a special meeting or roll call vote may be required concerning quarterly object transfer.

It was reiterated again, that until the FY 13 audit has been officially closed, there will no FY 13 budget transfers authorized by the board of education.

New Business

a. Schedule Teacher Negotiations Dates

As discussed under old business, the CEA and counsel have set 10/17 for commencement of negotiations, and set 11/19, 11/21, 11/25 and 11/26 as tentative dates, with potentially more to come. Mediation deadline is 11/22 and arbitration deadline is 12/17.

Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items

The next meeting date is scheduled for 10/24. Agenda items include approval of 09/19 minutes, FY 14 object budget transfers, September 2013 financial statement, final approval of bylaw amendment, Administrative Reports and Superintendent Evaluation. There will be finance and personnel committee meetings at 6:30 PM.

Superintendent Evaluation (Executive Session Anticipated)

Motion made by K. Warren to enter into executive session (9:01 pm) for the purpose of Superintendent Evaluation and inviting Dr. Longo into the session. Motion seconded by K. Rourke and carried unanimously. Present were K. Warren, J. Rupert, D. Wesson, K. Rourke and Dr. Longo.

The board and Dr. Longo exited the executive session at 9:52 pm.

No action was taken.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting (9:52 p.m.) made by K. Rourke, seconded by K. Warren and carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Barsaleau
Recording Secretary