

Ashford Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes – November 20, 2014
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

Board chair J. Rupert called the meeting to order at 7:31 PM. Present were J. Rupert, D. Wesson, L. Donegan and K. Rourke. Also present were Acting Superintendent D. Hartigan, business office staff members D. Morgan and L. SanDiego and recording secretary J. Barsaleau. In the audience were S. Morytko, N. Rice, Chronicle reporter A. McElveen, and AEA co-president E. Turcotte (7:40 pm). Unable to attend were board members K. Warren and J. Lippert.

Persons to be Heard

Chair J. Rupert announced that time would be limited to speak due to the many items listed on the agenda this evening. S. Morytko reviewed a communication that he had sent electronically prior to the meeting. The communications concentrated on follow up to the board retreat discussions, school goals, CMT scores, K12 Alert, the Director's meeting report and the website.

Communications

All communications were included in the board packet with the exception of Mr. Morytko's successive letter discussed under Persons to be Heard. There was no discussion.

Approval of Minutes: 11/06/2014

Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of 11/06/2014 made by D. Wesson seconded by L. Donegan and carried unanimously.

Administrative Reports (Superintendent, Principal, Director of Pupil Personnel, Cafeteria)

Acting Superintendent Report

Mrs. Hartigan's report was included in the packet received electronically by the board. Ashford School nurse, Martha Sibley-Jett, has been in contact with Northeast Oral Health Initiative's "Across the Smiles" program. Thanks to her efforts, a representative will be coming to parent/teacher conferences to speak to interested persons about the program. "Across the Smiles" provides dental screenings, routine preventative and restorative dental care in a mobile dental lab. Mrs. Hartigan was asked to address her Director's Report immediately following the Acting Superintendent report.

Director of Pupil Personnel

Mrs. Hartigan spoke of her responsibility for oversight of students that are Ashford residents but are homeschooled or attending another school, such as a magnet school. Her report also addressed Ashford's continuing efforts toward a "community" school.

Board member D. Wesson asked if homeschool students would be eligible to take part in the mobile dental services provided by the Northeast Oral Health Initiative. Mrs. Hartigan will follow up on that question.

Principal

Mr. Hopkins report was included in the board packet and highlighted Ashford School Spirit. Mr. Hopkins stated that a former student, Vincent LaMonica, has written a piece of music that will be played by the Ashford School band at the December 11th Winter Concert. Member L. Donegan commended all involved in the WINGS event that was held in October. It is and continues to a positive experience for students, staff and the school community. Other members agreed and expressed appreciation in having a positive relationship with the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, without their assistance, the ability to provide this opportunity for our students would be very difficult. Mr. Hopkins applauded all involved and recognized the efforts of Melissa McDonough in her first year of running the program.

Mr. Hopkins stated that he had met and worked with the parent of an Ashford student who is also a UCONN professor with regard to the Ashford Educator Evaluation plan. The plan is held in very high regard and the professor is using parts of the Ashford plan in a course in educational administration taught at UCONN.

Cafeteria

The cafeteria report was not included in the agenda packet, it will be added to the next meeting agenda.

a. Financial Reports

1. Month of October

2. September Reconciliation

D. Morgan and L. SanDiego received questions concerning the financial documents included in the packet. They were the October expense report, the BMSI report for the month of October with encumbrances projected to the year-end. The September reconciliation is complete, there are a few remaining reconciling issues, but they are small and amount to less than \$10. As requested at the last meeting, the board was provided with documentation concerning funds recovered during budget deliberations and held in Object 700.

K. Rourke commented that she and J. Lippert had attended the Board of Finance meeting on 11/13 to hear the draft presentation of the audit. She reported that it went well, the chair of the Board of Finance commented on how well the business office staff works with the town staff. The auditors had nothing but positive comments on our preparedness and it was the best audit experience they have had with the business office to date. The board chair and other board members thanked Mrs. Morgan and Ms. SanDiego for their efforts.

Old Business

Member D. Wesson asked if there had been any further word on Dr. Longo's return. The chair reported that he had spoken with Dr. Longo earlier in the day and that he is returning to work on a limited basis and plans to be in the office on Tuesday of next week.

Motion made by D. Wesson to add as item 6a, discussion concerning the Superintendent. Motion seconded by K. Rourke and carried unanimously. Other old business items on the agenda will resume as 6b, 6c and 6d.

Discussion was held concerning a transition period for Dr. Longo. This time, if any, should be minimal, as Dr. Longo has been in daily contact with his staff and Mrs. Hartigan. However, the board felt it important for Mrs. Hartigan to continue as acting Superintendent until Dr. Longo is fully able to return. This would allow for continuity in terms of financial transactions and the signing of documents until Dr. Longo has fully returned.

Motion made by D. Wesson to authorize Mrs. Hartigan continue in the role of acting superintendent until such time Dr. Longo is able to resume his full duties as stated in the letter received from Commissioner Pryor dated November 7, 2014. Motion seconded by L. Donegan and carried unanimously.

Members asked if an acceptable means of compensation for the time Mrs. Hartigan has filled the role of acting superintendent had been found. At the request of the board chair, Mrs. Hartigan has contacted legal counsel for direction on this matter, and we await that response.

b. Board Goals

Members began to discuss goal setting and asked for copies of the September retreat minutes.

J. Barsaleau left to make those copies. General discussion continued concerning goals and goal setting. During these communications, Chair J. Rupert was informed by phone of a work related emergency and would have to leave the meeting. Motion made J. Rupert to table board goals, seconded by L. Donegan and carried unanimously.

b. CABA Board Member's Session

J. Barsaleau was directed to contact Nick Caruso from CABA to discuss dates to meet with the board. Members would prefer a Thursday evening.

With the chairperson having to depart the meeting, a motion was made by D. Wesson to address New Business item 7a as the next order of business. Motion seconded by L. Donegan and carried unanimously.

New Business

a. Approval of Ashford Educator Evaluation Plan

The board received the evaluation plan electronically prior to the meeting. Due to its size, 104 pages, Mr. Hopkins gave an overview of the document's content.

Motion made by K. Rourke to approve the plan entitled, Ashford School, Professional Learning and Evaluation Program 2014-2015, motion seconded by L. Donegan and carried unanimously.

Old Business

c. Revision to BOE Meeting Schedule for 2015

The schedule adopted at the last meeting conflicted with the Spring Concert scheduled for May 21, 2015. Motion made by D. Wesson to amend the adopted meeting calendar as follows: cancel the meeting scheduled for May 21st, and add the optional meeting date of April 30th to the calendar. Motion seconded by K. Rourke and carried unanimously.

b. FY 13-14 Audit

Audit was discussed earlier in the meeting. Deficiencies that were identified by the auditors in internal control will be addressed with a letter of response to the Chair of the Board of Finance.

Motion made by L. Donegan to add to the agenda discussion of actuary service. Motion seconded by D. Wesson and carried unanimously. The board is required under GASB 45 to have the service of an certified actuary in filing an audit related report known as OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits). We are currently due to file such a report. The finance office has reached out to several firms, but only one has responded thus far. L. SanDiego is directed to solicit more proposals for this service and report back to the board.

The Chair left the meeting (9:05 pm) and announced there would be no further business taken after his departure. Any remaining items of business are therefore tabled.

Next Regular Meeting Date/Agenda Items

The next regular meeting is scheduled for December 4th and will include a public budget input session prior to the start of the regular meeting. Other items are board goals, Superintendent Evaluation, CABE self-evaluation, budget, cafeteria report, and follow up on actuary service proposals.

FY 15-16 Budget

As the meeting effectively ended in terms of any business being conducted after the chairperson's departure; remaining members took the opportunity to review the FY 16 Superintendent's Proposed budget and narrative text.

By general consensus, all budget related dialogue concluded at 10:02 pm.

Recorded by:

Jennifer Barsaleau
Recording Secretary

Approved by the Ashford BOE:

Unapproved