

Ashford Board of Education
Meeting Minutes – December 3, 2020
7:00 pm
Meeting Held 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

Chair John Lippert called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

- Present were members Tina Fradette, Kim Kouatly, Jane Urban, Al Maccarone, Tess Grous, and Ex Officio/First Selectman Cathryn Silver-Smith. Marian Matthews was absent.
- Also present were Superintendent Dr. James Longo, Principal Troy Hopkins, Asst. Principal Polly Borysevicz, Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford, State Representative Tammy Nuccio, and Zoom meeting host Scott Waddell as well as approximately 15 other members of the school staff and the public.

Introduction of Ashford State Representative (Tammy Nuccio)

- Tammy Nuccio asked the board if there were any issues or ideas they would like her to focus on when they go back into legislation. She has to have any bill ideas in by the end of December.
- State Funding
 - Jane Urban is interested to see how the state can help schools in small towns. Every year they seem to get a little bit less from the state, and the burden shifts to the town. Jane mentioned specific concerns of help to maintain teaching staff and help to address some funding issues that have arisen related to COVID.
 - Tammy mentioned the reduction in ECS funding over the next 7 years, which will shift cost onto local residents. She believes there should be a base of funding for every child. She asked for a summary of COVID expenses, which Dr. Longo said he would provide.
 - Dr. Longo said, from his experience, there is real difference between how funding is dispersed between urban settings and small towns. He would like to see a greater value on education in rural settings.
 - Tess Grous asked how can we make up for household income decreasing because of the pandemic?
 - Al Maccarone said the funding issue is paramount for the small towns.
 - Cindy Ford said because of the small class sizes in Ashford, they have been able to be all in since September.
 - Tess Grous said there are a number of kids that are home schooled in Ashford. How can they be connected to kids in school? Is there any funding for them?
- Traffic/Signage
 - John Lippert would like better signage in front of the school, perhaps flashing lights during times of arrival and dismissal.
 - Dr. Longo said the Board of Selectman had petitioned the state for more signage, and it was rejected. Cathryn Silver-Smith said they had certainly tried and that the state made the decision not to.
 - Discussion about concerns included people driving too fast, blind curve, and bicycle riding to/from school with a potential for more in the future.
 - Carolyn Silver-Smith thinks flashing yellow light would be ideal. John Lippert, Jane Urban, and Tina Fradette agreed.
 - Tina Fradette said she is afraid there will be a serious incident with a school bus someday.
 - Dr. Longo said Southeast School in Mansfield (on same road) has blinking lights.
- Free/Reduced Lunch
 - John Lippert asked if the application for free and reduced lunch is a state or federal issue. It is up to the parents to apply for free and reduced lunch and sometimes they don't. He wondered if that could be taken out of the hands of the parents and just have it happen so they wouldn't have to apply for it.
- Mandates
 - Tammy would like input from the administrators on unfunded mandates and specifically what to push back on.
 - Cindy Ford said some of the mandates are K-12, and Ashford is only K-8. It would be good if there was some leeway for the K-8 districts.

- Tammy said her ultimate hope is to form a coalition of small towns to show how these mandates are detrimental. There is more power in numbers.
- Consolidation
 - Jane Urban said, two years ago or so, there seemed to be a lot of interest at the state level on consolidating school districts. She would not support that at all. The impact on the students gets lost in those conversations, one factor being potentially long bus rides.
 - Tammy said if regionalization comes up again, she will be back to ask our opinion on that.
 - John Lippert said there is a role for the state to play to help schools, not consolidate, but share.

Communications

- Tess Grous said the Zoom link was not live in her agenda packet. Jane Urban said it did not look like a hyperlink, but it was live for her. Scott Waddell will check it out next week.

Opportunity for Public Comment – No comments.

Approval of Minutes

- *MOTION by Al Maccarone to approve minutes from 10/29/2020 (special). Motion seconded by Tina Fradette and carried unanimously.*
- *MOTION by Kim Kouatly to approve minutes from 11/19/2020. Motion seconded by Jane Urban and carried unanimously.*

Committee Breakout Sessions (Building & Grounds; Finance)

- Marian Matthews was absent, so John Lippert took Marian's spot in Building & Grounds Committee for this meeting.
- John Lippert asked each committee to decide on one person to be the spokesperson of the committee, to help facilitate coordination with John.
- Building & Grounds Committee focused on long-term planning. Kim Kouatly will be spokesperson for that committee. Tina Fradette will be the spokesperson for the Cafeteria Committee. Troy will look into how the cafeteria salaries are being paid. Dr. Longo said funding has been promised by the state.
- Finance Committee – Jane Urban will be the spokesperson for Finance. Al Maccarone will be the spokesperson for Personnel. Tess Grous will be the spokesperson for Transportation. Finance Committee will meet next Thursday night after having a chance to look at the budget presentation template provided by Dr. Longo.

Old Business

a. BOE Roles and Responsibilities

- Jen Barsaleau asked if any board members wanted the \$35 CABA book, Becoming a Better Board Member. Please contact Jen if you do not have it and would like to have it.
- Bylaws were provided for review in this agenda and will be reviewed and discussed in future.
- Primary responsibility of the board is the improvement of student achievement. Dr. Longo said it is really important to get a broad view of what student achievement is, not just standardized tests. We have a high-achieving school and a lot of high-achieving students. Jane Urban thought maybe there could be some sort of student achievement highlight at the beginning of every meeting after call to order. It might be valuable to see test scores as well, perhaps twice a year. Troy Hopkins said there are students who would like to come to a board meeting in January to share poetry. Tess Grous would like to include kids who are distance learning and home schooled also when looking at student achievement. Kim Kouatly mentioned the creativity of teachers and how recently the 4th graders (both remote and in person students) made YouTube videos with facts about states. Maybe things like that could be shared with the board. Tess mentioned students coming in last school year to present on dress code and how impressive that was.
- Part 2 of Roles and Responsibilities will be discussed at the next meeting.
- Dr. Longo mentioned CABA webinar on Monday, 12/07/2020 at 11:00 a.m. – The Board's Role in Advocacy.
- Tess Grous said the board is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of its policies, so it is important to look to see what is in the bylaws when we consider the roles and responsibilities. She also mentioned the importance of hearing the concerns of the community as a whole, not just the community of Ashford School.

b. FY 21 Budget

- Dr. Longo said Jen Barsaleau puts the budget on every agenda now because of the time of year.
 - Cafeteria funding – Dr. Longo will do some research on that and talk with other superintendents. Jane Urban asked if this is a situation unique to Ashford School, where the cafeteria funds itself with sales. Tess Grous said there are some schools that use vendors for cafeteria service. Dr. Longo will ask superintendents if any of their schools are doing that.
 - Tess Grous asked if they could get more itemization for COVID expenses. Dr. Longo will get that.
- c. FY 22 Budget Planning
- Dr. Longo – They have had three administrative meetings and are working to put together options. The options have not been priced yet. The business office has promised that by early January.
 - Dr. Longo has had one meeting with parents with some concerns expressed about class size and request for a low budget because of times being tough.
 - If they were to get everything they wanted, as far as staff, they would replace math interventionist at middle school, add an additional health teacher so kids can have more PE, and the media specialist would go back to full time. In regard to technology, they would replace computers in the computer lab in the library (they are 9 years old), add computers to continue 1:1 program, and replace computers in business office. That would be \$160,000 in computers.
 - No specific dates from Board of Finance yet. They usually have to present to them late February/early March.
 - Jane Urban asked if teacher computer upgrades were included in that \$160,000 figure? Dr. Longo said no teacher should have a computer that is giving them trouble. If they are having trouble, they need to ask and Scott Waddell will repurpose one for them.

New Business

a. Administrative Resignation

- Dr. Longo will retire at the end of this school year.

MOTION by Jane Urban to accept Superintendent Dr. James Longo's retirement at the end of this school year.

Motion seconded by Kim Kouatly and carried unanimously.

- John Lippert said they need to designate themselves a Personnel Search Committee.

MOTION by Jane Urban to designate the entire board as a Personnel Search Committee. Motion seconded by Tess Grous and carried unanimously.

b. FFRCA/FMLA Certified Staff Leaves of Absence

- Dr. Longo said a few people are leaving under Families First Coronavirus Response Act. They have two now that have applied and a third pending. Dr. Longo was not sure if their names should be public. Troy Hopkins said they have two teachers who are planning on taking 12 weeks of leave. He has a retired teacher that will be able to substitute until Christmas and is working on a long-term substitute to start in the new year. One of the teachers taking leave has a fully remote class, and they are working on how to cover that internally. Jane Urban asked where the funding would come from for these substitutes. Dr. Longo said it would come from the substitute account. There is no special funding for FFRCA/FMLA right now. Jane Urban asked if a teacher decided to come back early, for example after 8 weeks instead of 12 weeks, would the substitute be able to file for unemployment. Dr. Longo said yes they could choose to do that. He said they could run out of substitute money before the end of the year, but they should be able to transfer from another line.
- FFRCA expires statewide on 12/31/2020, but there is a very good chance the governor will extend it. Kim Kouatly asked if 12-week leave started now, would it end on 12/31/2020. Dr. Longo said as it stands now, it would, but he feels like there will probably be an extension.

MOTION by Jane Urban to acknowledge the Board of Education's responsibility in Families First Coronavirus Response Act and Family Medical Leave Act and authorize Superintendent Dr. James Longo to approve requested leaves of absence that fall within those acts. Motion seconded by Kim Kouatly and carried unanimously.

c. Revisit/Re-approval of Existing Board of Education Bylaws

- This will be homework for John Lippert. Dr. Longo would like John to inquire with Shipman & Goodwin to see if they will update them.

Opportunity for Public Comment

- Al Maccarone received an email from a parent about specials for distance learners. Troy Hopkins said scheduling is very challenging. The priority is to give teachers a preparation period every day. They are continuing to try to figure out how to do that.

Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items

- Next meeting will be December 17th. The board will hear from the administration.
- Public comment on the budget.
- Brief highlight from administration relating to student achievement, something innovative that is happening in the school.
- Breakout session for Personnel Search Committee.
- Board of Education goals: Any ideas for goal updates can be emailed to Jen Barsaleau by 12/11/2020.

Jane Urban asked about upcoming three maternity leaves in the spring and if we are prepared for that? Troy Hopkins said they have advertised for those three leaves. There has been some interest in the counseling position, no interest in the science position, and little interest in the art position. He is optimistic that it is all going to work out. Dr. Longo said they subscribe to a service that provides lesson plans to art teachers.

Dr. Longo had a meeting on 12/02/2020 for public input regarding the Board of Education budget. He will be conducting meetings on Wednesday, 01/06/2020 and Wednesday, 01/20/2020 as well to give more opportunity for public input.

Adjournment

MOTION by Al Maccarone to adjourn the meeting (10:00 p.m.). Motion seconded by Tess Grous and carried unanimously.

Sara Wilson
Recording Secretary

Passcode: 740934

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/k1Vmj3NX>

Ashford School District
Ashford Board of Education - 2021 Meeting Schedule

Unless otherwise posted, all meetings will be held via Zoom and/or the Library Media Center at Ashford School. The board reserves the right to schedule subcommittee meetings as a part of their regular meeting agendas. The regular meeting schedule is as follows:

January

January 7, 2021
January 21, 2021

February

February 4, 2021
February 18, 2021

March

March 4, 2021
March 18, 2021

April

April 1, 2021
April 15, 2021

May

May 6, 2021
May 20, 2021

June

June 3, 2021
June 17, 2021

July

July 15, 2021

August

August 19, 2021

September

September 2, 2021
September 16, 2021

October

October 7, 2021
October 21, 2021

November

November 4, 2021
November 18, 2021

December

December 2, 2021
December 16, 2021

Ashford Board of Education
Special Meeting Minutes – October 29, 2020
7:00 pm
Meeting Held Via Zoom

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Call to Order

- Chair John Lippert called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.
- Present were members Marian Matthews, Tess Grous, Tina Fradette, Kim Kouatly, Al Maccarone, and Jane Urban.
- Also present were Superintendent Dr. James Longo, Principal Troy Hopkins, Asst. Principal Polly Borysevicz, Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford, Ex Officio/First Selectman Cathryn Silver-Smith, Atty. Anne Littlefield, Zoom meeting host Scott Waddell as well as approximately 15 other members of the school staff and the public.
- Tess Grous asked Cathryn Silver-Smith for definition of ex officio. Cathryn said ex officio is a nonvoting member of a board. As First Selectman, she is Ex Officio on all town boards.
- John Lippert stated he wanted the discussion and criticisms of his performance to be in open session, rather than executive session. He also said whatever happens during this meeting, the board members will need to continue to work together. He asked Marian Matthews to facilitate the meeting.

Discussion Concerning Written Attorney Client Privileged Memorandum (legal advice regarding procedures for discussion of board member performance)

- Atty. Anne Littlefield said FOIA permits the board to go into executive session to discuss the document that reflects attorney client privilege and receive legal advice.
- ***MOTION by Jane Urban to enter executive session to discuss written attorney client privileged memorandum and invite Atty. Anne Littlefield to join. Motion seconded by Al Maccarone. Motion carried unanimously at 7:17 p.m.***
- The board and Atty. Anne Littlefield exited executive session at 7:54 p.m.

Discussion Concerning Performance of Board Chair

- Tess Grous shared her concerns about John Lippert's leadership performance in regard to voting in their new board member (Kim Kouatly) as well as conflict of interest.
- Marian Matthews said those concerns have been met and asked Tess Grous, "What is the issue now?"
- Tess Grous stated she feels like there is a pattern of things going wrong. They voted on the new member in executive session and not publicly. She mentioned a conflict of interest, with Kim Kouatly being seen with a class at Ashford School. She stated John Lippert did not communicate all the information that could have been given regarding what Kim was doing at the school (substitute, volunteer, or student teacher?).
- Jane Urban said they took a tally in executive session to gauge interest and acknowledged they did fail to make a motion outside of executive session to appoint Kim Kouatly. She stated every board member was there, that it was not all on John Lippert's shoulders. She mentioned Atty. Anne Littlefield saying, in regard to the mistake during the emergency meeting, the worst-case scenario would be a letter in the board's file since it was not done intentionally or maliciously. Jane said we keep rehashing this one mistake and questioned devoting so much time and energy to it. She said board members should be team members, working harmoniously. She stated she fully supports John and trusts his decision-making ability.
- Al Maccarone said John Lippert is a man of integrity and that he may make a mistake, but there is no malice.
- Kim Kouatly explained her presence at the school. She was a student doing an observation, which ended on 10/20/20. She was not paid. She has modified her student teaching application so that it does not include Ashford School. We learn from mistakes and move forward. We are here with the same goal, here for the kids, the school, and the town.
- Tina Fradette said it is sad that it has come to this and expressed her disappointment. She understands the concerns Tess Grous has. Kim Kouatly could have told the board prior. She said she is on the fence about the leadership of John Lippert and said they need more communication.
- Al Maccarone stated he does not understand the conflict of interest.

- John Lippert said Kim Kouatly described the situation prior to the call to order at the 09/03/20 meeting. On 09/30/20, when John was at the school with Sara Wilson, Jen Barsaleau mentioned something about Kim student teaching. The lawyer said student teaching does not violate the statutes but would not be recommended. John said he failed to follow up with Jen to clarify what Kim was doing and he failed to present the information to the board.
- Tess Grous stated that she values John Lippert, but there have been mistakes along the way. She wants the attorney to train them on board procedures. She expressed frustration in John as the leader in charge of communication. She is bringing her concerns forward and made the request for John to either resign from his position or get proper training. She said the board needs to move forward as a unit.
- Jane Urban mentioned the letters received by the board in support of John Lippert, one from Ashford Education Association and one from Jen Lindsay.
- Cathryn Silver-Smith stated she was Chair on the Board of Finance for 18 years and that it is a lonely place at the top. She said every member is accountable, not just the chair. She commended Tess Grous for trying to ensure proper procedure is followed. She said it would have been better for Kim Kouatly to mention her observation at the school during the formal meeting. She said the chair is a facilitator. She expressed support for John Lippert and said not once has she seen him get ruffled or riled. She encouraged the board members to get CAFE training, to look at procedures, and to be open to hearing from each other.
- Marian Matthews said she has attended CAFE trainings and a conference, which were very helpful. She said John Lippert has tried to address the issues.

Discussion and Possible Action Concerning Performance of Board Chair

- Tess Grous suggested that John Lippert stay chair and go through training as well as all of the board members. She said there was no malicious intent but rather a lack of knowledge.
- Jane Urban said we are heading into budget season and perhaps we could review and discuss one section of bylaws in each meeting.
- Kim Kouatly said she does not have the book. Marian Matthews will make sure she gets one.
- ***MOTION by Tess Grous that Chair John Lippert and entire board as a whole review and discuss as a board the rules and responsibilities presented at this special meeting (10/29/20) beginning no later than 11/19/20 board meeting. Motion seconded by Al Maccarone. Motion carried with one abstention (J. Lippert).***

Adjournment

MOTION by Al Maccarone to adjourn the meeting (8:42 p.m.). Motion seconded by Jane Urban and carried unanimously.

Sara Wilson
Recording Secretary

Ashford Board of Education
Meeting Minutes – November 19, 2020
7:00 pm
Meeting Held Via Zoom

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Call to Order

- Chair John Lippert called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.
- Present were members Marian Matthews, Tina Fradette, Kim Kouatly, Jane Urban, and Al Maccarone. Tess Grous joined the meeting at 7:05 p.m.
- Also present were Superintendent Dr. James Longo, Principal Troy Hopkins, Asst. Principal Polly Borysevicz, Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford, Business Manager Martha Guidry, and Zoom meeting host Scott Waddell, as well as approximately 15 other members of the school staff and the public.

Superintendent Evaluation and Negotiations

- ***MOTION by Marian Matthews to enter executive session for the purpose of superintendent evaluation and negotiations and invite Superintendent Dr. James Longo to join them. Motion seconded by Jane Urban. Motion carried unanimously at 7:04 p.m.***

The board exited executive session at 8:18 p.m. No action was taken. They did come to an agreement between superintendent and BOE that Dr. Longo will retire at the end of this school year.

Communications

- Tess Grous mentioned board members received communication from Tammy Nuccio, new state representative for 53rd district, wanting an opportunity to formally introduce herself. John Lippert would like to address traffic signs again with state government and encouraged board members to think about what they might want to discuss with her. Marian Matthews said it would behoove them to look at CABA legislative priorities and hear from the school about what they are interested in. John will respond on behalf of the board and invite Tammy Nuccio to either one of the December board meetings.

Opportunity for Public Comment – No comments.

Approval of Minutes

- Minutes from special meeting of 10/29/20 will be addressed later, to provide Tess Grous with more time to review the recording.
- ***MOTION by Marian Matthews to approve minutes from 11/5/20. Motion seconded by Tina Fradette.*** Kim Kouatly mentioned a motion Al Maccarone had made to table the minutes from 10/29/20 special meeting. That motion was withdrawn. ***Motion carried unanimously.***

Administrative Reports

Superintendent Dr. James Longo

- Marian Matthews asked about the pavilion suggestion. Dr. Longo said the pavilion on the town property is the same size but with a more elaborate roof. It would be a roof set over a concrete base. It would be nicer than a tent because the tent keeps blowing down. He thinks they have the money to do it if they could get volunteers to do the work.
- John Lippert wanted to amplify the Zoom meetings for public to get in on the discussions about the budget early on – first opportunity will be Wednesday, 12/2/20 at 7 p.m.
- Jane Urban said she does not love the format that the board has been using to present the budget to the Board of Finance. Dr. Longo has a template of it that he can send them. The Finance Committee will look at that.
- Marian Matthews asked if they have received information about fast COVID-19 tests. Dr. Longo said they are only 56% accurate. The best one, PCR test, takes 3 or 4 days to get the answer.
- Marian Matthews asked if there have been any positive tests at school. Dr. Longo said no.

- Al Maccarone asked, given that positivity rate is up to 6% in the state, are we prepared for a shutdown where every child is distance learning? Dr. Longo said they are prepared if it has to happen. He said the positivity rate in the schools is only 0.2%.
- Jane Urban asked about the rumor the governor would shutdown schools for 2 weeks after Thanksgiving. Dr. Longo said the governor got so much backlash, he decided not to bring it up again. Jane appreciated the information sent out about state requirements. Dr. Longo will send that information out again on K12.
- Tess Grous has been speaking with Melissa McDonough. There are different agencies that will provide Thanksgiving dinners for families that are in need. Dr. Longo will talk to Melissa McDonough and see if that information could be put in K12.
- John Lippert wanted to confirm that lunches are not being delivered anymore. Dr. Longo said if there is an emergency they will work it out somehow, but the drivers are driving kids now.
- Dr. Longo thanked the board and the Ashford community. He announced his retirement now because it is a big process for the board to find a replacement.

Business Manager Martha Guidry

- There is one family that does not have transportation for lunch. She is working with Karen on that.
- She wants to be in the loop on potential changes to budget presentation.
- She put together budget projections for FY 20/21. They have a little margin but need to be very prudent in terms of staying within the budget.
- She sent out transfer recommendations.
- They are struggling to get systems and processes in place. They need some technology upgrades. Their systems, security, and back up are inadequate.
- Jane Urban thought they had purchased a nice laptop for the prior business manager. Scott Waddell is reformatting it.
- John Lippert asked about delaying the payroll conversion. Martha said she talked with Dr. Longo, and they have decided that it will be delayed. They need to get themselves up to speed on tax tables and tax laws.
- Jane Urban said years ago they received quarterly financial reports, similar to budget transfers, and asked if there is a projected timeline for when that can be reinstated. Martha said it is a very manual process currently until they move over to the new financial system.
- Marian Matthews asked about the cafeteria fund potential liability. With the USDA free lunch program, they are not generating revenue to be self-sustaining. They are waiting to see what funding they get back from the government. John Lippert asked if they are expecting grants from the state to balance this out. Martha said even though they have been promised funds, they do not know when they will come and if it will be in this fiscal year.
- Jane Urban asked if the USDA program is not enough to cover their salaries. Martha said what they are getting quarterly is really just covering food supplies. It is a net outflow. Tess Grous asked if all schools were experiencing this. Martha has talked with other business managers, and they are experiencing the same thing.
- Pavilion money will not be coming from BOE budget.
- John Lippert asked about the timeline and if the 2/19/21 date for budget presented to Board of Finance was a set date. Martha said that is their date.
- Tess Grous and John Lippert expressed thankfulness to hear from the Business Manager.
- Jane Urban asked if custodial clothing allowance was COVID related. Martha said it was a contractual obligation not budgeted for originally.
- Tess Grous asked about free lunches and if there would be a time when we have to make the hard decision to not offer them? Dr. Longo believes they are state mandated. He said he would inquire.

MOTION by Kim Kouatly to add item 8c to the agenda to discuss transfers from the business office. Motion seconded by Al Maccarone and carried unanimously.

Principal Troy Hopkins

- Teachers are still working extremely hard. There have been 30 students return from the beginning of the year to be in-person students. They are working out some interventions for at-home students who are struggling.
- They have a German teaching assistant, Inga Heydekorn, who is staying with a host family in Ashford. Teaching assistant from Egypt did not happen.

- They are working out details for the third specials rotation.
- Artists in Residence grant: Chuck and Mira Costa worked with second grade classes to create songs. A completely remote class still participated in that. Marian Matthews said the songs were beautiful and she was interested in knowing how that happened. Troy said the artists brainstormed with the kids, then tried to come up with phrases to put in the songs, and then added the music in. They were gifted at getting the kids to collaborate as a group. Marian would love to hear the kids singing the song. Troy said there is a theater group working with grade 4 now.
- Veterans Day Video: John Lippert said the video was beautiful and touching. Jane Urban said thank you for the video.
- Jane Urban asked Troy about his impression of staff morale. He said it's a mix. Not everybody feels the same way. Overall, people have gotten more used to what they are doing, but it's still zapping a lot of energy. They know they could sometimes make it easier for themselves, but they don't because they know what's best for the kids. Jane said finding substitutes is a real challenge and are we doing something to proactively look for that? She also said she is nervous about more kids coming back into the school and asked how that is being handled. Troy said they are asking other staff and paras to cover for teachers. They do have a couple of dedicated substitute teachers. They haven't tried to recruit additional subs. So far, they've been able to manage it.
- Kim Kouatly gave a shout out to the administration and teachers. She said the kids are coming home smiling.
- Marian Matthews asked how the board could show their appreciation. Troy said positive comments are really helpful. He also thought a letter would be meaningful.
- Tess Grous asked if we need to start looking for more substitutes. Troy said they could reach out to past substitutes or reach out to new people. He said there are emergency certifications people can get this year. They want to make sure substitutes are committed to our school (not subbing for other schools) and responsible in their personal lives.
- Martha Guidry's husband is the principal at Ellington. They had 9 teachers out at once in 14-day quarantine.

Assistant Principal Polly Borysevicz

- John Lippert asked what would prompt a restorative circle. Polly said this is mainly for a reoccurring conflict with students in a classroom. Usually they don't have to do it more than once.
- Marian Matthews asked if disengaged students have all been contacted. Polly said they started with 7th and 8th grade. They were given an opportunity to come into the media center one day a week. Three families are doing that, and it is going very well. They then opened it up to the entire school. Certified letters were sent out to K-6 families whose students seem to be disengaged, somewhere between 12 and 16 letters. They are offering a 10-day homework program between 3:30 and 5:30 p.m. for students to come in who need support. They have 5 students as of now. Some have decided to transition to in-person school.
- Jane Urban asked how the space will work out. They will be using classrooms after school, making sure they are disinfected before those students come in.

Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford

- Cindy said she is sorry to hear of Dr. Longo retiring in June.
- John Lippert asked if she had any concerns about the number of distance learners. Cindy said there is a strong partnership between families and the school. She would prefer all kids in because she thinks that is the best, but in this circumstance the students that are home have remained home for good reasons.
- Cindy presented a PowerPoint presentation on therapy dogs.
 - John Lippert asked if we had done this in the past. Cindy said last year a dog would come into the front office with a schedule set up for kids to come in and see the dog.
 - Jane Urban asked if there would be a cost associated with this. Cindy said there would be no cost for the Board of Education. The handlers would be volunteers and provide their own liability insurance.
 - John Lippert asked board members to look through the draft policy before the second December meeting.
 - Marian Matthews asked if we need to incur the cost of an attorney to look over the policy. John Lippert will look into that.
 - Tess Grous is thrilled about this, especially given all that the kids are going through this year. Cindy said there aren't any organizations going into schools right now.

Old Business – None.

New Business

a. Approval of 2021 BOE Meeting Schedule

- **MOTION by Al Maccarone to adopt the BOE meeting schedule as presented with deletion of April 29 meeting. Motion seconded by Kim Kouatly and carried unanimously.**

b. BOE Roles and Responsibilities

- Most of the board attended Monday's webinar regarding board rules and responsibilities.
- Jane Urban liked the idea of a consent agenda where they could save time approving several things at once.
- Marian Matthews liked the reminder that their work should be focused on teaching and learning, not the small stuff.
- Al Maccarone has found the Becoming a Better Board Member NSBA book helpful.
- Kim Kouatly said she feels it is important to hone in policies.
- Marian Matthews said they should do a board self evaluation. Jane Urban and John Lippert agreed. Marian thinks they should try to do it on their own the first year. Martha Guidry said she would be happy to head that up.
- Jane Urban loved how they said student achievement should be a regular item on the board agenda. She would like to hear more about that on a regular basis.
- John Lippert said if students ever need an opportunity to present something, the board would be open to it.
- Marian Matthews mentioned Eisenhower Matrix being important.
- John Lippert asked board members to review the first section in the book, through page 10, so that they can discuss it during 12/3/20 meeting.

c. Approve Budget Transfers

- **MOTION by Marian Matthews to approve the budget transfers. Motion seconded by Jane Urban and carried unanimously.**

Opportunity for Public Comment

- Jennifer Leszczynski – What is the plan for social distancing if they have more kids coming into school? Any hybrid plan? Dr. Longo said they will maintain their current status as long as they can socially distance. They will have to make adjustments if class numbers get too big. They don't have any firm plans at this point because it doesn't seem likely. They would first attempt to find a way to split the classes. They may consider removing furniture to make more room. They could have one-third of every class always in a special. They will find solutions.
- Tess Grous – How are the paraprofessionals doing? Dr. Longo said their schedules are pretty much the same as they've always been.
- John Lippert asked if there is a large group wishing to return at the end of this trimester. Troy Hopkins said they don't anticipate a mad rush to come back.

Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items

- Regular meeting 12/3/20 with committee breakout time.
- Board rules and responsibilities.
- For second December meeting, administration could talk about how teacher evaluations work. Dr. Longo will get the evaluation form.
- John Lippert will offer Tammy Nuccio either December meeting to present.

Adjournment

MOTION by Jane Urban to adjourn the meeting (10:13 p.m.). Motion seconded by Al Maccarone and carried unanimously.

Sara Wilson
Recording Secretary

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School Web site: www.ashfordct.org

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November 15, 2020

Dear Ashford Board of Education Members;

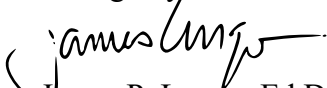
After careful consideration, and with mixed feelings, I have decided to retire at the end of my current contract, effective July 1, 2021. I have been the superintendent in Ashford since January 2009, and have enjoyed the twelve years that I have been leading the Ashford School District. This year I will have completed fifty years in education. It has been an exciting and interesting career, during which I have been observed and been part of many changes, as well as the positive evolution of the field.

I am proud of the things that were accomplished over the past twelve years, and will miss my colleagues and friends. However, I am ready to retire, and look forward to the future, both for myself and for the next phase of action at Ashford School.

Thank you for these many years of working as a team, but most of all, let us spend the remaining time that we have together setting the stage for the next administration. I am announcing my retirement at this time to give the Board of Education time to develop its goals, search for, and find, a suitable candidate to carry on the leadership of Ashford School.

I will be working diligently until my contract ends, and remain here to lead, assist, and support whenever needed.

Collegially,


James P. Longo, Ed.D

9000 Series - Bylaws of the Ashford Board of Education

Bylaw	Adopted
Code of Conduct for Board Members	01/16/2014
Committees	01/16/2014
Conflict of Interest	01/16/2014
Construction and Posting of Agenda	01/16/2014
Filling Vacancies on the Board	01/16/2014
Formulation, Adoption, Amendment or Deletion of Bylaws	01/16/2014
Formulation, Adoption, Amendment or Deletion of Policies	01/16/2014
Formulation, Adoption, Amendment or Deletion of Administrative Regulations	01/16/2014
Meeting Conduct	01/16/2014
Minutes	01/16/2014
Oath of Office	01/16/2014
Officers	01/16/2014
Official Duties – Chairperson	01/16/2014
Official Duties – Secretary	01/16/2014
Official Duties - Vice Chairperson	01/16/2014
Public Meetings and Executive Session	01/16/2014
Quorum and Voting Procedures	01/16/2014
Reimbursement of Board Members' Expenses	01/16/2014
Removal of Board Officers	01/16/2014
Role of Board and Members	01/16/2014
Suspension of Policies, Bylaws or Administrative Regulations	01/16/2014
Time, Place and Notice of Meetings	01/16/2014
Transaction of Business	01/16/2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
Bylaws

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR BOARD MEMBERS

It is the policy of the Ashford Board of Education that a member of the Board will:

1. adhere to all Board policies, rules and regulations;
2. conduct himself or herself in a fair and impartial manner;
3. refrain from interfering with the implementation of a Board policy decision by the administration;
4. refrain from interfering with the duties of any school district official; and
5. refrain from divulging to anyone any aspect of matters considered and discussed in executive session.

Each member of the Board shall act in complete accordance with the provisions and tenor of this policy. Should any member of the Board fail to so act, such failure shall constitute cause for censure or other such action as deemed appropriate by the Board.

Procedures for Censure:

Prior to any vote to censure a Board member for cause:

- 1) The Board may review the performance and/or conduct of the Board member in open or executive session (as determined by the Board and the Board member) prior to taking any formal action;
- 2) If the Board determines that formal action is necessary, the Board member shall be provided with reasonable notice of the Board's intent to consider possible censure (such notice to be given in writing after being authorized by Board vote at a prior meeting of the Board);
- 3) A vote to censure a Board member shall only take place at a regular meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose;
- 4) Such censure may be enacted for cause by a majority vote of all Board members.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes
10-220 Duties of boards of education.

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education:

January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
Bylaws

COMMITTEES

1. The Board shall act as a committee of the whole on all matters coming before it except that special committees for the consideration or investigation of certain problems, or for the performance of certain Board functions, may be created by vote of the Board.
 - A. Such special committees shall submit their reports at such regular meetings of the Board as may be determined, and when such reports have been submitted and accepted by the Board, shall be discharged.
 - B. All special committee reports affecting Board policy shall be submitted in writing.
 - C. A special committee's only authority is to make recommendations to the Board regarding matters that have been referred to it, unless the Board specifically authorizes otherwise.
2. Meetings of committees shall be posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. A record shall be maintained by the chairperson of each committee of each meeting, which shall include the names of committee members in attendance, listing of topics discussed and committee recommendations.
3. The Superintendent shall notify all Board members of committee meetings.

Legal Reference

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-218 Officers. Meetings.

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

**Series 9000
Bylaws**

CONSTRUCTION AND POSTING OF AGENDA

1. Construction of Agenda
 - A. The Superintendent in cooperation with the Chairperson of the Board of Education shall prepare an agenda for each meeting.
 - B. In addition to those items listed by the Chairperson of the Board, any member of the Board may contact the Chairperson or the Superintendent and request that an item be placed on the agenda.
 - C. Town residents and/or taxpayers may request that the Board place an item on the agenda of a regular meeting. To do so they must:
 - 1) Make their request in writing to the Secretary of the Board, with a copy of the request to the Superintendent of Schools.
 - 2) The Secretary of the Board will present the written request to the Board at its next regular meeting.
 - 3) If at least three Board of Education members agree to the additional agenda item, it will be placed on an agenda for a future regular meeting of the Board of Education.
 - 4) The Board of Education will decide at which future regular meeting date the item will appear on the agenda.
2. Posting of Agenda
 - A. At least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the time of the regular or special meeting, an agenda will be constructed and posted by the Superintendent of Schools for the Board of Education.
 - B. An agenda will be posted at Town Hall and the Administrative Offices of the Board of Education.
 - C. The Board may add items to the agenda of any regular meeting by a two-thirds vote of those Board Members present and voting.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes

- 1-225 Meetings of government agencies to be public.
Recording of votes. Schedule and agenda of meetings to be filed. Notice of special meetings.
Executive sessions.

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
Bylaws

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

1. No member of the Board of Education shall be employed by the Board in any position within the school system.
2. If any member of the Board is employed contrary to the provisions of this bylaw, the office to which he or she was elected or appointed shall become vacant.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes

10-232 Restrictions on employment of members
of the Board of Education

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
Bylaws

FILLING VACANCIES ON THE BOARD

1. If a vacancy occurs on the Board of Education, the remaining members of the Board shall fill such vacancy at a meeting or a special meeting convened for that purpose.
2. A member resigning from the Board of Education should present or have presented, a letter of resignation to the Board of Education at a regular meeting.
3. Having accepted a letter of resignation, or having become aware of a vacancy created by means other than the resignation of a Board member, the Board of Education will schedule the election of a replacement at the next regular Board meeting or at a special meeting convened for such purpose.
4. Said election, made by the majority of the Board, shall be in effect until the next regular Town election, at which a successor shall be elected for the unexpired portion of the term. The official ballot shall specify the vacancy to be filled.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes
10-219 Vacancy

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
Bylaws

FORMULATION, ADOPTION, AMENDMENT OR DELETION OF BYLAWS

Bylaw proposals and suggested amendments to, revisions of, or deletions of existing bylaws shall normally be submitted to all members of the Board of Education by the Superintendent in writing prior to a regular Board of Education meeting in which such proposed bylaws, amendments, revisions or deletions thereof shall be read and discussed.

Except for emergency situations, bylaws will be adopted, amended, or deleted after consideration at two regular meetings of the Board of Education. The agenda shall be marked to indicate such matters.

When a bylaw is placed on the agenda for the second consecutive meeting, a motion either to adopt or not to adopt the policy or the proposed bylaw changes is necessary for discussion. If the discussion results in a suggestion for change, such changes will be included in the second reading of the bylaw prior to adoption.

Any bylaw of the Board may be adopted, amended or deleted at any regular meeting by a majority vote of all members of the Board, provided that such proposal shall have been given to the Board at the previous regular meeting.

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
Bylaws

FORMULATION, ADOPTION, AMENDMENT OR DELETION OF POLICIES

1. In the absence of any written policy, administrative regulations will be used to guide and administer the effective operation of the school district.
2. Suggestions for either new policies or policy changes would normally come to the Board of Education from any of the following:
 - A. Board of Education Members
 - B. Superintendent
 - C. Statute
 - D. Matters of law
 - E. Citizens
 - F. Students.
3. The Superintendent will prepare a draft policy statement for consideration and for the development by the Board of Education.
4. Policy proposals and suggested amendments to, revisions of, or deletions of existing policies shall normally be submitted to all members of the Board of Education by the Superintendent in writing prior to a regular Board of Education meeting in which such proposed policies, amendments, revisions or deletions thereof shall be read and discussed.
5. Policies that deal with matters of an emergency nature may be introduced at any regular or special Board meeting.
6. Policies that affect students shall become effective at the beginning of the next school year following adoption unless the policy provides otherwise.
7. Except for emergency situations, policies will be adopted, amended, or deleted after consideration at two regular meetings of the Board of Education. The agenda shall be marked to indicate such policy matters.
8. When a policy is placed on the agenda for the second consecutive meeting, a motion either to adopt or not to adopt the policy or the proposed policy changes is necessary for discussion. If the discussion results in a suggestion for change, such changes will be included in the second reading of the policy prior to adoption.

9. The formal adoption or deletion of policies and the adoption of policy changes shall be by majority vote of all members of the Board, and the action shall be recorded in the minutes of the Board.
10. Only those written statements so adopted as policy and so recorded shall be regarded as official policy of the Board.

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
Bylaws

**FORMULATION, ADOPTION, AMENDMENT OR DELETION
OF ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS**

1. The Superintendent is responsible for the formulation, adoption, amendment and deletion of administrative regulations to implement the policies of the Board.
2. The Superintendent shall bring to the attention of the Board all new, revised or deleted administrative regulations.
3. The Board reserves the right to review and direct revisions or deletions of administrative regulations should they, in the Board's judgment, be inconsistent with the policies of the Board. If the Board directs the Superintendent to adopt, amend, or delete administrative regulations, it shall do so upon majority vote of all members in attendance at a meeting, provided that prior notification of such proposed revision has been described in writing in the call of the meeting, or upon majority vote of all members of the Board when no such written notice has been given.

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education:

January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
Bylaws

MEETING CONDUCT

1. Meeting Conduct
 - A. Meetings of the Board of Education shall be conducted by the Chairperson in a manner consistent with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act and the adopted bylaws of the Board.
 - B. All Board meetings shall commence at, or as close as practicable to, the stated time, provided there is a quorum.
 - C. All regular and special Board meetings shall be guided by an agenda which will have been prepared and delivered in advance to all Board members and other designated persons.
 - D. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the proceedings of the Board except as otherwise provided by these bylaws.

2. Smoking
 - A. Smoking will not be permitted in any room in which a meeting of the Board of Education is being conducted, nor during the time immediately prior to the meeting.
 - B. A sign notifying the public that no smoking is allowed in the place designated for the meeting will be prominently posted.

3. Procedures for Telephonic Participation
 - A. Board members may participate in meetings telephonically under the conditions set forth herein. When such conditions are met, any Board member participating telephonically shall be counted for the purpose of constituting a quorum. Conditions for participation are as follows:
 1. The facility that is made available to the public that wishes to attend the meeting must be located where the greatest number of Board of Education members are located;
 2. Any physical or demonstrable material that is used in the course of the proceedings must be present in the place where the public is located; and

3. All those in attendance at the meeting, at whatever location, must be able to hear and identify all participants in the proceeding, including their individual remarks and votes.
 - B. When a Board member is participating in a meeting telephonically, the Chairperson shall take the necessary steps to ensure that the three conditions enumerated above are met. In addition, the Chairperson shall take the necessary steps to ensure that a Board member participating telephonically has adequate opportunity to express himself/herself in Board discussion, including the opportunity to take the floor and make motions.
4. Public Address
- A. The Board may permit any individual or group to address the Board concerning any subject that lies within its jurisdiction during a portion of the Board's regular meetings so designated for such purpose.
 - (1) Five (5) minutes may be allotted to each speaker and a maximum of twenty (20) minutes to each subject matter. The Board may modify these limitations at the beginning of a meeting if the number of persons wishing to speak makes it advisable to do so.
 - (2) A Board of Education member shall be appointed by the Chairperson prior to the meeting to act as timekeeper for the meeting, if deemed necessary by the Chairperson.
 - (3) No boisterous conduct shall be permitted at any Board of Education meeting. Persistence in boisterous conduct shall be grounds for summary termination, by the Chairperson, of that person's privilege of address.
 - (4) All speakers must identify themselves by name and address.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 1-200 | Definitions |
| 1-206 | Denial of access of public records or meeting. Notice. Appeal. |
| 1-225 | Meetings of government agencies to be public. |
| 1-232 | Conduct of meetings. (re: disturbances) |

Freedom of Information Commission Advisory Opinion #41 (April 9, 1980)

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
Bylaws

MINUTES

1. In compliance with legal requirements, a complete and accurate set of minutes of each meeting shall be kept.
2. Minutes shall be maintained at the Administrative Offices of the school district in an official record book designated for said purpose.
3. The minutes shall constitute the official records of proceedings of the Board of Education and shall be open to public inspection at all reasonable times.
4. The minutes shall include the following:
 - A. The time, place and date of each meeting.
 - B. The names of those members in attendance.
 - C. The disposition of all matters on which action was recommended.
 - D. All motions and resolutions and their disposition, listing all votes, abstentions and absentees.
 - E. All decisions concerning future meetings and agendas.
 - F. By request, a brief statement of a Board member may be included.
5. A record of votes taken at each meeting shall be reduced to writing and made available for public inspection within forty-eight hours of the conclusion of the meeting at which the votes were taken. Votes taken shall also be reflected in the minutes of each meeting, and the minutes shall be made available for public inspection and posted on the Board's website, if available, not later than seven days of the date of the meeting to which they refer.

Effective October 1, 2010, the Board of Education may make minutes available on the Board's website, in its discretion.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes

- 1-225 Meetings of government agencies to be public.
Recording of votes.

Public Act 10-171, An Act Concerning Municipal Mandate Relief

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
Bylaws

OATH OF OFFICE

Members of the Board of Education shall, before entering upon their official duties, take the oath of office provided in Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-25.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes
10-218a Oath of Office

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
Bylaws

OFFICERS

1. The Board shall, not later than one month after the date on which newly elected members take office, elect from its own members a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and a Secretary.
2. If such officers are not chosen after one month from the date on which newly elected members take office because of a tie vote of the members, the town council, or, if there is no town council, the selectmen of the town shall choose such officers from the membership of the board.
3. Officers shall hold their respective offices for two (2) years, and until their successors are duly elected.
4. Should a vacancy arise in an office of the Board during the term of a Board officer's service, the members of the Board (including, if applicable, the member vacating a Board office) shall elect a successor to fill the office until the next regular election for Board officers.
5. The votes of each member cast in such election shall be reduced to writing and made available for public inspection within forty-eight hours, excluding Saturday, Sunday, or legal holidays, and shall also be recorded in the minutes of such meeting at which taken, which minutes shall be available for inspection at all reasonable times.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes
10-218 Officers. Meetings.

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
Bylaws

OFFICIAL DUTIES - CHAIRPERSON

1. The Chairperson shall preside at all of the meetings of the Board.
2. The Chairperson shall serve as the Board's spokesperson.
3. The Chairperson shall appoint the chair and members of all special committees.
4. The Chairperson shall serve as ex officio member on all committees.
5. The Chairperson shall act as the Board's representative for the purposes of consultation with Board legal counsel when appropriate, and may authorize other Board members to consult with Board counsel when appropriate.
6. The Chairperson shall perform such other duties as may be delegated to him/her by the Board.

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
Bylaws

OFFICIAL DUTIES - SECRETARY

1. The Secretary of the Board shall keep minutes or cause minutes to be kept of all meetings of the Board, and shall cause copies of such minutes to be forwarded to each member of the Board.
2. In accordance with the General Statutes, the Board Secretary shall cause a copy of the minutes of all Board meetings to be placed on file in the Board Office and posted on the Board's website, if available, no later than seven (7) days after the date on which the Board shall have met. Such minutes will be available for public inspection, except that such minutes will not be termed "official minutes" until approved by the Board of Education at a duly convened meeting of the Board.
3. The Board Secretary shall also make provision that members of the Board are notified of all regular and special meetings.
4. The Board Secretary shall attend to the official correspondence of the Board.
5. The Board Secretary shall submit to the Town at its annual meetings a report of the doings of the Board.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 1-225 | Meetings of government agencies to be public. Recording of votes. Schedule and agenda of meetings to be filed. Notice of special meetings. Executive sessions. |
| 7-3 | Warning of Town and other meetings |
| 7-4 | Record of warning |
| 10-224 | Duties of the Secretary |
| 10-225 | Salaries of Secretary and attendance officers |

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

Series 9000
Bylaws

OFFICIAL DUTIES – VICE CHAIRPERSON

In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson shall assume and carry out the duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson.

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

Series 9000
Bylaws

PUBLIC MEETINGS AND EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. Public Meetings

- A. All meetings of the Board of Education for the official transaction of business shall be open to the public except that the Board may, by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting, meet in executive session for the purposes specified in Conn. Gen. Stat. §1-225.
- B. As defined by statute, the term "meeting" shall not include: any meeting of a personnel search committee for executive level employment candidates; any chance meeting, or a social meeting neither planned nor intended for the purpose of discussing matters relating to official business; strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining; a caucus of members of a single political party notwithstanding that such members also constitute a quorum of a public agency; an administrative or staff meeting of a single-member public agency; and communication limited to notice of meetings of any public agency or the agendas thereof. The term "caucus" means a convening or assembly of the enrolled members of a single political party who are members of a public agency within the state or a political subdivision.

2. Executive Sessions

- A. The public may be excluded from meetings of the Board of Education which are declared to be executive sessions.
- B. Executive sessions may be held on a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting taken at a public meeting stating the reasons for such executive session. Executive sessions may be held for any reasons permissible under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, as it may be amended from time to time, including one or more of the following purposes:
 - (1) Discussion concerning the appointment, employment, performance, evaluation, health or dismissal of a public officer or employee, provided that such individual may require that discussion be held at an open (public) meeting.

- (2) Strategy and negotiations with respect to pending claims and litigation to which the Board or a member of the Board, because of his or her conduct as a member of the Board, is a party until such claims or litigation have been finally adjudicated or otherwise settled.
- (3) Matters concerning security strategy or the deployment of security personnel, or devices affecting public security.
- (4) Discussion of the selection of a site or the lease, sale or purchase of real estate when publicity regarding such site, lease, sale, purchase or construction would cause a likelihood of increased price until such time as all of the property has been acquired or all proceedings or transactions concerning same have been terminated or abandoned.
- (5) Discussion of any matter which would result in the disclosure of public records or the information contained therein described in Conn. Gen. Stat. §1-210(b).

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 1-200 | Definitions (Public Agency; Meetings; Person; Public Record; Executive Session) |
| 1-210 | Access to public record. Exempt records. |
| 1-225 | Meetings of government agencies to be public. Recording of votes. Schedule and agenda of meetings to be filed. Notice of special meetings. Executive sessions. |
| 1-231 | Executive sessions. |

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
Bylaws

QUORUM AND VOTING PROCEDURES

1. Quorum:
 - A. The majority of all members of the Board shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

2. Voting Procedures:
 - A. No member can vote on a question in which he/she has a direct personal or pecuniary interest.
 - B. Members may vote for themselves for any office or other position.
 - C. While it is the duty of every member who has an opinion on a question to express it by vote, he/she cannot be compelled to do so.
 - D. A member may abstain from voting (with the knowledge that the effect is the same as if he/she had voted on the prevailing side).
 - E. The votes of each member of the Board upon any issue before the Board shall be recorded in the minutes of the session at which taken.
 - F. Any Board member shall have the opportunity to explain his/her vote for recording in the minutes.

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education:

January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
Bylaws

REIMBURSEMENT OF BOARD MEMBERS' EXPENSES

1. Remuneration
 - A. A member of the Ashford Board of Education shall receive no compensation for carrying out Board services.
2. Reimbursement
 - A. Board members authorized to attend educational conferences, meetings or travel on Board business shall be reimbursed, upon submitting vouchers and supporting documentation for reasonable expenditures, transportation costs, and registration fees. Board members must have approval in advance from the Board to be eligible for a reimbursement.
 - B. Each Board member that receives prior authorization for reimbursement of a Board of Education expense is expected to account for all expenditures incurred in connection with the performance of his/her Board duties.
 - C. Receipts in general are required for:
 - (1) Lodging -- Lodging accommodations should provide normal comforts and services well located in relation to the area in which Board business will be conducted.
 - (2) Meals -- Reasonable expenditures are allowed for meals, but shall not exceed \$50.00 per day. Board members may submit appropriate explanatory information as needed, on a separate sheet of paper attached to the receipt. The Board will not reimburse Board members for the purchase of alcohol.
 - (3) Taxi or Bus Fare
 - (4) Parking Fees or Toll Charges (when applicable)
 - (5) Registration Fees -- The Board will not pay any late registration fees without an explicit prior authorization.

Legal Reference

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-225 | Salaries of secretary and attendance officers |
| Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-232 | Restrictions on employment of members of board of education |

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
Bylaws

REMOVAL OF BOARD OFFICERS

It is the policy of the Ashford Board of Education that an officer of the Board will:

1. adhere to all Board policies, rules and regulations;
2. conduct himself or herself in a fair and impartial manner; and
3. carry out the duties of his or her respective office in accordance with law.

An officer of the Board may be removed for cause by a majority vote of the entire Board. A vote to remove a Board officer shall only take place at a regular meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose. "Cause" includes, but is not limited to, any conduct that:

1. specifically relates to and affects the administration of the office in a manner deemed to be deleterious to Board operations;
2. negatively and directly affects the rights and interests of the public;
3. violates Board policies, rules and regulations; or
4. conduct that interferes with the orderly and efficient operation of the Board.

Procedures for Removal:

Prior to any vote to remove a Board officer for cause:

- 1) The Board may review the performance and/or conduct of the Board officer in open or executive session (as determined by the Board and the Board officer) prior to taking any formal action;
- 2) If the Board determines that formal action is necessary, the Board officer shall be provided with reasonable notice of the Board's intent to consider possible removal from office (such notice to be given in writing after being authorized by Board vote at a prior meeting of the Board);
- 3) Upon the written request of the Board officer within seven (7) days of such action, he/she shall be provided with an opportunity for a hearing before the Board of Education before the Board votes on removal;
- 4) At any such hearing, the Board officer shall have the right to be represented by counsel at his/her own expense and to present relevant evidence to the Board.

Standard for Removal

Service as a Board officer is a privilege, not a right, the purpose of which is to assist the Board in conducting its business in an appropriate, orderly and efficient manner. Therefore, any Board member serving as an officer shall have no legally-protected right to continue in that position. A decision that there is cause for removal shall be made by a majority of board members present and voting, provided that no less than a majority of the board membership as a whole shall be required for removal.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes

- 10-218 Officers. Meetings.
- 10-220 Duties of boards of education.

Lapointe v. Winchester Board of Education, CV040093257S, 2004 Conn. Super.LEXIS 2574 (Sept. 14, 2004).

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
Bylaws

ROLE OF BOARD AND MEMBERS

1. General Duties

- A. The Board of Education represents the residents of the Town in carrying out the mandates of the General Statutes pertaining to education.
- B. The Board of Education shall determine all questions of general policy to be employed in the conduct of the schools.
- C. In determining school policy it shall:
 - (1) hear and consider facts and recommendations,
 - (2) adopt a plan, policy or course of action, and
 - (3) authorize the Superintendent of Schools, its chief executive officer, to carry out its policy.

2. Specific Powers and Duties

The Board of Education shall have authority to take all action necessary or advisable to meet its responsibilities under state statute [and Town Charter] including but not limited to the following:

- A. Create, abolish, modify and maintain such positions, schools, divisions and classifications as may be necessary for the efficient administration of the educational enterprise.
- B. To elect a Superintendent of Schools in accordance with state statutes.
- C. To consider and adopt an annual budget, prepared by the Superintendent of Schools.
- D. To determine the number, classification, duties and remuneration of employees.
- E. To establish policies for employment, promotion and dismissal of personnel in accordance with the state statutes.
- F. To provide for the appraisal of the efficiency of personnel.

- G. To initiate and approve the acquisition and disposition of school sites, to initiate and approve plans for school buildings.
- H. To consider any specific recommendations made by the Superintendent of Schools.
- I. To keep the citizenry informed of purposes, values, conditions and needs of public education in the Town.
- J. To consider, revise and adopt any changes in the curriculum.
- K. To take any other actions required or permitted by law.
- L. To make reasonable provision to implement the educational interests of the State, as defined by law, so that
 - (1) each child shall have for the period prescribed in the General Statutes equal opportunity to receive a suitable program of educational experiences;
 - (2) the school district shall finance at a reasonable level an educational program designed to achieve this end;
 - (3) the school district shall provide educational opportunities for its students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds;
 - (4) the mandates in the General Statutes pertaining to education within the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education shall be implemented.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes

- 1-200 Definitions (public agency)
- 10-4a Educational interest of the State identified
- 10-4b Failure of local or regional board to implement educational interests
- 10-220 Duties of Boards of Education
- 10-221 Board of education to prescribe rules
- 10-241 Powers of school district

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education:

January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

**Series 9000
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TIME, PLACE AND NOTICE OF MEETINGS

1. Regular Meetings
 - A. The Board of Education shall set a calendar of regular meetings for the ensuing year at the first regular meeting in November.
 - B. In compliance with the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut, the Chairperson shall file this calendar with the Town Clerk, and post this calendar on the Board's website, if available, by November 30.
 - C. Normally the Board shall schedule regular meetings on the first and third Thursday of each month of the year except July and August, when the Board shall schedule no regular meetings.
 - D. If at any point in the meeting the Board of Education should not maintain a quorum, then the Chairperson of the Board will adjourn the meeting and declare the time and place of the resumption of the meeting, which shall be reflected in a written order of adjournment. A copy of the written order of adjournment will be posted on or near the door of the place where the meeting was held within twenty-four hours after the time of adjournment.

2. Special Meetings
 - A. Special meetings may be held when determined by the Board, when so called by the Chairperson, or upon written request of three members of the Board.
 - B. No special meeting shall be held unless a notice stating the time, place and purpose of the meeting has been given to each member and to the Town Clerk, and has been posted on the Board's website, if available, twenty-four (24) hours before the time stated for the meeting to convene.
 - C. When a majority of the members agree that an emergency exists which has made a regular notice impossible, such a meeting may be called at a time or place which may be most convenient. In case of such emergency meeting, a copy of the minutes setting forth the nature of the emergency and the proceedings occurring at such meeting shall be filed with the Town Clerk no later than seventy-two (72) hours following the holding of such a meeting.

3. Meeting Time and Place

- A. All regular meetings of the Board shall begin at 7:30 P.M. or as soon thereafter as a quorum is present and shall adjourn no later than 9:30 P.M. unless extended to a time certain by a two-thirds vote of the Board members present. All regular meetings of the Board shall be held in the District Office Conference room, unless otherwise ordered by the Board.
- B. Special Meetings (non-emergency) - time and place to be determined and announced in advance of meeting.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes

- 1-225 Meetings of government agencies to be public.
Recording of votes. Schedule of agenda of meetings to be filed. Notice of special meetings
Executive session.
- 1-228 Adjournment of meetings. Notice.
- 1-229 Continued hearings. Notice.
- 1-230 Regular meetings to be held pursuant to regulation, ordinance or resolution.
- 7-3 Warning of Town and other meetings.
- 7-4 Record of warning.
- 10-218 Officers. Meetings.

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

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TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS

- A. The Board shall transact all business at a legal meeting of the Board.
- B. The Board shall act as a whole entity, except that a committee created in accordance with these bylaws may act on matters before it in conformity with the committee's purpose or charge.
- C. Individual members shall make no commitments for the Board or issue orders for the Board, except when executing an assignment delegated by the Board.
- D. The Board shall concern itself with questions of educational policy, and not with administrative details of the district's operations.

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

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**SUSPENSION OF POLICIES, BYLAWS OR
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS**

1. Policies and bylaws of the Board shall be subject to suspension for a specified purpose and limited time by:
 - A. A majority vote of all members of the Board in attendance at a meeting, and
 - B. Provided that prior notification of such a proposed suspension has been described in writing in the call of the meeting.
2. Policies of the Board of Education shall be subject to suspension for a specified purpose and limited time upon a majority vote of all members of the Board when no such written notice has been given.
3. Bylaws of the Board of Education shall be subject to suspension for a specified purpose and limited time upon a two-thirds votes of all members of the Board when no such written notice has been given.
4. Administrative regulations of the Board may be suspended for a specified purpose and limited time:
 - A. By the Superintendent, who shall give notice to the Board of the reason for the suspension and the time period of the suspension.
 - B. The Board may direct the Superintendent to suspend administrative regulations for a specified purpose and limited time upon majority vote of all members in attendance at a meeting, provided that prior notification of such proposed suspension has been described in writing in the call of the meeting, or upon majority vote of all members of the Board when no such written notice has been given.

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 16, 2014

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MEETING CONDUCT

1. Meeting Conduct
 - A. Meetings of the Board of Education shall be conducted by the Chairperson in a manner consistent with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act and the adopted bylaws of the Board.
 - B. All Board meetings shall commence at, or as close as practicable to, the stated time, provided there is a quorum.
 - C. All regular and special Board meetings shall be guided by an agenda which will have been prepared and delivered in advance to all Board members and other designated persons.
 - D. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the proceedings of the Board except as otherwise provided by these bylaws.

2. Smoking
 - A. Smoking will not be permitted in any room in which a meeting of the Board of Education is being conducted, nor during the time immediately prior to the meeting.
 - B. A sign notifying the public that no smoking is allowed in the place designated for the meeting will be prominently posted.

3. Procedures for Participation By Means of Electronic Equipment
 - A. Board members may participate in meetings by means of electronic equipment (*e.g.*, telephone, video conference) under the conditions set forth herein. When such conditions are met, any Board member participating by means of electronic equipment shall be counted for the purpose of constituting a quorum. Conditions for participation are as follows:
 1. The facility that is made available to the public that wishes to attend the meeting must be located where the greatest number of Board of Education members are located;

2. Any physical or demonstrable material that is used in the course of the proceedings must be present in the place where the public is located; and
 3. All those in attendance at the meeting, at whatever location, must be able to hear and identify all participants in the proceeding, including their individual remarks and votes.
- B. When a Board member is participating in a meeting by means of electronic equipment, the Chairperson shall take the necessary steps to ensure that the three conditions enumerated above are met. In addition, the Chairperson shall take the necessary steps to ensure that a Board member participating by means of electronic equipment has adequate opportunity to express himself/herself in Board discussion, including the opportunity to take the floor and make motions.

[Note: The following section is optional:]

4. Public Address

A. The Board may permit any individual or group to address the Board concerning any subject that lies within its jurisdiction during a portion of the Board's regular meetings so designated for such purpose.

(1) _____ minutes may be allotted to each speaker and a maximum of _____ minutes to each subject matter. The Board may modify these limitations at the beginning of a meeting if the number of persons wishing to speak makes it advisable to do so.

(2) A Board of Education member shall be appointed by the Chairperson prior to the meeting to act as timekeeper for the meeting, if deemed necessary by the Chairperson.

(3) No boisterous conduct shall be permitted at any Board of Education meeting. Persistence in boisterous conduct shall be grounds for summary termination, by the Chairperson, of that person's privilege of address.

(4) All speakers must identify themselves by name and address.]

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes

- 1-200 Definitions
- 1-206 Denial of access of public records or meeting. Notice. Appeal.
- 1-225 Meetings of government agencies to be public.
- 1-232 Conduct of meetings. (re: disturbances)

Freedom of Information Commission Advisory Opinion #41 (April 9, 1980)

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education:

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut

Series 9000
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CODE OF CONDUCT FOR BOARD MEMBERS

It is the policy of the Ashford Board of Education that a member of the Board will:

1. adhere to all Board policies, rules and regulations;
2. conduct himself or herself in a fair and impartial manner;
3. refrain from interfering with the implementation of a Board policy decision by the administration;
4. refrain from interfering with the duties of any school district official; and
5. refrain from divulging to anyone any aspect of matters considered and discussed in executive session.

Each member of the Board shall act in complete accordance with the provisions and tenor of this policy. Should any member of the Board fail to so act, such failure shall constitute cause for censure or other such action as deemed appropriate by the Board.

Procedures for Censure:

Prior to any vote to censure a Board member for cause:

- 1) The Board may review the performance and/or conduct of the Board member in open or executive session (as determined by the Board and the Board member) prior to taking any formal action;
- 2) If the Board determines that formal action is necessary, the Board member shall be provided with reasonable notice of the Board's intent to consider possible censure (such notice to be given in writing after being authorized by Board vote at a prior meeting of the Board);
- 3) A vote to censure a Board member shall only take place at a regular meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose;
- 4) Such censure may be enacted for cause by a majority vote of all Board members.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes
10-220 Duties of boards of education.

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education:

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MINUTES

1. In compliance with legal requirements, a complete and accurate set of minutes of each meeting shall be kept.
2. Minutes shall be maintained at the Administrative Offices of the school district in an official record book designated for said purpose.
3. The minutes shall constitute the official records of proceedings of the Board of Education and shall be open to public inspection at all reasonable times.
4. The minutes shall include the following:
 - A. The time, place and date of each meeting.
 - B. The names of those members in attendance.
 - C. The disposition of all matters on which action was recommended.
 - D. All motions and resolutions and their disposition, listing all votes, abstentions and absentees.
 - E. All decisions concerning future meetings and agendas.
 - F. By request, a brief statement of a Board member may be included.
5. A record of votes taken at each meeting shall be reduced to writing and made available for public inspection within forty-eight hours of the conclusion of the meeting at which the votes were taken. Votes taken shall also be reflected in the minutes of each meeting, and the minutes shall be made available for public inspection and posted on the Board's website, if available, not later than seven days of the date of the meeting to which they refer, however, the Board shall not be required by law to post such minutes on an Internet website. Should the Board decide to make minutes available on the Board's website, it shall do so at the sole discretion of the Board.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes

- 1-225 Meetings of government agencies to be public.
Recording of votes.

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education:

