

Ashford Board of Education  
**Meeting Minutes – April 15, 2021**  
**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 7:10 p.m.

- Present were members Jane Urban, Kim Kouatly, Tess Grous, and Al Maccarone. Tina Fradette and Marian Matthews were absent.
- Also present were Superintendent Dr. James Longo, Principal Troy Hopkins, Asst. Principal Polly Borysevicz, Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford, Interim Business Manager Kelee Calkins, and Zoom meeting host Scott Waddell, as well as approximately 12 other members of the school staff and the public.

**Student Presentation (Mr. Busse and Class)**

- The STEAM table is a weekly center. The science, technology, engineering, and mathematics activities can go along with themes they are studying or holidays/seasonal themes. Mr. Busse showed a video with pictures of students working at the STEAM table and talking about their favorite STEAM activities.

**Communications**

- Communication with James Hendricks continued. Jen Truax has ensured that the recordings for the past six months are available on the school website.

**Opportunity for Public Comment**

- Al Maccarone and Jane Urban expressed appreciation for Troy Hopkins and Polly Borysevicz being out for drop off and pick up times. There are also always several teachers out at pick up.

**Approval of Minutes**

- ***MOTION by Jane Urban to approve minutes from 04/01/2021. Motion seconded by Al Maccarone and carried unanimously.***

**Administrative Reports**

**Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford**

- Jane Urban thanked Cindy for breaking down what the different mental health professionals are doing.
- There is a nice partnership forming between the mental health professionals at school and the community mental health program.

**Interim Business Manager Kelee Calkins**

- John Lippert would like to be kept informed of the bottom line and where we are budget wise as we finish this year.
- Jane Urban encouraged Kelee to reach out to Dr. Longo and ask for help if she gets overwhelmed.
- Preparation for the audit is coming up. Kelee has a timeline for what needs to be done and when.

**Principal Troy Hopkins**

- The federal government approved Connecticut's waiver to not use Smarter Balanced Assessment/NGSS Assessment to rate schools or teachers. They will be giving the Smarter Balanced Assessment in May so that they have something to compare growth. They will probably receive the results in the summer, and Troy will share those with the board.
- Teachers are expected to be available for the remote learning day on Wednesday, 04/28/2021 if they are feeling well. Any staff that are able to come in and work are welcome to.

**Assistant Principal Polly Borysevicz**

- Tent will be reassembled the first week in May. Dr. Longo is going to reach out to Jim Rupert and see if they can get together some volunteers to put up a pavilion, about 24' x 30'.

- Jane Urban asked why only the online students were included in the Dinosaur State Park virtual field trip. Polly will ask.
- On Friday, 04/09/2021, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls participated in Multiply Your Options conference with female role models in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

### **Superintendent Dr. James Longo**

- No board members have joined in for the MEUI negotiations.
- Summer school is an additional program. There is funding sufficient to do a thorough program. Teachers will identify students who have fallen behind, and parents can also identify if their students need extra help. It will merge into the school year with after school tutoring available as well. The summer school program will offer busing and lunch.

### **Old Business**

#### **a. FY22 Budget**

- There will be a town public hearing on Monday, 04/26/2021. Dr. Longo will make sure budget books will be available by 04/19/2021.

#### **b. Superintendent Search**

- There are 10 applicants including one internal applicant. All the board members have read through the application packets and done some rating of criteria. They will likely narrow down the candidates and interview half of those applicants on 04/26/2021. An email was sent to all 10 applicants to acknowledge receipt of their application and give a general timeline. They have developed a set of questions for the first round of interviews. John Lippert will email AEA, Board of Finance, and Board of Selectmen, inviting them to look at the questions and provide feedback. He will also ask for one person from each group to sit in on the first round of interviews. The seven board members will be making the final hiring decision.

#### **c. Cybersecurity Assessment (Scott Waddell)**

- This will be more of an assessment rather than an audit. They will talk about best practices and help us to come up with our own.
- This assessment will go through every process and make sure that we are secure, meet federal and state code, and that all of our vendors are playing in the same ballpark.
- They will be starting in June with some interviews about our current processes.

### **New Business**

#### **a. Review and Approval of 5-Year Capital Plan**

- Discussion about electric bus versus standard bus. The town owns the buses. The board does not have much of an active role in purchasing the buses.
- This 5-year capital plan will be discussed at the next meeting in hopes that Marian Matthews can contribute to the discussion.

#### **b. First Reading of Policy Amendments Provided by Counsel**

- Board members asked to read/skim these policy amendments. Al Maccarone will look through to see if there are any items the board needs to decide on.

### **Opportunity for Public Comment**

#### **Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items**

- Next meeting will be 05/06/2021.
- Committee breakouts.
- Review and approve 5-year capital plan.
- Discuss BOE goals and possible revisions.
- Develop an annual calendar.
- Further training/education about board rules and responsibilities, possibly Robert's Rules of Order.
- Plan for board member speaking at commencement.

**Discussion of Strategy with Respect to Potential Litigation (Executive Session)**

- *MOTION by Jane Urban to enter executive session to discuss strategy with respect to potential litigation and invite Dr. Longo and Troy Hopkins. Motion seconded by Kim Kouatly and carried unanimously.*

Board members entered executive session at 8:47 p.m.

Board members exited executive session at 9:27 p.m. No action was taken.

**Non-Union Personnel Negotiations (Executive Session)**

- *MOTION by Kim Kouatly to enter executive session to discuss non-union personnel negotiations and invite Dr. Longo. Motion seconded by Jane Urban and carried unanimously.*

Board members entered executive session at 9:28 p.m.

Board members exited executive session at 10:31 p.m. No action was taken.

**Adjournment**

- *MOTION by Jane Urban to adjourn the meeting at 10:32 p.m. Motion seconded by Al Maccarone and carried unanimously.*

Sara Wilson  
Recording Secretary