

REVISED 08/18/21 8:10 AM

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut
Meeting Agenda
August 19, 2021 - 7:00 pm

*In Person: District Office Conference Room, Masks required
and Electronic Meeting via Zoom (see instructions below)*

1. Call to Order
2. Communications
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
4. Approval of Minutes: 07/15/2021
5. Old Business
 - a. FY 21 Audit Update
 - b. Revisit Approval of Medical Standing Orders (Confidential, Not for Dissemination)
6. New Business
 - a. Staff Resignation
 - b. Acceptance of Donation
 - c. Policy Updates Provided by Counsel
 - d. Bus Questions
 - e. Cafeteria Regulations
7. Opportunity for Public Comment
8. Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items
9. Executive Session Anticipated
 - a. Personnel Negotiations
 - b. Non- Resident Student Tuition
10. Adjournment

Ashford Board of Education Goals

Curriculum – Ensure a Kindergarten to 8th grade curriculum that challenges students to use methods of inquiry to solve problems, think critically, and to express themselves creatively and effectively.

Financial - Develop a budget that ensures the best possible education while being fiscally responsible to taxpayers.

Culture - Foster an environment of physical and emotional health and wellness for all. Support a community that recognizes professional expertise and provides diverse opportunities that enhance teaching and learning.

Community Relations and Facilities - Provide opportunities for enhanced community engagement and serve as a leader for Ashford in enhancing energy efficiency, developing a maintenance and restoration plan that extends the school's useful life and demonstrates environmental responsibility.

All meetings, conferences, programs and activities at Ashford School are available, without discrimination, to individuals with disabilities as defined by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and/or Title II of the American with Disabilities Act. Individuals with disabilities requesting relocation of this meeting should call the Superintendent at 429-1927 or e-mail a request to jplongo@ashfordct.org not later than 2 working days prior to the meeting. Hearing impaired individuals may communicate their request for accommodations by using the e-mail address above, or calling the State of CT TDD relay service (800) 842-2880 or the national relay service number (800) 855-2880.

Encl: Minutes; Resignation, Donation email

Topic: Ashford Board of Ed's Personal Meeting Room

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4899084032?pwd=VjNjTjM5ZllPTVJqOXJXUGZXWjVUUT09>

Meeting ID: 489 908 4032

Passcode: 2FBGiM

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,4899084032#,,,,*538100# US (Chicago)

+16465588656,,4899084032#,,,,*538100# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Ashford Board of Education
Meeting Minutes – July 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 7:06 p.m.
- Present were members Kim Kouatly, Tina Fradette, Tess Grous, Jane Urban, and Al Maccarone. Marian Matthews joined the meeting at approximately 7:12 p.m.
- Also present were Principal Troy Hopkins, Asst. Principal Polly Borysevicz, Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford, and Zoom meeting host Scott Waddell, as well as approximately 15 other members of the school staff and the public. Superintendent Craig Creller joined the meeting at 7:21 p.m. Martha Sibley-Jett joined the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Communications – None.

Opportunity for Public Comment

- Stephanie West, parent of rising 2nd and 4th graders at Ashford School as well as stepchildren in another district, commended Ashford School for in-person instruction this past year. She voiced concerns about the re-opening plan for the next school year and believes masks should not be required. She believes masks are causing children to suffer with speech and language acquisition as well as affecting their social-emotional wellbeing. Stephanie is an ESL teacher in Massachusetts. She asked for an opportunity for discussion about mask wearing, which will be added to the agenda for the next board meeting. Further discussion about posting board meeting agendas on the school's Facebook page and website.

Marian Matthews joined the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

- *MOTION made by Kim Kouatly to approve minutes from 06/17/2021. Motion seconded by Jane Urban. Meeting date on first page should be June 17, 2021 instead of June 3, 2021. Motion carried unanimously with one abstention (T. Grous).*

Administrative Reports

Principal Troy Hopkins

- Draft of dress code policy produced 2 years ago for review. Current lockers are not large enough to accommodate student coats and backpacks. Backpacks have to be allowed in class if they do not fit in the locker. Kids can get their coats if they are cold. New lockers are on capital improvement list. Jane Urban mentioned item c being in the list of items students are prohibited from wearing. Troy said they could reword that. Dress code with item c reworded will be adopted at the retreat in August in order to allow for it to be included in next year's student handbook.
- Budget document shows grade 5/6 going from 5 teachers to 4 teachers as well as grade 4 going from 2 teachers to 3 teachers.
- Kim Kouatly asked how many 7th graders and 8th graders there would be next year. Troy will share those numbers at the next meeting.

Asst. Principal Polly Borysevicz

- Polly was encouraged by survey responses and their input. She had 28% respond and would love to have 100% of staff participation.

Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford

- ESY is going very well. The theme this year is camping.
- Statewide special ed is about 15%. Ashford Schools is currently 14%. Our numbers have increased, and the intensity of student needs has also increased.

Superintendent Craig Creller

- The superintendent meeting was delayed until 07/20/2021. He will have more to report on after that regarding mask wearing.

Old Business

a. Department Reports

Transportation

- Tess Grous asked how social distancing was done on the buses this past year. Craig Creller asked Tess to email him with any questions and said he would get an answer to the whole board.
- John Lippert asked if we are comfortable with the number of buses going into the fall. Craig said he would get an answer.

Health Office

- Martha Sibley-Jett commended for all she has done this last year.

Cafeteria

- There will be free breakfast and lunch for all students next year.
- Jane Urban suggested adding handwashing sinks to the building project. Marian Matthews will add it to the Building Committee's agenda.

Technology

- John Lippert asked about status of redesigning school website. Scott said they have reached out to Novus. Now that new superintendent is in place, Scott and Craig can move it up on the agenda.
- New asset tracking inventory system.
- About 150 laptops were purchased at the end of the year to replace those aging out. The 5th grade will now be a 1:1 program in the classroom.
- Tess Grous asked about status of security. We are signed up with Novus for a cyber audit.
- Discussion regarding school email addresses for board members. Scott said all members have a school email address and using them rather than a personal email is recommended by our attorneys as a best practice.

Bus Garage

- Everything is okay in the bus garage.

b. Capital Improvements Update

- Marian Matthews asked if the heat exchanger had been purchased. Craig said the project has gone out for bid. A new propane tank is in process also. The town will do the site work when they get their new excavator.
- Capital improvements list will be discussed at retreat in August. New propane tank should be included in year 1.

c. Strategic Planning Meeting

- Strategic planning meeting will be 08/19/2021 at 3 pm with regular board meeting at 7 pm. Both meetings will be in person at Ashford School in room 16 with ability for the public to attend in person or join via Zoom.
- Discussion about board self-evaluation possibly being done in executive session. Marian Matthews will see what other districts have done. Further discussion about public component to board evaluation and possible survey sent out for public input.
- Book recommendation from Marian Matthews, possibly *The Smartest Kids in the World and How They Got That Way*.
- Tess Grous asked whether board members can take CAFE training again, to which Craig answered yes.
- Review/revise BOE goals.
- Review/revise capital improvements list.
- Adopt dress code.

New Business

a. Authorization of Official Signatories for Board and District Business Operations

- *MOTION made by John Lippert that the Ashford Board of Education hereby authorizes Craig M. Creller, Superintendent of Schools to be the primary signatory for all board of education business, financial and legal matters, effective 07/01/2021 and further authorizes Deana Chrzan, Business Manager, as the secondary signatory for all board of education business, financial and legal matters effective 07/01/2021. Motion seconded by Al Maccarone and carried unanimously.*

b. FY 21 Year End Budget Audit Update

- Approximately 43 outstanding invoices.

- Approximately \$106,000 left over, which will go back to the town. Craig Creller said this means we are fiscally prudent. The hope is that the town will spend that money on capital improvements.
- They expect to close out accounts this month.

c. Staff Appointments

- *MOTION made by Al Maccarone to approve the appointment of Janel Brown as Special Education Teacher. Motion seconded by Tina Fradette and carried unanimously.*
- *MOTION made by Jane Urban to approve the appointment of Jack Champagne as Math Interventionist. Motion seconded by Kim Kouatly and carried unanimously.*

c. Approval of 2021-2022 Medical Standing Orders

- This will be postponed until the board can review them. Martha Sibley-Jett needs them before the new school year.

Opportunity for Public Comment – None.

Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items

- Next meeting date 08/19/2021.

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

- *MOTION made by Kim Kouatly to enter executive session for discussion of strategy with respect to potential litigation, inviting Craig Creller and Troy Hopkins. Motion seconded by Al Maccarone and carried unanimously.*
- The board, Craig Creller, and Troy Hopkins entered executive session at 9:12 p.m. They exited executive session at 9:26 p.m. No action was taken.

Adjournment

- *MOTION made by Jane Urban to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 p.m. Motion seconded by Marian Matthews and carried unanimously.*

Sara Wilson
Recording Secretary

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Rob Ackerson** <rackerson@ashfordct.org>

Date: Thu, Jul 29, 2021 at 11:58 AM

Subject: Accepting New Position

To: Troy Hopkins <thopkins@ashfordct.org>

Hi Troy,

I am writing to let you know I have accepted a PE position in the Seymour School district. I want to thank you for your leadership and support over the years. Ashford is a very special place and this decision was not easy. Thank you for your understanding and please advise me if there are any other steps I need to take at this time.

Thank you,

Rob



Jennifer Truax <jtruax@ashfordct.org>

Fwd: Donation

4 messages

Troy Hopkins <thopkins@ashfordct.org>

Mon, Jun 7, 2021 at 10:53 AM

To: Suzanne Schillinger <:sschillinger@ashfordct.org>, Jennifer Barsaleau <jbarsaleau@ashfordct.org>

FYI

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Steve Morytko <smorytko@yahoo.com>
Date: June 7, 2021 at 9:22:19 AM EDT
To: Troy Hopkins <thopkins@ashfordct.org>
Subject: Re: Donation
Reply-To: Steve Morytko <smorytko@yahoo.com>

Troy,

Just to clarify, based on our conversation this morning ... I see now how I messed up the wording. Please take a fresh look at this.

Over the years that Benny has been there, Ashford School has developed some really interesting ideas and programs and we'd like to contribute in a small way toward maintaining that great work.

I meant to say that our contribution will be annual (likely at least a few years - period). This contribution may fund academic, cultural, environmental or social enrichment at the school and more than one activity is fine if appropriate. As I mentioned, I don't want to be too specific about how the funds are earmarked so that you/whoever has adequate flexibility to figure out where it is best used.

It would be nice to receive a short report (email) annually regarding how the funds were used.

I hope that makes our wishes a bit clearer. I'll give you a check tomorrow. Let me know how it should be made out (Ashford School?).

Best - Steve

Steve Morytko

Ashford CT

On Friday, June 4, 2021, 06:41:33 PM EDT, Steve Morytko <smorytko@yahoo.com> wrote:

Troy,

Sorry for not trying harder to connect this week. Maybe we can figure this out by email.

I'd like to make a Morytko Family donation to the school (likely for at least a few years) with \$1K going toward an ~~annual academic or social event/activity~~ that teachers could draw from. I'm guessing you'd be the right person to provide some structure for this but if there is someone else I should contact let me know. I'm also open to other ideas too. I was hoping this could be something extra that wouldn't normally be covered by school budget funds but I don't want to tie your hands with regard to what it's used for. I'm sure there are plenty of things that might become possible with some extra funds. If it's not too much to ask perhaps I could receive a short report (email is fine) regarding how the funds were used? It's not much but maybe others make similar donations too?

If there is some sort of form or document that's used for this sort of contribution could you send it along? I searched a bit on the Internet but nothing jumped out at me.

If you think it would help to talk feel free to call me at: 860-680-5728

Thanks - Steve

Steve Morytko
Ashford CT

Troy Hopkins <thopkins@ashfordct.org>

Mon, Jun 7, 2021 at 11:00 AM

To: Ashford School <jbarsaleau@ashfordct.org>, Accounts Payable <ap@ashfordct.org>, Kelee Calkins <kcalkins@ashfordct.org>, Suzanne Schillinger <sschillinger@ashfordct.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Troy Hopkins** <thopkins@ashfordct.org>

Date: Mon, Jun 7, 2021 at 11:00 AM

Subject: Re: Donation

To: Steve Morytko <smorytko@yahoo.com>

Hi Steve,

This is very clear! You could make the check to "Ashford School Student Activity Fund".