

Ashford Board of Education
Meeting Minutes – October 21, 2021
7:00 pm

Meeting Held in Person and Electronically 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 7:05 p.m.
- Present were members Tess Grous, Jane Urban, Al Maccarone, Marian Matthews, and Ex-Officio member First Selectman Cathryn Silver-Smith. Tina Fradette and Kim Kouatly were absent.
- Also present were Superintendent Craig Creller, Business Manager Deana Chrzan, and Zoom meeting host Scott Waddell. Attending the meeting via the Zoom call were approximately 20 other members of the school staff and the public.

Awards and Recognition

- Deana Chrzan (CASBO) – Deana was elected to CASBO, a statewide organization. She recently gave a joint presentation on how to create a budget from scratch.
- Troy Hopkins (CAS) – Troy was recently elected to CAS Board of Directors.
- Goethe Institute (Dr. Imhoff and Students) – Two of the students, Lauren Trotta and Keira Bussey, spoke about their experience. They tried to plant enough trees to offset the carbon emissions from their expected flight to Germany. Every person that was going to go to Germany planted four white oak trees. They did workshops with other students from all around the world.
- John Lippert (12 Years of Service to BOE) – Award to our retiring board chair. John said the best thing that has ever happened in board meetings has been students and teachers presenting with confidence and poise. He said what matters in all of this is the students and that the experience was worth it. Jane Urban said she respected his calm, gentle, kind, and thoughtful leadership. Cathryn Silver-Smith appreciated his professional, thoughtful way of managing things. Marian Matthews said John has been one of the best leaders on the board, calm and thoughtful about everything he goes about doing. Al Maccarone said John has dealt with difficult situations and difficult people, a role model for the board. Tess Grous appreciated his calm, peaceful way of handling things, even when he was upset.
- Garrett Dukette, former Assistant Principal, is being honored tonight as Assistant Principal of the Year for 2020 by CAS.

MOTION made by Jane Urban to add item 10b Superintendent Evaluation and Contract in executive session to the agenda. Motion seconded by Tess Grous and carried unanimously.

Communications

- Letter from Charlene Russell-Tucker, Commissioner of Connecticut State Department of Education, endorsing Carly Imhoff's award.
- Anonymous letter received via USPS – a parent mentioning difficulties with keeping kids quarantined at home and wanting to keep children in school and learning.

Opportunity for Public Comment

- Public comments are limited to 5 minutes. Speakers are to state their name and the street they live on.
- Cathryn Silver-Smith is working with DOT on signs for slowing traffic. The town and library are rolling out TextMyGov starting in November. Phase 1 will send out notifications. Some examples would be storm updates and senior services. There will be links in the text to information on the town website. They are asking the public to sign up for Everbridge, which is for critical information.
- Marian Matthews asked about bike lanes. Cathryn is working with Mike Gantick from Our Town – Our Future regarding sidewalks and bike lanes. They have put up new lighting in Pompey Hollow Park, repaved sidewalks, and are working to finish repaving parking lots. The priority is working on slowing down traffic near the school first.

Approval of Minutes

- **MOTION made by Jane Urban to approve minutes from 09/16/2021. Motion seconded by Marian Matthews.** Name spelling corrected in the first bullet of Facilities Updates: Mike Sorano in second sentence, Mike Kovaravicks in eighth sentence (instead of Mike Sabiga), and Ron Standley in ninth sentence. Also corrected name spelling in first bullet of COVID Protocol Updates, Steve Draczynski. **Motion carried unanimously.**
- **MOTION made by Marian Matthews to approve minutes from 10/07/21. Motion seconded by Jane Urban.** First Selectman Cathryn Silver-Smith should be listed with board members as ex officio member. Fifth bullet under Finance Subcommittee should mention business office consult from July to September instead of March to July. **Motion carried unanimously with one abstention (T. Grous).**

Consent Agenda Items:

- a. Resignation – Mrs. Kelee Calkins, Business Office. She will stay until 11/12/2021, and they are hopeful to have a replacement by then. Jane Urban expressed appreciation for Kelee and the work she did, stepping up when the last business manager left with a great attitude and professionalism. Tess Grous asked if we could conduct an exit interview.
 - b. Approval of Employment Contract of the Superintendent of Schools
 - c. Approval of September 2021 Financial Statements
- **MOTION by Jane Urban to accept consent agenda items. Motion seconded by Al Maccarone and carried unanimously.**

Old Business

- a. Facilities Updates
 - New boiler – The new boiler room is almost finished. They have two new boilers, all new diesel pumps, and all new circulator pumps. The heat exchanger is being custom made in New Jersey.
 - New roof – There are nine things we have to do to get the state funding: FEMA map, site analysis, flood management certification notice, school safety and security letter, updated Ashford Elementary roof replacement specs, actual roof plan, potential radon test, ECHO environmental map attached, and an enrollment study. We might be able to save money on enrollment study by joining NEASC. Marian Matthews said Mike Sorano is going to be doing the roof sketch, the ed specs and resolutions, cost estimate, and grant application assistance.

New Business

- a. Executive Order 13G – Addendum 5: The CDC is now recommending testing for those vaccinated in days 5, 6, and 7 of known exposure. Addendum 7: New guidelines for performing arts with no real changes. Teachers are encouraged to use outdoor spaces as much as possible, and we have 50 Alen air purifiers in the school to help with indoor air quality.
- b. COVID Protocol Updates – We have had only 19 total cases. We have not had a new case or quarantine in almost 3 weeks.
- c. First Reading Board of Education Bylaw Revision: Meeting Conduct (new revision from counsel 09/06/2021) – We are already providing access via Zoom and allowing public comment via Zoom. We need to decide on time limit for public comment and then change bylaws to match. Board members are leaning toward a 3-minute limit for public comment per person. Discussion about limiting total time spent in public comment for any one topic.

MOTION made by John Lippert to add 8d Board Packets (paper or electronic) and 8e Resignation of Board Member to agenda. Motion seconded by Jane Urban and carried unanimously.

- d. Board Packets: In the past, board members had a school-issued tablet. Discussion regarding paper agenda packets versus electronic packets. Some prefer paper packets, and some prefer electronic packets. Those who want paper packets printed can reply to the electronic agenda packet email from Jen Truax and ask for a printed packet.
- e. Resignation of Board Member: Email has been received by Tina Fradette, stating her intention to resign from the board due to moving out of state soon. Official resignation has not been received by the town clerk.

Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items

- Next meeting: 11/04/2021

- Election of board officers
- Workshop: Social Emotional Learning
- Committees: Finance Committee, Curriculum Committee
- New Business for 11/18/2021: Test Scores, New Budget

Executive Session

- a. Security and Safety Plan
 - b. Superintendent Evaluation and Contract
- ***MOTION made by Marian Matthews to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing Security and Safety Plan, inviting Superintendent Craig Creller, Business Manager Deana Chrzan, and First Selectman Cathryn Silver-Smith. Motion seconded by Jane Urban and carried unanimously with one abstention (A. Maccarone).***

The board, Superintendent Craig Creller, Business Manager Deana Chrzan, and First Selectman Cathryn Silver-Smith entered executive session at 9:00 p.m. The board exited executive session at 9:28 p.m. No action was taken. Cathryn Silver-Smith left the meeting.

- ***MOTION made by Jane Urban to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing Superintendent Evaluation and Contract, inviting Superintendent Craig Creller. Motion seconded by Marian Matthews and carried unanimously.***

The board entered executive session at 9:30 p.m. Marian Matthews left the meeting at 10:40 p.m. The board exited executive session at 10:42 p.m. No action was taken.

Adjournment

- ***MOTION made by Al Maccarone to adjourn the meeting at 10:42 p.m. Motion seconded by Tess Grous and carried unanimously.***

Sara Wilson
Recording Secretary