

Ashford Board of Education  
**Meeting Minutes – May 7, 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 7:04 PM. Present were Jane Urban, Shannon Gamache, Tess Grous, Marian Matthews and Al Maccarone. Also present were Superintendent Dr. James Longo, Interim Business Manager Karen Munroe, Principal Troy Hopkins, Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford, Interim Acting Asst. Principal Polly Borysevich and recording secretary Jen Barsaleau. Also present was Atty. Rich Mills of Shipman & Goodwin.

Unable to attend was member Tina Fradette.

Approximately 75 members of the public signed in and out during the course of the meeting.

**Board Member Roles and Responsibilities (Atty. Rich Mills, Shipman & Goodwin)**

Chair John Lippert introduced Atty. Rich Mills from Shipman & Goodwin noting that Atty. Mills would be going over board member roles and legal responsibilities, followed by a brief question and answer period that should total about an hour. Topics included Freedom of Information, board authority, duties of the chairperson, committees and their role, electronic board communications, authority of the Superintendent and meeting conduct.

Members asked questions or sought clarity on specific items such as board email communications, best practice for committee meetings, legal timelines to post regular versus special meetings and executive session.

**Communications**

- John Lippert received communication from CABE noticing it is time to renew the district's membership.

**Opportunity for Public Comment**

- An email from Erika Duplessis-Rhodes was read aloud asking that the BOE reinstate staff positions that had been cut prior to the Public Hearing.
- John Kopec inquired about the control of information coming from the BOE and noted that a board member had spoken at the 4/29 meeting about the possibility of delaying teacher wage increases, which “quickly shot down” by the Superintendent, who is not a member of the BOE.
- Jennifer Lesczycnski spoke directly to everyone thanking them for their super hard work, noting the process was incredibly challenging. She agreed with Ms. Duplessis-Rhodes that keeping staff is priority as the students will need them when they go back to school. She would like the Spanish and custodial positions restored, noting that custodial needs are very important given the current times.

**Approval of Minutes: 04/23/2020, 04/29/2020**

***Motion made by Tess Grous to table the minutes of 04/23/2020, members are to email recommended edits to these minutes to the recording secretary. Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.***

***Motion made by Al Maccarone to approve the minutes of 04/29/2020 amended as follows:***

- ***Marian Matthews was not present***
- ***Despite technical issues, signing out of the Zoom meeting did not occur***

***Motion seconded by Jane Urban and carried with one abstention by Marian Matthews.***

**Old Business**

**a. FY 21 Budget**

At the May 6<sup>th</sup> public hearing, the Board of Finance voted to restore \$90,000 to the education budget. Based on the list of reductions that were made at the April 29<sup>th</sup> meeting, Dr. Longo provided members of the board with administrative recommendations for restoration:

Account Number	Title	Reduction
01-1000-111-10003 Plus several accounts.	World Language Certified Staff Includes Unemployment and benefits	\$ 36,719
01-2600-110-10000 Plus several accounts.	Custodians Includes Unemployment and benefits	18,661
01-1000-113-10000 01-1000-220-10000	Sub Teachers/Paras Reg Ed SS/Medicare	1,074 <u>82</u> 1,156
Athletic Program 01-2790-110-10001 01-2290-151-10001 01-2900-151-10000 01-2900-340-10000 01-1000-220-10000	Ashford Sports Accts. Extracurricular Transp. Prog Dir.: Athletic Coordinator Coaches Athletic Officials SS/Medicare	 2,640 2,500 22,600 5,126 <u>598</u> 33,464
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>\$ 90,000</b>

***Motion made by Al Maccarone to approve the recommendations provided by Dr. Longo.***

***Motion seconded by Marian Matthews.***

Discussion followed among the members of the board and there were some questions for the interim business manager, Superintendent and administrators about alternate ideas.

Chair John Lippert called for a vote, the motion on the floor failed.

***Motion made by Al Maccarone to restore the Spanish and custodial positions, the athletic program and to add \$1,156 to field trips/class trip transportation. Motion seconded by Jane Urban and carried unanimously.***

John Lippert expressed thanks to the many parents, teachers and others who took the time to write to the Board of Finance and in support of the BOE budget and making its case to the BOF. He noted the school and education are for everyone.

**b. COVID-19 Update**

Dr. Longo stated that Connecticut’s Governor has closed public schools for the remainder of this school year. Cindy Ford noted that she is making plans for Extended School Year based on state recommendations. She went on to say that we have an amazing staff who always rise to the occasion.

**New Business**

**a. 2020-2021 Healthy Foods Certification**

***Motion made by John Lippert that The Ashford Board of Education, pursuant to section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes, hereby certify that all food items offered for sale to students in the school under our jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education will meet said standards during the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Such certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises, whether or not school sponsored. Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.***

**Opportunity for Public Comment**

- AEA Co-President Jennifer Lindsay thanked the board on behalf of the AEA.

**Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items**

Approval of 4/23 minutes, “Framework for Understanding Poverty”, understanding finance curriculum, electric school buses and invite Melissa McDonough to the next BOE meeting and committee meeting schedule.

**Superintendent Evaluation (Executive Session Anticipated)**

***Motion made by Jane Urban to enter into executive session (9:41pm) for the purpose of evaluation of the Superintendent. Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.***

Present: John Lippert, Shannon Gamache, Tess Grous, Jane Urban, Al Maccarone, Marian Matthews.

The board exited executive session at 10:39 pm, there was no action taken.

**Adjournment**

***Motion made by Jane Urban to adjourn the meeting (10:45pm). Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.***

Recorded by:

Jennifer Barsaleau, Recording Secretary

