

EDUCATE, CHALLENGE, & INSPIRE

**WESTBROOK BOARD OF EDUCATION
Tuesday, October 13, 2020 @ 7:00 p.m.
Regular Board of Education Meeting**

MINUTES

Members Present: Zachary Hayden, Sally Greaves, Mary Ella Luft, Michelle Palumbo, Kim Walker, Don Perreault, Christine Kuehlewind, Mike Esposito, Michele Brigham

Also Present: Interim Supt. Dr. Patricia Charles; Administrators – R. Rose, T. Winch, Dr. Miller, M. Illinger; L. Wysocki, Business Manager, B. Russell, IT Specialist; T. Cosgriff, Athletic Dir.

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – The BOE meeting of October 13, 2020 was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Zachary Hayden, Chair.

MOTION by D. Perreault and SECOND by M. Brigham to add Synchronous Learning to Item VII. New Business, Item B. Vote unanimous.

MOTION by M. Palumbo and SECOND by D. Perreault to add Daisy COVID Update to Item VII. Superintendent's Report, Item E. Vote unanimous.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

- III. BOARD OF EDUCATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** None

- IV. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT** – Jesse McGannon reported on high school activities including boys' and girls' soccer teams and field hockey, High School Bowl, Math Team and SAT/PSAT's for juniors and seniors. He is hopeful that there will be a play this year. He added that students are wearing masks and social distancing.

- V. PUBLIC COMMENT:** No comments

- VI. ADMINISTRATOR(S) COMMENTS:** No comments

- VII. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Budget Guidelines & Development Timeline – 2021-22: The Board reviewed a timeline and draft of the BOE Budget Guidelines. MOTION by M. Brigham and SECOND by M. Palumbo to approve the 2021-2022 Budget Guidelines and Timeline. Vote unanimous.

B. Synchronous Learning: M. Esposito requested this topic be added to the agenda. The general consensus was that our district is doing a great job with online learning and that we should market our success. D. Perreault suggested the Board send a letter to teachers expressing appreciation for the phenomenal job they are doing, and if anyone has suggestions for marketing Westbrook's success to forward them to the Chair or to the Superintendent.

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Enrollment Update – Census October 1:

Dr. Charles reported the October 1 enrollment of 650 students which includes 6 out placed students. The October 1 enrollment is used for state reporting.

B. Superintendent Goals:

Dr. Charles explained that the purpose of the Superintendent setting goals is based on Board goals and helps the teachers and administrators to be in compliance when forming their own goals. The base for her goals included promoting high academic achievement; educate students in skills necessary for healthy, productive and fulfilling lives; advocate for education through effective communication between the community and the school; recruit, develop, support, and retain outstanding personnel; and provide an appropriate learning environment that promotes lifelong learning. Highlights included Objective 1.1 for Continuous improvement of instruction, and Objective 2.2 Increase social and emotional wellness among students. She commented on the impact on our English Learners and our special education students who opt more for distance learning, and said we are all struggling with managing the stress of COVID, and dealing with synchronous and asynchronous learning, but particularly sees the evidence in our ELL and Special Education population. She also focused on the Corona Virus and School Security and Safety, and internal and external communication. Each Board member received a copy of Dr. Charles' goals, which will be a foundation for when the Board works on their goals.

C. Seamless Summer Option:

Dr. Charles said that many surrounding districts are participating in the SSO program and explained why Westbrook is not. The plan only runs as long as there is money to fund it, probably through December. It would require increased staff and places a financial burden on the cafeteria. She said students needing help are getting help through the free and reduced plan already. The Board was given the opportunity to speak and the consensus was that as long as we are providing meals to those in need to continue to do so without participation in the SSO program. Dr. Charles reported that Westbrook can still enter into the SSO program if it was determined that there is a need to do so.

D. Updated Reopening Plan:

Dr. Charles shared an updated reopening plan which includes continuing how we are providing distance learning, social and emotional wellness and the changes in the athletics department.

E. Daisy COVID update:

Dr. Charles reported a 2nd confirmed case of COVID in the District. This case is at the elementary school. Health Director, Zackary Faiella, completed a case investigation and contact tracing and all identified people meeting

close contact criteria have been notified and are in quarantine. Custodians performed additional cleaning and disinfecting the school for the return of students and staff members on Tuesday, Oct. 13.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Update on Superintendent Search – Z. Hayden reported the Search Committee has been working hard and multiple interviews have taken place. It should be two or three weeks before deciding on a finalist.
- B. BOE Self-Evaluation – Goals & Retreat Update/Survey: Z. Hayden reported on the results of a survey he sent to Board members requesting information to assist in setting up a Board retreat. A date has not been agreed upon. Board members would like to keep the retreat to two hours or less or at least schedule more than one day. Although an in-person retreat is ideal, a consensus was that both could be accommodated (virtual and in-person). Zack will share a PDF of the results of the survey with the Board members. It is important that the Board works on their goals soon. Dr. Charles commented that part of the process is for the Board to learn the roles and responsibilities and how they work together with the Superintendent.
- C. Budget Committee discussion: L. Wysocki has agreed to meet with board members to help them have a better understanding of the budget process. M. Esposito suggested establishing three liaisons of board members to attend meetings with the Superintendent and to report back to the Board. He also suggested a reorganization of board committees and combining budget related committees into one. Continued discussion will take place at the December BOE meeting.

X. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes:
 - 1. Regular Meeting – September 08, 2020
 - 2. Special Meeting – September 14, 2020
 - 3. Special Meeting – September 28, 2020

MOTION by Z. Hayden and SECOND by S. Greaves to approve the minutes of 9/8, 9/14 and 9/28. Vote unanimous.

XI. FINANCIAL REPORTS

- A. Review of Check Listing: Board members reviewed check listings for September 3, 2020 in the amount of \$193,030.17, and September 17, 2020 in the amount of \$97,315.13
- B. Budget Narrative/Review of Expenditure Report: L. Wysocki provided an overview of the budget as it stands.
- C. Line Item Transfer: None
- D. Insurance Report: The most recent insurance report was provided to the Board.
- E. COVID-19 Expenses and Distribution of Surplus: L. Wysocki reported that she and Dr. Charles met with the Board of Finance and discussed expenses related to COVID. The BOF seemed willing to accommodate whatever is necessary for COVID related

expenses. Grant monies, Covid Relief Fund and reimbursements from FEMA were discussed.

XII. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Policy - K. Walker (no meetings)
- B. Long Range Planning – M. Palumbo requested a date to be set for a meeting.
- C. Insurance – M. Luft reported on activities of the Insurance Subcommittee meeting. Athletic and student accident insurance rates were set, and a health/dental renewal came in at -2.76%. The committee will meet again in December.
- D. Negotiations - S. Greaves (no report)
- E. Town Energy Ad Hoc Committee – L. Wysocki reported this committee will be meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 21.
- F. PTSO Representatives – M. Luft reported on a google meet with high attendance of the Daisy PTSO and planning for fundraisers in the spring. Z. Hayden asked Dr. Miller to report on WMS PTSO. Two fundraisers are planned – one a catalog sale for gift wrap, etc.; M. Esposito said high school is still working on plans of what to do this school year. T. Winch commented that the high school PTSO is coming up with creative ways to fundraise such as gift cards, and ordering online.

XIII. PERSONNEL

- A. Professional Appointment(s)
 - 1. Director of Special Education and Student Services: The Special Education Director Search Committee is pleased to announce that Francis A. Lagace will be joining the Westbrook School District. Mr. Lagace has been a Director of Pupil Services in Killingly Public Schools since 2015. He has served as Assistant Directors in Killingly and in Regional School District 11 and was a secondary mathematics teacher from 2001 to 2010. His education includes Engineering, Actuarial Science at the University of CT, Bachelor of General Studies at University of CT, Master's of Science in Secondary Education at the University of New England. He earned his Sixth Year Certification from Sacred Heart University and Special Education Master's Degree from Western Governors' University.

Superintendent Dr. Patricia Charles recommended the BOE approve Francis A. Lagace as the Director of Special Education and Student Services and to authorize her to execute the Special Education Director's contract. MOTION by S. Greaves and SECOND by M. Palumbo to approve hiring of Francis Lagace and the Special Education and Student Services Director and to authorize Dr. Charles to execute his contract. Vote: Aye(s): M. Luft, M. Palumbo, C. Kuehlewind, K. Walker, S. Greaves, D. Perreault, M. Brigham, Z. Hayden Abstained: M. Esposito

Mr. Lagace was present to address the Board stating he is honored and humbled and is very excited to get started. Dr. Charles expressed appreciation to the Special Education Director Search committee.
- B. Child-rearing leave request – An unpaid child-rearing leave request following approved FMLA by Jennifer Kowalski, Daisy Teacher, to return on approximately

January 25, 2021. Dr. Charles recommended that unpaid child-rearing leave be granted to Jennifer Kowalski as requested. MOTION by D. Perreault and SECOND by M. Esposito. Vote unanimous.

C. Non-certified Appointment(s): The Board was notified of the following Non-Certified new hires:

1. Jaramie Spencer was hired as a part time night custodian.
2. Meredith Werner was hired as a Daisy paraprofessional.

D. Non-Certified Resignation(s) – The Board was notified of the following resignation:

1. Deborah Trout-Kolb – Ms. Kolb, Paraprofessional at WMS, submitted her letter of retirement effective immediately.

MOTION by M. Palumbo and SECOND by M. Brigham to move into Executive Session at 8:50 p.m. with Superintendent Patricia Charles. Vote unanimous.

E Discussion concerning personnel matter (complaint regarding certified administrator)

Discussion of matters that would result in the disclosure of exempt matters.

Moved into Regular Session at 9:22 p.m.

XIV. ADJOURN: MOTION by D. Perreault and SECOND by M. Palumbo to adjourn at 9:25 p.m. Vote unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Walker, Board Secretary

Cecilia S. Lester, Board Recording Clerk

BOE Approved: November 10, 2020