

Ashford Board of Education
Meeting Minutes – December 17, 2015

7:30 p.m.

Note: Per C.G.S. §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 exception of motions and votes recorded, these minutes are unofficial until they have been read and approved by a majority vote of 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

Board J. Rupert called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm. Present were members K. Rourke, K. Warren, M. Matthews, J. Lippert, L. Donegan and J. Calarese, Superintendent Dr. J. Longo, Director of Special Education C. Ford, Principal T. Hopkins, Asst. Principal G. Dukette, Business Manager D. Neel and recording secretary J. Barsaleau. Also present was Ashford fleet mechanic S. Lyman.

Persons to be Heard

There was no audience present.

Motion made by J. Lippert to reorder the agenda to address item 6a: Decommission of School Bus at this time in the meeting, motion seconded by K. Warren and carried unanimously.

Mechanic Seth Lyman reported that this vehicle had been used as a spare bus and has failed motor vehicle inspection due to excessive frame and body rust. If the vehicle is not repaired within 15 days, motor vehicle will suspend the registration. Mr. Lyman reported that this would be a costly, time consuming repair and will not result in any further useful life of the bus if repaired.

Motion made by K. Rourke to decommission Bus #3 from active service. Motion seconded by L. Donegan and carried unanimously.

Communications

Chair J. Rupert received an email from a group of 6th grade students asking that the Board of Education has considered using LED lighting within the school to achieve energy savings. Members were very appreciative of the student's initiative in communicating this to the Board. Discussion followed concerning the types of lighting presently used in the school, energy saving upgrades that have occurred, and contacting the CT Clean Energy task force to further investigate savings opportunities.

Motion by J. Lippert for the Board of Education to continue to examine ways to make energy saving improvements to Ashford School and investigate the possibility of replacing current light bulbs with LED bulbs as soon as may reasonably be possible. Motion seconded by M. Matthews and carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: 11/19/15; 12/03/15

Motion to approve the minutes of 11/19/15 made by K. Rourke, seconded by L. Donegan and carried with two abstentions (J. Calarese, M. Matthews).

Motion to approve the minutes of 12/03/15 made by K. Warren, seconded by L. Donegan and carried unanimously.

Administrative Reports

a. Superintendent

Dr. Longo provided members with a working draft of a preliminary FY 17 budget. The draft is zero based, representing only known contractual increases and a projected health care increase. Options for potential inclusion in the budget were provided the working draft document. This document, referred to as the "status quo" budget, will be discussed later in the meeting.

b. Business Manager

Monthly financial reports were included in the board agenda packet; a written report was distributed. Mr. Neel attended the most recent Board of Finance meeting. Audit management letter recommendations, including a corrective action response by the Board, and financial accounting software were discussed. Mr. Neel recognized the many hours spent by staff to create the working draft budget. The Board of Education acknowledged receipt of the monthly financial and written reports of the Business Manager attached to these minutes, noting that there were no non-contractual payments to, or for the benefit of the Superintendent.

c. Principal/Asst. Principal

Mr. Hopkins reviewed the content of the Principal's report, theme based trimester activities of students and after school clubs. The physical education and health teachers are involved with the Gardening group and will be merging this with curriculum. The Winter Concert was a great success. The Select Chorus visited area hospitals earlier this week singing Christmas Carol and appeared on Channel 30 News.

Mr. Dukette provided an update on implementation of the “*Writing Pathways*” program, incorporating writing across the curriculum. A help desk support for teachers has been established to address questions and share needs directly with the administrative team. Also discussed were program revisions to the STRIVE (enrichment) program, and the start of a new program, “Wolf P.A.C.K.,” which will begin in January.

d. Director of Pupil Personnel

Mrs. Ford’s report addressed behavioral issues and needs. She attended a meeting with other Directors and the main focus of discussion was the increasing need for behavior supports in schools. Reductions at the state level have limited the funding resources available to the outside agencies that have long been utilized by public schools to provide behavioral intervention and support.

Dr. Longo took a moment to praise the administrative team for their consistent hard work, effort and leadership.

New Business

a. Decommission of School Bus

Addressed earlier in the meeting.

b. Bicknell Trust: Authorization of 2015 Scholarship Awards

The November 2015 Bicknell Ashford Education Trust statement was reviewed. The current balance is \$117,480.16. Members discussed the trust’s guidelines, the number and denominations of past scholarship awards, return on investment and the management company fees.

Motion made by M. Matthews to table the authorization of 2015 Bicknell Scholarship Awards until the next board meeting. Motion seconded by L. Donegan and carried unanimously.

c. First Reading of Policies (Series 5000: School Lunch Program-Charging Policy)

The policy and associated regulations were briefly reviewed. The policy has been forwarded to legal counsel for editing prior to second reading in January.

Old Business

a. Second Reading of Policies: (Series 5000 – Use of Private Technology by Students; Wellness)

The Use of Private Technology by Students policy offered optional language that would allow students to bring their own devices to school using wireless provided by the district. While a required policy for boards of education, Dr. Longo does not recommend the addition of optional language at this time. The optional language can be revisited at a later time if desired.

Motion made by K. Warren to approve the Use of Private Technology by Students without optional language, seconded by L. Donegan. Motion carried with two abstentions (M. Matthews, J. Calarese).

Motion made by K. Warren to approve the Wellness policy as provided by counsel, seconded by L. Donegan. Motion carried with two abstentions (M. Matthews, J. Calarese).

b. Revisit Family and Medical Leave Request

Dr. Longo informed the Board that medical leave for a certified staff member began on December 16th. The board had been made aware of this matter at a prior meeting and had requested they be informed when the leave commenced.

Motion made by L. Donegan to acknowledge the medical leave of a certified staff member beginning December 16, 2015, motion seconded by K. Rourke and carried unanimously.

A brief recess was called at 9:37 pm by mutual agreement. The meeting resumed at 9:45 pm

c. FY 17 Budget Worksession

An FY 17 working draft of a status quo budget, narrative and options were reviewed in its entirety followed by extensive discussion. The Board directed the Superintendent to seek out an additional option or options that address declining enrollment and maintains the integrity of current programming at Ashford School.

Motion made by K. Rourke to table remaining items on the agenda until the next regular meeting and to adjourn (10:44 pm) Motion seconded by J. Calarese and carried unanimously.

Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items

Superintendent Evaluation (Executive Session, Action Anticipated)

Tabled.

Recorded by:

Jennifer Barsaleau, Recording Secretary

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: January 21, 2016