

Ashford Board of Education  
Regular Meeting Minutes – April 17, 2014  
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 chair J. Rupert called the meeting to order at 7:37 pm. Present were J. Lippert, K. Warren, J. Rupert and K. Rourke. Also present were Superintendent J. Longo, Principal T. Hopkins and recording secretary J. Barsaleau. Present in the audience were Cathryn Silver-Smith, Nichole Page and Gay Leedie. Unable to attend were board members B. Supina, L. Donegan and D. Wesson.

**Persons to be Heard**

G. Leedie addressed the planned location of the computer lab discussed during the budget deliberations for next year. She brought up the issue of air conditioning needs for the equipment in the lab, and that alternate locations may need to be considered if the expense of changing that classroom into a lab is too great. The board thanked her and was appreciative of that input.

**Communications**

K. Rourke shared that she had gotten an e-mail communication from the Board of Finance chair asking for review of the request for proposals seeking an auditing firm, and to provide any response to that RFP document. Mrs. Rourke had no concerns with the RFP and stated her appreciation for being part of this process.

**Approval of Minutes: 04/01/2014; 04/03/2014**

Motion made by K. Warren to approve the special meeting minutes of 04/01/2014. Motion seconded by J. Lippert, and carried unanimously.

Motion made by K. Warren to approve the special meeting minutes of 04/03/2014 with a spelling correction from “lighting” to lightning on page 1, Personnel, subsection b. Motion seconded by J. Lippert. Discussion followed concerning motions, amendments and procedures for voting. K. Warren withdrew her motion. J. Lippert withdrew his second.

Motion made by K. Warren to table the approval of the 04/03/2014 minutes until the next meeting pending review of Robert’s Rules of Order concerning voting procedures for amended motions. Motion seconded by J. Lippert and carried unanimously.

**Committee Reports**

**a. Finance**

**1. FY 13-14 Budget Update**

The finance subcommittee met prior to this meeting and updated the committee on projects in the current budget that have begun, or have been planned for this year. Dr. Longo will provide more detail during his report later in the meeting. The business office staff was present at the meeting and reviewed the current year budget, known encumbrances and other expenses that are known at this time. The current projection was that the FY 14 budget would show a surplus of \$9,316. The business office has completed its reconciliation through March 31<sup>st</sup>, but some reconciling differences remain with the Town. These are entries that the board has asked the Town treasurer to make, but they have not yet been made. With this in mind, the board chair suggested that the Superintendent contact the 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman and set up a time to meet with the business office staff and the town treasurer to work out a plan to address these entries. Ms. Silver-Smith spoke from the audience and asked that she be informed of any meeting and copied on any related communication. Security grant reimbursement funds were received and a list was provided of budget lines that were used to purchase security items stated the grant narrative were replenished.

**2. Quarterly Transfers (per board policy)**

The committee does not recommend any budget transfers be made at this time. Budget transfers will be revisited in May.

**Administrative Reports**

**a. Superintendent**

Dr. Longo reviewed his written report, providing some background information on each category. Curriculum: Math curriculum materials will be purchased using currently available REAP grant funds, and more purchased after anticipated REAP funding is received in the fall. The curriculum change is necessary due to implementation of the Common Core.

Social studies will be purchasing one set of books for the classroom and will be utilizing an electronic web component. Law requires the identification of Gifted and Talented students; we plan to pursue the Renzuli model of project based learning to serve this population of students. Robotics lab equipment and supplies will be purchased as part of middle school enrichment.

Facilities: Restrooms in the lower lobby near the gym are being painted and having sink, toilet and other fixtures replaced as necessary. Water fountain filling stations are being installed, we have plans to purchase cafeteria tables, as many of them are a safety concern and most can no longer be repaired.

Those that are deemed worth keeping will be saved to use as extra tables for events.

There are four areas of the roof that have been identified and will be repaired. The preventative attention the roof has been receiving each season has been very beneficial in terms of the need for a roof replacement in the future.

Security: The security doors listed in the security grant have been installed with a panic button. The button itself is not yet hooked up to the fire alarm system, but ultimately will be part of the entire fire alarm and security system. A company is coming out next week to measure windows and give a price for glazing the main office and other windows with a bullet resistant film. Safety benches for the playground, interior and exterior signage, and radio compatibility with local first responders are a priority and are in progress now.

Technology: Technology grant funds have been received and the purchase of computers identified in the grant have been purchased and will be set up in a lab after school is out for Connecticut's new Smarter Balanced assessment testing and for educational use. Dr. Longo spoke of a 5-year plan in replacing laptops, and in filling the needs for additional iPad carts in the future.

Communications: The school web site is in need of work. S. Waddell, C. Ford and J. Barsaleau have been working on the site needs and made contact with a group that will be able to assist in its improvements.

2014-2015 Calendar and PowerSchool: A trimester schedule is planned, and standards based report cards through grade 5 will be utilized. A trimester schedule will be more beneficial in terms of allowing more time for teaching and assessing each child. Linking to a parent portal in PowerSchool is planned. A pilot of the portal for grades 7 and 8 is planned before the end of this school year.

Transportation: Passenger vans used largely for transportation in special education currently do not have cameras. The director of special education feels that this should be addressed and we will be seeking quotes to purchase up to three cameras.

#### **b. Principal**

Mr. Hopkins began his report by informing the board that he had spent three days in service to the state as a scorer and grading for the CT Administrator's Test. He found the experience extremely valuable in terms of professional development as an administrator and would welcome the opportunity to do it again. He and two teachers, Donna Backhaus and Jennifer Lindsay were pleased to represent Ashford at the New England League of Middle Schools conference (NELMS). They presented workshops to other professional educators that were very well received by their peers. Mr. Hopkins then shared a PowerPoint presentation of the STEAM concept that has been discussed in great detail of late. (copy attached)

At the conclusion of the presentation, Dr. Longo lauded Mr. Hopkins for his work and collaboration on this project and that he was excited to be working with Mr. Hopkins on this endeavor.

#### **c. Director of Pupil Personnel**

No report.

#### **Old Business**

##### **a. 2014-2015 Budget**

The Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:30 pm. A page was added to the board's presentation showing where grants are applied to the funding of staff positions.

#### **New Business**

##### **a. Approval of Staff Resignations**

Three members of the certified staff have submitted letters indicating that they will be retiring at the end of the school year and partaking in the early retirement incentive offered by the board. Letters were received from Amelia Porri, Janis Belair and Martha Hardisty.

Motion made by K. Warren to accept the resignations of Mrs. Porri, Mrs. Belair and Mrs. Hardisty with sincere thanks and appreciation of their many years of service.

Dr. Longo stated that all three of these teachers have had great impact on this school and will be missed.

Mr. Hopkins echoed that statement and added that these retirements are a big loss for the school. Amy Porri has been a leader in integrating technology into the teaching of music; Marti Hardisty's list of contributions to the school are endless, and Jan Belair has shown incredible flexibility and successfully taken on the challenges of being assigned varying grades and teaching assignments, often with little or no advanced notice. He expressed his appreciation for each and is thankful to have had the opportunity to work with them. All will be greatly missed. Mr. Rupert expressed his appreciation for their dedication and service to Ashford and requested they be formally recognized at a future meeting.

Motion seconded by J. Lippert and carried unanimously.

**b. 2014-2015 School Calendar Revision**

Calendar revision was discussed earlier and involves a change to a trimester schedule from the present quarterly schedule. This may or may not impact events such as parent teacher conference dates and will be revisited.

**c. Authorization to Submit Grant Application – Individuals w/Disabilities (IDEA) 2014-2016**

Included in the agenda packet were copies of the introductory pages of the IDEA grant application and cover page indicating preliminary funding amounts of \$102,456 for special education assistance funds and \$6,952 for preschool education assistance funds.

Motion made by K. Warren to authorize the filing of the 2014-2016 IDEA grant application. Motion seconded by J. Lippert and carried unanimously.

**Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items**

The next meeting date is May 1st. Agenda to include approval of minutes of 04/03/2014 (tabled).

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at (9:25 pm) made by J. Lippert, seconded by K. Rourke and carried unanimously.

Recorded by:

Jennifer Barsaleau  
Recording Secretary