

Ashford Board of Education  
Regular Meeting Minutes – May 15, 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. Rupert, K. Warren, L. Donegan and K. Rourke. Also present were Superintendent J. Longo, Principal T. Hopkins and recording secretary J. Barsaleau. Twenty-five people were in the audience (list attached). Unable to attend were board members B. Supina, J. Lippert and D. Wesson.

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Community Service Project Presentation**

Several students and Mrs. Hardisty were present and shared a PowerPoint presentation of their community service project “Art on the Walls.” 8<sup>th</sup> grade students sent out a survey to students and teachers asking for their favorite children’s books. Students then tabulated the survey results and set out to paint the favorite book characters on corridor walls. The presentation was very enjoyable and the board was very receptive and appreciative of this project. Mrs. Lusa thanked the students and commented on what a wonderful job the students are doing, how her students are following the progress of the work and how much the preschool students love the characters. She also commented on how well the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students work together and their obvious enthusiasm for this project. Board member K. Warren suggested that Mrs. Hardisty contact the Chronicle to publicize the project. Mrs. Hardisty said she would look into that, and noted that Lowe’s and Sherwin Williams donated much of the paint for this project and asked for the group to provide updates and photos of the project. Board member L. Donegan thanked the students and admired their initiative and hard work.

**Persons to be Heard**

R. Haeger shared her concern that on at least two recent occasions, she was volunteering at school and found that students in the library were unable to sign out books, as there was no staff member in the library available to help them. She also shared her observation that the art room seems to be too small to hold the equivalent of a class and half and allow for quality instruction, and asked that this be considered when making class schedules for next year.

**Communications**

A thank you note was received from the Ashford Easter Bunny for making the school available for the Easter Egg hunt. Scholarship Management Services sent a letter identifying 2014 Bicknell Scholarship recipients. Five people will receive these awards. The CT Association of Boards of Education (CABE) sent a letter to the Board Chair thanking the board for its continued membership, and a publication was received from the CT Invention Convention held in May.

**Approval of Minutes: 04/03/2014; 04/17/2014**

Motion made by K. Rourke to approve the meeting minutes of 04/03/2014. Motion seconded by K. Warren. The header of the minutes should be amended to note that this meeting was a regular meeting and not a special meeting. Discussion then followed concerning the approval of an amended motion from that meeting. After review of “Robert’s Rules” by the board chair and the superintendent’s office, it was determined that the amendment is accepted as part of the original motion. The motion to approve the April 3<sup>rd</sup> minutes carried unanimously.

Motion made by K. Warren to approve the regular meeting minutes of 04/17/2014. Motion seconded by K. Rourke. K. Warren asked the secretary to spell out at least once of items that are commonly known by letter combinations, such as RFP, which means Requests for Proposals. The motion to approve the April 17<sup>th</sup> minutes carried with one abstention (L. Donegan).

**Committee Reports**

**a. Finance**

The committee was not able to meet due to lack of a quorum.

**Administrative Reports**

**a. Superintendent – Year In Review**

Dr. Longo reviewed his written report provided in the board packet.

**1. Proposed Staffing Change**

Dr. Longo asked that the board consider restoring the music position to full time for next school year

as it relates to the board's stated goal and implementation of a STEAM based curriculum. Open enrollment for health insurance will have passed by the time of the board's next meeting and there should be enough information available concerning available funds to consider restoration. He also asked the board to consider the reduced physical education position for next year, and that it be inclusive of a health teaching assignment. The current physical education teacher would be allowed to teach health classes up to .2 FTE, with a waiver from the department of education.

K. Rourke stated that a strategic plan is needed to move to a STEAM based curriculum. She also stated the board needs a detailed report showing the costs of the early retirement incentives, retired employee healthcare and associated fringe benefits lines, i.e. medicare, taxes, etc. in order to consider the restoration question.

**b. Principal**

Mr. Hopkins distributed his report, which summarized the selection process for new teacher hires. The process is comprehensive and complex, but is necessary to find and choose the best teacher candidates for Ashford. The board was supportive of the process for selection. L. Donegan suggested that Mr. Hopkins reach out to UCONN concerning Residential Learning Communities.

**c. Director of Pupil Personnel**

Mrs. Hartigan's report was included in the board packet addressing the maintenance of effort issue cited by the state. Dr. Longo shared that Mrs. Hartigan hopes to be back from medical leave soon and the she has been extremely active despite her absence from the building, she has been working from home and is in contact every day.

**Old Business**

**a. 2014 Bicknell Scholarships**

As mentioned earlier, Scholarship Management Services has named five recipients of the 2014 Bicknell Trust scholarships. Each will receive \$2,000 scholarships.

**New Business**

**a. Approval of Staff Resignation**

Dr. Longo received a letter of resignation from teacher Courtney Mercadante who will be relocating over the summer. Motion made by K. Warren to accept with regret, the resignation of Courtney Mercadante. Motion seconded by L. Donegan and carried unanimously.

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

Dr. Longo and Mr. Hopkins asked the board to consider revision of the approved school calendar as follows: the May 26 professional day is moved to August 27, the first day of school for students is August 28, the March 16 professional day is moved to March 23 and the last day of school is June 12. Motion to accept the calendar change as presented made by K. Warren, seconded by K. Rourke and carried unanimously.

**c. Review of Attorney-Client Privileged Communication – School Security** (Executive Session Anticipated)

Motion made by K. Warren to enter into executive session (8:52 pm) for the purpose of discussing confidential school security plan requirements and to invite Dr. Longo and Mrs. Barsaleau to attend. Motion seconded by L. Donegan and carried unanimously.

Present: J. Rupert, K. Warren, L. Donegan, K. Rourke, J. Longo and J. Barsaleau.

The board and invited attendees exited executive session at 9:34 pm.

**Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items**

The next meeting date is June 5<sup>th</sup>. Agenda items to include discussion of board committee structure, revisiting position restoration, school safety policy reading and CL&P lighting upgrade offer.

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at (9:35 pm) made by K. Warren, seconded by L. Donegan and carried unanimously.

Recorded by:

Jennifer Barsaleau  
Recording Secretary