

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut
Special Strategic Planning Meeting
August 8, 2019
3:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Ashford School Library/Media Center

AGENDA

- 3:00 Approval of Minutes: 06/06/19; 06/20/19; 07/18/19
- 3:15 Review of BOE Mission, Vision, Goals
- Strategic BOE tasks associated with goals
 - Review of CAGE BOE Roles and Responsibilities
- 3:45 Opportunity for Public to Speak
- 4:00 BOE Committees
- Reports and Future Plans
- 5:00 Capital Projects
- Update and Prioritization
- 5:45 Working Dinner
- BOE Roundtable – Concerns, Ideas and Recommendations
- 6:15 Community Outreach
- BOE ideas for Community Connections
- 6:45 Second Opportunity for Public to Speak
- 7:00 Second BOE Roundtable – New Ideas, Concerns, Topics of Discussion
- 7:30 Adjourn

Ashford Board of Education Goals

Curriculum – Ensure a Kindergarten to 8th grade curriculum that challenges students to use methods of inquiry to solve problems, think critically, and to express themselves creatively and effectively.

Financial - Develop a budget that ensures the best possible education while being fiscally responsible to taxpayers.

Culture - Foster an environment of physical and emotional health and wellness for all. Support a community that recognizes professional expertise and provides diverse opportunities that enhance teaching and learning.

Community Relations and Facilities - Provide opportunities for enhanced community engagement and serve as a leader for Ashford in enhancing energy efficiency, developing a maintenance and restoration plan that extends the school's useful life and demonstrates environmental responsibility.

All meetings, conferences, programs and activities at Ashford School are available, without discrimination, to individuals with disabilities as defined by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and/or Title II of the American with Disabilities Act. Individuals with disabilities requesting relocation of this meeting should call the Superintendent at 429-1927 or e-mail a request to jplongo@ashfordct.org not later than 2 working days prior to the meeting. Hearing impaired individuals may communicate their request for accommodations by using the e-mail address above, or calling the State of CT TDD relay service (800) 842-2880 or the national relay service number (800) 855-2880.

Enclosures: Minutes

Ashford Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes – June 6, 2019
7:00 pm
Ashford School District Office Conference Room

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 7:08 pm. Present were members Jane Urban, Shannon Gamache and Marian Matthews. Also in attendance were Superintendent James Longo, Assistant Principal Garrett Dukette and recording secretary Jen Barsaleau. Unable to attend were members Kay Warren, John Calarese and Lisa Donegan. Resident Rebecca Haeger was present in the audience.

Communications

- A thank-you note was received from Haley Ignatowicz, one of the recipients of this year's Bicknell Scholarship.

Approval of Minutes: 05/16/2019

Motion made by Marian Matthews to approve the minutes of 05/16/19. Motion seconded by Jane Urban and carried unanimously.

Opportunity for Public Comment

- Rebecca Haeger commented that she was glad that the budget passed at referendum.

Committee Worksessions (Building & Grounds; Cafeteria)

Due to member absences, there were no committee worksessions, but members were asked to comment on committee related topics. Dr. Longo shared that he had a meeting earlier in the day to discuss future plans for the library media center, including the possibility of room alterations. This will be revisited next year to allow Mrs. Craven to get acclimated to the role of library media specialist and to gather thoughts and ideas for the best use of the library media center.

Marian Matthews inquired as to which energy saving measures have been completed to date. Dr. Longo will revisit the list of the 23 suggested improvements noted in the last energy audit.

Board members engaged in a lengthy discussion about the cafeteria and food service including but not limited to increasing salad component offerings, biodegradable packaging, replacing plastic utensils with silverware, opening up the salad meal option to students in other grades, not just 5-8. It was suggested that other districts, such as Mansfield, be consulted about salad bar operation. The grant application for Salad Bars To Schools has been submitted. Dr. Longo will meet with food service manager Karen Samperi to discuss these items, and he will reach out to the food service director in Mansfield before scheduling a cafeteria committee meeting.

Old Business

a. Walking/Biking to School (Transportation Policy) Follow Up

A revised draft to the policy was distributed to members. It was noted there are still some more edits desired. Counsel will be contacted to make these edits and upon receipt, the policy will be added to a future agenda for first reading.

New Business

a. 2019 Bicknell Trust Scholarship Report

John Lippert read the names of the 2019 Bicknell Trust Scholarship recipients. \$1,000 scholarships were awarded to Faith Carabino, Haley Ignatowicz, Marcella Vertefeulle and Rachel Vertefeulle.

b. Security System

Garrett Dukette distributed a proposal to purchase the "Raptor Visitor Management" system. The system will greatly improve administration of visitor management at Ashford School. The system is relatively inexpensive and enhances security and safety.

Motion made by Marian Matthews to approve the purchase of the Raptor Visitor Management System with an initial cost of \$1,999 and \$540 for annual license fees. Motion seconded by Jane Urban and carried unanimously.

c. Staff Resignation

A letter of resignation was received from math teacher Helene Poppleton.

Motion made by Marian Matthews to accept the resignation of Helene Poppleton. Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.

d. Discuss Strategic Planning Meeting

Item tabled until the next regular meeting.

Second Opportunity for Public Comment

- Rebecca Haeger said she was in favor of the idea of talking to other food service directors to ask what resources they use. She thinks it is wonderful that students could walk or bike to school, but very concerned about traffic speeds on Rt. 89. More signage or flashing lights indicating school zone are needed. She also supported the purchase of the visitor management system and noted that the lower lobby door lock mechanism was not working. Mr. Dukette responded that it has already been repaired.

Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items

The next regular meeting is 6/20. Agenda items: FY 19 Budget and Budget Transfers, strategic planning, transportation policy. A reminder that teacher negotiations are scheduled for June 18th from 6-8pm.

Non-Union Personnel Negotiations (Executive Session)

Motion made by Jane Urban to table executive session for Superintendent Evaluation and to enter into executive session (8:24 pm) for the purpose of non-union personnel negotiations, inviting Mr. Dukette to participate in the session. Motion seconded by Marian Matthews and carried unanimously.

Present: John Lippert, Shannon Gamache, Jane Urban, Marian Matthews and Garrett Dukette.

Garrett Dukette exited the session at 8:36 pm.

The board exited executive session at 8:37 pm, there was no action taken.

Superintendent Evaluation (Executive Session)

Tabled

Adjournment

Motion made by Jane Urban to adjourn the meeting (8:37 pm). Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.

Recorded by:

Jennifer Barsaleau
Recording Secretary

Ashford Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes – June 20, 2019
7:00 pm
Ashford School District Office Conference Room

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Call to Order

Chair John Lippert called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. Present were Kay Warren, John Calarese, Marian Matthews and Jane Urban. Also present was Dr. James Longo, Superintendent, Business Manager Lisa Dyer, Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford and Principal Troy Hopkins. Present in the audience was Rebecca Haeger.

Communications

Martha Sibley-Jett provided a year-end health room report. Members reviewed the report followed by some discussion regarding this report.

Approval of Minutes (06/06/2019)

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

Opportunity for Public Comment

Rebecca Haeger made comments regarding continuity of teachers coming and going. Her child did not have continuity. Expressed concerns regarding the reading specialist position being eliminated. What plans or actions that are currently being done after the elimination of the position. Discussed having another survey of 8th and 9th grade students be done each year regarding their transition to high school. There was discussion regarding high school transition. Mrs. Ford stated end of the freshman year would be a better time for the survey. Timing of the survey is very important. Mr. Hopkins stated there were a low number of students that participated in the survey. There was discussion regarding doing this survey for at least 5 years. Mrs. Ford stated that district 19 is looking at how the transition of students entering their freshman year. Dr. Longo stated that at the superintendents meeting two of the superintendents discussed the transition at their last meeting. Through sports many kids are meeting each other before they get to E.O. Smith which is helpful. Students need to be prepared for the amount of homework. There was further discussion regarding the social transition however we can focus on the academic transition. There was discussion regarding the surveying at the end of the freshman and the end of sophomore year. Dr. Longo discussed taking the social aspect of the survey off because that is something that the students learn at home not at school.

Administrative Reports (Superintendent, Business Manager)

a. FY 19 Budget Transfers

b. FY 19 Year-End Budget

Mrs. Dyer reported that there is approximately \$50,000 remaining in the FY19 budget, however there are a number of items that will be posted in the coming weeks. Dr. Longo discussed the transition that is taking place in the business office. Jen Barsaleau, Catherine Klessner and Lisa Dyer have pitched in to help and Catherine Klessner is going to work part-time until someone is hired for the A/P payroll position in the near future.

Old Business

a. Discuss Strategic Planning Meeting (Dates, Topics)

Strategic planning meeting dates were discussed. July 18th was decided upon as the meeting date starting at 2:00 pm. The regular board meeting may still need to be held at 7:00. Topics of the meeting was administration reports on standardized testing, transportation costs, energy audit, curricular and instruction (this committee held a meeting on Monday and will bring topics to consider) Mr. Lippert suggested Dr. Longo come up with an agenda with many items that they can choose from. Have the cafeteria sub committee come and share their results of their

meetings at this meeting. Possible that the cafeteria committee will meet prior to the planning meeting to discuss using real silverware.

New Business

a. Staff Appointments

Mr. Hopkins discussed the process for filling the math position. They held rigorous interviews and the candidate presented a lesson and met with the 7th and 8th grade team. Kristine Melo and Marcia LoRiccio already know each other and this adds diversity to the staff.

Motion made by John Calarese to appoint Kristine Melo to the position of full time math teacher. Motion seconded by Kay Warren and carried unanimously.

Mrs. Ford stated that Megan Gendron had been working in a contracted position here this past year and was a former paraprofessional at the school. She is a dedicated teacher and loves her students. She is very good with younger population and has proven to be a good fit in Ashford.

Motion made by Jane Urban to appoint Megan Gendron to the position of full-time special education teacher. Motion seconded by Kay Warren and carried unanimously.

b. AEA Negotiations Update

John Lippert reported there was a meeting with AEA on Wednesday 6/18 to start teacher negotiations.

Second Opportunity for Public Comment

Mrs. Haeger encouraged the board to have a discussion about retaining teachers at the strategic planning meeting. She discussed hiring more experience teachers for continuity especially at the middle school level. She also encouraged that work sessions be posted publicly.

Next meeting date and items

Strategic Planning meeting date is July 18th at 2:00 pm; alternate date Aug 8th at 2:00.

Non-Union Personnel Negotiations (Executive Session)

Motion made by Jane Urban to enter into executive session at 8:12pm for the purpose of non-union personnel negotiations. Motion seconded by Marian Matthews and carried unanimously.

Present: John Lippert, Jane Urban, Marian Matthews, John Calarese, Kay Warren.

Administrators Troy Hopkins and Cindy Ford were invited individually to join the session briefly.

The board exited executive session at 9:20pm. There was no action taken.

Superintendent Evaluation (Executive Session)

Motion made by Kay Warren to enter into executive session at 9:20pm for the purpose of evaluation of the Superintendent. Motion seconded by John Calarese and carried unanimously.

Present: John Lippert, Jane Urban, Marian Matthews, John Calarese, and Kay Warren.

The board exited executive session at 9:42pm. There was no action taken.

Adjournment

Motion made by Marian Matthews to adjourn the meeting at 9:42pm. Motion seconded by Jane Urban and carried unanimously.

Recorded by:

Lisa Dyer
Business Manager

Ashford Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes – July 18, 2019

7:00 pm

Ashford School District Office Conference Room

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Call to Order

Chair John Lippert called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM. Present were John Calarese, Shannon Gamache and Jane Urban. Also present was Dr. James Longo, Superintendent of Schools, Business Manager Lisa Dyer, Transportation Coordinator Joan Celotti and Food Service Manager Karen Samperi. Unable to attend were members Kay Warren, Marian Matthews and Lisa Donegan. Present in the audience were Christina Siggins, Tom Dell and Tess Grous.

Superintendent Evaluation (Executive Session)

Motion by Jane Urban to enter into executive session for the purposes of Superintendent Evaluation and inviting Dr. Longo into the session. Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.

Present: John Calarese, Shannon Gamache, Jane Urban, John Lippert, Dr. Longo.

The board and Dr. Longo exited executive session at 7:40pm. No action was taken.

Communications

- John Lippert read three letters that were sent to the BOE thanking the Board for awards and scholarships received.
- A letter was received from Amy Capozziello requesting maternity leave commencing on or about December 2nd.

Motion made by John Calarese to approve the maternity leave request of Amy Capozziello.

Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.

- An email was received from Michael Dietz commenting on the amazing teachers and great programs offered at the school. The reason they chose to reside in Ashford was because of the small town and the school system. He stated that he would not forget the experience his daughter had during her time at Ashford School and that he was impressed with the international travel offered, Mrs. Craven, Ms. Imhoff and Mrs. Aubrey. He also commented on the hard work that Mrs. Schillinger does in the main office.

Approval of Minutes (06/06/2019) 06/20/2019

Tabled until the next meeting due to board attendance.

Opportunity for Public Comment

Tess Grous commented that her daughter is attending E.O. Smith and was thankful that someone had extended her a scholarship opportunity. She shared positive comments regarding the letters from students that were read earlier in the meeting.

District Administrative Reports (Superintendent, Business Manager)

a. FY 19 Budget Transfers

Lisa Dyer distributed a list of FY 19 line item budget transfers totaling \$90,308. Discussion followed.

Motion made by Jane Urban to approve FY 19 budget transfers in the amount of \$90,308.

Motion seconded by John Calarese and carried unanimously.

b. FY 19 Year-End Budget

Lisa Dyer distributed an FY 19 year-end budget report dated 7/18/19. Discussion followed concerning certified staff line adjustments.

Motion made by Shannon Gamache to add to the agenda, item 7b, “Approval of FY 20 Non-Union, Non-Certified Staff Employee Agreements.” Motion seconded by Jane Urban and carried unanimously.

Old Business

a. Strategic Planning Session Agenda

1. New capital projects up to \$50,000. Dr. Longo explained there have been issues with the fire alarm system recently and we have been advised the diagnostic/main systems panel needs to be replaced.
2. Discussion regarding dress code
3. Screen time and recess were discussed
4. Biking and walking to school was discussed
5. Administration will prepare reports for the meeting
6. Home room for the 7th and 8th grade
7. Curriculum and instruction committee to give an update at what they have been working on
8. A curriculum template for all curriculum will be in the same format. The point of the curriculum committee was discussed. State the intention of the committee and adopt a mission.
9. Teacher retention
10. Sustainability and energy audit
11. Freshman surveys should be done in the Fall and Spring with a comparison of area schools with topics on the survey. Troy will be asked to ask other sending elementary schools to RD19 to do the surveys as well.

b. Approval of FY 20 Non-Union, Non-Certified Employee Agreements

Employee agreements for non-certified employees of the Board were discussed.

Motion made by Shannon Gamache to direct the Superintendent to execute employment agreements with wages as stated in the approved FY 20 budget for the 2019-2020 fiscal year for the following employees: Business Manager, Technology Coordinator, Fleet Mechanic, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, Administrative Assistant to the Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel, the Administrative Assistant to the Principal, the Office Clerk and the School Nurse. Motion seconded by John Calarese and carried unanimously.

New Business

a. Cafeteria/Food Services Discussion

Karen Samperi stated that she is working with Ghost Farm in Willington to purchase certified organic fruits and vegetables. The salad bar grant was approved, it will take approximately a year to complete the process. On August 15th she is having staff training for salad bar operation and standards. Her biggest fear is that there will be waste. She stated that she gets \$15,000 of free food through the USDA. She is going to use \$5,000 for the fresh vegetables and shredded cheese they provide. Karen reviewed the current state of the Cafeteria budget. Karen asked the BOE to consider purchasing a sign for the cafeteria to help the students know what is for lunch and any specials they may have that day. Currently there is just a paper menu and they have tried a chalkboard in the past but the students would change the words. The cost would be \$835, funds will be donated to the Cafeteria to purchase the menu board.

There was discussion regarding free and reduced lunches and the annual roll up of data in the cafeteria database was completed. Karen noted that Kim Johnston does a great job in reducing food waste. There was discussion regarding offering a weekend lunch program and changing to flat ware from plastic utensils. In addition, the Board requested that some sort of electronic salad ordering system be put into place in the middle school. The Board thanked Karen for all that she does.

Dr. Longo stated that he would have Mr. Waddell look into the electronic ordering system.

John Lippert discussed some future agenda items including more recess and the salad ordering process. There was discussion regarding having less processed foods. Shannon Gamache stated that she would send information to Karen about a cooking school in Tulsa.

b. Transportation/Fleet Services Discussion

The BOE welcomed Joan Celotti to the meeting. Joan stated that she was glad that BOE put this back on the agenda. There was discussion regarding the annual purchase of a bus. Purchasing a bus annually helps to cut down on breakdowns or expensive repairs. Seth Lyman's morning high school run was discussed. As the fleet mechanic, Seth uses existing parts to help keep costs down. There have been several years where we have not bought new buses which contributes to more break downs and repairs. This year alone there were 68 field trips which puts a strain on the drivers and the buses, having spare buses helps this situation. Handicap buses were discussed. Last year a Transit Van was purchased that had two wheelchair positions. Additional seats were purchased so the transportation department can utilize it more. Joan stated that all buses have at least 2 cameras, while new buses come with four. The cameras are very helpful in investigating incidents that take place on the bus. The amount of transportation staff and the long reaching pick up and drop off points make it difficult to shorten runs.

Dr. Longo went to UCONN a few years ago and they couldn't make other adjustments to the Ashford runs. Outsourcing has been discussed. Sometimes they have to juggle due to field trips and sports. There was discussion regarding the bus shed. It is used to store keys for fuel, trip tickets and there is also a camera housed in the hut that records the back lot. Drivers clock in via phone or time clock. Use of phones is encouraged so that the drivers do not need to enter the building to clock in.

There are safety meetings held 3-4 times per year. There was some discussion regarding introductions to drivers and having the same drivers repeat runs and get to know parents and to be sure who should be at the bus stop.

Bus ride times were discussed. Joan stated that there are fewer calls about drive time. It is difficult to make the demographic runs with all the far-reaching bus pickups in Ashford. There is a statewide bus driver shortage. New regulations come out every year. It currently takes about 4 months to get a bus driver's license and 8 to 10 weeks to be cleared through fingerprinting to get that license.

There was discussion regarding bids for bus transportation and the suggestion was to pay companies to do an RFP bid, send a consultant to get a quote, and make sure BOE bus companies will only do an RFP bid. The BOE and town must have an input in any decisions. Joan stated that she goes to COSTA meeting's monthly. Joan shared an article about school transportation and the legalization to marijuana. Dr. Longo stated that the school is very lucky to have a very strong leader in the role of transportation coordinator.

There was discussion regarding the change in the parent drop off location. At first it was great, then parents who wanted to park and walk their students in were allowed in the front parking lot again, which is very unsafe for the students. Joan, Jim, and Troy will meet regarding the safety issue with drop off.

There was discussion regarding decommissioning bus 9.

Motion made by John Calarese to authorize the Administration to decommission Bus 9.

Motion seconded by Jane Urban and carried unanimously.

Second Opportunity for Public Comment

Tess Grous commented on the healthy communication within the board.

Non-Union Personnel Negotiations (Executive Session)

Motion made by Jane Urban to enter into executive session at 10:10 pm for the purposes of personnel negotiations and to invite Dr. Longo. Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.

Present: John Lippert, Jane Urban, Shannon Gamache, John Calarese, Dr. Longo

The board and Dr. Longo exited executive session at 10:45pm. There was no action taken.

AEA Negotiations Status Report (Executive Session)

Motion made by Jane Urban to enter into executive session at 10:45 pm for the purposes of personnel negotiations and to invite Dr. Longo. Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.

Present: John Lippert, Shannon Gamache, John Calarese, Jane Urban, Dr. Longo

The board and Dr. Longo exited executive session at 11:03 pm. There was no action taken.

Adjournment

Motion made by Jane Urban to adjourn the meeting at 11:03pm. Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.

Recorded by:

Lisa Dyer
Business Manager