

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut
Meeting Agenda
November 21, 2019
7:00 pm
Ashford School
District Office Conference Room

1. Call To Order
2. Communications
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
4. Approval of Minutes: 09/19/2019, 10/03/2019; 11/07/2019
6. District Administrative Reports (Superintendent, Director of Pupil Personnel, Principal, Asst. Principal)
7. Old Business
 - a. FY 19 Audit Status Update
 - b. Infinite Visions Financial Software
 - c. Follow Up Discussions with Department Coordinators/Supervisors
 - d. Joint BOE/BOF/BOS Financial Office Advisory Committee
 - e. School Based Behavioral Health Services
8. New Business
 - a. Request Approval of Leave of Absence
 - b. Ashford BOE FY 20 Budget Calendar
9. Second Opportunity for Public Comment
10. Adjournment

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.

Ashford Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes – September 19, 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 7:07 PM. Present were Shannon Gamache, Marian Matthews and Jane Urban. Also present was Dr. James Longo, Superintendent of Schools, Principal Troy Hopkins, Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford, Asst. Principal Garrett Dukette and recording secretary Jen Barsaleau. Present in the audience were Rebecca Haeger, Tess Grouse, Carolyn Trotta, Lisa Centola, Mike Mellady, Rick Fadus from Mechanical Maintenance and teacher Valerie Stickles. Unable to attend were members Kay Warren, John Calarese and Lisa Donegan.

Motion to move agenda item 5, “Opportunity for Public Comment” to item 2 made by Jane Urban. Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.

Opportunity for Public Comment

- Carolyn Trotta and Lisa Centola introduced themselves and addressed the board concerning funding for cultural arts. Grants from “Arts for Learning” are no longer available. Mrs. Trotta outlined an opportunity to receive up to \$13,000 in funding for cultural arts activities from HOT (Higher Order Thinking) Schools. Several staff members, PTO members, Mr. Hopkins and Dr. Longo will be attending a two-day HOT Schools conference in October. In order for Ashford to be considered for the maximum amount of available funding, it was strongly suggested that the team that is attending in October include a member of the BOE. Brief discussion followed, Marian Matthews will represent the BOE and attend the conference.
- Rebecca Haeger encouraged the BOE to discuss student dress code and change it, particularly the no backpack rule. Students have little or no opportunity to get to lockers during the day and have to carry books from class to class.

Vendor Presentations

a. Elm Electric (Tina Romano)

Ms. Romano will attend a future meeting to review and discuss a proposal for electrical component improvements and servicing of those components.

b. Mechanical Maintenance (Rick Fadus)

Mr. Fadus and Mike Mellady reviewed suggested measures with regard to energy savings from the 2016 energy audit done by Eversource through the Town of Ashford. There were 23 items listed in the audit. Mr. Fadus and Mr. Mellady addressed each item listed, discussing whether or not they could be viable solutions at this time due to building age and other improvements that must be done before some of these suggested items would be worth considering.

The board expressed its appreciation to Mr. Fadus and Mr. Mellady for attending.

Communications

- John Lippert received a letter from SEI Private Trust concerning procedural changes. SEI oversees the Bicknell Trust.
- John Lippert received an email from Christina Davis asking that the BOE page of the website be updated. Jen Barsaleau will address this issue.

Approval of Minutes: 09/05/2019

Motion made by Jane Urban to approve the minutes of 09/05/19.

Discussion followed with the amendments/corrections noted:

- Page 3 - b. Staff Appointment. Insert the sentence “*Dr. Longo recommended appointment of special education teacher Catherine Robacker.*” prior to the motion.

- Page 3 – e. BOE/BOF Financial Office Combination Study Committee. In the last sentence change “2020” to 2019.

- Page 3 e. BOE/BOF Financial Office Combination Study Committee. Edit motion by striking the words “to develop” and replace with the words “to partner in developing...”
- Page 1 – Approval of Minutes. Strike the comma after the word “Insert” in the 5th bullet point.
- Page 2 – Old Business a.1. Approval of Committee Restructuring. Insert the word “curriculum” after the words “school level” in the 4th bullet.

Motion seconded by Marian Matthews to approve the minutes of 09/05/19 as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

Administrative Reports (Principal, Asst. Principal, Director of Pupil Personnel)

Dr. Longo noted that each of the administrators have spent a great deal of time in preparation of the information they will be sharing with the board. Since these are essentially annual reports, each administrator will spend significant time in reviewing their reports. Dr. Longo further noted that some of the report contents are in response to items discussed at the BOE’s 8/8/19 Strategic Planning Session.

Reports are attached and were presented in the following order:

- Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford
- Principal Troy Hopkins
- Asst. Principal Garrett Dukette

Following the presentation of reports, Dr. Longo expressed satisfaction and his support of this particular group of administrators, noting their hard work each and every day and the differences they have made to our district. Board members their support and agreement with Dr. Longo’s comments.

Old Business

a. BOE Committee Updates/Committee Planning

1. Infinite Visions Financial Software Update

A letter to the Board of Finance has been prepared requesting the release of Unexpended Educational Funds to apply toward the purchase of the software. The BOF chair has asked that a similar letter be written and given to the first selectman.

New Business

a. Ratification of the Successor Agreement by and between the Ashford BOE and the Ashford Education Association

Copies of the successor agreement were sent to board members. BOE members will postpone ratification until the next regular meeting to allow for any feedback.

b. Requests for Approval of Intermittent Family and Medical Leave

The board has received requests from staff members to approve intermittent family and medical leave for the current school year. Each of the individuals who have submitted requests is eligible for FMLA, and may need to utilize intermittent leave to care for an immediate family member. Out of respect for privacy and confidentiality, employee names have been redacted.

Motion made by Jane Urban to approve the intermittent family and medical leaves requests for three staff members as presented. Motion seconded by Marian Matthews and carried unanimously.

c. Approval of Leave of Absence

A note was received from teacher Megan Gendron requesting maternity leave commencing on or about January 30, 2020 for the remainder of the current school year. Mrs. Gendron will return in August of 2020.

Motion made by Marian Matthews to approve the maternity leave request of Megan Gendron. Motion seconded by Jane Urban and carried unanimously.

Second Opportunity for Public Comment

- Tess Grouse referenced Mrs. Ford's report and asked how struggling students are prepared for high school. Mrs. Ford spoke about interventions that are in place at Ashford School, such as SRBI and SIT. Mrs. Ford said she could not speak to what the high schools may or may not do.
- Rebecca Haeger referenced Mr. Hopkins' report and is pleased that the idea of making changes to the student dress code is student driven. She stated she hoped that the philosophy of a dress code would be discussed.

Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items

The next regularly scheduled meeting is 10/3. Agenda items: ratification of AEA Successor Agreement, financial software follow up, walking/biking to school policy discussion, audit update, committee break out sessions.

Adjournment

Motion made by Marian Matthews to adjourn the meeting at 10:37pm. Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.

Recorded by:

Jennifer Barsaleau, Recording Secretary

Ashford Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes – October 3, 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 7:12 PM. Present were Shannon Gamache, Marian Matthews and John Calarese. Also present were Dr. James Longo, Superintendent of Schools, Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford, Asst. Principal Garrett Dukette and recording secretary Jen Barsaleau. Present in the audience were Rebecca Haeger, Kim Kouatly and teacher Kelly Knotts. Unable to attend were members Kay Warren, Jane Urban and Lisa Donegan.

Superintendent Evaluation (Executive Session Anticipated)

Motion made by John Calarese to enter into executive session (7:13 pm) for the purposes of evaluation of the Superintendent, with Dr. Longo present. Motion seconded by Marian Matthews and carried unanimously.

Present in Executive Session: John Lippert, Marian Matthews, John Calarese, Shannon Gamache and Dr. James Longo.

The board and Dr. Longo exited executive session (7:57 pm) with no action taken.

Communications

a. SY 19-20 Region 19 Transportation Agreement

A copy of the draft agreement prepared by Region 19 was included in the BOE packet. Dr. Longo explained the long history of Region 19 contracting with the Ashford BOE to provide high school bus transportation to E.O. Smith and Windham Tech. There was significant discussion over the spring and summer as some Ashford students have opted to attend Ellis Tech instead of Windham Tech. Following legal consult and research, Region 19 has been advised that transportation to Ellis Tech must be provided by Region 19. With this in mind, Dr. Longo will revise the agreement to include reference and add the cost to transport to Ellis Tech. The agreement will be sent back to the Region 19 Superintendent for review and discussion.

Approval of Minutes: 09/19/2019

Minutes are tabled until the next regular meeting.

Opportunity for Public Comment

- Rebecca Haeger reiterated her feeling that the BOE needs to look into dress code and the current board policy. Student feedback is good to have, however parent/adult input and philosophy are needed for discussions on this subject. Also, might the BOE consider changing “Columbus Day” to “Indigenous People’s Day” when creating the school calendar for next year?

Administrative Reports (Superintendent, Business Manager)

Dr. Longo did not provide a written report. He reminded the board that the transportation coordinator has been asked to seek quotes for the cost of outsourcing of student transportation so that the BOE can compare it to our current in-house transportation costs.

Motion made by John Calarese to authorize that an RFP or RFQ for student transportation be sought by the transportation coordinator and further authorizes payment as may be necessary to obtain said costs. Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.

Old Business

a. Ratification of Successor Agreement - Ashford BOE and the Ashford Education Assoc.

Motion made by John Calarese to ratify the successor collective bargaining agreement by and between the Ashford Board of Education and the Ashford Education Association for the period of July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023. Motion seconded by Marian Matthews and carried unanimously.

Chair John Lippert thanked Jane Urban and Dr. Longo for their presence and participation in the negotiations. Mr. Lippert noted the entire process was very smooth and positive. The teachers were very pleasant and professional throughout negotiations.

b. Approval of Administrator Contracts

Mr. Lippert noted that this item needed to be tabled until the 10/17 meeting to allow for the review of some minor language revisions prior to considering them for approval.

c. Update on the Purchase of Financial Software

The Board of Finance has requested a presentation of the Infinite Visions software to gain a better understanding of what is being purchased. Lisa Dyer is working on scheduling a demonstration for the Board of Finance as soon as possible.

d. Transportation Policy Amendment Draft (Walking/Biking to School)

Dr. Longo reviewed the documents that were included in the board agenda packet. Dr. Longo recommended that the walking/biking to school guidelines and permissions be added to the policy as Administrative Regulations.

Motion made by Marian Matthews to approve the addition of administrative regulations concerning walking/biking to school to the existing Transportation policy. Regulations will be based on the recommendations of the Biking Committee and legal counsel. Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.

New Business

a. Staff Appointment

Dr. Longo and Mrs. Ford summarized the recruiting process followed to fill the full time vacancy in the district business office. After reviewing the resumes and narrowing down the number of applicants to those that best met the advertised qualifications, six interviews were scheduled. The committee consisted of Lisa Dyer, Cheryl Baker, Dr. Longo, Mrs. Ford and Mr. Hopkins.

Motion made by Shannon Gamache to approve the appointment of Kelee Calkins to the staff of the business office of the Ashford Public School district effective 10/28/2019. Motion seconded by Marian Matthews and carried unanimously.

Second Opportunity for Public Comment

None

Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items

10/17/19: Agenda to include all tabled items from this meeting agenda, formal reports from the food service manager, technology coordinator, transportation coordinator and the head of maintenance.

Adjournment

Motion made by John Calarese to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm. Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.

Recorded by:

Jennifer Barsaleau, Recording Secretary

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

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Call to Order

Superintendent of Schools Dr. James Longo called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. Present were Shannon Gamache, Jane Urban, John Lippert, Tess Grous, Tina Fradette and Al Maccarone. Also present were Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford, Principal Troy Hopkins, Asst. Principal Garrett Dukette, Business Manager Lisa Dyer and recording secretary Jen Barsaleau. Present in the audience were John Calarese, Rebecca Haeger, Chuck Funk, Rachael Funk and teacher Jason Horn. Unable to attend was member Marian Matthews.

Board Reorganization

a. Election of Secretary

- Dr. Longo opened the floor for nominations for Secretary of the Board of Education.

Shannon Gamache nominated Tess Grous for the position of Secretary of the Board of Education. Nomination seconded by Al Maccarone.

Dr. Longo asked if there were any other nominations. There being none, the floor was closed.

The meeting was turned over to board chair John Lippert who asked for a vote on the nomination of Tess Grous.

The motion to appoint Tess Grous to the position of Secretary of the Board of Education carried 4 to 0 with one abstention (Tess Grous).

b. Committee Appointments

Chair John Lippert took a moment to welcome Tess, Al and Tina, new members to the board and to thank the three outgoing members Kay, Lisa and John, for their service. He noted that generally, the board is a fairly happy group to be a part of, however, there are some issues of contention that the board must work through. A brief explanation of the committee structure that was discussed at the BOE's Strategic Planning Meeting occurred. Mr. Lippert asked the members to choose committees that are of interest to them. After discussion, members chose the following committee assignments:

- Finance/Personnel/Transportation: Jane Urban, Al Maccarone, Tess Grous
 - Building & Grounds/Cafeteria/Long-Term Planning: Shannon Gamache, Tina Fradette
- Marian Matthews was appointed to the Building & Grounds, Cafeteria and Long-Term Planning committees in absentia. Mr. Lippert emphasized that the BOE is making a concerted effort to spend more committee time to dedicate to particular issues or items.

c. Adoption of 2020 Board of Education Meeting Schedule

A draft 2020 meeting schedule was included in the BOE agenda packet. After discussion, members agreed to strike the 1/30, 10/29 and 4/30 meeting dates and to change the 4/16 meeting date to 4/23; and the 5/21 date to 5/28.

Motion by John Lippert to approve the 2020 Board of Education meeting schedule as amended. Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.

Communications

- An anonymous letter was sent to a BOE member voicing concern with regard the application of disciplinary action across the school population. The letter was passed to the administrators for their consideration.

Opportunity for Public Comment

- John Calarese addressed the transportation update in the agenda packet, stating that an actual cost quote to outsource student transportation is still needed according to prior BOE directive. Dr. Longo will follow up on this matter.
- Rebecca Haeger welcomed the new board members and wished to say thank you to the outgoing board members, Lisa, John and Kay noting they have left "big shoes to fill."

Approval of Minutes: 09/19/2019; 10/03/2019

The minutes of 9/19 and 10/03 were tabled until Robert's Rules are reviewed due to the change in board membership.

District Administrative Reports (Superintendent, Business Manager)

Dr. Longo welcomed each of the new board members and informing them that there are some changes occurring within the business office. Some are smooth, some are not. He suggested again that the BOE, BOF and BOS schedule a joint meeting prior to the start of the FY 21 budget deliberations. Dr. Longo asked Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford to elaborate on the School Based Behavioral Health Services portion of his report. Mrs. Ford spoke about the need for such services, along with medical and dental care, in the schools. She noted that this would not take away from services that our staff is providing, but it can help students and families with behavioral matters who may prefer not to have school staff involved. This relationship affords the opportunity to have behavioral and health services on site. This would mean that a student would not have to be taken out of school for appointments, and parents would not have to take time off of work in order to take the child to appointments. These services are 100% covered by public and/or private health insurance. The service providers are employed by Community Health Center and not the BOE. We need only provide a space, phone, parking, furnishings and internet access for them. Discussion followed and Dr. Longo asked that the board vote on entering into an agreement with Community Health Center.

Motion made by Tina Fradette to authorize the administration to pursue behavioral health services in Ashford School with a follow up report from the administrative team at the end of the current school year. Motion seconded by Al Maccarone and carried unanimously.

Dr. Longo continued his report addressing the unfinished CORR space and capital concerns as a recent sprinkler inspection has revealed several deficiencies. Dr. Longo would like to investigate adding on to or replacing our generator so that it can power more of the school building than it presently does. He further discussed formation of a school calendar committee, the status of the financial software purchase and discussion of student dress code on an upcoming BOE agenda.

Old Business

a. FY 19 Year-End Report/Audit Update

Lisa Dyer distributed a year-end budget report for the year ending June 30, 2019. The remaining balance is \$34,278. She stated her frustration with our current financial software and that it has taken a lot of additional work hours to navigate system shortcomings and produce correct documents. At this point BOF chairperson Chuck Funk was allowed to speak. He welcomed the new board members and stated that he is "extremely frustrated and not comfortable" with the business office of the school. Deadlines from the auditors have come and gone and the auditors are very concerned. The deadline to file annual audit is in December and an extension may be needed. He went on to say that he had personally spent the majority of the previous day meeting with the auditors addressing the fact that BOE reports are not being provided. He also noted that other districts that use BMSI software have no issues and he questioned why our business office has so much trouble.

At this point, conversation became quite heated and ultimately ended with Mrs. Dyer leaving the meeting. Discussion resumed with Mr. Funk and Dr. Longo speaking about a resolution to technical issues and the plan to get the necessary reports to the auditors.

b. Approval of Administrator Contracts

John Lippert gave a brief summary of the changes to the administrator agreements. All are 3 year agreements with a 0% wage increase for FY 20 and 2% for FY 21 and FY 22. Changes are as follows:

- Professional development allowance was changed to \$2,000 in the Principal's contract
- 403b contributions were increased in all three contracts

Motion made by Jane Urban to approve the 2019-2022 administrator employment agreements.

Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.

c. Update on the Purchase of Financial Software

Discussed earlier in the meeting.

New Business

a. Distribution of Department Reports (Cafeteria, Transportation, Technology, Maintenance)

Departmental reports were included in the BOE agenda packet with the exception of the maintenance report, which will be sent by email upon completion. Members should read the reports and formulate any questions for the department supervisors who will be present at the next regular meeting.

b. Decommission of Bus from Fleet Service

Midbus 11 is no longer in service. The Town has requested action by the BOE to remove it from service so that they may put it up for sale or disposal.

Motion made by Shannon Gamache to decommission Bus 11 from fleet service. Motion seconded by Tina Fradette and carried unanimously.

Committee Break Out Sessions (B&G/Cafeteria/Long-Term Planning) (Personnel/Transportation/Finance)

None

Second Opportunity for Public Comment

- Rachael Funk applauded the BOE for supporting the concept of the Behavioral Health center in the school. She noted the importance of having access to the center as the school. The district where she is employed utilizes this program and there are children would otherwise not have access to services without it.
- Rebecca Haeger thanked the board for creative thinking and asked they not forget to keep committee break out sessions on the agenda.

Personnel Matter (Executive Session Anticipated)

None

Adjournment

Motion made by Jane Urban to adjourn the meeting (9:37 p.m.). Motion seconded by Shannon Gamache and carried unanimously.

Recorded by:

Jennifer Barsaleau, Recording Secretary

Ashford School District
Ashford Board of Education - 2020 Meeting Schedule

Unless otherwise posted, all meetings will be held in District Office conference room 14. The board reserves the right to schedule subcommittee meetings as a part of their regular meeting agendas. The regular meeting schedule is as follows:

January

January 2, 2020
January 16, 2020

February

February 6, 2020
February 20, 2020

March

March 5, 2020
March 19, 2020

April

April 2, 2020
April 23, 2020

May

May 7, 2020
May 28, 2020

June

June 4, 2020
June 18, 2020

July

July 16, 2020

August

August 20, 2020

September

September 3, 2020
September 17, 2020

October

October 1, 2020
October 15, 2020

November

November 5, 2020
November 19, 2020

December

December 3, 2020
December 17, 2020



James Longo <jplongo@ashfordct.org>

Parental Leave in the Spring

3 messages

Rob Ackerson <rackerson@ashfordct.org>
To: James Longo <jplongo@ashfordct.org>

Thu, Oct 24, 2019 at 11:23 AM

10/24/19

Hi Dr. Longo,

I am writing to you in hoping to set up a meeting with you to discuss parental leave in the spring. My wife and I are expecting our first child on February 2nd, 2020. My wife will be taking 12 weeks of maternity leave after the baby is born. I am interested in taking leave following her 12 weeks through the end of the school year. I would like to discuss this further with you to see if this is possible and if so what the process would look like.

Thank you so much,

Robert Ackerson
PE/Health Teacher

James Longo <jplongo@ashfordct.org>

Thu, Oct 24, 2019 at 7:47 PM

To: Rob Ackerson <rackerson@ashfordct.org>, Jennifer Barsaleau <jbarsaleau@ashfordct.org>

Rob,
Congratulations to you and your wife.
I will be in the office both Tuesday and Thursday afternoons next week.
Please set up an appointment either day. Jen Barsaleau can set it up.

Jim
[Quoted text hidden]

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