

*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 the next regularly scheduled meeting, noted in the meeting minutes, and voted upon.*

**SCOTLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Scotland, Connecticut**  
**Special Meeting Minutes**  
**May 5, 2020**

Vice-Chair Scott Sears called the meeting to order at 5:40 PM. Present were Board members Sherry Smardon, Steven Kurcinik, Cassidy Martin, Rod Perry and Bill Trudelle. Administrators present were Superintendent Dr. Francis Baran, Principal Dr. Catherine Pinsonneault and Finance Coordinator Tim Smith. Also present was Technician John Gusczkowski. Unable to attend was Chairperson Brynn Lipstreu.

**2. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:** None

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

***#1-19/20 Motion to approve the remote meeting minutes from April 7, 2020, was made by Rod Perry with the following correction:*** Item #6E should read – Brynn Lipstreu expressed concerns with the Trimester Grading for required work and supplemental work done at home and posting to Power School. ***The motion was seconded by Sherry Smardon and carried unanimously.***

**4. FINANCE COORDINATOR REPORT:**

**A. Financial Report:**

The Financial Reports were reviewed with no unusual expenses. The overage for Instructional Aides under regular instruction from last month was due to salaries posted incorrectly and was moved to Special Education. Rod Perry asked for an update on the audit. Tim Smith reported that the response to the state regarding School Readiness will be sent out by the end of the week.

**B. Approval of Financial Statement:**

***#2-19/20 Motion to approve the Financial Statement dated April 30, 2020, was made by Sherry Smardon, seconded by Steve Kurcinik and carried unanimously.***

**5. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT:**

**A. 2019-2020 Calendar Update:**

Governor Lamont issued an Executive Order today closing all Connecticut schools through the end of the academic year. A conference with the Commissioner is schedule for tomorrow to discuss the next steps.

Sherry Smardon asked about the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Celebration and recommended continuing with Barnes and Nobles Gift Cards as gifts from the Board. Dr. Baran would like to get the entire staff involved in the discussion for planning. Principal Pinsonneault recommended that the students deserve to be recognized as well for the Presidential Awards and they have been ordered.

**B. Food Service Update:**

As of today, 1,978 meals (breakfast and lunch) have been distributed with the vast majority to Scotland residents.

**C. Teacher Evaluation (TEVAL) Update:**

The report is the same as last month. The Governor has suspended all Teacher Evaluations for the current school year and teachers will not be held accountable moving forward. Sherry Smardon asked for a copy of the last Scotland Teacher Evaluation Plan.

**D. Bus Contract Status Update:**

There is no change from last month. Savino Transportation is being paid per contract through the end of the school year with the staff being kept on the payroll. Sherry Smardon requested in writing that Savino staff are being kept on the payroll.

**E. Distance Learning Status Update:**

Distance learning has been overwhelming for parents with some concerns that have been addressed. Everyone's situation is different depending on the number of students in the household. Specials are being streamlined into the regular classroom. The issue of grading has been resolved and is posted on the website. The new policy is Pass (quantity of work completed below 85%) and Pass with Distinction (quantity of work completed 85% or higher).

**F. Green Skies Update:**

A request was received from Goldman Sachs Financial Group regarding information on the Eversource bills. Goldman Sachs has purchased a bundle of solar panel companies including Green Skies. The school will be notified when billing changes. The solar panels are still working.

**G. FY20/21 Budget first draft:**

The Board was emailed a draft budget with a 3% decrease. A draft budget was presented in February with a 0% increase. Sherry Smardon expressed concerns with cutting positions not knowing what the school year will bring and why Art went from 1 day to 3 days. She suggested cuts be made elsewhere such as technology. Dr. Baran reported that scheduling is worked around two lunch waves and specials. In addition, Mrs. Johnson from Special Education (also certified in Art) is scheduled for Art in addition to other duties. Concerns from teachers included: not enough passing time and the time for specials. Sherry Smardon asked not to cut the music teacher (does a lot with chorus, band and shows) that is a huge asset that Scotland has to offer. Dr. Baran stated that the town requested the Board cut 3% (approximately \$71,000) from the budget with not many places to cut from. Without the savings from health insurance (reduction in number insured), the cuts could have been worse. Sherry Smardon would rather stand behind the student and teachers and explain it to the town. Cassidy Martin feels the same stating the importance of specials and especially mental health now and suggested coming in at 0 to 1-1/2% decrease. Sherry Smardon would like to see a draft version of the budget with a slight cut and minimal impact to the students learning specials. Steve Kurcinik commented that a 3% decrease shows what it will cost and suggested a 1% to 1-1/2% decrease budget be reviewed for discussion of the pros and cons. Bill Trudelle asked about the increase to unemployment compensation and increase to Instructional Aides. Dr. Baran reported that each teacher with their position cut can apply for a portion of unemployment insurance. Aides for 2 students in the

0-birth are required for 1 on 1. Bill Trudelle expressed concerns with cutting the specials staff and the decrease for Speech Pathologist. He feels that all students should have access to band, speech and counseling. Dr. Baran reported that adding back to specials would cut into academic time. The caseload of 13 speech students will be assisted (a grouping of 2-3 is acceptable) by the administrators. Sherry Smardon expects there will be more students with needs with the current situation. The Board was asked to email any suggestions and feedback to Dr. Baran. The Board requested the Superintendent draft another version of the budget with a slight decrease for the May 19<sup>th</sup> budget meeting.

**H. Request to Purchase Technology Infrastructure:**

A request was presented to purchase switches for major infrastructure components that are needed now. The cost for 4 refurbished switches (3 for replacement and 1 for backup) ranges from \$800 to \$1,200 each and would need to be funded out of this year's budget. Dennis LaBelle may have alternative plan and would like to discuss the models.

***#3-19/20 Motion to authorize the Superintendent to purchase 4 switches for technology infrastructure not to exceed \$4,800 pending discussion with Dennis LaBelle, was made by Steve Kurcinik, seconded by Sherry Smardon and carried unanimously.***

**I. Other:** None

**6. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. FY 20-21 Special Budget Meeting:**

A Special Budget Meeting will be held on May 19<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

**7. OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. Second Read BOE Communication Plan (Action Anticipated):**

Tabled until the June meeting.

**8. COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**A. Tri-town BOE Meeting Update:** No Report

Sherry Smardon asked to put up signs at Scotland Elementary congratulating Parish Hill Graduates. Dr. Pinsonneault liked the idea.

**B. CABE/EASTCONN:** No Report

**C. Readiness Council Report:**

Verification was received from the state with continued funding at the current level for the School Readiness program. Funds left over from the Quality Enhancement Grant scheduled to be used for Professional Development has been cancelled. The funds have been redirected to find books and hands-on educational materials for PreK students. Dr. Pinsonneault reported that educational materials and backpacks have been ordered.

Sherry Smardon asked about refunding PreK tuition for this year and how the positions are being paid for out of the grant. Dr. Baran reported that ½ of the March PreK tuition will be refunded.

The office of Early Childhood has allowed funds to be moved from accounts that are not being spent to the payroll account.

**D. Communications Committee:** No Report

**E. Policies Committee:** No Report

**F. Technology Committee:** No Report

**9. NEXT STEP HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:**

The Board is asked to review the budget and email any feedback to Dr. Baran.

**10. NEXT MEETING AGENDA ITEMS:**

- FY 2020-21 Budget
- Rose Khourie Scholarship

**11. ADJOURNMENT:**

***#4-19/20 Motion to adjourn (6:58 PM) was made by Sherry Smardon, seconded by Steve Kurcinik and carried unanimously.***

***Respectfully submitted by Kathleen Scott  
Recording Clerk***