

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
Meeting Minutes
September 7, 2021

Chairperson Brynn Lipstreu called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Present were Board members Sherry Smardon, Steven Kurcinik, Cassidy Martin, Scott Sears, Rod Perry and Bill Trudelle. Others present were First Selectman Gary Greenberg, Superintendent Valerie Bruneau, Principal Ann Knowles, and Finance Coordinator Tim Smith.

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. CELEBRATIONS/RECOGNITION:

A. New Staff:

The transition is going well with the new administration and school began with new staff - 2nd grade teacher Svetlana Apley and part-time Music teacher Melissa Labbe.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS: None

5. COMMUNICATION WITH THE AUDIENCE: None

6. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA – ADDITIONAL BUSINESS MAY BE CONSIDERED AT A REGULAR MEETING UPON 2/3 VOTE OF THOSE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD PRESENT AND VOTING, PER STATE STATUTE:

#1-21/22 Motion to adjust item 12A to read - Technology Contract – visit: Novus Solutions and Savage Systems, made by Sherry Smardon, seconded by Scott Sears and carried unanimously.

#2-21/22 Motion to adjust item 12B to read - Set Tuition Rate and Review Policy 5118, was made by Sherry Smardon, seconded by Cassidy Martin and carried unanimously.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

#3-21/22 Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from August 3, 2021, was made by Sherry Smardon, seconded by Scott Sears and carried with one abstention by Steve Kurcinik.

8. FINANCE COORDINATOR REPORT:

A. Financial Report:

The Financial Reports were reviewed. The FY 2020-21 reports have been submitted to the auditors (did very well with grants). FY 2021-22 grants are still available to spend. Sherry Smardon asked if the price of fuel oil was locked in (oil is locked in and the first delivery of heating oil has been received but not yet processed). Valerie Bruneau responded to Brynn Lipstreu regarding the number of STEM students that she believes is 2 and will verify.

B. Propane Rebate Update:

Research on the propane rebate has been turned over to the Town Treasurer by the First Selectman.

C. Propane & Solar Use:

The Board was presented with Propane & Solar use. Sherry Smardon asked for a monthly update and include data for last year.

D. Approval of Financial Statement:

#4-21/22 Motion to approve Financial Statements dated September 2, 2021, was made by Sherry Smardon, seconded by Steve Kurcinik and carried unanimously.

9. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT:

A. Grants:

There is expansion to the American Rescue Relief with extra funding to IDEA for a total of \$4,593. In the process of doing application for the After School Grant, teachers and paras will be asked to submit proposals for afterschool clubs they would like to see based on student interest. Bill Trudelle asked for breakdown of the ESSRII Grant (is a 2-year grant for curriculum, staff, and engaging activities that can be reallocated; making sure other grants are used first). Rod Perry asked about vaccinations for all staff and contracted people (everyone who works with the students full-time and is not a one-timer has to be vaccinated by the 26th or must show medical exemption or religious exemption or must provide negative test weekly if not fully vaccinated – there is some questionable language that needs clarification). Copies of vaccine cards are being collected by the school nurse. Sherry Smardon asked what percentage of the staff is vaccinated in the building (95% of the staff are vaccinated).

B. Bussing Report:

The Board previously decided not to have bus monitors and there has been a little push back from the staff as it is different than what they were used to with more staff reallocated to the front to take students off the buses. There has only been 1 minor incident and there are cameras on the buses.

C. Other: None

10. PRINCIPAL REPORT:

A. Current Enrollment: Current enrollment increased to 101 students (up from 92 the end of last year).

B. Professional Development Opportunities:

Have some ideas to enhance the curriculum with teaching strategies in the classroom and surveying staff for their needs.

C. Other:

- Free and reduced lunches are available for all students. Tracking hot lunches with about 69% of students receiving hot lunches in August.
- Early Bird/Before Care for students started today with 12 students and is held in the library.
- A Chromebooks cart is in every classroom for grades K-6.
- Phonics program has been purchased for grades K-3.
- Implementing Mystery Science program for grades K-4 (Science Dimensions already in place for grades 5-6).
- 2021 SBAC results will be used to better understand and identify students and their needs. Science Testing for grade 5 will be held in Spring 2022 and SBAC testing will be done in May 2022.
- Open House will be held this Thursday, September 9th with the night split into 2 sessions.

Rod Perry asked if any families decided not to send their children to school (all families sent their children to school and working on trying to get home-schooled children to return). Cassidy Martin asked for a summary of the SBAC results.

11. FRIENDS OF SES REPORT: No Report

12. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Technology Contract-visit: Novus Solutions and Savage Systems:

Michael Quick presented proposal from Novus Solutions on IT Services (1-year contract) that includes: remote support staff, one dedicated person at the school, help with funding for projects, quality assurance check (would know right away if anything needs updating), unlimited remote calls. Gary Greenberg asked about the backup (there would be support for the backup but not the backup itself that would depend on the license). Steve Kurcinik asked if there are enough licenses to cover the school (includes 30 clients and would increase if needed).

Eric Gould presented a proposal from Savage Systems (current provider) on IT Services (1-year contract) that includes: lower cost with more services, unlimited tech support, help during SBAC testing, no additional costs for projects, up to 6 hours per week of a dedicated person at the school (not a substitute for ongoing support), working on completing PowerSchool with training (was never fully implemented), will consolidate some software, manage the school website (would like to move toward Apptegy), remote and on premise backup done twice a day, no additional cost for licenses, antivirus licensing - Bit Defender and EDR (an additional layer of security), creation of internal Tech Committee for support (meets monthly to review goals, software, strategies and training), 4 hours of emergency support outside the regular hours at a lower cost (regular support hours are 8am – 5 pm).

Valerie Bruneau presented proposal from EASTCONN on IT Services (9-month contract) that includes: one day of support with dedicated person, access to specialists at no additional cost, additional costs for projects or additional equipment. Rod Perry expressed concerns with the lack of details for the proposal, a customer list and details on problems solved. Gary Greenberg would like to see a detailed proposal similar to the other two companies. Steve Kurcinik expressed concerns with the lack of detail and if backup is included.

#5-21/22 Motion to extend contract from Savage Systems for another year based on their price that includes a backup and their past service, was made by Steve Kurcinik, seconded by Scott Sears and carried unanimously.

B. Set Tuition Rate and Review Policy 5118:

Policy 5118 will be reviewed at the next meeting as a First Read.

#6-21/22 Motion to keep the Tuition Rate the same at the current rate of \$7,500, was made by Sherry Smardon, seconded by Steve Kurcinik and carried unanimously.

C. Climate Survey:

The Board previously discussed doing a Climate Survey at the beginning and at the end of this school year. The State Department of Ed has templates for climate surveys. Scott Sears suggested forming a Climate Survey Committee and will serve with Cassidy Martin and Bill Trudelle. Valerie Bruneau will email templates to the Committee for staff, parents and students.

D. BOE Goals:

Board goals were last done in 2018 (goal to develop a Communication Plan was completed). Valerie Bruneau drafted some Board Goals from the school profile and survey by CABA and will email to the Board for discussion at the next meeting.

13. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Rose Khourie Scholarship Update:

No further information has been found on the Rose Khourie Scholarship. Gary Greenberg suggested going through the Probate Courts (assuming it was in the will) and if nothing found, will turn over to the town attorney.

B. Air Conditioning:

Valerie Bruneau reported that the Board needs to decide if moving forward with air conditioning and where the funds are coming from (it has been written into the grant and can be reallocated if necessary). A meeting will be held with the electrician to make sure systems are compatible with the current system. There is currently air conditioning in the PreK-K wing and different spots in the building (the proposal would cover 8 classrooms and repair to the teacher/tech room).

C. Meet and Greet:

The Meet and Greet went really well with 122 cups of Ben & Jerry's ice cream served. It was a beautiful day with a great turnout, nice raffles, and things for the kids. Brynn Lipstreu suggested doing the event annually.

D. "How's it Going" Check-in:

Anne Knowles commented that school is going well with the big adjustment of a new administration. Attendance is great with students happy to come to school. Valerie Bruneau commented that some roles were not defined last year and the administration is making sure everyone knows their job and asking the staff to accept change during the transition. Brynn Lipstreu asked about the following: Committee for the interview process to replace the Special Ed teacher (putting a team together and waiting for applicants); number of Para Educators and if IEP hours are covered (there are 11 Para Educators in the building with one leaving over the summer and not necessary to replace, reviewing some hours that are not being used); status of ordered instructional materials (almost everything received with some backorders replaced with similar materials thanks to Ashley). Bill Trudelle asked about the following: how are lunches going (going well with 3 lunch waves and PreK eating in their classroom, everyone is putting their masks right back on after); bus driver shortage (no issues due to the small number of buses); mask breaks (during snack break, 2 recesses for younger grades, lunch, an afternoon break and breaks during outside activities). Brynn Lipstreu suggested as it gets colder to do laps around the building for fresh air breaks.

14. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Interdistrict Education Cost Sharing Update:

Gary Greenberg apologized for the discomfort Interdistrict Schools has caused (needs to be done in public with meetings and committees which is a slow process). Combining schools with a cooperative agreement (more likely to be done at Scotland Elementary) has to be done by a lawyer for the two towns to have an equal stake. A potential lawyer is working on a waiver for a conflict of interest to present to the Hampton Board of Education. An advisory vote was suggested with a referendum that

will only decide whether this is a good idea. There are two Committees – one for Governance and one for Programing. Once the process gets going, a timeline would be established with public information meetings that will include the various stakeholders. According to the census, population has decreased dramatically in town and something needs to be done. Sherry Smardon expressed concerns with the effect on contract negotiations. The next meeting will be held on Oct. 5th.

B. CABE/EASTCONN:

EASTCONN sent out their Bylaws to all town Boards they serve on August 24th and they would like feedback from the Board.

C. Readiness Council Report: Decided to meet virtually this school year.

D. Policies Committee: Will schedule meeting to review Policy #5118.

E. Personnel Committee:

Negotiations for Certified Staff will begin October 21st (data has already been requested). Rod Perry and Cassidy Martin will serve on the Negotiations Committee.

F. Technology Committee: No Report

G. Citizen’s Advisory Committee:

The Committee discussed having both a CAC and a PTO. They will need to determine the difference between them and get a vision of each out to parents to help them decide which group they want to be a member of. The next meeting will be held on September 15th @ 7:30pm (Scott Sears will attend).

15. SECOND AUDIENCE FOR CITIZENS: None

16. NEXT STEP HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:

- Valerie Bruneau - email Board goals to the Board and survey templates to the Climate Survey Comm.
- Brynn Lipstreu - invite Nick Caruso from CABE to January meeting.
- Gary Greenberg - continue search on Rose Khourie Scholarship.
- The Board - look for EASTCONN Bylaws for review.

17. NEXT MEETING AGENDA ITEMS:

- Board Goals
- Policy 5118 First Read
- Climate Survey Committee (under Committees)
- Rose Khourie Scholarship
- Air Conditioning
- How’s It Going

18. ADJOURNMENT:

#7-21/22 Motion to adjourn (9:05 PM) was made by Sherry Smardon, seconded by Cassidy Martin and carried unanimously.

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