

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

October 4, 2022

Chairperson Cassidy Martin called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM. Present were Board members Sherry Smardon, Scott Sears, Rod Perry, Clark Stearns, Gracie Martin (7:35) and Lisa LaBelle. Administrators present were Superintendent Valerie Bruneau, Principal Ann Knowles, Special Ed Director Susan Costa (online) and Finance Coordinator Tim Smith (online).

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Beth Troeger of Ziegler Road is concerned about the consolidation proposal and vote and will be writing a letter (wanted to see who she's writing to).

3. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD: None

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **Regular Meeting of September 6, 2022:**

#1-22/23 Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from September 6, 2022, made by Sherry Smardon, seconded by Scott Sears and carried with abstention by Lisa Labelle.

5. OPPORTUNITY TO ADD OR DELETE AGENDA ITEMS:

#2-22/23 Motion to add to agenda as Item #9I1 - Discuss Public Hearing on Consolidation, made by Clark Stearns, seconded by Scott Sears and carried unanimously.

6. CELEBRATIONS – WELCOME NEW BOE MEMBER LISA LABELLE:

- Welcome to new Board member Lisa Labelle.
- There are 2 new students increasing enrollment to 98.

7. PRESENTATION NOVUS (TECH CONTRACT): Not present

8. REPORTS

A. Chairperson's Oral Report: No Report

B. Superintendent's Report:

- Grants – new grants unable to apply for were an HVAC Grant (requires matching funds, a Building Committee, plans that should have already been started, and lots of prework with a December 1st deadline) and After-School Program for towns that haven't applied in the past 3 years. Looking for Safety Grants (haven't come out yet). Work from the Budsies Summer Grant Program will be on display.
- Interviewing candidate this week for the Finance Coordinator position.
- Received Safety Fire Report (did very well – moving forward, need to provide list of fire drills with outcomes). The DEMUS Book with School Safety Security Plan is almost done (waiting for signatures).

C. Principal's Report:

- Enrollment is at 98. PreK is an active program with 17 students.
- Participation in Breakfast was significantly down this month.
- Early Birds has the same students every day and is going great.
- Curriculum implementation continues for the new Reading and Math programs. PD will be held on Friday to continue the next stages with the experts. PreK staff will do training on Dots (Observation Program). The CEA is sending a trainer to do a workshop on Building a Culture of Empathy. Looking at more PD for Paras. The 1st NYAEC meeting was held with teachers.
- The school is almost fully staffed and the overall climate of the school is positive.

D. Special Education Report:

- Continuing to look at student files (schedules and timelines for evaluations), met with special service providers to touch base on services, and meeting with parents in-person.
- Working on implementation of the new CT SEDS initiative with Deb Wright (great help and will be another go to person for the staff). The next step will be getting information out to parents with training on how to access the system.

E. Financial Report:

Financial Reports were reviewed. Rod Perry expressed concerns about not enough being budgeted for heating oil (delivery was at last year's price of \$2.29 gal. due to recording error by Saveway) and asked what the plan is (will get pricing from 2-3 places, check with the town and plan how to proceed - Valerie will follow up with the town and provide monthly update on usage). Propane prebuy of 500 gallons has not been used up yet. Rod Perry asked about any unexpected expenses (banners for the parking lot - \$900) and items overbudget – In Service, Other Professional Services (Insurance for Doctor on consult – additional \$800), New Supplies (Health Office - Supplies for teaching First Aid in the classroom).

#3-22/23 Motion to approve Financial Report dated September 29th, made by Rod Perry, seconded by Scott Sears and carried unanimously.

F. PTO Report:

- The Fall Fundraiser of Popcorn/Cotton Candy was sent out and is due back October 6th (funds go towards school events, teacher appreciation days and other activities). The top 3 selling families will get admission to the 2nd annual Halloween Family Movie Night on Friday, October 21st at SES. A poll on Facebook resulted with the movie "Hocus Pocus 2" (small fee per child and adults free with water, snacks and treat bag).
- Looking into bringing a Gaga pit to the school.
- Parish Hill's Trunk or Treat will be held on Friday, October 28th.
- Scotland Tree Lighting will be held in December (need a microphone) and discussed having kids make ornaments ahead of time at school.

G. Committee Reports:

Inter-district Cost Sharing, CABA/EASTCONN, Readiness Council, Policy Committee, Personnel Committee, Technology, Finance, Facilities, and Climate Survey Committee

EASTCONN – The new Director will hold a meeting on October 22nd to discuss the direction for EASTCONN post Covid.

School Readiness – Outstanding business from last year is to review policies.

Policy Committee – A few policies will be presented each month for review. Rod Perry asked if CABA still gives feedback on policies to consider (Valerie will include recommendations from CABA with the Board policies each month).

9. BOARD BUSINESS

H. Items for Discussion & Actions

1. Item: Tech Contract Vendor Decision (Action Anticipated):

Discussion was held regarding Tech Contracts from Savage - \$48,000 (\$4,000 month), EASTCONN - \$30,240 and Novus - \$50,000 (\$4,225 month). All 3 are willing to provide services for the town if the Board chooses. EASTCONN is reasonable for what they will do (administration believes they will meet the needs of the school and willing to do PD with the staff).

#4-22/23 Motion to approve bid by EASTCONN for Technology Services, made by Clark Stearns, seconded by Lisa Labelle and carried unanimously.

Clark Stearns asked the Superintendent to send the decision to all 3 bidders.

2. Item: Board Goals (Action Anticipated):

Cassidy Martin presented ideas for Board Goals:

- Board involvement in student achievement (celebrate at Board meetings).
- Stay connected to the community (how to get people to attend budget sessions, monitor BOE emails, being present at school and community events, surveys). Lisa Labelle suggested sending information out to parents and the community in layman's terms (Library, Facebook, Town Website, School Website). Sherry Smardon suggested posting agendas and minutes with a link that opens into a separate document (similar to Parish Hill).
- Maintain Fiscal Responsibilities (update maintenance plan).
- Calendar, BOE PD, Review Policies, Board Self-Evaluation.

#5-22/23 Motion to accept Board Goals as presented, made by Sherry Smardon, seconded by Gracie Martin and carried unanimously.

Clark Stearns asked how to keep Board Goals out front (will keep on agenda every month for discussion). Sherry Smardon suggested posting the goals on the website.

I. Old Business updates

1. Discuss Public Hearing on Consolidation:

Good questions were raised at the Public Hearing and answered by the Board of Selectmen. The Board was presented with an exit poll for review that can be given out with the ballots (will share with the HES Board). Clark Stearns expressed the need for something to be done and is in favor of exploring a cooperative agreement (model presented is a starting point). If the vote fails, the board owes it to the town to explore whether the concerns can be addressed. Scott Sears addressed concerns brought up about the \$600,000 savings being returned to the town (is not a slush fund – the savings would reduce the budget). Rod Perry asked if each town would receive the same amount in ECS funding (each town would still have a school) and asked about grants (not included in the proposal, would be one application for a cooperative school). Lisa Labelle expressed concerns with the number of meetings - 2 per month for BOE members, 3 per month for the Superintendent (could be changed with a Cooperative Agreement). Rod Perry expressed concerns about responsibility for capital expenditures for whichever town the building becomes the school (could be part of the Cooperative Agreement). Cassidy Martin expressed concerns about union contracts and the cost (very expensive). Sherry Smardon expressed concerns about the wording (entering into an agreement) for the vote without answers to questions. Clark Stearns expressed concerns about the timeframe for the agreement to begin if approved.

10. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON AGENDA ITEMS:

- Dennis Labelle (online) expressed concerns about the Board being able to make a decision on the Cooperative Agreement without all the details spelled out.

- Beth Troeger commented about the agreement being complicated and could be exciting looking into the future. A Cooperative Agreement would help maintain local control.

11. OTHER ACTION ITEMS: None

12. UPCOMING MEETINGS

- **Regular Board Meeting November 1, 2022**
- **Items for Next Meeting and Assignments:** Cooperative Agreement Discussion and Vote, Board Policies, Discuss Professional Development

13. ADJOURNMENT:

#6-22/23 Motion to adjourn (8:57 PM) made by Sherry Smardon, seconded by Scott Sears and carried unanimously.

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