

Winchester Board of Education

Type of Meeting: Regular BOE Meeting Minutes

Date: February 8, 2022 @ 7:00 p.m.

Location: Town Hall - Hicks Room (Everyone must wear masks in the Town Hall)

Meeting Facilitator: Melony Brady-Shanley, Superintendent
Doug Pfenninger, BOE Chairman

Jeannette Brodeur, Richard Dutton, Salvatore Lovetere, Cheryl McGlynn, Nora Mocariski, Kristin Peterson, Sondra Strubhar, and Renata Waldron

I. Call to order @ 7:00pm

II. Pledge of Allegiance:

III. Roll call:

In Attendance: Richard Dutton, Renata Waldron, Kristin Peterson, Nora Mocariski, Melony Brady-Shanley, Jeannette Brodeur, Salvatore Lovetere, Sondra Strubhar, Cheryl McGlynn

III. Agenda Review Discussion Possible Action:

a) Regular Board of Education Agenda: February 8, 2022

Superintendent Melony Brady-Shanley would like to suggest the movement and addition of the following items for tonight's agenda:

Propose to the Board to add response under discussion and possible action items to discuss WPS potentially taking action on WPS response to the masking beyond February 28, 2022.

Motion to add to agenda

First: Nora Mocariski, Second: Doug Pfenninger, U

IV. Comments from the Chairman:

Doug Pfenninger stated he would discuss later in the evening.

Nora Mocariski commented that Melony Brady-Shanley is doing a great job as Superintendent. She can keep us all focused on learning staying on top of our initiatives, and her leadership skills are exceptional.

Doug Pfenninger concurred with the comments and thanked Melony Brady-Shanley for doing a great job.

V. Presentations: No presentations

VI. Public Comment:

Board of Education Chairman to read Public Comment Regulations. Three minutes are allotted to each speaker per Board Policy #1120. No BOE employee, student, or community member should be defamed within a public comment.

Virginia Shultz Chruttle, 78 Wetmore Avenue of Winsted, talked about her experience with COVID and how the virus is real, and how damaging it can be. She also spoke about her concerns for the children and encouraged them to continue to wear a mask and get vaccinated.

Luigi Martinez, Preston Road of Winsted, stated how he doesn't think the Governor or the Board of Education should have the authority to put masks on children's faces—asked if Melony Brady-Shanley supported CAPSS and the mask mandate.

VII. Consent Agenda Items Discussion Possible Action:

a) Minutes of Regular BOE Meeting – January 11, 2022

MOTION to approve the minutes, adjustments to January 11, under roll call.

On-Page 3, change Nora Waldron to Nora Mocarski

On-Page 4, change Kirstin Peterson to Kristin Peterson.

On-Page 6, change Melony Brady-Shanly to Melony Brady-Shanley

MOTION to accept the minutes and approve with the three edits as presented (Page 3, 4, 6)

First: Kristin Peterson, Second: Nora Mocarski, U

b) Minutes of Special Meeting – January 10, 2022

c) Minutes of Committee Meetings – January 22, 2022

VIII. Gilbert Report from Board of Education Representative:

The meeting is scheduled for tomorrow night, February 9, at 6:30 pm at the library.

The finance committee is scheduled for 8:00 pm.

Please attend if you can.

IX. Correspondence to the Board:

a) Letter of Resignation from Tina Koutromanis

MOTION to accept a letter of resignation from Tina Koutroumanis.

First: Renata Waldron, Second: Jeannette Brodeur, U

X. Superintendent's Reports & Action Items Discussion Possible Action:

a) Superintendent's Report

Question: Has a tour of the barn been scheduled at Batcheller School?

A tour has not been scheduled, but will follow up and schedule accordingly.

Question: What is involved in faculty evaluations?

Evaluations for non-certified staff involve attendance, adherence, confidentiality, and narrative of their performance.

Evaluation for certified teachers is more in-depth. Evaluations start in the fall to establish goals, and there are three observations during the school year.

Question: How many more vaccination clinics are scheduled for the rest of the year?

Wednesday, February 9, is the last one scheduled.

b) School Enrollment - Batcheller has 283, Pearson has 282, School District has 565

c) Chronic Absences

In January, we had a large number of staff and students absent due to Covid. We have seen a decline in absences so far in February. We hit the highest absences with 32 staff members out in one single day. Between 10-15 absences a day is typical. Absences for staff and students will decline as we move into the Spring. We had 14 cases per day on average when we returned from December break, and now we are seeing 1-2 per week. We are moving in the right direction.

d) Gilbert Enrollment & Grade Level Enrollment

Gilbert has 415, 16, International, 1 Out of District. Total Enrollment is 432

Question: If students have mastered their goals, are they not eligible for services?

The goals are reflected in the special education enrollment.

e) Monthly Budget Summary - FY22

f) Monthly Hinsdale Report

Question: Do we have any supply chain issues?

We are experiencing a few minor issues, but we are moving in the right direction.

Question: Will a tour of Hinsdale be scheduled?

Yes, we will schedule accordingly.

g) Updated FY2023 Budget Calendar

XI. Board Action Items:

a) New Hire

Karli Heneghan was hired for the position of Library Media Specialist.

Barbara Silverio gave the Board her background experience.

b) Acceptance of Donation from Northwestern Connecticut Community College

MOTION to accept a donation from Northwestern Connecticut Community College

First: Nora MocarSKI, Second: Jeannette Brodeur, U

XII. New Business Discussion and Possible Action:

a) Update on Mrs. McGlynn and Mrs. Brady-Shanley's inquiry with the Department of Administrative Services

The grant is 15-20 years. The concern is, is the DES certain if Gilbert would qualify? Gilbert doesn't own the property and they are the designated high school. We haven't encountered this issue before.

Doug stated there is a lack of clarity and will be discussed in the executive session. In the future, if we are able to have a contract with Gilbert, the town has to fund the projects upfront and get reimbursed at a later date.

b) Polices First Read

1) Policy# 4118.11(a) – 4218.11 Personnel – Non Discrimination

This policy pertains to hair textures and protective hairstyles. This is a mandated policy, and we can't change it.

2) Policy# 4135.141(a) – 4235.141 – Personnel – Union Access to District Employees

This policy pertains to Union/Associations Access to District employees, and we have to have this policy.

3) Policy# 5141(a) – Students – Students Health Services

We either have no policy, or we have to correct the policy. We want to give fair notice to everyone that we are following the policy and compliant with the law. We need to provide more clarity.

Question: Will our medical advisor provide the care to the families if needed?

If we did have families that needed exams, we have a school-based health center that can conduct the physical exams.

Melony Brady-Shanley reviewed the religious exemption policy with the Board.

c) Shipman and Goodwin Board of Education Training

They offer training and review the legal do's and don'ts the Board of Education has, they also review the different functions of the Board and what is required.

If the Board is interested, the fee would be \$425.00 for two hours of training, and a draft agenda will be sent out.

The Governor's Executive Order pertaining to mask-wearing in school may run out in the coming days. If the order is not extended, Melony Brady-Shanley sent out two surveys. One to staff and one to families, which was optional to get an idea of their thinking regarding masking.

Winchester is at 21%

Staff survey had 118 responses, and 61.9% said they would prefer to wear a mask at school and would like to make the decision themselves. We have 167 staff members.

Family surveys affect kids and staff members. We have 565 students, and we received 374 responses.

75.6 % want parent choice and 24.4% want the Board to continue to mandate.

Question: How is the school bus transportation affected by this choice?

The bus company is subject to our decisions since they are under contract with us. They follow instructions from what we do.

Question: Are there students or staff members who have any immune-compromised problems?

This has not been brought to my attention.

Question: What anti-bullying measures should go into effect regarding whether a child wears a mask or not?

The messaging can be incorporated into our morning announcements.

Question: What happens if the parents want their child to wear a mask and the child arrives at school and doesn't want to wear it because their friends aren't wearing one?

1. Bring the issue to the parent and have a conversation about the problem we are having.
2. The administrators will not be the mask police. This needs to be instilled as a home measure.

Melony Brady-Shanley will come back to the Board with a short-term plan to cover communication and continued work with the public health department to monitor COVID cases.

The Board was asked if they would like Melony Brady-Shanley to report COVID numbers within the school system every month.

The motion that was made and approved with a 9-0 vote

"To support the parent/staff choice regarding wearing of masks beyond the timeframe of the active Executive Order or any applicable extensions. Further BOE action may be necessary should a triggering event in relation to COVID-19 happen according to DPH metrics. The Board of Education directs the Superintendent of Schools to promptly notify the BOE of any COVID-19 triggering events. Should a COVID-19 trigger event occur, the BOE will convene either an emergency or special meeting as determined by the Chairman."

- d) Discussion of academic/programmatic expectations of The Gilbert School in relation to the Winchester resident students.

Doug Pfenninger mentioned to the Board that he hopes that our current Board members can seek and achieve a better partnership with the Gilbert School. We need to let them know what our hopes and expectations are.

XIII. Public Comment:

Board of Education Chairman to read Public Comment Regulations. Three minutes are allotted to each speaker per Board Policy #1120. No BOE employee, student, or community member should be defamed within a public comment.

Kym Higgins, 20 Crescent Street of Winsted, stated that COVID is scary and brings disease. She is concerned about the children. There are vaccinations, but we are still wearing masks. Children can't communicate while wearing masks if they are nonverbal.

Virginia Shultz Chruttle, 76 Wetmore Avenue of Winsted, agrees that it is important to see students' faces and understand what is being taught. Emphasized the importance of vaccinations and masking.

Nick Teeling - When the survey was sent out, did parents know that the survey information would be used at tonight's Board meeting?

Lucy Gable, 29 Crescent Street of Winsted, stated that she didn't know a survey was sent home until she was notified at daycare.

An unknown person wanted to thank everyone for their progress tonight.

MOTION to move into Executive Session

First: Doug Pfenninger, Second: Nora Mocarski, U

Adjourn @ 9:29 p.m.

XIV. Executive Session

a) Update on The Gilbert School's Contract

XIV. Adjourn: 10:20 p.m.