

Winchester Board of Education

Type of Meeting: Regular BOE Meeting **MINUTES**

Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 @ 7:00 p.m.

Location: Town Hall – Hicks Room – In-Person or Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7966671341?pwd=OGh4c1haZkkvcGJ2UHVtZXo4M0VDdz09>

Phone Number: 1-929-205-6099

Meeting ID: 796 667 1341

Passcode: 12345

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

Members: Nora Mocarski, Kristin Peterson, Richard Dutton, Alexandria Propfe, Cheryl McGlynn, Michelle Hintz, Shana DeVaux, and Tara Sundie

- I. Call to order @ 7:01pm
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Roll call
  - A. Board of Education (BOE) Members (in alphabetical order by last name): Cheryl McGlynn (via Zoom), Michelle Hintz, Nora Mocarski (via Zoom), Secretary; Doug Pfenninger, Chairman; Alexandria Propfe (via Zoom), Tara Sundie, Dr. Richard Dutton, Kristin Peterson
  - B. ABSENT: Shana DeVaux
  - C. Central Office: Melony Brady-Shanley, Superintendent, Nancy O’Dea-Wyrick, Director of Finance
  - D. Administration: R. Fields, Principal Batcheler School
- IV. Agenda Review Discussion Possible Action:
  - A. Regular Board of Education Agenda: August 18, 2020
  - B. **MOTION** to add a discussion of the Board of Selectmen’s meeting regarding The Gilbert School from August 17, 2020, under “Discussion”
    1. First: C. McGlynn, Second: N. Mocarski → U.
- V. Comments from the Chairman
  - A. Governor Lamont and Commissioner of Education Cardona met with Superintendent MBS and Chair D. Pfenninger to discuss the opening of schools. Our Administration is held in high regard by both the governor and the Commissioner of Education Cardona.
  - B. The Board Chair mentioned he was puzzled by Gilbert’s decision to continue to separate the administration of the two systems given the proven skills of our district’s leadership for grades Pre-K-6.
  - C. Discussed Mayor Perez’s introduction to the BOS and the unanimous adoption by the BOS of exploration of legislative solutions to the financial struggles between the two districts. The Chair is very pleased the BOS has unanimously approved the decision to explore a legislative solution.
- VI. Gilbert Report: Steve Sedlack
  - A. None.
- VII. Presentations:
  - A. Updated Reopening Plans
    1. MBS shared Google slides and the Winchester Public Schools Website that contained reopening information with the public, particularly for parents.
      - a) Viewers would do well to pay attention to the updated date of the slides to ensure that information shared is the latest.
      - b) Bus routes must be stable. WPS is not allowing for different drop-offs to different places on different days.

- c) Note that “synchronous” means live instruction
- d) Absentees - teachers will take attendance for all subjects in PowerSchool, whether virtual or in-person, the student will be marked absent.
- e) The number of parents selecting in-person and at-home instruction is fluctuating.
- f) For clarification: “Homeschooling” is different from WPS plans to open schools
- g) Asking parents to make a choice on in-person vs. at-home for a trimester. Helps us figure out the appropriate staffing, consistency of delivery of programs (curriculum, assessment, and instruction), and its impact upon the budget.
- h) Parents are ready to send their children back to school!
- i) No set formula exists in the State regarding going to at-home/remote only if COVID cases hit. It is really a case-by-case basis and it is important to do contact tracing. We are working with the Torrington Area Health District to help on these matters.

VIII. Public Hearing:

- A. Five minutes allotted to each speaker per Board Policy #9325 No BOE employee, student, or community member should be defamed within a public comment.
  - 1. None.

IX. Consent Agenda Items Discussion Possible Action:

- A. Minutes of Regular BOE Meeting – June 9, 2020
- B. Minutes of Special Meeting – June 23, 2020
- C. Minutes of Special Meeting – July 15, 2020
- D. Minutes of Special Meeting – July 21, 2020
  - 1. **MOTION** to accept the minutes of the above meetings A through D.
    - a) First: M. Hintz Second: K. Peterson → U.

X. Correspondence to the Board:

- A. Kid-Governor Program was shared by the Chair. To be placed on the Curriculum Committee Agenda for discussion [Next curriculum committee meeting is September 29, 2020].

XI. Superintendent’s Reports & Action Items Discussion Possible Action:

- A. Superintendent’s Report - pages 13- 15 of BOE Packet was discussed
  - 1. The operational side of the report was discussed regarding Summer School. We had 40 students in person. All students were compliant. No issues. It was wonderful to watch. Smoothest-run summer school we’ve ever had. “Predictability” was critical to its success. It was safe, prepared, and it was well run. Bus unloading was quick and strategic. School nurses and the school custodian did an excellent job of supporting this session.
  - 2. Instructions side of Summer School - able to provide 1:1 instruction/help support. Not right there with them, but able to address their needs. Able to provide “Running Records” and acquire pre/post data. We delivered instruction the way it should be done. Kudos to the faculty in working with students. Proactive planning a full-day prior was important. Overall, positive experience. Had no mask issues. Masks did not hinder learning.
  - 3. Oak Street School preparation discussed. No visitors will be allowed in any building. SRC is here in Oak Street, Teacher Team Room, CHAMPs/Art/ OT/PT room, small groups, PPT conference rooms are all at Oak Street. MBS’s desk is in the hallway.
  - 4. Distance Learning Numbers were discussed. Numbers have been steady at 20-22%. Education of what “syncryons learning” has helped parents make decisions.
  - 5. Staffing - notices are still coming in from faculty. There is a rigorous process / the threshold is high for a “leave of absence.”
  - 6. Bussing - There is an increase in parents taking responsibility for transporting their children. Again, parents must have one consistent location where to drop off in the afternoon every day, every week.
  - 7. Class sizes - following the contracted obligation. 4 classrooms per grade to increase distance. 13 to 20 in the room. “Maximum distance,” does not necessarily mean 6 feet. Average: 18. We did not add staff. We are providing a Distance Learning teacher.

8. Online Forum Update: Two online forms have been conducted thus far. MBS's emphasis: "Have I answered your question for you?" to ensure parents are clear. Spanish version of videos to be released.
9. Masks are to be worn all day, unless during a break.
10. Guidelines for COVID Benchmark Data was discussed. Connecticut is in a good place to start school. EdAdvance information is further informative by town in Litchfield County.
11. MOU - 39 bulleted items have been discussed. Down to the last bullet.
12. In good years, it is difficult to find substitute teachers. So given this, there is an MOU for Paraprofessionals. A Bachelor's degree is required to be used as a substitute and this person would be paid with a stipend to cover classes.
13. Re: CEA hoping to delay two weeks, but Winchester will be ready to open and will open as scheduled unless there is a major state-wide order/health department mandate otherwise.
14. Cares Act Funding
  - a) Operating and Appropriated Budget information was shared.
15. Budget Projections
16. Financial Update

XII. Discussion:

A. Middle & High School Enrollment

1. Gilbert enrollment numbers on page 16 of the packet were shared. It looks like the enrollment numbers are less than anticipated. Approximately 15 students fewer. It looks like 40-50 kids in the 9th-grade group but should wait until the October 1, 2020 report to be firm on this number. It appears that a significant number of students have selected VoAg or other schools than Gilbert.
2. Discussion, whether students from China that attend The Gilbert School will be quarantined, was discussed. N. Mocarski sent an email to A. Serio and S. Sedlack to get an answer.
  - a) Answer: overseas students will be quarantined for 14 days and tested for COVID per T. Serio.
3. Questions arose as to whether The Gilbert School has a bottom-line figure that would be used to determine if and when the International Program is insolvent.
  - a) Email sent to A. Serio asking this question.

- B. M. McGlynn discussed the Winchester BOS meeting from last night, Monday, August 17, 2020, whereby BOS unanimously agreed to explore a legislative remedy to the on-going issues associated with the process of the setting the educational side of the town budget by the Gilbert School Corp. On July 1, 2019, after the town had voted on the budget, The Gilbert School Corp submitted a bill to the Winchester Schools for an additional \$100,000 without voter approval. This impacts the Town Budget. The BOS is looking for a possible remedy including requiring mediation and arbitration in the process of setting the tuition amount as a possible way to solve the on-going problem of the budget process.
- a) It was agreed that C. McGlynn will make arrangements to sit down with Mayor Perez to draft legislation for the State Legislature to find a legislative remedy to the problem of the structure and law in relation to the budget-making process with regards to the Gilbert School Corp, Winchester Schools, the Town of Winchester, and the taxpayers.

XIII. Board Action Items:

A. New Hires

1. **MOTION** to accept the new hires as presented
  - a) First: K Peterson, Second: M. Hintz → U.

B. Approval to Apply for Following Grants

1. Alliance Grant: \$200,966.00
2. Commissioner's Network: \$450,000.00

3. Family Resource Center: \$101,530.00
4. Title IV: \$16,676.00 Shared with Gilbert
  - a) \$7,971.03 The Gilbert School
  - b) \$8,704.97 Winchester Public Schools
5. Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) - \$191,756.00 Shared with Gilbert
  - a) \$93,667.56 The Gilbert School
  - b) \$98,088.44 Winchester Public Schools
6. Second Round of Cares Funding Grant

**MOTION** to approve the application for the grants listed above # 1-6.

First: A. Propfe, Second: T. Sundaе → U.

XIV. Unfinished Business:

A. None.

XV. New Business Discussion and Possible Action

A. None.

XVI. Adjourn at 8:40 pm.

A. First: C. McGlynn, Second: M. Hintz → U.

Minutes submitted by N. Mocarski, WPS Board Secretary