

WILLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
Tuesday, April 9 2024
Virtual Meeting: Hybrid (in-person and online)
7:00 p.m.
Minutes
Zoom Recorded

Members Present

Briana Ross - Chair
Jennifer Goodale - Vice Chair
Samantha Sperry - Secretary
Ann Grosjean
Tracey Anderson
Arthur Christensen
Jon Mitchell

Also Present

Superintendent Phil Stevens

1. Call to order

Chair Briana Ross called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Ross led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Student Representatives Report

Elijah W. and Riyanna W. from Center Elementary School discussed positive and upcoming events that were happening at the school including a 2nd grade field trip to the Connecticut Science Center. They noted things that students could improve are being quieter on the bus and listening to bus drivers, using indoor voices, and being a good sport.

Maren F., Lucas A., Lauren R., and Angus B. from Hall Memorial School gave a recorded presentation discussing recent school events that they have had and things that they are doing to make a positive impact in the school. Things they would like to see improved are increasing awareness about racism. They also noted that new feminine product dispensers would be installed in the school bathrooms.

4. PTA Report

Carrie Rainville gave the PTA report that discussed recent events and activities happening in the schools. Ms. Rainville noted that due to money raised during the readathon, they will be able to buy new headphones for students at Center and Hall Memorial Schools. She also discussed upcoming PTA events.

5. Present to Speak

James Marshall, Fisher Hill Road, said he would like to thank QA+M for their diligent work. He also commented that the cost and impact on students should be the biggest thing that is considered while working on these upcoming projects and renovations.

6. Chair Report

Chair Ross said she wanted to make sure that everyone was receiving emails from the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education and noted that they had a lot to offer. Chair Ross also reminded members of the Budget meetings that are coming up.

7. Communications

P. Stevens stated that there were two communications from Rick Maloney about CIP and bonding.

8. Superintendent report

a. Staffing

P. Stevens said that there were two staffing changes. Michelle White was hired as a paraprofessional for Hall School to replace Natasia Chandler. P. Stevens said they also received a letter of resignation from Haley Collins, CES special education teacher. She will be leaving at the end of May to go back to school full-time to get her master's degree.

b. Town budget update: hearing, Town meeting to set referendum

P. Stevens said that the BOF appropriated \$9,877,772 for the 24-25 BOE budget. The budget hearing is Wednesday, April 10 at 7 pm in the Old Town Hall on the green. The town meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 24 at 7 pm in the Old Town Hall on the green. The BOF finance will hold a meeting following the budget hearing.

c. District Health Statistics

P. Stevens said that we have had 1 COVID case since our last meeting. He said that they have had the stomach bug and strep throat reported in the schools, but not a lot of known COVID cases.

d. CES power outage

P. Stevens said that they had a power outage at Center School on the morning of March 21st. He said that he typically wouldn't report an issue like this, but unfortunately, it was a brownout, and the drop in voltage to the power supply system resulted in some damage. He noted that half the building had power for a period of time which is terrible for electronics. He said that the switch that turns on the circulator pumps for the boiler was damaged and needs to be repaired and that they are currently waiting on parts. He noted that the internet bridge from CES to the Town Office Building was damaged and was repaired. P. Stevens also said the burglar alarm was impacted and has been fixed. He said that they will continue to monitor for additional issues, but this would be a reason to have a whole school generator.

e. HMS water incident

P. Stevens said that on Easter morning, CT Water had an issue with water pressure on the line that feeds Hall School. He stated that the condos on Depot Road, the firehouse, High Chase, and Hall School were impacted. P. Stevens said that Steve Folino, HMS maintenance, Chief Moore from Willington Fire #1, and himself went to HMS to assess the situation and found several bathrooms and the boiler room slightly flooded. He said that they spent a couple of hours cleaning up the water and manually shutting off each unit. He said that when they left, CT Water was out working in front of HMS installing a pressure relief valve so it wouldn't happen again. P. Stevens said he had one of the custodians check the school later in the day to make sure they did not have any additional issues and everything was good.

f. Eclipse, April 8

P. Stevens said that each student and staff member received a pair of approved eclipse glasses on April 8th as the eclipse was occurring during dismissal time. He stated that staff provided additional supervision during dismissal and things went very well. P. Stevens said that they had a lot of students picked up early from Center School, but the remainder of the students were able to view the eclipse with their glasses before getting on their school bus.

g. Upcoming events

P. Stevens noted upcoming events including, April vacation next week, with camp occurring at HMS, Hidden in Plain Sight: April 30 at 6 pm at HMS, and a Prek and kindergarten screening occurring the first two weeks of May.

h. Other

P. Stevens discussed ARPA enrichment activities which included New England Science & Sailing Foundation (NESS) at CES and HMS had Nature's Classroom. He said that they also had a reptile nook at Center School today. P. Stevens also thanked those who completed the cell phone survey sent to parents and staff and that a committee would be looking at it.

9. Financial report

a. April 2024 financial report

Attachment #1

P. Stevens said that this was a difficult financial report to pull together due to all of the movement including transfers and grants. He said that there will be more movement in it, however with all the transfers and grants he would be discussing he believes the balance number is pretty accurate at \$130,000. He said that new outplacements were not listed in the number, however, with other funds coming in from grants and transfers he was going to request tonight brings the balance number back to \$135,000. P. Stevens noted that we received the flood insurance check. He also noted that they encumbered funds for tree work at Hall School. He mentioned that a tree fell on the softball field and it would cost about \$50,000 to clear all the trees and branches in the area, but they spent funds to make it safer. P. Stevens said that they also updated the bus contract number which is closer to what will be expended. He also noted they requested funding from Program 6 to the Title II grant that would allow them to bring some money back into the budget. P. Stevens also noted that they updated the insurance encumbrance for current staff.

b. Program 3: Special Education budget update and transfers

P. Stevens said that he would like to propose that Board Members make the following transfers to start to balance out the shortfall in the special education program from the additional outplacements. He said that the \$112,589 reduction in excess cost grant funds hurts, especially this year because of all the additional unbudgeted outplacements. He stated that 19 school districts lost over 1 million dollars with the reduction in excess cost grant. P. Stevens proposed that the Board move \$144,864 into Program 3 from Programs 1, 2, 9, and 10.

A. Christensen moved that they transfer \$144,864 into Program 3 special education from the following programs, \$13,169 from Program 1, \$35,452 from Program 2, \$16,243 from Program 9, and \$80,000 from Program 10.

J. Goodale seconded the motion.

The motion passes unanimously.

P. Stevens said that because they applied part of the non-lapsing fund to the chimney project, they would need to unencumber all of that so that they can apply what they said they were going to apply in next year's budget and then they will have the balance of \$125,000.

J. Goodale moved that they unencumber all non-lapsing funds allocated to the Center School chimney project totaling \$109,000.

J. Mitchell seconded the motion.

The motion passes unanimously.

c. Maintenance fund request

P. Stevens said that we have spent enough funds on repairs utilizing the BOE budget and that he is recommending the Board request a transfer of funds from the million dollars in CIP to offset the Board of Education budget. He said that he is recommending this action because of the shortfall in funding this year. P.

Stevens said that all of the projects have been completed/encumbered except the special education pneumatic to electric project. He said it would bring approximately \$26,000 back to the operating budget.

A. Grosjean moved that the Board of Education request that the Board of Finance request the Board of Selectmen call a town meeting to appropriate \$27,049 from the Capital Reserve Fund to 04-4050-001: school repair projects. These funds are to come out of the million dollars set aside for School Projects in CIP FY 2023-2024.

J. Goodale seconded the motion.

The motion passes unanimously.

1. New Business

- a. Regular meeting minutes March 12 , 2024
 - b. Special Meeting minutes March 14, 2024
 - c. Policy Committee meeting minutes March 20, 2024
- Attachment #4**

Attachment #2
Attachment #3

J. Mitchell moved to approve the minute meetings from the March 12, March 14, and March 20, meetings.

S. Sperry seconded the motion.

A. Christensen asked that S. Sperry be highlighted as secretary where the board members were listed.

The rest of the board agreed.

The motion passes unanimously.

d. 2023-2024 Willington Public Schools calendar adjustment

Attachment #5

P. Stevens recommended that the Board adjust the 23-24 school calendar from 182 student days to 181 student days. He said that it would make the last day of school for students Friday, June 13 instead of having them return for a ½ day of school on Monday. He said he would propose that Friday still be a ½ day of school. He stated that making this adjustment would allow them to utilize Monday, June 16 for a full day of professional development on the new language arts program. He also proposed that the Board maintain that Friday as the last day of school even if they have one more weather-related closing which would make the student year 180 days, which is the state minimum.

J. Goodale moved that the Board of Education adjust the 2023-2024 school calendar to make the last day of school for students Friday, June 14th which will be an early dismissal, and if the district has one additional weather-related closing before the end of the school year that the last day of school will remain Friday, June 14th 2024, and be an early dismissal.

J. Mitchell seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

e. 2024-2025 Health Food Certification

Attachment #6

P Stevens said that the Health Food Certification is completed each year. He said he is requesting the Board approve two motions. He said that the motion must be read as written as we submit proof via our minutes to the state. He said that they have to do this because they participate in the National School Lunch Program and receive funds from the government. He said he recommends the board approve both motions. Approving the 1st motion keeps them aligned to receiving reimbursement from the lunch program, and the 2nd motion

allows them to provide food or drinks at various times that meet the requirements of the exemption.

S. Sperry moved that pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Willington Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.

A. Christensen seconded the motion.

A. Christensen asked if they would be getting a food presentation this year.

P. Stevens said that they could and that an update on the program would be helpful.

The motion passed unanimously.

A. Grosjean moved that the Willington Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An "event" is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The "regular school day" is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. "Location" means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales.

J. Goodale seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

f. Policy #5112(a) Ages of Attendance

Attachment #7

P. Stevens said that the policy committee reviewed the ages of the attendance policy and provided the changes. P. Stevens said that the changes are required as the law changed and the new age to attend kindergarten is 5 by September 1 of each school year. He said that this is a first reading and it has minor changes. He said that the attorney is reviewing the policy and legal references portion as well.

11. Old business

There was no old business at this time.

12. Present to speak

There was no present to speak at this time.

13. Board comment

Chair Ross said she would like to thank Alex, Steve, and Phil for wearing their bunny ears to clean up the flood on Easter. She also gave a shout out to those who were organizing an evening of arts and said that it was a great experience and that the students' personalities and self-expression showed through.

J. Goodale agreed and said that the evening of arts was great for students and was absolutely incredible.

A. Grosjean said that she was looking for the Center School Events coming up. She also welcomed the new staff and thanked staff that were leaving.

A. Christensen said being on this side of that table for a budget meeting was an interesting experience because he has watched some very volatile meetings and he said that their Board of Education should congratulate themselves for working as a team when presenting the budget and that it was a testament to working as a team despite differences in opinions.

14. Adjournment

L. Grosjean motioned to adjourn the meeting.

J. Mitchell seconded.

The motion passed unanimously, meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

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WILLINGTON, CT.

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TOWN CLERK