

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Remote Meeting

Tuesday, July 7, 2020
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, July 7, 2020. Governor Scott signed H.681 into law, making temporary changes to Vermont's Open Meeting Law. Part of those changes allow school districts to hold school board meetings remotely with no designated meeting location. LCATV provided coverage through a live stream and citizens were provided online and telephone options to participate in the meeting. Those in attendance were Board Chair Mike Rogers; Directors: Craig Kieny, Lindsey Cox, Curt Taylor, and Nic Longo; Superintendent Amy Minor; Business and Operations Manager George Trieb; Director of Curriculum Gwendolyn Carmolli; and Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz. Principals: Heather Baron, Michele Cote, Jordan Burke, Carolyn Millham and Chris Antonicci; Assistant Principals: Erica LeClair, Chad DeMagistris, Dovid Yagoda, and Brooke King; Directors of Student Support Services: Jean Shea and Julie Tanguay.

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Board Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Citizen Participation

None.

III. Discussion on Request to Fly Black Lives Matter Flag

Action

At the last school board meeting, Director Lindsey Cox read a statement that she wrote which asked the board to add an agenda item to the next meeting so they could discuss raising the Black Lives Matter flag on all school campuses for the 2020-21 school year. Prior to their discussion, Colchester Education Association (CEA) Co-Presidents Tara Sharkey and Kate Ellingson called into the meeting to give their unwavering support of flying the flag. They supplied the board with 20 letters representing 41 CEA members. Following their call, the school board recording secretary read 16 letters that were sent to the board by current students, alumni, parents, and community members. One letter was signed by 80 English learner students, both current and alumni. Of the 16 letters that were sent in, all but one were in support of flying the flag. Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz then read a statement from the Association of Colchester Administrators (ACA) expressing their unified support for flying the Black Lives Matter flag at each of their schools.

The board thanked everyone who participated in the meeting. Director Cox noted that in her time on the school board she has never experienced such engagement from the community at a meeting or regarding a specific topic. She expressed gratitude to everyone who called and wrote in and stated that from what was shared, the board has heard loud and clear that the community wants the raising of the flags to be a first step towards the district's work to promote an anti-racist community.

Director Kieny shared his full support of raising the flags for all of the reasons that were mentioned in the letters and statements. He requested that the motion to raise the flags also include language that speaks specifically to the board's commitment to review district policies and procedures with an

anti-racist lens. He also suggested that the board remove the time limit to only fly the flag for the upcoming school year. Director Longo agreed with Director Kieny's suggestions and wanted to be sure the motion incorporates the board's promise to listen and continually discuss anti-racism. He went on to say the symbol of raising the flag is very important but the pledge to listen and discuss is imperative. Also within the board's control, Director Cox stated that it will be important to evaluate the allocation of resources. Director Taylor concurred with the statements of the other board members but suggested to leave the year time-limit to fly the flag for the sole purpose of having a set time to discuss and evaluate the board and district's efforts to become an anti-racist community. He expressed fear that without regularly scheduled discussion, the flag may eventually blend into the background. The board agreed and then drafted a motion that incorporated their discussion.

Director Cox moved to raise the Black Lives Matter flag at all Colchester Schools for the 2020-2021 school year as a commitment to anti-racist education, conversation, and action from the school board. With this motion, the board commits to review district policies and procedures with an equity lens. The board agrees to review raising the Black Lives Matter flag on an annual basis to promote further engagement and conversation with the community. The motion was seconded by Director Longo and passed unanimously, 5-0.

Following the motion, Director Taylor read a statement that he drafted in support of flying the flag.

IV. COVID-19 School Closure Status Update

Informational

Superintendent Amy Minor shared an update on the district's work to reopen school in the fall. She highlighted that welcoming some or all of the district's students back into school buildings during a pandemic is a complex task that requires rethinking how the district operates on all levels. She described the process as re-engineering school. The district's systems and services rely on conditions that are currently out of our control, however, the administrators are continuing to plan for a multitude of scenarios. She announced that the district has formed a reopening committee that consists of administrators, nurses, teachers, paraeducators, technology professionals and food service. The first meeting will be held that week and the committee's ultimate task is to review the guidance provided by the State so far and to determine the local level parameters of reopening school.

She also highlighted the data from a recent family survey. Nearly 1,400 families completed the survey and the data is being distributed to appropriate subcommittees for consideration into their recommendations. Overall, 70% of families feel comfortable or excited about returning to in-person instruction in our school buildings. That leaves 30% who feel uncomfortable or fearful. Superintendent Minor stated that administrators in the district understand how some families are feeling and will be working to communicate the steps that they are taking to maintain the welcoming school community that Colchester prides itself on. 88% of families said their child(ren) missed coming to school to learn and see their peers.

Also noted was 16%, or 216 families, who selected that if the Agency of Education allows it, they would prefer an option to enroll their student in full-time remote learning, even if schools are open for in-person instruction. Director Kieny asked how the district would implement two forms of instruction simultaneously. Superintendent Minor stated that the Agency of Education has not yet formalized or agreed to this as an option for families, but in the event they do, building administrators have already been brainstorming possibilities including partnering with resources and agencies who already offer online instruction. Full-time remote learning would be different than the

emergency remote-learning that occurred in the spring. It would be more rigorous with expanded course offerings.

Director Cox asked the district to think about how we are communicating to ensure that we are making an effort and solicit input from families who are not responding to surveys or emails or who are non-English speaking. She also asked if there were any COVID-19 funding updates. Business and Operations Manager George Trieb stated that he had not heard anything yet, but expects to soon. Specifically regarding what items can be reimbursed.

V. Approval of Tax Anticipation Note **Action**

To start the next fiscal year, the district needs to borrow money from a lending institution until funds arrive from the state. This is an annual requirement. Given that the meeting was held remotely, Business Manager George Trieb provided the forms and lending documents to the board electronically and will set up a time to have the necessary members sign them in person.

Director Taylor moved to approve the Tax Anticipation Note for the Colchester School District as recommended by the business manager, seconded by Director Kieny. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

VI. Monthly Financial Report **Informational**

Business and Operations Manager George Trieb presented a report of the district's finances for the month of June. At this time, he did not have any substantial concerns to alert the board of.

VII. Approval of Personnel Consent Agenda **Action**

The following Personnel Consent Agenda was reviewed by the board.

PERSONNEL CONSENT AGENDA
Board Meeting Date: July 7, 2020

Licensed Employees (Teacher/Administrator)										
Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Non-Licensed Employees (Support Staff), <i>Informational</i>										
Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Support Staff	Nathaniel	Thompson	End of Employment	Behavior Interventionist	35	CHS	Notice of End of Employment			Yes
Support Staff	Linda	Schick	Transfer	Paraeducator-Speech	32.5	UMS	Notice of Transfer	Jeannie Perkins	Yes	Yes

Director Cox moved to approve the Personnel Consent Agenda for July 7, 2020, seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

VIII. Approval of General Meeting Minutes: June 16, 2020 Action

Director Cox requested that the statement she read be included as an appendix.

Director Cox moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on June 16, 2020, seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

IX. Board/Administration Communication, Correspondence, Committee Reports Informational

- There is no update on when the district will hear about their lead testing results.
- A board retreat will potentially take place the last week of July.
- Future board meetings will remain remote since the buildings will remain closed to the public.

X. Future Agenda Items Informational

- COVID-19 Update and Planning
- Director Cox requested a list of items/actions that have been postponed because of COVID-19.

XI. Executive Session to Discuss Contract Negotiations Action

Director Taylor moved to enter executive session at 8:42 p.m. for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations, seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Director Taylor moved to exit executive session at 8:58 p.m., seconded by Director Kienny. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

XII. Adjournment

Director Cox moved to adjourn at 8:59 p.m., seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Recorder:


Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:


Lindsey Cox
Board Clerk