

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Remote Meeting

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

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, August 4, 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; Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz; and Principals: Heather Baron, Michele Cote, Jordan Burke, Carolyn Millham, and Chris Antonicci.

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Mike Rogers called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He then took a moment to acknowledge the tireless efforts of the administrators, who were all in attendance at the meeting. On behalf of the school board, he applauded the administrators for all their hard work to prepare for this school year.

II. Citizen Participation

A letter sent to the board from community members Steve and Hana Robinson in opposition to flying the Black Lives Matter (BLM) flag was read aloud. Board Directors Craig Kieny and Lindsey Cox read a statement composed by the board explaining the board's decision and support for flying the BLM flag. The board's letter will be posted on the school board page of the website.

III. Reopening Colchester Schools Update

Informational

Superintendent Amy Minor, along with administrators representing Central Office and each school, provided information including recent updates to the State's reopening guidance, enrollment numbers, class size, teacher schedules, student assessments and safety drill procedures.

Notable changes in the updated guidance from the state include a strong recommendation for the return of grades PreK – 5 to full-time, in-person learning; a change in the distance recommendation for grades PreK – 5 from 6 feet to 3 feet; and the allowance of temperature screenings and health check questions to occur at the entrance of the school if not feasible to be conducted on the bus before boarding. Director Cox questioned the State's language of "feasibility". She inquired if the district knew if this shift was solely for operational and staffing purposes or if it was also made because of updated health and safety information. Superintendent Amy Minor shared that the district's nurses are continuing to refine the district's health screening procedures and that the district nursing supervisor will be in attendance at the next school board meeting to answer health-related questions. She noted that the State's guidance was revised in conjunction with the Department of Health, so the assumption would be that they have indeed signed off on that change. She added that all districts in the state are having an extremely difficult time finding and hiring

health screeners to ride buses. In Colchester, the district has approximately 40 daily bus routes operated by 20 buses and would subsequently need to fill 20 health screening positions. She added that the district will be pushing out specific communication to families encouraging them to add checking for symptoms and taking temperatures to their morning routine before they leave the house. It will be communicated to families that the district will assume that every child who boards a bus or enters a school is feeling well and not displaying any symptoms of illness. The district will also assume that if a child is sent to school, the child has not knowingly been exposed to another person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Director Kieny asked if the district was reconsidering its reopening plan after reading the updated guidance recommending PreK – Grade 5 learn in-person, full-time. Superintendent Minor said the district, and the other districts in our region, are continuing with their plans to reopening in a hybrid model. She emphasized that with so many changes this year, local leaders feel strongly that we need to first welcome our students and staff back to ease in and acclimate to all of the new routines and procedures. The hybrid model will allow the district to assess the overall implementation of the reopening plan before considering bringing students back full time. Director Cox asked that school leaders continue to keep health and safety at the forefront of their decision making.

Director Kieny asked how the teachers are feeling and if they are anxious or if they have concerns. Superintendent Minor shared that in general, teachers and staff are excited to be back with kids. She stated that public school teachers do not get into education to be virtual teachers and that school buildings are ultimately where they want to be, however, as a group they are nervous. They want to see strong safety measures in place to protect themselves and the students. Uncertainty is what generates the most anxiety amongst employees so district administrators and nurses are having regular conversations regarding the multiple layers of protection in each building to mitigate transmission of the virus.

Also included in the presentation was the enrollment of tuition students into the district. As a whole, tuition numbers from school choice towns are up from last year. That, in conjunction with several significant developments being built in town has district leaders keeping a close eye on total enrollment, knowing many of our buildings are already at capacity. Superintendent Minor also pointed out that they will be watching kindergarten enrollment for the 2021-2022 school year since it appears many families chose to delay entry this year because of COVID-19.

IV. Updated 2020-2021 School Calendar **Informational**

Superintendent Minor outlined a couple of changes to the calendar which will be shared with families later in the week. The changes addressed several spots in the calendar where a day off resulted in the week being unbalanced in the amount of in-person days for one of the learning groups.

V. Approval of the Contract Agreement with Colchester Education Association **Action**

A contract agreement between the Colchester Education Association (CEA) and the School Board has been reached. The agreement is a one-year deal with a compensation increase of 2.90%. There are some minor language changes and the addition of the statewide insurance coverage which starts on January 1, 2021. It includes an hourly rate change for teachers from \$35 to \$40, and a percentage rate change for drivers' education instructors from 0.095% to 0.115% from the base amount.

Director Taylor moved to approve the collective bargaining agreement with the Colchester Education Association for the years 2020-2021 as outlined, seconded by Director Longo. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

VI. Approval of Purchase of Chromebooks Action

This purchase is part of the district's annual replacement plan for CMS. The district is looking to place this order much earlier than normal due to the significant delay in receiving devices from vendors. Normally, it would be approved over the winter. Vendors have informed the district to plan on delivery taking at least six months.

Director Kieny moved to authorize the business and operations manager to purchase the IT equipment as requested, seconded by Director Longo. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

VII. Approval of Personnel Consent Agenda Action

The following Personnel Consent Agenda was reviewed by the board.

PERSONNEL CONSENT AGENDA**Board Meeting Date: August 18, 2020****REVISED****Licensed Employees (Teacher/Administrator)**

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Teacher	Andrew	Fulton	FTE Decrease - Leave of Absence	Psychologist	.4 FTE	CMS	Request FTE reduction Leave of Absence for the 2020/2021 SY			
Teacher	Amanda	Hughes	Leave of Absence	English Teacher	1.0 FTE	CHS	Request Leave of Absence for 1st semester - Extended Maternity Leave			

Non-Licensed Employees (Support Staff), *Informational*

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Support Staff	Rebecca	Fink	End of Employment	Paraeducator	32.5	UMS	Notice of End of Employment			Yes
Support Staff	Isabel	Sanchez	New Hire	Paraeducator - EL	32.5	CMS	Notice of Hire	Alison O'Brien	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Allison	McCuin	End of Employment	Food Service Worker	31.25	CHS	Notice of End of Employment			Yes
Support Staff	Jody	Wright	New Hire	Paraeducator - Special Education	32.5	CHS	Notice of Hire	open position	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Michael	Gove	Leave of Absence	Paraeducator-Special Education	32.5	CHS	Request Leave of Absence for the 20/21 School Year			

Director Taylor moved to approve the Personnel Consent Agenda for August 18, 2020, seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

VIII. Approval of General Meeting Minutes: August 4, 2020 Action

Director Kieny moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on August 4, 2020, seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

IX. Approval of Special Meeting Minutes: August 11, 2020 Action

Director Taylor moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on August 11, 2020, seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

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

- Superintendent Minor asked if the board would like to reevaluate holding school board meetings remotely. The board quickly and unanimously agreed that they would like to meet in person again, however, the building will need to remain closed to the public to abide by the State's guidance. To ensure the public can continue to participate in meetings, LCATV will continue to film and stream the meetings so the public can view them live. The public will continue to have the option to call or email in comments for the meetings.
- Director Kieny requested that the board's letter in response to the BLM email read in the public comment section be posted to the school board's website. It will be uploaded to the school board meeting page under the August 18th meeting date.

XI. Future Agenda Items Informational

- Reopening Schools Update
- Financial Update
- Additional Lead Testing Updates

XII. Adjournment

Board Chair Rogers asked for a motion to move to executive session to discuss a personnel issue. Director Kieny moved to enter executive session at 8:41 p.m., seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

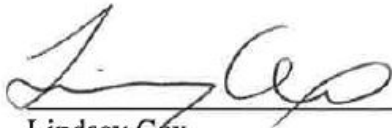
Director Taylor moved to exit executive session and adjourn at 9:02 p.m., seconded by Director Kieny. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Director Taylor moved to adjourn at 9:02 p.m., seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Recorder:


Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:


Lindsey Cox
Board Clerk