

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Library

Tuesday, November 3, 2020
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, November 3, 2020. Due to COVID-19 precautions, school buildings are remaining closed to the public. LCATV provided coverage through a live stream and citizens were provided online and telephone options to participate in the meeting. Those in attendance (both remotely and in-person) were Board Chair Mike Rogers; Directors: Craig Kieny, Lindsey Cox, and Curt Taylor; Student Representative Julia Correll; Superintendent Amy Minor; Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz; Director of Curriculum and Instruction Gwen Carmolli, Business and Operations Manager George Trieb; Principals: Heather Baron, Michele Cote, Jordan Burke, Carolyn Millham and Chris Antonicci.

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Board Chair Mike Rogers called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Citizen Participation

None.

III. Food Services Report

Informational

Director of Nutrition & Food Services, Steve Davis, provided the board with an update on food services for in-person and remote learning students in the district. He shared that meals will be reimbursed through the end of the school year so all children will continue to eat for free. Meal consumption for in-person students is up but remote pick-ups have continued to decline. He voiced concern that the onset of winter weather would further reduce the number of families accessing the pick-up locations on remote learning days. Currently, the district is using four school buses to bring food to 20 pick-up locations throughout Colchester. They plan to reassess participation rates in a few weeks and make necessary adjustments.

From a financial perspective, COVID relief funds are offsetting some unanticipated expenses, however, he still projects that the program will need assistance from the general budget as they did last year. They are not currently offering a lot of choices but they are working to add options like ala cart back in which will increase participation and revenue.

He highlighted the incredible support and dedication of his staff since March. He also noted that he has been impressed by the relationships that have been fostered by having much of his staff in one kitchen. Normally they are spread out among five schools and rarely work directly together.

IV. COVID-19 Update

Informational

Superintendent Minor gave a presentation outlining the updated guidance from the Agency of Education that was issued on October 23, 2020. The primary purpose of the update is to prepare schools for cold weather months when students will have fewer opportunities to go outdoors. She noted that this particular update to the original guidance is unique because it does not go into effect until November 16, 2020, allowing districts time to logistically implement the changes required.

Superintendent Minor gave an overview of the layered safety measures already in place, how the cold weather is impacting health screenings, travel restrictions using the state's cross-state travel map, the district's PPE supply, logistics for arrival/dismissal and transportation, management of classroom materials and library books, restrictions on field trips, the reopening of playgrounds, guidance on indoor physical education classes, use of cafeterias and meals, limited use of school facilities, and the guidance for winter sports.

One area of focus in the presentation was the physical distancing guidelines and the impact those guidelines have on grades K-5, which are now back in school four days a week. Superintendent Minor pointed out that the state strongly suggested and encouraged districts to bring elementary students back for more in-person learning days and lowered the distancing restrictions to three feet. They also stated that plexiglass would be allowable to use when three feet could not be maintained. The physical layout of classrooms combined with the number of students assigned to each class does not allow for three feet at all times so the ability to use plexiglass was a critical component in the district's plan to bring elementary students back full time. The newly updated guidance removes the allowance of plexiglass in place of three feet of distance. Superintendent Minor stated this change presented a significant challenge. In many classrooms, there is simply not enough room to space students three feet apart with the existing furniture and layouts. She showed several photographs illustrating how they are rearranging furniture and why they are needing to purchase new furniture, such as individual student desks to replace tables. However, in some classrooms, simply swapping out furniture will not be enough. To avoid having to return to hybrid instruction, the district is currently planning to relocate several classrooms to larger spaces as well as adding a new class section using an existing Title 1 teacher. They are also monitoring the number of new enrollments in the district as well as virtual learners who are requesting to switch to in-person instruction.

Board Chair Rogers asked how the district is preparing to handle staffing shortages if employees call in sick or need to quarantine. Superintendent Minor stated the district is fully staffed in professional positions but they are still hiring for open support staff positions. It is possible that if there is a significant number of absent employees there could be an intermittent closure for a classroom, grade level, or school.

V. Budget Timeline

Informational

Superintendent Amy Minor gave an overview of the budget presentations and discussions planned for the next two months. She shared the communication timeline which encompasses a robust on-line and print distribution plan. Due to COVID-19, the timeline of the communication plan will see some changes, mostly an effort to get the information to the community sooner since it is likely many residents will vote early.

VI. Approval of Personnel Consent Agenda

Action

The following Personnel Consent Agenda was reviewed by the board.

PERSONNEL CONSENT AGENDA
Board Meeting Date: November 3, 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), *Informational*

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Support Staff	Nicole	Loring	New Hire	Paraeducator - Library	14	UMS	Notice of Hire	Mary Barnes	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Katherine	Gilbert	New Hire	Paraeducator	32.5	MBS	Notice of Hire	Ryane Severin	Yes	Yes

Director Kienny moved to approve the Personnel Consent Agenda for November 3, 2020, seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

VII. Approval of Special Meeting Minutes: October 20, 2020 Action

Director Taylor moved to approve the special meeting minutes from the meeting held on October 20, 2020, seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

VIII. Approval of General Meeting Minutes: October 20, 2020 Action

Director Taylor moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on October 20, 2020, seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

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

- Superintendent Minor shared some changes to the school year calendar.

X. Future Agenda Items Informational

- COVID-19 Updates
- Financial Quarterly Report
- FY'22 Budget Discussion
- Policy Work

XI. Executive Session to Discuss Negotiations

Director Kienny moved to enter executive session at 8:10 p.m. to discuss negotiations, seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Director Taylor moved to exit executive session at 8:24 p.m., seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

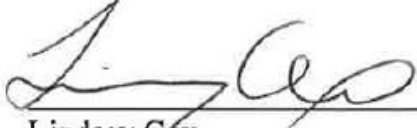
XII. Adjournment

Director Taylor moved to adjourn at 8:24 p.m., seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Recorder:


Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:


Lindsey Cox
Board Clerk