

# COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting  
Remote Meeting

Tuesday, November 17, 2020  
7:00 p.m.

## MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, November 17, 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; Student Board Member Julia Correll; 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 and Michele Cote.

### **I. Call to Order**

Board Chair Mike Rogers called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

### **II. Citizen Participation**

Board Chair Rogers indicated the board received two emails since the last meeting. Superintendent Minor reached out to both senders and will update the board after she speaks with them further.

### **III. Financial Update and Quarterly Report**

**Informational**

Business and Operations Manager, George Trieb, presented the financial report for the first quarter. He acknowledged that the report was compiled later than normal and attributed it to the new financial software the district is using. He stated the program has some significant differences from the old program and they are working with IT to determine how best to use it. He walked the board through the components of the quarterly report and how the new system shows different line items. Overall, revenue and expenditures are tracking mostly as expected. If the current spending trend continues, he expects a slight surplus of \$74,295. The district has spent 30.5% of the budget versus spending 28.6% last year at this time.

### **IV. COVID-19 Update**

**Informational**

The district had to make several significant shifts to comply with the new distancing requirements which went into effect on Monday, November 16, including moving a handful of classrooms to new spaces and the purchase and assembly of individual student desks to replace tables. Superintendent Minor thanked the vast array of employees who helped in the effort to get the schools ready.

Superintendent Minor also shared that the district completed the first round of voluntary employee COVID-19 surveillance testing. This new testing initiative is sponsored by the state and every district in Vermont will offer tests to employees monthly. It was stressed by the state that schools were chosen to take part in surveillance testing because they reflect the greater community and not

because they are at a higher risk. She noted that of the three positive cases in the district, none of them resulted in transmission in school.

Superintendent Minor gave an overview of some of the changes that are being rolled out regarding contact tracing. Given the uptick in cases, in the scenario where a positive case in the district results in the Vermont Department of Health recommending quarantining an entire pod or classroom, they will now ask the district to communicate quarantine guidance directly with the teachers, staff, and families of the pod. Formerly, families would have to wait to be contacted by the Health Department to receive that information.

Director Cox asked a series of questions about the Governor's recent announcement to suspend recreational sports but to continue to allow school sports sanctioned by the Vermont Principals Association (VPA). She raised concerns and asked if it would be possible for the board to make a local decision to not have or delay the winter sports season. Superintendent Minor shared that administrators in other districts share the same concerns and that they are hopeful the VPA will announce a decision soon so that districts do not need to make local decisions regarding sports. Student School Board Member Julia Correll echoed the concerns but asked to include student-athletes in any possible decision-making process. She advocated for advance notice as well and to include athletes directly in any information that comes out regarding a decision.

Director Taylor asked how the climate is for both employees and students given the recent spike in cases and the new order from the Governor which restricts socializing. Superintendent Minor stated they have been fielding several questions from employees trying to understand the new restrictions and that there is some confusion on why it is safe for schools to be open when they are no longer allowed to gather with their family and friends outside of school. Student Board Member Correll shared that in speaking with friends and from her general observations in class, students are worried about going back to fully remote learning. She explained that although it can be daunting knowing that all their social outlets have been cut off, for the most part, students would rather stay in school with the restrictions in place than go fully remote. She shared that students are staying informed because it greatly impacts their day to day lives.

## **V. Budget Discussion**

## **Informational**

Superintendent Amy Minor gave a summary of student enrollment as the first FY'22 budget presentation. She highlighted the Education Quality Standards (EQS) set by the Vermont Agency of Education which states K-3 classrooms should have no more than 20 students and grades 4-12 should have no more than 24 students per classroom or 100 students per teacher. She then went through current enrollment by grade and projected enrollment for next school year. In Colchester, enrollment is very steady with a slight trend upward and class size is a concern in some areas. She specifically highlighted middle school unified arts classes (UA) as an example because they are large. A future presentation will go into the UA data in more detail as Superintendent Minor prepares her recommendations for next year's budget. The administration is also monitoring the incoming kindergarten class since it appears a decent amount of families chose to keep their kindergarten-eligible child home this year due to COVID. The 2021-22 kindergarten class may be larger than originally predicted. Principal Heather Baron also guided the board through the high school's schedule, enrollment (including tuition students), and class size for the current school year.

Director Longo shared that he heard reports that families from bigger cities are moving to rural areas like Colchester. He asked if there is any data to support that. Superintendent Minor stated that the

district did start tracking that type of information at the beginning of the school year. She stated that families have moved in and out of the district but so far, there has not been a significant shift in either direction that has required the administrators to take action.

**VI. Out of District Placement Presentation**

**Informational**

Director of Student Support Services, Carrie Lutz, gave an overview of how students are supported in CSD schools and at what point a decision to place a student in an alternative program is determined. She explained who makes the placement decision and what variables they consider, as well as the alternative programs used by the district and the services they provide. Out of district alternative programs are a significant cost to the district, however, some expenses get reimbursed. For several years now, special education directors in Chittenden County have recognized an increased need for alternative programs. There are waitlists and often a student is determined to need an alternative placement but there are no available spots. Ms. Lutz is currently serving on a committee with other regional district representatives and they are creating a new alternative program through a consortium to support the increased need. They are in the final stages and are currently looking for space to house the program.

**VII. Approval of Personnel Consent Agenda**

**Action**

The following Personnel Consent Agenda was reviewed by the board.

**PERSONNEL CONSENT AGENDA**  
**Board Meeting Date: November 17, 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	Mindy	Demeo	New Hire	Paraeducator-Sped	32.5	MBS	Notice of Hire	open position	Yes	Yes
				01/11/00						

*Director Kienny moved to approve the Personnel Consent Agenda for November 17, 2020, seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

**VIII. Approval of General Meeting Minutes: November 3, 2020 Action**

*Director Taylor moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on November 3, 2020, seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

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

None.

**X. Future Agenda Items Informational**

- COVID-19 Updates
- FY'22 Budget Discussion
- Policy Work

**XI. Executive Session to Out of District Student Placements Action**

*Director Taylor moved to enter executive session at 8:21 p.m. to discuss identifying student information as it relates to out of district placements, seconded by Director Longo. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

*Director Taylor moved to exit executive session at 8:55 p.m., seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

**XII. Adjournment**

*Director Longo moved to adjourn at 8:55 p.m., seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.*

Recorder:

  
Meghan Baule  
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:

  
Lindsey Cox  
Board Clerk