

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Remote Meeting

Tuesday, December 15, 2020
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, December 15, 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 School 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, 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.

II. Citizen Participation

None.

III. COVID-19 Update

Informational

Superintendent Amy Minor introduced Jay Nichols, the Executive Director of the Vermont Principal's Association (VPA), who provided the board with an overview of the work that the school sports committee is doing, including the decision-making process and how they make recommendations.

Director Cox asked how contact tracing occurs with interscholastic meetings. Mr. Nichols states that it follows the same format as any other instance. The positive individual would be interviewed by a public health official and the department of health would work with the schools to ascertain any close contacts. He noted that winter sports will implement multiple mitigation efforts including masks, physical distancing for players on the bench, shift rotations for athletes in alpine sports, and no spectators at indoor games. Director Cox asked if any of the wording in the VPA's guidance will be strengthened to discourage and possibly outline consequences for athletes who do not follow the guidance. Mr. Nichols stated that the committee makes recommendations on the guidance but final decisions on language are made above his committee's level. Director Cox asked if there was anyone on his committee who looks at the guidance from an equity perspective. Mr. Nichols stated that there is no one person assigned to the committee with that specific charge, however, the members come from varying backgrounds and they do look at their recommendations with an equity lens to ensure things like equal participation.

Superintendent Amy Minor then gave a brief update on other COVID-19 impacts throughout the district. The Food Service Program will be preparing and distributing meal bundles that will provide a week's worth of breakfast and lunch. At the time of the meeting, over 300 families totaling more

than 600 students had signed up. Superintendent Minor then spoke about the upcoming winter break. She stated the district's current plan is to return to school for in-person learning on Monday, January 4th. She expressed hope that the break will go smoothly and that no changes would result in the district needing to pivot to a remote learning environment. She stated the administrative team will be watching the Governor's press conferences, monitoring the health data and staying in communication with their employees to ensure the district can staff the buildings. Based on the information at the time of the meeting, it is believed that the district will open as scheduled on Monday, January 4th.

IV. Approval of Contract Agreement with Colchester Education Association Action

The board reviewed the contract agreement with the Colchester Education Association (CEA). Terms are a one-year deal with an average 3% salary increase. All other terms of the contract will remain the same except for teachers moving over to the statewide healthcare plan. The CEA ratified the agreement before the meeting.

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

V. Approval of Agreement for Replacement Copiers Action

Business and Operations Manager George Trieb requested approval from the school board for the replacement of 22 Canon copiers districtwide. The district currently leases the copiers and Canon proposed replacing all equipment with new and like models. The proposal is structured identical to the existing lease but with better pricing.

Director Longo moved to authorize the Business and Operations Manager to enter a lease as noted above for the replacement of district copiers. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

VI. First Reading of the Flagpole Requests Policy: E11 Action

The board made a decision this summer, as did many other districts, to raise the Black Lives Matter flag on school grounds. This new policy comes at the recommendation of the district's attorney. It outlines the way that someone can request a flag to be raised and clearly illustrates the criteria and decision-making process. The board asked some clarifying questions. Student Board Member Julia Correll asked why the policy places a maximum duration that a proposed flag could fly. She specifically pointed to the Black Lives Matter flag and stated that many students would not support taking the flag down since it serves as a symbol of inclusiveness for students. She noted that taking it down after only a short amount of time could result in the raising of the flag being viewed as performative action. Superintendent Amy Minor appreciated Ms. Correll's student perspective and noted that putting a limit on the duration would allow the opportunity for other flags to be raised. She also pointed to a section in the policy where the board can renew a request.

Director Taylor moved to approve the first reading of the Flagpole Requests Policy: E11. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

VII. FY'22 Budget Discussion

Informational

Superintendent Minor gave an overview of the building requests for the FY'22 budget and the education tax components that are known at this point. She noted that the singular goal of all of the requests made by administrators is to increase achievement and engagement for all students. She then went over the top priorities by putting them into categories of A, B and C.

- **Priority A** includes maintaining current staffing levels; adding 1 FTE for a district diversity, inclusion and equity coordinator using Medicaid funds; adding 1 FTE for a special educator at CHS using IDEA-B funds; and adding .2 FTE for a CHS Arabic Teacher. All of the Priority A totals \$197,000.
- **Priority B** includes adding 1 FTE for a reading teacher at MBS; adding 1 FTE for an instructional coach/intervention leader at CMS; adding 2 FTE for core teachers at CMS in grades 7/8. All of the Priority B totals \$360,000.
- **Priority C** includes adding a math intervention program in grades K-8; adding .2 FTE for a CMS French teacher.

Director Cox verified that the .2 FTE positions would most likely be an addition to teachers already employed with the district. She also asked to know more about the diversity, inclusion and equity coordinator position. Superintendent Minor stated that ideally, the position would have the licensure, skillset and teaching expertise to model practices. She expects the position would evolve and provide a focused opportunity for the district to grow.

Board Chair Rogers asked how using Medicaid funds would work and if there would be a potential to lose those funds. Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz stated that between the funds that have been allocated to the district and the amount that can be carried over, they are in good shape and there has not been any recent discussion of those funds going away. Director Taylor expressed concern with potentially hiring two positions using Medicaid and IDEA-B funds, knowing it is a possibility those funds would not come through. Ms. Lutz reaffirmed her confidence in the process and stated the district has done this numerous times in the past and it has worked well.

Board Chair Rogers asked if there is a concern that adding these positions would alter the teacher/student ratio. Superintendent Minor stated that was not a current concern. The state is still evaluating its formula to calculate ratios. Additionally, she stated that the district is still recovering from many years of failed budgets which resulted in staffing cuts. The district is doing the best with what they have, however, some gaps need to be worked on. The moves that have been made in the last few years have been necessary and have shown student growth and improvement.

VIII. Approval of Personnel Consent Agenda

Action

The following Personnel Consent Agenda was reviewed by the board.

PERSONNEL CONSENT AGENDA
Board Meeting Date: December 15, 2020

Licensed Employees (Teacher/Administrator)

| Contract Type | First Name | Last Name | Category | Position | FTE/Hours | Building | Agenda Information | Person Replacing | Budgeted | Admin Support |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|--|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Teacher | Erin | Brady | Leave of Absence | Social Studies Teacher | 0.2 FTE | CHS | Request Leave of Absence from .2 FTE January 27, 2021 to June 11, 2021(anticipated last day of school) | | | Yes |

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 | Nancy | Pratt | New Hire | Paraeducator-Sped | 32.5 | MBS | Notice of Hire | open position | Yes | Yes |
| Support Staff | Melissa | Nutting | New Hire | Title One Tutor - One Year Only | 20 | UMS | Notice of Hire | open position | Yes | Yes |
| Support Staff | Phoebe | Paron | New Hire | Paraeducator-Sped | 32.5 | CMS | Notice of Hire | open position | Yes | Yes |

Director Cox moved to approve the Personnel Consent Agenda for December 15, 2020. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

IX. Approval of Special Meeting Minutes: December 1, 2020 (4:00 PM) Action

Director Taylor moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on December 1, 2020. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

X. Approval of General Meeting Minutes: December 1, 2020 (7:00 PM) Action

Director Taylor moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on December 1, 2020. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

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

- Superintendent Minor informed the board they have the option of adding a meeting on January 29. This would be the latest they can warn the FY'22 budget.

XII. Future Agenda Items Informational

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

XIII. Executive Session to Discuss Negotiations Action

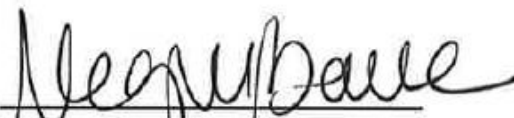
Director Cox moved to enter executive session at 8:26 p.m. to discuss negotiations. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Director Taylor moved to exit executive session at 9:06 p.m. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.


XIV. Adjournment

Director Taylor moved to adjourn at 9:06 p.m. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Recorder:


Meghan Baile
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:


Lindsey Cox
Board Clerk