

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Remote Meeting

Tuesday, January 19, 2021
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, January 19, 2021. 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 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: Carolyn Millham and Jordan Burke.

I. Call to Order

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

II. Citizen Participation

None.

III. COVID-19 Update

Action

District Nursing Supervisor and COVID-19 Coordinator Deborah Deschamps gave the board an overview of what steps are taken when the district has a positive COVID-19 case. She described how the district works with the Vermont Department of Health to determine any close contacts within the school and how the district communicates quarantine guidance with staff, families, and students. Director Cox asked what the threshold would be to close an entire building. Nurse Deschamps stated that the decision would center around staffing levels and the school's ability to operate safely and effectively. Director Taylor asked how students access learning when a whole classroom must quarantine. Superintendent Minor stated that the entire class moves to remote learning as a group and follows a schedule of synchronous and asynchronous learning. Director Cox asked how the district's response will change as the vaccine becomes more widely available. Nurse Deschamps stated that those discussions are taking place on a state level, however, it's unlikely with the current pace of vaccinations, that any changes will be made to the current system before the end of the school year.

IV. Third and Final Reading of the Flagpole Requests Policy: E11

Action

At the last meeting, Director Cox asked why the policy states that only requests from CSD students would be considered. She made statements that supported allowing employees to also make requests to the board. Superintendent Minor spoke with the district's attorney who drafted the policy. The attorneys said students and employees have different free speech parameters and allowing employees to make requests could increase the district's liability. Director Cox voiced how antithetical it feels to create a policy that excludes an avenue for school employees to communicate with the board. She noted that she does trust and value the advice of the district's attorney. She

requested that the board plan to review the policy sooner than the normal review cycle to ensure it's working as currently written.

Director Taylor moved to approve the third and final reading of the Flagpole Requests Policy: E11. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Approval of FY'22 Budget and Warning

Informational

Superintendent Amy Minor and Business and Operations Manager George Trieb shared the educational tax components for the FY'22 budget. They presented a proposed budget that would use Medicaid and carryover grant funds to add a District Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Coordinator and a special educator at CHS, both at no tax increase to taxpayers. This proposed budget would result in a 4.60% budget increase and an estimated tax increase of 6.467%. Mr. Trieb then went over how much the FY'22 proposed budget would affect Colchester taxpayers. In Vermont, if the household's income is below \$138,500 a year, they qualify for a property tax credit and pay taxes based on income instead of property value. He showed two charts displaying what those increases would be, based on how the resident's taxes are calculated. Superintendent Minor went over the comparison of per-pupil spending among regional districts. Historically, CSD is one of the lowest per-pupil spenders in the county and also spends below the statewide average.

Director Longo noted that as a first-term board member, he appreciates the way budget information has been presented to the board and the community. He showed support for the proposed budget. Director Kieny voiced his appreciation that the district is not adding anything that will be funded by taxpayers in an effort to keep the budget increase as low as possible.

Director Taylor moved to adopt a budget of \$46,679,911 for the support and operation of the Colchester School District for the year beginning July 1, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

With the budget approved, Superintendent Minor then went over the plan to inform the community. The district will mail their Annual Report to every household in Colchester, they will email information to families, and host budget-related zooms for employees, and will produce and distribute videos for the Your Vote Matters Series throughout February. Normally, the board also records a round-table discussion at the LCATV studio which is made available online and on-air on the LCATV channel. LCATV is not allowing groups in the studio to record but has offered to edit and air a Zoom presentation by the board. The board brainstormed ways to make that happen and agreed to do a presentation at the beginning of the next board meeting on February 2. The district will publicize the presentation in advance and the ways that residents can participate. The board will also allot time at the February 16th meeting for any additional questions from the community.

Normally, the residents of Colchester are welcomed to Colchester High School on the evening before voting day to share a meal and hear presentations from both the town and school district. Following the presentations, residents in attendance vote "from the floor" on several housekeeping items. Due to COVID-19, there will be no Town Meeting this year and subsequently, the school board agreed to add two articles to the ballot for voter approval. The articles will be explained in the Annual Report that's mailed out to all residents.

Director Kieny made a motion that due to health and safety concerns related to meeting in person during the COVID-19 pandemic, pursuant to Act 162, the School Board moves to vote all questions by Australian ballot at the 2021 Colchester School District Annual Meeting on March

1, 2021, including the School Budget proposed by the School Board. Director Longo seconded this motion. All members in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

VI. Approval of Personnel Consent Agenda

Action

The following Personnel Consent Agenda was reviewed by the board.

PERSONNEL CONSENT AGENDA
Board Meeting Date: January 19, 2021

Licensed Employees (Teacher/Administrator)

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Teacher	Nicholas	Corrigan	New Hire	Math Teacher - One Year Only	.51 FTE	CMS	Notice of Hire	John Helme	Yes	Yes
Teacher	Deborah	Gay	End of Employment	Special Education Teacher	1.0 FTE	CMS	Request to end Employment effective June 30, 2021			Yes
Teacher	Caitlin	Bellavance	Leave of Absence	Elementary Teacher	1.0 FTE	MBS	Request Leave of Absence from approximately 06/01/21- End of School year			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	Karin	Brenin	Leave of Absence	Paraeducator-Special Education	32.5	CHS	Request continued Leave of Absence for the 2nd semester of 20/21 School Year			Yes
Support Staff	Emily	Schulze	New Hire	Paraeducator-Sped	32.5	CHS	Notice of Hire	open position	Yes	Yes

Director Cox moved to approve the Personnel Consent Agenda for January 19, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Approval of Meeting Minutes: January 5, 2021 Action

Director Taylor moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on January 5, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

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

- None.

IX. Future Agenda Items Informational

- COVID-19 Updates
- FY'22 Budget Information Sessions
- Policy Work

X. Executive Session to Discuss Negotiations Action

Director Taylor moved to enter executive session at 8:09 p.m. to discuss contract negotiations. The motion passed unanimously.

Director Taylor moved to exit executive session at 8:41 p.m., seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. Adjournment

Director Cox moved to adjourn at 8:44 p.m., seconded by Director Longo. The motion passed unanimously.

Recorder:



Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:



Lindsey Cox
Board Clerk