

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Library

Tuesday, October 5, 2021
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, October 5, 2021, in the Colchester High School Library. Board members in attendance were Board Chair Craig Kieny, Directors Lindsey Cox, Nic Longo, Laurie Kigonya, Ben Yousey-Hindes, and Student Board Member Gloria Kigonya. District administrators in attendance included Superintendent Amy Minor, Business and Operations Manager George Trieb, Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz, and Director of Curriculum Gwendolyn Carmolli. There were nine audience members.

I. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

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

II. Citizen Participation

Colchester resident, Genna Barnaby, provided a statement with seven topics including a request to make masking optional, a request for Dr. Rebecca Coleman to provide supplemental data to support statements she made at the September 7, 2021 meeting, more information about the voluntary testing program, questions about the use of outdoor tents for learning, a request to allow CMS students to use lockers, and an inquiry about how ESSER funds are being spent at CSD.

III. Black Lives Matter Flag

Action

Board Chair Kieny recounted the history of why the school board raised the Black Lives Matter (BLM) flag. Following numerous letters and statements from students and employees, at the July 7, 2020 meeting, the school board unanimously passed a resolution that the BLM flag would be flown at each school for the 2020-2021 school year. On August 18, 2020, the board released a letter detailing the rationale for their July 7th decision. On January 19, 2021, the board unanimously approved district policy E11: Flagpole Requests. On June 22, 2021, the board voted to keep the BLM flags up for another 90 days as outlined in the district's Flagpole Request Policy; it passed with a 4-1 vote. Board Chair Kieny noted that he was the opposing vote and explained that he voted against the measure because he preferred a more inclusive flag and that he was worried about community perception and political ramifications. On September 30, 2021, at the end of the 90-day cycle, the BLM flags were taken down.

Gloria Kigonya, a CHS student who is also the student representative on the school board, addressed the board with a letter requesting the flags be raised for an additional 90 days to give students time to identify how they can address diversity, acceptance, and equity in the schools and community. Jamilah Vogel, the district's diversity, equity, and inclusion coordinator stated she has met with Gloria and other students at both CHS and CMS about the BLM flags. She supports continuing to fly the flag and explained that the needs that were present when it was first raised in July of 2020 are still present today. She stated the additional 90 days will provide staff, leadership, and students time to honor what it meant to raise the flag and to develop a plan moving forward. If it is decided to

eventually remove the flags, a clear plan of action will be developed to ensure it is done with great care and intention.

Jackie Murphy, a Colchester resident with two children who went through the district, stated that she loudly and proudly supports the students' effort to fly the flag, even beyond the 90 days outlined in the policy.

Susan Rosato, an English learning teacher at CHS, read a letter signed by 18 faculty members who firmly and resolutely support keeping the BLM flag up at schools in the district. They stated the flag acknowledges the historic marginalization of people of color and that it represents the commitment of educators in a democratic state to the ongoing work of dismantling the effects of systemic racism.

Rebecca Sofferman, the librarian at CMS and also a Colchester resident and CSD alumni, indicated her support to fly the BLM flag at schools in the district. She stated the action aligns with her belief to stand up for racial justice as a way to value students. She spoke about a club that is forming at CMS to celebrate Black lives and educate fellow students about issues facing students of color. She stated the group members noticed immediately that the flag had been taken down and that its display means a great deal to them.

Toni Josey, a resident, parent, and district employee, thanked the board for listening to student voices and leading by example. She expressed that she was happy to hear the proposal to keep the BLM flags up and supports it.

Carrie Robinson, a teacher at CHS, echoed what had already been said and issued her support of continuing to fly the BLM flag.

Destany Carter, a student at CMS, told the board that there are things said at school that make her feel uncomfortable. She stated that there are not many Black students or teachers but coming to school and having the flag up makes her feel safe knowing that the school is working to address the issues and to educate the community.

The board members then shared their support for the proposal to continue to fly the BLM flags for another policy cycle. Director L. Kigonya drew a connection to the recent racially motivated incidents in Winooski. She stated there is still a lot of educating, learning, and work to do. Director Longo shared that was inspired by hearing from the various stakeholders who spoke at the meeting. He acknowledged and appreciated the work that student leadership is doing at CMS and CHS. Director Yousey-Hindes also voiced his support and encouraged students to embrace the policy. He asked to see more curriculum components that support the flag, stating that simply flying the flag is not enough and there needs to be continued dialog. He implored students to feel empowered by their voice, noting that the board has heard them and is making their decision based on the statements made at the meeting. Director Cox thanked everyone who spoke at the meeting. She reiterated the board's appreciation for their time and the thoughtfulness of their comments. She stated that her second-grader noticed the flags had been down for a few days and that was impactful to her. Board Chair Kieny acknowledged that he was the one dissenting vote three months ago but was moved by the statements made at the meeting and wants to show his support for students of color and will vote in favor of the BLM flags staying up for three more months.

Director Cox moved to raise the Black Lives Matter flag at all CSD schools for a full three months starting Wednesday, October 6, 2021, seconded by Director L. Kigonya. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Presentation of CSD Food Service Program

Information

Director of Nutrition and Food Services, Steve Davis, provided the board with an overview of the food service program. Meals are currently free for all students, and they are making over 2,000 on a daily basis. While some meals are consumed in cafeterias, more than half are individually packaged and served in classrooms. He has struggled with staffing but is optimistic they will be fully staffed soon which will help the program to be able to expand its offerings. He thanked his staff for their incredible dedication over the last year and a half. He said most of them have worked since the first day of the closure and have not taken any significant time off. Additionally, he said the support from students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members had meant a great deal to him and his team. The board echoed the appreciation for food service employees. They also discussed the benefits of universal free meals and their hope that federal funding continues to support it.

Mr. Davis stated there have been food shortages nationwide that are affecting the availability of their offerings. He also noted that the price of food has increased, citing meat, poultry, and eggs are up more than 15% from August of 2019. Mr. Davis and Business and Operations Manager, George Trieb, went over the budgeted and actual costs of the approximately \$1.3 million program. They stated they always have the goal to break even but with the supply challenges and increasing costs, that is not a reality. They estimate the FY'23 program will need to be supplemented with \$100,000. The board will see it listed as an item in the proposed budget at an upcoming meeting.

V. Approval of Chromebook and Laptop Purchase

Action

Business and Operations Manager, George Trieb, asked the board for approval to spend \$350,999.55 to purchase 495 Chromebooks and 210 laptops. The purchases are planned, budgeted, and are part of the annual replacement plan for student devices. He noted that the district is placing the order earlier than normal due to the uncertainty of the supply chain in the coming months.

Director Yousey-Hindes moved to authorize the Business and Operations manager to purchase the IT equipment as requested. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Approval of Personnel Consent Agenda

Action

The following Personnel Consent Agenda was reviewed by the board. This district has several positions that are still open and Superintendent Minor encouraged community members looking for employment to visit www.csdvt.org/jobs.

CONSENT AGENDA

Board Meeting Date: October 5, 2021

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), Board Approval Required

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Support Staff	Dawn	Hanf	Leave of Absence	Paraeducator	32.5	CHS	Request leave of Absence 21/22 School Year			

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	Krittiya	Clark	Resignation	Paraeducator	32.5	PPS	Notice of Resignation			
Support Staff	Ryane	Severin	Resignation	Behavior Interventionist	35	MBS	Notice of Resignation			
Support Staff	Kathleen	Walsh	Resignation	Para - Spec. Ed	32.5	CHS	Notice of Resignation			
Support Staff	Tim	Hayes	Resignation	Custodian	40	CHS	Notice of Resignation			
Support Staff	Tracy	LaPan	Resignation	Leas Custodian	40	CHS	Notice of Resignation			
Support Staff	Debbie	Brosseau	New Hire	Food Service Worker	15	CHS	Notice of Hire	Steve Milhous	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Henry	Makuba	New Hire	Custodian	40	CHS	Notice of Hire	Open Position	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Jerrica	Robare	New Hire	Paraeducator	32.5	CMS	Notice of Hire	Open Position	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Tim	Emery	New Hire	Behavior Interventionist	25	CHS	Notice of Hire	New Position	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Chanderlin	Moussoua	New Hire	Behavior Interventionist	35	CMS	Notice of Hire	Open Position	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Rowan	Post	Resignation	Cafe Monitor	15	CMS	Notice of Resignation			

Director Longo moved to approve the Consent Agenda for October 5, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Approval of Meeting Minutes: September 21, 2021

Action

Director Cox moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on September 21, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

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

- Superintendent Amy Minor gave an update on COVID impacts in the district. Masks will be required in all schools until further notice. School nurses now have the authorization to review the immunization system, which will hopefully improve the efficiency of contact tracing. The district has started a weekly voluntary testing program sponsored by the state. It has proved to be an incredibly complex undertaking that requires a significant amount of staff and logistics to run. They are exploring additional staffing and/or volunteering options. The Agency of Education announced more COVID-19 testing programs for schools to offer to support increasing in-person learning. In addition to weekly testing, they outlined a Test to Stay Program, Onsite Response Testing, and Take Home Testing. They are assessing the district's capacity to implement these programs with fidelity. Several training opportunities are coming up for school officials to learn more about the programs.
- Director Cox recommended relaxing the board meeting attendance requirement for administrators. Given their workload this year, she would like to provide options for virtual attendance or as-needed attendance. The rest of the board agreed and voiced their support.

IX. Future Agenda Items

Informational

- Facilities Information
- FY'23 Budget Timeline
- Out-of-District Placement Presentation
- Education Funding Formula

X. Executive Session to Discuss Contract Negotiations and Potential Real Estate Opportunity

Action


Director Yousey-Hindes moved to enter executive session at 8:14 p.m. to discuss contract negotiations and a potential real estate opportunity. The motion passed unanimously.

Director Cox moved to exit executive session at 8:45 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. Adjournment

Director Cox moved to adjourn at 8:46 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Recorder:


Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:


Nic Longo
Board Clerk