

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Performing Arts Center

Saturday, October 12, 2024
10:00 a.m.

MINUTES

The Colchester Board of Education held a Special Board Meeting on Saturday, October 12, 2024 to give a community presentation on the facilities bond item that voters will consider on the November 5 election ballot. Board members in attendance were Board Chair Lindsey Cox, and Directors Laurie Kigonya, and Jennifer Fath. District administrators in attendance included Superintendent Amy Minor, Business and Operations Manager George Trieb, and Director of Curriculum and Instruction Gwen Carmolli. Architect John Hemmelgarn from Black River Design Architects was also in attendance to answer questions.

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Lindsey Cox called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

II. Community Presentation and Q&A on the Proposed Facilities Bond Information

School board members, administrators, and architects provided a comprehensive presentation for community members outlining the proposed facilities bond on the November 5 ballot. The bond will fund enhancements to safety, upgrades to infrastructure, and improvements to learning spaces through renovating existing facilities and constructing new additions at schools in the district. While all five schools will see some level of updates, most of the funds will go to Porters Point School, Union Memorial School, and Colchester Middle School. Following the presentation, community members were invited to make statements or ask questions.

John Powell of Powell Beach Lane thanked the board for their commitment to a comprehensive, long-term approach to school facilities. He expressed his support for the facilities bond. Mr. Powell also voiced concern about the upcoming tax increase coming from the State.

George Verdon of Timberlake Drive requested clarification on the school's annual operational budget as pertaining to the capital and operational funds, and if those funds could cover any of the renovations presented in the proposed facilities bond. Business and Operations Manager George Trieb explained how the district's budget funds a targeted project each year versus the scope of the current needs of the facilities and the costs associated with major renovation. Mr. Verdon also asked if the school is considered a separate entity from the town and how the new recreational center funds and services can be utilized. Superintendent Amy Minor stated that the school is a separate municipality from the town and does not have access to the funds approved for the recreational center project.

Sarita Austin of Crooked Creek Road stated she is on the House Committee on Education in the Vermont Legislature, and she supports the facilities bond. She encouraged the school board and architects to engage the students when planning the design of the proposed buildings and spaces.

Chrisine Powell of Powell Beach Lane commented on her experience of the overcrowded parking at Union Memorial School. She asked if the school board had inquired about the costs of building a parking garage to alleviate the issue. Superintendent Minor stated that alternative parking options were part of the research that went into the proposed facilities bond.

George Verdon made a second comment, looking for clarification about the process of determining how the annual operational budget gets divided into the programs offered by the schools. Board Chair Lindsey Cox responded that she would be happy to go over the specifics of the school's budget with Mr. Verdon outside of the facilities bond meeting.

III. Adjournment

Board Chair Cox moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:31 a.m.

Recorder:

Gabrielle Brooks
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:

Ben Yousey-Hindes
Board Clerk

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