

**WESTBROOK BOARD OF EDUCATION
EDUCATE, CHALLENGE, & INSPIRE**

**WESTBROOK BOARD OF EDUCATION
Tuesday, April 7, 2020
Regular Board of Education Meeting
Google Meet**

MINUTES

BOE Members Present: Lee Bridgewater, Sally Greaves, Zachary Hayden, Mary Ella Luft, Michelle Palumbo, Don Perreault, Christine Kuehlewind, Mike Esposito, Kim Walker

Also Present: Superintendent Patricia A. Ciccone; Business Manager, Lesley Wysocki, Administrators Tara Winch, Ruth Rose, Taylor Wrye, Madeline Illinger, Technology Director, Ben Russell, Atty. Anne Littlefield, members of the community

Minutes –April 7, 2020

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting of April 7, 2020 was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Lee Bridgewater, Chair.
- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- III. **PUBLIC COMMENT** - None
- IV. **NEW BUSINESS – Vote anticipated**
 - A. **Healthy Food Certification**

Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that each local board of education or governing authority for all Connecticut public school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) **must take action annually** to certify whether all food items sold to students **will or will not** meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards.

Superintendent Ciccone recommended that pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the board of education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or by non-school organizations and groups.

Motion: To agree to comply with C.G.S. Section 10-215f for the 2020-2021 school year as described Moved by Z. Hayden and seconded by M. Palumbo. Vote unanimous

M. Esposito questioned if it was worth the money received from the state to participate. It was explained that this agreement aligns with our Wellness policy. Several board members agreed that it is in the best interest of our students to provide healthy foods.

Superintendent Ciccone recommended that the board of education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held.

Motion: To agree to allow exemptions of food items to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, given the conditions outlined are followed. Moved by M. Palumbo and seconded by S. Greaves. Vote unanimous.

Information on Beverages

Note: C.G.S. Section 10-221q addresses requirements for the sale of beverages to students in public schools, and allows exemptions if beverage sales meet specific conditions. Beverage exemptions are not part of the annual HFC Statement, which applies only to food sales. If the district chooses to allow beverage exemptions, the CSDE recommends that the board of education or school governing authority conducts the vote on beverage exemptions at the same time as the vote on HFC participation and food exemptions. Sample language for beverage exemptions is below.

Superintendent Ciccone recommended the board of education will allow the sale to students of beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the food sales.

Motion: To agree to comply with C.G.S. Section 10-221q for the 2020-2021 school year as described. Moved by M. Palumbo and seconded by S. Greaves. Vote unanimous.

B. Consideration of First Selectman’s request to attend executive sessions of the Board

L. Bridgewater, Chair, stated that although this item was requested to be withdrawn from the agenda by First Selectman, Noel Bishop, she wished to comment on it. In consultation with CABA, the request to serve as ex-officio and to attend executive sessions of the Board of Education is not supported as the town does not have a charter to allow such. Both parties (Town and BOE) involved did seek legal counsel on this matter.

It was requested that Items C. and G. be included in Executive Session

D. Discussion regarding process for appointment of search firm/consultant for Superintendent search. L. Bridgewater stated that the process for appointing a search firm such as CABA is the Board's duty and that a committee can be created. She stated this is a very confidential process and conducive to having a third party.

E. Possible Board action to authorize appointment of Superintendent Search firm and/or to authorize Board member(s) to do so (Action taken on Item E. after Executive Session)

F. Discussion regarding appointment of personnel search committee for Superintendent of Schools vacancy (Action taken on Item F after Executive Session)

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- A. Enrollment – Superintendent Ciccone reported April enrollment totals of 667 students (Pre K through 12 = 661 plus 6 out-placed). She stated that she continues to have inquiries and the enrollment process continues even through the current pandemic crisis.
- B. Contract, Employment Agreements (Transportation, Services, etc.) – Superintendent Ciccone reported that agreements have been made in some areas – Transportation is still pending as the transportation companies are still looking for guidance with concerns about FOI laws and future RFP's.
- C. MOU's – The Superintendent reported that MOU's were well done with cooperation between the WEA and the AFT and with the assistance of Shipman & Goodwin. She said we continue to pay our employees. The Distance Learning platform is going well; she expressed appreciation to Mr. Russell, Ms. Hovey, the teachers, and the administrators for launching the distance learning as quickly as possible. K. Walker asked about distance learning aligning instruction with the curriculum. Superintendent Ciccone explained that initially the process was held back while the state provided guidelines for equity of access. Tremendous efforts have been made to continue courses at each grade level. R. Rose said her teachers meet with children at the start of the day. In answer to C. Kuehnelwind's question on formats teachers are using, M. Illinger said teachers are working through e-chalk classroom, web pages, google classroom, Wilson, Lexia reading and other platforms with which the children are familiar. Children with special needs work from 9-2:30 in addition to service times in the afternoon. M. Palumbo stated that her daughter's IEP is being met as though she was at school and she offered appreciation to the special education teachers. R. Rose stated they continue to work with families with challenging situations. In answer to M. Esposito's question about the delay in launching distance learning, Superintendent Ciccone explained the guidance from the Commissioner of Education relative to the Federal Government and the minute to minute changes that were occurring. Also relative to the distance learning, T. Winch said that high school students are engaged and productive; participating with their teachers. The

administrators have direct means of monitoring curriculum and she is comfortable with how curriculum is being delivered. K. Walker requested a follow-up and C. Kuehlewind and M. Esposito agreed that since this is uncharted territory they would like the Board to hold a special meeting on distance learning to review what is being done and what the Board can do to help. The Board chair suggested administrators could make presentations of what each of the schools is doing to align distance learning with curriculum. Cecilia was directed to request dates of availability from board members for a special meeting.

- D. Spring Break Week – Superintendent Ciccone, having conversations with WEA, AFT, parents, through surveys of other districts, conversation with Shipman & Goodwin, and the Chair concluded that it was best to continue to follow the Board approved calendar.
- E. Budget Process/Review – L. Wysocki reported a conversation she had with the Town regarding keeping the mill increase at zero, requiring the BOE to make cuts. With the expected Anthem renewal figure, it would help offset cuts that would impact our students. Board members were invited to attend the virtual meeting of the BOF on April 8 at 5:00 p.m.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

VII. CONSENT

Approval of Minutes:

- 1. Regular Meeting – March 13, 2020: Moved by Z. Hayden and seconded by D. Perreault to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2020 Regular BOE meeting: There was discussion on Item IV – Public comment. The minutes stand as written. Vote: (Ayes) Z. Hayden, M. Luft, M. Palumbo, L. Bridgewater, S. Greaves, K. Walker, D. Perreault, C. Kuehlewind (Nay): M. Esposito

VIII. FINANCIAL REPORTS

- A. Review of Check Listing: Board members reviewed check listings for March 5, 2020 in the amount of \$134,707.21 and for March 16, 2020 in the amount of \$49,605.96.
- B. Budget Narrative/Review of Expenditure Report. – L. Wysocki provided a report on the budget as it stands. She advised the Board that the town has requested singling out expenditures related to the pandemic which will be listed in the supply code.
- C. Line Item Transfer
- D. Insurance Report – A current insurance report was provided. L. Wysocki stated renewals look good for next year.

IX. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. LEARN report – no report
- B. Policy– K. Walker – no report – requested a meeting be arranged
- C. Long Range Planning: L. Wysocki reported BOF will meet on 4/8 to approve CIP
- D. Insurance - L. Bridgewater – no report
- E. Negotiations - S. Greaves – no report
- F. Town Energy Ad Hoc Committee – L. Wysocki – no report
- G. PTSO Representatives – M. Luft, Z. Hayden, M. Esposito – no reports

X. PERSONNEL

- A. Professional Resignation(s)

1. Superintendent Ciccone reported that Madeline Illinger, Director of Special Education and Student Support Services, submitted a letter of her intent to retire at the end of the school year, June 30, 2020. Mrs. Illinger has been the Director of Special Education for Westbrook Public Schools for seven years and in education for 37 years. Superintendent Ciccone recommended *the Board accept with extreme regret, the retirement of Madeline Illinger effective June 30, 2020. Moved by M. Palumbo and seconded by C. Kuehlewind. Vote unanimous.* Superintendent Ciccone commented that Ms. Illinger has been an outstanding addition to the administrative team. Mrs. Illinger expressed appreciation to the Board for their support.

Moved by Z. Hayden and seconded by M. Palumbo to move into Executive Session at 8:30 p.m. with invited guest, Anne Littlefield, Esq.

8:40 p.m. All affirmed confidentiality

Item IV C. Discussion regarding confidential attorney client privileged written memorandum (legal advice regarding superintendent search process/appointment)

Item 4 G. Discussion regarding confidential attorney client privileged written memorandum (legal advice regarding parent complaint/public comment/procedures for investigation of complaints involving students & personnel)

Move back into regular session

Item IV. E. Motion to appoint each of its board members to a personnel search committee for the purpose of filling the superintendent position. Moved by K. Walker and seconded by M. Palumbo. Vote unanimous.

Item IV. F - Motion to appoint Michael Esposito, Christine Kuehlewind, and Kim Walker as a subcommittee to gather information for a search firm. Moved by M. Palumbo and seconded by Z. Hayden. Vote unanimous.

Discussion of having a roll call vote to stream line phone in Google Meet meetings.

XI. ADJOURN: Moved by Z. Hayden and seconded by M. Esposito to adjourn at 11:05 p.m.
Vote unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Walker, Board Secretary

Cecilia S. Lester, Board Recording Clerk

BOE Approved: May 12, 2020

