

BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

DATE: October 21, 2020

LOCATION: Branford High School Lowe Media Center
185 East Main Street, Branford, CT 06405

SUBJECT: Board of Education Meeting

Page 1 of 4

ATTENDANCE

HERE	ATTENDEE	AFFILIATION
Y	John R. Prins, Vice-Chair	Board of Education
Y	Joanne Borrus	Board of Education
Y	Cristina Cantu	Board of Education
N	Chad Edgar	Board of Education
Y	Meredith Gaffney	Board of Education
Y	Ellen Michaels	Board of Education
Y	Dawn Perrotti	Board of Education
Y	Hamlet M. Hernandez, Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Rachel Sexton, Assistant Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Don Neel, Chief Operating Officer	Central Office
Y	Charles Cicarella, Director Student Services	Central Office

Others present: Joe Carbone, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds

BUSINESS ITEMS

ITEM DESCRIPTION

CALL TO ORDER

- 01 Meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by BOE Chair, John Prins.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gregg Jerolman, Branford resident, made a comment regarding the District and Board's leadership.

APPROVE MINUTES

- 02 MOTION (Michaels/Cantu) to approve the minutes from the August 6, 2020 Full Special BOE Meeting.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY
- 03 MOTION (Michaels/Gaffney) to approve the minutes from the September 16, 2020 Full Regular BOE Meeting.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY
- 04 MOTION (Gaffney/Michaels) to approve the minutes from the September 29, 2020 Full Special BOE Meeting.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

COMMUNICATION

Mr. Prins reported that the Board received thank you notes from Ruth Prins and Helen Higgins.

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Page 2 of 4

NEW CERTIFIED STAFF INTRODUCTION

Superintendent Hernandez and Assistant Superintendent Sexton introduced the District's new certified staff members:

- Stephen Brownlee, WIS World Language Teacher
- Tom Ermini, District Athletic Director
- Oishi Gomes, MTM Grade 4 Teacher
- Finessa Lee, Indian Neck Pre-K Teacher
- Caitlin Raffone, MTM Kindergarten Teacher
- Ronald Suraci, MRT Grade 4 Teacher

The following new certified staff members were unable to attend this evening's meeting:

- James, Carlson, BHS Social Studies Coach
- Alex Dickerson, MRT School Psychologist
- Jamie Donohue, WIS School Counselor
- Alex Larson, WIS Special Education Teacher
- Iris Marte, BHS Spanish Teacher
- Erica Rascati, JBS Grade 4 Teacher

BOE COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

05 Mr. Prins announced the following committee assignments:

A. Communication Committee

Chair: Meredith Gaffney

Members: Joanne Borrus, New Board Member 1, New Board Member 2

B. Policy Committee

Chair: Chad Edgar

Members: Meredith Gaffney, New Board Member 1, New Board Member 2

C. Personnel & Finance Committee

Chair: Dawn Perrotti

Members: Joanne Borrus, Cristina Cantu, Ellen Michaels

D. Teaching & Learning Committee

Chair: Ellen Michaels

Members: Cristina Cantu, Dawn Perrotti, New Board Member

Mr. Prins stated that he will be acting as ex-officio for each Committee.

Mr. Prins also stated that each committee is paired with a District Administrator:

- A. Personnel & Finance Committee – Don Neel, Chief Operating Officer
- B. Teacher & Learning and Policy Committee – Rachel Sexton, Assistant Superintendent
- C. Communication Committee – Superintendent Hernandez

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Page 3 of 4

PRESENTATION

Joe Carbone provided an update on the summer 2020 facilities projects. Mr. Carbone stated that a tremendous amount of work has been done in the schools since COVID started. Among those projects were tile work at Indian Neck, Sliney, Branford High School (BHS) abatement and retiling, work in the BHS auditorium, lockers replaced at Indian Neck and the addition of three new piece to the Sliney playground.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT/WIS PROJECT UPDATE

Don Neel, began the Superintendent Report by presenting the monthly expenditures report. Mr. Neel reported that the pupil services budget is 56% committed, the general operations budget is 67.8% committed for a consolidated general fund commitment of 65.6%. Mr. Neel stated that we in good shape and are poised for success fiscally. Mr. Neel also stated that the food service participation is less than we would have hoped. He reiterated that free meals are available for residents 18 years and younger at Branford High School from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM.

Charles Cicarella, presented the Special Education Tuition and Transportation Report. Mr. Cicarella stated that the tuition budget for this year is 2.95 million dollars with current expenses at 2.85 million dollars, the transportation budget is \$782,000 with projected expenses sitting at \$616,000. In total the budget sits at 3.7 million dollars with expenses sitting at 3.4 million dollars. Residuals this year going into June are approximately \$304,000. Mr. Cicarella concluded by stating that this year transportation expenses are more volatile then ever.

Mr. Neel discussed the Personnel Report. He reported that we have been very successful bringing in some new certified staff and as well as other staff members.

Superintendent Hernandez discussed phase 2 of the Walsh construction project. He stated that the building is being prepared for winter. He discussed the cooperation of the weather and landscaping in the back of the building. Mr. Hernandez stated that the pool area has taken on life of its own. He also stated that he cannot say enough about the amazing work and flexibility of the WIS staff. He concluded his update by saying that the Owner, Architect, Construction (OAC) Team will be at next month's BOE meeting to provide an update.

Superintendent Hernandez also discussed the District's 4 COVID-19 positive cases and the measures that the District is taking to mitigate the spread. Mr. Hernandez stated that we still have challenges and he wanted to point out that the students have been amazing. Mr. Hernandez also discussed the completion of the September fire/crisis drills. Mr. Hernandez also gave an update on the District's hybrid attendance that included data from the State, the % of students who are fully remote, the number of students who are always virtual, the number of students who are always present, and overall BPS attendance rates.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

06 Mr. Prins Adjourned the meeting into Executive Session at 8:21 PM. All Board members present for this evenings meeting including Superintendent Hernandez adjourned into Executive Session.

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Page 4 of 4

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

Mr. Prins returned the meeting to Regular Session at 8:56 PM.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

07 A. Branford Administrators Organization (BAO) Contract

MOTION (GAFFNEY/Michaels) to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the BOE and the BAO.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

08 B. 2021 BOE Meeting Schedule

Mr. Prins discussed with the Board the need to review the draft of the 2021 BOE meeting schedule so that it could be voted on at the November full BOE meeting.

09 C. 2020-2021 Non-Resident Tuition Rates

MOTION (Michaels/Perrotti) to approve the 2020-2021 non-resident tuition rates.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ACTION ITEMS

There were no public comments made.

BOARD REPORTS:

There were no Board reports made at this evenings meeting. Dawn Perrotti stated that because of time constraints she wished to step down as the Boards liaison for BECC. Meredith Gaffney stated that she would be happy to take Ms. Perrotti's place.

ADJOURN

10 MOTION (Michaels/Gaffney) to adjourn.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Mr. Prins adjourned the meeting at 8:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Meredith Gaffney
Secretary

Prepared by,
Kerry Eyrich