

BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

DATE: May 19, 2021

LOCATION: Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria
185 Damascus Road, Branford, CT 06405

SUBJECT: Board of Education Meeting

ATTENDANCE

HERE	ATTENDEE	AFFILIATION
Y	John R. Prins, Chair	Board of Education
Y	Ellen Michaels, Vice-Chair	Board of Education
Y	Meredith Gaffney, Secretary	Board of Education
Y	Peter Berdon	Board of Education
Y	Joanne Borrus	Board of Education
Y	Cristina Cantu	Board of Education
Y	Chad Edgar	Board of Education
N	Dawn Perrotti	Board of Education
Y	Dr. Tim Raynor	Board of Education
Y	Hanna Bloomquist	Student Representative
Y	Carly Pierre-Louis	Student Representative
N	Aldin Aksamovic	Student Representative
N	Patricio Banegas	Student Representative
Y	Hamlet M. Hernandez, Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Rachel Sexton, Assistant Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Don Neel, Chief Operating Officer	Central Office

Others present: Scott Pellman, Colliers International

BUSINESS ITEMS

ITEM DESCRIPTION

CALL TO ORDER

- 01** Meeting was called to order at 7:25 PM by BOE Chair, John Prins.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Nichols, affiliation unknown, discussed having difficulty accessing this evening's meeting.

Gregg Jerolman, Branford resident, spoke about his past experience of not being able to access a BOE meeting.

Jennifer Orlando, District parent, spoke about an email that she sent regarding what platform another school district used for their meetings.

APPROVE MINUTES

- 02** MOTION (Berdon/Gaffney) to approve the minutes from the April 12, 2021 Full Regular BOE Meeting.
APPROVED (Michaels abstained)

AGENDA CHANGES

A. MOTION (Berdon/Raynor) Consider and take any action appropriate with an email dated April 27, 2021 relative to the incident of alleged ethical conduct.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Continued...

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AGENDA CHANGES (Continued)

B. MOTION (Berdon/Raynor) to discuss in Executive Session the citizens email of April 27, 2021.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

PRESENTATION

OAC Team - WIS Project Update

Scott Pellman, Colliers International, Owner Representative, discussed the status of the project, the cost of the project and what could be potentially done for the fields. Mr. Pellman also discussed the project timeline (starting in 2016), the development of Ed Specs, conceptual drawing, the 88.2 million dollar budget, the Town share of 58 million dollars, aspects that are eligible and not eligible, State Change ORders, Phase I of Construction (implementation phase), Phase II (portion of school that remained), the students move, temporary locations, converting spaces back, slated to open this summer, the pool renovation (new codes and regulations regarding pool depth not meeting compliance, tracking costs closely, the project is under budget, on schedule with the exception of the pool (end of December or early January), the State of Connecticut will not reimburse for artificial turf fields, the need to stay below 88.2 million dollars and coming in below the Towns 58 million dollars. Mr. Pellman explained that an artificial turf field would cost 1 million dollars and if it became part of the cost of the current WIS project it would keep bonding open and the State of Connecticut's rule is "don't come back within 20 years" would keep the timeline open. The State holds back 10% of money until closeout to make sure work is done diligently. Mr. Pellman concluded by stating that as the owner representative he did not recommend pursuing the field through this project.

Among the questions that Board members, Cantu, Berdon, Gaffney and Prins asked were: what will fields look like upon completion, the name of storm water management company, the plan for the stockpiled topsoil, new pool deck affecting attendance, and pool doors (quasy doors during summer months)?

Kevin Healy, RTM member, asked about the Town's portion (58 million dollars), how much more the pool cost and the compliance issue with the pool?

Jennifer Orlando, District parent, spoke about the building of BHS, the Public Building Committee meetings and Mr. Pellmans role in the building project.

Gregg Jerolman, Branford resident, asked when in the process it became apparent that there was going to be a time overrun, when the project would be completed, and the financials to date.

BOE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

Hanna Bloomquist and Carly Pierre-Louis, reported that AP testing started (some in-person and some on-line), the high school musical (Little Shop of Horrors) was live streamed and there were also 100 people in the audience, this year there were more senior days for sports. Hanna and Carly also discussed senior traditions (happy to see them return), the movement of CAPSTONE to the Spirit Project (resilience, integrity and exit interviews), graduation taking place outside with each student getting 4 guest tickets, graduation being live streamed, prom on Friday and their excitement to have the opportunity to return these events.

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SUPERINTENDENT REPORT/WIS PROJECT UPDATE

In his report, Superintendent Hernandez, discussed the following: attending the High School play and how impressed he was with the student’s performance and poise, Prom on Friday (at Owenego, approximately 130 participants), working closely with Public Health to ensure traditions go on in a safe way, recently received CDC guidance, the State of Connecticut opening up but no changes to school district (masks still required), a decrease in case and COVID positivity rates for staff and students, the vaccination effort, the possibility of having vaccination clinics over summer for children ages 12-15 years old, the start of the SCC postseason (the schedule can be found on the BHS website) and coming out to support our kids, end-of-the-year events (graduation ceremonies for all 3 major grades), early release days on ceremony days, SBA and Assessments (reason and testing rationale for testing - a gauge for learning loss and not being used as accountable reports for districts). Superintendent Hernandez ended his report by stating that he cannot say enough about the leadership of Joe Carbone and the custodians for their work and dedication. He stated that “they are truly the unsung heroes.”

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

03 A. Modification of Bylaw 9325

The Board discussed exploring the possibility of modifying Bylaw 9325. Dr. Raynor recommended adding language to have a dialogue with the community and also adding conduct to be disruptive or verbally abusive at a BOE meeting shall not be permitted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ACTION ITEMS

Jennifer Orlando, District parent, spoke about Dr. Raynor’s recommendation to modify Bylaw 9325.

STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. Communication Committee (Meredith Gaffney, Chair).
Next scheduled meeting: June 9, 2021, 6:30 PM, Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.
- B. Personnel & Finance Committee (Dawn Perrotti, Chair).
Next scheduled meeting: June 9, 2021, 7:00 PM, Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.
- C. Teaching & Learning Committee (Ellen Michaels, Chair).
Next scheduled meeting: June 9, 2021, 7:00 PM, Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.
- D. Policy Committee (Chad Edgar, Chair).
Next scheduled meeting: Wednesday, June 16, 2021, 6:00 P.M., Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.

BOARD REPORTS

- A. ACES – Ellen Michaels did have anything to report on ACES this evening.
- B. BECC – Meredith Gaffney discussed BECC wrapping up their community survey and the Parent Cabinet (Birth to 5, quarterly meetings).
- C. CABE – John Prins reported that the Executive Committee is performing its evaluation of the Executive and commended them for providing exemplary service to Board Chairs.

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FUTURE ITEMS

- A. Changing Committee meetings to 2 meeting days per month.
- B. Developing a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy and statement.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- 04** MOTION (Michaels/Borrus) MOVED, that the Board enters into executive session to discuss a citizen's claim concerning a Board member's conduct.

MOTION RESCINDED

RECESS

The meeting adjourned into a recess at 9:37 PM.

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

The meeting returned to regular session at 9:52 PM.

ADJOURN

- 05** MOTION (Michels/Gaffney) to adjourn.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Mr. Prins adjourned the meeting at 9:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Meredith Gaffney
Secretary

Prepared by,
Kerry Eyrich