

**MINUTES OF THE HYBRID REGULAR WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**

**Monday, October 17, 2022**

**South Assembly Room Beecher Road School**

**Via WebEx** <https://woodbridgeps.webex.com/woodbridgeps/j.php?MTID=mde59c13fd62b828d185fb373a6fcfb8e>

**Meeting Number:** 2488 883 1890

**Meeting Password:** SvrjEqas537

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Piascyk, Chair, called the meeting to order (7:03 PM).

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Chair (in-person); Dr. Jay Dahya (remote); Ms. Sarah Beth Del Prete, Secretary (7:05 PM in-person); Ms. Brooke Hopkins (in-person); Mr. Jeff Hughes (in-person); Mr. Steven Lawrence (in-person); Dr. Maria Madonick, Vice Chair (in-person); Dr. Michael Strambler (in-person) and Ms. Erin Williamson (remote).

**STAFF:** Christine Syriac, Interim Superintendent; Analisa Sherman, Principal; James Sapia, Assistant Principal; Carrie Borcharding, Special Services Director; Donna Coonan, Director of Business Services / Operations; and Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board.

**GUESTS:** Floyd Dugas, Board Counsel.

**CORRESPONDENCE** – None

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – None

**PTO Report** – Chair Piascyk noted that a detailed report was available in Board Book.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**MOTION #1 – CONSENT AGENDA**

Move that we approve the consent agenda as presented.

Dr. Madonick

Second by Ms. Hopkins

Dr. Dahya indicated he was in-person and not remote.

**MOTION #1A – CONSENT AGENDA**

Move that we approve the consent agenda as amended.

Dr. Madonick

Second by Ms. Hopkins

**UNANIMOUS**

**REPORTS**

**Superintendent Report** – Interim Superintendent Syriac noted that the BRS Enrollment Report is available in Board Book. There has been minimal change since the Board received an update in September.

**Special Education Presentation** – Ms. Borcharding presented an overview of the Special Education population at BRS. Presently, 117 students are being served. Staffing includes 12 teachers, 3 full-time and 2 part-time psychologists, 2 full-time and 1 part-time speech / language pathologists, 1 full-time occupational therapist, 1 part-time physical therapist and district-wide support of 34 paraeducators who provide 1-1 support. The Board requested a per grade breakdown comparison to last year, an indication of increased costs based on the number of students serviced, where we are in comparison to the state, and expressed concerns regarding the phonics curriculum currently used in the primary grades.

Interim Superintendent Syriac indicated that given the shortage of paraeducators, the district is exploring the option of utilizing two certified Behavior Technicians for the 2022/23 school year only in place of several paraeducators with a neutral cost to the budget. These positions would be contracted through CT Behavioral Health who currently provides a full-time certified behavioral analyst to the district.

The Board called a recess at (7:42 PM) to meet with Attorney Dugas regarding the recently negotiated WEA Contract.

Meeting reconvened (8:08 PM).

BRS Update – Ms. Sherman noted recent visits of the fire truck for fire safety week, goal setting meetings with certified staff and upcoming parent / teacher conferences.

Upcoming Meeting Presentations – TAG Update and proposed EDay guidelines.

Board members were reminded to review their committee priorities with their membership and respond to Chair Piascyk prior to November Board meeting.

Town Building Committee – Mr. Hughes reviewed the September 30 and October 13 meetings which focused on pool repairs, school construction grant funding timelines, and the commencement of roofing repairs in the spring / summer of 2024. It was noted that the committee should also be cognizant of the increasing student population and exploring the possibility of building expansion.

Curriculum Committee – Dr. Strambler reviewed the October 6 meeting with discussion on realigning the BRS PreAlgebra eligibility requirements / expectations to avoid students having to retake PreAlgebra at the Middle School. Of the 13 students in the PreAlgebra class last year, only 7 were eligible for Algebra at the Middle School. By realigning our program with the Middle School, our students will be better prepared. Also discussed was the CSDE mandate for PK-3 Reading curricula in the 2023/24 school year. The CSDE mandate requires each district to adopt one of the CSDE evidence-based reading programs and Readers/Writers Workshop was not on the approved list. The district could apply for a waiver or adopt a different program which may have budget implications in the training of staff and purchasing new materials. It is anticipated that it would take at least 18 months to be in a position to adopt a new program so the practical approach would be to file a waiver. Only 12 districts in the state were using one of the approved programs

Finance Committee – Dr. Dahya reviewed the October 12 meeting inclusive of standard monthly financial reports and the 2024 – 2029 proposed Capital Budget. Currently, the operating budget has a projected \$42,000 surplus. Projects included in the Capital Budget proposal are roof repair / replacement, drainage remediation, security enhancements, technology infrastructure upgrades, parking lot / sidewalk repairs and building space usage.

### **MOTION #2 – 2024 – 2029 CAPITAL PROJECT**

Move that we approve the 2024 – 2029 Capital Projects as presented.

Mr. Hughes

Second by Dr. Dahya

**UNANIMOUS**

Policy Committee – Dr. Madonick reviewed the October 4 meeting which included submission of two policies for 30-day review –2120 Organizational Chart and 4111 – Recruitment and Selection of Administrative Staff. Policy 2120 realigns certain areas to a previous alignment. Policy 4111 had minor language changes and established guidelines for a more comprehensive process and outlines how to conduct the search process. The next meeting is November 10 at 9:00 AM.

CABE Liaison Report – Board members were reminded to register for the various workshops at the CABE / CAPSS Convention in November. Ms. Del Prete will represent the district at the Delegate Assembly on Thursday.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Natural Gas Contract – The Town conducts a formal bidding process, and historically, the Town and the Board collaborate on a contracted rate lock as a result of the bidding process. Currently, the contractual rate is \$6.36 per unit which will increase to \$15.71 for the next 30 months. Although the rate is significantly higher, it remains below projected market increases. Also, should the rates drop below our locked rate, the contract could be extended and blended with our current rate to secure a lower rate. As our current contract expires at the end of October, another option would be to pay the floating rate for another month (currently \$10.91) and lock-in at a later date although it is possible we could pay more than \$15.71. Should we do nothing, the Board would be required to “float with the market” over the next 12 months. In addition, as the Town bid was structured with the Town and Board together, the Town could incur a higher rate if the Board chooses not to participate. The Town voted on October 12 to lock-in the rate of \$15.71.

Concerns were raised for locking-in a rate for 30 months instead of 12 or 24, which could prove more financially viable. It would be helpful to know how this cycle compares to previous ones, if savings were achieved and if floating could be a better option. It was also suggested better collaboration occur between the Town and Board prior to voting as each entity is affected differently.

**MOTION #3 – NATURAL GAS CONTRACT**

Move that we authorize the Superintendent and/or designee to enter into a multi-year contract for procurement of natural gas in conjunction with the Town of Woodbridge.

Ms. Piascyk  
Second by Dr. Madonick

**IN FAVOR:** Ms. Piascyk, Messrs. Hughes, Lawrence, Drs. Dahya, Madonick, Strambler  
**AGAINST:** Ms. Del Prete, Ms. Hopkins and Ms. Williamson

***MOTION PASSES 6-3***

The Board announced that the WEA and Board had reach agreement on a new contract.

**MOTION #4 – WEA CONTRACT RATIFICATION**

Move that we ratify the agreement between the Woodbridge Board of Education and the Woodbridge Education Association effectively July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2026.

Ms. Piascyk  
Second by Dr. Madonick

**UNANIMOUS**

Chair Piascyk noted the November meeting dates: Facilities Committee on November 3 at 7:30 AM, Policy Committee on November 10 at 9:00 AM, Finance Committee on November 14 at 4:30 PM and the regular Board meeting on November 21 at 7:00 PM.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – None

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:** (9:22 PM)

Ms. Hopkins  
Second by Ms. Del Prete

**UNANIMOUS**

Recorded by Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board