

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, November 18, 2024
Town Hall Main Meeting Room

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynn Piascyk, Chair; Dr. Jay Dahya (7:17 PM); Dr. Laura Francese; Jeff Hughes; Steven Lawrence, Vice Chair; and Erin Williamson.

STAFF: Vonda Tencza, Superintendent; Analisa Sherman, Principal; Cheryl Tafel, Assistant Principal; Donna Coonan, Director of Business Services/ Operations, Vito Esparro, Facilities Manager and Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board.

CORRESPONDENCE – Chair Piascyk acknowledged receipt of an email from Amity High School students regarding inclusion of additional holidays in the school calendar which is available in BoardBook.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #1 – CONSENT AGENDA

Move that we approve the consent agenda as presented.

Mr. Lawrence

Second by Dr. Francese

UNANIMOUS

Superintendent Report – Superintendent Tencza provided updates on enrollment, the hiring of the 1st grade teacher; the successful and well attended parent forum on the Literacy program, attendance at the Teacher of the Year Celebration, the Grade 5 “Kid Governor” celebration and the Veterans Day celebration.

BRS Update – Ms. Sherman noted the Veterans Day celebration, the hiring of the new Grade 1 teacher with notification to parents occurring tomorrow, literacy learning walk with a focus on the work of oral language and professional development activities for certified staff.

Dr. Dahya arrived (7:17 PM)

Strategic Plan – Ms. Sherman noted the work of Ross Cooper in gifting all teachers with the book *Project Based Learning Real Questions, Real Answers and How to Unpack PBL and Inquiry*. Project based learning creates learner-centered opportunities for students at their respective levels. Mr. Cooper provided professional development activities on November 5 and will attend the November 27 session as well. The book is a resource that provides an educator toolkit to develop project based learning / inquiry interconnections.

MLL Report – Ms. Sherman presented an overview of the BRS Multi-Language Learner program. There has been a significant increase in students since the 2020/21 school year when 24 students were served. The current population is approximately 60. There is a general increase of multi-language learners state-wide with most newcomers speaking little or no English. Mandated LAS testing and services encompass listening, speaking, reading, writing, oral, literacy, overall comprehension and productive skill levels.

As part of the Town-wide diversity initiative, Jeanne Ciarleglio created a video, *Woodbridge Like Me*, centered on the diversification of Woodbridge and its various community-wide events and offerings.

2025/26 Calendar Draft – Superintendent Tencza presented a draft 2025/26 calendar which includes a full week for February vacation. It was noted that Orange will not be including a full week of vacation in February although Bethany and Amity will. Holidays and professional development days included are similar to past calendars. It also does not include the addition of various holidays requested by Amity students.

It was suggested that we follow the Amity calendar and that with a 1/3 of our population being Asian we should explore different holiday offerings that reflect the current community membership and not that of past years. Also, given the number of holidays that exist which holidays should be selected and what makes the most sense for how and when those holidays are honored. The Board was reminded that additional transportation fees could be incurred should the BOWA calendars not align and that the majority of designated holidays in the calendar are contractual obligations. The Board requested a survey of parents be conducted, a breakdown of transportation fees, and the specific calendar(s) from Amity with explanations of the additional holidays.

BRS Infrastructure Upgrade Building Committee Update – Ms. Coonan explained that Antinozzi & Associates has completed the interview segment and is in the process of drafting the EdSpecs. It is anticipated that space planning options to accommodate an additional 100 students will be formalized and presented at a TriBoard meeting in April with a pre-referendum / town meeting in May and the referendum to follow in June. There was general consensus this is an overly ambitious timeline and that the Board and community-at-large will require more time to digest options / costs and raise questions. The next meeting of this committee is November 21 at 3:30 PM via Webex.

Facilities Committee – Mr. Hughes reviewed the November 7 meeting with work completed on boilers and identification of the boiler room roof leak, and selection of a vendor to assist with the fire panel upgrade. It was noted that the grounds work should be completed in early December.

Finance Committee – Mr. Lawrence noted that the projected deficit is current \$71,000 and the result of the hiring of four (4) additional paras, one (1) additional classroom teacher and the hiring of a part-time psychologist. Board members were reminded to hold December 9, January 6 and 7 in their individual calendars for 2025/26 budget meetings.

2026-2030 Capital Budget – Superintendent Tencza presented the proposed projects spread over the next five years. Several projects previously included in the proposal (playground improvements, fire panel upgrades and grounds/drainage) have been removed as they will be accomplished with different funding. New items include the retro commissioning of the HVAC unit as a result of the air quality improvement audit, asbestos removal in the South Art room, classroom casework in S Wing, ventilator replacement and exterior painting.

Suggestions were made that we should continue to follow the previous plan with all items included. They could then be removed / deferred if not needed or if accomplished differently. This is an aging building and maintenance continues to be a large challenge. Capital funding is for maintaining the building and we should be documenting these needs / projects year-after-after until they are accomplished. It was noted that as there is a facilities assessment in process and administrative decisions were made to not overlap / include items that would be incorporated in that process. It was agreed the flooring and casework would be incorporated into year 2026 instead of 2027 and projected yearly figures adjusted to reflect:

2026 = \$240,000 2027 = \$240,000 2028 = \$214,000 2029 = \$150,000 2030=\$150,000

MOTION #2 – 2026-2030 CAPITAL BUDGET

Move that we make adjustments as discussed with updated numbers and adopt the proposed 2026-2030 Capital Budget with those adjustments.

Ms. Williamson
Second by Dr. Francese
UNANIMOUS

Policy Committee – Ms. Williamson presented the policies under 30-day review for adoption.

MOTION #3 – POLICY 9210 QUALIFICATIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS

Move that we adopt Policy 9210-Qualifications of Board Members as submitted.

Ms. Williamson
Second by Mr. Lawrence
UNANIMOUS

MOTION #4 – POLICY 9212 OATH OF OFFICE

Move that we adopt Policy 9212-Oath of Office as submitted.

Ms. Williamson

Second by Mr. Hughes

UNANIMOUS

MOTION #5 – POLICY 9230 ORIENTATION

Move that we adopt Policy 9230-Orientation as revised.

Ms. Williamson

Second by Dr. Dahya

UNANIMOUS

MOTION #6 – POLICY 9240 BOARD MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

Move that we adopt Policy 9240-Board Member Development as revised.

Ms. Williamson

Second by Dr. Francese

UNANIMOUS

MOTION #7 – POLICY 9260 PROTECTION

Move that we adopt Policy 9260-Protection as submitted.

Ms. Williamson

Second by Mr. Lawrence

UNANIMOUS

MOTION #8 – POLICY 9270 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Move that we adopt Policy 9270-Conflict of Interest as revised.

Ms. Williamson

Second by Dr. Francese

UNANIMOUS

MOTION #9 – POLICY 9271 CODE OF ETHICS

Move that we adopt Policy 9271-Code of Ethics as revised.

Ms. Williamson

Second by Dr. Dahya

UNANIMOUS

MOTION #10 – POLICY 9272 CODE OF CONDUCT ON DATA USE

Move that we adopt Policy 9272-Code of Conduct on Data Use as submitted.

Ms. Williamson

Second by Mr. Lawrence

UNANIMOUS

MOTION #11 – POLICY 9300 METHODS OF OPERATION

Move that we adopt Policy 9300-Methods of Operation as submitted.

Ms. Williamson

Second by Dr. Dahya

UNANIMOUS

MOTION #12 – POLICY 9314 SUSPENSION OF POLICIES, BYLAWS, REGULATIONS

Move that we adopt Policy 9314-Suspension of Policies, Bylaws, Regulations as submitted.

Ms. Williamson

Second by Dr. Dahya

UNANIMOUS

MOTION #13 – POLICY 9321-TIME, PLACE AND NOTIFICATION FOR MEETINGS

Move that we adopt Policy 9321-Time, Place and Notification for Meetings as revised.

Ms. Williamson

Second by Mr. Hughes

UNANIMOUS

CABE Liaison Report – Chair Piascyk updated the Board on the CABE / CAPSS Conference that was attended by her, Sarah Beth and Steven. She also noted that she and the superintendent are registered to attend the leadership webinars.

Upcoming Meeting Presentations – The regular December 16 meeting will include the 2025/26 budget and will be held in the Main Meeting Room at Town Hall. Committee meetings will be held as follows: Policy on December 2 at 4:30 PM Curriculum on December 5 at 4:00 PM and Finance on December 10 at 4:30 PM. Additional budget meetings will be held on December 9, January 6 and 7 if necessary.

NEW BUSINESS

Open Choice – Superintendent Tencza presented the recommendation to maintain 18 slots for the 2025/26 school year. While, we are not able to control the lottery and placement of students, this recommendation is predicated on three (3) vacancies as a result of exiting Grade 6 students. Questions were raised relative to incoming class sizes in Kindergarten and a suggestion was made to raise the slot allocation to 20. Discussion ensued for increased enrollment / class sizes at BRS and unknown Kindergarten registrations at this time. It was requested that background data on Open Choice be presented in October prior to the Board vote in November.

MOTION #14 – OPEN CHOICE

Move that we adopt the Superintendent’s recommendation and continue participation in the Open Choice program with 18 slots allocated for the 2025/26 school year with any vacant slots filled beginning in Kindergarten.

Ms. Williamson

Second by Dr. Dahya

IN FAVOR: Ms. Piascyk, Dr. Dahya, Dr. Francese, Mr. Lawrence and Ms. Williamson

AGAINST: Mr. Hughes

MOTION PASSES 5-0-1

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

Executive Session

The Board entered Executive Session in accordance with State statute to discuss the Superintendent evaluation process and goals.

MOTION #15 – EXECUTIVE SESSION (9:47 PM)

Move that we enter Executive Session to discuss the Superintendent evaluation process and goals and invite the Superintendent to join the Executive Session.

Mr. Hughes

Second by Mr. Lawrence

UNANIMOUS

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynn Piascyk, Chair; Dr. Jay Dahya; Dr. Laura Francese; Jeff Hughes; Steven Lawrence, Vice Chair; and Erin Williamson.

STAFF: Vonda Tencza, Superintendent.

The Board reviewed the evaluation process that would be followed and identified specific goal areas for evaluation of the Superintendent.

MOTION #16 – RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

Move that we return to Public Session (10:30 PM).

Dr. Francese

Second by Mr. Lawrence

UNANIMOUS

MOTION TO ADJOURN: (10:30 PM)

Ms. Williamson

Second by Dr. Dahya

UNANIMOUS

Recorded by Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board.