

MINUTES OF THE REMOTE REGULAR WOODBRIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, March 21, 2022

Via WebEx

<https://woodbridgeps.webex.com/woodbridgeps/j.php?MTID=md62cee60f264fd39ef517d56d6752e71>

Meeting Number: 2486 064 7985

Meeting Password: mS2dkt5eeJ7

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Piascyk, Chair, called the meeting to order (6:33 PM).

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Chair; Ms. Sarah Beth Del Prete, Secretary; Ms. Brooke Hopkins; Mr. Jeff Hughes; Dr. Maria Madonick, Vice Chair; Dr. David Ross; and Ms. Erin Williamson.

STAFF: Dr. Jonathan Budd, Superintendent; and Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board.

The Board entered Executive Session (6:35 PM).

MOTION #1 – EXECUTIVE SESSION

Move that we enter Executive Session to discuss a matter which would result in the disclosure of records exempt from disclosure based on attorney-client privilege, and invite the relevant attorney to join the Board.

Mr. Hughes

Second by Ms. Hopkins

UNANIMOUS

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Chair; Dr. Jay Dahya; Ms. Sarah Beth Del Prete, Secretary; Ms. Brooke Hopkins; Mr. Jeff Hughes; Dr. Maria Madonick, Vice Chair; Dr. David Ross; Dr. Michael Strambler; and Ms. Erin Williamson.

STAFF: Legal Counsel.

The Board discussed the disclosure of records exempt from disclosure based on attorney-client privilege matters.

MOTION #2 – RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

Move that we return to Public Session (7:12 PM).

Dr. Dahya

Second by Dr. Madonick

UNANIMOUS

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Chair; Dr. Jay Dahya; Ms. Sarah Beth Del Prete, Secretary; Ms. Brooke Hopkins; Mr. Jeff Hughes; Dr. Maria Madonick, Vice Chair; Dr. David Ross; Dr. Michael Strambler; and Ms. Erin Williamson.

STAFF: Dr. Jonathan Budd, Superintendent; Richard Huot, Interim Director of Business Services / Operations; Cheryl Kiesel, Special Services Director; Analisa Sherman, Principal; James Sapia, Assistant Principal; and Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board.

GUESTS: Beth Heller, First Selectman; Sheila McCreven, BOS Liaison; Joi Prud'homme, PTO; community.

CORRESPONDENCE – The Board received an email from a parent regarding mask options.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

Board of Selectmen Update – Ms. McCreven apprised the Board that the Board of Finance had recently set the Town Budget and thanked the Board for their willingness to collaborate. At the March 9 Board of Selectmen meeting, a draft of the Town Strategic Plan was shared. The short-term and long-term goals of the plan include diversification of the grand list, ensuring fiscal stability and streamlining shared services to the greatest extent possible to save taxpayer dollars.

PTO Report – Ms. Prud’homme noted the annual Book Swap, preparations for Artsweek May 20-24 with the theme of “Trees”, the purchase of *I Am You* for every classroom as part of Empathy Week, the May 14 Bike Parade, Quassy Night in collaboration with Bethany Community School on May 20, the Spring Book Fair from April 25-29, Teacher Appreciation Week May 1-6 and upcoming plans for graduation and field day.

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #3 – CONSENT AGENDA

Move that we approve the consent agenda as presented.

Dr. Madonick

Second by Dr. Dahya

UNANIMOUS

REPORTS

Superintendent’s Report – Superintendent Budd noted the Grade 4 music program and the achievements of Grade 6 students – Shaleigh Grogan, Ben Smith and David Babic - who each secured a spot on the All Regional Concert Band.

Board Member Appreciation Month – Ms. Heller acknowledged the volunteer contributions and efforts of Board members and declared March 21 as Board Member Appreciation Day in Woodbridge. The district provided a lava cake, a slice of cheesecake, and Hershey kisses to each Board member.

Safe Return Plan – Superintendent Budd and Ms. Sherman outlined current mitigation strategies which include optional in-school screening testing for staff and students as well as free test kits. Since the implementation of mask choice, BRS has had 10 confirmed Covid cases. In the coming weeks, it is anticipated that use of the cafeteria will be expanded to include multiple classes in a given grade level, shields will be removed, and social distancing in classrooms will be decreased. Also presented was the metric for reconvening the Board in response to the directive of the Board on February 23. The Board would be convened if the New Haven County Community Level rose to the “high” level or if there is clear evidence of significant in-school transmission. It was questioned when field trips will resume. It was noted that field trips are linked to curriculum study units and are usually organized at the beginning of school year for the spring. As we continue to relax restrictions, options for resuming field trips will be explored.

Technology – Mr. Billings, Ms. Ciarleglio, and Ms. Robinson provided an overview of technology within the classroom. Currently, all technology classes are based on a combination of Connecticut Core Standards, Connecticut Computer Science Standards, and the International Society for Technology in Education Standards (ISTE). Lessons are scaffolded to create a strong foundation in computer science with a focus on digital literacy, digital citizenship, and coding.

- Kindergarten and Grade 1 are based on understanding the fundamentals of coding concepts. Sequencing, properties, loops, conditions, and functions are taught in a combination of direct lessons. These lessons correlate to everyday routines, explore the program Kodable, and include hands-on application with basic robotics including Ozobots and BeeBot.
- Grade 2 students explore coding through Hour of Code activities that expand on coding basics in a fun, engaging way. This helps reinforce background knowledge and prepares students for the independent and group challenges.
- Grade 3 students focus on many skills, including building on the key concepts of coding taught in Grades K-2. They begin with a unit on block-based coding using the program Scratch. Students then transition to working collaboratively to complete a series of mazes using the Dash Robot. Dash is programmed through block-based coding, which closely mirrors Scratch and allows learners to experience hands-on application of their coding skills.
- Grade 4 students start to explore the ethical implications of coding and computing. Students learn about artificial intelligence and machine learning and how coding is applied to real-world applications.
- Grade 5 students were invited into the Lab for the National Hour of Code Challenge! After directed lessons by the technology specialist teachers on the activities, homeroom teachers support student exploration during Open Lab hours.

- Grade 6 students have the opportunity to work with circuits and robots during MakerSpace time, a collaboration between the Technology & Library Media Departments. Students continue to practice block coding and JavaScript during independent exploration time.

Questions were raised regarding “on-line safety.” It was noted that, while this is taught at all levels, there is targeted emphasis in Grade 4 regarding personal identifying information, password safety, false website identification, and cyberbullying. There are also specific technology units embedded in the Health and DARE programs.

BRS Update – Ms. Sherman noted the recent professional development day held for staff on the topic of implicit bias, the reconvening of the “Green Team,” and spirit week.

Curriculum Committee – Dr. Strambler reviewed the March 10 meeting, which highlighted the “Keepin’ it Real” DARE Program. Students in Grade 6 participate in this 16-week program that encompasses decision-making skills, dealing with stress, resisting peer pressure, bullying, facts about drugs (Nicotine, Marijuana, Alcohol, RX and OC Drugs), “help” networks, development of confident communications skills, ways to be positive community citizens, and social media / internet safety. The Committee also received an update on literacy curriculum enhancements in preparation of mandated approvals by the CSDE in July 2023.

Finance Committee – Dr. Dahya reviewed the March 15 meeting which discussed the current operating budget / forecasted surplus; MERF contribution increases for 2022/23; CSDE calculation changes to the Excess Cost Grant; ESSER and ARP funding; and review of Policies 3160 (Budget development, administration, and monitoring and transfer of funds) and 3260 (Disposal of obsolete books, equipment, and supplies).

Capital Budget / Operating Update – Superintendent Budd presented an overview of possible reductions to the 2022/23 budget. These reductions would reconcile the current 8.92% proposal to the 5.0% increase recommended by the Town Board of Finance. The Town Board of Finance also allocated \$167,500 of the FY 23 Excess Cost Grant revenue to the Board. As a result, reductions of \$441,950 (2.84%) are still necessary. Possible reductions identified include the deferment on hiring of new staff, software implementation, utilization of ARP ESSER funding for new staff hires, reduction of interns, and reductions in supplies and non-instructional areas. Reconciliation of the budget does not need to occur until after ratification of the Town budget in May.

Policy Committee – Dr. Madonick apprised the Board that this committee met on March 15 and reviewed seven policies, five of which were presented for 30-day review under the consent agenda.

CABE Liaison – Dr. Madonick reviewed the virtual CABE Day on the Hill that is available on the CABE website, policy updates, and the CABE/CAPSS Convention on November 18-19, 2022.

Upcoming Meeting Presentations: Summer 2022 Programs – Board members were asked to forward any requests to Chair Piascyk or Superintendent Budd.

Chair Piascyk reminded everyone of the April meetings – April 5 will include Facilities at 7:30 AM, Finance at 4:30 PM, and Policy at 7:00 PM. The regular WBOE meeting will move to April 19 as a result of the Town Preliminary Budget Hearing scheduled for April 18.

NEW BUSINESS

Chair Piascyk informed the Board of an additional action item that would be added to the agenda under New Business for this evening.

MOTION #4 – MODIFY AGENDA

Move that we add acceptance of a certified staff retirement to tonight’s agenda.

Ms. Piascyk

Second by Dr. Madonick

UNANIMOUS

Superintendent Budd acknowledged receipt of the retirement of Michele Waldron after 20 years of teaching at BRS.

MOTION #5 – CERTIFIED STAFF RETIREMENT (WALDRON)

Move that we accept retirement of Michele Waldron, effective July 1, 2022, with much regret.

Ms. Piascyk

Second by Ms. Del Prete

UNANIMOUS

Superintendent Budd clarified the motions required by the CSDE related to compliance with the Healthy Food Program for the 2022/23 school year. The first verifies participation in the Healthy Food program and the second verifies the exemptions that would be applicable during the 2022/23 school year.

MOTION #6 – HEALTHY FOOD CERTIFICATION

Move that pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 10-215f, the Woodbridge Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale 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, 2022, through June 30, 2023. 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, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.

Ms. Piascyk

Second by Dr. Dahya

UNANIMOUS

MOTION #7 – FOOD / BEVERAGE CERTIFICATION

Move that the Woodbridge Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and 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 food and beverage 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 and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales.

Ms. Piascyk

Second by Dr. Madonick

UNANIMOUS

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

The Board entered Executive Session (9:11 PM).

MOTION #6 – EXECUTIVE SESSION

Move that we enter Executive Session to discuss the evaluation of the Superintendent, and invite the Superintendent to join the Board.

Ms. Del Prete

Second by Ms. Hopkins

UNANIMOUS

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Chair; Dr. Jay Dahya; Ms. Sarah Beth Del Prete, Secretary; Ms. Brooke Hopkins; Mr. Jeff Hughes; Dr. Maria Madonick, Vice Chair; Dr. Michael Strambler; and Ms. Erin Williamson.

STAFF: Dr. Jonathan Budd, Superintendent.

The Board discussed the evaluation format process and timeline for evaluation of the Superintendent in June.

MOTION #7 – RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

Move that we return to Public Session (9:34 PM).

Dr. Dahya

Second by Dr. Strambler

UNANIMOUS

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Lynn Piascyk, Chair; Dr. Jay Dahya; Ms. Sarah Del Prete, Secretary; Ms. Brooke Hopkins; Mr. Jeff Hughes; Dr. Maria Madonick, Vice Chair; Dr. Michael Strambler; and Ms. Erin Williamson.

STAFF: Dr. Jonathan Budd, Superintendent; Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board.

Chair Piascyk called the Public Session back to order (9:36 PM).

MOTION TO ADJOURN: (9:36 PM)

Dr. Dahya

Second by Dr. Madonick

UNANIMOUS

Recorded by Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board