

# **WILLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Tuesday, September 10, 2019

Minutes

**Town Office Building, Lower Level Meeting Room**

**7:00 p.m.**

Audio Recording: yes

Notes Taken: yes

## **Members Present:**

Michelle Doucette Cunningham

Herb Arico

Tracey Anderson

Ann Grosjean

Stephanie Summers

Elena Testa- exited meeting at 8:22 pm (due to illness)

Chiara Bambara

Also Present: Superintendent of Schools Phil Stevens

## **Call to Order:**

M. Cunningham called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm

## **Present to Speak:**

Laurie Semprebon: Thanked the board for their efforts throughout the school facilities process and stated it is time to move forward with a solution.

Sarah Smith: Excited to see the direction board decides to go, would like to see a new school and acquired land for facility but regardless of the final decision knows best foot has been put forward and supports that.

## **Board of Education Chairman's Report**

M. Cunningham: Welcomed everyone back to a new school year, asked the board to come to the next meeting 15 minutes early for a celebration and asked to give

thought to attending the CABA conference November 15 & 16 at the Groton Marriott. If interested please let Brenda know.

### **Superintendent Reports**

**Retirement:** School Enrichment Specialist (Kate Grabowski Clark), she is retiring and was accepted into a master's program in photography at the University of London.

**New hires:** Hall Memorial School Spanish teacher Angela Ruiz, Library Media Specialist for Hall Memorial School Amy Redding, Hall Memorial School Counselor Kimberly Tillona. Paraprofessionals- Kristen Andrulonis, Amanda Hansen, Kaley Carr, and Leilani Arnau

P. Stevens: The 7<sup>th</sup> grade math position is still open, however there is another highly qualified certified teacher within the school system filling the role until a replacement is hired.

### **Bus Transportation Policy**

P. Stevens: Summer adjustments were made and group stops identified at both schools. Center School has 12 group stops in the AM and PM as does Hall Memorial School. The policy states that students can walk up to a half-mile for middle school students and a quarter mile for elementary school students. All the parents were notified and all complaints were resolved. Once the weather changes all the group stops will be reevaluated for safety. As a result of these changes route times have been shortened to under an hour.

### **CABA Policy Service Option**

P. Stevens: There was a miscommunication with the quote we received. We are looking for an online searchable database of all the policies. Stevens will clarify with the company and get a new quote.

### **Grant for clubs**

P. Stevens stated notification of a grant was received and is being housed by the PTA for \$25,000 this current year and next year. He is currently in the process of completing the paperwork to access the money for clubs. There are a lot of great ideas for clubs and this grant will help establish them.

Additionally, human services aided the school in obtaining a \$5,000 grant from DCF. This money will be used to purchase two self belay systems and extend the rock wall at Hall Memorial School. The belay systems will be checked on an annual basis. This also opens up the possibility to use during PE classes and/or a club.

C. Bambara asked about another possible grant for transportation funding for clubs.

M. Cunningham shared that the application period is closed and was geared toward larger districts

P. Stevens stated some of this money could be used for transportation and stipends to run clubs. Also, he is exploring cutting edge clubs such as virtual reality, currently looking at the cost of goggles. Additionally looking for professionals in the area with unique ideas.

### **Oil tank update**

P. Stevens provided news the oil tank is complete. Donna Latincsics and Phil are going to begin applying for reimbursement. The project came in under budget and they are expecting 64.64% to be reimbursed.

### **Opening of Schools: Convocation, Professional Development Days, Meet and Greet**

P. Stevens reported opening day of schools was great. The Willington Hill Fire House space was donated for convocation. Professional Development Days

consisted of de-escalation training, the I-Ready assessment program, and the discussion on the Portrait of a Graduate. Meet and Greet was also well attended.

**Enrollment**

P. Stevens stated total enrollment is 435 students with 232 students at Center School and 203 students at Hall Memorial School.

**Financial Report**

**19-20 Budget Report**

P. Stevens stated the budget is consistent for this time of year. Materials were ordered and salaries have been encumbered. Center School budget is low because grants have not been applied to the budget yet. Transfers will likely occur next meeting. Hall Memorial School seemed high due to open positions and salaries not being encumbered. Special Education is high due to out placements not being billed until the end of June.

**18-19 Budget Report Final**

P. Stevens reported on the 18-19 budget which shows \$5,559 left at the end of the year. This shows how tight our budget was last year.

A. Grosjean asked if the money be moved to the 1% fund?

P. Stevens stated the board can ask to move money into contingency account.

A. Grosjean made a motion to suggest to the Board of Finance the remaining \$5,559 from last year be moved into the non-lapsing account to be used for future unexpected expenses. S. Summer second.

<b>Vote:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Herb Arico	X			
Tracey Anderson	X			

Chiara Bambara	X			
Michelle Doucette Cunningham	X			
Ann Grosjean	X			
Stephanie Summers	X			
Elena Testa	X			

Motion passes unanimously

### **18-19 Food Services Account Final**

Final year-end balance is \$11,559 due to \$5,000 being borrowed from the town. This is \$8,000 shorter than last year. The balance really needs to be at \$20,000 because reimbursements are slow to come in, approximately 2-3 months behind. The balance was under \$1,000 at certain points in the year which is why money had to be borrowed.

### **New Business**

#### **Approve minutes of August 13, 2019 meeting**

T. Anderson made motion S. Summers second. **A. Grosjean asked for a change to be made under Donna Cook changed bared to board.**

<b>Vote:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Herb Arico	X			
Tracey Anderson	X			
Chiara Bambara	X			
Michelle Doucette Cunningham			X	
Ann Grosjean	X			

Stephanie Summers	X			
Elena Testa	X			

**Approve minutes of August 22, 2019 retreat meeting**

C. Bambara made motion. S. Summers second

<b>Vote:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Herb Arico			X	
Tracey Anderson	X			
Chiara Bambara	X			
Michelle Doucette Cunningham	X			
Ann Grosjean			X	
Stephanie Summers	X			
Elena Testa			X	

**Motion passes**

**Discussion of CAFE Policy Services**

Tabled until there is a new quote

**BOE Goals 19-20: First Review**

Discussion occurred at the retreat about the Board of Education Goals for 19-20.

H. Arico questioned the language of the word “celebrate” within the draft goals.

A. Grosjean proposed changing differences to diversity.

M. Cunningham stated this goal is to celebrate diversity in the community. For example, children from different backgrounds. This will enrich the environment and lead to more inclusive classrooms with students of different abilities and skills.

E. Testa proposed celebrate different backgrounds or respect student differences could also lead to many negative differences that could become a problem.

T. Anderson explained a student with autism is not being celebrated in a negative way. The accomplishments and success is instead of differences.

M. Cunningham asked the board to review this over the next month and return with ideas. This is the first reading that came out of the retreat.

E. Testa asked how everyone interpreted innovative culture.

C. Bambara stated culture that embraces innovation that can move forward with new ideas and promote creativity.

E. Testa personally believes goals are a statement and wording should be as simple as possible.

M. Cunningham asked to include this topic on the October agenda so have time to review and digest material.

### **WPS Facilities Options**

P. Stevens presented facility study options that are current and the ones that have been removed. Stevens also reached out to the architect who returned with three separate quotes now options 7, 8A and 8B.

Option 7 is a new school on Center School property without tearing down, however a significant amount of land would need to be purchased.

Option 8A is a new school on a new site without a central office.

Option 8B is new school on a new site with an auditorium. There would be no reimbursement on the auditorium but there would be no penalty. This is because

based on the amount of students' reimbursement is only for 60,098 square feet which is the amount required for the number of students. Any additional square footage is not eligible for reimbursement.

E. Testa asked why the old prices were presented to the town. Testa proposed prices be updated and reissued to the public.

P. Stevens stated prices on the original options were from 2017 and this was made clear during presentations. Options 4A and 4B have not been updated. All of the prices have increased. The three options updated are all ballpark prices for 2019, if he were to update 4A and 4B they would likely be 16 and 18 million dollars.

T. Anderson explained when these options were presented in 2017, it was clearly stated this cost is going to increase and P. Stevens did the best he could with presentations.

P. Stevens stated if the board votes today on an option, they are not voting on a price as that is the job of the building committee. The numbers presented could go up or down based on the building committee's decision.

H. Arico asked what some advantages of auditorium are?

The board discussed this question and stated a community space for school functions. Currently everything takes place in the gym. The theater program could move into the auditorium, there is currently a class taught at the stage at Hall School. This could be moved to a location with chairs. Additionally, the auditorium could be used for town events as well.

P. Stevens discussing risk assessment, specifically related to renovation project. Spoke with someone from Fuss and O'Neil about the 3 levels of risk assessment. Lowest level is visual walkthrough with no testing for \$3,000 and list of potential problems would be created. The second level includes limited testing with visual walkthrough for approximately \$10,000. Final option includes testing everything possible for hazards at between \$10-20,000+.



Aaron Krueger and Katherine Viveriros whom are both professionals in the construction industry did walkthroughs of Center and Hall Schools on Labor Day.

Aaron Kreuger presented his background, 20 years in construction and worked on 6 schools in CT of which he was the project manager for. 3 of those schools were renovations and 3 brand new. In terms of what is being presented cost wise will not be the same three years from now which is generally the length of time a project like this takes to get started. When making a final decision assess value of project over cost.

Katherine Viveriros stated she has worked at UConn for 11 years, and in addition has 15 years of construction experience working on a variety of projects including magnet schools across the state. Regarding budget and schedule, there are more risks with renovation versus new. As a board, it is best to identify what is important to you and the community and understand the limits. With renovation you can change something and make it look nice, but you are still stuck with the same footprint. Hall Memorial School, when walking in the first thing noticed was the crossing of Route 32. It is a beautiful historic building but has a complex layout with many ramps.

Aaron Kreuger elaborated by stating Hall Memorial School has little to no swing space in the building project outline. Children would need to be relocated during construction. There have been updates over time, but the walls or ceilings haven't been opened. Generally speaking, Hall is a concern from the construction standpoint. There would be a fair amount of money wasted to relocate kids and unpredictability of issues.

K. Viveriros stated it is important to know what you are getting or not with renovation. With a new building it is obvious and there will be lower maintenance cost for 5-10 years. Versus renovating there will still be maintenance costs, interior is being renovated not the exterior.

A. Kreuger: Hall Memorial school has ADA issues as well. There is officially an ADA code within the Building Code which is something else to think of. Center School also has a swing space concern as well. HMS has a lot of mechanical

system issues and the majority of the interior would need to be gutted. The exterior skin is in rough shape with single pane windows on the upper level. There are a lot of band aids on the building. There is also wood frame construction in the upper area which would be a building code issue and with renovating a building it would need to be updated to the current building code.

K. Viveriros when building new or renovating they use steel. Getting a new insurance premium on wood frame might be costly and something to consider when making decisions. She agrees with Aaron with comments on Center, building could be repurposed possibly as a town building or used for other programs that may be on the agenda for the town. Regarding risk of renovation versus new, would not recommend occupying building when renovation is taking place.

A. Kreuger rebuilding is much faster because building is not occupied versus having to relocate kids while you are fixing which takes longer.

K. Viveriros recommend having a site professional work with the committee who knows the area and can evaluate the type of land that is out there. New site may or may not have utilities already established.

S. Summers asked presenters which option is most viable for community.

K. Viveriros suggested a new site new building due to the value. New school would be brand new, up to building and ADA code, no accessibility issues, new layout, from a safety standpoint egress and entrance points could be discussed and worked out in conjunction with the fire department. There are energy efficient rebates, minimized maintenance costs single resources for one school (maintenance staffing overhead cost, principal), new utilities with little risk of failures, latest technology, furniture options for different learning styles, more predictable with respect to final cost. Cons being the process design and land acquisition could take up to a year and construction would take a year.

A. Kreuger- 8A is his choice due to the ability to build a program and budget and make it work, can spend money wisely with the only concern being land acquisition. Part of cost built in is land development.

A. Grosjean made a motion to move to recommend to the Willington Board of Selectman that they appoint a committee to pursue the building of a preK to 8<sup>th</sup> grade school on a site other than the Center Elementary and Hall Memorial Middle School.

S. Summers second.

C. Bambara stated 2019 estimates and building committee will create specs and create something more solid and present to the Board of Finance. Building committee's job is to make numbers firmer.

H. Arico- 8A does not include auditorium, most of the schools visited had auditoriums. Could be used by the community as well other than just the schools. Would be difficult to sell to the town but if not recommended now it will not happen and the thespian program will go back to the gymnasium.

C. Bambara agrees with Arico, all the middle schools visited have auditoriums.

S. Summers agrees with Herb and Willington is minus a space that can fit residents. Quality of performance would be much better than space, if board does not say it then no one will. Put priority on auditorium.

<b>Vote:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Herb Arico	X			
Tracey Anderson	X			
Chiara Bambara	X			
Michelle Doucette Cunningham	X			
Ann Grosjean	X			

Stephanie Summers	X			
Elena Testa				x

Passes unanimously

**Present to Speak**

L. Semprebon currently serving on the Board of Finance, gave a rough estimate on bonding for 18 million, 1<sup>st</sup> year would be a \$200 increase on a house worth \$200,000 to give people a picture of what the increase would be. This is based on assessed value not appraised.

Robert Jellen stated his concerns with the length of time this has taken the board to reach a decision and is concerned the timeline for the new school could overlap with the new roof at E.O. Smith.

Judy Threatt commended the board on tenacity and amount of work the public does not see. Thanked board for all the efforts.

**Board Comments**

H. Arico thanked retirees for service, hopeful for a successful retirement. Thanked Phil on school lunch budget kept up to date, thanked Aaron and Katherine for coming out and providing us with information.

S. Summers can't wait for everyone to see "Most Likely to Succeed" and what it means for the future work force and preparing kids to be able bodied participants in future. Suggested the building committee watch the movie.

T. Anderson welcomed new employees and thanked the presenters.

A. Grosjean welcomed all new hires and those whom have shifted around, thanked Aaron and Katherine and is excited for a new school.

C. Bambara thanked Phil for getting the updated information, Aaron and Katherine for their input.

M. Cunningham thanked everyone for coming and for the public input.

**Adjournment**

9:14 pm