

# WILLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

## Minutes

Tuesday, September 8, 2020

**Virtual Meeting: Zoom**

**7:00 p.m.**

### 1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Arico called the meeting to order at 7:24PM

### 2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Arico led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### 3. **Present to Speak**

Peter Latincsics of 97 Trask Road was present. He stated I came to the meeting tonight because I was surprised to see item C on the agenda for a discussion on mental health service. I attended the original meeting on this issue and the meeting where the board made a decision on this issue deciding not to pursue having this organization in the school. I listened to many of the parents who expressed similar concerns about the nature of this organization and the lack of parental controls and I'm concerned and not understanding why this is now before the board again especially at the time of Covid when we are unable to meet as we were for the original meeting. I dont think it's right when the representatives for the townspeople act on an issue then it is ignored. I respectfully support the original decision of this board and ask that it continue to be upheld until towns people can attend meetings again.

Sarah Smith was present to speak. She stated, I would like to express my appreciation for the start of school and what everyone has done. I hope we will look at every advantage and listen to what the board has to say tonight to see what we can do to provide the best for our town.

### 4. **Chairman's Report**

Chairman Arico stated we have made every effort to open Willington Public Schools while providing a safe and healthy environment for students and giving them the educational programs and services they need. We have opened our schools and made provisions for all contingencies due to Covid-19. Various models are in place to provide our students with learning including on campus, hybrid and remote. The Willington Public Schools are also prepared to shift to a different model if necessary. We will be supplying the highest level of instruction possible. There are a lot of people involved in the opening of schools and each of those people deserve credit. The re-opening has also been in collaboration with Eastern Highlands Health District and Connecticut Department of Education. Phil Stevens, our Superintendent will give us more information on the opening of schools later in this meeting.

### 5. **Communications**

No Communications

### 6. **Superintendent Report**

#### a. Staffing

We hired several new staff including: Stephanie Knight for Food Service Director, Leslie Belsito for Kindergarten, Clarey Pass for grade 2, Hannah Wood long term sub for grade 3, Nicki Maines for Special Education at HMS, Stacey Moseley for Special Education at CES, Amy Lord for Paraprofessional, Danielle Eldridge for Paraprofessional, and five Utility Support Staff: Mitchell Hudon, Cristi Page, Janina Eldredge, Stephanie MacFarland, and Ally Nyser

#### b. Election day use of HMS

The Willington election department asked to use HMS and I approved their use of the building for the day. We are going to have a remote learning day for HMS and a typical on-campus day at Center School.

c. Enrollment update

We currently have 414 students. 23% of our student population is learning remotely and our average class size right now is 12. We had 12 students move to home schooling but many if not all intend on returning to the district once Covid is gone.

d. Fire marshal report

The fire marshal report was good. We had a couple items at CES that needed attention, including storage in the attic and a wire that needed to be relocated, but overall the report was good.

e. CES roof update

I am currently at a standstill with the roof project. Once we are rolling along with our reopening I will be able to divert my attention back to the CES roof. This is a large undertaking because of the grant reimbursement portion of the project and I will be making time once the schools are operating efficiently under all our new COVID protocols.

f. Update on WPS Return to School Plan

Typically, we would invite the Board to our opening meeting, but as you can imagine this is not a typical year. We had a great reentry last week with professional development for staff throughout the week on a variety of topics. Dr. Ravit Stein presented on trauma informed instruction, we had Zoom meet and greets for students, lots of training on health and safety, training on instructional practices, and team time to prepare for all the changes. We had a successful reopening of schools today and I would like to thank the administrative team and staff for all their work this summer to get us to this point. I know this past week was stressful for our staff and families because of the unknowns, but the students' smiling faces as they returned to school today made it all worthwhile.

Elena Testa stated I wish we had informed the BOF you were unable to do the roof when we had everything set aside. I think we should learn from this situation and try to avoid it in the future. I think you, Phil, put too much on yourself. I think if you saw in June that you could not handle the situation with the roof, you should have informed us so we could hire someone. There could be big issues created from not moving forward with the roof project. It is ok to admit we can't handle it all, but then we need to make sure we discuss hiring someone, etc.

Donna Cook stated this is a very unusual year and sometimes we get hammered with things but this is the second summer the roof didn't get taken care of, in the future we cant be left in the dark.

## 7. Financial Report

a. 2019-2020 Budget update

Attachment # 1

Superintendent Stevens stated we have an update on where we think the budget is going to close. Program 1 is a shortfall due to the grant that needs to be moved to Hall School, the chrome books, and the septic project. Program 2 has an excess, they received the benefits of the grant as well as some open positions and hiring some folks at lower rates. Program 3 the short fall is due to outplacement costs and transportation. Program 4 has an excess due to the re-negotiated rates and fuel savings. Program 5 is basically spent with very little left. Program 6 we didn't have much staff development because of Covid. Program 7, utilities, balanced out towards the end. Program 8 balanced out and there were some hiring savings and less summer hours. Program 9: I did not travel as much this year due to Covid. Program 10 has an excess. This brings the total education balance remaining to \$459,701, a lot of the excess was due to Covid.

b. 2019-2020 Budget transfers (policy 3160)

Superintendent Stevens stated after speaking to the attorney about the proper way to do this, we believe we should be balancing out the two programs that are in the negative. The transfer request

would be for what you see in the negative and both would come from program 2. The transfers would be \$54,692 for Center School and \$19,754 for special education.

**Michelle Doucette Cunningham made a motion to transfer 2 sums from the Hall Middle School line in the amounts of \$19,754 into the special education line and \$54,692 into the CES line to cover the shortfalls.**

**Laura Rodriguez seconded the motion.**

<b>Vote:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
H. Arico	✓			
M. Cunningham	✓			
D. Cook	✓			
T. Anderson	✓			
A. Grosjean	✓			
E. Testa	✓			
L. Rodriguez	✓			

Motion passes.

c. Nonlapsing account request (policy 3171)

Superintendent Stevens stated my recommendation is to ask the BOF to move 2% of the 19-20 budget into the nonlapsing fund to cover covid related expenses that were not budgeted for in the 20-21 budget. The account currently has approximately \$30,552. If we need to use this money we need to put in a request to the BOF and if the request is under \$20,000 they could approve the request. If the request is over \$20,000 they would have to bring the request to a town meeting for approval.

**Ann Grosjean made a motion to recommend to the BOF that we (BOE) take 2% of the 19-20 budget figure and move it into the non-lapsing account.**

**Michelle Doucette Cunningham seconded the motion.**

Chairman Arico asked if there is any way we could increase the 2% or is it a rule.

Superintendent Stevens replied the statute says 2%.

Chairman Arico asked how long the money needs to sit in the nonlapsing account before we use it.

Superintendent Stevens replied I haven't seen anything in the statute or policy that describes a timeline.

Tracey Anderson stated I think this request would be a good idea since at the August meeting Phil presented a number of expenses that would be at least through December and since we are hopeful we are going to stay in school we will most likely need this money to cover those expenses.

Ann Grosjean asked if we have received any money from the state for Covid related expenses.

Superintendent Stevens replied we have been given a number but we haven't seen any yet.

<b>Vote:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
H. Arico	✓			
M. Cunningham	✓			
D. Cook	✓			
T. Anderson	✓			
A. Grosjean	✓			
E. Testa	✓			
L. Rodriguez	✓			

Motion passes.

d. 2020-2021 Budget update

Attachment # 2

Superintendent Stevens stated this is the first report out of our new software. CES has a balance remaining of \$144,740, we have an open Kindergarten position and because of our numbers, I did not hire anyone. HMS has a smaller balance of \$35,497 because the two people we hired had a little more experience. Program 3 has a large balance remaining because none of the outplacement or special education bills have been received yet. Program 4 is in the negative because we input the transportation costs for the whole year and haven't included fuel reimbursements from region 19. Health Services program 5 is already in the negative due to all the additional PPE and supplies we have had to order. I don't have an idea yet on how quickly we will go through those supplies, we made an estimate based on the number of students and staff. We are hoping what we have ordered is going to get us through November. As long as we remain in school, we will have to order more. We haven't spent anything yet for program 6. We encumbered all the expenses for program 7. Program 8 Operations Maintenance includes the district cleaning supplies so this program is already significantly overdrawn. We believe we have estimated enough cleaning supplies to get us through to November. Program 9 systemwide support includes students who opt to go to a magnet school. Program 10 Fringe Benefits/Substitutes, Donna will true this up after all the hiring paperwork is in. This is mostly health benefits and we have been lucky about hiring people who do not need these benefits. We should have a good idea by next month about our usage of cleaning supplies and PPE as well as benefits. This will give us a much better idea of where we will be.

Donna Cook asked did we ever find out what our minimum budget requirement was for 20-21?

Superintendent Stevens replied I did not.

Donna Cook asked if there is a way that Covid expenses could be flagged so that it is easier to identify them when it comes time for reimbursement.

Superintendent Stevens replied yes whenever we submit items to accounts payable we are letting them know that it is Covid related and they are keeping track of that. We are also updating the sheet I shared at the last meeting as we move forward.

Laura Rodriguez stated I understand only buying PPE through November due to the possibility of not remaining in school, my concern is that PPE will get harder to get a hold of as it did in the spring.

Superintendent Stevens replied there are certain items where the supply chain has been challenging such as the dispensers but the PPE is actually easier to get ahold of and the state has given us some resources if we are having trouble getting certain items. We are also trying to be thoughtful and creative with items such as using a music stand at Hall School as a dispenser stand which can cost \$1,000. We won't wait until November to order the additional PPE and chemicals.

e. COVID-19 reopening expenses, grants

Superintendent Stevens stated we have had some communication with the state regarding grants. We were supposed to get \$60,000 the first round and \$140,000 the next. We haven't seen any yet but we will continue to apply. I will let you know if that money comes in. As far as the items from the document I shared at the last meeting, the utility staff estimate was around \$104,000 and right now we are at \$68,000. I greatly appreciate the work these folks have done. I went to place the order for the tents after the last meeting and they were no longer available due to the high demand. We decided to purchase car ports which we have ordered. There will be two at Center School and two at Hall School. These can be left out during the winter. We have budgeted \$6,500 each for the tents and the carports are about \$6,300 each. Superintendent Stevens stated we are still waiting on quotes for the ventilation project at Hall School. This project would go to CIP once I get those quotes, at some point I will come to the board and ask for approval to go to CIP for these items. There was a request for teachers to have shields at their tables for times that students take their masks off to eat or when they are working one on one with a student. We got a really good deal from a local dealer of \$16 each for the shields and we distributed those. Because we are promoting outdoor learning we have purchased a foam cushion for each student to sit on outside.

Elena Testa asked why we can't purchase the shields for student desks so they could remove their masks during class.

Superintendent Stevens replied according to the executive order, the only time students and staff are allowed to remove their masks are when they are eating and when they go outside. Unfortunately the shields would not change this.

8. **New Business**

a. Approve minutes of July 14, 2020

Attachment # 3

**Michelle Doucette Cunningham made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2020 regular meeting.**

**Elena Testa seconded the motion.**

<b>Vote:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
H. Arico	✓			
M. Cunningham	✓			
D. Cook				✓
T. Anderson	✓			
A. Grosjean	✓			
E. Testa	✓			
L. Rodriguez	✓			

Motion passes.

b. Approve minutes of August 11, 2020

Attachment # 4

**Ann Grosjean made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 11, 2020 regular meeting.**

**Elena Testa seconded the motion.**

<b>Vote:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
H. Arico	✓			
M. Cunningham	✓			
D. Cook			✓	
T. Anderson	✓			
A. Grosjean	✓			
E. Testa	✓			
L. Rodriguez	✓			

Motion passes.

c. Discussion of WPS behavioral and mental health services

Chairman Arico stated we had a question earlier from a member in town regarding how this got on the agenda. We have a general policy that if a board member wants something put on the agenda we try to accommodate them. This is something the board has addressed over the last several months but we

have yet to discuss some of the basic issues as a board. I wanted this on the agenda so we could set up some meetings to discuss the behavior and mental health services we presently have in the schools and also the need for the services. We can also meet with the company and the Community Health Center during these upcoming meetings so they can answer any questions we may have. I know Phil had some suggestions on this.

Superintendent Stevens stated it is clear the board has been divided on this issue. I think it is important tonight to discuss what questions board members want answered. Even if we don't have all the questions tonight if we could put this information together before we meet, everyone can get the information they need.

Tracey Anderson stated I think it would be helpful for those who don't work in the schools to get examples of situations that would prompt the teacher to recommend this type of a service.

Laura Rodriguez stated since I was not present for the first meeting I think it would be helpful for me to have the company come talk to us at a meeting as Herb suggested. It seems like there is a concern about parental permission, having worked in schools I am sure that nothing would happen without a parents permission but it would be nice for people to know exactly how that works. I was also wondering about the cost of this service.

Chairman Arico stated when they were here last time they did give us a little figure on the cost. They take work with people's insurance and also work with people that dont have insurance.

Superintendent Stevens stated I want to remind everyone that this does not have to be about one program. There are different options out there Community Based Health Services is just one approach. There are social and emotional curriculums you can purchase, you could hire a professional on your own, there are a lot of things you can do. I think an important part of the discussion is going to be what the options are. The parental permission would be based on what option you choose to go with. I think it's important for everyone to learn the needs of our students and how many students need these services.

Michelle Doucette Cunningham stated I have a question I would like more information on. She stated I heard someone last week state that Northeastern Connecticut was a desert for mental health services for children, meaning parents have a hard time finding these services for children. I'm not sure exactly what age group they were talking about. I was wondering if there is any evidence to back this up and does it interfere with Willington students school work.

Chairman Arico stated the closest headquarters for the company that came in was Stafford Springs.

Michelle Doucette Cunningham stated I was referring to any type of mental health counseling.

Chairman Arico stated it would be interesting to find this information out as well as what we are doing internally for mental health services even just in the classroom.

Donna Cook stated I have spent a large number of hours researching this and I probably should have been bolder when this issue first came up. When I was talking to someone in town, and they expressed their concern about our curriculum and I said we have a meeting coming up here's how you can get on and participate and share your concerns. People don't want to speak when they fear retribution. I did not speak all the things I wanted to say before because I didn't want to deal with the grief. When I'm looking at our board policy under regulation 1130B number 17, it says "use of school premises for non school activities is not permitted during school hours and this is not a school organization. They are non-profit and they would be eligible to use our building but not during school hours. The saving grace is that people who want to use this particular company's program and services can. They provide tele-health services and during this Covid time, we know our students know how to get on Zoom meetings so there

is nothing preventing a parent from getting in touch with them and registering. They accept insurance and they will do sliding fees. I don't know if they will do it for free but they definitely will accommodate the financial aspect. Then the parents can be there, they can monitor it, they can be responsible, and they can see if it's the right match for their child all from the comfort of their own homes. No one in Wellington needs to wait to access their services. Another concern is when they gave the meeting last time they specifically said they would be responsible to the BOE and I can with 100% confidence tell you I am not qualified to oversee a mental health professional and I'm not sure any of us are. I think we would be doing our schools and students a disservice when we start having someone come in during school hours. We could be opening ourselves up to other non-profit organizations that want to do something positive for kids that now want to have space. This mental health group is also linked to a medical group that provides all sorts of medical care and service and I find some very inappropriate for pre-k through 8th grade. Other school districts across the country are finding out that mental care is being provided to students without parental permission because the parents didn't need to give it. I think it would be great if students and their parents could go on their website CHC1.com and take a look at the different services they provide and make the decision based on that.

Tracey Anderson stated my understanding is that Stafford has this particular service being provided in their district. Is it possible we could have a representative from that district who could talk to us about their experience so we can better understand it from a schools point of view. My other question is are those who are opposed to this service opposed to just this service or any service. If so maybe we would need to keep the services inside the building except for the fact that the experts inside the building are saying they can't do it and need help. To Donna's point, if we open ourselves up to an outside organization isn't the board's job to decide whether we let them in or not? Just because we say yes to this organization doesn't mean it's a yes for all organizations. Based on the community's outreach to us over the past six months I have never seen an issue brought to our attention so many times by not only teachers but also community members saying we need this. If people are opposed they should be coming here to say that, I don't think we are that scary. There have been over 20 correspondence in the last six months asking to please bring this issue back to the table. I think we need to come to an understanding, do we want to ask for outside organizations or are we opposed to that and just go internally. If we don't bring an outside organization in we need to pay for more staff which is going to be an issue come budget season. The special services professionals at the school are saying we need it, the Covid plan is saying social and emotional learning is needed, so we need to decide on a direction.

Ann Grosjean stated a couple people tonight have brought up the parental piece and if I remember correctly, nothing would happen with this student until a parent had approved a plan. Also I think parents had the option of referring their child. I think we should look closely at the parent piece but I think it's pretty positive.

Elena Testa stated as I remember they need the parental permission only once. After that whatever direction they choose to go with the child wouldn't need the parental permission. Parents have very little control over what is going on with the mental health services for their child.

Michelle Doucette Cunningham stated I have two points of clarification first being no child would be able to participate without their parents permission, so if they don't agree they do not have to participate. I don't know that it said anywhere that child would be receiving services that their parents didn't know about. The other piece is what Donna brought up earlier about some of the programs providing other types of services as well such as dental and medical, but what we were talking about tonight and in previous meetings was only behavioral and mental health not about any medical services we would not include anything else in the contract.

Donna Cook stated but once you let this group in which is against our policy which I mentioned earlier, what about all the equal access rules where you can't discriminate against someone coming in and someone using the facilities. I think there is a reason that a not for profit isn't supposed to be using our facility during school hours and those who do are supposed to be paying some sort of fee to cover the



custodial staff cleaning. In light of all that's going on with covid and all the efforts to keep cohorts together and segregated, now you will have one room with one or two counselors and you are going to have who knows how many students going into that one room. This isn't why I think this is dangerous but it is another piece of what needs to be considered.

Michelle Doucette Cunningham stated we need to be careful because different states have different laws. In Connecticut the BOE has local control for education therefore we can control what services are provided to the schools. We don't have to let any service into our schools. We could provide these services internally and hire additional staff to make it happen but I thought this was a great option because it was no additional cost to the school and was a service we knew we needed. I think as the BOE we have to decide is this a contract we want to oversee. We oversaw the contract for the guy who fixed the sewage issue and none of us are experts in plumbing so I don't think we need any special expertise to oversee this contract. I also don't think there is any equal access issue we would need to address. We choose as a board who and when we partner with the community.

Donna Cook stated I think there is a difference between hiring someone to do something and having them come in to do it for free. One of the rules we have for the buildings is that no non-profit organizations can use it during school hours.

Chairman Arico stated I think we should turn this over to Phil to put something together for us for the next meeting.

Superintendent Stevens stated I can do that. I don't know if you want to make this a special meeting more like a workshop only about this or if this will be part of the next board meeting.

Chairman Arico stated I think if we are going to have someone present we should have a special meeting.

Tracey Anderson stated we have only been able to hear from teachers through letters or through present to speak, if we are going to have a special meeting, could we have some teachers from each of the buildings who could come and be part of that meeting so we can ask them questions and hear their concerns.

Chairman Arico stated ok if they want to come in but I am going to limit them to five minutes.

Michelle Doucette Cunningham stated I would like to be able to ask them questions and during the present to speak we can't ask them questions. If we kept it short per person would we still be able to have a back and forth.

Chairman Arico stated yes we could have some.

Ann Grosjean stated I think a great place to start would be with a needs assessment which is what I think Tracey is talking about with the teachers and also what we have available to us like Michelle said.

#### d. Willington Education Association Memorandum of Understanding Attachment # 5

Superintendent Stevens stated usually we do this memorandum of understanding when there is something going on that is outside the typical contract and this is one of those times with Covid. I met with union leadership and we worked hard on developing a reasonable memorandum of understanding to address these times, some of the things are what we need as a district and some are what they need. We did it together to minimize the cost of attorneys and talked through some of the challenges of our return. We had a negotiation meeting which included Ann and Herb and we had an opportunity to answer questions. The WEA board brought this in front of their group last week and they did approve the MOU as it sits. Many of the items in the MOU are part of our reopening plan.

Chairman Arico stated if something develops during the year this document can be modified.

Ann Grosjean stated I think going back to school is very scary for a lot of people and any reassurance we can give them that every effort is being made to make it as safe as possible is what we need to do. I feel this document does that.

Donna Cook asked on item 9 it states no student or parent will be permitted to record the lesson, is this because it is available somewhere else?

Superintendent Stevens stated we will record it and post it on our sites but we don't want someone filming and posting to social media. It preserves the privacy rights of the teachers and the students in that class.

Donna Cook stated on the news yesterday there was a piece about a teacher who noticed something strange in a students room and instead of calling the parent they called the police and the police visited the home and upset both the parent and the little boy. Is there some sort of policy in place so the teacher knows what they are and aren't supposed to do so they are not put in a procurious position?

Superintendent Stevens stated all of our staff and teachers are trained as it's a legal piece and are mandated reporters so if they see something that could be considered neglect or abuse they are not allowed to make a determination either way they have to report it to the administrator and the Department of Children and Families. DCF is the one that is responsible to make the determination.

Elena Testa stated under number 12 it says if the student does not show up for the lesson or has failing assignments the school communicates with the parents via email. My question is why we can't contact via phone call because some people dont check emails.

Superintendent Stevens stated emails are written evidence that we can prove but we would absolutely call as well.

Elena Testa stated under number 9 any it states the teacher will not be expected to be in camera view for the length of the class. I think it's important that while the teacher explains the students can see them.

Superintendent Stevens stated the reason for that is when the teacher uses the microphone they want to be able to walk around the room and not sit at their desk in front of the computer.

Elena Testa asked who is included in the bargaining union members.

Superintendent Stevens stated it is the teachers union.

**Ann Grosjean made a motion to accept the Memorandum of Agreement or Understanding with the Willington Education Association relating to Covid.**

**Elena Testa seconded the motion.**

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
H. Arico	✓			

M. Cunningham	✓			
D. Cook	✓			
T. Anderson	✓			
A. Grosjean	✓			
E. Testa	✓			
L. Rodriguez	✓			

Motion passes.

e. Willington Hill Fire Department lease

Attachment # 6

Superintendent Stevens stated we started looking into every option available for mask breaks and outdoor instruction and we looked across the street and noticed they have a pavilion at the Willington Hill Fire House and so I approached their leadership and have been working with them to use that as an additional space for outdoor learning. Public Works came in to clean that building up and I have the Building Inspector signing off on it. Public Works has spruced up a ton of stuff both at Center School, the fire house and Hall School. You can get to this by walking down the sidewalk at Center School and walking into the grass. We are looking at using two spaces one is 24 Old Farms Road which is this pavilion and 25 Old Farms which is the land across the street. It might help with recess so the kids can spread out. Parents would absolutely have to sign off on this. It would be a blanket field trip permission slip.

Chairman Arico asked if the teachers would have a telephone or something with them for security purposes.

Superintendent Stevens replied we have portable walkie talkies and first aid bags that the teachers would have to bring.

Donna Cook asked if there will need to be any additional insurance.

Superintendent Stevens replied we would provide a copy of our insurance to the FireHouse and we are covered.

Chairman Arico asked how long the lease is for.

Superintendent Stevens replied we did it for the year.

**Michelle Doucette Cunningham made a motion to accept the lease between the Willington BOE for 24 and 25 Old Farms Road.**

**Elena Testa seconded the motion.**

<b>Vote:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
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H. Arico	✓			
M. Cunningham	✓			
D. Cook	✓			
T. Anderson	✓			
A. Grosjean	✓			
E. Testa	✓			
L. Rodriguez	✓			

Motion passes.

f. WPS Food Service payroll review

Superintendent Stevens stated you need to approve the next layer of salaries for our food services staff; you adjust their salaries on an annual basis. My suggestion is either a 2.75% increase or minimum wage range depending on where the person is already.

**Michelle Doucette Cunningham made a motion to adjust the 2020-2021 school year wages as recommended by 2.75% or to minimum wage effective today.**

**Ann Grosjean seconded the motion.**

<b>Vote:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
H. Arico	✓			
M. Cunningham	✓			
D. Cook	✓			
T. Anderson	✓			
A. Grosjean	✓			
E. Testa	✓			
L. Rodriguez	✓			

Motion passes.

9. **Old Business**

a. 2020-2021 School Calendar (attached to email)

Superintendent Stevens stated we were matching other regions and somehow I put April vacation on the wrong week. I'm just asking you to allow me to update the calendar so April vacation would be the week of the 19th and match the region.

**Michelle Doucette Cunningham made a motion to adjust the calendar to reflect the April 19th vacation date to match region 19.**

**Tracey Anderson seconded the motion.**

<b>Vote:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
H. Arico			✓	
M. Cunningham	✓			
D. Cook	✓			
T. Anderson	✓			
A. Grosjean	✓			
E. Testa	✓			
L. Rodriguez	✓			

Motion passes.

**10. Present to Speak**

Sarah Smith was present to speak. She stated I was very pleased with the board's decision to discuss things on the agenda tonight and I appreciate everyone listening to each other. I am proud of how well the beginning of school has gone.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski was present. She stated I want to thank Superintendent Stevens who met with the elections department, myself, and the Public Works Director to discuss moving our polling place to Hall School to allow for social distancing. After six long months it was nice to drive by Center School today and see kids and staff outside. I know this doesn't come without hesitation but we wish a healthy and productive school year to Phil, your staff, and all of the students. Thank you for all your hard work.

Brynn Lipstreu, third grade teacher at Center School, was present to speak. She stated I want to publicly thank Superintendent Stevens for the collaboration we had working on the MOU and thank you to the board for approving that. Also I would like to thank the board for putting back on the agenda the conversation of the social and emotional learning and health of our students and potentially looking into programs for our school.

**11. Board Comments**

Chairman Arico stated we appreciate everything Phil and his staff have done to get everything going for the beginning of the year. We have committees and one of our board members is not on a committee

and we will have to look into that.

Ann Grosjean stated I would like to welcome the new staff members to Willington and also thank Phil and the administrators and teachers for getting things going so well.

Elena Testa stated I want to give a word of hope. I think we are going to be ok and that the town will be ok. Let's believe there will be a time this will be behind us and we can stay positive. Thank you again for everyone who worked so hard to reopen the schools.

Tracey Anderson stated I would like to agree with everyone else welcoming the new staff and everyone back to school it is wonderful to see. I would like to thank Phil and his staff for the countless hours they have put in and realize you can't handle everything and maybe we need to hire someone to help you.

Donna Cook stated I would like us to continue with the creative things like using the fire house even after Covid is over.

Michelle Doucette Cunningham stated it is always exciting in September when school opens and I think that it is scary for parents so I want to send a warm thank you to the parents who put their faith in us and thank you to Phil for leading your team to do an amazing amount of work to get ready for school. It is up to all of us to remain safe. I would like to thank my colleagues on the board for a relatively civil conversation. I think the roof conversation was a little accusatory and we need to give everyone the benefit of the doubt that we are operating in unforeseen times.

Laura Rodriguez stated I am looking forward to being on a committee. I would like to thank the staff and administration for getting school started today especially Phil. Welcome to the new staff members. I appreciate that we have all decided to continue the discussion about mental health needs and the best solutions. I want to focus on our successes.

## 12. **Adjournment**

Chairman Arico adjourned the meeting at 9:59PM

\*\*\* Next regular meeting October 13, 2020\*\*\*