



Board of Education Regular Meeting

January 4, 2021 7:00 PM
via Zoom Teleconference

Attendance Taken at: 7:00 PM

Present Board Members:

Erica Gelven
Michael Hornyak
Jason Adler
Christopher Passante
Kimberly Russo
Catherine Staunton

Absent Board Members:

Omar Francis

1. Opening Exercises

1.A. Roll call

Discussion: Also in attendance were Superintendent Maryann O'Donnell, Assistant Superintendent Marco Famiglietti, Business Manager Carolyn Dickey and student representatives Emma Lindsay, Aiden Maurais, and Jessica Flanagan.

1.B. Pledge of Allegiance

Discussion: All recited the pledge.

2. Public participation/recognition

There was no public participation.

3. Minutes – Approval - Regular Meeting of December 7, 2020

Motion Passed: To approve the minutes of the regular meeting of December 7, 2020, passed with a motion by M. Hornyak and a second by Jason Adler.

6 Yeas - 0 Nays

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| Erica Gelven | Yes |
| Michael Hornyak | Yes |
| Jason Adler | Yes |
| Omar Francis | Absent |
| Christopher Passante | Yes |
| Kimberly Russo | Yes |
| Catherine Staunton | Yes |

4. Communications

Discussion: No report.

5. Report of Student Representatives

Discussion: E. Lindsay, J. Flanagan, and A. Maurais reported on events at all three schools. Morgan students are very involved in fundraising events to give back to the community. Positivity programs at the high school are taking place and students are excited about a music app that allows musicians to play/sing together virtually.

At Eliot, holiday spirit days made the pre-winter break more festive. Like the high school, mid-terms are being waived this year. More videos from Morgan student athletes will be shared with their Eliot counterparts.

At Joel, spirit days in December were enjoyed by staff and students. Parent/Teacher conferences took place on December 10, and the Friends of Joel held a breakfast the following day for teachers to thank them for their efforts.

6. Administrative Reports

6.A. Administrators, Program Directors and Teachers

6.A.1. General Update

Discussion: No report

6.B. Assistant Superintendent's Report

6.B.1. General Update

Discussion:

M. Famiglietti stated that the unified hybrid conversion is complete and temporary remote students at Eliot and Morgan have been reincorporated into the hybrid learning model.

M. Famiglietti and IT Director Frank Rossi are assessing new software. They will report on which applications makes sense to use next school year. State summative assessments will be starting with the LAS Links virtual testing this month. Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) testing will take place this year, as will Smarter Balanced, Advanced Placement, School Day SAT, and the CT Physical Fitness Assessment.

Advanced manufacturing initiatives are being supported by the Perkins Grant that has been expended on a variety of technology education items. The tech ed department is eager to start using the equipment.

Morgan students and teacher Jessica Mularksi are working on a marketing video to promote the advanced manufacturing program at Morgan.

6.C. Business Manager's Report

6.C.1. Bills Payable

Discussion: There were no questions regarding bills payable.

6.C.2. General Update

Discussion: 2021-22 budget preparation work continues. The quarterly reports will be presented to the Board in February. Reimbursement of \$114K for expenditures under the Coronavirus Relief Fund Grant has been accepted by the state.

7. Superintendent's Report

7.A. Strategic Plan and Priorities Mid-Year Update

Discussion: M. O'Donnell reviewed year three of the Strategic Plan with the Board, highlighting ongoing work that continues although slowed slightly by the pandemic. Areas of focus include curriculum, structure, and organization. She noted that a NEASC visit is scheduled for the fall.

7.B. NESDEC Enrollment Projection Report

Discussion: Every year, NESDEC provides an enrollment projection to the district. The projection numbers are relied on for staffing and class sizes and will be referred to throughout the budget season. She explained the drop of approximately 100 students due to expected reductions as well as impacts of the pandemic and students withdrawing to homeschool this year. NESDEC projects kindergarten enrollment to be 119 students in 2021-22. The district will be prepared for the influx in 2021-22 although enrollment will be less predictable next year.

C. Staunton suggested a survey be put out to the community in an effort to determine what students will be returning next year. J. Adler urged communications materials featuring the district's technology initiatives and the new Morgan building be shared with prospective 8th grade students. M. O'Donnell indicated that the number of homeschooled students has jumped this year from 16 to 56, although she believes many of these were related to the pandemic and is expecting that many will return next year.

7.C. 2021-2022 Budget Overview

Discussion: Budget cost center presentations are scheduled on January 7 and 12.

M. O'Donnell discussed budget considerations and focus areas. She indicated that the impact of the pandemic cannot be minimized and that the budget will need to support any deficits.

She praised the thoughtfulness of the use of new and older technology tools, and the strength of the district's network and security.

Major drivers of the operating budget continue, as in years past, to be salaries and health insurance. Some of the increases may be offset by decreases in out-of-district and magnet school tuition costs. Capital requests have come in at slightly lower levels. When debt service numbers are received from the Town, they will be shared with the Board.

The budget process and timeline were reviewed. Overall, the Superintendent anticipates an increase of approximately 3% although many line items are still being finalized. Board members were urged to attend all budget presentations. The next three presentations are scheduled for January 7, 12, and 20 at 5:30 p.m.

7.D. The Morgan School Indian River Embankment Update

Discussion: The Inland Wetlands Commission met on December 1, 2020, to approve the permanent repair, restoration, and armoring of the downstream Indian River embankments and

environment from storm damage at The Morgan School. The legal notice of the decision and a copy of the permit were provided to the Board. Repairs should begin this spring.

7.E. Notification of Donation: Funds from the Huisking Foundation

Discussion: The Huisking Foundation has donated \$3,000 to the district. After review with the Superintendent, it was decided to direct the money for PPE in the Special Services department. The Board expressed gratitude for the donation.

7.F. ESSER & CRF Grant Update

Discussion: The Superintendent reviewed the final allocations and status of the Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) and the Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER). M. O'Donnell noted that PPE and other items purchased by the district during the pandemic have been itemized, reported, and approved for reimbursement by the CRF. Funds used for the purchase of Chromebooks have been adjusted and resubmitted to ESSER for reimbursement. The Board was urged to refer any families in need of technology to the Superintendent's office.

7.G. General Update

Discussion: M. O'Donnell discussed ideas and plans for viewing Morgan sporting events. Cameras will be installed shortly. The CIAC had voted to postpone the start of the winter sports season to January 19, and we are awaiting an update from the CIAC.

Full, in-person learning is being strived for by mid-January if trending of Covid-19 decreases. The Superintendent will continue to communicate updates and decisions regarding learning models with families.

Updated Addendums 5 and 9 from the State have been provided to all districts. Addendum 5 provides guidance for responding to Covid-19 in Connecticut Schools. Addendum 9 provides guidance regarding contact tracing scenarios in schools.

Discussion followed regarding a switch to full, in-person learning, helping families with student attendance, and vaccines for teachers.

8. Reports of Board of Education Subcommittees and Special Committees

8.A. General Updates

Discussion: E. Gelven encouraged all Board members to participate in the budget process and to provide their unique perspectives. The budget timeline was included in the Board packet. Negotiations will continue after the budget process.

9. Second Reading and Possible Adoption of 2021-22 School Year Calendar

Motion Passed: To adopt the 2021-22 School Year Calendar as presented passed with a motion by Catherine Staunton and a second by Jason Adler.

6 Yeas - 0 Nays

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| Erica Gelven | Yes |
| Michael Hornyak | Yes |
| Jason Adler | Yes |
| Omar Francis | Absent |
| Christopher Passante | Yes |
| Kimberly Russo | Yes |
| Catherine Staunton | Yes |

10. Personnel Information

Discussion: The Board welcomed new hires and thanked those employees leaving the district.

11. Adjournment

Motion Passed: To adjourn at 8:46 p.m. passed with a motion by Catherine Staunton and a second by Jason Adler.

6 Yeas - 0 Nays

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| Erica Gelven | Yes |
| Michael Hornyak | Yes |
| Jason Adler | Yes |
| Omar Francis | Absent |
| Christopher Passante | Yes |
| Kimberly Russo | Yes |
| Catherine Staunton | Yes |

Michael Hornyak, Secretary of the Board

Allison Friday, Clerk of the Board