

Ashford Board of Education
Special Meeting Minutes – March 1, 2012
7:00 p.m.

Note: Per C.G.S. §10 – 218, Board of Education meeting minutes are provided in a draft format within 48 hours of the date the meeting was held. With the exception of motions and votes recorded, these minutes are unofficial until they have been read and approved by a majority vote of the Board. Should edits be necessary, they will be made at a regularly scheduled meeting, noted in the meeting minutes, and so voted upon.

Call To Order

Chairperson D. Wesson called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

Board Present

Present were members D. Wesson, K. Rourke, J. Lippert, J. Rupert and L. Donegan. Also present were Superintendent Dr. J. Longo, Business Manager T. Clements and recording secretary J. Barsaleau. Unable to attend were board members K. Warren and B. Supina.

There were thirty residents and members of the Ashford School staff seated in the audience (sign in attached).

Persons to Be Heard

Chair D. Wesson asked those in the audience if they would prefer to speak after the business portion of the meeting. MEUI representative D. McMullen thanked the chair and stated that it would be preferable. Resident L. Gagne provided the board members with history and background concerning transportation and the commitment that had been made by the board and the town several years ago to provide this service and employ local residents. She asked the board to consider this commitment in their budget discussions.

Approval of Minutes: 02/16/2012

Motion to approve the minutes of 02/16/2012 made by J. Rupert, seconded by K. Rourke and carried with one abstention (J. Lippert).

Motion to approve the special meeting minutes of 02/23/2012 made by J. Lippert, seconded by L. Donegan. Members noted the following amendments, “AES” or “Ashford Elementary School”, should be changed to Ashford School; first and last names of some of those present at the meeting were misspelled and were noted by the recording secretary for correction. Change the word “eliminate” to implement, and the Anthem increase changed to 17.6%. Motion seconded by L. Donegan and carried unanimously as amended with one abstention (J. Rupert).

Superintendent Report

a. Staff Resignations

Dr. Longo reported that he had received letters of resignation from Marjorie Roy, technology coordinator effective June 30, 2012, from Mark Cataldi, driver and custodian, effective March 3, 2012 and from Elizabeth Tucker, special education teacher, effective June 30, 2012.

Motion made by J. Rupert to accept the resignations of Marjorie Roy, Mark Cataldi and Elizabeth Tucker, motion seconded by J. Lippert and carried unanimously.

Dr. Longo reported that he and chair D. Wesson had met this past Monday with Selectman Fletcher and Board of Finance Chair C. Silver-Smith. The meeting was honest and candid with all parties contributing to the dialogue and was viewed as a positive experience. Dr. Longo suggested that there be more of these types of meetings.

Budget Worksession

a. FY 2012-13 Budget

Several budget related documents were distributed to the board (attached). Dr. Longo’s recommended budget is an increase of 5.34%. It is not reflective of an expected premium percentage decrease from Anthem. Business Manager T. Clements stated that the insurance package has gone out to bid, therefore, no updated information is expected from broker Ovation Benefits prior to the BOE’s presentation to the Board of Finance. This budget reflects technology purchases be made this year with remaining grant funds that must be spent prior to September. D. Wesson stated that all budget calculations must be finalized by March 22nd.

Dr. Longo distributed a copy of Senate Bill 24. The bill has several components, one of which dictates that districts with less than 1,000 students and a per pupil expenditure of 110% above the state average, regionalize with another district or districts. If the bill passes successfully, identified districts, including Ashford, who do not regionalize will bear significant penalties to ECS funding. The target effective date would be the 2016. J. Lippert suggested that the sharing of some services within

Region #19 be investigated. K. Rourke asked about the technology consultant remaining a contracted position. She asked how it would be filled. Dr. Longo responded that Mrs. Roy will be very difficult to replace and commented on her knowledge and dedication to the school. Mrs. Roy has offered to assist with the preparation of a job description. J. Lippert asked for clarification of “Pay to Play”. It is reflected in the Superintendent’s budget, but is deferred until September, unless the directive to reduce the budget is passed down.

D. Wesson asked board members if sending forward the Superintendent’s budget with a 5.34% increase is acceptable. All present agreed to bring forward the Superintendent’s proposed budget. Final edits to the formulas and narrative will be made prior to presentation to the BOF.

Motion to accept the Superintendent’s budget as proposed made by J. Lippert, seconded by L. Donegan and carried unanimously.

Persons to be Heard (continued)

Chair D. Wesson asked for audience comments. Several audience members addressed their concerns to the board about outsourcing high school transportation services. Discussion followed concerning the way that transportation is funded through the BOE budget, with the Region #19 Board making payment back to Ashford for the service. The common concern shared by audience was that if high school transportation were to be handled by Region #19, current drivers could lose hours of work affecting their benefits, and that outsourcing of all transportation would eventually follow.

Members of the audience asked about the Superintendent’s salary, cost increases for bookkeeping, outplacement tuition, if there had been any follow up with the state comptroller’s office since the last meeting, and when a decision would be made about high school transportation. Dr. Longo stated that high school transportation is reflected in the budget to be presented next week and that he had not yet had the opportunity to contact the comptroller’s office. The chair stated that although high school transportation is in the present budget, it would have to be addressed, as would other line items, if cuts are warranted.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting (8:44 p.m.) made by J. Rupert, seconded by K. Rourke and carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Barsaleau
Recording Secretary