

Ashford Board of Education
Meeting Minutes – October 1, 2015
7:30 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

Chair J. Rupert called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM. Present were J. Rupert, K. Rourke, J. Mozeiko, J. Lippert, K. Warren and L. Donegan (7:47 pm). Also present were Dr. J. Longo, Superintendent, Principal T. Hopkins and recording secretary J. Barsaleau. In the audience were S. Morytko and C. Silver-Smith (7:37 pm). Unable to attend was member D. Wesson.

Persons to be Heard

S. Morytko commented about a communication in the board packet from D. Neel to Dr. Longo concerning the FY 14 audit response to the CSDE. He felt the content was rather defensive in its tone. C. Silver-Smith arrived and also stated that she was “disconcerted” by the response. She was not pleased that neither she, nor the auditor, had received a copy of the communication that was sent to the CSDE. She went on to speak of past audit matters and stated that she would have expected to be copied on such a communication. She reviewed past discussions and actions by the BOE and her feeling that this letter changes what she believed the Board of Education’s practices were concerning the approval of purchases initiated by and for the Superintendent. She also reported that she has not received financial reports since the new fiscal year began. It was explained that the Superintendent had a deadline of 9/18 and was required to file a corrective action response concerning FY 14 audit recommendations. J. Rupert informed Ms. Silver-Smith that the Board had also just read this communication for the first time. K. Rourke spoke to Ms. Silver-Smith and stated that she takes exception to the tone and manner in which Ms. Silver-Smith addresses the Board of Education. She went on to state that financial reports are available and they can certainly be sent to her and if she does not receive them, then she should request them. Dr. Longo and Mr. Neel will review past and present corrective action plans and all other related correspondence. No changes to the purchasing policy or regulations have occurred since March 19, 2015. Ms. Silver –Smith left the meeting.

K. Warren made a motion to add discussion of the memo from Don Neel dated 9/16/15 to the Superintendent and a letter from Dr. Longo to Selectman Zambo dated 9/16/15 to the agenda under “New Business”. Both were included in the meeting agenda packet. Motion seconded by J. Lippert and carried unanimously.

Communications

J. Rupert read a letter from the Office of Early Childhood congratulating Ashford School for meeting the Qualified Staff Member requirement for 2017, in advance. This accomplishment will be acknowledged at a reception later this month.

Approval of Minutes: 09/03/2015

Motion to approve the special meeting minutes of 09/03/2015 made by K. Rourke, seconded by K. Warren and carried with two abstentions (L. Donegan and J. Rupert).

Distribution of Administrative Reports

a. Superintendent

Dr. Longo’s report was distributed at the beginning of the meeting. J. Rupert summarized the content of the report. Mr. Rupert noted that he, Dr. Longo and S. Waddell met recently to discuss the Ashford School technology plan. All members have been provided a draft copy of the plan with a reminder that it is a working draft and should be reviewed and any feedback should be forwarded to Dr. Longo. Dr. Longo spoke briefly of the documents in the board packet concerning Board goals, 3-year and capital planning. He also discussed gifted and talented education and after hearing from that committee, he feels that students who have been identified as gifted and/or talented should receive services. This will happen through a project based learning program, there will be professional development training on Renzuli software for the teacher assigned to gifted and talented education on 10/13/15. J. Mozeiko asked if a more structured program had been considered, and had any model programs been looked at? Mr. Hopkins responded affirmatively to both questions. The Renzuli project based learning will be utilized for the time being.

New Business

a. First Reading of Board Policy Updates Provided by Counsel (Series 1000 – School Volunteers; Series 4000-Reporting of Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Assault; Series 5000-Attendance and Truancy; Immunizations; Health Assessments and Screenings; Discipline; Student Records (FERPA); Administration of Medications in Schools; Use of District's Computer Systems)

J. Rupert read aloud the titles of all of the policies considered for first reading and informed the board that the policies were being brought forth in terms of priority. The policy samples distributed reflect public acts or new legislation that affect existing policies of the board. Members are encouraged to read through these policies and direct any questions to the Superintendent's office. These policies will be on the first November agenda for second reading and final approval. There will be more policies on the next meeting agenda. An index of policies and model notifications prepared by counsel was distributed.

Motion made by L. Donegan to accept the model policy index dated 9-20-15 listing the mandatory state and federal policies and required notifications as provided by Shipman and Goodwin LLC, as the official policy manual of the Ashford Board of Education. This manual shall supersede any policies adopted by the Ashford Board of Education prior to July 1, 2010. Motion seconded by K. Warren and carried unanimously.

b. First Reading of Board Policy Regulation Update (Series 1000-Sexual Offenders on School Property)
Counsel has updated the regulation. Optional language listed in the regulation will be included and the second reading will be on first November meeting agenda.

c. Requests for Family and Medical Leave

Dr. Longo has been made aware that there are three staff members in need of family and medical leave. Two are for the employees' own serious medical condition, and one is of an intermittent nature for an ill family member. The board encouraged Dr. Longo to revisit any intermittent leave time requests as there are specific parameters concerning intermittent leave. Complete forms have been received for a non-certified staff member.

Motion made by K. Warren to authorize family and medical leave for a member of the non-certified staff for the treatment of their own serious medical condition. Motion seconded by L. Donegan and carried unanimously.

Requests for two members of the certified staff will be addressed when the appropriate forms have been received.

d. Discussion of FY 14 Corrective Action Memo and Letter to Selectman Zambo dated 9/16/15

K. Warren asked about the letter to the Selectman concerning disposal of computers and why they are not given to the Town? J. Rupert and Dr. Longo confirmed that equipment purchases made from the appropriated budget fall under the management of the BOE.

There was discussion of the purchasing policy segment of memo from D. Neel concerning corrective action. After brief discussion, Dr. Longo said he took responsibility if there was any confusion about its content. J. Mozeiko stated she did not see any derogatory or negative comments in the memo. L. Donegan and K. Rourke agreed.

Motion made by J. Rupert to add discussion of the Board of Education's response to the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) concerning education. Motion seconded by K. Rourke and carried unanimously. J. Rupert received a working copy of the POCD from committee chair J. Silver-Smith and was asked to provide comment. In consult with Dr. Longo, Mr. Rupert crafted a response on behalf of the Board of Education to the POCD committee that outlines the board's philosophy and vision for education.

Audience member S. Morytko spoke and encouraged all to participate in public hearings that will be forthcoming on this matter as it is very important to all residents in that it can have long term effects on the town.

7. Old Business

a. Second Reading: Series 1000 – School Security and Safety Plan

J. Rupert briefly summarized the extensive meetings and committee work that went into developing the safety plan for Ashford School, and recommended approval of the policy unless the members desired more time to review the plan.

Motion made by L. Donegan to approve the School Security and Safety Plan policy, motion seconded by K. Rourke and carried with one abstention (J. Mozeiko).

b. Long Term Planning

1. Capital Improvement

2. Three Year Plan

Working drafts of all of these items were sent to each member and are included in the board packet. Members should carefully review and offer any suggestions before the next meeting if possible. The capital improvement plan needs to be addressed soon so that the board will have necessary documentation and justification for the items it asks to be considered for approval.

Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items

The next meeting date is 10/15. The board will meet at 7 pm in order to recognize the retirement of driver Kathleen Makray. The meeting will begin at 7:30 pm; agenda items include an audit update, financial and administrative reports, and first reading of policies.

Superintendent Evaluation (Executive Session, Action Anticipated)

Motion made by K. Rourke (9:23 pm) to enter into executive session for the purpose of the Superintendent evaluation, and to invite Dr. Longo to attend. Motion seconded by L. Donegan. Members had been asked to review the document and format used to evaluate the superintendent. K. Warren stated that review of the document should not be in executive session. K. Rourke amended her motion to hold discussion of the format and document in open session and then enter into executive session with Dr. Longo in attendance. The motion as amended carried unanimously.

Members reviewed the form and made edits to the existing document. J. Barsaleau will incorporate those changes and send to members for review. Dr. Longo was asked to provide the board with a summary of issues addressed and accomplishments for the past year.

The board went into executive session at 9:51 pm. Present were: J. Rupert, K. Rourke, J. Lippert, K. Warren, J. Mozeiko, L. Donegan and Dr. J. Longo.

The board exited the executive session at 10:00 pm.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at (10:08 pm) made by J. Rupert seconded by K. Warren and carried unanimously.

Recorded by:

Jennifer Barsaleau
Recording Secretary

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education: