

**PLAINFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
PLAINFIELD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY**

October 9, 2019 7:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Christi Haskell, Kathleen Barry, Matthew Radant, Peggy Bourey, Mike Cartier, Cindy Arpin, Cheryl Hull, Kenneth Di Pietro, Superintendent; Ronald Lussier, Business Manager; Sterling Representative; Jacob Irons, Student Representative; Tammy St. Amour, Recorder

1. **CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Ms. Haskell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked the PMS students to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **ROLL CALL (taken silently by Board secretary)**

3. **CONSENT AGENDA:**

A. Minutes of the meeting of September 11, 2019.

MOTION: Ms. Barry moved to approve the amended minutes of the September 11th meeting.

SECOND: Ms. Arpin

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

4. **COMMUNICATIONS:**

- EASTCONN Board of Directors: Ms. Haskell indicated that EASTCONN has informed us that we have a seat available to fill on their Board of Directors. She asked if any member would like to be their representative and attend the Directors meetings at EASTCONN to let her know.

5. **PERSONNEL:**

A. Resignations & Retirements: Mr. Di Pietro stated that he received a letter of resignation from the new special education teacher at Shepard Hill. Kelly Zils has decided to seek employment elsewhere and has submitted her resignation.

MOTION: Ms. Barry moved to accept the letter of resignation from Ms. Kelly Zils.

SECOND: Ms. Bourey

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

A letter of resignation was received from Melissa Hoyt, PHS Special Education Teacher. Mr. Di Pietro said that she has been offered a position at Ellis Tech with some administrative responsibilities and will be leaving at the end of the month.

MOTION: Ms. Barry moved to accept the letter of resignation from Melissa Hoyt.

SECOND: Ms. Arpin

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

Mr. Di Pietro also received a letter of resignation from James Ryan, PHS Tech Ed teacher, effective immediately.

MOTION: Ms. Barry moved to accept the letter of resignation from James Ryan.

SECOND: Ms. Bourey

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

- B. Appointments & Transfers: Mr. Di Pietro said that Mrs. Nicole Deary has been hired as a .8 FTE Speech Language Pathologist. Ms. Deary is also certified as a BCBA. She has taken the speech position along with working .2 FTE as a Behavior Analyst for the district.

MOTION: Ms. Barry moved to approve the appointment of Ms. Nicole Deary as a speech pathologist and behavior analyst.

SECOND: Ms. Arpin

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

Mr. Di Pietro was pleased to announce to the board that a new Assistant Principal for Plainfield High School has been hired. Mr. John Cote has worked in many aspects from teacher to mentor and department head. He was chosen by his present district as their teacher of the year and was chosen by the State as one of 15 finalists.

MOTION: Ms. Arpin moved to approve the appointment of Mr. John Cote as the new assistant principal at Plainfield High School.

SECOND: Mr. Radant

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

6. PUBLIC FORUM:

- A. PMS Student Demonstration: Mrs. Hutchinson introduced some of the students from Plainfield Memorial School. She said that they are taking part in the new STEM lab that has recently opened in their school. Each student spoke briefly about the project that they were given and how they used differently scenarios to solve the problem that was presented to them.
- B. Student Representation Introductions: Ms. Haskell said that two new representatives are on the Board this year. Jacob Irons, a Jr. at PHS and Olivia Bessette, also a Jr. at PHS. Mr. Irons gave a brief report. He said that the CNA Lab is now open and 12 students are currently taking the course; there was a college fair going on today; SAT/PSAT testing will be on October 22nd; the annual cooking contest will also be on October 22nd; and he said that Mr. Flynn is keeping the band very busy.
- C. Public Forum/Agenda Items: Ms. Renee Toper spoke to the Board with regard to her daughter's attendance at Camp Q for the summer. She wanted them to know that it was a wonderful experience for her daughter and that the paraprofessional was knowledgeable of her disabilities and worked well with her.

Representatives from the MES PTO said that they took part in gathering items for Project PIN. They were able to collect over 1200 items to help stock the pantry.

7. STANDING COMMITTEES & INDIVIDUAL REPORTS:

Policies: Mr. Sugarman stated that the policies have been placed on the district website for the past month for review. He said that he is looking for approval of the changes to the following policies:

Policy 5050 – Child Abuse or Neglect: Mr. Sugarman said that the revisions clarify the language for mandated reporters and the new electronic reporting system.

MOTION: Mr. Radant moved to dispense with the second reading and approve the revisions of Policy 5050 Child Abuse or Neglect.

SECOND: Ms. Barry

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

Policy 5050.1 – Reporting of Abuse or Neglect of Disabled Adults: Mr. Sugarman said that this policy has also been on the district website for the past month and the revision specifies the reporting period and list of mandatory reporters.

MOTION: Mr. Radant moved to dispense with the second reading and approve the revisions to Policy 5050.1 Abuse or Neglect of Disabled Adults.

SECOND: Ms. Barry

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

Policy 6174 – Guidelines for Independent Educational Evaluations: Mr. Sugarman said that the policy has been updated to align with the CT State Department of Education guidelines and noted that options that are not included in Connecticut have been omitted.

MOTION: Mr. Radant moved to dispense with the second reading and approve the revisions to Policy 6174 Guidelines for Independent Educational Evaluations, with the elimination of the options that are not including in Connecticut.

SECOND: Ms. Bourey

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

Policy 6045 – Mr. Sugarman said that this policy was updated back in 2014 to include 4 credits for English and math. It was also approved to reduce the number of credits required for graduation to 26 and the additional credits in health and PE. The board has already approved the changes, but the policy was not updated. He is asking that the Board post this policy to the website to allow public review before the final posting of the policy.

MOTION: Ms. Barry moved to post policy 6045 to the website for review.

SECOND: Ms. Bourey

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

8. **OLD BUSINESS:**

A. FY20 Budget & Facilities Report: Mr. Lussier said that there are no excessive costs from September. He noted that outplacements are somewhat of a concern. He said that there is approximately \$185,000 in overruns at this point. He informed the Board that there are no significant facilities issues to report on. The solar panels at MES have been connected to the grid. They still need to be energized upon authorization from Eversource.

Mr. Lussier said that the walkthroughs have been scheduled for the following dates:

October 23 – PMS/PCS

October 24 – PHS/SHE

October 25 – MES/ECC

- B. Update of Bus Run Times: Mr. Lussier provided the Board with a listing of the most recent bus run times. He said that some of the times have improved, others are still being worked on. A representative from Dattco was in attendance at the meeting and spoke to the Board. They were made aware of the many issues in town that may cause the bus runs to take longer. i.e. stopping for trains, students not at bus stop, parents not waiting for student at drop off, road construction, disciplinary issues, etc. Dattco also asked if it may be possible for the administration to send home a reminder to parents to have their children ready and at the bus stop at the designated time.
- C. Special Education Update: Mr. Sugarman said that we have had many students move into the district this year that have already been outplaced by their previous district. He is hopeful that we may be able to service some of these students in district and will keep the board informed. He also noted that he is working with two other districts to potentially place their students within our ILP and Pathways programs.
- D. BOF Reconciliation of ECS Funding: The Board Chair and the Superintendent reported to the Board of Finance that the law allows but does not require a municipality to reduce a school appropriation by an amount equal to a reduction in State Aid. The BOF was presented with three options:
- Require a \$64,000 reduction to the FY2020 budget and return the funds to the taxpayer
 - Allow \$64,000 to remain in the allocation for un-anticipated costs
 - Require the school department to reserve the \$64,000 and the unused funds will be set aside at the end of the fiscal year into a restricted account which is now allowed by law for up to 2% of the allocation for future use by the school as needed.

Mr. Di Pietro said that he has since heard from the chair of the BOF and he believes that they will require the cost reduction of \$64,000. He presented the BOE with the following options should they need to make the cuts:

- \$11,000 from Administrative staff retirement savings
- \$18,000 unbudgeted savings from solar project
- \$35,000 fixed costs savings

Mr. Di Pietro also wanted the Board to be aware that there are significant overruns in the special education account. As such there could be potentially new excess costs of \$185,577. He said that the Board has an obligation to authorize the superintendent to reconcile, if required by the Board of Finance and Town vote a reduction of \$64,000 to the FY2020 School Budget appropriation.

He stated that he also would like the BOE to consider informing the BOF of the impending need for the excess aid monies from the state. If the BOF allows the school to keep the \$64,000 in their budget, it would reduce the need for the excess aid from the state.

Mr. Radant said that he felt that these were two separate issues and should not be addressed together. He agrees that the Board of Finance needs to be aware of the possible need for excess costs but wants it to remain separate from the \$64,000.

Ms. Haskell said that she would like to have the Board of Finance attend their December meeting so that they can discuss the potential overruns in the special education account at that time.

MOTION: Mr. Cartier moved to empower the Board Chair or Superintendent to advise the Board of Finance where the \$64,000 in savings would be cut as outline in the October 7, 2019 memo.

SECOND: Ms. Bourey

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Ratification of Secretary Contract: Ms. Haskell said that the Board was provided with information with regard to the secretary contract. She asked if any members had questions, and if so, they could discuss the contract in executive session.

MOTION: Ms. Barry moved to approve the contract for the secretarial union as presented.

SECOND: Mr. Radant

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

- B. School Lunch Delinquent Account Amnesty: Mr. Lussier stated that the USDA requires that we address delinquent and bad debt accounts. He said we presently have a balance of \$1,386.57. Every effort has been made to collect the debt. He is asking the Board to allow him to use funds from the general account to pay the debt and balance the school lunch account.

MOTION: Ms. Bourey moved to approve a onetime amnesty of \$1,386.57 to pay the bad debt from the school lunch account.

SECOND: Ms. Arpin

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

- C. Family Resource Center Report: Ms. Myra Ambrogi spoke to the Board about the Family Resource Center. She said that the program is funded through the State Department of Education. They currently service 46 families through their play and learning programs. She said that part of their goal is to get the smaller children ready for preschool. They also provide services through WIC and run a diaper bank.
- D. Family Support Specialist Update: Ms. Lugauskas said that she is enjoying the work she is doing with the families in town. She has been able to help parents navigate through the PPT process. In addition she is now providing some child development classes with the parents that are working with the Family Resource Center.
- E. Superintendent's Report: Mr. Di Pietro told the board that they took part in the job fair today that was held at the Town Hall. There were approximately 30 people that stopped by the booth for information or to complete the application.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: Ms. Bourey moved to adjourn at 9:24 p.m.

SECOND: Ms. Arpin

VOTE: Passed unanimously.