

**PLAINFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
LIVE STREAMING VIDEO MEETING**

April 8, 2020 7:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Christi Haskell, Kathleen Barry, Peggy Bourey, Mike Cartier, Mike Broughton, Audrey Lemieux, Steve Boettcher, Cheryl Hull, Cindy Arpin, Kenneth Di Pietro, Superintendent; Ronald Lussier, Business Manager; Sterling 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 lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **ROLL CALL (taken silently by Board secretary)**
3. **CONSENT AGENDA:**

A. Minutes of the meeting of March 11, 2020.

MOTION: Ms. Arpin moved to approve the minutes of the March 11th meeting.

SECOND: Mr. Cartier

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

4. **COMMUNICATIONS:** Ms. Haskell said that she received notification that our former chair Doug Smith passed away. Thoughts and condolences to his family

BOE Member Resignation – Ms. Haskell stated that Ms. Cheryl Hull will resign from her position on the Board of Education after 12 years of service, effective April 30th. Ms. Haskell thanked Cheryl for her service to the Board and wished her well.

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

SECOND: Mr. Boettcher

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

5. **PERSONNEL:**

A. Resignations & Retirements: A letter of resignation was received from Lorraine Tierney, Speech pathologist. The effective date will be April 22, 2020.

MOTION: Mr. Boettcher moved to accept the letter of resignation from Lorraine Tierney, effective April 22, 2020.

SECOND: Ms. Bourey

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

6. PUBLIC FORUM:

A. Public Forum/Agenda Items: Ms. Haskell asked anyone that would like to communicate with the Board to send questions to BOEquestions@plainfieldschools.org and someone will get back to them.

7. STANDING COMMITTEES & INDIVIDUAL REPORTS:

A. Superintendent's Report: Mr. Di Pietro reviewed what each school is doing for on line learning. He showed a brief example from each school and examples of the school work that is taking place.

Mrs. Cadro explained some of the exercises that the teachers are doing on a daily basis along with the innovative ways they are engaging students. Administration is doing Zoom meetings with their staff.

Mr. Bitgood said that they had a jump on this because some of the teachers were already using online learning with their students.

Mrs. Haskell thanked all staff for the work that they are doing and for keeping the district running during this time.

8. OLD BUSINESS:

A. FY20 Budget & Facilities Report: Mr. Lussier stated that the budget remains on or under target. Substitutes, fuel, energy and transportation will be underrun for the year due to the circumstances. We are also hoping to get FEMA money for the COVID issue. He said that we are currently working to determine what will need to be spent to fulfill contracts with contractors. He noted that there is a new sign at the ECC to replace the old one that was deteriorating. He said that the custodial staff will continue disinfecting rooms at the schools and sealing them so that they are clean. All railings and door handles are cleaned throughout the day along with fogging.

Governor's Order 7R – Mr. Di Pietro said that the new order from the Governor is to restore employment where you can and negotiate with contractors for the services that should have been provided. He said that he is talking with DATTCO tomorrow. He said that presently their employees are on furlough. He said that they should not have to pay contractors for their profit, but to cover our obligation to them. He also noted that with Special Education alternative placements that are out of our district, agreements will need to be made with those districts as we need to maintain those placements. We formally sent letters to our partners informing them that we understand the executive order but there are other cost that are part of the tuition and we need that information so that we can renegotiate for the rest of the year.

FEMA cost recovery: Mr. Di Pietro said that the state has been classified as a disaster area. Due to this classification, we can now recover costs that pertain to COVID. We can also ask for money for students that will need summer help that may have regressed during this time.

B. FY21 Budget Update: First Selectman Cunningham addressed the Board and stated that they are looking to work with BOE on what can be done to minimize the budget impact to the Town. He said that the BOE is already in the whole from the previous year cuts, and understands that it would be

difficult to reduce even further. He said he is trying to work on a zero mil increase. He said that he has some ideas and will meet with Mr. Di Pietro to review the things that believes can help. He said that he will be working together with the school to submit the FEMA funding for reimbursement due to the COVID pandemic. He said that after a discussion with Mr. Di Pietro, they are looking to see if there is funding available from the Town to purchase Chromebooks with hotspot access for the students that do not have internet access at their homes. These purchases would be eligible for reimbursement through the FEMA funding.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Coronavirus Response Efforts: Mr. Di Pietro reported that the Governor continues to report that schools should anticipate being close through 4/30/20. Another Governor Order allows an unchanged end year for schools. 180 day waiver. This allows for the April break to remain on schedule: April 10 – April 17, 2020. Mr. Di Pietro said that based on this order, he will set the last day of school as June 16th. He said that they will reduce the school year from 182 to 180 days and the Graduation can be held on June 16th.

MOTION: Ms. Arpin moved to set the last day of school and graduation for the 2019-2020 school year as June 16, 2020.

SECOND: Mr. Cartier

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

Mr. Di Pietro said that on March 16th the Governor ordered an immediate effort to move to distance learning by March 30th. In Plainfield, 2,200 students attend our schools in grades PK to Grade 12. 195 educators had to prepare two weeks of lessons for March 30th to April 9th, for various grades and subjects. A website needed to be created as a portal for all staff and students and families to access on-line resources and lessons and a process to interact with teachers remotely to complete lessons that will be reviewed towards their grades. He said that this was no easy task and congratulations and appreciation need to go out to many good people. While there is both on-line instruction available and printed materials being sent home to families with insufficient or no access to technology, there are at least 100-200 students who will need other supports to achieve comparable to their peers. Some noted concerns are:

- There are a number (less than 50) students whose first language is not English.
- PK students (general) ended March 30th but will continue to get supplemental work
- PK-IEP students will continue with support to June 16th as requires by regulations.
- 47 of 2,142 students report no access to internet. Over 300 Chromebooks loaned.
- Over 380 students with IEP's receive additional support that is now altered or delayed due to being home-bound for schooling. We are working on this.
- Parents are expressing concerns that they are working and unable to support children during the instructional hours of 9 AM to 12 Noon; others have children at daycare; and still others have 2-3 children all trying to engage in learning at the same time. Family hardships.
- Many of our own educators are providing lessons to students from their school while their own children are engaged in learning from our district or another district. No easy challenge.

Mr. Di Pietro said that with issues of equity - 80 percent have access to technology. There are about 40 to 50 families without internet, and we need to provide those students with access. He

said that he would like the Board to request of the Town the opportunity to purchase the technology needed to give access to all students. This would require up to \$50,000 for the purchase of Chromebooks with internet access.

MOTION: Mr. Cartier moved to request up to \$50,000 from the Board of Finance for the purchase of technology to allow student access during the COVID pandemic.

SECOND: Ms. Arpin.

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

Mr. Di Pietro said that there are 210 educators and administrators continuing to provide their duties and services. Teachers provide lessons remotely from home in a modified day schedule. Administrators provide predominantly on-site support as essential staff. All secretaries and custodians provide on-site service on a modified day as they are also essential staff. Nurses and security officers are work on assigned projects and duties from home. 115 paraeducators now engage daily in on-line professional development in the areas of behavior support, paraeducator practices and master teacher modules for paraeducators. The employee who were laid off included substitutes, tutors, before/after childcare supervisors and other employees whose work cannot be provided when the programs had to be discontinued. These positions represent approximately 40 people.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: Mr. Broughton moved to adjourn at 8:07 p.m.

SECOND: Ms. Bourey

VOTE: Passed unanimously.