**BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**October 22, 2018**

**MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING**

Attendance: Richard Aroian

Julia Dennis

Jake Fisher Absent Jaymee Miller

Timothy Oakes

Adam Salina

Kari Sassu, Ph.D.

Tracy Sisti

Matthew Tencza

Student Representatives: Alexander Halkias Absent

Jenna Smalley

Also in attendance: Superintendent of Schools Brian J. Benigni; Director of Human Resources Denise Parsons; Director of Pupil Personnel Services Linda Holian; Director of Business Operations Jeffrey Cugno; and Principal of Griswold School David Kitzman.

## I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Tencza called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. in the Mary E. Griswold Gymnasium at 133 Heather Lane, Kensington, Connecticut. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**II. STUDENT PRESENTATION – MARY E. GRISWOLD SCHOOL**

Mrs. Larsen’s 4th grade class initiated a school-wide project this fall called Start With Hello Week. Student presenters shared the process of initiating the project and showed a video that chronicles the week. The audience and members of the Board participated in one of the activities. Student presenters were Audrina Baggiero, Marni Heeps, Owen Holland, and Addison Watson.

**III. COMMITTEE REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE TO THE BOARD**

A. Report of Student Representatives

Miss Smalley reported, during spirit week, students participated in the annual color wars, with the seniors winning with a *Stranger Things* theme; the Berlin High School ECE UCONN Drawing Class participated in the “Memory Project”; New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) visitors will arrive on Sunday, October 28, 2018; and Saturday, November 3, 2018, will be cabaret night at Berlin High School with students singing their favorite songs from their favorite musicals.

B. Correspondence to the Board

None.

**IV. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS**

Mr. Jon Peyton, 39 Towne Drive, Berlin, Connecticut, addressed the Board concerning the status of the school security vestibules. Superintendent Benigni responded the school security vestibules have been approved and materials have been ordered. The intent is to have them completed as soon as possible, with one school completed prior to the summer and the others during the summer.

Mr. John Markowski, 27 Penny Brook Lane, Berlin, Connecticut, addressed the Board as a follow up to the question he posed at the last Board meeting, concerning the mechanicals in the schools, specifically HVAC systems. He inquired if the Board would pursue a grant to acquire HVAC equipment and place the responsibility for installation on the faculty of the area regional technical high schools as a learning program for those students. Mr. Tencza responded the Board of Education does not oversee the maintenance of the school buildings; that is done by the Town. The Board of Education puts forth requests to have items addressed through the Budget process, and those items are voted on by the Town Council and Board of Finance. Mr. Tencza indicated he and Superintendent Benigni have had numerous discussions regarding pursuing grants that would allow for improvements to the school buildings, which are brought forward to the Town management. Mr. Tencza indicated, although it has been discussed, he does not know if technical high schools can perform this work within the schools. Mr. Tencza suggested Mr. Markowski attend the next Board of Finance meeting, which is scheduled for November 13, 2018, and address this subject with them. Superintendent Benigni also suggested speaking with Doug Solak.

**V. CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting of October 9, 2018

B. Overnight Field Trip Request – BHS Upbeat – Woodstock, CT –

October 27-28, 2018

Berlin High School Principal Eileen Eustis and Upbeat Director Jack Rudy requested permission for Upbeat students to travel to Camp Woodstock, in Woodstock, CT, on October 27-28, 2018, to participate in the Freshmen/Sophomore Leadership Weekend. The purpose of the trip is for underclassmen to build leadership skills and to introduce them to the concept of Upbeat.

**Moved by Ms. Dennis, seconded by Dr. Sassu, to approve the consent agenda as presented.**

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Tencza

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

Discussion on Security and Safety

The Board discussed current safety and security concerns and needs. Mr. Tencza reported, in April, the Board discussed the creation and hiring of a School Security Director for the district. Mr. Tencza indicated the Board has put out a posting for this position and has received numerous applications. The Board discussed the hiring of unarmed security guards and/or armed retired law enforcement officers as security guards in each school and whether these officers would fall under the control of the police department or the Board of Education. Superintendent Benigni shared with Board members the current school security personnel, with student population and school configurations, for surrounding towns. A handout with this information was also provided to Board members. Superintendent Benigni noted, other than the two school resource officers, one at McGee and one at the high school, there are no other security personnel in the district at this time. Superintendent Benigni provided Board members with an article, written July 17, 2018, concerning armed security guards within the schools, and with a copy of Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-244a, which allows schools to employ former police officers as armed security guards if they train within the Connecticut Police Academy.

Mr. Cugno noted the other security initiatives occurring in the schools: the district implemented the program Raptor for visitors entering the schools; background checks for volunteers; and shielding/film has been placed on school windows. There are grants available to support additional cameras in the schools and a locking system and entry system on the doors. Last February, a grant was approved for a fire and police responder system, which has been contracted for by the Town.

Mr. Tencza suggested a survey be sent to parents and staff as soon as possible. Superintendent Benigni will prepare a draft, which will be sent to the Communications Committee for their review.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Prior to adjournment, Mr. Tencza reminded Board members on Sunday the team from NEASC will interview the Board of Education at Berlin High School, beginning at 2:15 p.m. Mr. Tencza noted tonight’s meeting is the final Board meeting with this Board, and he wished Julia Dennis, Tracy Sisti and Adam Salina the best in the elections.

**At 8:26 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Salina, seconded by Ms. Dennis, to adjourn.**

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Tencza

Respectfully submitted,

Kari Sassu, Ph.D., Secretary, Berlin Board of Education