

BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION

June 8, 2020

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Attendance: Richard Aroian
Julia Dennis
Mary Ellen Maloney – Arrived at 6:08 p.m.
Jaymee Miller – Absent
Timothy Oakes
Adam Salina – Arrived at 6:06 p.m.
Kari Sassu, Ph.D.
Tracy Sisti - Absent
Matthew Tencza
Student Representatives: Jenna Smalley
Ryan McGowan

Also in attendance: Superintendent of Schools Brian J. Benigni; Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Erin McGurk; Director of Business Operations Jeffrey Cugno; Director of Human Resources Denise Parsons; Director of Pupil Personnel Services Linda Holian; Supervisor of Special Education – Secondary Cindy Martin; Supervisor of Special Education – Elementary Michelle Zeuschner; Director of Literacy and Social Studies Laurie Gjerpen; Principal of Berlin High School Eileen Eustis; Assistant Principal of Berlin High School Barbara Ventura; Principal of McGee Middle School Salvatore Urso; Assistant Principal of McGee Middle School Tim Chiaverini; Principal of Griswold School David Kitzman; Principal of Hubbard School Alfred Souza; and Principal of Willard School Megan Sirois.

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Aroian called the virtual meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by student Jenna Smalley.

B. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

1. Announcement – Teacher and Paraprofessional of the Year 2021

Superintendent Benigni announced Berlin School District's 2021 Teacher and Paraprofessional of the Year, Mary MacFarland and Kim Dunnigan, respectively.

2. Berlin High School Recognition

Principal Eustis and Mr. Aroian recognized the following Berlin High School and McGee Middle School students:

Valedictorian – Audrey Feldman and Salutatorian – Matthew Uryga

CAS Scholar Athletes – Audrey Feldman and Matthew Uryga

CAS Arts Awards – Dawson Trotman (performing) and
Nathaniel Hansen (visual)

All-State Chorus – Tori Cascone, Em Roche and Dawson Trotman (Dawson was also selected for the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) All-National Honors Ensembles)

All-State Band – Brendan Malcarne and Clemens Henning (Clemens was also selected for the NAfME All-Nationals)

CABE Student Leadership Awards – Julia Coccozza and Ryan Hunt – BHS
Angela Gross and Nicholas Manzi – McGee

Class of 2020 Officers:

President – Dan Lynch
Vice Presidents – Jake Holmes and Jenna Smalley
Secretary – Maria Butrimas
Treasurer – Hailey Nardelli
Social Chair – Anna Sarrazin

Student Government Officers 2020:

President – Emily Rutledge
Vice President – Makayla Gorski
Secretary – Gina Scalero
Media Secretary – Emma Roski
Treasurer – Alex Miloszewski

National Honor Society Officers 2020:

President – Jenna Smalley
Vice President – Audrey Feldman
Secretary – Abbie Rochette
Treasurer – Adam Kajzer

3. Thank You to BOE Student Representatives

The Board recognized and thanked Jenna Smalley and Ryan McGowan for their enthusiasm, insightful reports and intuitiveness provided to the Board of Education this school year.

4. Recognition of Retirees

BHS – John Line, Mary Pacyna, Marie Siegal, Eileen Thurston
McGee – Janice Carpenter, Suzanne McCabe
Willard – Dolores Chowanec, Sharon Corriveau

Each building principal and Ms. Holian shared a few words about the retiree from their school/department.

II. COMMITTEE REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE TO THE BOARD

A. Report of Student Representatives

Miss Smalley and Mr. McGowan thanked the Board and expressed their appreciation, serving as student representatives.

B. Committee Reports

Ms. Dennis reported the Community Engagement Committee met on Monday, June 1, 2020, and discussed next steps and how to maintain and build community relationships over the summer. Ms. Dennis reported the Committee is exploring the idea of creating an additional social media page where comments are turned off and the Committee can share links to meetings and columns appearing in the *Berlin Citizen*. Ms. Dennis will provide Board members with the date of the next Committee meeting so they may participate as this item will appear on the next Board meeting agenda.

Dr. Sassu reported the Curriculum Committee met on Friday, June 5, 2020 and discussed some of the steps that have been taken to prepare for summer school and to ensure the guidelines issued by the state of Connecticut are followed. Dr. Sassu stated a district committee has been formed and will meet weekly to address changes and ensure there is sufficient personal protective equipment for those attending summer school. Dr. Sassu reported the Curriculum Committee also discussed issues related to the possibility of distance learning in the fall.

Mr. Tencza reported the Finance & Operations Committee met on Wednesday, June 3, 2020, and discussed the transportation agreement with the New Britain Transportation Company, which will be addressed later in the agenda and the forecast of the year-end surplus. Mr. Tencza stated the Committee anticipates returning approximately \$350,000 to the town and has also identified funds to be placed in the two percent account. The Committee discussed additional spending that will happen between now and the end of the year, and it is the general consensus to use as much of the Operational Budget, while still returning funds to the Town, and to leave CHOICE funds in place as the cost to teach students virtually in the future is unknown.

C. CREC Report

There was no report this evening.

D. Correspondence to the Board

There was no correspondence to the Board this evening.

III. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Mr. Aroian stated there was a different type of audience of citizens yesterday as he, along with his wife, attended the Black Lives Matter rally, which was attended by staff and current and alumni students. Mr. Aroian stated he was very impressed with the organization and inspirational speeches. Mr. Aroian reported on the emails received concerning similar type measures and stated the Board has charged Superintendent Benigni with creating a community based committee, beginning in the fall, around the concepts of inclusion and equity.

Superintendent Benigni stated he has spoken with Dr. McGurk, and the district will begin to look at the K-12 curriculum, the K-12 Social Studies curriculum as well as readings, text and projects to ensure they are meeting the needs of students and the diversity and social competence. Superintendent Benigni stated there will be more information in the next school year when these conversations can occur face-to-face.

James Fallon, 75 Windsor Road, Berlin, Connecticut thanked the Board for all the communications over the last several months and inquired when the district anticipates having a defined plan for the reopening of schools so parents and students will have some measure of certainty. Superintendent Benigni responded the district is waiting for further instructions from the state of Connecticut; however, in the meantime, the district is working with the Center for School Change and a district committee has been put in place concerning the reopening of schools. A survey will be going home to parents and students, which will provide the district with greater insight to meet the learning needs of students and provide the

best education possible given whatever constraints are placed upon the district. Superintendent Benigni anticipates having a greater amount of information by the end of June/beginning of July, which will be shared with the community.

IV. PERSONNEL

Anticipated Appointment of Assistant Principal – Berlin High School

Katie Amenta was appointed Assistant Principal of Berlin High School.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes
 - 1. Regular Meeting of May 11, 2020
 - 2. Regular Meeting of May 26, 2020
 - 3. Special Meeting of May 4, 2020
- B. Monthly Budget Report – Period ending May 31, 2020

Moved by Mr. Salina, seconded by Dr. Sassu, to accept the consent agenda as presented.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Aroian

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Summer Instructional Program

Director of Pupil Personnel Services Linda Holian reviewed the extended school-year programs for students with disabilities. These programs are based on PPT recommendations for specific students. They provide students with an opportunity to maintain their learning over the summer vacation.

Ms. Holian reported there will be two in-person sessions: a four week program that runs from July 7 – July 30 for preschool – grade 12; and a five week program that runs from July 6 – August 7 for special education students that need a more intense program. In addition, at McGee, the ESS Program will run their summer school program and a handful of students will participate in the Credit Recovery Program.

Ms. Holian reported that, as of today, there are approximately ninety (90) students that will be attending the summer instructional program; thirty-seven (37) families have opted out for various reasons; and twenty (20) families have not yet responded.

Ms. Holian reviewed the guidelines currently in place for transportation, personal protective equipment, social distancing, bathroom procedures, temperature taking and training.

Superintendent Benigni stated a summer school manual will be distributed to parents prior to the start of the summer instructional program that will outline the guidelines in place.

- B. Facilities Related Updates

Director of Business Operations Jeffrey Cugno reported this month the Town Facilities Department will advertise for a consultant to review the ductwork at Berlin High School, and the town has decided to move forward with a Statement of Need to upgrade the HVAC systems in each of the elementary schools.

C. Modified Contract with New Britain Transportation

Director of Business Operations Jeffrey Cugno reported that, due to the school closings associated with COVID-19 and the Governor's Executive Order, the district negotiated an Amendment to the transportation contract with the New Britain Transportation Company. Board members were provided with a copy of the Proposed Amendment for their review. The Finance and Operations Committee met on Wednesday, May 20 and June 3, 2020, to review the modified contract.

Moved by Mr. Oakes, seconded by Ms. Dennis, that the Board of Education approve and authorize the Superintendent of Schools to execute the Amendment to the Transportation Contract, dated June 8, 2020.

Mr. Salina noted that on page 4 of the Proposed Amendment there are two sections numbered 6. Mr. Cugno stated, before the Amendment is signed, this will be addressed and renumbered, which will not change the intent of the contract.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Aroian

D. Security Vestibules Project Close Out

Director of Business Operations Jeffrey Cugno reported that all punch list items have been completed and the project is ready for close out. Mr. Cugno stated he has spoken with the building principals, and they have no outstanding issues. It is recommended that the Board close out the project. Once the Board deems the project closed, the final electronic submission will be made to the state.

Moved by Mr. Oakes, seconded by Mr. Salina, to close the Security Vestibules Project and authorize the filing of the final electronic submission with the state.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Aroian

E. Berlin Visiting Nurse Association Service Agreement with the Board of Education for July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021

Board members were provided with the annual agreement between the Berlin Board of Education and the Berlin Visiting Nurse Association.

Moved by Dr. Sassu, seconded by Ms. Dennis, to approve the agreement between the Berlin Board of Education and the Berlin Visiting Nurse Association for 2020-2021.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Aroian

Add Item to the Agenda:

Moved by Mr. Oakes, seconded by Mr. Salina, to add an agenda item, prior to adjournment, to discuss a personnel matter concerning unaffiliated contracts.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Aroian

At 7:28 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Oakes, seconded by Mr. Salina, to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter, inviting the Superintendent.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Aroian

In attendance for Executive Session were Board members Aroian, Dennis, Maloney, Miller, Oakes, Salina, Sassu, and Tencza. In addition, Superintendent Benigni was present.

At 8:16 p.m., the Board returned to Open Session.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:17 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Salina, seconded by Ms. Dennis, to adjourn.

FAVOR: ALL
MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Aroian

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Dennis, Secretary, Berlin Board of Education