

BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION

June 29, 2020

MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING

Attendance: Richard Aroian
Julia Dennis
Mary Ellen Maloney – departed at 8:25 p.m.
Jaymee Miller
Timothy Oakes
Adam Salina
Kari Sassu, Ph.D.
Tracy Sisti
Matthew Tencza

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 Literacy and Social Studies Laurie Gjerpen; Assistant Principal of Berlin High School Barbara Ventura; and Principal of Hubbard School Alfred Souza.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Aroian called the virtual meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

Mr. Aroian acknowledged and thanked the administration, staff, students, parents, Berlin Police Department and community partners that took part in the end-of-year celebrations.

II. COMMITTEE REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE TO THE BOARD

A. Committee Reports

Ms. Dennis reported the Community Engagement Committee met twice since the last Board of Education meeting to discuss ways to engage the community and how to stay ahead of relevant information. The Committee will meet prior to the July Board meeting and plans to have some time in workshop at the July Board meeting to discuss community engagement topics and the idea of bringing back social media.

Mr. Tencza reported the Finance and Operations Committee met on June 24, 2020 and in attendance beside himself were Board members Aroian, Oakes and Salina; Superintendent Benigni; Jeffrey Cugno; John Richards; and Jan Zagorski. The Committee discussed the disposition of the year-end surplus (\$775,000) that was accumulated through closing schools for the balance of the school year and also Superintendent Benigni's and his team's budget management throughout the school year. Mr. Tencza stated the Committee agreed to propose to the Board of Finance putting \$775,000 into the two percent non-lapsing account, with \$375,000 used for the fire suppression capital expenditure for Hubbard School and the roof top unit at Willard School. The remaining \$400,000 would be held in the event all CHOICE funds were expended. Mr. Tencza stated he spoke with the Board of Finance Chair Sam Lomaglio this morning, and the Board of Finance will allow the Board of Education to put \$375,000 into the non-lapsing account; however, \$400,000 would need to be returned to the Town. Mr. Tencza stated at the July 13, 2020 Board meeting, the Finance and Operations Committee will recommend \$375,000 be placed into the non-lapsing account and \$400,000 be returned to the town.

B. Correspondence to the Board

Superintendent Benigni shared correspondence received from Alexandra Brielmann.

In response to Mr. Aroian's question concerning the Governor's Adapt, Advance and Achieve Plan released today for the reopening of schools, Superintendent Benigni stated the Administrative Council Group will meet next Monday to begin discussing the plan and rollout. In the meantime, a back-to-school group, currently consisting of 32 staff and community members, has been formed. Superintendent Benigni stated each school will address individually how it operates and functions to best meet the social distance and cleaning guidelines. Superintendent Benigni anticipates sharing some broad thoughts concerning the plan at the July 13, 2020 Board meeting with the goal to have the Berlin Public Schools back-to-school plan ready to be shared with the community and submitted to the State at the end of July.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting of June 8, 2020

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

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 9:0; including President Aroian

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Anticipated Appointment of Athletic Director

Moved by Mr. Salina, seconded by Mr. Tencza, that the Board of Education appoint David Francalanga to the position of Athletic Director and K-12 Physical Education Health Coordinator for the district, effect July 1, 2020.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 9:0; including President Aroian

B. Statement of Need – HVAC Systems – Elementary Schools

Director of Business Operations Jeffrey Cugno presented the Statement of Need and Education Specifications for the design and construction of upgrades to the HVAC systems at the three elementary schools, which will be submitted to the Berlin Public Building Commission.

Moved by Mr. Oakes, seconded by Mr. Salina, to approve the Statement of Need and Education Specifications for the design and construction of upgrades to the HVAC systems at the three elementary schools to be submitted to the Berlin Public Building Commission.

Mr. Tencza expressed his concern that the Statement of Need references a 2013 study, the recommendations in that study are now seven years old and the Board is in the process of having that study updated. In response to Mr. Tencza's question will the Statement of Need be modified as it moves through the process to accommodate any deficiencies, Mr. Cugno stated the Statement of Need provides information for the projects and provides the Public Building Commission and State of Connecticut with what has been done to date and the rationale for moving forward. There are no bids or specifications attached. Mr. Cugno stated brand new information will be put together for the HVAC systems, and in putting together the Educational Specifications, he made aware the condition of these three facilities and anticipates that would be updated during the process.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 9:0; including President Aroian

C. Discussion: Deposit into the Non-Lapsing Account

Mr. Tencza stated he did not have much more to add from his earlier committee report. He stated at the July 13, 2020 Board meeting the Board will vote on the recommendation of the Finance and Operations Committee to place \$375,000 into the non-lapsing account and return \$400,000 to the town.

D. Personnel Not Covered by Collective Bargaining

Board members were provided with Superintendent Benigni's recommendations for personnel not covered by collective bargaining.

Moved by Mr. Salina, seconded by Dr. Sassu, to approve the proposed salaries for personnel not covered by collective bargaining and issue them contracts for the 2020-2021 school year.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 9:0; including President Aroian

E. Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools

At 6:31 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Oakes, seconded by Mr. Salina, to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter and invite just the members of the Board.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 9:0; including President Aroian

In attendance for Executive Session, in the Board of Education meeting room at 238 Kensington Road, Berlin, Connecticut, were Board members Aroian, Dennis, Maloney, Miller, Oakes, Salina, Sassu, Sisti and Tencza. Board member Maloney departed at 8:25 p.m.

At 8:42 p.m., the Board returned to Open Session.

V. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:42 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Tencza, seconded by Ms. Miller, to adjourn.

FAVOR: ALL

MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Aroian

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Dennis, Secretary, Berlin Board of Education