

**Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting held May 18, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. in the Newtown High School Auditorium.

M. Ku, Chair
D. Delia, Vice Chair
D. Cruson, Secretary
D. Leidlein
J. Vouros
R. Harriman-Stites
D. Zukowski

L. Rodrigue
A. Uberti
T. Vadas
approximately 50 Staff
approximately 40 public

Mrs. Ku called the meeting to order at 6:43 p.m. and stated it was being recorded and live streamed.

Item 1 – Pledge of Allegiance

Item 2 – Profiles in Professionalism

Dr. Rodrigue noted that we were here to recognize truly outstanding staff and community members. She and Mrs. Uberti announced the winners which included Laura Altieri, Executive Secretary, Middle Gate Elementary School, Melissa Arsenault, School Counselor, Middle Gate Elementary School, Jill Beaudry, Assistant Principal, Reed Intermediate School, Anne Dalton, District Nursing Supervisor, Tracy Galassi, Grade 3 Teacher, Hawley Elementary School, Jaclyn Lloyd, Physical Education Teacher, Sandy Hook Elementary School, Amy McGinniss, Special Education Teacher, Newtown High School, Deirdre Murphy, Nurse, Reed Intermediate School, Eric Myhill, Project Challenge Teacher, Head O'Meadow/Middle Gate/Reed Intermediate Schools, Karen Powell, Nurse, Newtown High School, Laura Taylor, President, Newtown High School Band Parent Corporation, and Richard Thorne, Head Custodian, Middle Gate Elementary School. A short reception followed.

Item 3 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the consent agenda which includes the minutes of May 4, 2021 and the correspondence report. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 4 – Public Participation

Item 5 – Reports

Chair Report: Mrs. Ku spoke about the middle school moving up ceremony and high school graduation and asked for Board representatives at the middle school ceremonies. The next meeting will also begin at 6:30 p.m. The Charter Revision Commission meeting was tomorrow night and would be a virtual meeting. She reminded everyone that the diversity, equity and inclusion survey from CAFE is still open for Board members to take. We will address the Board self-evaluation, CAFE workshops on diversity and equity for Boards, and the Superintendent's evaluation.

Superintendent's Report: We have end-of-year activities including proms at the high school. Our snow date committee met and they will outline their plan for snow days next year and the use of remote days if the State allows that flexibility. We met today regarding the hiring process for the equity and inclusion coordinator who will be housed at the high school and funded by a grant. We will include parents and students on the interview committee. We also received official word our NOVO grant is secured.

Committee Reports:

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said the Policy Committee met last week and brought back the gaming policy. They continue going through personnel policies.

Mr. Vouros reported that the Curriculum and Instruction Committee met and there was a professional development update and discussion on equity and diversity. Mrs. Uberti reported that the IT Department was working on the collection of devices process before the end of the school year. Summer curriculum work was also discussed.

Mr. Delia reported on the CFF Committee meeting where they discussed the joint nonlapsing account work we are doing and agreed to work in the best interest of the Newtown community members.

Mrs. Ku stated the nurses negotiations were ongoing and asked members to stay after the meeting for an update.

Mr. Delia said EdAdvance will be moving into their new workspace and invited us to the ribbon cutting on June 7.

Student Representatives:

Ms. Clure reported that the Capstone presentations were scheduled with the first one last week. Spring sports are finishing up regular games this week. The Junior Prom is this Friday and Senior Prom is June 4. Parents will be helping out with pictures. A lot of Covid restrictions are being lifted. The Mystery of Edwin Drood will be shown online. Godspell was presented May 14 freshman and sophomores.

Mr. Jerfy noted there are fun activities for seniors this week. Next week is the senior trip to Six Flags and the senior BBQ is coming up. There are fundraisers being held such as the one for NICE for money for our sister school in India.

Financial Report Month ending April 30, 2021:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the financial report for the month ending April 30, 2021. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mr. Delia stated the CFF Committee discussed this report in great detail and supported this motion.

Mrs. Vadas presented the financial summary along with account updates.

Motion passes unanimously.

Item 6 – Presentations

Athletics Program Update:

Matt Memoli gave an update on this year's athletics program. He thanked the middle school and high school student athletes who have been outstanding. Wrestling is the only sport we didn't have and football had a modified season. He also thanked the coaching staff and parents who were so supportive, our athletic trainer who was on top of students wearing masks, and Deb Modzelewski and the school nurses who have been amazing.

Mrs. Ku thanked Mr. Memoli for all he's done this year to make sports work.

Adoption of New K-5 Math Program:

Dr. Frank Purcaro presented the K-5 Math Pilot 2020-2021 report and resource selection.

Mr. Vouros was very encouraged to see and hear students will learn the vocabulary that goes with this and asked what will happen for students in grades 6, 7 and 8.

Dr. Purcaro stated we will start the process for those grade levels.

Mrs. Ku thanked him and our teachers who were involved.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve Bridges Math as the K-5 math resource selection. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Jill Bracksieck thanked the classrooms teachers who piloted the program. She said the teachers said it was amazing watching their first graders experiencing this program. She was proud of Newtown for piloting this the way they did and making a really good choice. Chris Feda said watching the program in the school was amazing.

Item 7 – Old Business

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the continuation of the school activity fund accounts. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mr. Delia said the CFF Committee discussed this in great detail with Mrs. Vadas. There has been no change over the years and they were comfortable supporting this.

Motion passes unanimously.

Second Read of Policy 5124:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve Policy 5145.31 Gaming.

Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said the Policy Committee discussed and added wording to clarify this policy.

Ms. Zukowski liked the wording change and asked Dr. Rodrigue if it was alright for younger students to play games or engage in fantasy sports when learning a subject and that nothing precludes those activities in this policy.

Dr. Rodrigue said that can happen in instruction.

Ms. Zukowski asked for clarification on a 50/50 raffle. She was concerned that was illegal and the statute has an exclusion that educational and charitable organizations are excluded.

MOTION: Ms. Zukowski moved to amend the motion to change the title from Gaming to Gambling. Mr. Delia seconded.

Ms. Zukowski said that now with videos and computer games there is a second definition where gaming is playing these games.

Mr. Delia said he also was going to ask about that.

Vote on amendment: Motion passes unanimously.

Vote on policy: Motion passes unanimously.

COVID-10 update:

Dr. Rodrigue said we are at a 1% positivity rate. The Governor has supported the decision of the CDC for guidance for masks outdoors and indoors if fully vaccinated. Those who want to wear one can do so and this starts tomorrow. Nothing will change in mediation strategies in our schools. We look ahead to a brighter fall. We will be putting together a back to school plan and that will be part of it.

Mrs. Ku noted that many students haven't gotten vaccinated yet. Only 12% of 12 to 15 year olds have gotten vaccinated.

Item 8 – New Business

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education award the contract for the Reed Intermediate School Lighting and Boiler Project to Greenleaf Energy. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mr. Delia said they discussed this in the CFF meeting and Greenleaf has done a good job. Mr. Gerbert noted that our CIP amount for this project was in the \$1.5M range and this is roughly half a million less. We started looking at this after the Legislative Council approved the CIP.

Mr. Delia thanked Mr. Gerbert for his wonderful work on this project. He is serving the community so well. We are saving hundreds of thousands of dollars and thanked Mr. Gerbert for his efforts on the project. .

Mr. Gerbert noted Rick Thorne as a Profiles in Professionalism recipient and that his heart and soul is into his job.

Motion passes unanimously.

Item 9 – Public Participation

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved to adjourn. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 10 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Daniel J. Cruson, Jr.
Secretary