

Approved 2/3/2020

**Minutes**  
**Board of Education Meeting**  
**January 7, 2020**  
**7:30 p.m.**

Board Members Present: James Chakulski, Jr., Linette Dooley, Christopher Lent, Michael Maziarz, Joseph Napolitano and Kathy Tolsdorf  
Board Member Absent: David Crim

Others Present:

Superintendent Maria Geryk, Principal Alyssa Gwinnell, Gina Jarvis, Rachel Riendeau and Christine Sposito

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Lent called the meeting to order at 7:39 p.m.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

**III. Comments from the Audience (Bylaws of the Board #9300)**

Time allotted for public participation is twenty (20) minutes; time allotted for an individual speaker is three (3) minutes.

Chairman Lent welcomed all present and opened the floor to comments from the audience.

Christine Sposito, 62 Doubleday Road, noted there is not a Comments from the Audience on the agenda at the end of the meeting. Both Superintendent Geryk and Chairman Lent thanked her for bringing this to their attention. This is an oversight that will be rectified.

Ms. Sposito said she is excited with the upcoming addition of guitar to the music class. She believes this is an amazing opportunity.

No one else wished to be heard.

Ms. Tolsdorf MOVED, Ms. Dooley SECONDED to add section X. Comments from the Audience, before the Board of Education Member Remarks.

MOTION CARRIES 6:0

**IV. Action Items (Consent)**

A consent agenda is presented by the Chairman at the beginning of the meeting. Items may be removed from the consent agenda on the request of any one member. Items not removed may be adopted by general consent without debate. Removed items may be taken up either immediately after the consent agenda or placed later on the agenda at the discretion of the assembly.

Ms. Dooley MOVED, Mr. Chakulski, Jr. SECONDED to move d. Approval of H.W. Porter 2020-2021 Academic Calendar to section V. Action Items (Discussion & Action).

MOTION CARRIES 6:0

Mr. Chakulski, Mr. MOVED, Ms. Tolsdorf SECONDED to approve a. Approval of December 9, 2019 Special Board of Education Minutes; b. Payment of Bills; c. Second Reading, Policy 1002,

Policy 1008; e. Approval of Wrana Excavation LLC Proposal 2020-2022; and f. Approval of 2020-21 Budget Timeline  
MOTION CARRIES 6:0

**V. Action Items (Discussion and Action)**

a. Superintendent Mid-Year Evaluation

Following brief discussion it was agreed the format from last year will again be used this year. Superintendent Geryk will submit her comments to Chairman Lent by January 17. The Superintendent mid-year evaluation will be part of the BOE self-evaluation session with Mr. Carusso of C.A.B.E.

b. BOE Self-Evaluation

The working session with Nick Carusso must be rescheduled. Calendars were compared with the availability provided by Mr. Carusso and all members present agreed to February 20 at 6:30 p.m. Chairman Lent will provide another copy of the Board's goals to any member who requires it in preparation for the self-evaluation.

c. Approval of H.W. Porter 2020-2021 Academic Calendar

Superintendent Geryk noted there is one edit on the proposed calendar. On the right-hand side, in the Early Dismissal/Holidays section, June 9 is the Last Day. This edit will align with the calendar to the left.

Superintendent Geryk stated there is consideration to allow for a three-hour school delay on occasion, which will permit roads to be cleared before buses set out to pick up students. This option would allow for continuity for students and families and be consistent with Region 19. Bolton has been informed of this possibility and will consider it as an option for their district. If adopted by all three districts, there will be consistency throughout. Superintendent Geryk confirmed a three-hour delay will meet the hours required for a school day.

Mr. Maziarz MOVED, Ms. Dooley SECONDED to approve the H.W. Porter 2020-2021 calendar as amended.

MOTION CARRIES 6:0

**VII. Reports of Board Committees**

*Policy*

Superintendent Geryk proposes this subcommittee meet on February 3. Two policies were formally adopted tonight and there is more work to be done in this area.

*Budget*

This subcommittee also met earlier tonight and discussed the current budget. The Tri-board met on December 8, laying out general high level expectations of the town. The budget timeline was

approved. There are two budget subcommittee meetings scheduled – January 22 and February 3. The public is welcome to attend to hear the discussions underway.

On February 3 the Superintendent will present the budget draft to the Board. Community members will have an opportunity to provide input. Another budget subcommittee meeting will be held on February 10.

On February 24 there will be a Public Hearing and Board of Education deliberations at a special meeting for the draft budget.

At the regular Board of Education meeting on March 2, the proposed budget is adopted to be sent to the Financial Planning and Allocation Commission (FIPAC) members.

On March 18 the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education will present their respective budgets to FIPAC at a Special Meeting. On March 25 there will be a FIPAC Special Meeting for a budget workshop (Board of Education and Board of Selectmen are invited). Another budget workshop will be held at a FIPAC Special Meeting on April 1. If needed, there is a Special Meeting for a budget workshop tentatively scheduled for FIPAC on April 8. On April 22 there is a Public Hearing on budget with FIPAC Special Meeting to follow.

The Annual Town Budget Meeting is scheduled for May 12.

### *Teaching and Learning*

Superintendent Geryk proposes an update to be presented on March 2. She will share information with the Board in advance so they may let her know if there are particular topics they would like addressed.

## **VII. Correspondence/Communications**

### a. CABA Liaison Newsletter

Chairman Lent pointed to the upcoming advocacy events.

### b. 12/7/19 “The Era That Will Live in Infamy” Article, Featuring Special Education Teacher, Tim Barry

Superintendent Geryk said Mr. Barry was working in Coventry at the time he received a grant from Fund for Teachers to research the internment of 7,000 Japanese American citizens in relocation centers during World War II. Superintendent Geryk said he started with us recently and is a great addition to the staff.

### c. 2020 Eastern Regional Band on Flute Congratulations to Audrey Merrill

Chairman Lent congratulated Audrey Merrill on this fine award. Superintendent Geryk acknowledged we are seeing more and more recognition of our students’ performances.

## **VIII. Board of Education Upcoming Meetings**

a. Future Meeting Dates:

- Wednesday, January 22, 2020, 6:30 p.m. Budget Subcommittee Meeting, LMC
- Monday, February 3, 2020, 6:30 p.m., BOE Subcommittee Meeting, LMC
- Monday, February 3, 2020, 7:30 p.m. BOE Regular Meeting, JWP Cafetorium

**IX. Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Geryk opened by inviting Principal Gwinnell to share information about an art exhibit in town. Principal Gwinnell said Millie Ramsey taught here previously. She worked to coordinate an art exhibit on loan from the Delta Kappa Gamma CT Chapter, Pieces for Peace. Columbia student Sophie Carver has a submission on display for "What Does Peace Look Like to You?" A walking field trip for students in grades 1-8 is arranged. Ms. Gwinnell said she is working on another opportunity for our students, which she hopes to share in the very near future.

Superintendent Geryk continued with her report to the Board, saying the full Continuous Improvement Plan pamphlet will be sent out to families and staff for input by January 30, 2020. She also said the digital sign provided by the PTO and supported by the Town of Columbia, has arrived. Protocols are being discussed for content approval and posting. The PTO has January 24 at 4:00 p.m. as the tentatively date/time for the sign dedication. She will inform the Board when this has been confirmed.

At this time Superintendent Geryk is inclined to discontinue our work with the vendor updating the district's website. There is considerable frustration for the lack of follow-through on the vendor's part. As of this afternoon, Principal Gwinnell reverted to making necessary updates to the site. Chairman Lent said he receives information from various vendors on this topic. Superintendent Geryk asked that he please forward those to her for consideration.

The high school contracts have been signed by both Region 19 and Bolton. We have a ten-year commitment, taking us through 2030.

Families and students will be invited to *An Evening of the Arts* on March 12 from 4-7. This event is collaboratively created by the Porter related arts teachers. The evening will involve many engaging and creative experiences such as a visual art show, theatrical performances, a traveling minstrel, jazz band performance, American Heart Association Dodge Ball Tournament, and much more. In addition, there will be face painting provided by National Junior Arts Honor Society (NJAHS) and an ice cream social will be sponsored by Porter PTO and NJAHS. More information to follow.

STEAM Day 2020 will be on Friday, April 3. This is the second year STEAM Day will happen, and Superintendent Geryk hopes this will become an annual event. She expressed excitement in welcoming performer Caryn Lin and "The Science of Sound." She expressed a special "thank you" to the Porter PTO who helped fund this activity. In addition to Caryn Lin's performance, students will experience hands-on STEAM activities to experiment with science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics. She said everyone is looking forward to another successful interactive experience and thanks the staff who are creating this wonderful event for our students.

**X. Comments from the Audience (Bylaws of the Board #9300)**

Time allotted for public participation is twenty (20) minutes; time allotted for an individual speaker is three (3) minutes.

Christine Sposito asked about the retirements noted in the December minutes, asking if these are mid-year retirements. Superintendent Geryk responded no, these are effective the end of the year. These staff members have provided advance notification, which is appreciated because it allows us to secure the best candidates to start a new school year.

Fund for Teachers became a topic of discussion. Principal Gwinnell confirmed staff in Columbia are aware of the opportunity to secure grants from this source. She and Superintendent Geryk believe staff will submit proposals for consideration.

## **XI. Columbia Board of Education Member Remarks**

Ms. Dooley looks forward to STEAM Day. She participated last year and it was awesome. She said teachers did a great job and wanted immediate feedback. Superintendent Geryk readily agreed, saying she heard last year students went home and told their parents they had a great time.

Mr. Maziarz congratulated Audrey Merrill. He also expressed enthusiasm about the high school contracts being signed. These high schools offer great opportunities for our students.

Ms. Tolsdorf asked if there would be more publicity on this. Mr. Chakulski, Jr. stated a lot of work went into making this happen. Superintendent Geryk said she could include this in an article in *The Chronicle*. Perhaps Board members will be interviewed as part of this article. Superintendent Geryk said she will also invite reporter Lisa Massicotte to the previously-mentioned upcoming events.

## **XII. Adjournment**

Mr. Maziarz MOVED, Ms. Tolsdorf. SECONDED to adjourn.  
MOTION CARRIES 6:0

The Board adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Christopher Lent, Chairman