

COLUMBIA BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes
Monday, February 5, 2018

Board Members Present: Christopher Lent, Linette Dooley, Karin Vertefeuille, Gary Littlefield, David Crim, James Chakulski

Absent: Kathy Tolsdorf

Others Present: Lol Fearon-Superintendent, Alyssa Gwinnell-Principal, Barbara Wilson-Director of Special Education, Bev Ciurylo, Jennifer Hill-Assistant Principal, Steve Piro, Lisa Napolitano, Megan Maziarz, Amanda Strong, Mackenzie and Michael Collins, Christa McManus, Kelly DeForest

I. Call to Order Chairman C. Lent called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m.

Changes to the Agenda:

G. Littlefield MOVED, D. Crim SECONDED to correct the title of the Reading Language Arts Coach to Literacy Instructional Coach and Interventionist and to add item d) Reading/Math Paraprofessional.

MOTION CARRIES 6:0.

G. Littlefield MOVED, K. Vertefeuille SECONDED to move approval of January 8, 2018 regular meeting minutes to Action Items (Discussion and Action) item e).

MOTION CARRIES 6:0.

I. Special Recognition

- Lisa Napolitano, former Board of Education Member 2011-2017

The BOE recognized Lisa Napolitano former Board Member for her years of service and expressed their sincere appreciation. A plaque was presented in her honor.

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.

Mrs. Gwinnell shared a book written by a Porter graduate, Amanda (Nowak)Frame, Into the Void.

Megan Maziarz said one of the reasons they chose to move to Columbia is because of the choice of E.O. Smith as an option for high school. She would like more information as to how parents and guardians will be kept informed of possible changes to high school options.

Mr. Lent explained the Board is in its second phase of the long range planning process. Columbia's contracts with Bolton and EO Smith's expire on June 30, 2022 and notice must be given to the current

schools by June 30, 2021. As part of the process the BOE is soliciting feedback from citizens. We are in the early stages of this process. We will have public forums and focus groups.

Mr. Fearon noted last year an initial survey was completed. As a result of the initial survey a focus group met in June.

The second survey questions came out of discussions from the focus group from last June.

K. Vertefeuille noted the focus groups had strong participation and represented a diverse population from the community was represented.

Amanda Strong asked if there are concerns with the two current high school choices.

Mr. Fearon said there are no concerns regarding the quality of our high school choices. The only concern is to not wait until last minute to make a decision.

K. Vertefeuille said the BOE is looking at class size changes, demographics, reduced class sizes and if it is better to transfer students into 1 school.

Kelly Deforest, Rt. 87 asked if Columbia has received feedback from either high school that they wouldn't want us to continue to send our students there?

Mr. Fearon said both schools would be very happy to continue to receive Columbia's students as well as many other schools in the area who have asked if we would like to join them.

IV. Action Items (Consent)

A consent agenda is presented by the Chairman at the beginning of a 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.

- a) *Payment of Bills*
- b) *Expenditure Report*

G. Littlefield MOVED, D. Crim SECONDED to approve the consent actions items a-b.
MOTION CARRIES 6:0.

V. Presentation

- a) *2018-2019 DRAFT Board of Education Budget, Initial Discussion and Public Input*

Mr. Fearon described the budget process and reviewed the timelines and meeting dates. He noted State funding has had a tremendous impact on the budget. ECS funding was reduced significantly this year and is projected to be reduced for next year as well. This impacts what the town has to support.

Four teachers will be retiring this year which allows for attrition rather than lay-offs.

New initiatives in the budget include a shift in the SRBI approach that does not increase the budget. Project O will be added for middle school students and will offer a marine science experience.

Reductions in the number of classes are proposed for kindergarten from 3 to 2 classes dependent on the numbers of students entering over the summer.

VI. Action Items (Discussion and Action)

a) Math Instructional Coach & Interventionist Job Description Approval

G. Littlefield MOVED, K. Vertefeuille SECONDED to approve the Math Instructional Coach and Interventionist job description.

MOTION CARRIES 6:0.

b) Literacy Instructional Coach & Interventionist Job Description Approval

D. Crim MOVED, G. Littlefield SECONDED to approve the Literacy Instructional Coach & Interventionist Job Description.

MOTION CARRIES 6:0.

c) Superintendent's Mid-Year Evaluation

G. Littlefield MOVED, J. Chakulski SECONDED, to approve the Superintendent's Mid-Year Evaluation. K. Vertefeuille noted Mr. Fearon is a valuable asset to the Board of Education.

MOTION CARRIES 6:0.

d) Reading/Math Paraprofessional Job Description Approval

G. Littlefield MOVED, J. Chakulski SECONDED to approve the Reading/Math Paraprofessional Job Description.

MOTION CARRIES 6:0.

e) Approval of January 8th Regular Meeting Minutes

G. Littlefield MOVED, L. Dooley SECONDED to correct the minutes to indicate Gary Littlefield as a board member present instead of Lisa Napolitano.

Motion to correct the minutes CARRIES 6:0.

J. Chakulski MOVED, K. Vertefeuille SECONDED to approve the minutes of January 8, 2018 as corrected.

MOTION CARRIES 6:0.

VII. Reports of Board Committees

- Policy – The Policy subcommittee will begin meetings after the budget process is completed.
- Budget – The budget was reviewed earlier in the meeting.
- Teaching and Learning – The subcommittee met in December and job descriptions were generated which were acted on this evening.
- Ad hoc Committee on Future Needs – Mr. Fearon said Mr. DePalma reported we received 331 responses for the second survey. 198 responses were received for the first survey. Mr. DePalma will have an initial report available by February 14th. The future needs report will be presented on Feb. 21st when the BOE meets for a budget subcommittee. The Budget Subcommittee will meet at 6:30 and Future Needs at 7:15.
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VIII. Correspondence/Communications

a) *Willimantic Chronicle Article, "Columbia urges folks to take survey"*

b) *Calendar of Columbia FY 18-19 Budget Process*

c) *Enrollment Update* – Mr. Fearon noted enrollment has held steady between 431 and 432 students.

There has been very little change in high school numbers at this time.

- d) *Town of Columbia Audited Financial Statements June 30, 2017* – Mr. Fearon noted there are no issues with the audit or financial statement

IX. Board of Education Upcoming Meetings

a) *Future Meeting Dates:*

- February 21, 2018, Wednesday, 6:30 pm, BOE Budget Committee, & Future Needs Committee - LMC Conference Room or Cafeteria dependent on the number of attendees.
- February 26, 2018, Monday, 7:00 pm – Public Hearing Board of Education Budget, Cafeteria
- March 5, 2018, Monday, 6:30 pm, BOE Budget Committee, LMC Conference Room
- March 5, 2018, Monday, 7:30 pm, Regular BOE Meeting, HWP Cafetorium

X. Superintendent's Report

- Survey Update – This was covered earlier in the meeting.
- Snow days – We have used 7 days to date (3 during power outage in Oct. /Nov.) and 4 snow days. As of now the last day of school would be June 20th. Holding school during the last week of June may interrupt holiday and camp plans for families. It is suggested to change March 9th to an early dismissal day for students to recapture a school day. Ashford, Willington, Mansfield are also looking at this option too.

G. Littlefield MOVED, D. Crim SECONDED to change March 9th from a full staff in-service day to a half day for students and a half day of in-service for staff.

MOTION CARRIES 6:0.

Mr. Fearon and area superintendents have been reviewing the delayed opening start time. Both Region 19 and Columbia currently have a 90-minute delayed opening for weather related delays. A 2 hour delay would provide town crews more time to have roads ready and may reduce the number of cancelled school days.

Columbia will wait until the other schools boards have met to be sure we are in alignment. The BOE consensus is to implement a 2-hour delay following the February break.

J. Chakulski left the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

XI. Future Regular and Subcommittee Agenda Items

- Budget 2018/19
- Future Needs Committee will meet on 2/21 at 7:15 p.m.
- Board of Education Goals – after future needs
- Superintendent's Mid-Year Evaluation- Will be discussed next Wednesday

XII. Columbia Board of Education Member Remarks

K. Vertefeuille asked if the meeting with Bolton and Bolton's BOE chair and selectmen from Bolton has occurred.

She recently attended EO Smiths open house and found it to be much more informative than in past years.

XIII. Adjournment

D. Crim MOVED, G. Littlefield SECONDED to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

MOTION CARRIES 5:0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christopher Lent, Chairman