

DRAFT Minutes
Board of Education Meeting
May 7, 2018
6:30 p.m.

Board Members Present: James Chakulski, Jr., David Crim, Linette Dooley, Chairman
Christopher Lent, Gary Littlefield, Kathy Tolsdorf, Karin Vertefeuille

Others Present: Lol Fearon-Superintendent, Alyssa Gwinnell-Principal, Barbara Wilson-Student
Services Director, Jennifer Hill-Assistant Principal, Beverly Ciurylo-Finance Director, Mark
Walter-Town Administrator, Mike Sylvester-Facilities Director, Tom Boardman, Alyson
Cranick, Chris Irwin, John Muro, Lisa Napolitano, Kevin Quinn and Christine Sposito

I. Call to Order - Chairman Lent called to meeting to order at 7:44 p.m.

Change to the Agenda:

Chairman Lent MOVED, D. Crim SECONDED to add item f) Resolution in Support of
Historic Preservation Grant for Moor's Indian Charity School to Action Items.

(Discussion and Action)

MOTION CARRIES 7:0

II. Pledge of Allegiance

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

Ms. Sposito shared she is concerned about the future of the Future Needs Committee with
the impending change in superintendent. Mr. Fearon is a very integral part of that
committee. She questioned how we can be sure continuity of the process will continue
with the new Superintendent. Chairman Lent said that, as a group, the Board will be
discussing this topic. The immediate goal is establishing a Superintendent Search
Committee. There are other administrative issues for the group as well. The board will
make sure the community is informed.

Ms. Sposito asked if parent representation would be allowed on the interview committee.
Chairman Lent said the committee will consist of all seven board members. Community
wide input will be part of the process.

Ms. Sposito also raised concerns about how to help families looking for a preschool
program if the one at Porter is full. She has heard nothing but praise about the program.
She wants to work with families who are new to town, or new to needing a preschool
program, with local options available if there is no spot available in the program.
Additionally, Ms. Sposito asked if it were possible for children new to preschool to have
an opportunity to ride a bus prior to the first day of school, similar to what is done for
kindergarten students. She stated this may assist both the parents and the child in the
transition to school.

B. Wilson is organizing a preschool open house including all area preschool programs which will be held next fall so parents are aware of all of the options available to them.

IV. Presentation – Artisenergy Solutions (Mr. John Muro, President) – LED Lighting Installation

Mr. Muro thanked the Board for allowing him to provide an overview of his proposal to install high-efficiency LED lighting both inside and outside at Porter. He introduced Chris Erwin, who would manage the installation project, if it is awarded. The project is turn-key, meaning the proposal covers all parts, labor, tax, removal and disposal of materials. Artisenergy upgraded the Columbia Senior Center and Town Hall.

Mr. Muro stated fluorescent lights contain mercury and have a 17,000-20,000 hour lifetime. LED lifespan is 70,000-100,000 hours. They installed one fixture to allow teachers and staff to see the dimming function and aesthetics. Principal Gwinnell said all feedback has been positive. Mr. Muro stated he believes the estimated \$19,978 per year savings is conservative as the dimming feature is not factored into the savings. They were recently asked to add the Finance annex to the project. The annex is included on the school meter.

Mr. Muro explained the proposal process started much earlier this year. It was delayed considerably by the State's uncertain budget. EverSource stopped accepting applications and halted those already in the process until there was resolution.

If approved by the Board, B. Ciurylo and M. Walter will work to secure the loan. Permits and materials would be ordered in May. Material is usually received in four to six weeks. Installation would be scheduled over a three-week period in the months of July and early-August and would be completed before the school year starts.

Ms. Vertefeuille clarified the project was originally estimated to cost \$214,486, but there is an additional \$13,000 cost for dimmers. Mr. Muro stated it is not only for dimmers, but also the permit and additional fixtures needed for the annex. He explained the annex was not included in the initial quote.

Mr. Fearon reiterated the District was approached in the Fall about this proposed project. It was only within the last four or five weeks that the process was sped up. Part of the concern is the incentives included in the proposal will not be available in the future. Because this is a Town Building, the Board of Selectmen will need to move the application forward. M. Walter proactively set up a meeting next week with the Board of Selectmen to discuss this. Mr. Fearon stated the LED lighting is very efficient. Savings will be realized while paying for the project.

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Mr. Muro stated the Board would pay 0% interest if they elect to use the 48 month option. Artisenergy offers a one-year warranty on everything. Lamps and ballasts would be replaced at no cost. In addition, the manufacturer offers a five-year warranty.

V. Action Items (Consent)

There were no Consent items.

VI. Action Items (Discussion and Action)

a. Approval of Artisenergy Solutions Lighting Proposal

K. Vertefeuille MOVED, J. Chakulski Jr. SECONDED, to approve Artisenergy Solutions' Lighting Proposal.

Discussion:

K. Vertefeuille expressed concerns regarding the anticipated cost of the project. The initial payment was not calculated in the budget this year and additional payments will need to be spread out over the next 4 years.

L. Fearon explained the potential cost effectiveness of the short term investment and long term savings. The project is being fast tracked in order to take advantage of incentives which may not be available in the future. Timing of the project was delayed due to delays in the State budget process. The application window opened in March and the process began immediately. Town Hall and Beckish Senior Center lighting have been upgraded by Artisenergy and the Town reported the process was smooth and efficient.

K. Vertefeuille asked if the anticipated annual savings of \$19,000 is on top of expected savings for solar panels.

Mr. Fearon said it was an estimated savings beyond the solar panels.

MOTION CARRIES 4:3.

K. Tolsdorf, L. Dooley, J. Chakulski, and G. Littlefield voted FOR THE MOTION.

K. Vertefeuille, C. Lent and D. Crim voted AGAINST THE MOTION.

b. Out-of-district student to H.W. Porter 2018-2019/Set Tuition

A family has requested consideration for their child to be tuitioned into Porter School.

There was considerable discussion to establish the tuition amount. Policy # 3240 was reviewed.

Mr. Fearon contacted other districts who report they base tuition upon a percentage of the per pupil cost. Columbia's per pupil cost was \$17,500 in 2016/17 in the ED001 reporting.

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The intention is not to be cost prohibitive to families. However, it was pointed out the district pays approximately \$6,000 per student attending a magnet school with the State supplementing approximately \$5,500. Because a magnet school receives approximately \$11,500 per student, the question was posed, why wouldn't we charge the same?

Ms. Vertefeuille MOVED, Chakulski, Jr. SECONDED to approve out-of-district student to attend H.W. Porter in 2018-2019.
MOTION CARRIES 7:0

Tuition rate amounts were discussed. Proposals included \$8,750 and \$10,000, as well as \$11,050.

Ms. Vertefeuille MOVED, Mr. Crim SECONDED to set tuition for out-of-district student to attend H.W. Porter in the 2018-2019 school year at \$11,050.

Discussion:

K. Vertefeuille reached the tuition figure based on the cost of tuition for a magnet school student.

D. Crim felt half of the per pupil expenditure cost was a more attractive figure and feels that \$11,050 is a dis-incentive.

L. Dooley said this is a unique situation and she didn't want to penalize the family for their request. She prefers a lower tuition rate.

MOTION CARRIES 4:2:1

K. Vertefeuille, G. Littlefield, D. Crim and C. Lent voted FOR THE MOTION.

L. Dooley and J. Chakulski voted AGAINST THE MOTION.

K. Tolsdorf ABSTAINED from voting.

c. Approval of Minutes – April 2, 2018

A motion in the minutes read for the Superintendent to be able to make line item transfers. It is necessary to amend this to say the Superintendent will develop a list of proposed line item transfers for Board consideration and approval.

Mr. Chakulski, Jr. MOVED, Ms. Vertefeuille SECONDED to approve minutes from April 2, 2018 meeting.

To correctly state the board's intention in the minutes, there is one edit.

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Mr. Chakulski, Jr. MOVED, Ms. Vertefeuille SECONDED to amend 7d to state the Superintendent is to develop a list of line item transfers that will be presented to the Board for approval.

MOTION CARRIES 7:0

Mr. Littlefield MOVED, Mr. Chakulski Jr. SECONDED to approve minutes from April 2, 2018 meeting as amended.

MOTION CARRIES 5 Yea (Chakulski, Jr., Dooley, Lent, Littlefield, Tolsdorf), 0 No, 2 Abstain (Crim, Vertefeuille)

d. Payment of Bills

Mr. Littlefield MOVED, Ms. Vertefeuille SECONDED to approve payment of bills.

MOTION CARRIES 7:0

e. Expenditure Report Line Item Transfers 2017/18

Mr. Fearon explained the current available balance of \$91,396 is due, in part, to lower special education tuition costs. During the school year he would advocate to maintain these available funds in case an unforeseen need arose. At the end of the school year funds would be returned to the Town. A list of transfers has been prepared for the Board's consideration.

Ms. Tolsdorf asked if the \$50,000 should be moved to a non-lapsing account for next year.

Mr. Fearon responded that this would be a decision for the board at the end of the year.

Mr. Littlefield MOVED, Ms. Vertefeuille SECONDED to authorize transfers as recommended by the Superintendent.

MOTION CARRIES 7:0

f. Historic Preservation Grant

Mr. Walter explained the grant for which he is submitting and why it is being brought before the Board of Education. It is possible the Moor's Indian Charity School stands on the school's parcel. If that is the case, Board of Education approval is required for this application. The grant will help fund painting and repairing windows, all of which will be a source of pride for the town. The lowest bid is \$45,000. This is considerably lower than others received. The Historic Society has \$25,000 set aside for this restoration. Town Attorney Henry Beck agreed the application should be signed by tomorrow because the application is due.

Ms. Vertefeuille MOVED, Mr. Littlefield SECONDED to approve grant application for Indian Charity School preservation.

MOTION CARRIES 7:0

Mr. Littlefield MOVED, Mr. Crim SECONDED to authorize the Superintendent to sign grant application on the Board of Education's behalf.
MOTION CARRIES 7:0

VII. Reports of Board Committees

Policy

Shipman & Goodwin vs. CABE. There is a potential cost savings if we switch to Shipman & Goodwin, which costs approximately \$3,500 the first year and \$1,000 annually thereafter. CABE costs approximately \$5,000 annually. If we no longer use CABE, we would lose the professional offerings. It was stated the offerings are not readily utilized by our Board Members because they occur during the work day. After more discussion it was agreed to table any decision at this time.

Budget

Budget vote on May 15th by the town. Board budget proposal was discussed. Kindergarten projection is now 44. We may need to add another kindergarten teacher, which may be funded by the \$75,000 included in our budget proposal as this scenario was anticipated. Second grade is now at 46 students. We may need to add another second grade teacher. This may be accomplished with minimal budgetary impact because we have multiple teachers retiring at the higher end of the pay scale. We expect to be able to hire highly qualified staff at the lower end of the pay scale. Ms. Ciurylo stated the State provided a positive updated ECS projection, which may also help offset some of the cost of an additional teacher.

Teaching and Learning

A meeting will be held in June.

Ad hoc Committee on Future Needs – *Future Needs Committee Meeting Notes, April 23, 2018*

The meeting was well attended and productive. It was agreed the survey seemed to prompt a lot of the questions and/or issues raised at the meeting. Chairman Lent will schedule a meeting separate from the Board of Education meeting.

Search Committee Update

Chairman Lent said the Search Committee met at 6:30 tonight and are continuing the process of selecting a Search Consultant.

VIII. Correspondence/Communications

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- a. Copy of Letter Sent to Porter Pals Preschool Families with Lottery Application – Jan. 2018

Mr. Fearon stated that special education services are mandated for students who qualify. A pre-k program is not mandated for typically developing children. The model for our pre-k program changed. Previously we had one teacher with two half-day sessions. Now we have one full-day program and two half-day sessions. This model was developed to meet specific student needs. There is a range of abilities and range of services within the classrooms. A waiting list for typically developing peers is being whittled down. Mr. Fearon acknowledged that this is a wonderful program.

- b. Multiply Your Options, 8th Grade Girls to UCONN, School of Engineering to explore STEM careers with Teacher, Brooke Kleinman

Principal Gwinnell was asked to report on this. She shared the feedback is all positive and the girls were given exposure to multiple possibilities in the engineering field.

- c. Invitation to Staff Retirement Celebration

RSVP due by June 1.

- d. Letter from Corey Polakowski and Sandra Rijs-Career Day Conference

Principal Gwinnell reported people from local businesses were invited to present workshops. Students were allowed to sign-up to attend what interests them most. This is an opportunity for teachers to correlate “real world” jobs with what is being taught in math, etc.

IX. Board of Education Upcoming Meetings

- a. Future Meeting Dates:
 - May 15, 2018, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m., Annual Town Budget Meeting – Yeoman’s Hall
 - May 23, 2018, Wednesday, 5:30 p.m., AFSME Negotiations – LMC
 - June 4, 2018, Monday, 6:30 p.m., BOE Policy & Teaching & Learning Subcommittees Meeting – LMC
 - June 4, 2018, Monday, 7:30 p.m., Regular Board of Education Meeting
 - June 22, 2018, Friday, 4:00 p.m., 8th Grade Graduation, E.O. Smith Auditorium

X. Superintendent’s Report

Enrollment Update

We have a consistent enrollment rate and enrollment has stabilized over the past couple years.

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XI. Future Regular and Subcommittee Agenda Items

Update Year 1 EASTCONN Food Services Contract
Math and Literacy Programs Update
April 23, 2018 Future Needs Public Forum Notes

XII. Columbia Board of Education Member Remarks

Ms. Tolsdorf asked for information concerning homeschooled students. She asked if we have any students being homeschooled and if we provide families with materials for students.

Mr. Fearon answered that we have approximately 8-11 homeschooling families in Town. The requirement is for families to notify the Board if the homeschool their child but there is no compulsion on their part to do so. If a family does not notify the District, we have no way of knowing. Mr. Fearon stated the District does not provide materials for the homeschool families. Typically, families choosing to homeschool do so for specific reasons and utilize a standard curriculum. It is rare for a family to request materials.

XIII. Adjournment

Mrs. Dooley MOVED, Mr. Chakulski Jr. SECONDED to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 p.m.
MOTION CARRIES 7:0

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Tolsdorf, Vice Chairperson/Secretary