

# BOARD OF EDUCATION

COLUMBIA, CONNECTICUT



*The Columbia School District is a community of learners providing rigorous programs to ensure that each student can excel as an individual.*

Christopher Lent, Chairman  
Kathy Tolsdorf, Vice Chairperson  
James Chakulski, Jr.  
David Crim  
Linette Dooley  
Lisa Napolitano  
Karin Vertefeuille  
Laurence Fearon, Superintendent

## Board of Education Minutes Tuesday, September 5, 2017 Regular Meeting

Board Members Present: Christopher Lent-Chairman, Linette Dooley, Kathy Tolsdorf, Lisa Napolitano, James Chakulski

Board Members Absent: David Crim, Karin Vertefeuille

Others Present: Lol Fearon-Superintendent, Alyssa Gwinnell- Principal, Barbara Wilson-Student Services Director, Beverly Ciurylo-Finance Director, Jennifer Hill-Assistant Principal/Data Coordinator, Sandra Rijs, Steve Piro, Tom Cronin and Heather Plourde, (EASTCONN K-12 Services)

I. **Call to Order** – Chairman Chris Lent called the meeting to order at 7:37 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.

No comments were received.

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) *Approval of August 7, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes*
- b) *Appointment of Ms. Megan Potamianos-Grade 1 Teacher for the 2017/18 school year*
- c) *Appointment of Ms. Alyson Cranick-Paraprofessional for the 2017/2018 school year*
- d) *Appointment of Ms. Amanda White-Paraprofessional for the 2017/2018 school year*
- e) *Resignation of Mary Conway, Food Services Manager, effective September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017*

K. Tolsdorf MOVED, L. Napolitano SECONDED to approve the consent agenda items a-e. MOTION CARRIES 5:0.

V. **Discussion and Action**

a) *Payment of Bills*

L. Napolitano MOVED, K. Tolsdorf SECONDED to approve payment of bills. MOTION CARRIES 5:0.

b) *Expenditure Report 2016/17 Update/Projected Budget Surplus*

Mr. Fearon said the EDOO1 has been completed and certified. He recommends returning the fund balance from 2016/2017 to the Town. Board members agreed.

L. Dooley MOVED, L. Napolitano SECONDED to return the fund balance of \$51,750.72 to the Town General Fund. MOTION CARRIES 5:0.

c) *Approval of Food Services MOU between the Columbia Board of Education and EASTCONN*

Lol Fearon reviewed alternatives for food services after receiving Mary Conway's resignation. Three options were reviewed and discussed.

Board members agreed the best fit for the district is to contract with Eastconn to assume responsibility for the food services program at Porter including the breakfast program. The cost for the first year is \$21,000. A 2.26% per year increase will occur over the course of 5 years.

Mr. Fearon contacted three other districts who use Eastconn for food services. Scotland, Hampton and Pomfret are very pleased with the quality of the food and the services provided.

Board members asked if Eastconn would maintain the current kitchen staff.

Mr. Cronin said hiring existing staff is not guaranteed but would be strongly considered.

Board members asked if lunch prices would remain the same. EASTCONN's current price is \$3.00 and this is evaluated yearly and effected by the State.

K. Tolsdorf MOVED, J. Chakulski SECONDED to approve the memorandum of understanding agreement for the Columbia Board of Education and Eastconn to enter into for the 2017-2022 school years. MOTION CARRIES 5:0.

d) *Board of Education Goals, Discussion and Timeline*

The Board will review information during December.

**VI. Reports of Board Committees** – No reports were reviewed at this time.

**VII. Correspondence/Communications**

a) *2017-2018 Horace W. Porter School Staff List*

Mr. Fearon shared that he regretfully accepted the resignation of Mrs. Louise Nowak today. Mrs. Nowak has decided to retire. The resignation will appear formally on the next agenda.

Board members expressed their regrets and best wishes for Mrs. Nowak.

b) *Willimantic Chronicle – Columbia Gearing Up for New School Year*

Mrs. Cavallo and Mrs. Traber were featured in a welcome back to school article published by the Chronicle.

c) *Thank you note from Teachers*

Thank you notes were received from the teachers for the welcome back luncheon provided by the Board.

**VIII. Board of Education Upcoming Meetings**

• *Future Meeting Dates:*

- *October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6:00 pm, Policy & Teaching and Learning Subcommittee, H.W. Porter LMC*
- *October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7:30 pm Regular BOE Meeting, Cafeteria*
- *November 6<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 pm, Regular BOE Meeting, Cafeteria*

**IX. Superintendent's Report**

- **State Budget Update and possible impact on Columbia Public Schools**

Mr. Fearon said there are two budget proposals currently being reviewed. The Governors' budget constitutes a 1.8 million dollar loss of funding for Columbia or about 23% of our pk-8 budget. Grades 9-12 budget is tuition and transportation and can't be revised.

The Democratic Party proposal would reduce our ECS funding by about \$70,000. Two possible dates have been mentioned for the state to hold a budget vote, 9/11 and 9/14.

Over the summer Mr. Fearon met with Mark Walter, Ernie Sharpe, Carmen Vance, and Beverly Ciurylo. It looks as though large budgetary reductions in the north east. We could look to some discretionary items. The Town isn't going to be looking for the \$1.8 million to come from any one area. Discussions have been occurring to consider where funds would come from including the undesignated fund, possibly a supplemental tax bill or reductions wherever possible. Some savings (approximately \$105,000) by reducing the after school/before school programs and stipends. Spending for things like workshop approvals, supplies, equipment have been frozen.

Board members discussed options such as pay to play and fundraising. The agreed they would prefer pay to play other than cutting activities.

C. Lent suggested the Board meet before the Fiscal Policy Meeting scheduled on 9/27/17. A Special Meeting of the Board of Education will be scheduled on 9/18 at 7:00.

Mr. Fearon distributed out a sample email he created which board members could send to our representatives expressing budgetary concerns.

Student Enrollment 2017/18

Mr. Fearon reports student enrollment is greater than the projected 415 students. We are currently at 433 students at H.W. Porter. There are a couple of families still in process of enrolling. These numbers may be revised as Oct. 1 is the official date. High School enrollment is also up mostly at Bolton High School which has increased by 5 students. EO Smith is about the same and there is 1 student left at Windham H.S.

#### **X. Future Regular and Subcommittee Agenda Items**

- Board of Education Self-evaluation November 2017 - subcommittee meeting in November  
October 2nd – Annual SBAC Update – Accountability scores from the state.  
Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup> - Teaching and Learning Subcommittee
- Future Needs Committee - will be on the agenda on 10/2 for discussion

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

L. Dooley asked how the schedule process is going.

Mrs. Gwinnell responded overall it is going well. The afternoon part of the schedule is the most difficult part. She is continuing to make adjustments to keep classes balanced and she expects schedules will be completed Thursday.

L. Dooley asked for an update on a Bolton bus situation.

Mr. Fearon said Bolton had a slightly earlier dismissal and they it wasn't announced. Nine freshmen missed the bus. Bolton requested Columbia to send the bus back to pick up the 9 students but this would've affected our other 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders and Porter's K-8 runs negatively.

C.Lent attended the first day back for staff and commended Mr. Fearon on a great welcome back speech which focused on positive attitudes. He said it was heartwarming to see the staff's recognition and card for Jim Shifrin, a former teacher at Porter.

#### **XII. Convene to "non-meeting" to discuss negotiations**

L. Napolitano MOVED, L. Dooley SECONDED to adjourn to a non meeting to discuss negotiations at 9:30 p.m.  
MOTION CARRIES 5:0.

The Board reconvened to regular session at 9:44 p.m.

#### **XIII. Reconvene Regular Meeting of the Board for the purpose of ratifying the agreement between the Columbia Board of Education and the Columbia Association of School Administrators 2018-2021**

L. Napolitano MOVED, L. Dooley SECONDED to approve the Agreement between the Columbia Board of Education and Columbia Association of School Administrators for the period July 1, 2018 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021.  
MOTION CARRIES 5:0.

#### **XIV. Adjournment**

J. Chakulski MOVED, K. Tolsdorf SECONDED to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m. MOTION CARRIES 5:0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Tolsdorf,  
Vice Chair, Secretary