

EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

Virtual via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/93035490248?pwd=N0dzeldHM3pZMjFoNW5ZTFJRR3dHZz09>

Meeting ID: 930 3549 0248, Passcode: 06612

Tuesday, June 8, 2021 – 7:30 p.m.

Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members: Stinson, Chieda, Hicks, Parker, Wible, Goldstein

Administration: Harrison, Pierson Ugol, Zachery, Del Conte, Fox Santora, Kaplan

Five members of the public

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Stinson called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: move to approve the minutes from the May 5, 2021 ER9 Joint Special Meeting. Wible, Chieda. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move to approve the minutes from the May 11, 2021 Easton Board of Education Regular Meeting. Parker, Hicks. Approved. Unanimous.

Motion: move to approve the minutes from the May 25, 2021 ER9 Joint Regular Meeting. Hicks, Chieda. Approved-5, Goldstein abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Allison Bonoff, Gregory Farm Rd.: spoke about the DEI survey questions not being specific enough to determine if students were experiencing social difficulties. For example, none of the questions on the survey mention sexual harassment. She spoke about the need for improved academics and curriculum, and hopes the administration will address these issues.

Anne Manusky, Morning Glory Dr.: spoke about concerns regarding the curriculum and shared her hopes that parents will request an audit of the curriculum this summer. She emphasized the needs for goals to be set for students academically. She recommended several books for parents to read.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

J. Chieda extended thanks to parents, staff, and school bus drivers, cafeteria staff, and volunteers who helped the schools during the COVID time period and beyond. R. Hicks spoke about the

lack of good communication that he has noticed this past year. In particular, emails need to be responded to in a timelier manner. He shared a story about an 8th grade teacher, Mr. Fearn, who assisted several students in achieving high scores on the math placement exam. The teacher saw the student need and offered to help. D. Wible extended thanks to S. Kaplan for her hard work at HKMS.

REPORTS

- A. Superintendent: Dr. Rydell Harrison extended his thanks to S. Kaplan for her hard work and dedication during her tenure at HKMS.
- B. Assistant Superintendent: Dr. Stephanie Pierson Ugol spoke about the summer academy at JRMS and that there are 114 students registered at this time. This is a new endeavor, and she is grateful for the teachers who have committed to instructing at this time. She is working on providing a similar program at HKMS, and will keep the board updated on the progress. Dr. Pierson Ugol spoke about professional learning and the ways in which instruction is provided for teachers and staff.
- C. Director of Finance and Operations: Clarence Zachery spoke about the projected calculated payroll for the end of the school year (June 2021). A discussion ensued among board members regarding the use of excess funds and potentially returning those funds to the town of Easton. J. Stinson spoke about scheduling a meeting to discuss use of excess funds. J. Parker said the funds need to be assigned to a project, if that is how it is decided they will be used, by the end of June 2021. K. Fox Santora spoke about the need for crack sealing for the driveway in selected areas at SSES.

Motion: move to add agenda item 6B to tonight's meeting to discuss unexpended funds from fiscal year 2020-2021 budget. Hicks, Parker. Approved. Unanimous.

- D. Director of Special Education: Jennifer Del Conte spoke about the new format for IEPs. They are designed to give parents a stronger voice in decision-making for their children. She will share additional information about the IEP format as it becomes available. J. Del Conte pointed out that all districts are eligible to apply for a one-time-only special education stipend related to COVID relief. She said the funds can be used for reading intervention and teacher support.
- E. SSES & HKMS Reports- HKMS: Susan Kaplan reported that there were 8 new student enrollments so far for the 2021-2022 school year at HKMS. J. Stinson thanked Mrs. Kaplan for all her hard work and said that she will leave a memorable legacy at HKMS. The BOE presented S. Kaplan with a gift in gratitude for her hard work and she graciously accepted and thanked the BOE.
SSES: Kim Fox Santora spoke about the successful Zoom kindergarten orientation. She anticipates an in-person orientation and short bus ride for the incoming students in August. She thanked the parents in the PTO for finding innovative ways to show appreciation to parents and staff who assisted with remote learning. K. Fox Santora thanked S. Kaplan for her hard work and emphasized how greatly she will be missed.
- F. Board Committee Reports:

- a. DEI Update, Inclusion Statement and Surveys: S. Pierson Ugol said she expects to get DEI surveys out to parents for consent, and then on to students by later this week. J. Chieda asked how long will the surveys be available? R. Harrison answered that students will take the survey at home, and he expects the survey to be open beyond the end of this school year. The administration plans to analyze the data collected from the surveys over the summer of 2021.
- b. Policy Committee: J. Stinson spoke about the creation of a policy committee and to consider using CABA as a model to review policy rules and language. Each town has its own policies, and it would be beneficial if they could be consolidated for easier access. We all need to be clear on board bylaws and a “board retreat” can be scheduled to informally discuss policies and the public can attend this meeting.
- c. Personnel Search Committee (HKMS and Dir. Of Digital Learning and Technology) J. Stinson spoke about the ongoing interviews for candidates for HKMS Principal and Director of Digital Learning and Technology. The interviews are going well, and many qualified candidates are applying for both positions.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: VOTE TO FILL BOARD VACANCY

The board has decided to table item A until the next BOE meeting.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: USE OF UNEXPENDED 20-21 FUNDS

The board explored possible use of unexpended funds for the fiscal year 2020-2021. J. Parker and various board members spoke about using the funds for building repairs that relate to student safety. K. Fox Santora suggested asking the town public works for the name of the company that helped SSES in the past with crack sealing work. She remembered they helped SSES when they were in the Easton area. C. Zachary provided an invoice for capital improvements. The board discussed what school repairs were a priority. The board decided approval for expenditure of the funds would be included in the next meeting’s agenda. This will give board members a chance to review the budget and invoices.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Allison Bonoff, Gregory Farms Rd.: suggested returning the unexpended funds to the town of Easton. Many people in town have lost jobs during the pandemic and are struggling financially. She spoke about the importance of assisting those who are struggling financially instead of repairs on the school which could potentially be addressed in the future.

Anne Manusky, Morning Glory Dr.: stated that the unexpended funds should be returned to the town of Easton. She does not think that students need a summer academy, and they really need a break to prepare for the coming school year.

Andrea Mocanu, Field Stone Dr.: spoke about the high heat at JBHS for the past week. He stated that it is a health hazard for students to attend school in such high temperatures. He said the upper-level classroom thermometers read over 83 degrees F. He asked that this be investigated.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

J. Chieda and members of the board thanked S. Kaplan for her years of service. J. Chieda said that S. Kaplan made her feel very welcome when she joined the board.

Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education Regular Meeting be adjourned. Hicks, Chieda. Approved. Unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Submitted by Jon Stinson, Easton Board of Education Chair

Recorded by Deborah DeLorenzo