

EASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

Helen Keller Middle School - Learning Commons

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June 14, 2022 – 7:30 p.m.

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board members: Stinson, Chieda, DeJesus (attended remotely), Hicks, Parker, Wible

Administration: McKinnon, Pierson Ugol, Scrofani, Clapp, Del Conte, Fox Santora

Others: 2 member of the public and the recording secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Stinson called the Easton Board of Education to order at 7:38 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Concerning the Minutes of the Easton Board of Education Regular Meeting from May 10<sup>th</sup>, May 24<sup>th</sup> and February 22<sup>nd</sup>, Mrs. Wible requested a correction in the spelling of the name of a member of the public who spoke - Debbie Bauer to Debbie Barer from the May 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mrs. Chieda asked that a statement attributed to her under Board Member comments (*She spoke at length about the schedule that we, as parents, are putting our kids through and wondering if we should all take a pause to consider this*) be removed because she was actually referring to infrastructure in terms of schedules and how it affects parents. No other corrections were needed.

Hearing no further revisions, the minutes of the Easton Board of Education regular meetings of May 10<sup>th</sup> and May 24<sup>th</sup> as well as the minutes of the February 22<sup>nd</sup> joint Boards of Education meeting were deemed approved by Mr. Stinson.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeanette Bailey, Hall Road: Spoke about the issue of school safety. Commended Dr. McKinnon and Ms. Fox Santora along with all of the leadership team for being proactive and forward thinking, even before the recent event in Texas. She expressed that parents are deeply concerned and have ideas that she hopes the Board will consider.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

None.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Samuel Staples Elementary School Principal, Kimberly Fox Santora: Emily Marchetti was named Teacher of the Year, which is a teacher nominated/teacher voted aware. Mrs. Fox Santora reported that out of the 92 projected kindergarten enrollments, 81 came to kindergarten orientation. She also reported on the Envisions math program was well received but teachers were unable to finish 3-5 sections. Will cover those at the beginning of next year. Field Day, and recent music concert and reminded everyone that the Stepping Up ceremony for current fifth graders will be on Monday, June 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. J. Stinson asked

if Nature's Classroom remains in 2023. The answer is "yes". R. Hicks asked if 81 kindergartners would project to 92. The answer is "yes". D. Wible thanked the administration for letting parents return to the buildings.

Additional Update: New Art Teacher: Samantha Sabia

Helen Keller Middle School Principal, Dr. Steven Clapp: Reported on the success of recent concerts that were held outdoors. He also reported on upcoming events, including the Barbeque Bash and the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Moving Up Ceremony which is scheduled for Friday, June 17<sup>th</sup>. He also extended his thanks to PTO Co-Presidents for their hard work this year and his appreciation to the Easton Police Department for their increased presence for security purposes after the recent event in Texas. D. Wible thanked school for communication. J. Parker asked if top teachers going to compete on state level. J. Chieda thanked A. Mohr for her communication.

Director of Special Services, Jennifer Del Conte: Reported that a new IEP system has been rolled out by the State with an effective date of 7/1/22. The Special Services Department has met all the timelines and staff are currently receiving tiered training on the new system.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Stephanie Pierson Ugol: Remarked that her report is in the Board packet. She highlighted summer curriculum activities that are scheduled. Called attention to the K-8 English Language Arts work, there has been state legislation in regards to science of reading and phonics and has worked with literacy specialists and created expectations for every grade level in terms of time requirements for phonics and grammar instruction. Teachers will be provided with a road map that includes a more delineated explanation of how the reading and writing block needs to be used. She reminded everyone of the new national holiday, Juneteenth. ER9 schools will be in session on that day, and teachers have been provided with a long list of resources and opportunities for them to integrate the holiday into instruction.

#### AGENDA CHANGE

Mr. Parker asked if Section E, Possible Appointment of new Board Member to Fill Vacancy could be moved to precede Section A given that there are two Executive Sessions on the agenda and the candidate is in attendance. Mr. Stinson agreed to put it to the Board, but indicated the vote would not occur until later in the meeting as Mrs. Chieda planned to participate in the entire meeting.

**Motion: move that the Agenda be revised to allow introduction of Alicia Young, the candidate put forward by the Republican Town Committee for appointment to the Board. Parker, Chieda.**

Approved - unanimous.

Alicia Young introduced herself to the Board. She shared that she attended Easton schools as a child and is a Barlow graduate. She has two girls in the system. Her family is dedicated to public service, and she grew up surrounded by education. She has made the change to working from home which has afforded her extra time, and she is ready to give back to the town. She feels she will bring a fresh perspective to the Board with her background in bringing technology to lower income districts, getting donations for educational purposes, and working to bring people together.

Mr. Stinson and other Board members thanked her for her time.

#### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: FISCAL YEAR 2022 FINANCIAL UPDATE

Dr. McKinnon presented a memo dated June 14, 2022 which shows how the Easton budget for 2021-2022 is ending. Mrs. Scrofani summarized what took place in previous budget discussions and direction that is needed from the Board to close out the fiscal year's budget.

Mrs. Scrofani noted a budget correction, moving a special education tuition payment from account 561 to 563. She also noted that at the time the 2021-2022 budget was created, the preschool tuition offset was not applied to preschool teacher salaries as it normally would have been.

Mrs. Scrofani also informed the Board that in accordance with the transportation contract, First Student will be issuing the Board a credit for each time buses did not run for full or half days.

Mr. Hicks questioned a \$69,000 charge to account 511. Mrs. Scrofani responded that it was a change to Special Education transportation for students moving or having a change in placement.

The Easton School District Health Claims Analysis report was reviewed. The fiscal year started with an account balance of \$912,250. The balance as of 5/31/22 is \$713,668. May claims totaled \$227,799, and it is estimated that June claims will be about \$300,000 plus an administrative fee of 17,000. Account lines 270 and 271 show encumbrances of \$896,314 and \$460,680, respectively.

Dr. McKinnon reminded the Board that because of the strength of the reserve account and because claims have been relatively low this year, the Board was able to reduce the burden to the taxpayers by lowering the budget for 2022-2023. He indicated he was looking for direction from the Board on how they wanted to distribute the encumbered funds in the 270 and 721 accounts. Discussion ensued.

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education authorize the superintendent to move \$500,000 into the employee Health Benefits Account from the already encumbered \$1,356,995.** Wible, Chieda; Approved, Unanimous.

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education authorize payment of installments two and three of the Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Plan (VERIP) at \$102,000 each from unexpended funds in the current year budget.** Parker, Wible; Approved, Unanimous.

Further discussion followed on what the Board might do with the estimated unexpended funds for 2021-2022. Dr. Clapp presented a project for renovating the HKMS cafeteria that included the purchase of additional cafeteria furniture. Other items suggested by the superintendent, assistant superintendent and Mrs. Fox Santora were discussed. It was decided to table the discussion until after the Executive Session on security.

#### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: REVIEW OF SECURITY REPORT AND ASSOCIATED CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Dr. McKinnon reported that CIRMA performed a security audit and risk management for all five ER9 schools on April 22 and April 29. The audit was confidential. No one at the schools knew it was happening. Dr. McKinnon indicated he would share the audit report during Executive Session.

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education recess to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing school security, and invite Dr. McKinnon to attend.** Parker, Hicks

Approved. Unanimous.

The Easton Board of Education recessed to Executive Session at 9:28 p.m.

RECONVENE

Mr. Stinson reconvened the meeting to public session at 10:45 p.m.

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education allocate up to \$75,000 for security enhancements identified during recent security audits.** Hicks, Parker. Approved. Unanimous

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: POLICY REVIEW

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve "Schedule A" Policies.** Chieda, Hicks  
Approved. Unanimous

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education to repeal all existing policies.** Chieda, Wible  
Approved. Unanimous

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: SUPERINTENDENT REVIEW

**Motion: move to authorize the Superintendent to spend \$216,177.00 to improve curriculum. This will leave a balance of \$ 631,000.00 to be returned to the town.** Wible, Chieda. Approved. Unanimous

The meeting recessed at 10:54 p.m.

RECONVENE

J. Stinson reconvened the meeting in public session at 11:14 p.m. No further action taken

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Motion: move that the Easton Board of Education approve Alicia Young appointment to the Easton Board of Education.** Parker, Hicks (5-0-1, Chieda abstained)

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

D. Wible thanked Jenny Chieda for her service.

R. Hicks "Ditto".

J. Stinson Thanked Jenny Chieda for her Grace at meetings

J. Parker appreciated her different perspectives

J. deJesus thanks Jenny Chieda for her dedication

J. Chieda; take care of each other and keep putting kid first

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:33 p.m.

Submitted by Jeffrey Parker, Board Secretary.

Recorded by Michelle King.