

*Filed subject to approval*

REGION 9 BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom  
March 17, 2020 – 7:30 p.m.  
Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Board members: Johnston, Graziano, Berry, D'Agostino, Denny, O'Brien, Pampel, Williams  
Administration: McMorran, Pierson Ugol, Reiss  
Others: approximately 42 members of the staff and public, and the recording secretary

CALL TO ORDER

T. Johnston called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion: move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the minutes of March 5, 2020, Budget Workshop Meeting as submitted (D'Agostino, Williams). Vote 7-0-1. Approved. (O'Brien abstained).**

STUDENT COMMENT

M. Monson said that he had no report. He spoke briefly on how he, as a high school student, was feeling about the current COVID-19 crisis.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeff Fligelman, Pocahontas Road, Redding, thanked the BOE for having the meeting and for doing the right thing for the students. He said he learned of a few families that were not able to enroll in Latin and that there was to be another BOE vote on the sections of Latin. He asked why this was still a topic of discussion and stated that he thought this was the case because the student population of JBHS is now swinging toward Easton.

Jennifer de Jesus, Laurel Drive, Easton, thanked Dr. McMorran for continuing to educate our students. She said that she's a proponent for the budget and for Spanish being taught as early as possible. She said she is concerned about extracurricular activities being cut and that staff learning should not be cut.

Chris Parkin, Indian Hill Road, Redding, expressed his gratitude to the administration for all their hard work. He said he was pleading to please fund the freshman basketball teams.

Linda Meyer Mitchell, Huckleberry Lane, Redding, thanked the BOE for putting the freshman basketball teams back into the budget and hoped it would stay in the final version. She said that the number of students involved with athletics at Barlow is large and the amount of money it costs is small.

Joann Gray, Lonetown Road, Redding, thanked the BOE for having the meeting and for including Latin in the budget. She said that students are thrilled that it's included, but now concerned that there will be another vote on Latin tonight.

Elizabeth Gray, Lonetown Road, Redding, said that she's been taking Latin for five years and that she can understand romance languages when she hears them being spoken around her, and her Latin studies have helped her understand other words as well.

Virginia Gray, Lonetown Road, Redding, said that it was hard to sign up for Latin during class sign-ups at JRMS.

Reed Gray, Lonetown Road, Redding, said that Latin and calculus are threshold issues, and that we should stay with the DRG A schools and keep Latin at JBHS. He said that our property values will be damaged otherwise.

8th Grade REBA Girls Player, High Ridge Road, Redding, said that lots of kids play for REBA and want to play freshman basketball next year, and please continue to fund the freshman basketball teams at Barlow.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

C. Graziano thanked fellow BOE members and the public for participating in the virtual meeting.

M. Pampel thanked Dr. Pin, Dr. McMorran, the rest of the administration and Central Office for their efforts and told the public - viewing the Zoom meeting - that you're in good hands.

M. Williams thanked everyone for participating in the virtual meeting.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Superintendent of Schools: Dr. Tom McMorran stated that on behalf of the 12-month staff at Central Office, he thanked everyone for their acts of kindness and messages of support. Dr. McMorran explained the following: Friday, March 20 would be a professional learning day for staff; virtual learning would begin on March 23; everyone needs to be flexible as the virtual learning rolls out; problem solving will take place in real time; students will be not penalized for missed work; the technical team will play large role in resolving issues; Central Office is currently dealing with 10 different unions; the SBA, SAT, ACT and AP are all working with high schools; everyone should continue to check their emails. Dr. McMorran finished his report by stating that he was proud and pleased with administration, and that they're working extremely hard for the students.

Director of Finance & Operations: Scott Reiss reported on the health insurance analysis, saying that Region 9 is having a low claims year and that Central Office claims have returned to a normal trajectory.

#### BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

G. Denny said that the Policy Committee did not meet this past Friday but is hoping to resume their meetings next week.

#### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: 2020-2021 BUDGET

T. Johnston initiated the 2020-2021 budget discussion by stating that the BOE was going to address five remaining issues, which had been put in the form of questions to Dr. Pin for further clarification. Additionally, the BOE would have a further discussion of the number of sections of Latin to be offered, the possibility of an added custodial position, the budget surplus and the bond premium. Dr. Pin answered the BOE questions regarding the issues of summer work days, counselor visits, athletics, substitute line and the student services secretary. Athletic Director Mike Santangeli provided details and a historical perspective on freshman athletic teams at JBHS and other area high schools. A lengthy and robust discussion took place concerning the number of sections of Latin to be offered in the coming school year. A decision on the budget surplus will be made at the June BOE meeting.

**Motion:** move that the Region 9 Board of Education amend the last motion regarding two sections of Latin, to give the JBHS administration the flexibility to decide upon what the acceptable number of students that have enrolled in Latin is to be (Graziano, Williams). Vote 2-6. Failed. (Johnston, D'Agostino, Berry, Denny, O'Brien, Pampel opposed).

**Motion:** move that the Region 9 Board of Education add a custodian to the 2020-2021 Budget, with a salary to range from \$47,000 - \$52,000 (D'Agostino, Denny). Vote 2-6. Failed. (Johnston, Graziano, Berry, O'Brien, Pampel, Williams opposed).

**Motion:** move that the Region 9 Board of Education use the excess of the bond premium to make a May, 2020 interest payment of \$31,500 and the remaining \$73,825 to reduce the bond line item in the 2020-2021 budget (D'Agostino, Pampel). Vote 2-6. Failed. (Johnston, Graziano, Berry, Denny, O'Brien, Williams opposed).

**Motion:** move that the Region 9 Board of Education approve the Budget of \$24,351,255 for the 2020-2021 school year, reflecting a .9% increase (D'Agostino, Denny). Vote 5-3. Approved. (Johnston, Graziano, Berry opposed).

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jeff Fligleman, Pocahontas Road, Redding, said thank you to the BOE.

Cathy Katz, Silverhill Road, Easton, thanked Dr. McMorran for all his communication. She also said that she's lived in Easton for 18 years and passing a school budget in Easton is not an issue. C. Katz also said that she has a problem with the Latin numbers and that she'd like to see the money go toward sports because it will impact more students.

Elizabeth Gray, Lonetown Road, Redding, said she had a friend who didn't know Latin was offered at Barlow and this friend would have taken it if she knew.

Virginia Gray, Lonetown Road, Redding, said it was hard to sign-up for Latin and thank you to BOE.

Lee Gray, Lonetown Road, Redding, said that what you just heard is that students did not have the opportunity to sign-up for Latin, and thank you to the BOE.

#### **BOARD MEMBER COMMENT**

J. Berry thanked everyone for their patience.

M. Pampel thanked everyone.

C. Graziano thanked everyone for participating and for their feedback. She said that people are very engaged and that is an example of teamwork.

G. Denny thanked T. Johnston for pulling meetings together and making it work.

M. Williams said for everyone to stay safe and healthy.

K. O'Brien thanked everyone for getting this done tonight. She said she hopes that people understand that we are trying to do the best for all people.

M. D'Agostino thanked BOE members and administrators and said that it says something about our group and how hard we work.

T. Johnston thanked administration and staff for all their hard work and thanked the community for being civil and constructive.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: move that the meeting be adjourned (Denny, Pampel). Approved. Unanimous.**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 p.m.

Submitted by,  
Juliette Berry, Region 9 Board of Education Secretary

Recorded by,  
Sarah Ota

Instr# TBD  
Received and Filed Remotely 03/25/2020 @ 10:25am  
Christine Halloran, Town Clerk, Easton, CT