

**LEBANON BOARD OF EDUCATION
LEBANON MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA
DECEMBER 8, 2020 - REGULAR MEETING - 7:30 PM**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

PRESENT:	Sarah Haynes, Chairperson	Alexis Margerelli-Hussey, Vice Chair
	Maureen McCall, Secretary	Delton Wentworth, Student Representative
	Dawn Whitcher	Nicole McGillicuddy
	Matthew Smith	Mark DeCaprio
	John Konow	Danelle Person

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent Robert Angeli, James Apicelli, Principal, Rita Quiles-Glover, Principal, Robert Laskarzewski, Principal, Jeannette Picard, Teacher, Kathleen Smith, Teacher, Ken Ochs, Teacher, Robert Sirpenski, Business Manager, Kevin French, Director of Facilities, Jacques Dulac, Director of Information Technology.

I. CALL TO ORDER

S. Haynes called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. COMMUNICATION

1. Letter of Retirement - Superintendent Angeli summarized a letter of retirement from Virginia (Ginnie) Chamberlain, Instructional Assistant.
2. Letters of Resignation - Superintendent Angeli read three letters of resignation. The first letter was from Heather Farley, C.N.A., the second was from Chantal Fauteux-Fields, Instructional Assistant and the last letter was from Sonia Hartnett, Administrative Assistant.
3. Letter from Administrator - Superintendent Angeli summarized a letter from Rita Quiles-Glover, Principal of LES, for financial reimbursement for three unused vacation days.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - BYLAWS OF THE BOARD #9324

Public participation - 30 minutes; Individual Speaker - 2 minutes

Kathleen Smith read a letter stating that although she believes in-person instruction is best for the students, the majority of the staff does not feel safe with the in person instruction with the cases of COVID-19 rising in Lebanon. There have been 30 new cases in Lebanon since last Wednesday. The CT positivity rate is 8.65%. The LEA took a survey prior to the Thanksgiving break, of the 84 responses only 23 felt comfortable returning to in school instruction after Thanksgiving. This survey was repeated yesterday and the number has fallen to only 16. The staff would like to move to all distance learning until at least January 11, 2021.

Jeanette Picard - Read a letter from teachers and staff at LMS. The letter stated that they were initially told that COVID-19 doesn't spread in school but feel that statement is not valid. A survey indicated 78.5 % of the staff was not comfortable coming back after the Thanksgiving break. The teachers suggested three options following the Thanksgiving break; move to distance learning, go to half days, or go to hybrid for 10 days. They are concerned about the set up in their classrooms, lunch time when children are eating with their masks off and cleaning especially in the evening hours. One other concern is that because the middle school is distance learning they need more reliable internet services for distance learning.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of minutes
1. Finance/Facilities Subcommittee Meeting, Revised - 10/13/2020
 2. Strategic Plan/Curriculum Subcommittee Meeting 11/10/2020
 3. Finance/Facilities Subcommittee Meeting 11/10/2020
 4. LBOE Regular Meeting - 11/10/2020

5. LBOE Special Meeting - 11/19/2020
6. Budget Transfers

Motion made by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by M. Smith to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion passes unanimously.

V. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

D. Wentworth stated there was one complaint among the students and that is they feel that there is less one to one attention during distance learning. The students are less likely to ask questions because there is more of a public forum format where a personal question is broadcast to the whole class rather than being able to talk to the teacher one on one. The senior projects reports are completed and presentations are the only thing left. The projects were difficult to complete from home. Classes seem to have about 1/3 of the students participating through Distance Learning. The students don't want to shut down again.

VI. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

- Negotiations - M. DeCaprio reported they are working with two bargaining units, the Secretaries and IA's. The Secretaries Contract will be discussed in Executive Session.
- Strategic Plan/Curriculum - D. Person reported they have not met, but the first round of interviews was conducted and the second round is next.
- Superintendent's Evaluation - J. Konow reported they have not met.
- Safety and Security - A. Margerelli-Hussey reported they have not met.
- Governance - S. Haynes reported they have not met, but there will be more during the Executive Session.
- Policy - M. McCall had no report.
- Enrollment/Communications/Goals - D. Whitcher had no report.
- Finance/Facilities - N. McGillicuddy reported that the first draft of the 2021-2022 budget requests have been presented. The capital budget requests is broken down into three categories, Facilities is requesting \$186,000, IT Dept is requesting \$100,000 and Athletics is requesting \$30,545. The operating budget is currently asking for a 5% increase that includes the increase in hours of the part time secretaries, part time tech, assistant principal at Lyman, Social Studies teacher at Lyman, the Health Teacher and Fourth Grade Teacher. The Lyman Oil Tank project should be completed by the end of this year.
- EASTCONN - M. Smith had no report.

VII. ADMINISTRATORS' REPORTS

The reports were all the board packets. J. Apicelli added that he listed several athletes in his report that were All State. In addition two volleyball players were named All State; Helen Megson and Anna Mathewson. They are still waiting on swimming.

VIII. REPORT OF SUPERINTEDENT

1. Enrollment - Magnet School enrollment was at 22 but as of today it is at 24. LES is at 338. LMS is at 296. The enrollment sheet in the board packet was incorrect totaling 295 it is supposed to be 296. There was an increase of two students in 7th grade and a decrease of one student in 6th grade. Lyman stayed the same at 318 students. There was an increase of two students in 9th grade and a decrease of two students in 10th grade.

2. School Updates Re: COVID-19 - Superintendent Angeli stated that during the public comment section it was stated that COVID-19 does not spread in schools. The wording on that is not quite accurate. What Superintendent Angeli has been reporting to the students, families, staff and the board is that we have not had any spread of COVID-19 in our schools, which doesn't mean it can't happen it just hasn't happened. Superintendent Angeli attends many weekly meetings regarding COVID-19. This morning was the weekly call with the Department of Public Health and the State Department of Education where it was discussed that Addendum 4, which has the gradient of recommended learning models based on number of cases, is no longer the recommended guidance. They would like to retire this document and put it in the COVID-19 response artifacts because they no longer feel that having 25 or more cases as a daily rate is reason for schools to move to distance learning. This has been in the Superintendents' letters and communications. This guidance is changing all the time. Hearing the increased number of cases in Lebanon is startling because Lebanon has not

experienced that yet. At the state level and national level officials are pushing for other sectors of society to dial back or close but they are all saying schools need to do whatever it is to try to stay open for students. In our district we have taken a measured approach. Superintendent Angeli gets all this information from the state agencies, local health district, and the updates on numbers from Patrick McCormack with Uncas Health. The approach is that instead of closing all the schools and sending all students home because of an incident at one school, we will close the school where the issue is at or to quarantine the kids if that is appropriate and keep the rest of the students coming in. In the most recent situation we had two students at LMS on Friday that tested positive for COVID-19. That information was not received until well after school was let out which made it more difficult to complete contact tracing. All the staff that were in close proximity with the students have to be contacted. Principals have to review seating charts with teachers and reference attendance lists. If the student rode the bus, the bus company needs to be contacted to find out where the child sits and who else sits in the proximity of that child. At the middle school level there could be 20-30 people that come in contact with that student which when there's two children that turns into 50-60 phone calls which may take a while. Often times a parent isn't reached the first time and a follow up must be made. Most parents have questions surrounding the situation. There is not much that the staff can do to speed the process up but they will continue to debrief after these situations. Over the weekend they were notified of another case at the high school. Having only one case, and with more hands on deck, this process was quicker. The decision to put LMS into distance learning was based on the number of staff that were close contacts and the fact that there were not going to be subs available to supervise the children that are in the classroom. Most of the parents in Lebanon are sending their kids to school at this time. At the high school the decision was to remain open because they were pretty confident about the other students that were close contacts. There was one staff member that was a close contact. If more situations more staff members need to be out then they will have to transition into distance learning. LES has not had to close. As of yesterday, 19% of students are in distance learning at LES, 100% at LMS for right now, and 34% at Lyman are distance learning. At the meeting this morning Superintendent Angeli was told that Addendum 5 will be rewritten. Addendum 5 is the guidance for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in CT schools. We will also be getting a new update on Addendum 9 which is the contact tracing scenarios in schools. There has been a shift in CDC guidelines for quarantining. The school nurses are keeping track of all students and staff members quarantining. M. Smith asked if N95 masks are available for staff members. Superintendent Angeli stated that we have some N95 masks which are used for medical staff and anyone who may be of heightened risk. There are also face shields, gowns and other PPE available for staff members. N. McGillicuddy asked if Superintendent Angeli has heard much from parents. He responded that any parents that are nervous he does hear from more often. Some parents do contact him about going into distance learning. Parents have the option to choose Distance Learning for their child and some have recently switched. N. McGillicuddy asked if Hybrid was on the table and the response was that it is on the table but there will be a discussion after the numbers for this week come out. D. Whitcher is looking for stability in this whole process. M. McCall asked if Superintendent Angeli has talked with Patrick McCormack often and if he is still OK with our district still being open. Superintendent Angeli talks with him 3-4 times a week, including Sundays, and he is supportive of keeping Lebanon Schools open. M. DeCaprio asked if Superintendent Angeli could share updated documents as they are released. Superintendent Angeli stated the advice that we get verbally and the advice on Addendum 4 are different. The other two documents that were updated should be released this week. M. DeCaprio also commented about all the appreciation for all the work that is done when there is a COVID-19 positive case. D. Person stated that we need to be more cognitive about our reactions to news and changes because it startles the students. Superintendent Angeli also explained that a teacher may not be considered a close contact because they are not within 6 feet of the student for a long period of time. She also appreciates all the work that is done on a daily basis. J. Konow stated his concerns with Addendum 4. He also appreciates all the work being done. He would like to see a more uniform approach so we are not so reactive in specific situations. A. Margerelli-Hussey would like to see more focus on how to fix some of these frustrations because there will most likely be more of them. She likes that parents have the option for Distance Learning. She would like to see everyone coming back together to get through this. S. Haynes stated this is a hard time and there are things she is unhappy with that were handled and things that she is so proud how they were handled. The state is not making it easy to follow their guidelines. She thinks we really need to think of the distance that is between the kids during unmasked times and hopes that we can entertain the hybrid model. The teachers would feel more comfortable in the hybrid model. K. Ochs states that the

data shows the hybrid model is the way to go at the moment. There is no reason all the schools have to be in the same model.

IX. FINANCE REPORT

1. 2020-2021 Budget - In the packet there is a 2 page budget summary talking about positive budget impacts and negative impacts. There is not accurate data yet in the salary line items due to PayChex switching over to a new system and errors with the data migration. Everything should be corrected by this payroll. The positive impacts are that the fall sports season was not a full season so there were fewer buses used and fewer refs. There may not be a winter sports season. Negative impacts include a potential increase in health insurance expense due to the increase in staff that was hired, increased salary expenses, cleaning supply expenses, technology expenses, continued PPE expenses, lower excess cost reimbursement and the expense for exhaust fan replacements. There is no food service report tonight. The reimbursement requests to the BOE for expenses for 2019-2020 related to COVID-19 from the town was submitted and \$19,303.87 was approved and received. That should be a credit to the 19-20 school year and go towards the year end balance. R. Sirpenski stated that we are currently waiting to hear back from the auditor if this is correct. More expenses will be able to be submitted for this school year if we exceed the \$145,419 for COVID-19. The credit would go towards the surplus from last year which in turn would increase the amount in the non-lapsing fund.

2. COVID-19 Relief Funds - This was discussed above.

3. 2021-2022 Budget - This was discussed during the report of the finance/facilities subcommittee. We are at a 5% increase for the first draft. There will be modifications that will be made. The ventilation system at LES would be a school building project, rather than a capital request. It also may need to be tied into redoing the windows.

X. DISCUSSION

1. Review 7th grade schedule - At the last board meeting there was discussion about the 7th grade science teacher position going from 0.6 FTE to 1.0. The BOE requested a schedule that would accommodate this. R. Laskarzewski presented the board with a schedule only affecting 17 students. The new schedule would be implemented after midterms in January. The current part time science teacher does have experience with the greenhouse which is beneficial.

XI. ACTION ITEMS

1. Act on Letter of Retirement

Motion made by M. McCall and seconded by N. McGillicuddy to accept the letter of retirement. The motion passes unanimously.

2. Act on Letters of Resignation

Motion made by M. McCall and seconded by M. DeCaprio to accept the letters of resignation. The motion passes unanimously.

3. Act on request from Administrator for payment of unused vacation time

Motion made by M. Smith and seconded by M. DeCaprio to approve the payment for unused vacation time for Rita Quiles-Glover. The motion passes unanimously.

4. Act on 2021-2022 Calendar

Information: The calendar is in the packet. There was input from the Administrators and Teachers for this calendar. This year was a special calendar due to COVID-19, so 2021-2022 is back to a traditional calendar format. The parent/teacher conferences are similar to how it was done this year. April vacation was set to be the 3rd week in April to avoid SAT days but that is being done online now and the staff would like to keep the vacation week the 3rd week in April. The state originally stated that distance learning days would not be counted for snow days, but they have adjusted their opinion on that and now they can be considered school days. Some districts are in favor of making those days distance learning days and some districts would like keep snow days as snow days.

Motion made by M. McCall and seconded by J. Konow to accept the 2021-2022 school calendar as presented. This motion passes unanimously.

5. Act on FTE increase for 7th Grade Science position.

Motion made by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by D. Person to approve the FTE increase for the 7th grade science position. This passes unanimously.

XII. ANTICIPATED EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. For the purpose of reviewing Secretary Contract Negotiations
2. For the purpose of reviewing a Memorandum of Agreement with the LEA

Motion at 9:17 p.m. by M. Smith and seconded by M. DeCaprio to go into Executive Session and invite Superintendent Angeli. This motion passes unanimously.

The meeting came out of Executive Session at 9:48 p.m.

XIII. ACTION ITEMS

1. Act on Contract with the Lebanon Educational Secretaries
Motion by M. DeCaprio and seconded by N. McGillicuddy to approve the Secretaries' Contract. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Act on Memorandum of Agreement with the LEA
Motion by M. Smith and seconded by J. Konow to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with the L.E.A. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by A. Margerelli-Hussey and seconded by M. McCall to extend the meeting not past 10:15 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

XIV. ANTICIPATED EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. For the purpose of reviewing the Interim Superintendent Contract

Motion at 9:51 p.m. by M. Smith and seconded by J. Konow to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of reviewing the Interim Superintendent's contract. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting came out of Executive Session at 10:11 p.m.

XV. ACTION ITEMS

1. Act on Contract with the Interim Superintendent

Moved by A. Margerelli-Hussey and seconded by M. McCall that the Board appoint Patricia Ciccone as Interim Superintendent of Schools, effective January 9, 2021 and continuing through June 30, 2021, or until such time as a new Superintendent of Schools begins work in Lebanon, whichever occurs first, subject to the following conditions:

Approval of the Commissioner of Education in accordance with Section 10-157 of the Connecticut General Statutes;

Satisfactory completion of all statutory requirements concerning the hiring of Board of Education employees; and

Moved further that the Board Chairperson be authorized to finalize and execute the proposed employment contract with Patricia Ciccone on behalf of the Board.

The motion passed with D. Person, J. Konow, A. Margerelli-Hussey, S. Haynes, M. McCall, D. Whitcher and N. McGillicuddy voting for. Having been unable to attend the last meeting, M. Smith and M. DeCaprio abstained.

2. Act on resignation date for Current Superintendent

Motion by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by M. Smith to designate Superintendent Angeli's resignation date as January 8th, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

XVI. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

The chair asked the board members to email her with agenda suggestions for the next meeting.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by the chair at 10:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Hashem,
Board Clerk