

**LEBANON BOARD OF EDUCATION
HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE
FEBRUARY 9, 2021 - REGULAR MEETING - 7:30 P.M.**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

PRESENT:	Sarah Haynes, Chairperson Maureen McCall, Secretary Dawn Witcher Danelle Person Mark DeCaprio	Alexis Margerelli-Hussey, Vice Chair Delton Wentworth, Student Representative Nicole McGillicuddy John Konow
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ALSO PRESENT: Interim Superintendent Patricia A. Ciccone, Rita Quiles-Glover, Principal, Robert Laskarzewski, Principal, James Apicelli, Principal, Robert Sirpenski, Business Manager, Samantha McCarthy, Assistant Principal, Cheryl Biekert, Director of Pupil Services, Holly Hollander, Director of Curriculum, Kevin French, Supervisor of Facilities and Custodial Services, Kathleen Smith, Teacher, Jeannette Picard, Teacher, Scott Elliott, Athletic Director and Teacher, Chris Fabry, Teacher, Amy Reynolds, Teacher, Jacques Dulac, Director of Information Technology.

I. CALL TO ORDER

S. Haynes called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. COMMUNICATION

1. Letter of Retirement - Superintendent Ciccone read a letter of retirement from Molly Lathrop.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - BYLAWS OF THE BOARD #9324

Public Participation - 30 minutes; Individual speaker - 2 minutes

Jeannette Picard thanked the board for all the work they have done to prepare the budget. Jeannette stated this year all of our schools are in great need and hopes there will be an understanding in the general public of these needs. The students have struggled through all the different phases of the pandemic. The teachers and administrators work hard to make sure the students' needs are addressed, but they will continue to have needs that are greater than what a regular budget proposes. It is also important to keep in mind the condition of the facilities and needs for repairs.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of minutes

1. Finance/Facilities Subcommittee Meeting - 1/12/2021
2. LBOE Regular Meeting - 1/12/2021
3. Finance/Facilities Subcommittee Meeting - 1/19/2021
4. LBOE Special Meeting - 1/19/2021
5. Enrollment/Communications/Goals Subcommittee Meeting - 1/21/2021
6. Finance/Facilities Subcommittee Meeting - 1/26/2021
7. Policy Subcommittee Meeting - 2/4/2021
8. Budget Transfers

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

V. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

D. Wentworth reported that he will now be attending a monthly meeting with 4 selected 4th graders who are all part of the elementary school leadership program. All four of the 4th graders preferred in-person learning, as they like to hang out with their friends and one of them does not like computers. They do not mind distance learning for too long, as they get to be home and be comfy. Delton will be reaching out to the Student Council President at the Middle School for a report for next meeting. At the high school, despite COVID-19 generally restricting activities, they were able to have a few. Spirit Week was last week, Pajama Day is tomorrow, Winter Sports are starting up, the recording of the school play will be released next weekend, and a few snow days were nice to have. The email update from the Board to the high school student body was appreciated and they feel more informed. Delton stated he

thinks that all teachers at all levels are doing an excellent job of balancing in-person and distance learning workloads in classroom environments. Midterms overall went very well and students felt they were fair since everyone was home distance learning.

VI. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

- Enrollment/Curriculum/Goals - D. Whitcher reported that they met twice. The main reason they met was to develop a statement from the committee and recommend to the board for approval per Delton's request. That led to other conversations about communication in general, including to the community and among all three schools. They discussed how to develop a stronger channel of communication while making it appropriate to age and school building.
- Policy - The policy committee met and the minutes are in the board packet. There are some recommendations for first readings and a few updates.
- Strategic Plan/ Curriculum - The subcommittee met and talked about midterm exams. The playing field was level because everyone was taking the exams remotely. The teachers adjusted and were prepared for this. A lot of the exams were explaining answers rather than objective questions. The results were similar to previous years. The teachers, staff and board had a good discussion about rethinking how we proctor exams and ask questions. They are also thinking about how this learning and type of assessing helps students for higher education or the workforce. All of the teachers said there are some challenges in keeping up. At the high school level the AP classes are challenging to stay on target because they have deadlines to meet by May. R. Laskarzewski provided some insight about the students that are distance learning and really struggling with focusing and being engaged. He talked about how important GoGuardian has been for the administrators to stay on top of things. The students log in but they are not engaged. The subcommittee talked about failing numbers. There are no solid numbers but the administrators are on top of it. R. Quiles-Glover talked about having a lot of support for distance learners. NWEA test scores are being used to monitor students' progress.
- Negotiations - The subcommittee is working on one contract with the instructional assistants. There is a mediation session scheduled March 1st.
- Superintendent's Evaluation - No report.
- Safety/Security - Did not meet.
- Finance/Facilities - The subcommittee has met three times. The LED Lighting Project will be an action item this evening. Earthlight is going to replace all the LED lighting in all the schools which will actually save money every month. The Lyman oil tank project is now complete. It was suggested to dismantle the stairs during the winter to avoid any accidents. In the spring a permanent fence will be installed. The 2021-2022 budget began at 5.7%. Superintendent Ciccone and R. Sirpenski reviewed some cost savings in different areas to bring it down to 3.6%. The extra custodians, CNA and increased hours for part time secretaries were removed from the budget. Currently we are now at 3.21% due to recent savings in insurance, heating costs, and another retiree. With this percentage there will be no teacher cuts and no program cuts. For the LES ventilation project, S. Haynes and N. McGillicuddy met with two representatives from the BOF. They would like to have an engineer provide a cost of what the project entails. This project is for the ventilation system and possibly the windows in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade wing. The maintenance of the LMS baseball field was also discussed. Aspinall Field is a park and rec field but they allow the LMS baseball team to use the field. C. Fabry, S. Elliott and some custodians volunteer their time to prep the field. This will be revisited once it gets closer to the spring season. The subcommittee looked at the capital list that goes to BOF and will meet next week to finalize.
- Governance - They did meet this month. S. Haynes reported that the superintendent search committee also met and came up with a planning timeline for the search process. They will be looking for a new superintendent to start in July.

VII. ADMINISTRATORS' REPORTS

These reports were included in the board packet. R. Quiles-Glover publicly thanked the PTA who decorated the hallways at LES with valentine hearts with encouraging messages. D. Person asked if the newspaper at LMS gets published. R. Laskarzewski stated they do publish the newspaper and it is great to have clubs because there are so few things going on right now. There will be a Greenhouse Club starting on Fridays and this past week they were already doing soil samples. The band and chorus program has seen a decrease in enrollment due to staff turnover in that department and there are no

performances due to COVID. The senior project has to be redesigned due to the change in it becoming a one-credit graduation requirement, starting with the class of 2023.

VIII. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

1. Enrollment - The district is at 951 students; LES is at 334, LMS is at 297 and LMHS is at 320 students. Currently LES has 52 distance learners, LMS has 75, and LMHS has 77 distance learners. The number of Magnet School students is around 24 students, which has gone down over the years. The number of homeschoolers that are not considered enrolled in the district is 36.

2. School Updates Re: COVID-19 - The numbers are coming down but they are not plummeting. Mitigation strategies continue to be the most important practice. Superintendent Ciccone spoke about snow days and remote days. In past meetings, former Superintendent Angeli favored having a couple snow days before moving to remote days. We have now had two snow days along with a couple of delays. The primary obstacle with this decision is whether a snow storm will be bringing heavy snow or high winds, in which a remote day would not be possible due to possible power outages and other storm effects. The governor did reissue a commitment to a part of the FFCRA that was allowed to lapse by the federal government on 12/31/20 and made it retroactive. Superintendent Ciccone wanted to let the board know they are aware of this and they are working on it.

3. Winter Sports Updates Re: COVID-19 - There is a consent and waiver form that the district has to have from all athletes. The schools are doing an excellent job with the stipulations that are given for all the sports. J. Apicelli thanked Scott Elliott and Chris Fabry for all their work that went into making the winter sports season happen. S. Elliott presented the set up plan for mitigating strategies. Superintendent Ciccone reminded everyone that in order to keep the sports season open, we need to be cautious about socializing to prevent the spread of COVID-19. There is a new camera system installed in the gymnasium which allows games to be livestreamed on YouTube.

4. Superintendents' Proposed Budget (Public Participation: Individual Speaker - 2 minutes) - Superintendent Ciccone presented the Lebanon Public Schools 2021-2022 Proposed Budget. The Budget is a request for \$20,294,038, which is a 3.21% increase over our current years budget. The presentation included, budget philosophy, 2019-2024 strategic plan goals, budget drivers, budget goals and budget guidelines. Superintendent Ciccone also showed the budget history and past percentages. ESSER II money will be coming in the amount of \$210,000, which can be used for anything that we would have used for a criteria from ESSER I, with 2 additional uses; 1. to address learning gaps and 2. facilities. It cannot be used for normal BOE expenses.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Amy Reynolds - Amy thanked Superintendent Ciccone for the presentation and the highlight of the last 5 years showing the trend of a low budget line increase. Amy stated at the middle school they are still feeling the cuts from those five years. Teachers were cut in 5th and 6th grade. Last year in December when the budget process was going forward, many middle school teachers advocated reinstating the 5th grade teacher, as the 4th grade team had already decided that class needed to be split 4 ways and they wanted that to continue into middle school. In the fall when COVID-19 happened they advocated again for that position to be reinstated. Amy stated this year has been really tough for everyone with large classes. Spacing is an issue in fifth grade. The split between students distance learning and in-person learning is difficult to manage. In the fall, when students come back, Amy believes we will be seeing the real impacts of COVID-19.

IX. FINANCE REPORT

1. 2020-2021 Budget - R. Sirpenski believes we will end the year in the positive, which could be anywhere from \$50,000 to \$300,000. The Coronavirus Relief Fund grant received from the state for \$145,419 was quickly received and credited accordingly. The insurance and retirement account is expected to be over budget but the offset is a greater savings on the salary line item. There were fewer students enrolled in magnet schools than budgeted, which is \$43,000 savings in that account. There was a salary savings in the curriculum director line item because the district went without one for about six months. There was an unexpected expense with hiring another fourth grade teacher. There was also non certified staff hired. The office secretaries went from part time to full time during the year. The IT tech increased hours. The middle school increased the 7th grade science position by 0.4 FTE. The title one grant was higher than expected. Savings is seen in student transportation and professional fees for officials due to the limited fall sports schedule and the impact of winter sports. In facilities, we spent an extra \$55,000-\$65,000 to upgrade exhaust systems, which is being absorbed by the current budget. Currently the extra fourth grade teacher that we have is not in the budget for next year because the position was added due to COVID-19. The \$210,000 can be used for teacher salaries as long as it is related to COVID-19 and needs to be written in detail to the state.

2. COVID-19 Relief Funds - The ESSER II/Cares Act II grant is the second part of money that was approved by congress in December and it's a large sum for CT. The grant period is March 2020 - September 2023 and Lebanon will be receiving \$210,000. The common goal is education recovery and learning acceleration for every student. The application will be done the week of February 22. The legislation required the state to use the Title I formula from 2020. If they used the year before or this year's formula we would have gotten more. Every family should have internet access through Charter Communications or through the District by way of hotspots.
3. 2021-2022 Budget - Nothing more to add.

X. NEW BUSINESS

1. First and Only Reading, Policy #1003 - Non-Discrimination (Community)
2. First and Only Reading, Policy #3000 - Board Budget Procedures and Line Item Transfers
3. First and Only Reading, Policy #4001 - Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug-Free Workplace
4. First and Only Reading, Policy #4009 - Policy Regarding Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Personal)
5. First and Only Reading, Policy #5002 - Student Dress
6. First and Only Reading, Policy #5007 - Transportation
7. First and Only Reading, Policy # 5002 - Hazing
8. First Reading, Policy # 1010 - School Security & Safety
9. First Reading, Policy #4012 - Non-Discrimination (Personnel)
10. First Reading, Policy #5006 - Physical Activity, Undirected Play and Student Discipline
11. First Reading, Policy # 5012 - Policy Regarding Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment (Students)
12. First Reading, Policy # 5013 - Policy Regarding Students and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
13. First Reading, Policy # 5014 - Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy
14. First Reading, Policy # 5016 - Homeless Children and Youth
15. First Reading, Policy # 5018 - Non-Discrimination (Students)
16. First Reading, Policy # 5019 - Drug and Alcohol Use by Students
17. First Reading, Policy # 5020 - Suicide Prevention and Intervention
18. First Reading, Policy # 5021 - Fundraising Activities

These first seven were updates to policy numbers and to match Shipman and Goodwin. The Hazing policy is not from Shipman and Goodwin, the Safety Committee reviewed and recommended we keep and just renumber. On the first readings, there will be a second reading next month. Superintendent Ciccone spoke about #10; this is the policy that prohibits us from using a deprivation of undirected play, recess or anything like that as punitive action. In Lebanon most of the staff have been trained in school climate training and restorative work. Superintendent Ciccone said that it might be a good idea for the Communications Committee to put a statement out about this particular policy. Once this policy is voted on by the Board the committee can discuss. The minutes describe the issue with numbers 1-7. M. McCall stated the board should see numbers 8-18 next month.

Motion made by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by J. Konow to amend the agenda and Act on funds for engineering costs at LES up to \$20,000. The motion passes unanimously.

XI. ACTION ITEMS

1. Act on Letter of Retirement

Motion made by M. McCall and seconded by J. Konow to accept the letter of retirement with regret. The motion passes unanimously.

2. Act on LED Lighting Project

Motion made by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by J. Konow to move forward with the LED project at all three schools by Earthlight.

Discussion - Earthlight would start in the summer time but before that they have to put in the request by April so that we can get all the rebates from the state. The next step would be the application process and the rebates from the state. This is just to move forward with the next step of this project, not acting on an amount to spend, so there could be a stopping point if the Board decides they do not want to go any further with Earthlight.

Motion amended by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by J. Konow to move forward with Earthlight through the application process. The motion passes unanimously.

3. Act on Communication Item

Motion made by D. Whitcher and seconded by N. McGillicuddy to approve the communication to students.

Discussion - It is addressed to Delton and not all students as the hope is that Delton will be the BOE conduit to have ongoing conversations between the board and students at the different buildings.

The motion passes unanimously.

4. Act on School Nutrition Waiver

Information - The federal government made a provision whereby schools and districts could waive the bid process for entering into an extended year contract with food services without going through a formal bid process. Due to COVID, there is no comparable financial data for school meals for this year. The district had to respond by February 8, 2021 to participate. R. Sirpenski submitted the waiver and clarified with the state that should the board not vote to do this, the waiver could be redacted.

Motion made by J. Konow and seconded by M. McCall to approve the school nutrition waiver. The motion passes unanimously.

5. Act on the 2021-2022 Budget

Motion made by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by J. Konow to approve the 2021-2022 Budget at 3.21% or lower.

Discussion: There is a lot of moving parts in the budget and there may be more areas of savings that could be found in the next couple of weeks before it is presented to the BOF, so the budget could come in at less than 3.21%.

Motion amended by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by J. Konow to approve the 2021-2022 budget up to 3.21%.

Discussion: Superintendent Ciccone stated that she does not know if we can count on enough COVID relief funds to fund positions other than in a temporary way. She stated she would not plan for a long term employee through relief funds.

Motion made by A. Margerelli-Hussey and seconded by N. McGillicuddy to extend for 15 minutes to 10:15 p.m. The motion passes unanimously.

Continued Discussion: Superintendent Ciccone stated the Board could approve the budget tonight, or have a special meeting at a later date this month. M. DeCaprio would like to see the budget be closer to 3%.

Motion made by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by J. Konow to approve the 2021-2022 Budget at 3.21%. The motion passes unanimously.

6. Act on Engineering Services for the Ventilation Project at LES

Motion made by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by D. Whitcher to approve engineering services at LES for up to \$20,000 for environmental concerns. The motion passes unanimously.

XII. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

If there are any items for next agenda S. Haynes asked for them to be emailed to her.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by S. Haynes at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Hashem
Board Clerk