

**LEBANON BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING  
LYMAN MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY  
SEPTEMBER 14, 2021 - 7:30 PM**

**MINUTES**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Sarah Haynes (Chair)

Maureen McCall (Secretary)

Mark DeCaprio

Dawn Whitcher

Matthew Smith

Alexis Margerelli-Hussey (Vice-Chair)

John Konow

Danelle Person

Nicole McGillicuddy

**ALSO PRESENT:** Andrew Gonzalez (Superintendent), Rachael Springer (Student Representative), James Apicelli (LMHS Principal), Samantha McCarthy (LMHS Assistant Principal), Robert Laskarzewski (LMS Principal), Jessica Scorso (LES Interim Principal), Cheryl Biekert (Director of Pupil Service/District Title IX Coordinator), Rita Quiles-Glover (Director of Curriculum and Instruction), Jacques Dulac (IT Director)

**REMOTE ATTENDEES:** Kevin French (Supervisor of Facilities and Custodial Services)

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Sarah Haynes called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. Recognition**

A. New Hires - Superintendent Andrew Gonzalez introduced the following new staff members and expressed his excitement at their arrival.

1. Komi Adzimawo (LMHS French)
2. Hannah Bowen (LMS Language Arts)
3. Catherine Creme (IT Tech)
4. Jennifer Wales (LMS 6th Grade)
5. Daniel Murphy (LMS Special Education)
6. Lauren Brown (LES School Psychologist)
7. Amanda Mansfield (LES/LMS Social Worker)

B. Student Representative - A. Gonzalez introduced Rachael Springer as student representative to the Board of Education

C. Board Clerk - A. Gonzalez introduced Hannah Walcott as Board Clerk

D. Student Recognition

A. Gonzalez recognized a group of students for assisting an injured schoolmate, praising their compassion, composure, and level-headedness in getting appropriate medical help. He thanked them for their leadership, as well as exemplifying the principles Lebanon seeks to teach its students. These students were Helen Blakeslee, Ryan Dungan, Kyle Franchi, Maxwell Hussey, Hunter Sanchez and Maxwell Tingley.

Kasey Cook was recognized for her senior project of painting parking spots at LMHS. All funds raised via the project will be donated to an art therapy foundation.

S. Haynes, on behalf of the board, congratulated and thanked the students recognized for their achievements.

**III. Communication**

A. Letters of Resignation - A. Gonzalez read portions of letters of resignation from Sarah Porter (LES Instructional Assistant), Laura Scott (LMS Instructional Assistant), and Deb Frank (LMS Nurse). All spoke highly of their experience in Lebanon schools.

**IV. Public Participation (Bylaws of the Board #9324)**

Melissa Hoffman expressed her support, as a parent, for the board's decision to vote on the FFA field trip, and for providing students with that opportunity.

**V. Consent Agenda**

- . Approval of minutes
  - 1. Finance/Facilities Subcommittee Meeting - 8/10/2021
  - 2. LBOE Regular Meeting - 8/10/2021
  - 3. Safety & Security Subcommittee Meeting - 8/24/2021
  - 4. LBOE Special Meeting - 8/27/2021
  - 5. Policy Subcommittee Meeting - 9/8/2021
  - 6. Budget Transfer

**Motion by A. Margerelli-Hussey and seconded by M. McCall to accept the consent agenda with one correction (removal of J. Konow as "Present" at 8/10/2021 Finance/Facilities meeting). Motion passed unanimously.**

**VI. Student Representative's Report**

Rachael Springer detailed recent activities at the high school, including Freshman Orientation and Open House, both of which were well-received among students. She stated that students are happy to be back in person (as opposed to distance learning), and that school seems to be returning to some sense of normalcy. She then provided updates on other activities around LMHS. The drama department will be performing two shows, The Cask of Amontillado and the Masque of the Red Death, in October. There is also a plan to perform a musical in the spring. There is considerable excitement for these shows, due to the fact that no plays were performed last year. Additionally, there is a plan for winter and spring band concerts, which were also cancelled last year. Rachael updated the board on sports, stating that those teams with new coaches liked them. She finished by detailing her plans to connect with students from all schools. She will meet once a month with a group of 4th graders at LES, with the first meeting in two weeks. At LMS, she plans to meet virtually (for now) with one student from each grade, beginning this Friday. At LMHS, she will meet with the PAWS groups from each grade once a month. At all levels, she plans to talk with students about what is going on in their schools. Additionally, she also plans to discuss students' mental health and stress/anxiety levels at the middle and high schools, to see if changes can be made to help those students.

**VII. Committee Reports**

- A. Negotiations - M. DeCaprio reported they met on 8/26 regarding the IA contract. Discussions were completed, and a vote to ratify will be taken later in the meeting.
- B. Strategic Plan/Curriculum - D. Person stated they met tonight (9/14) and received a report from Rita Quiles-Glover (Director of Curriculum and Instruction). Topics discussed included new teaching and support positions, curriculum alignment in Language Arts, Math and SEL, and new programs in the district, such as I-Ready. R. Quiles-Glover also provided an overview of the first Professional Development day, as well as a preview of the next PD day on 10/8.
- C. Superintendent's Evaluation - J. Konow stated there is nothing to report
- D. Safety & Security - A. Margerelli-Hussey reported they met on 8/24. They discussed camera quotes to upgrade coverage in certain areas, and the subcommittee recommended the

board purchase the necessary cameras. It has been placed as an action item and will be voted on later in the meeting. She also stated A. Gonzalez updated the subcommittee on safety-related grant proposals, as well as his work with the Safety Committee.

E. Policy - M. McCall reported they met on 9/8 to discuss Policy #5002 regarding student dress. The subcommittee recommended removing the first three sections of the policy and instructing administrators at each school to use their discretion in incorporating those sections into their student handbook. The first reading of the revised policy is scheduled for tonight's meeting. The subcommittee also discussed Governor Lamont's Executive Order 13D.

F. Enrollment/Communications/Goals - D. Whitcher reported they met tonight (9/14) and received a summary of staff exit interviews from Superintendent Gonzalez. They also discussed the possibility of conducting similar interviews with students, both graduating seniors as well as those moving between schools (i.e. within the district).

G. Finance/Facilities - N. McGillicuddy stated they met tonight (9/14).

1. Line Striping/Crack Sealing at LMHS - K. French reported the project will cost about \$38,000, which will be coming out of capital. Superintendent Gonzalez wants to put it into the annual maintenance budget so the district remains "on cycle" in repairing parking lots.
2. HVAC Upgrades at LES - K. French reported it will cost \$475,000 in total. The subcommittee will look into the possibility of obtaining state grant money for this project, as well as meeting with the Board of Finance to see what help they may be able to provide.
3. LED Lighting Upgrades at all three schools - K. French reported the project is more than 90% finished, with estimated completion occurring by the end of October, depending upon the receipt of necessary materials.
4. Asbestos Removal at LES and LMS - The total project cost is estimated at about \$307,000. This expense will be presented to the Board of Finance. LES could most likely be completed in a summer, while LMS would likely require two summers to complete.
5. Maintenance Tracker reports - The subcommittee heard a report from EMCOR representatives, explaining how they generate service reports, as well as how to read those reports.
6. Status of Schools - K. French provided updates on all three schools. The subcommittee then discussed the issue of mold at LMHS, and were informed of mitigation efforts underway. These include the purchase of a dehumidifier, as well as re-testing affected areas.

H. EASTCONN - M. Smith reported EASTCONN is in the process of changing their bylaws, which could make it easier to add another liaison position. S. Haynes asked if he would like a subcommittee member to join him in that role. M. Smith stated they aren't able to do that yet, but the upcoming bylaw changes would hopefully allow for it.

I. Governance - S. Haynes reported she and N. McGillicuddy met with the Board of Finance and several selectmen to discuss the possibility of the Board of Education sharing services with the Finance department. They reviewed a relevant case study pertaining to shared services, and determined that more research was needed. The group plans to meet on 9/20 to continue discussions.

## **VIII. Administrators' Reports**

1. LMHS - Principal James Apicelli and Vice-Principal Samantha McCarthy reported that orientation for new students was well attended and received by students. Open House was held

outdoors this year, and was also a success. The first newsletter of the year was sent out. Future editions will offer guidance on college and career readiness.

2. LMS - Principal Robert Laskarzewski reported that orientation for new staff was a success, lasting longer than previous years due to the number of recent hires. He also thanked the maintenance staff for their work in setting up workspaces for all the new staffers. He noted that the first PD day was a success, and how excited everyone is to be back in school in person. Lastly, students are looking forward to Pantherfest, held between other local schools with a panther mascot. N. McGillicuddy asked if it was true sports are being opened up to 5th graders. R. Laskarzewski confirmed.

3. LES - Interim Principal Jessica Scorso stated it has been great having students back, and seeing them playing and interacting with their friends at school. Preschool screening was conducted in August, resulting in 17 new students to the program. "Popsicles with the Principal" was attended by 42% of LES families. 27 students have transferred to LES this school year, 16 of which are kindergarteners. LES will hold an in-person Open House this year, to be spread across two nights (9/29 and 9/30) to ensure smaller groups. J. Scorso stated it was very important to have families in the building for Open House. A virtual informational band night will be held on 10/4. A fire drill was performed last Friday, and fire prevention week will be held during the week of 10/4-10/8, in collaboration with the Fire Department. The first PD day was very productive, featuring presentations on Tier 1 universal assessments for both academics and SEL. The Mini Mudder event will be held this weekend.

4. Central Office - Director of Pupil Service/District Title IX Coordinator Cheryl Biekert reported that there are many new hires in the district, and that they have already had a positive impact. The district now has two full-time social workers, one at LMHS and another split between LES and LMS.

5. Curriculum - Director of Curriculum and Instruction Rita Quiles-Glover reported that the Board will hear a presentation regarding testing results in November, and that a letter with individual results will be sent to students' families on Friday. She also highlighted the success of the TEAM program, which aims to support new hires. There are 13 formal mentors in the program, and R. Quiles-Glover noted that there are many more informal participants, reflecting the collaborative and supportive community in the district.

## **IX. Superintendent's Report**

### **A. Enrollment (as of 9/9)**

1. District - 937
2. LES - 341 - A. Gonzalez noted that additional Grade 4 hires have brought the average class size down to about 15 students
3. LMS - 270 - average class size is about 16 students in Grade 5 and 17 students in Grade 6
4. LMHS - 326
5. Homeschooling - 37 students withdrew to homeschool during the summer of 2020 and the 20-21 school year; an additional 8 have withdrawn during the summer of 2021

B. Back to School - A. Gonzalez thanked the LMHS staff for their work on tonight's Open House, and reiterated how nice it is to have everyone back in person. D. Person inquired about lunch plans at LMS. Currently students are eating at their desks. A. Gonzalez agreed that conversations should be held about returning lunchtime to the cafeteria.

C. Continuity of Services Plan - There have been a few COVID cases within the district, but it was noted that transmission has occurred out of school, and that there have been no outbreaks within our facilities. A. Gonzalez believes this proves the mitigation efforts of the district are working.

1. Executive Order 13G/Vaccine requirements for staff - All staff who are not vaccinated by 9/27 must submit weekly COVID tests to the Central Office (to be received by 7 a.m. Monday mornings)

## **X. Facilities Report**

K. French summarized the repairs and preventative maintenance projects completed at each school this summer. He highlighted new carpeting at LES, installation of a display cabinet at LMS, and new soccer goals at LMHS. A full listing is included in the board packet.

N. McGillicuddy asked why the sanding and refinishing of the high school gym was not done during the summer. The reason is because the company could not get here earlier. J. Apicelli reported he is hopeful it will be completed within the week. It is not expected to impact the basketball season. K. French reported there is a 1 year warranty on the floor.

D. Person asked when the tents purchased for each school would be set up, and why they have not been already. K. French stated they would be up by the end of the week, and that high winds and storms have caused the delay.

## **XI. Finance Report**

A. Gonzalez reported on behalf of Business Manager Robert Sirpenski, and noted that hiring is underway on a full-time position which will provide regular finance reports to the Board.

A. 2020-2021 Budget - A year-end surplus of \$111,271 was reported, falling within the expected range forecasted this spring. Net costs for Special Education were favorable by a total of \$193,224. Athletics-related expenses were under budget by \$64,454. Electricity expenses also came in \$11,212 under budget. Both are attributed to the impact of COVID. Operational and instructional supply accounts and substitute salary expenses were also under budget. There is a shortage of available substitute teachers in the area. Several areas, including legal expenses, health insurance, repair and maintenance, heating, and certain salary accounts came in over budget, primarily due to COVID. The district was aware of these throughout the year. Overall spending YTD is within the anticipated range.

B. 2021-2022 Budget - will have more details at next meeting

C. Discussion - D. Person asked how the substitute teacher shortage was affecting schools operationally. A. Gonzalez and R. Laskarzewski stated it is an ongoing issue, and figuring out classroom coverage can be very time consuming for administrators. This is a regional issue, not one affecting only Lebanon schools.

## **XII. New Business**

A. First Reading, Policy #5002 - Student Dress

The Policy subcommittee recommended removal of the first three sections and allowing administrators to use discretion in incorporating those sections into their handbooks. D. Whitcher stated her intention to not support the policy, based on objections to later sections that would remain. M. McCall pointed out this would leave the proposed red-lined items (a, b, and c) in the policy unless further discussion and revisions were undertaken. The Board agreed to move forward with the proposed changes and conduct a second reading next month. The Policy subcommittee will likely meet to discuss revisions to later sections of the policy.

### **XIII. Action Items**

- A. Act on Letters of Resignation  
**Motion by J. Konow and seconded by N. McGillicuddy to accept the resignations with regret. The motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Act on Security Cameras  
A. Margerelli-Hussey stated the cost of installing additional cameras was a little over \$19,585, and that it would address blind spots within camera coverage. The Safety subcommittee recommended making the purchase, and allowing the Superintendent to obtain the funds as he sees fit. A. Gonzalez recommended the money be taken from capital.  
**Motion by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by M. McCall to purchase the security cameras for the Barn and all three schools for \$19,585, to be taken from the capital account.**  
D. Person recommended including installation in the motion, as this is the majority of the expense.  
**Amended motion by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by M. McCall to purchase and install security cameras for the Barn and all three schools for \$19,585, to be taken from the capital account. M. DeCaprio, J. Konow, A. Margerelli-Hussey, S. Haynes, M. McCall, D. Whitcher, N. McGillicuddy and M. Smith voted in favor. D. Person voted against. The motion passed.**
- C. Act on Authorized Signers of the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs  
A. Gonzalez stated the agreement requires two authorized signers. He will be acting as the first, and the new business manager (once fully hired) will be serving as the second.  
**Motion by J. Konow and seconded by M. McCall to authorize Mr. Gonzalez as an authorized signer of the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition as signature #1. The motion passed unanimously.**
- D. Act on FFA Field Trip to National Convention  
There was discussion on the money used to cover this expense. It is a \$2,000 line item in the budget, with the remainder to be obtained through fundraising.  
**Motion by J. Konow and seconded by D. Person to approve the FFA field trip to the national convention. The motion passed unanimously.**
- E. Act on parking lot line striping and crack sealing  
N. McGillicuddy previously informed the Board the project cost has increased by \$16,000. A. Gonzalez recommended the Board move forward, with the additional funds to be taken from the non-lapsing account.  
**Motion by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by J. Konow to act on the parking lot striping and crack sealing at Lyman for a total of \$38,000, with \$22,000 coming from the SIP account, and the remaining \$16,000 coming out of non-lapsing. M. DeCaprio, J. Konow, A. Margerelli-Hussey, S. Haynes, M. McCall, D. Whitcher, N. McGillicuddy and M. Smith voted in favor. D. Person abstained. The motion passed.**
- F. Act on 2021-2022 Board of Education Goals  
**Motion by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by J. Konow to approve the 2021-2022 Lebanon Board of Education Goals. The motion passed unanimously.**

### **XIV. Anticipated Executive Session**

**Motion at 9:08 p.m. by M. Smith and seconded by M. DeCaprio to move into executive session to discuss Instructional Assistants' contract negotiations, inviting Superintendent Gonzalez to join. The motion passed unanimously.**

Returned from Executive Session at 9:22 p.m.

**XV. Action Item**

A. Act on contract with Lebanon Instructional Assistants

**Motion by M. DeCpario and seconded by N. McGillicuddy to approve the Instructional Assistants' Contract before us. The motion passed unanimously.**

Superintendent Gonzalez noted that the Connecticut State Board of Education sent an acknowledgement letter to all school districts in recognition of the critical work that they do in support of the schools, students, faculty and families.

**XVI. Items for Next Agenda**

The chair asked the board members to email her with agenda suggestions for the next meeting. Suggestions for items that are coming up for discussion:

- Snowplowing
- Superintendent's goals
- Vaccination cards and exemptions
- District goals presentations will be made at the October meeting by all building principals

Superintendent Gonzalez noted that currently 150 of 230 vaccination cards have been received and only two exemptions. So far there has been no notice of refusals.

**XVII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned by the chair at 9:29 p.m.

Submitted,  
Hannah Walcott (Board Clerk)