

**LEBANON BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
LYMAN MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY
JANUARY 11, 2022 - 7:30 PM**

MINUTES

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah Haynes (Chair)	John Konow
Alexis Margerelli-Hussey (Vice-Chair)	Nicole McGillicuddy
Maureen McCall (Secretary)	Matt Smith
Dawn Whitcher (Remote)	Bruce Calef
Danelle Person	

ALSO PRESENT: Andrew Gonzalez (Superintendent), Rachael Springer (Student Representative)
Jacques Dulac (IT Director)

REMOTE ATTENDEES: James Apicelli (LMHS Principal), Samantha McCarthy (LMHS Assistant Principal), Robert Laskarzewski (LMS Principal), Jessica Scorso (LES Principal), Rita Quiles-Glover (Director of Curriculum and Instruction), Valerie Belles (Business Manager)

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. Communication

- A. Letter of Resignation – A. Gonzalez shared a letter of resignation from LMS School Psychologist Dawn Pagliarini, stating her last day will be 1/14/22.
- B. Letter from Region 11 - A. Gonzalez also shared a letter from Kenneth Henrici, Superintendent of Chaplin, Hampton, Scotland and Regional District #11 Schools, in which he stated the Region 11 BoE's 5-1 decision to continue having LMHS as their designated Vocational Agriculture School.

III. Public Participation (Bylaws of the Board #9324)

- A. Paul Franson of 54 Bascom Rd, Lebanon, asked if he may take an extra two minutes, which was granted. His wife is the nurse at LMHS, and he has concerns regarding the nurses' contracts and job descriptions, saying they are outdated. He would like to see them reevaluated and rewritten. Within that issue, he noted two main points, the first being the nurse's salary pathways. He believes they should follow a similar scale that of teachers. He also noted the many extra hours put in by nurses, especially during the pandemic, for which there is no additional compensation. The second point deals with work hazards faced by nurses (potential exposure to body secretions, blood-borne pathogens, etc) and the lack of additional work hazard compensation, which he states is common in other contracts for workers exposed to similar hazards. He provided the Board with a packet of additional documents presenting his arguments.

IV. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of minutes
 - 1. Policy Subcommittee Meeting – 12/14/2021
 - 2. Curriculum Subcommittee Meeting – 12/14/2021
 - 3. Facilities Subcommittee Meeting – 12/14/2021
 - 4. LBOE Regular Meeting – 12/14/2021
 - 5. Enrollment Subcommittee Meeting – 01/04/2022
 - 6. Budget Transfer

Motion by J. Konow and seconded by M. McCall to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Student Representative's Report – R. Springer reported.

- A.** LES – She met in-person with elementary students. They are working on research papers, learning geometry, and are looking forward to Crazy Sock Day.
- B.** LMS – She also met in-person with middle school students this month. Current highlights are science projects, as well as a mummified chicken project.
- C.** LMHS – Students are not looking forward to exams. There is a NHS trivia night planned for after midterms, and the debate club is underway.
- D.** LMHS Winter Sports – Updates were given on boys and girls basketball, wrestling and indoor track. The track team has qualified for 10 events at the state meet so far.

VI. Committee Reports

- A.** Safety & Security – D. Witcher stated there was nothing to report
- B.** Curriculum – D. Person stated they did not meet
- C.** Superintendent's Evaluation – J. Konow thanked Board members for their contributions to the evaluation and stated they met yesterday (01/10/22), crafting an evaluation that he will share with the Board.
- D.** Negotiations – A. Margerelli-Hussey stated there was nothing to report
- E.** Policy – M. McCall noted three policies scheduled for votes later in the meeting, and said they will be meeting in upcoming weeks to discuss additional policy reviews. N McGillicuddy requested the committee review the Student Discipline Policy #5005, specifically concerning consequences for students bringing weapons to school.
- F.** Facilities – N. McGillicuddy reported they met tonight (01/11/22). Project updates were provided for the following:
 - 1.** LMS painting – mostly complete, hopefully wrapped up within the week
 - 2.** Door replacement at all three schools – currently waiting on parts to arrive
 - 3.** WiFi Access Points – project is still estimated to be underway by the end of February, by which time all parts will hopefully have arrived.
 - 4.** Curbing at LES – must wait until springtime due to weather
 - 5.** Baseball seating project – The retaining wall block has been received; weather permitting, work can begin.
 - 6.** Catch basins at LMHS – must also wait until springtime; the committee is looking into other contractors as well
 - 7.** Central Office rooftop unit – An emergency repair costing \$14,758 was performed in the fall, with the superintendent's recommendation to use non-lapsing funds.
 - 8.** LMS Generator Fuel Tank Replacement – scheduled to be performed this Saturday (01/15/22)
 - 9.** LES Ventilation – there is no update; the committee asked the Board of Finance (BoF) and Board of Selectmen (BoS) for assistance in this project and are awaiting more clarification. Estimated costs are \$295,000 for the 66 wing and \$180,000 for the 55/1st grade wing.
- G.** Finance – M. Smith stated they met tonight (01/11/22) and received an initial budget presentation from A. Gonzalez. They also discussed the remaining ESSER funds, which A. Gonzalez noted have already been designated for use. Additionally, these funds are not part of the operating budget.
- H.** Facilities follow-up
 - A.** D. Witcher asked the following questions regarding two projects at LES
 - 1.** Curbing – If the goal is to make a pathway accessible for all, including those in wheelchairs and other mobility assistance devices, is putting off this project until springtime (due to snow, weather, frozen ground, etc) valid, especially if it's an issue of ADA compliance? Further, if the project is completed in order to make access to town-owned fields easier, why is the BoE undertaking it? Also, both the

bus company and snow removal contractor will need to know the access point must remain clear.

2. Ventilation – There are currently two separate projects under discussion, one upgrading the ventilation system and the other replacing windows. Is it possible to merge the two projects? Is there a reason they are separate? N. McGillicuddy replied the projects were split in order to seek funding assistance from the BoF for the ventilation project.
- B. D. Person clarified that the baseball seating project is also awaiting a check from the town (to the contractor) in order to begin work. A. Gonzalez stated that V. Belles is working to provide the town with the required information, so that they may cut the check.
- I. Enrollment – B. Calef stated they met and had a lively discussion, resulting in a number of potential action items for upcoming meetings, including efforts to make Lebanon a choice school system for neighboring towns, as well as a partial magnet school.

VII. Administrators' Reports

Reports were included in the board packet. Additional updates are below.

- A. J. Apicelli noted communication from the UCONN ECE program, highlighting Lebanon's #3 ranking in ECE enrollment increase, with a 240% increase.
- B. J. Scorso reported that the CAS leadership conference was held with LES 4th graders today.
- C. Rita Quiles-Glover noted several teachers currently involved in PD, particularly three from LMS who are looking more in-depth at the writer's workshop model. She also commended those teachers piloting math programs. N. McGillicuddy also offered her thanks and support for Lebanon teachers as a whole.

VIII. Superintendent's Report – A. Gonzalez reported.

- A. Enrollment - Enrollment report (as of 01/04/22) was included in the board packet. Total district enrollment remains at 957 (LES – 352; LMS – 275; LMHS – 330), with two new enrollments at LES, and two withdrawals from LMHS. He noted enrollment remains at its highest level in several months.
- B. 2022-2023 Preliminary Budget Projection – A. Gonzalez gave preliminary budget presentations to school administrators, the public, and the finance committee. Not including staffing enhancements, the budget is at a 2.38% increase. With staffing enhancements, that number is 3.61%. Further cost breakdowns were included in the report provided to the Board, as well as potential line-item cuts. Input has been received, and will be incorporated into the next phase of budget development.
- C. COVID-19 Update – The district was able to receive and distribute a number of at-home test kits and masks to staff and students. He noted the CDC has updated its quarantine recommendation to five days, but that Lebanon will continue using a 10-day quarantine, to be reevaluated on 01/14/22. As of 01/10/22, confirmed cases of COVID are as follows: LMHS - 17, LMS - 15, LES – 9. Another update to the CDC recommendations is a shift away from contact tracing as a necessity, focusing instead on mitigation factors. The district is continuing to notify the school community of positive cases. The Board then discussed how contact tracing and case reporting is conducted at each school. D. Witcher asked how or if case reporting and potential exposure was monitored on buses, especially given that busing issues have resulted in adjusted, combined, and sometimes longer routes. She feels uneasy, as the situation on the buses isn't well-monitored, both regarding COVID protocols as well as larger bus staffing issues. D. Person noted that contact tracing is still conducted for athletic and extracurricular activities, and asked for further clarification. A. Gonzalez stated updated CIAC guidance was received today, and will be reviewed. D. Person noted the difference in how potential exposure is treated on buses versus athletic events. A. Gonzalez also noted that the state will allow staffers to use at-home tests for the time being.

IX. Facilities Report – V. Belles reported, reviewing the Facilities Tracking List. Updates for December include \$4,905.77 paid for services relating to the asbestos and windows project, \$17,270 paid to

Integrated Security for camera upgrades, as well as receipt of a verbal quote for \$17,345 from Budget Blinds.

X. Finance Report - V. Belles reported. She noted the status of section 520 of the budget report (Property/Liability Insurance), which shows a remaining balance of zero. The encumbered amount represents the final payment, which will be paid in June. That portion of the budget is right on target. She also noted two sections (614 – Repair & Maintenance Supplies, 619- Art Supplies) which have negative expenses. These are due to credits owed, which were taken advantage of by our bookkeeper. Regarding earlier questions about the contract with M & J (the busing company), and whether it is being fulfilled, she stated that communication had been received about the possibility of a credit being issued. A. Gonzalez reported that due to reports of buses not running as scheduled, he had reviewed the contract, and sent it to Shipman & Goodwin for their review. They agreed that the district would be owed a credit for any bus runs not performed as contracted. M & J will be submitting their numbers shortly, which the district will review and discuss thoroughly prior to acceptance. D. Whitcher asked about the reliability of communication regarding altered bus runs, especially to students and families who are most affected by scheduling changes.

XI. Discussion

- A. CAFE Membership** – S. Haynes included several items regarding membership to the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CAFE) in the board packet. She noted that legal fees represent a large portion of the district’s budget, and that a number of the services provided by CAFE would cover those areas, eliminating some legal expenditures. The membership fee is \$2,775 for the first year, and \$5,549 for every year thereafter, and would likely be covered by section 810 of the budget (Dues & Fees). M. Smith stated he would like more time to conduct research prior to voting. J. Konow asked if the district was required to sign up for multiple years, or if the option exists to end membership after year one. He also noted he had communicated with districts which had ended their membership with CAFE, and it seemed there were issues regarding the timeliness of CAFE’s replies. The Board discussed prior votes to join, which were voted down, as well as comparing the legal fees paid to Shipman & Goodwin against CAFE membership. There was also discussion of other services provided by CAFE, and what additional costs may not be covered by membership fees. Further research and discussions will be conducted prior to any vote.
- B. Remote Learning** – A. Gonzalez noted that given the rise in cases, the question of returning to remote learning has been raised. He stated that only the governor possesses the authority to make an emergency declaration requiring all schools to go remote. Individual schools must seek permission from the State Department of Education to go fully remote. The requirements are quite strict, and allow for limited duration remote learning. He stressed that the district does not possess the authority to switch to remote learning, independent of state approval.

XII. Action Items

- A. Act on Letter of Resignation**
Motion by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by M. Smith to act on the letter of resignation with regret. The motion passed unanimously.
- B. Act on 2022 Graduation Date**
Superintendent Gonzalez discussed recent updates to the school calendar as a result of inclement weather. The projected final day of school is currently June 16th. He proposes the Board set that date for graduation as well, so students and families can plan accordingly. N. McGillicuddy asked about the possibility of additional snow days, and whether this would change the graduation date. A. Gonzalez stated that it would not, and that additional school days (after graduation) would be required, if makeup days were needed. Any students not attending would receive unexcused absences. J. Apicelli stated that finals for seniors would have to be completed prior to graduation.
Motion by M. Smith and seconded by J. Konow to approve June 16th as the graduation date. Discussion continued, with M. Smith asking how and when graduation has been scheduled previously. A. Gonzalez stated the district has never set a graduation date, and

- frequently runs into issues booking venues, especially for post-graduation activities. D. Whitcher said she thought the Board had set a date in previous years, but that there was a deadline as to how early they were allowed to set it. R. Laskarzewski stated a state-imposed date of April 1st had existed previously, but he was unsure if it was still in effect. It was noted that if five school days are cancelled prior to March 1st, additional school closings will be made up during April break. N. McGillicuddy expressed her wish to wait on setting a graduation date before the end of snow season. M. Smith asked if there was any downside to waiting to set the date; A. Gonzalez replied there was not.
- M. Smith withdrew his motion to set the graduation date.** The issue is tabled until a later meeting, with research into the state's laws to be conducted.
- C. Act on use of non-lapsing funds for Central Office roof top unit
Motion by M. Smith and seconded by D. Person to allow non-lapsing funds to be used for the repair of the unit on the Central Office, in the amount of \$14,758. The motion passed unanimously.
 - D. Act on CABA Membership
Motion by A. Margerelli-Hussey and seconded by D. Person to table this action item pending further information. The motion passed unanimously.
 - E. Act on Second Reading, Policy #1011, Conduct by Members of the Public on School Property
 - F. Act on Second Reading, Policy # 4016, Substitute Teacher Categories
 - G. Act on Second Reading, Policy # 6005, Therapy Dogs
Motion by M. McCall and seconded by J. Konow to accept all three policies. The motion passed unanimously.
 - H. Act on Second Reading, Textbook for British Literature Course at LMHS: *Only Literature*
Motion by D. Person and seconded by J. Konow to accept the textbook for British Literature *Only Literature* for the coming year. D. Whitcher, N. McGillicuddy, M. McCall, S. Haynes, A. Margerelli-Hussey, J. Konow, and D. Person voted in favor. M. Smith and B. Calef voted against. The motion passed.
 - I. The Board returned to discussion regarding a graduation date. A. Margerelli-Hussey stated they are required to vote on tabling the issue. N. McGillicuddy noted the policy number pertaining to the issue (#6146.3) which confirms April 1st as the earliest date the Board may choose a graduation date. S. Haynes requested the issue be reviewed by the Policy committee.
Motion by M. Smith and seconded B. Calef to table action item #2. The motion passed unanimously.

XIII. Executive Session

Motion by A. Margerelli-Hussey and seconded by J. Konow to move into executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel and legal matters, and for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent's mid-year evaluation, inviting Superintendent Gonzalez. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board entered Executive Session at 9:11pm.

The meeting came out of Executive Session at 9:56 PM.

Motion by A. Margerelli-Hussey and seconded by N. McGillicuddy to extend the meeting no later than 10:15 PM. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by M. McCall and seconded by M. Smith to go into Executive Session at 9:57 for the purpose of discussing Superintendent Gonzalez' mid-year evaluation. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting came out of Executive Session at 10:13 PM.

XIV. Items for Next Agenda

Snow Removal Contract

XV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by the chair at 10:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Hannah Walcott (Board Clerk)