

Pending BOE Approval

**Watertown Board of Education  
Regular Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Date:** April 22, 2019  
**Meeting Time:** 7:30 p.m.  
**Meeting Place:** Lecture Hall, Watertown High School

**Members Present:** Ms. Leslie Crotty, Chairman  
Mr. Tom Lambert, Vice Chairman  
Mr. Robert Makowski  
Ms. Diane Bristol  
Ms. Cheryl Albino  
Ms. Cindy Eastman  
Ms. Josephine Cavallo-Rosa

**Members Absent:** Ms. Janelle Wilk, Secretary  
Ms. Cathie Rinaldi

**Others Present:** Dr. Rydell Harrison –Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Tom DiStasio – Business Manager

- A. Convene Regular Meeting – 7:30 p.m.**
- B. Salute to the Flag**
- C. Roll Call – Ms. Davidson**
- D. Minutes**

Agenda Item: D.1  
Subject: Minutes of the April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Regular Board of Education Meeting

Motion Presented By: Mr. Lambert  
Motion Seconded By: Ms. Eastman

Text of the Motion:	Madame Chair, I move that the Board approve of the minutes from the April 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2019 meeting of the Board of Education, as presented by Ms. Davidson
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion passed

#### E. PTO Recognitions

The Watertown Board of Education would like to honor the Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO) for their outstanding services to the school community. In order to support our students, they have created strong working relationships between our parents and our teachers. Their volunteer efforts in planning activities, events, fundraisers, and *much* more are greatly appreciated. We sincerely thank you for your hard work and your dedication to our schools.

**Ms. Crotty** - Tonight the Watertown Board of Education recognized Parent Teacher Organizations' leadership for their outstanding service to our school community. In order to support our students, they have created strong working relationships between our parents and our teachers, and helped to build a community where students and teachers can do their best work. Their volunteer efforts in planning thoughtful educational activities, unique and enticing family events, and fundraisers that align with our student and faculty needs are greatly appreciated. When they are not busy organizing, planning, and collecting, they are sharing their voices on matters important for student success, and providing insight and levity to the challenges we face as a school community. We are so thankful for their hard work and dedication to Watertown Public Schools.

##### **John Trumbull Primary School**

Kerry Dains, President  
Lauren Kellnhauser, President  
Carolyn Boynton, Vice President  
Becky Zadlo, Vice President

##### **Judson Elementary School**

Becky Zadlo, President  
Stephanie Varrone, Vice President

##### **Polk Elementary School**

Jodi Roundtree, President  
Megan Pienczykowski, Vice President

##### **Swift Middle School**

Diane Bristol, President  
Christina Neidt, Vice President

##### **Watertown High School**

Katie Consalvo, President

#### F. Superintendent's Recommendations and Report

##### 1. **Appointments – (Information Only)**

Ms. Suzanne Drapeau to the position of long term substitute art teacher at Watertown High

School, effective April 5, 2019 and continue until the last day of school. Ms. Drapeau will be paid the substitute retired teacher rate of \$100.00 per day for the first ten days, and on the eleventh day, the rate will change to \$251.16, Step 3, of the WEA contract of \$46,717.00 prorated.

Ms. Olga Spring to the position of long-term substitute special education paraprofessional, category 2, at Polk Elementary School, effective April 9, 2019 and continue until the last day of school. Ms. Spring will work 32.5 hours per week, at an hourly rate of \$12.00.

Mr. Mark Thorne to the position of long term substitute special education paraprofessional, category 2, at Swift Middle School, effective April 12, 2019 and continue until the last day of school. Mr. Thorne will work 32.5 hours per week, at an hourly rate of \$12.00.

2. **Transfers– (Information Only)**

None

3. **Resignations – (Information Only)**

None

4. **Superintendent’s Report**

**Dr. Harrison**– Good evening. Tonight we have just a couple of appointments and you will see that several of these are substitute positions. As a reminder, in our budget, one of the things that we’ve moved forward was to increase our sub pay daily rate from \$75 to \$85 and also to add some full time substitutes to each of our schools. In addition to these folks, we thought it was a good way to make sure there is consistency in our classrooms and that our teachers have the resources that they need when they have to be out for training or there is a sickness in their family.

Now that spring break is over, we are in the final stretch of the school year. All across our schools, our students are gearing up for end of year testing. Our high school juniors have taken the SATs, students in AP classes are counting down the days to their exams, and our elementary students at Judson & Polk will soon begin SBACs. This is the perfect time, in the midst of this testing season, to remind ourselves on the need to focus on the whole child. The whole child initiative is an effort to transform from a focus on narrowly defined academic achievements to one that promotes long term development and success of all children. Research, practice, and of course, common sense confirm that a whole child approach to education will develop and prepare our students for the challenges and opportunities of today and tomorrow by addressing students comprehensive needs through the shared responsibility of our students, families, schools, and communities. To establish a strong core, we cannot solely focus on academics; we must also prioritize a clear and cohesive approach to behavioral expectations and also social and emotional support. Meeting the social and emotional needs of our students is a significant part of our strategic plan, as we have witnessed significant changes in the needs of our students over the years; we have also had to makes changes in the ways that we utilize our resources. This is one of the reasons why we have included in our current budget for our upcoming budget a ½ school psychologist and also the expansion of DESA which is a social/emotional screener for all students. This is very

important, in the middle of budget season, the things that we are expanding on for our budget for next year are things that are really designed to meet the needs of our students. We have talked a lot about this as a community, as a board, and Mr. Brown is leading our social/emotional learning task force, and again, over and over we are seeing that these areas in our budget that may have been seen before as luxuries are really necessities. So just a reminder to us as a team and also to our community that we are really looking forward to moving forward a budget that is not just designed to meet our students' academic needs but also their social/emotional needs.

#### **G. Wall of Honor**

The Watertown Board of Education is currently seeking nominations for the Watertown High School Wall of Honor. The purpose of the Wall of Honor is to recognize those individuals that have brought distinction to Watertown High School and the community through their commitment to excellence. To be nominated to the Wall of Honor, a candidate must have graduated from Watertown High School at least 10 years prior to the year of induction and have consistently demonstrated the highest standards of excellence and honor in his or her chosen vocation. Award recipients will be chosen from the fields of: Athletics; Business/Finance; Fine/Performing Arts; Education; Health/Medical Services; Government/Public Service; and Science/Technology. Nomination Forms can be found on the district's website at [www.watertownps.org](http://www.watertownps.org). The completed nomination forms must be received in the district office no later than May 22, 2019.

#### **H. Public Participation**

**Joe Skowronski, Boys' Track & Field Captain, WHS** – Spoke on behalf of the Track and Field team to thank the Board and Superintendent for expediting the purchase of pole mat covers. They are still in need donations for high jump mats; they do not want another injury like the one suffered this week.

**Luke Calabrese, Boys' Track & Field Captain, WHS** – Spoke about his career ending injury because of the lack of proper equipment. Spoke about equipment issues, offers to purchase this equipment and its purpose. He is looking for a change in the system for getting the proper equipment in place and not it just being passed off.

#### **I. Committee Reports:**

**Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Ms. Cathie Rinaldi, Chair – No**  
**Policy and Labor Committee, Ms. Janelle Wilk, Chair – No**  
**Budget and Finance Committee, Ms. Diane Bristol, Chair – Yes**

Ms. Bristol thanked Dr. Harrison for the article in the *Town Times* explaining the budget in detail and how it was derived. She reminded everyone that the Town Council approved both the town budget and the Board of Ed budget and that the referendum is on May 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Facilities/PBC/Operations Committee, Mr. Thomas Lambert, Chair – No**  
**Governance and Community Engagement Committee, Mr. Robert Makowski, Chair – No**

**J. Communications - Secretary**

**Mr. Makowski** – Read a thank you note into the minutes from the Harrison Family

**K. Report from the Board Chair**

On October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018 the Town and Board received a letter from the State notifying them that the Town must pay the Board of Education \$568,954 to make up for a Minimum Budget Requirement shortfall, and that the Board must use those funds in the current fiscal year, which ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The letter stated that, pursuant to Connecticut General Statute Section 10-262, failure to appropriate those funds to the BOE by June 30<sup>th</sup>, will result in a forfeiture of \$1,137,908 in Watertown's Education Cost Sharing grant funds in 2020.

The Town of Watertown received \$568,954 more in Education Funding from the State than what was used for Education. Anyone who lived in CT could see how we may have received more than we thought we were getting; the amounts each town would receive changed last year from one month to the next. The State included in the letter the calculations they used to determine Watertown's shortfall. Both the Town and the Board of Ed did their due diligence and determined that the State is correct. In addition, the Town determined that there were no loopholes to avoid paying the additional education funds they received from the state, to the schools.

The Board is required by law to expend those funds by June 30<sup>th</sup>. Six months have passed since we received the letter and as we enter the last month and a half of school, we have yet to have those funds appropriated to the Board by the Town. Over the past few weeks, council members inquired about the \$568,954, and, as a courtesy, we provided a list to the Town of what we intend to spend the \$568,954 on.

Town Council Chairman Tom Winn does not want the Town's General Fund to lose \$568,954, and instead of using the largest leadership role in the Town of Watertown to work on ways to increase the General Fund and determine where those education funds went, he has publicly tried to encourage a cut to the Board of Ed budget to make up those funds, has publicly tried to make it seem like the Board has hidden what the school budget increase for next year actually is, has tried to detract attention away from the fact that the Town has received the education funds the state is requiring the Town to appropriate to us, and he is risking \$1,137,908 in Watertown's future Education Cost Sharing grant funds.

The Board of Ed's budget presentation clearly shows our increase, and exactly how it was determined. The only one trying to make it confusing and the only one being non-transparent, is Town Council Chairman Tom Winn.

We must not allow anyone to misrepresent who we are as a district, who we are as a Board, and we must not allow Tom Winn to withhold education funds given to us by the State. Our students, our employees, our residents, deserve better. I no longer have confidence in Tom Winn's ability to put the best interest of our Town and our Schools, ahead of his own, and I strongly encourage Town Council Chairman Tom Winn to appropriate those funds to the Board of Education, because we have a legal obligation to spend them.

**L. Action Items – Adoption of Items to be Approved by Consent**

Agenda Item:

L.1

Subject:

Consideration of the Approval of Gifts

Motion Presented By: Ms. Rosa  
Motion Seconded By: Ms. Bristol

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Board accept these two generous donations as presented and that letters of appreciation be sent to the donors.

Discussion: Ms. Crotty – We have received two generous gifts: one from Ms. Shirley Plourde of Oakville who donated a check for \$672.08 to the Watertown High School Baseball team and Ms. Monica Nolan who donated a check for \$331.57 for Watertown High School Field Hockey and Track.

Opposed: None  
Abstained: None  
Vote: Motion Passes

**M. Public Participation (Please state name, address and topic of discussion)**

None

**N. Adjournment**

Agenda Item: N.1  
Subject: To adjourn the meeting

Motion Presented By: Mr. Makowski  
Motion Seconded By: Ms. Albino

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that we adjourn

Discussion: None

Opposed: None  
Abstained: None  
Vote: Motion Passes

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mindi Davidson  
Recording Secretary

Janelle Wilk  
Secretary of the Board