

Pending BOE Approval

**Watertown Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Date: November 26, 2018
Meeting Time: 7:30 p.m.
Meeting Place: Lecture Hall, Watertown High School

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

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Dr. Rydell Harrison –Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Tom DiStasio – Business Manager
Ms. Alyssa Perugini – Student Council Representative

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 November 13th, 2018 Regular Board of Education Meeting

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

Text of the Motion:	Madame Chair, I move that the Board approve of the minutes of the November 13 th , 2018 Board of Education Regular Meeting as presented by Ms. Davidson
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	Ms. Wilk Ms. Albino
Vote:	Motion passed

E. Board of Education Member Vacancy

Nomination for consideration of approval of a candidate for appointment to the Board of Education

Ms. Crotty – As per the Watertown Town Charter, chapter 2, section 206: vacancy, when a seat on the Board of Education is vacated prior to the expiration of the term, the Board of Ed may appoint a candidate to the Board until the expiration of the original term or until the next municipal election occurs, whichever comes first. In this case, Mr. Vicenzi's term expires on November 5th of 2019 and there are no municipal elections prior to that date. I have a copy of the charter at that section if any of you would like to look and verify that. At this time, I would like to ask the Board if there is a motion:

Agenda Item:	E.1
Subject:	To Appoint a New Member to the Board of Education
Motion Presented By:	Ms. Rinaldi
Motion Seconded By:	Mr. Lambert
Text of the Motion:	Madame Chair, I move that the Board appoint Ms. Diane Bristol to the Board of Education, effective immediately, to fill the remainder of the term vacated by Mr. Vic Vicenzi, expiring on November 5 th , 2019.
Discussion:	Diane Bristol grew up in Watertown and graduated from Watertown High School in 1989. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Management from Bentley University and is the Director of Operations Accounting at Cartus, an industry leader of global corporate relocation, with whom she has worked for 19 years. She has extensive knowledge in the areas of finance, management, and banking. Locally, Diane has played an

integral part of the Watertown Public Schools volunteer community for over a decade, holding parent/teacher/student organizations executive board positions at Judson, Swift and Watertown High School. She is currently the Swift PTSO President and the WHS PTO Vice President. She also serves as a member of the Project Graduation committee. Diane's service to the students of Watertown extends to athletics, having served as a team mom for Pop Warner football and as a member of the Pop Warner Cheer committee. Ms. Bristol and her husband Pete reside in Watertown together with their sons Robbie, a senior at Watertown High School, and Nick, an 8th grader at Swift Middle School. And that is just a little bit about our nominee this evening.

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion passed

F. Oath of Office

The oath of office was administered to Ms. Bristol.

G. Reconvene Regular Meeting

H. Report from Student Council Representative – Alyssa Perugini

Ms. Perugini - Mrs. Meka reports from **John Trumbull** that during the month of November, the preschool students learned the social skill of "asking for help" which was taught through the reading of a book and guided practice. The students learned how to use sign language to ask for help as well. Students in kindergarten have learned various reading strategies such as pointer power, sound power, and picture power. In writing, kindergarteners are beginning to write simple sentences with matching pictures. During math workshop, students are playing various numbers and comparing games. First graders have become "word detectives", looking closely at words and applying reading strategies to solve tricky words. They have learned how to write procedural texts that teach a specific audience about things they know how to do well. In math, students have been sorting, describing, identifying and comparing 2-D and 3-D shapes. Second graders have been learning how to read nonfiction. They are noticing, learning, and questioning while reading so they can have conversations about the nonfiction topics. During writing class, students have been writing as many "all about" books as they can. In math, second graders are learning about geometry, sorting, drawing and describing shapes.

Principal Fekete reports from **Polk** that all Polk Students participated in various classroom activities on Veteran's Day to honor our veterans. Students watched videos, read articles and

wrote thank you cards. In the intimate setting of the classroom students were able to dig deep, ask questions, and reflect on the significance of this day and the sacrifice of our veterans. On November 14th, Polk teachers recognized World Diabetes Day by writing HOPE on their hands. This simple act was intended to raise awareness about Diabetes and show love and support to the many students at Polk that live with Diabetes each day. Polk's next town meeting will be tomorrow night. The theme is Risk Taking. Students will be recognized for taking academic and social risks throughout the month of November.

Mrs. Skully reports from **Judson** fifth grade teacher, Ms. McIntosh was recognized as Judson School's "Turkey of the Year". Students purchased the most feathers to decorate her turkey. In total, \$1,550.00 was raised to benefit the Watertown food bank. The Judson School PTO hosted an "Adult Night Out" at the Old Platform 6. It was a relaxing, social gathering with good food and good conversation. Teachers are so appreciative that they have Chromebooks available to all students in their classrooms. This allows teachers and students more access to online resources and programs.

Ms. Lerz reported from **Swift** that ten Swift student athletes recently attended the Junior NVL Leadership Conference at Tyrrell Middle School. The students worked with peers from other local middle schools on team building activities and also heard guest speakers address issues such as goal setting and being a role model. Student athletes from Swift include: Karina Deros, Madison Buono, Ashley D'Elia, Kyle Zaccagnini, Adriana Melaragno, Kayla Bonderenko, Zach Polletta, Declan Connolly, Kami Labella, and Adriana Dandonoli. The Swift Middle School Leo Club proudly welcomed twenty new members to the club this week. The Leo Club Induction celebrated the new members with a short ceremony and reception attended by the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Harrison, and led by the club advisors, Mrs. Wohlheiter and Mr. Sales. The Leo Club promotes student leadership and community service and is associated with the local Lions Club.

Mr. Carroll reports from **Watertown High School** that on December 6th, 7th, and 8th, the WHS Theatre Department will host "Midsummer Jersey", a contemporary spin-off on a Mid-Summer Night's Dream. All show times will be at 7:00 pm. On December 13th, the WHS Music and Choral department will be hosting a winter concert from 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm. in the auditorium. The snow date for the concert is December 18th at 6:30 pm. Also, the Field Hockey team qualified for the CIAC Class M State Tournament. They finished the year strong with an 8-8 record with wins over Shepaug, Joel Barlow, and Bethel. Congrats to Chloe Defeo and Jordyn Forte for making first and second team all-state, respectively. Congrats to Kelsey Dejesus for gaining second place in the CIAC Open Diving Championship. Congratulations to Hannah Jack, as she has been selected for the National Association of Music Educators Eastern Division Mixed Choir. Hannah will be attending the festival in Pittsburg from April 4th to April 7th. Only 8% of ensembles were selected from Connecticut. The following students were accepted into the Northern Region Music Festival for choir: Skylar Bartush, Bonnie DiAngelis, Ruth Fomo, Hannah Jack, and Hayley Zemaitis. For band: Carissa Deschaine, Jesse Kaye, Cailin McGuire, Jack Ryan, and Noah Ryan were selected. Last week, Dr. Harrison invited me to sit in on one of the Superintendent Student Advisory Meetings. Dr. Harrison addressed the common theme for the group being, the development of a strategic plan along with developing a vision of a graduate.

While there are three aspects to this plan “Watertown Cares”, “Watertown Learns”, and “Watertown Leads”, the main focus of this meeting was “Watertown Cares”. After Dr. Harrison shared with the group a survey conducted last year for grades 3-8, regarding school environment, students in the advisory group brainstormed ideas to promote and reinforce positive and respectful behavior. The group of about 10 students sat in a restorative circle in this Lecture Hall, where each student had the opportunity to speak when it was their turn with the ball. Their own thoughts, ideas, concerns, and opinions regarding the survey were shared without interruption. An over branching topic of discussion was school safety, both physical and mental. By the end of the meeting, Dr. Harrison and the students developed a goal to create a challenging, productive, and supportive environment while being respectful of the differences of others.

I. Superintendent’s Recommendations and Report

1. Appointments – (Information Only)

Ms. Jennifer Cello to the position of Paraprofessional, Category 1 for Watertown High School, effective November 30, 2018, being paid a contractual hourly rate of \$14.87 at 32.50 hours per week, per the Paraprofessional Contract.

Mr. Jeremy Plourde to the position of Long-Term Substitute Paraprofessional, Category 5 for Watertown High School, effective November 20, 2018, being paid the long-term substitute rate of \$12.00 hourly, thirty (30) hours per week.

Ms. Kendall Salch to the position of Paraprofessional, Category 2/Special Education at John Trumbull Primary School, effective November 26, 2018. Being paid a contractual hourly rate of \$14.87 working thirty (30) hours per week, per the Paraprofessional Contract.

Ms. Leisha Eckerlin to the position of Homework Club Co-Advisor for Polk Elementary School, effective for the 2018-2019 school year, being paid the WEA contractual stipend amount of \$774.50.

Ms. Ashleeann Graham to the position of Invention Convention Advisor for Polk Elementary School, effective for the 2018-2019 school year, being paid the WEA contractual stipend amount of \$759.00.

Ms. Valerie Tasker to the position of Homework Club Co-Advisor for Polk Elementary School, effective for the 2018-2019 school year, being paid the WEA contractual stipend amount of \$774.50.

Ms. Jessica D’Addona to the position of Student Council Co-Advisor for Polk Elementary School, effective for the 2018-2019 school year, being paid half the WEA stipend amount of \$516.50.

Ms. Erica Wilson to the position of Student Council Co-Advisor for Polk Elementary School, effective for the 2018-2019 school year, being paid the WEA contractual stipend amount of \$516.50.

2. **Transfers – (Information Only)**

Ms. Johanna Semmelroth-Koval to the position of Paraprofessional-Special Education/Category 2 at John Trumbull Primary School to Paraprofessional, Category 1 at Watertown High School, effective November 19, 2018.

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

Ms. Cheryl Philips from the position of English Language Learners (ELL) at Watertown High School, effective November 21, 2018, for personal reasons

4. **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Harrison – Good evening everyone. I want to start by saying thank you to Alyssa for the report about our Student Advisory meeting, not just for participating, but also capturing that work. At our last Board Meeting, I was really excited to give an overview of our strategic planning process and a timeline for the year. You can hear from Alyssa's presentation that we are really trying to pull in lots of different voices to be a part of the development of this plan that I believe will lead us through the next three to five years and really be representative of who we are as a community and where we want to go. This Thursday, here at the high school, we are hosting an event to develop a Vision of a Graduate of Watertown Public Schools. In this meeting, we will have opportunities for our folks that come to talk in small groups and look at some other plans, but also talk about some big ideas of where we want our students to be at the time that they graduate. This is a really critical piece and I am really happy to report tonight that we have over 80 people that have RSVP'd, which is great, as I was hoping for 35....that was the number I had in the back of my head. Included in that list are many of our administrators and Board members. We are excited to have the Dean of the Malcolm Baldrich School of Business joining us. The Assistant Director of Naugatuck Community College, the Director of Community Relations from Post and also a professor from Naugatuck Valley from the English Department and the Director of the Waterbury Campus. I think that it is great to have voices from higher Ed as part of this process. We have also tried to connect with some of our community business owners to be able to get a full picture of what we want our students to be able to do and the qualities that we would want them to have as graduates. It is also important to have our students included in that process so I have invited the students from our advisory council to that as well to be able to give their input.

We have started working on our theory of action two weeks ago and our administrative council that will guide our thinking and our work. We will continue that work at the cabinet level and I will share that with the Board at a later update. I want to say a thank you to all of our Board members and community members that came out to the WTA ribbon cutting ceremony this past week. It was a great opportunity to see the new space and to acknowledge our staff and administration and to also be there in support of our students as well.

And as for an announcement to the community, the snow season is upon us, and we “weathered” our first storm together. I want to say a public thank you to Public Works, to our facilities and maintenance for getting our schools ready for students to come in for a two hour delay. I was very pleased to share with family and friends in North Carolina that with 6+ inches of snow, we only had a two hour delay. That is not because of any work that I did, but because of the strong people that we have in our community and our district that go the extra mile preparing our schools. I sent a snow letter to all of our families indicating that what our process is for closing and of course, Board members, you all know that it is not something that we do lightly, but we spend a lot of time talking with representatives from our town, looking at what is happening in other districts, and working closely with a meteorologist at 4 in the morning for a conference call. I want to just say thank you at the start of the community and just remind the community that we really try hard to get it right. Obviously educating our students is most important and thanks to our administrations for not only developing the two hour delay, but also the three hour delay, which we think will help us to save some snow dates as we make our way through the season.

There are a number of appointments tonight, one transfer and one resignation for your review.

There was a question regarding the 90 minute delay – this delay has been done away with, there is no longer a 90 minute delay, only a two hour and three hour delay, which will give us the flexibility we will need. I also want to note that we have had a couple of early releases so far due to heat, and one of the changes that we made to the high school schedule is that on early release days, all students will have the opportunity to visit the cafeteria. What we have found is that the number of students with free/reduced lunch is increasing and we want to be cognoscente of the fact that this lunch that they get at school may be the best meal of their day and so we want to make sure they have that opportunity to eat if school has an early release.

J. Items of Discussion:

Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) & Proposed Capital Improvement Fund

Dr. Harrison – In relationship to the discussion about the MBR, as a cabinet, we are looking at the reductions that we had in development of our 18/19 budget and looking at the reductions in three areas: staff reductions, supplies and service reductions and facilities reductions. When we look at all of that together, it is about a million dollars in reductions in order for the current budget that we are living in to pass. In thinking about how we are going to use these funds going forward, the approximately \$568,000. We are looking at restoring some of these areas that were previously reduced and allocating those resources proportionality to align with the ways that they were cut. So for instance, 65% of the million dollar reduction was related to staffing reductions, so then looking at the money we would set aside about 65% to help restore some of those pieces. As part of the strategic process, we are engaging in a needs comparative assessment which will give us a better picture of where we should be allocating funds and having lots of discussions in our cabinet meetings about how we are prioritizing those areas. One of the large parts of our budget is related to how we can plan for and secure funds for larger capital improvement projects that need to be taken care of in order to maintain our facilities.

One of the things that administration is proposing to the Board is to move a proposal forward to the town to create a Capital Improvement Fund. I shared with the committee earlier this evening a draft of this Capital Improvement Fund document that was created by the town’s

attorney. The process for establishing this fund is that administration makes a recommendation to the Board, and then the Board makes a recommendation to the town to establish this fund. Our goal for establishing this fund is to set aside money to pay for long term or larger capital improvements that would extend beyond one year. Our proposal is that we set aside between .05 and 1% to be allocated for this fund each year. This would give us approximately \$227,000 annually that we would put into this fund for larger projects. In addition to allocating funds from our annual budget, the other sources of income for this fund would be fundraising activities that are supported by sporting groups or parent organizations or even the Board of Ed. Those can be created to put monies into this fund. Also, charitable gifts....if it was specified for this fund; we would follow the procedures for a gift and place it into this fund. Another place we anticipate funds coming into this account is any positive savings that came from the end of the year. Of course, we don't anticipate a huge amount of money coming from that, as Mr. DiStasio and I and our administration, we are working to be very fiscally responsible with those finances and making sure we are allocating and making adjustments for our budget as we go. In the event that there is money at the end of a fiscal year, if we wanted to have the option of putting some of the money towards the capital fund, and in the last place, the Board has made a change in policy in regards to facility rental fees and our proposal was that these fees would be set aside to out into this capital improvement fund. So that is our proposal, it follows our town charter; it has been looked at by the town's attorney, and aligns with our general statutes as well. It is also a good opportunity to think about how we are supporting our and maintain our facilities. So flipping back to our conversation on MBR, our goal is to take part of the \$568,000 and allocate that to the capital improvement fund so that as we go into the 19/20 fiscal year, we will already have a balance of money in that account...about \$227,000 into that account. The final proposal for the MBR additional appropriation...that will come to the board in our January update.

Ms. Crotty – Just as a reminder, we are not creating a policy here, we are creating a proposal to be sent to the Town Council presented by Dr. Harrison. Town Council has fiscal authority over all funds such as these. With their approval, then we would be able to create the funds.

K. Public Participation

None

L. Report from the Board Chair

Ms. Crotty – Just a brief statement I want to make about upcoming dates for the Board of Education to take note of. As Dr. Harrison explained, we have the November 29th Vision of a Graduate and thank you to all Board members that are able to come. On December 10th, we will have a Facilities meeting at 6:00 pm. For those of you that are on the Facilities committee, I am sure you are aware of that as the message came out today. For those of you not on the committee, please make an attempt to come as we will be discussing the capital improvement plan as it relates to budget and long term planning. On December 17th, as a reminder, we have a workshop with Atty. Jessica Ritter. She will be in the Watertown High School Library at 6:30. For those if you who haven't been to these, she will walk us through some of the newer legislation. One of the things I asked her to also concentrate on was some of the regulations regarding negotiations. I am looking to increase the number of members of the Board of Ed that may want to be involved in negotiations and if you have any other items, please let me know so I can email

her and see what we can do. In the New Year in January, we have two meetings on the 14th and the 28th and I would like to note that most likely we will have some subcommittee meetings prior to those meetings given budget season is upon us.

M. Committee Reports:

Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Ms. Cathie Rinaldi, Chair – No
Policy and Labor Committee - No
Budget and Finance Committee, Mr. Thomas Lambert, Chair – Yes

During our meeting tonight, we discussed the MBR and the Capital Improvement Plan.

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

N. Communications - Secretary

None

O. Action Items – Adoption of Items to be Approved by Consent

Agenda Item:	O.1
Subject:	Consideration and Possible Approval of a Proposal to the Town Council to establish a Capital Improvement Fund
Motion Presented By:	Mr. Lambert
Motion Seconded By:	Ms. Wilk
Text of the Motion:	Madame Chair, I move that the Board approve of the Capital Improvement Fund Proposal as presented.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	Ms. Bristol
Vote:	Motion Passes

P. Future Agenda Items and Board Members’ Comments

None

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

None

R. Adjournment

Agenda Item:	R.1
Subject:	To adjourn the meeting
Motion Presented By:	Ms. Rinaldi
Motion Seconded By:	Mr. Makowski
Text of the Motion:	Madame Chair, I move that we adjourn
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion Passes

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mindi Davidson
Recording Secretary

Janelle Wilk
Secretary of the Board