

Pending BOE Approval

**Watertown Board of Education  
Regular Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Date:** March 27, 2017  
**Meeting Time:** 7:30 p.m.  
**Meeting Place:** Lecture Hall, Watertown High School

**Members Present:** Mr. Tom Lambert, Vice Chairman  
Ms. Janelle Wilk, Secretary  
Mr. Robert Makowski  
Mr. Victor Vicenzi  
Mr. Jim Gambardella  
Ms. Josephine Cavallo-Rosa  
Ms. Cheryl Albino

**Members Absent:** Ms. Leslie Crotty, Chairman  
Ms. Cathie Rinaldi

**Others Present:** Dr. Bridget Carnemolla – Superintendent of Schools  
Jill Browne – Business Manager  
Ali Deka – 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 March 13, 2017 Regular Board of Education Meeting

Motion Presented By: Ms. Wilk  
Motion Seconded By: Ms. Albino

Text of the Motion:	Mr. Chairman, I move that the board approve of the minutes of the March 13, 2017 regular meeting of the Board of Education as presented.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	Mr. Vicenzi
Vote:	Motion Passes

### E. Award Recognition

1. The Watertown Board of Education wishes to recognize the following Judson Elementary School students for their participation in Student Council.

#### Grade 4

Ava Kyle – Vice President  
Isabella Lombardo – Recording Secretary

Advisors: Mrs. Patricia Chipko &  
Mrs. Sherri Marquardt

#### Grade 5

Jason Hanis – President  
Charlotte Carlson – Corresponding Sect  
Abigail Metcalfe – Treasurer

2. Recognition of Music Students

*The Month of March is Music in Our Schools Month*

The Watertown Board of Education would like to congratulate and recognize the following students that were accepted into music festivals for 2017. They were selected by private audition and represent some of the most motivated and talented students in the area.

#### **Watertown High School**

**Joshua Rodis**, Grade 12, Connecticut Northern Regional High School Music Festival, All State Music Festival, NAFME Eastern Division Honors Chorus and All National Choir - Tenor.

**Julia Squillace**, Grade 11, Connecticut Northern Regional High School Music Festival, All State Music Festival, NAFME Eastern Division Honors Chorus - Alto.

**Mary Ryan**, Grade 12, Connecticut Northern Regional High School Music Festival and All State Music Festival - Soprano.

**Mei Jiang**, Grade 11, Connecticut Northern Regional High School Music Festival and All State Music Festival - Flute

**Hayley Zemaitis**, Grade 10, Connecticut Northern Regional High School Music Festival and All State Music Festival - Soprano.

**Vanessa Morse**, Grade 11, Connecticut Northern Regional High School Music Festival – Alto.

**Swift Middle School**

**Melany Boivin**, Grade 8, Connecticut Northern Regional Middle School Music Festival - Alto.

**Jordan Elliott**, Grade 8, Connecticut Northern Regional Middle School Music Festival - Baritone.

**Ruth Fomo**, Grade 7, Connecticut Northern Regional Middle School Music Festival - Alto.

**Jesse Kaye**, Grade 8, Connecticut Northern Regional Middle School Music Festival – BbClarinet.

**Charlotte Manalo**, Grade 6, Connecticut Northern Regional Middle School Music Festival - Percussion.

**Noah Ryan**, Grade 8, Connecticut Northern Regional Middle School Music Festival – Bb Bass Clarinet.

**F. Report from Student Council Representative – Ali Dika**

At John Trumbull, the JTPS PTO held an auction on Saturday, March 18th, bringing 180 families together and raising \$20,000 for the school and \$5000 for the family of the terminally ill second grade student. The Swift Water Oak Adolescent Heroes visited, teaching a lesson to every K-2 classroom, focusing on the importance of kindness and being unique.

In Judson school, thirty two student inventors participated in the Invention Convention on March 14th, with seven of them moving on to a regional competition. Students will be taking Interim Block Assessments in math class which is one way that teachers can check student progress throughout the year.

At Polk School, the Student Council raised \$750 for the March of Dimes by selling shamrocks last week. On Friday, March 24th, the Polk School Safety Committee met with Jill Browne, Remo Ceniccola and other local law enforcement officials to complete the School Vulnerability Assessment.

At Swift, the Swift Student Council held a three on three after school basketball tournament, raising \$900 for the Jimmy V Foundation. Swift students have been preparing for the Smarter Balance testing using the Chromebooks, with official testing starting during the first week of April with the CMTs for Grade 8 and LA and MA testing after spring break.

And finally at Watertown High School, seniors are working hard to complete their Capstone projects, having led various activities to raise awareness and funds to support needs in both our local community and abroad, such as volleyball tournaments, open mic nights, talent shows, and more. The district Art Show on Thursday, March 16th at Watertown High School was a great success, showcasing the artistic talents of our students from Kindergarten to graduating seniors.

**G. Superintendent's Recommendations and Report****1. Appointments – (Information Only)**

Mr. Martin Ariola to the position of School Psychologist for Swift Middle school, effective start date of April 18, 2017, to be paid the contractual salary of \$61,002.00, Step 7, MA 6<sup>th</sup> Year, prorated, per the WEA Agreement.

Mr. Christian Callahan to the position of Junior Varsity Baseball Coach for Watertown High School, effective for the 2016-2017 school year, receiving a stipend in the amount of \$2,338.00, per the WEA Contract.

Mr. Brian LaFontaine to the position of Girls Outdoor Track Head Coach for Watertown High School, effective for the 2016-2017 school year, receiving a stipend in the amount of \$3,068.00, per the WEA Contract.

Ms. Cassie Mineo to the position of Long-Term Substitute Third Grade Teacher at Polk Elementary School, effective March 27, 2017, to be paid the rate of \$75.00 per day for the first 10 days and \$230.96 on the eleventh day thereafter, Step 2 of the WEA Agreement.

Ms. Samar Zaghloul to the position of Title I Tutor for John Trumbull Primary School, effective February 13, 2017 through June 12, 2017 to be paid the rate of \$16.00 per hour/6 hours per day with a half hour unpaid lunch.

2. **Transfers – (Information Only)**

None

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

Ms. Kelly Spargo from the position of District Wide Social Worker, effective July 1, 2017 for the purpose of relocating.

4. **Superintendent's Report**

Thank you. First, I would like to thank the staff and administration at Judson School for assisting me in the development of a visit for our board members to see the work that we are doing in grades 3 – 5 in action. Several of us were able to visit Judson with Dr. Parlato and Mrs. Scully last Monday. We saw a great example of fourth grade math being taught according to the new standards, we saw a class being taught in the Library and in the Technology Lab. Students were using chromebooks to do research in the Library and evaluate authors and evaluate sources of information related to that author. In the Technology Lab, we saw students creating Google Slide presentations and critiquing each other's presentations. The interesting way to watch the intermeshing of a higher level skill that we teach across the district, and looks different across each grade level, but the cognitive rigor matrix, that is a higher level skill we teach students and we certainly had a chance to see that in action. Clearly teaching students how to evaluate sources online is a key skill in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, so I think we saw some great examples of what we are doing right now in Watertown Public Schools. I want to mention for the record that we went to Judson for scheduling. We wanted to see something in this grade level, and as you know, the Library and Technology teachers are in the school in the afternoon and it worked out to do the visit in the afternoon. This is a continuation of some of the visits that we started in the district so that we can see some of the work in action. We visited Kindergarten last year at JTPS and we also visited the high school, so now we are making our way back and our next visit,

probably in the fall, will be at the middle school so see some of the programs being offered there.

Over the last two weeks, administrators have been working to finalize the standardized testing schedules at Polk, Judson, Swift and Watertown High. The tests include the Smarter Balance test in language arts and math, the mastery tests in science, and we have also been scheduling the SAT, which I believe is April 3<sup>rd</sup>, at Watertown High School. The majority of the testing that is required for the state will take place throughout the month of April and the first half of May. The strategy that we have employed and will continue to use is to place the Math testing as late in the schedule as possible so that students experience as much mathematics as possible in the classroom before the testing. Likewise, we are required to do standardized testing for any students that use English language learners by law. We have about 75 learners in the district who are labeled as English language learners where the primary language of our students is Albanian. We also have some Spanish, Macedonian, Italian, and a number of others that are primary for our student, but the most prevalent is Albanian. They take a test that called Las Linx and it is to determine which students might need additional services or if the services can be discontinued depending on how well that they do. The basis is that they are looking for the students to be proficient in English and that is shown by academic work, but also speaking and writing.

The art show was very well done, this is the second year that we did it at the scale that we did here. Thank you to the High School for hosting it and to the Art teachers throughout the district who really worked hard with our students to highlight their talents. The showcase was amazing. We also had the coffee house at John Trumbull Primary School last week and that is a program where we began to show the musical talents and programs of our students, so I want to thank our music instructors for that as well. We did it a little differently this year in the way that it was set up, and I think it went well, we had nearly 400 people that came to see them.

I was at the Rotary Club meeting last week where the students of the month were recognized from the high school and after that was when we had a visit at Judson and we went to see the chromebook donation in effect at that school. We had the Rotary Club donate a chromebook cart last year, and then they followed it up with a charging station donation. It has been a welcome addition because it is mobile and it helps us maintain the inventory safely, it locks, and the chromebooks can be charge at any time no matter what classroom it is in. We had a nice visit with about 8 Rotary members that came to Judson to see the students using the donation. I have been to all five schools over the last two weeks, more than once on several occasions, and as Mr. Deka mentioned, we have begun the vulnerability building assessments, which is part of the school safety and security, and we do it every two years to go through a checklist again to see where we are in terms of the latest requirements for school safety. To put it into perspective, the last time that this was done, it was done in preparation of applying for the school security grant, and the results of that were putting in the cameras, the key cards, the panic systems and a number of other changes to the facilities and also the policies and procedures. We continue to reevaluate our policies and procedures every year, and we do it with a large team that typically includes teachers, administrators, nurses, fire fighters, police officers, but this is a specific committee that meets in each schools, full of all of the same people that I mentioned, we also have the emergency management director that retired, SGT. Bromly. I

am involved in some of them, but it depends on scheduling. From my office, we look at the data collection...what pieces are in place, what do we need to think about putting in or revise in the plans? They are living documents, so every time there is a drill that is run, there is almost always some sort of changes that we make in some piece of the plan, no matter how small. We have done three out of the five schools with the other two being scheduled in the next two weeks and then we are also doing Munson House, which was not done in the past. Thank you to Mrs. Browne for heading them up and to Officers Desena and Rivera, who were also present, SGT. Bromly and Chief Black. They are about 1 – 2 hours and they take considerable time to complete the checklist on the data. We will bring the plans back to the board again when we finish it up.

#### **H. Discussion Regarding Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Teachers**

Thank you. So each year by our procedures, and to comply with state law, we notice all non-tenured teachers in the district. A non-tenured teacher is someone typically with less than five years with us. So from day one through the end of your fourth-year, you are a non-tenured teacher by law. Unless, for example, you worked two years somewhere else as a teacher and then came to Watertown, you would have two more years here, or if you were already tenured in another district, you are what is called fast tracked into tenure here. So, generally speaking, with a new teacher to Watertown, is a difficult procedure, because we are telling all of our non-tenured teachers I will recommend to the board that they are being served with a nonrenewal. We do that so that if we did have to have a reduction in force, because of budgetary constraints, we would be within the timeline established by statute and they would have been noticed by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Generally speaking, however, it is nearly an impossibility to have a reduction in force of any sort of teachers, because as you know, if we were able to reduce any of the positions we would have done that as we moved through and put this budget together. To give you an idea of how many teachers had a non-renewal letter and the entire district, it is 67. So the fact of the matter is we could not run the school district if they were not renewed. But to be safe, and as has been our policy, we notice everyone in advance of May 1. Since I have been the superintendent, I have done at the same way. I go to each school, I bring the letters with me, I hand-deliver them in advance of this meeting, I give every one of the 67 teachers a letter, and then bring them together in a room with me, union representation, and an administrator, and I tell them the process, and we are in compliance with the law. You might imagine we face many questions as to whether or not this means they should look for other jobs and how likely do I believe it to be that they will actually be not renewed, especially the ones that are the newer hires, and as I always explained to them, we have to do this and I would hope not to reduce the teaching force at all no matter what became of the budget, because as you know, we are very lean a teaching department, given the number of students and the number of students with needs that we have, and the overall class sizes. In most classes, we are close to where we would like to be, we are a little higher than we would like to be given some of the grade levels, and as I explained to them, we allow that to happen to some degree in some grade levels, because we're trying to think ahead as we hire, so every year since I have been the superintendent, when we have looked at class sizes, the projected for the next year and we would know that we would have X number and third grade, X number and fourth grade, etc. and we run the numbers with the teachers that we have, and if we find that we have one larger class coming through for example, and we do have that happen fairly often, instead of adding interposition what we had typically done, is moved to teachers from another grade to cover. We have also done that school to school. These are some of the examples that I give my meet with the teachers so that they understand we have been very purposeful and strategic anytime a position has been added

versus reallocating a current position. Which, again, is contingent upon them having the appropriate certification to move any teacher within the district. We have done that in the previous years, and we will do that again in the fall to meet the demands of the incoming grade levels without hiring anymore teachers. We will not be hiring anymore teachers within this current year's budget, but we will have to move teachers within grade levels and possibly within schools. I do deliver the letters in advance of this meeting so that they do not find out by watching or listening to our meeting. After we carry the motion forward tonight, a second letter goes out as I tell all of them, it may be the scarier letter, but the latter does tell them that they are non-renewed in advance of May 1. Then we wait for the referendum, and if the referendum passes, then we leave everything as is, I come back to the board and I recommend that you rescind their letters of nonrenewal, and they get another letter that tells them it has been rescinded and they are employed in the fall. If not, and there were significant cuts made, we would have to have a discussion to see if we would allow certain class sizes, in some cases, in excess of 30 in the grades of K – 5, if we were to reduce individual teachers. Or, if we were going to discontinue offering some of the courses and programs of studies at the high school, for example, we would have to make the strategic decisions and then decide if any of those non-renewal's would remain and not be rescinded. That is the process we have carried out and I have explained to the administrators in all of the teachers.

**I. Discussion Regarding the 2016 – 2017 School Year Calendar**

We had a total of seven days of the schools were closed for weather related incidences. That means that we have to make up seven days at the end of June, so that will bring our new last a day of school to June 21, 2017. For the record, the April vacation is remaining as it is now and none of those days have been removed. Our April vacation is in effect an intact. It will start Monday, April 10, and go through the 13<sup>th</sup>, where the 14<sup>th</sup> is considered holiday.

**J. Discussion Regarding the Proposed Design and Installation of a Press Box at Watertown High School**

Tonight, the Facilities subcommittee met to discuss this item. Some of the discussion items included safety glass on the garage door, a small platform for each exit door upon exiting, hand railings on one side of the platform, and we discussed other things such as a rubber membrane roof, joist sizes and school colors. It will be painted the same school colors as the concession stand. We would like to thank the Water-Oak Circle of Sports for donating this building in some of the other things that may come about such as some electrical installations, lighting, occupancy permits.... And we had some very good suggestions by the subcommittee. After much discussion, we approve the design and installation by consensus and we will move this item for discussion and possible approval by the board tonight.

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

None

**L. Report from the Board Chair**

None

**M. Committee Reports:**

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

Dr. Carnemolla presented a budget to the committee last week. The Town Council will meet on March 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 to discuss all budgets with input from the finance subcommittee.

**Facilities/PBC/Operations Committee, Mr. Thomas Lambert, Chair – Yes**

Tonight, at our meeting, we discussed the design and the installation of the press box at Watertown high school. We discussed design and engineering specifications and there was a consensus to move this item for possible approval under action item O.4.

**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 to Approve the Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Teachers

Motion Presented By:	Mr. Vicenzi
Motion Seconded By:	Mr. Gambardella

Text of the Motion:	Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board approve of the non-renewal of non-tenured based on the possible need for a reduction in force and that the employees affected be notified in writing prior to May 1, 2017 in accordance with Connecticut State Law.
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Discussion:	None
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Opposed:	None
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Abstained:	None
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Vote:	Motion Passes
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Agenda Item:	O.2
Subject:	Consideration of the Approval to Revise the 2016 – 2017 School Year Calendar

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

Text of the Motion: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board approve of the revised 2016 – 2017 school year calendar for the Watertown Public School and that the last day of School be Wednesday, June 21, 2017.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item: O.3  
Subject: Consideration of the Approval of the High School and Middle School Graduation Dates

Motion Presented By: Ms. Wilk  
Motion Seconded By: Ms. Albino

Text of the Motion: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board approve of Tuesday, June 20, 2017 as the date for graduation exercises for Watertown High School, Class of 2017, and Wednesday June 21, 2017 as the date for graduation exercises at Swift Middle School.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item: O.4  
Subject: Consideration of the Approval of the Proposed Design and Installation of a Press Box at Watertown High School

Motion Presented By: Mr. Vicenzi  
Motion Seconded By: Mr. Gambardella

Text of the Motion:	Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board approve of the design and installation of a press box at Watertown High School, donated by the Water-Oak Circle of Sports.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion Passes

**P. Future Agenda Items and Board Members' Comments**

**Mr. Makowski** – I just wanted to second Dr. Carnemolla's comments earlier about all of the culture we've seen throughout the district in the last week or two. I had the pleasure of going to the coffee house and to the art show at the high school I wish more parents can come and see this because it is invigorating to see what our children are doing, and it is invigorating to see what their children will be doing and the opportunities that they have. All of that is surrounded by what our teachers and administrators are doing. Sometimes it is hard to make it tangible on what our children are doing and learning, so I wanted to thank everybody in the district that had input on that. The singing was amazing, the instrument playing was amazing, the artwork was amazing, and so I just wanted to share that because it is very special to see those things and hopefully more community members and parents will get out and get to enjoy those things. One more thing, a fundraiser idea, we know there is PowerPoint for dummies, and I feel like we should have PowerPoint by fourth-graders, because when I see what my son does in fourth grade and what my daughter does in seventh, it is light years ahead of people in the business world.

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

None

**R. Adjournment**

Agenda Item:	R.1
Subject:	Adjournment
Motion Presented By:	Mr. Makowski
Motion Seconded By:	Ms. Rosa
Text of the Motion:	Mr. Chairman, I move that we adjourn.
Discussion:	None

Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion Passes

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mindi Davidson  
Recording Secretary

Janelle Wilk  
Secretary of the Board