

From the Cape Elizabeth School Board

SCHOOL BOARD NEWS

January 28, 2019

Happy New Year! 2019 is off to a productive start and promise of many important meetings ahead.

First, during the December 10th Oath of Office, the School Board welcomed Laura DeNino as the newest member. Laura was elected during the November election and fills John Voltz's vacancy. Returning members, Heather Altenburg and Elizabeth Scifres were re-elected to the board and also sworn in. Heather is beginning her second three-year term and Elizabeth is beginning her third! Directly following the swearing in, School Board members caucused to determine the following leadership positions, officially approved during the December 11th Regular Business Meeting:

Susana Measelle Hubbs, Chair
Heather Altenburg & Kimberly Carr, Co-Vice Chairs
Elizabeth Scifres, Finance Chair
Hope Straw, Policy Chair

Trying something new, the board decided to select two co-vice chairs so that growth within the board is encouraged and supported.

At the same business meeting, athletes and coaches from the CEHS Girls Soccer Team were honored for their Class B State Championship. Lila Gaudrault, a CEHS long distance runner, was also honored for her Class B Girls Cross Country State Championship. Superintendent, Dr. Wolfrom, instated a new process of a more personal congratulations by greeting and awarding each student with a certificate and a handshake.

On January 8th, during the most recent Regular School Board Business Meeting, the board discussed setting goals for the upcoming FY20 budget season with the idea that all budgeting decisions would lean on the goals as guides for budgeting decisions. The consensus among the board lead to the following goals:

1. Maintaining and improving the high quality of education for every student.
2. Careful examination of line items and consideration of the success and effectiveness of the expenditures in order to provide a fiscally

responsible budget.

3. Clear and continual communication throughout the budget process.

Live coverage and recordings of School Board Regular Business Meetings can be viewed on the [CETV website](#).

BUDGET:

On December 18th the School Board and Town Council held a second joint workshop to continue conversations on ways to improve the school budget process. The meeting produced a healthy exchange of questions and suggestions. Beginning with a question from a community member on whether the superintendent builds the budget assuming \$0 in funds will be coming from the state? Dr. Wolfrom answered that the approach to building the budget begins by looking at staffing, person by person, considering retirements and whether or not these positions need to be replaced. From there, the process moves by looking at each and every line item. The “original request budget,” developed after numerous meetings with all department heads, is then calculated with no assumption of revenues included.

Councilor Penny Jordan pointed out the importance of marketing the budgeting process to the community so that they are fully aware of the needs and rationale. Town Council Finance Chair, Chris Straw, shared that more pressure should be put on our local representatives to stand firm on behalf of our town.

Town Council Chair, Jamie Garvin, reinforced the value of providing comparisons with neighboring school districts. Finally, the joint committee fully agreed that it would be prudent to continue conversations within the context of a sub-committee made up of the Town Manager, Town Council Chair, Town Council Finance Chair, the Superintendent, School Board Chair, School Board Finance Chair and the Business Manager.

The newly formed sub-committee met on January 24th to begin examining the budget schedule, the anticipated timing of state subsidies being announced (early February), the status of the upcoming municipal budget, as well as the details of the school budget. Currently, the total percentage increase for *only* — staff, benefits, and retirements (without any additions) — is 4.33%. While this percentage may change it is important to clarify that it does not represent any other additional expenses, such as, supplies or a possible Needs Assessment nor does it include an

estimate of any revenues.

As the board moves forward with this very important work, every effort will be made to provide as much communication, transparency, and clarity as possible. As always, the public is encouraged to attend meetings and workshops and/or send questions directly to the School Board.

Workshops for *only* the **School Board Budget Review** as they currently stand, are as follows:

1. Tuesday, January 29th, Budget Presentation, 5PM - 8:30PM at Town Hall Chambers. *During this extended workshop, administrators and department heads will present their budgets to the School Board.*

2. Tuesday, February 26th, Budget Workshop Q&A, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, CEHS Library. *State subsidy (ED279) estimate will be announced and School Board will begin intensive review of the budget with Q&A from all department heads.*

3. Tuesday, March 5th, Budget Workshop Q&A, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, Town Hall Chambers.

4. Tuesday, March 26th, Budget Workshop Q&A, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, CEHS Library.

5. Thursday, April 4th, Final Budget Workshop Q&A, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, Town Hall Chambers. *Health insurance costs will be provided and discussed, as well as any outstanding questions.*

All budget-related materials and schedules can be found online at the [CESD Budget](#) site, as they become available.

FACILITIES STUDY:

The Needs Assessment Committee has met twice more since November. On December 5th, the committee met at the CEHS library and toured six different areas within the school (excluding athletics) that have been identified as needing improvement. High school students, Joe Clancy, Liv Cochran, Aidan Lee, Max Patterson, Piper Strunk, and Julia Thoreck guided groups from each station to the next. The following areas were discussed: CEHS main entrance; Science classrooms 319 & 320; Cafeteria & Kitchen; Auditorium/Stage Entrance; Life Skills and Special Services Classrooms; and the Library. Some of the items identified

as needs included: proper safety measures, equipment, and spacing within one of the chemistry labs; and the need for new curtains for the theater that are *not* torn and *are* fire compliant. For a complete review of the concerns and needs, please review the [Minutes](#) from the entire meeting and the video of the tour under the [Facilities Needs Assessment Committee](#) tab on the school website.

On January 9th, the committee met again to fulfill its charge of determining whether or not a Needs Assessment should be recommended to the School Board for the FY20 budget. Prior to voting, a slide-show comparing neighboring districts was presented. With over six neighboring school districts compared to Cape Elizabeth, the slides highlighted a stark contrast between the condition of Cape Elizabeth's buildings to those of our neighbors. Also included in this presentation, was a historical look at renovations and bonding from these schools. The community is encouraged to [view this slide show](#), also located on the [Facilities Needs Assessment Committee](#) tab.

Colby Company Engineers provided a presentation of a [Needs Assessment Study Proposal](#) in the amount of \$189,060 (roughly \$60K less than the Facilities Study proposed last year, but eventually removed from the budget). While the Needs Assessment would *not* include various things such as conceptual renderings and PE/RA stamped construction drawings, it would provide the district with a comprehensive field investigation and reports; categorized project-specific reports sorted by priority levels; and multiple stakeholder interviews and presentations.

In the end, after significant discussion of options to increase the speed of progress, the committee voted unanimously to make the recommendation to the School Board at the next Regular School Board Business Meeting on Tuesday, February 12th from 6:30PM - 8:30PM. The School Board, at the January 22nd workshop, indicated via straw poll that the recommendation will be approved.

POLICY:

The policy committee met on January 3rd to continue the ongoing review of CESD policies. The following policies were discussed for a second reading at the January 3rd Policy Committee meeting:

JJIBD: Athletic Policy - Sanctioning of Sports;
EBCC: Bomb Threat;
BCC: Nepotism;
BBA: School Board Powers & Responsibilities; and

JJIAB: Private Schools Access to Public School Co-Curricular, Interscholastic & Extracurricular activities.

No comments or requests for changes were received from the School Board, Administration or community members. As such, the above listed policies were approved as-is at the January 8th School Board Regular Business Meeting.

The following policies were reviewed for a first reading at the January 3rd Policy Committee Meeting:

KF: Community Use of School Facilities;
ECB: Integrated Pest Management;
EEAEAA: Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus Drivers; and
IHOA: Field Trips

There was extensive discussion around the policy **KF: Community Use of School Facilities**. The committee determined that use of the Maine School Management Association's sample policy on use of School Facilities would provide more concise clarity on the use of School Facilities. The existing policy, however, reflects the unique shared use of Cape Elizabeth town facilities among the school district and town. As such, the existing policy will be retained with some modifications as regulations applicable to the use of facilities.

The Director of Facilities recommended that in order to more closely meet regulatory requirements, policy **ECB: Integrated Pest Management** be revised to more closely reflect the Maine School Management Association's sample policy.

IHOA: Field Trips policy was discussed extensively. The policy committee and administration determined that many details contained in the Field Trips policy are more closely related to a transportation policy. The committee determined that moving the transportation related details out of the Field Trips policy and into a separate transportation policy would be appropriate.

All three policies were brought before the School Board for a first read (public reading and discussion, no vote) at the Board's January business meeting.

On the Agenda for the January 3rd Policy Committee meeting, but not discussed due to time constraints:

DN: School Properties Dispositions;

GCFB: Recruiting & Hiring of Administrative Staff; and
JRA: Student Education Records and Information.

All policies are posted on the [CESD website](#) in the School Board section policy tab.

Policy Committee meetings occur once per month and are open to the public. The next policy meeting is scheduled for **February 7th at 3:00PM** in the Jordan Conference Room. Meetings are typically held on the first Thursday of the month, and details are posted online.

FUTURE DATES:

- Tuesday, January 29th, Budget Presentation, 5PM - 8:30PM at Town Hall Chambers.
- Monday, February 4th, School and Municipal Audit Report, 7PM - 9PM, Jordan Conference Room, Town Hall.
- Thursday, February 7th, Policy Committee, 3PM - 5PM, Jordan Conference Room.
- Tuesday, February 12th, Regular School Board Business Meeting, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, Town Hall Chambers.
- Tuesday, February 26th, Budget Workshop Q&A, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, CEHS Library.