

## SCHOOL BOARD NEWS

December 3, 2018

At the November 13<sup>th</sup> School Board Regular Business Meeting, Food Service Director Peter Esposito provided a presentation on the rationale behind the request to withdraw Cape Elizabeth High School (CEHS) from the National School Lunch Program, which provides meals for students at free or reduced costs. Mr. Esposito explained that in addition to providing meals to all students in need, one of the other intentions of the national program has been to enforce the use of healthier ingredients (e.g., whole grains) and smaller portions. Ironically, it has forced nutrition directors to serve food that is often pre-frozen, more processed, and less appetizing, with little to no room for modifications. As a result, the number of students buying school lunches has gone down, food waste has increased, and students who qualify for meals at free or reduced costs are opting out.

Mr. Esposito explained that because of the increased regulations, the food service staff is no longer able to make everything from scratch, which they would prefer to do. Furthermore, in order to comply with the national standards, the town has had to subsidize a portion of the district's lunch programs because the approved foods are more costly and the ability to purchase produce from local farms less feasible. Mr. Esposito explained that by withdrawing from the National School Lunch Program, he will be able to offer healthier and more affordable choices to all students, while still being able to provide meals at free or reduced costs to students who qualify.

The School Board voted unanimously to withdraw CEHS from the national program, with the expectation that *all* students will have access to better food and that the anticipated increase in lunch sales will not only mitigate the loss of funding resulting from this withdrawal, but have no impact whatsoever on students requiring food assistance. Lastly, it is expected that this change will greatly reduce food waste.

During the same Regular Business Meeting, School Resource Officer (SRO) David Galvan provided a review of how his first few months serving as the district's first SRO have progressed. Officer Galvan reported that he is greatly enjoying the relationships he is forming with students at the high school through his daily morning greetings at the school entrance

and within the school throughout the day. With John Holdridge, the district's Volunteer and Extended Learning Opportunities Coordinator, Officer Galvan is also co-leading an Advisory class. Mr. Holdridge shared that while Officer Galvan is a police officer first, he is also an educator who "has the ability to talk about serious issues with students as well as the ability to build relationships with students and staff through casual interaction." While most of his time is spent at the high school, Officer Galvan also regularly visits both Cape Elizabeth Middle School (CEMS) and Pond Cove Elementary School (PCES).

School Board members devoted the ending of the meeting to voicing their gratitude and best wishes for a departing board member, John Voltz. During his three years on the board, Mr. Voltz has been a steadfast champion of a holistic approach to education and a diligent Finance Subcommittee chair during last year's budget cycle.

On a separate but related note, should you wish to view a live recording of any School Board Regular Business Meeting, these are now available for viewing on the Cape Elizabeth television website (linked [here](#)). Access to these recordings should be particularly helpful to families who no longer use cable television.

## **BUDGET:**

The School Board and Town Council will hold a second joint workshop on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM, at the Cape Elizabeth Fire Department, to continue conversations on how to improve and strategize for the upcoming school budget process. The town manager and superintendent will help facilitate the meeting. As always, the public is welcome to attend and will be given an opportunity to address the meeting participants.

## **FACILITIES STUDY:**

The Facilities Needs Assessment Committee has been finalized and held meetings on November 7<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. In addition to School Board members, administrators, and teachers, the committee includes Town Manager Matt Sturgis, Town Councilor Jamie Garvin, Town Councilor-elect Valerie Deveraux, community member Peter Anderson, community member Tim Thompson, parent and community member DJ Nelson, parent and community member Carla Bryant, parent and community member Jill Abrahamsen, and CEMS student Maya Nelson. A complete list of committee members can be found in the November 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes, which are available on the Facilities Needs Assessment Committee page (linked [here](#)) of the school district's website. Video footage of tours and audio recordings of the meetings will be uploaded as well.

The November 7<sup>th</sup> meeting was held in the CEHS library and focused on the safety and overall challenges the physical education classes, athletics, and community service programs face at CEHS. Students Sam Dresser and Erin Foley joined Principal Jeff

Shedd and Athletic Director Jeff Thoreck in leading a tour of the facilities and provided firsthand accounts of challenges and limitations from a student's perspective.

The November 28th meeting was held in the PCES/CEMS cafetorium and focused on issues of safety, space limitations, and inefficiencies. Principals Troy Eastman and Jason Manjourides, along with Facilities Director Perry Schwarz, led committee members on tours of the entrances, cafetorium, kitchen, service and delivery access points, and band room. Among other concerns, the tour illuminated the risk of having both schools' front offices located far away from main entrances, which limits the ability of staff to monitor where visitors go once they are admitted inside the buildings. In addition, the special challenges associated with having one room utilized as both a cafeteria and an auditorium were highlighted in a brief video produced by CEHS student Sam Whitney, which captured the cafetorium in use during several student lunch periods.

The next Facilities Needs Assessment Committee meeting will be held on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM, in the CEHS library. This meeting will include tours and discussions of the high school's classrooms, science labs, cafeteria, kitchen, auditorium, library, and entrances. The public is welcome and encouraged to participate.

#### **FUTURE DATES:**

- Wednesday, December 5th, Needs Assessment Committee Meeting, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM, CEHS Library
- Monday, December 10th, Swearing in of new School Board members and Town Councilors, 7 PM, Town Hall Chambers
- Tuesday, December 11th, School Board Regular Business Meeting, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM, Town Hall Chambers
- Tuesday, December 18th, Second School Board and Town Council Joint Workshop on FY20 Budget Process, 6:30 PM, Cape Elizabeth Fire Station