

Pending BOE Approval

**Watertown Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Date: December 9, 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
Ms. Janelle Wilk, Secretary
Mr. Robert Makowski
Ms. Diane Bristol
Ms. Cindy Eastman
Ms. Josephine Cavallo-Rosa
Mr. Jason Malagutti

Members Absent: Ms. Cathie Rinaldi

Others Present: Dr. Rydell Harrison –Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Tom DiStasio – Business Manager
Jordan Arnold – Student Council Representative

- A. Convene Regular Meeting – 7:30 p.m.**
- B. Moment of Silence –** In remembrance of Sterling Jette & Della Jette

Dr. Harrison - The Watertown Public Schools community is deeply saddened by the tremendous loss of two former students, Della Jette, age 15, and Sterling Jette ,age 16, who were tragically killed on Tuesday, December 3rd in a shooting at their home. Prior to attending Kaynor Technical High School, they attended Watertown schools through eighth grade and formed close relationships with students and staff over the years. Principal, Marylu Lerz, stated that siblings, Sterling and Della Jette were active members of the Swift Middle School community. Sterling and Della were hard-working students and it showed every day that school was important to them. Both students loved music, as Della played the flute for five years and Sterling volunteered his time assisting in the school piano lab. Along with their musical talents, both siblings had a passion for athletics and played on teams for the town. Sterling and Della were the most giving individuals, always looking out for others. They were humble and did not seek

the limelight and were always the ones you could depend on. It's hard to find someone whose lives they did not touch with their kind ways and willingness to help. True to their character, both children were involved in numerous service clubs and activities, such as the Leo Club, WOA, Peer Leaders and Peace Pals. Both siblings were extremely connected to one another which was evident to anyone who came in contact with them. Their smiles were infectious and would light up a room. They left an imprint on the fabric of our school community that can never be erased. Since our loss, grief counselors have been available for students and staff throughout the school day and will remain in place for the remainder of this week. Watertown High School held community counseling hours from 6-8pm on Thursday, December 5. Our community is grateful for our administrators and crisis team members who are supporting our students who are grief-stricken; and for our teachers, paraprofessionals, secretaries and resource officers who are surrounding students with love and support as they struggle to find answers and deal with their loss. Our heartfelt condolences, thoughts and prayers go out to the Jette family. Watertown Board of Education Chairperson Leslie Crotty noted that "at times of tragedy, the Oakville/Watertown community unifies in its support of our students, staff, parents, and community members. The strength of our town is in how we pull together, especially at such difficult moments." This has been my experience over the last several days in this community.

C. Salute to the Flag

D. Roll Call – Ms. Davidson

E. Minutes

Agenda Item:	E.1
Subject:	Minutes of the November 25 th , 2019 Regular Board of Education Meeting
Motion Presented By:	Mr. Lambert
Motion Seconded By:	Mr. Makowski
Text of the Motion:	Madame Chair, I move that the Board approve of the minutes from the November 25 th , 2019 regular Board of Education meeting as presented by Ms. Davidson.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	Ms. Wilk
Vote:	Motion passed

F. Report from Student Council Representative – Jordan Arnold

Mr. Arnold - Mrs. Meka, from **John Trumbull Primary School**, Ms. Scully, from **Judson**, & Ms. Galik, from **Polk**, all report that they took time to gather together as a school community to support all staff during this week of tragic news. Our hearts are broken and as we struggle to understand this event. They felt it necessary to take time for each other and lift each other up so they could focus on the students and give them what they need. They chose to spend some time discussing kindness and what can be done in the world to make it a better place. The loss of Sterling and Della Jette is heart-wrenching for the school communities. The world will never be the same without their beautiful presence.

Ms. Lurz, from **Swift**, reports that their friend and colleague, Jonathan Sales, a 7th grade Science teacher at Swift is undergoing treatment for acute leukemia. To show their support for Jonathan, they are organizing a variety of fundraisers throughout the year. For December, they are selling "STRONG FOR SALES" bracelets for \$1 each. They also have a Bone Marrow Registry Drive scheduled for February and a 5K in the spring. To showcase the talents of their students, they recently held their annual Variety Show which featured over twenty acts with students from all three grade levels performing for a full house. Their Winter Concert is scheduled for Thursday the 12th and the eighth-grade members of the Select Choir will be caroling in the community.

Ms. Parlato, from **Watertown High School**, reports that the community banded together in support of one another in the face of terrible tragedy. To help the students and staff members feel a sense of comfort and care, they invited therapy dogs from the group, K9 first responders to visit Watertown High School on December 5. These dogs were wonderful guests and brought joy and delight to all they encountered. Watertown High School also held community counseling hours for those students, staff, and community members who felt the need for psychologists, members from Lotus Counseling here in town, and more therapy dogs from K9 First Responders for helping the Watertown community through these days.

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

Ms. Matjane Nuredini to the position of Mathematic Tutor at Polk Elementary School, effective November 25, 2019 at an hourly rate of \$16.00.

Ms. Catherine Ochs to the position of Accounts Payable Clerk for Watertown Public Schools, effective December 2, 2019, at an hourly rate of \$22:23, Step 1 of the Watertown Educational Secretaries Union.

2. Transfers– (Information Only)

None

3. Resignations – (Information Only)

None

4. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Harrison – Thank you. I just wanted to take a moment to talk about some things that are happening in our community. We are excited to have our report cards for John Trumbull, Judson & Polk; they were sent out this past week through our parent portals. Prior to the release of the report cards, parents received brochures explaining standard based report cards, which were new for many of our families, and with an explanation on how to interpret those grades.

I want to say thank you to all of the folks who worked behind the scenes to put that in place. As you know, on November 1st, we had ransomware that targeted our networking systems across the district. As far as an update, Mr. Turner and the IT team have been working in all five schools to ensure all teachers have a working computer, projector and/or Smartboard. They have been working on print servers and they have been completed at Swift and the high school, and they are working on the other three schools this week. The team restored office files from the Z drive and our third party experts will be on site this week to review the teacher files and then map them out to all of our teachers. Now that the desktops are finished, the team will turn their attention to admin laptops, which our administrators will be very happy about, grade 3 laptops and working on the Maclab. So again, a special thank you to our local IT team who have really been working 7 days a week for the entire month of November and also now into December. Connected to that is our sincere appreciation to our district as they had to be really flexible in making sure that teaching and learning continued. As you have heard from all of our schools, we have been working as a community to come together and think about ways that we support each other, support our students, support our staff, during a very difficult time. I recently shared with a community member that in the types of things that we are going through, with the loss of Della and Sterling, but then also some of our staff members are in crisis, and lots of difficult periods here, right at the holidays. You don't ever want to have to deal with that level of trauma and difficulty, but if you have to, this is the community that you want to be surrounded by. As Superintendent, I am very proud of staff, teachers and students for the ways that they have rallied support and very grateful to our community at large for the ways that they have done very considerate things to support students and staff, to support the families impacted and then the nice collaboration with some of our colleagues at Kaynor Tech to make sure that they feel supported by the Watertown community as well. I want to finish by saying, from a personal standpoint, that I really appreciate all of you that you do for our students, but specifically over the last several days, your calls, your texts, your posts; all of those things have made us feel supported and it is very much noted and very much appreciated.

H. **Recognition and Award for Ms. Cheryl Albino**

Ms. Cheryl Albino will be recognized tonight for her service to the Watertown Board of Education. Ms. Albino served on the Board since November 9, 2015 through November 4, 2019. Thank you, Ms. Albino for your dedication and service to the Board of Education and Watertown Public Schools.

Ms. Crotty – This evening, the Board is please to recognize Cheryl Albino. Mrs. Albino proudly served on the Watertown Board of Education for four long years. I say long because there are

lots of meetings, conversations, emails, discussions, Executive Sessions, and training sessions. Four years is a long time and a huge commitment. From November 2015 through November 2019, Mrs. Albino served. She served as a member of the Community and Engagement Committee and actively participated in other subcommittees. During her tenure on the board, Cheryl participated in Freedom of Information training, legislative updates and information sessions. During her time on the board, Cheryl encouraged and supported curriculum and programming in many areas including social and emotional learning, and support for both students and their families, executive function skills, safety, special education, climate and healthy lunch options. She shared many resources, programs, and services and shared them to the attention of the Board and Superintendents, including “Start with Hello”, yoga and mindfulness. At this time, I would like to call upon Ms. Eastman who has some further thoughts to share with us.

Ms. Eastman – First of all, I want to thank Cheryl for being such a warm and accepting colleague. When I joined the team two years ago, as my neighbor on the board, she always made sure I was clear on our procedures and helped me learn what to expect. As I have gotten to know her better over these last couple of years, I have found her to be a positive component to the board, always ready to listen and thoughtfully consider all of the issues that come our way. Our positions are elected, but they are also volunteer; as in we volunteer to campaign, and if elected, to serve. All of our members are passionate about our town and our children’s education, but the thing about doing work such as ours is that one can literally be on the board one day and not on the next. So although her term on the Watertown Board of Ed has ended, I have no doubt Cheryl’s commitment to the students and youth of Watertown and Oakville has not. I know she will continue to work tirelessly, as she always does, to bring new ideas and support to the students and staff of our schools and to further the health and wellbeing of the entire community. Our board was richer with her presence and I will personally miss it going forward. Thank you, Cheryl, for all of your hard work and friendship.

Ms. Rosa – Cheryl, it was such a pleasure to serve with you on the last four years on the board. Your enthusiasm for this board and the community showed in everything you did; whether it was on committees or just volunteering for fundraisers. Your passion for students and the whole education system shined through, and I was honored to have Cheryl in the seat right next to me.

Ms. Crotty – Thank you Ms. Albino for four years of dedication and service to the Board of Education and to Watertown Public Schools.

I. Presentation – WOA (Watertown-Oakville Adolescent Heroes)

Ms. Kathleen Sklanka, Eighth Grade Science Teacher and Ms. Alexandra Computzzi, Eighth Grade History Teacher, co-advisors of WOA (Watertown-Oakville Adolescent Heroes) at Swift Middle School, along with student representatives from the club, will present the mission and goals of WOA. The student representatives that spoke were: Aria Rose, Casey O’Toole, Naomi Brooks and Tyler Carolan.

To view their presentation, please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24Zrx8hd8wU>

J. Board Policies – Second Reading

Ms. Crotty – The following policies are presented to you for a second reading tonight and then later for board approval. As a reminder, the policies are listed and I do have the explanations for all of them. Does anyone have any questions or concerns as they went over them over the last two weeks? (none)

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

None

L. Committee Reports:

Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Ms. Cathie Rinaldi, Chair – No

Policy and Labor Committee, Ms. Janelle Wilk, Chair –Yes

As you said, the policies were presented to the Board tonight for their second reading.

Budget and Finance Committee, Ms. Diane Bristol, Chair – No

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

There were many updates given on the building project. There was paving that was done last week and they may try again this week. Looking at a time line by the end of the year.

Governance and Community Engagement Committee, Mr. Robert Makowski, Chair – No

M. Communications - Secretary

None

N. Report from the Board Chair

Ms. Crotty – I would just add to Dr. Harrison’s sentiments that on behalf of the Board of Education and all members here, we want to thank our administration, teachers and staff for doing what we always knew they were capable of and always have done for our students and for each other. Trying times and we are incredibly grateful for the support and the love and the attention that you are providing for our students and our entire community. I received a message, among many, more than I received during any public event, Board decision in the six years that I have been on the board, and those messages have been....to quote one, “How you have wrapped your arms around the entire community through these times and how much it has meant to this community.” I want to thank you and encourage the community to reach out to our Superintendent’s office and the administration if you know of anyone in need of help or assistance or just need somebody to talk to. So, again, from the bottom of our heart, collectively I want to thank you and show the appreciation of everyone with you.

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

Agenda Item:

O.1

Subject: Consideration of the Approval of Board of Education Policies – Second Reading

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

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Board approve of Policy 1350 Smoking, 4010 Alcohol, Tobacco & Drug Free Workplace, 4140 & 4140R Sex Discrimination & Harassment in the Workplace, 4130 Child Abuse, Neglect, Sexual Assault Reporting, 5110 & 5110R Attendance, Truancy & Chronic Absenteeism, 5015 & 5015R Bullying & Safe School Climate, 5075 Physical Activity & Student Discipline, 5120 & 5120R Student Discipline, and Policy 5145 Transportation, effective December 10, 2019.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Vote: Motion passed

Agenda Item: O.2
Subject: Consideration of the Approval to address requirements for the sale of beverages to students in Watertown Public Schools – C.G.S Section 10-221q

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

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Watertown Board of Education allow the sale to students beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met:
1. The sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2. The sale is at the location of the event; and
3. The beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store.

Discussion: For this purpose, location means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the beverage sale. An event is an occurrence that involves a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity.

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion passed

P. Future agenda Items and Board Members’ Comments

Mr. Makowski – Thanked the school district and Dr. Harrison for his words, the high school staff and Swiftto see the community come together and see Dr. Harrison convey such a powerful message. .it really hit his heart in a good way. He reminded everyone to look out for each other and to find time for yourselves as well. It goes to show how strong #watertowncares.

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

None

R. Executive Session (8:10 p.m.)

Agenda Item: R.1
 Subject: To move into Executive Session

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

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Board go into Executive Session for the purpose of a discussion regarding the negotiated settlement agreement between the Watertown Board of Education and the Watertown Administrators’ Association. Attending the Executive Session will be Dr. Harrison, Leslie Crotty, Tom Lambert, Janelle Wilk, Rob Makowski, Tom DiStasio, Jason Malagutti, Cindy Eastman, Josephine Rosa, and myself, Diane Bristol.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

S. Regular Session (8:54 p.m.)

Agenda Item: S.1
Subject: Approval of Agreement

Motion Presented By: Ms. Wilk
Motion Seconded By: Mr. Malagutti

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Board approve of the agreement between the Watertown Board of Education and the Watertown Administrators' Association effective July 1, 2020 through July 30th, 2023.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

T. Adjournment

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

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

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

Discussion: None

Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mindi Davidson
Recording Secretary

Janelle Wilk
Secretary of the Board