

Pending BOE Approval

**Watertown Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Date: March 23, 2015
Meeting Time: 7:30 p.m.
Meeting Place: Lecture Hall, Watertown High School

Members Present: Ms. Leslie Crotty, Chairman
Mr. Tom Lambert, Vice Chairman
Mr. Ray Nardella, Secretary
Mr. Victor Vicenzi
Mr. Jim Gambardella
Ms. Janelle Wilk
Ms. Cathie Rinaldi
Ms. Josephine Cavallo-Rosa
Mr. Donato Orsini

Members Absent: Mr. Ray Nardella, Secretary
Ms. Emma Karpinski – Student Council Representative

Others Present: Dr. Bridget Carnemolla – Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Jill Browne – Business Manager
Mr. Ray Ceniccola, Facilities Manager

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 09, 2015 Regular Board of
Education Meeting

Motion Presented By: Mr. Lambert

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| Motion Seconded By: | Ms. Rinaldi |
| Text of the Motion: | I move that the Board of Education approve the minutes from the March 09, 2015 Board of Education Regular Meeting. |
| Discussion: | None |
| Opposed: | None |
| Abstained: | Ms. Wilk Mr. Orsini |
| Vote: | Motion Passes |

E. Awards

The Watertown Board of Education would like to congratulate the following Polk School Golden Bucket Winners that were recognized for their excellent citizenship:

November

Grade 3

Joseph Sirica
Casey O'Toole
Samar Atbega
Sarah Ramirez
Patrick LaChance

Grade 4

Gabriela Perez
Jake Barbieri
Jason Quiroz
Julia Dacampo
Ethan Rodriguez

Grade 5

Michael Gambucci
Sara Mustafi
Lucas Fenn
Rhiannon Bulwidas
Felicia Cruz
Bryn Burleigh

December

Grade 3

Madison Smith
Gabriella Paturzo
Frederick Matthis
Brandon McClary
Emily Matozzo

Grade 4

Christian Braatz
Michael Fleming
Alexandra Burkhart
Adea Selmani
Abby Gallagher

Grade 5

Blayden Koval
Joshua Adamski
Alexander McCarthy
Tatiana Terni
Elizabeth Bird
Jacob Wawer

January**Grade 3**

Mahmoud Hafez
 Lana Kolpa
 Lauren Ashmore
 Bora Muso
 Sophia Angiolini

Grade 4

Megan Mordarski
 Erin Pienczykowski
 Logan Paliulis
 Grace Pinkerton
 Samuel Falotico

Grade 5

Kylie O'Brien
 Rikee Curtis
 Lilliana Spagnoletti
 Drew Kennedy
 Emalyn Osborne
 Alex Daponte

February**Grade 3**

Gabriel Goodman
 Luke Acuna
 Jacob Fenn
 Jacob Lucas
 Vincent Tanganelli

Grade 4

Stuart Beauvais
 Samantha Stowell
 Ethen Powell
 Adriana Melaragno
 Karina Deros

Grade 5

Allison Stoto
 Natalie Nascimento
 Ana Almeida
 Morgan Hodorski
 Ethan Cizauskas
 Klaus Nuzi

Polk Elementary School - Special Area Winners:

In the month of November, December, January & February, twelve (12) students were recognized for outstanding dedication in the disciplines of art, music, and physical education. These students are as follows:

November

- Gianna Barry-Art
- Morgan Hodorski-Music
- Adriana Melaragno-Physical Education

December

- Rhiannon Bulwidas-Art
- Mattingly Creter-Music
- Ruth Fomo -Physical Education

January

- Frederick Matthis-Art
- Camilla Bikbova-Music

- Addyson Finateri-Physical Education

February

- Emma Nugai-Art
- Casey O'Toole-Music
- Jackson Slattery-Physical Education

F. Public Participation

None

G. Budget Status

Ms. Browne began by reviewing the February budget status. We continue to run under budget and staff and the one line we kept an eye on, contractual maintenance, continues to improve. Most notably, is the grant revenue, which is the result of the combination of two budget lines. We have received the hundred and \$811,334. I would like to take a moment to review how it is determined. After a student has reached the threshold, of four and half times are per pupil expenditure, which in Watertown is \$13,516, so 4 ½ times that is \$60,822, so once a single student has reach that threshold in their educational costs, we can then apply the remaining costs of their education the excess cost grant. It is not 100% funded but typically we get between 70 and 80% of our costs after the threshold.

H. Committee Reports

Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Mr. Ray Nardella, Chair – No

Policy and Labor Committee – Ms. Leslie Crotty, (Acting Chair) – No

Budget and Finance Committee – Mr. Tom Lambert, Chair – No

Facilities/PBC/Operations Committee, Mr. Tom Lambert, Chair – No

Governance and Community Engagement Committee, Mr. Ray Nardella, Chair-No

I. Communications – Secretary

None

J. Superintendent's Recommendations and Report

1. Appointments (Information only)

- a) Ms. Sharon Maia to the position of Transportation Driver for Watertown Public Schools, effective Monday, March 9, 2015 at a rate of \$14.00 per hour.

2. Resignations (Information only)

The following Teachers have elected to take the Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Plan (VERIP).

- a. Ms. Layne Allison, from the position of Pre-Kindergarten Teacher at John Trumbull Primary School, effective June 30, 2015 for the purpose of retirement.
- b. Ms. Linda Bartholomeo, from the position of Art Teacher at Watertown High School, effective June 30, 2015 for the purpose of retirement.
- c. Ms. Deborah Bortolan, from the position of Grade 2 Teacher at John Trumbull Primary School, effective June 30, 2015 for the purpose of retirement.
- d. Ms. Ann Marie Downey, from the position of English/Language Arts Teacher at Swift Middle School, effective June 30, 2015 for the purpose of retirement.
- e. Ms. Christine Govertsen, from the position of Special Education Teacher at Swift Middle School, effective June 30, 2015 for the purpose of retirement.
- f. Ms. Patricia Hotchkiss, from the position of Special Education Teacher at Polk Elementary School, effective June 30, 2015 for the purpose of retirement.
- g. Ms. Cheryl Kaiser, from the position of Special Education Teacher at Swift Middle School, effective June 30, 2015 for the purpose of retirement.
- h. Ms. Cheryl Magnanimo, from the position of Special Education Teacher at Judson Elementary School, effective June 30, 2015 for the purpose of retirement.
- i. Mr. Gary Reznik, from the position of Technology Teacher at Watertown High School, effective June 30, 2015 for the purpose of retirement.
- j. Ms. Carole Weaver, from the position of English/Language Arts Teacher at Swift Middle School, effective June 30, 2015 for the purpose of retirement.

3. Discussion Regarding Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Teachers

Connecticut State Law requires that Non-Tenured Teachers whose contracts are not being renewed shall be notified in writing prior to May 1, 2015. Following the Boards approval to non-renew the non-tenured teachers, I will send another letter to each teacher stating that this action has been approved by the Board of Education. As soon as the budget has been finalized, it is my hope that I can request that the Board rescind these notices and call back all of the non-tenured teachers. As a note of reference, the superintendent has already met with all of those teachers that this will affect.

4. Presentation

Mr. Ceniccola presented an update in the security upgrades in all of our schools with the security grant money. A note of reference is that the projects must be completed by June 30, 2015. Our focus will be to update software, the entry access systems, CCTV, panic alarms in the front entry and window treatments for the glass. A PowerPoint was put up to break down the individual schools by the work to be completed at the end of June.

At JTPS, the window film treatments and camera surveillance installation (adding about 21 cameras) has begun. Money was saved by doing the electrical and installation ourselves. We are also planning on doing the wiring for the entry access ourselves as well. If money is left over in the budget we would like to use it for more cameras. John Trumbull also does not have shades, so in a lockdown situation that would be problematic. We went ahead and found shades that we could add to our budget and are beginning the installation process of those around April break. We have to program the office panic alarms with software but they are in place.

At Judson school, some of our systems were already in place. As part of this process, we have to make sure we have a unified system in all of the schools. This will help with all monitoring processes. We will be adding an office panic system, and more cameras with electrical work to be done by us.

At Polk school, we will be adding more internal cameras (32) and the office panic system will be added along with the window film treatments.

At Swift middle, when it was renovated cameras were not a priority at the time. Now that they have become a priority, we find that they are lacking and we will need to add an additional 49 cameras, which are both internal and external. Along with that, window film treatments in the office panic alarm will also be added. At Swift, one thing that was never in place was entry access system. So that will be needed as well.

At the high school, the high school is robust when it comes cameras. We will need to determine if more are needed in the future. We will need to update the software and add the entry access system that are in place and ready to go. We will also be adding the window film treatments in the office panic system. A note to point out is that there is a CCTV monitoring system at the high school.

Finally the Munson House, we will be adding the entry access control and this will also help when all of this is done, it will be the control center for all of the entry access systems in the

district. The flow of control of who has access to what building will be controlled out of Munson House. There is electrical work to be done and some software upgrades as well. It is good to note that all of the upgrades at Munson house can be moved if needed to be. A question was asked if there will be any cameras inside of classrooms and the answer was no. The second question asked if power was lost, with the panic alarm systems still work and the answer was yes, with a battery backup.

5. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Carnemolla began by going over her schedule for the last week or so. She spent most of last Tuesday at Judson school, with the third and fifth graders and then some time with the fourth graders in their specials. That same day she was invited to lunch at the senior center and enjoy touching base with them. She also did budget presentations to the PTOs of both the high school and Swift middle school. It went very well and there were a number of parents there. Mr. Jones joined in as well to discuss the changes in the programs of studies at the high school. On Thursday afternoon, I was able to stop in the Polk school where they were having a third grade parent event. She commended the entire staff at Polk school for putting it together as it was very well attended. Each third-grade classroom was loaded with parents and it was standing room only. In conjunction with St. Patrick's Day, they did an activity called "what I am lucky for". The students and parents that it together and then presented their answers.

Lastly, we have continued with our professional development initiatives at the school and district level. Ms. Parlato, Ms. Rochester, and I attended the first two days of a four-day session about district coherence. Make sure we have a system in place for many things, but most importantly ensuring we have coherence across all of our buildings. We will attend to more of these sessions, one in April and one in May. It is helping us improve our district planning immensely. We will carry it through to the administrative retreat at the end of the school year and hopefully to another board retreat before we begin the next school year. Also, Ms. Parlato continued the curriculum and instruction update meetings with the administrators, in part continuing to make sure we are prepared for our NEASC visit and also to ensure that our smarter balanced assessment testing is scheduled and the technology is in place so that we don't have the issues with that testing.

Ms. Crotty thanked Dr. Carnemolla for all the time and effort she has put in to educating our parents and the community over multiple times to understand the Board of Ed approved budget. She also thanked her for the wonderful presentation to the town Council this past Thursday evening and they are looking forward to the budget process moving forward.

K. Report From the Chairman

The Board of Education has been familiarizing itself with our 2015/2016 proposed and now BOE approved budget for some time now. It is equally important to all of us that we are able to understand and articulate the costs associated with educating our students and employing

hundreds of people. Throughout the past year the Board has shed light on the increasing costs associated with Special Education Services, through presentations by Donnah Rochester, Director of Special Services, and most recently, within Dr. Carnemolla's budget presentation. To continue on that front, tonight I would like to bring your attention to the State of Connecticut's Excess Cost Grant, as its funding helps to offset overages in per pupil spending due to Special Education Services.

The CT Excess Cost Grant provides partial funding for school districts where the cost for educating a special education student exceeds the district's current expenditures per pupil. In order to qualify for reimbursement of our excess costs, we must first have spent four and a half times (4.5) the per pupil expenditure on a student in order to be reimbursed for that excess cost. If we have to spend 4.5 times the PPE, we must submit the information and the associated expenses to the state. Some items however, like legal expenditures, are not considered reimbursable expenses within the Excess Cost Grant.

The state audits our submission, and based on their findings reimburses us 78% of the amount in excess of the PPE. For example, using the state's current Excess Cost Grant formula, If we spend \$10,000 per student, special education costs must exceed \$45,000 for that student before our district is eligible for any state reimbursement on the \$35,000 in excess costs. Even if our special education excess costs meet all of the state eligibility requirements, we only receive 78% in reimbursements. In this example we would receive \$27,300 under the grant, and would be left to find ways to make up the excess cost difference on our own. Since we have to spend 4.5 times our PPE in order to qualify, we are spending thousands of dollars without any Excess Cost reimbursement at all.

The state grant is supposed to pay for all costs in excess of that figure but unfortunately the state appropriation has been capped, even as costs and the incidence of students requiring services have both risen. In a report on CT Special Education Funding by the Office of Fiscal Analysis and The Office of Legislative Research, as of January 2014, 20 % of the state's Education Cost Sharing (ECS) expenditure has been attributed to special education.

In the current fiscal year, 2014-2015, our total special education budget is \$7,050,831, which is 17.97% of our total budget. In the upcoming fiscal year, 2015-2016, it is forecasted to be \$7,903,381, or 19.56% of our budget. Each year, we do our best, based on the previous year's budget expenditures, current students' needs, and our approximation of what we may receive back from the state to support special education through excess cost, to approximate what we will be responsible for funding through our local budget.

However, the responsibility of the district is to provide the services that students need, **based primarily on students' needs**, *not* whether the money is in our budget: and this is the reason that Excess Cost exists... to assist the Town in providing necessary services to students that are in excess of what may be affordable and/or budgeted for. Although we, and most districts in the state, continue to see a rise in the overall costs associated with special education, and flat funding for Excess Cost, we will continue to do our best for our students, while both maintaining fiscal responsibility in our budget, and maintaining compliance with state and federal education laws.

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

Agenda Item: L.1
Subject: Consideration to Approve the Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Teachers

Motion Presented By: Mr. Vincenzi
Motion Seconded By: Mr. Lambert

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the board approve that the contract of employment of non-tenured teachers, as recommended by Dr. Carnemolla, not be renewed for the following year upon its expiration at the end of the 2014-2015 school year. In accordance with Connecticut State Law, the Superintendent is directed to advise such person(s) in writing.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item: L.2
Subject: Consideration of the approval of and Out of Town Field Trip to Waterford, CT

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

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the board approve of the field trip to Camp Harkness in Waterford, CT, from June 1 through June 3, 2015, for twenty (20) Watertown High School students accompanied by four (4) chaperones in order to provide them with an opportunity to demonstrate their independence and daily living skills in an authentic context.

Discussion: None

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| Opposed: | None |
| Abstained: | None |
| Vote: | Motion Passes |

M. Future Agenda Items and Board Members' Comments

None

N. Public Participation

None

O. Executive Session

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| Agenda Item: | O.1 |
| Subject: | Executive Session |

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| Motion Presented By: | Mr. Lambert |
| Motion Seconded By: | Mr. Orsini |

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| Text of the Motion: | Madame Chair, I move that the Board enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the negotiated contract settlement between the Board of Education and the Custodial, Maintenance and Technical Employees. Attending the Executive Session will be James Gambardella, Josephine Cavallo-Rosa, Don Orsini, Janelle Wilk, Vic Vicenzi, Cathie Rinaldi, Leslie Crotty, Jill Browne, Bridget Carnemolla, and myself, Tom Lambert. |
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| Discussion: | None |
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| Opposed: | None |
| Abstained: | None |
| Vote: | Motion Passes |

P. Regular Session

Agenda Item: P.1
Subject: Consideration to Approve the Negotiated Contract Settlement between the Board of Education and the Custodial, Maintenance and Technical Employees

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

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the board approve of the negotiated settlement between the Board of Education and the Custodial, Maintenance and Technical Employees.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion Passes

Q. Adjournment

Agenda Item: Q.1
Subject: To Adjourn the Meeting

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

Text of the Motion: Madam Chair, I move that adjourn the meeting

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion Passes

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mindi Davidson
Recording Secretary

Ray Nardella
Secretary of the Board