

**LEBANON BOARD OF EDUCATION
HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE
AUGUST 11, 2020 - REGULAR MEETING - 7:30 P.M.**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

PRESENT:	Sarah Haynes, Chair	Alexis Margerelli-Hussey, Vice-Chair
	Nicole McGillicuddy	Matthew Smith
	Mark DeCaprio	John Konow
	Dawn Whitcher	Danelle Person

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent Robert Angeli, James Apicelli, Principal, Rita Quiles-Glover, Principal, Robert Sirpenski, Business Manager, Kathleen Smith, Teacher, Kevin French, Facilities Director, Jacques Dulac, Director of Information Technology, Kevin Cwikla, First Selectman.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by S. Haynes at 7:31 p.m.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - BYLAWS OF THE BOARD #9324

Public participation - 30 minutes; Individual speaker - 2 minutes.

Superintendent Angeli summarized an email from K. Ochs a special education teacher at Lyman. K. Ochs wanted the Board to be aware of concerns that have risen about an application called Tik Tok. Tik Tok is a video app that has become very popular with people. The Tik Tok app gains access to private information. President Trump is trying to stop Tik Tok from being used in the United States. K. Ochs wants to make the board aware of this and encourages the board, if they would want to, to ban Tik Tok from use within the school system. J. Morek wanted to thank R. Quiles-Glover for answering questions from parents at the PTA meeting, and wanted to speak in front of the board how much the PTA appreciates her and all her hard work. D. King asked two questions. The first question asked was if we know if all the classrooms or areas that the students will be learning are ventilated? The second question was about communication. D. King asked if a teacher or child is sick or has symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, will the parents with children in that classroom be notified? S. Haynes responded to the first question that the ventilation system will be addressed later on in the meeting. S. Haynes states that the second question may not be answered tonight but that we will identify an avenue for the district administration to answer that question. K. Cwikla spoke more about Tik Tok. K. Cwikla states that Tik Tok is owned by a Chinese company and they do collect a huge amount of data. Tik Tok does use cookies, they save browser histories. Kevin wanted to reiterate to the board that the children may not understand the potential harm that they are getting themselves into by using the app.

III. CONSENT AGENCDA

A. Approval of minutes

1. Strategic Plan/Curriculum Subcommittee Meeting - 7/14/2020
2. Finance/Facilities Subcommittee Meeting - 7/14/2020
3. LBOE Regular Meeting - 7/14/2020
4. LBOE Special Meeting - 7/23/2020
5. Budget Transfers

Motion made by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by J. Konow to approve consent agenda as presented. Motion passes unanimously.

IV. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

- Governance - S. Haynes reported that they did meet. She sent out a new list of committee chairs. D. Person accepted the chair for the curriculum subcommittee. There are only a couple of adjustments. There was a member added to the curriculum subcommittee due to the impact right now. There was one member taken away from enrollment and communications.
- Finance/Facilities - N. McGillicuddy reported that K. French confirmed the exhaust fans in all three buildings are functional. N. McGillicuddy, S. Haynes and A. Margerelli-Hussey will be doing a walk through of all three buildings this Friday. The filters were ordered. If we get a MERV 11 or 13 that should be enough to protect the students and staff from the virus or any bacteria. We want the MERV 13 filters. The filters are on back order, hopefully they will arrive in two weeks. We may have to revisit what we are going to do about that. Currently there are MERV 8 filters on which are not approved by the CDC. M. Smith asked about possibly getting the 14 or 15 filters. N. McGillicuddy said that K. French did look into getting the 16's but the systems at the three schools especially at LMS and LMHS are a little antiquated so that may overload the system. Currently we have spent about \$120,000 in COVID purchases. That includes cleaning supplies, masks and plexiglass shields for student and teachers desks. We are using last years budget and SIP money for these purchases. We are waiting to see if the state is going to kick in some money, which they said they would. The last thing the subcommittee talked about was the 2020-2021 budget. The budget seems okay for now. We are not under or over budget. D. Whitcher asked about the MERV filters and asked at what point will we decide if the schools have adequate ventilation? N. McGillicuddy answered that they will be doing a walk through Friday and they will be checking the ventilation system, the spacing, and safety measures. They will talk about it at that point, and if there are any adjustments that need to be made then they will decide. D. Whitcher also asked if those filters are not in, will the schools be able to open? Superintendent Angeli states that in the reopening plan that the ventilation system improvements need to be in place one week prior to opening school, so it is a concern that the filters are on back order. He also states that he will follow up with K. French about the 14 or 15 filters. The 16 filters are too thick so they will not work. If we don't have the ventilation system up and running, Superintendent Angeli will bring that to the board and make a recommendation as to whether or not we can open.
- Safety/Security - A. Margerelli-Hussey reported that they did not meet. They hope to meet once the schools open.
- Enrollment/Communications/Goals - D. Whitcher reported they did not meet.
- Policy - M. McCall was not at the meeting, but she did include the first reading of some COVID-19 temporary policies. The subcommittee was supposed to meet this past week, but it was canceled due to the power outage. The subcommittee is asking for a first reading tonight.
- Superintendent Evaluation - J. Konow reported that they did not meet, but they are on the agenda to further that process along.
- Strategic Plan/Curriculum - The subcommittee did not meet.
- Negotiations - M. DeCaprio reported that they have not met, but they are talking with the two unions (IA's and secretaries). After August 23rd they will be looking to try and set up time for those initial discussions.
- EASTCONN- M. Smith reported that they are struggling to reopen. Not a lot happened at the last meeting.

V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

1. New Hires - Superintendent read off the new hires. Amber Coombe - part time Social Studies teacher at LMHS. Brandon Strout - PE/Health Teacher at LMHS. Michael Jaffe - Chemistry/Physical Science teacher at LMHS. Amanda West - Instructional Assistant at LES and Vicktrie Hilario - Instructional Assistant at LES. Superintendent Angeli stated there is an action item that he is asking the board for consideration of a one year temporary position at LES for fourth grade. Those classes are the largest classes due to having three teachers. There are concerns about overcrowding in those classrooms, and not being able to maintain appropriate

social distancing. LES has a room for the class to move into, but they need an additional teacher. There was a teacher moved out of fourth grade with the hopes that we would be opening with no restrictions, and if there were restrictions they were not determined at that time. The restrictions were learned afterwards, and we would have needed the extra teacher in the other grade anyway. There is another option where we can take a reading support teacher and move them into the fourth grade, but that is not recommended because there is concern about learning gaps that may have occurred during distance learning. In the reopening plan it stated that the district would like to have bus monitors for at least the first month of school. There was limited interest in the bus monitor position from the IA's. That may need to be taken out of the plan if the problem is not solved. There is an isolation room at each school and if a child exhibits symptoms of COVID19 there will need to be someone supervising these children so we are looking to hire certified nursing assistants (CNA's) for that position, but there are no interviews yet. There are 16 buses this year so 16 bus monitors are needed. We are working with the manager at the bus company for the routes the buses will take. The bus drivers will be given a list of their stops before August 31st of the known bus takers. If we are unable to hire 16 bus monitors the buses will run without them. If this is the case we would put on a concerted effort to communicate with parents about appropriate bus protocol, something that would also be reinforced with students at school. Bus monitors are not a part of the bus contract, so if we were to ask the bus company to hire there would be additional costs. The bus monitors position includes, monitoring social distancing, monitoring students wearing masks as they enter the bus. If the student doesn't have a mask on, they will ask them to put one on. If the student doesn't have one then the monitor will provide a mask. M. Smith made a suggestion to possibly hire some of the older kids (16/17 year old) for this position.

2. Building walk through - Friday, August 14, 8:30 a.m. - All board members are invited to this. The walk through will start at 8:30 a.m. at LMHS, then will move to LMS and then LES. They can take up to an hour so it could be potentially three hours. This walk through is being scheduled earlier than normal based upon BOE availability, so the buildings are not going to be as far along in getting ready for the opening of school as they normally are. Superintendent Angeli will be sending an invite to the BOF and the Board of Selectmen. Each principal attends the walk through at their building, K. French and J. Jarvis will be attending. LES has an uptake in enrollment. Superintendent Angeli will include census information in the upcoming communication with parents.

3. Reopening schools - Two surveys recently went out. The first was to parents, which was a short survey. There are 835 responses to this survey. The results show 79% of the respondents will return their children to in school instruction and 21 % will be opting for distance learning. The 21% is about 175 students. The parents that opt their children for distance learning have been asked to fill out a form, but because of the power outage the form will remain open. There have been about 100 forms received at this point. A little more than 100 parents have not completed the survey. The second survey went to district staff. There were about 125 responses. There were nine people that indicated they will not be able to return to in school instruction. As was stated previously, the district has been making purchases towards a safe opening of school. There has been equipment or supplies that have been purchased. This includes various PPE (gloves, mask, gowns, plexiglass barriers). The district has ordered six tents (20 x 40) to be placed on school grounds. Two will be for each school. These tents will be used for outdoor recess, mask breaks, outdoor learning and possibly lunches. Lebanon is purchasing them, because rental fees are more than the cost to buy them outright. Four of the tents will be in prior to the start of the school year and the last two will be in a couple weeks after school begins. There will be two tents installed at the elementary school right away. One at LMS and one at LMHS. There is an email account set up for parents to send emails to if they have questions regarding the reopening of schools. That email address is: reopening@lebanonct.org. Superintendent Angeli has been answering the emails. There might be enough emails in there that would generate a frequently asked questions document that he could answer those on that document and then send those out. Superintendent Angeli is making a recommendation for the district of Lebanon to open up in the hybrid model. The hybrid model is when students are split up in two groups. Group A will go to school Monday and Tuesday. Group B students will go to school Thursday

and Friday and Wednesday all students will be distance learning. The reason for this recommendation is that we cannot find a way to maximize social distancing primarily at LMHS and LMS beyond four feet. There are concerns growing at LES that we may not be able to meet it there either because of the increased enrollment. There has been increased awareness of COVID19 being spread by children and also that students in age group 9-19 there is an increase of COVID19 cases. Young children can have up to 20 times the amount of virus in their nasal passages than adults. Opening in the Hybrid allows us to have a transition experience to other segments of society that have been told that they need to open gradually. The governor has allowed districts to make local decisions. Originally the governor told districts that they have to open fully unless there is a moderate increase of COVID19 cases. The definition of moderate increase is 10 cases per 100,000 people. N. McGillicuddy asked if we go to the Hybrid model if we would need the extra fourth grade teacher. The answer is yes. The plan would be to open in hybrid and if there is no increased COVID19 activity we could move to full reopening. Superintendent Angeli has asked the principals to take a look at their classes and if they were to divide them by alphabet what do the splits look like? If they have really uneven splits can the students be rescheduled to make a better balance? The buses will not be at full capacity with the hybrid model, but we will still maximize social distancing as much as possible. In the Hybrid model Lebanon stated they will run after school activities as best as possible. All the teachers will report to school to teach the students that will be in school. We are still working out the details for the students that have opted for distance learning or the ones that would be distance learning half the week. The talk of the curriculum subcommittee of reopening is that there would be synchronous and asynchronous learning for the kids that are distance learning. At LES there is a concern about having too much screen time for the younger kids. There were iPads purchased for the younger kids so there will be some screen time activities and some will be synchronous and some will be assigned. It is a possibility that there be strictly distance learning teachers and in school instruction teachers, but the plan right now is to keep the students with their originally assigned teachers. Part of the mechanisms to do that would be to provide live streaming of lessons. There would be live meetings through the Google software. Kids would be logging in at certain times for certain activities. There would be teachers who would prerecord certain lesson aspects and post them. The first two weeks will still be half days because it will allow the district staff to debrief and continue planning.

VI. FINANCE REPORT

1. 2019-2020 Budget - The end of year state report is due September 1, 2020, so R. Sirpenski is working on that now. There has not been a lot of movement in the projected surplus. As of today there is still \$29,000 of purchase orders that are open with encumbered items. There has been difficulty in getting supplies and that is reflected in encumbrances.
2. 2020-2021 Budget - We are using money out of the current years budget to purchase some of these COVID19 related purchases. There is an additional \$160,000,000 that is going to be made available to education systems to help cover costs for reopening. R. Sirpenski is working with the administrators to maintain a list of all our expenditures. We are just unsure at this time how the money will be distributed. Once we get a more definitive number on the salary line and the health insurance line we will be able to figure out where the money would come from for the fourth grade teacher. If the funds are not available in the appropriate line items then eventually there will be budget transfers to cover these costs which could result in hard or soft freezes of other line items.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. First reading, COVID-19 Temporary Policy Packet - The policy committee has yet to meet on this. This is a packet put together by Shipman and Goodwin. They recommended that we adopt these policies.

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

1. Act on 1 year interim position at LES

Motion made by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by A. Margerelli-Hussey to add the 1 year interim position at LES.

Discussion: If we were to stick to hybrid or go to distance learning and not return to full would we need this fourth teacher. If Superintendent Angeli knew right now we were going to be in hybrid or distance learning for the rest of the school year then we would not need it. The expectation is that we are coming back to full in school instruction. The number of students did go up due to the recent enrollments. The class sizes in at about 18 in first grade, 19 in second grade, 19 or 20 in third grade and right now in fourth grade the class sized are 24. In kindergarten there were 11 new enrollments within the last week so class sizes are at about 14. There are four teachers currently in kindergarten. In first grade there are four teachers, second grade there are three teachers. Third grade has three teachers.

N. McGillicuddy, A. Margerelli-Hussey, D. Person, J. Konow, M. DeCaprio, D. Whitcher and S. Haynes approve. M. Smith is opposed. The motion passes.

IX. ANTICIPATED EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion made by N. McGillicuddy and seconded by A. Margerelli-Hussey to go into executive session at 9:35 p.m. for the purpose of discussing Superintendent's Evaluation and to invite the superintendent. The motion passes unanimously.

The Board returned from executive session at 9:58 p.m.

X. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

XI. ADJOURNMENT

S. Haynes adjourned the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Hashem
Board Clerk