

**Watertown Board of Education  
Regular Board of Education Meeting**

**Meeting Date:** September 14, 2020  
**Meeting Time:** 7:30 p.m.  
**Meeting Place:** REMOTE MEETING

**Members Present:** Ms. Leslie Crotty, Chairman  
Mr. Tom Lambert, Vice Chairman  
Ms. Janelle Wilk, Secretary  
Mr. Robert Makowski  
Ms. Cathie Rinaldi  
Ms. Diane Bristol  
Ms. Cindy Eastman  
Mr. Jason Malagutti  
Ms. Josephine Cavallo-Rosa

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Dr. John Ramos – Interim Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Tom DiStasio – Business 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 August 21, 2020 Special Board of  
Education Meeting

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

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Text of the Motion:  | Madame Chair, I move that the Board approve of the minutes of the August 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2020 Special Board Meeting as presented by Ms. Davidson. |
| Discussion:          | None   |
| Opposed:             | None   |
| Abstained:           | None   |
| Vote:                | Motion passed  |
| Agenda Item:         | D.2  |
| Subject:             | Minutes of the August 31, 2020 Regular Board of Education Meeting  |
| Motion Presented By: | Ms. Wilk   |
| Motion Seconded By:  | Mr. Makowski   |
| Text of the Motion:  | Madame Chair, I move that the Board approve of the minutes of the August 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2020 Regular Board Meeting as presented by Ms. Davidson. |
| Discussion:          | None   |
| Opposed:             | None   |
| Abstained:           | None   |
| Vote:                | Motion passed  |

#### **E. Report from Student Council Representative – Natalie Lindstrom**

**Ms. Crotty** - Tonight, I am very happy to welcome Natalie Lindstrom to her first meeting as the Board of Education student representative. Natalie is a senior at Watertown High School and she is the daughter of Amy and Eric Lindstrom of Oakville. Natalie is a very active participant in many aspects of the high school community. This includes being a four-year member of student council and class officer, a member of Link crew, the World Language Honor Society, National Honor Society, and many more. Natalie, who is in the top 10% of her class, has also participated on the girl's swim and dive team, the Interact Club and last year she was chosen to be a student facility for the Anti-Defamation League program. She works for the Watertown Park and Rec Department year-round planning events and is also one of their summer camp counselors. Natalie, you are a wonderful addition to the Board of Ed and we are extremely happy to welcome you tonight for your first report.

**Ms. Lindstrom** - At **John Trumbull**, after six months of not seeing our students, our hearts were overjoyed on Tuesday! The building was alive with laughter and movement, and while we couldn't see the many beautiful smiles on the faces of our students, we did see the twinkle in their eyes. Teachers spent time with typical getting to know you activities, but there was also a focus on the social and emotional well-being of our young learners which will continue in the weeks to come. Students are learning our John Trumbull Primary School pledge that we recite over morning announcements with Mr. Paylor every day.

At **Polk School**, our first four days of learning were a tremendous success! After months of planning, it was wonderful to see things come together and run so smoothly. Best of all, we were reunited with our students again! Seeing their faces, even from behind a mask, makes everything worthwhile. Our students were absolutely amazing! They were so respectful of the new safety rules and of each other. Whether it was wearing a mask or social distancing in the hallways, they took things seriously and did them perfectly! We are grateful to the Polk families for all of the hard work they did at home to prepare our students for their re-entry.

Another huge kudos is due to the Polk staff! They worked tirelessly all spring and summer to keep our students engaged, to plan and prepare, to keep families up-to-date, ready the building, and a million other tasks large and small. Our reopening would not have gone so well without all of their hard work and I am so thankful to work alongside such dedicated and caring people. For our returning students, re-acclimating to Polk remains a top priority. As part of our on-going social-emotional initiative, our school psychologist and social worker are providing social-emotional learning lessons to all 3rd through 5th graders. During the first of these lessons, students will learn how to say good-bye in a healthy way to last school year. Additionally, our master schedule for this year includes time each morning for teachers and students to meet for morning meetings and to engage in restorative circles, although in a modified way.

At **Judson School**, the first week of school was very successful! The policies and procedures that have been put into place were well received by the staff, parents, and students. There were a few tweaks that were made with our staff parking that allowed for a smoother parent drop off and pick up process to happen at Judson. Teachers did a fantastic job creating colorful and welcoming spaces for our students to learn, even given all the requirements put in place. Our teachers have made Social Emotional Learning and the overall well-being of our students a priority. In talking with the students throughout the week, they were all excited to be back at school, seeing their teachers and friends. Since Ms. Raymond's start date on July 1, 2020, she has sent out three newsletters, including a Meet the Principal newsletter in July. She has also communicated via Thrillshare several times, mostly to give information related to our reopening plan. She called every 3rd grade student's family to introduce herself and welcome their child to Judson. This allowed some great connections with families and provided Ms. Raymond with an opportunity to get to know their child prior to the first day of school. She will begin 4th grade phone calls next week.

At **Swift**, the opening of school went smoothly at Swift this week, thanks to so many people all working together! Thanks to our students and families for patiently following our new protocols; thanks to our teachers and staff for going the extra mile, especially helping with arrival and dismissal procedures; thanks to our secretaries for helping organize our schedules; thanks to our cafe staff for their flexibility with our new routines and thanks to our custodians and support personnel for helping to create a clean and safe environment for us all. Lots of back to school activities began this week, including holding our first full-school fire evacuation, attended by our Fire Marshall. It was very successful, with many thanks to our new security paraprofessionals for

assisting us. New cafeteria protocols were put into place and students learned how to navigate the halls to get to their classes. Band instruction began, students started creating in unified arts and started learning the routines in classes. We're off to a great start!

**Watertown High School** has had an excellent start so far. On Tuesday, we hosted Freshman Orientation for 190 students. Ninth graders learned about our schedule, where their classes are located, and did some introductory activities with each other in socially-distanced small groups. Our upperclassmen students who are members of Link Crew led the majority of freshman orientation, including planning the activities and facilitating the activities. Our Video Production students created a brief tour of our school so that students can see all of it while staying in the classroom. Each of our coaches and club advisors contributed to a Flipgrid video so that 9th graders could learn about all of the co-curricular offerings that WHS has. WHS held its first-ever Virtual Open House on Wednesday, and parents and guardians visited with each teacher on their child's schedule. We used a Google website to link to individual teachers' Zoom meetings. Parents appreciated meeting teachers from the comfort of their own homes, and they didn't have to worry about getting lost on the way to classes! Students are doing a great job consistently wearing their masks and using hand sanitizer each day. They are also maintaining social distancing in the halls, classrooms, and cafeteria. Our remote learners and students who are home on their hybrid days have been logging in consistently and learning about their classes, classmates, and teachers. On Wednesday, we had our first remote learning day for all students, with teachers instructing from their classrooms at WHS.

**Ms. Crotty** - Thank you so much Natalie, that was an excellent report from all five of our schools and a lot of great sentiments and information shared. Thank you and congratulations on your first official board meeting and we are thrilled to have you here.

## **F. Superintendent's Recommendations and Report**

### **1. Appointments – (Information Only)**

Ms. Karen Albino to the position of Durational School Nurse for Watertown Public Schools, effective September 15, 2020, being paid an annual contractual amount of \$47,300.00 (prorated), per the Watertown Nurses' Union Agreement.

Ms. Stacy Capodilupo to the position of Building Substitute at Polk Elementary School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, being hired at a daily rate of \$100.00.

Ms. Cristine Capuano to the position of General Cafeteria Worker for Watertown High School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year at a contractual hourly rate of \$13.50.

Ms. Melanie Carew to the position of Long-Term Substitute Paraprofessional at Swift Middle School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, being paid the hourly rate of \$12.00.

Mr. Bruce Cianciolo to the position of In-School Suspension Monitor at Swift Middle School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, being paid \$138.10 per day.

Mr. Andrew Consalvo to the position of Building Substitute for Swift Middle School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, hired at a daily rate of \$100.00.

Mr. Kevin Dandonoli to the position of Paraprofessional, Category 5/Corridor at Swift Middle School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, being paid the hourly rate of \$15.17, Step 1 of the Paraprofessional Contract.

Mr. Mark Faressa to the position of Building Substitute for Swift Middle School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, being hired at a daily rate of \$100.00.

Mr. Thomas Gorman to the position of School Security & Residency Officer at Polk Elementary School, effective September 8, 2020, at an annual salary of \$45,000.

Ms. Emine Iljazi to the position of Paraprofessional, Category 2, Special Education at John Trumbull Primary School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, being paid the hourly rate of \$15.17, Step 1 of the Paraprofessional Contract.

Mr. John Lorenzini to the position of Long-Term Substitute Health Teacher at Watertown High School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, being paid a daily rate of \$85.00 for the first ten days and on the eleventh day the rate will change to \$252.24, Step 3 of the WEA Contract.

Ms. Carrie Petrucci to the position of Durational School Nurse for Watertown Public Schools, effective September 15, 2020, being paid an annual contractual amount of \$47,300.00 (prorated), per the Watertown Nurses' Union Agreement.

Ms. Oceanna Roach to the position of Paraprofessional, Category 1 at Polk Elementary School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, being paid the hourly rate of \$15.17, Step 1 of the Paraprofessional Contract.

Ms. Lori Santopietro to the position of Paraprofessional, Category 1, for Watertown High School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, being paid the hourly rate of \$15.17, Step 1 of the Paraprofessional Contract.

Ms. Valerie Sassu to the position of Long-Term Substitute/Special Education Teacher at Watertown High School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, being paid the substitute teacher rate of \$85.00 per day for the first ten days and on the eleventh day the rate will change to \$252.24, Step 3 of the WEA Contract.

Ms. Karie Stango to the position of Building Substitute for Polk Elementary School, effective for the 2020-2021 school year, being hired at a daily rate of \$100.00.

2. **Transfers – (Information Only)**

Ms. Rosanna Farrow from the position of Paraprofessional Category 2, at John Trumbull Primary School to Kindergarten Paraprofessional at John Trumbull Primary School, effective September 8, 2020.

Ms. Anne Marie Walker from the position of part-time Nurse at Watertown High School to full time nurse at Watertown High School, effective August 24, 2020.

### 3. Resignations – (Information Only)

None

### 4. Superintendent's Report

**Dr. Ramos** - Good evening everyone. I would like to mention a few things. First, you'll notice on the appointments that we've managed to fill several of our vacancies and particularly some of our sub vacancies. It is really great to have some of our alumni back feeling some of those spots. I'd also like to mention that we still need more folks so if anyone out there tonight is interested in coming in and subbing here in the Watertown Public Schools please come and see us over at Munson House or give us a call. We are continuing to work on other remaining vacancies, such as over the Labor Day weekend we were able to secure the last three nurses that we needed in order to have our schools employee staff with nurses.

I would also like to mention regarding facilities that we are buttoning up some of the outstanding issues related to our opening. Things are coming along nicely and of course; the deep cleaning is occurring daily and kudos to the custodial and maintenance staff for all of what they are doing. The tech upgrades are coming along well as we work to fully accommodate the new demand on our system. We have made significant upgrades that I think are really helping us. Kudos to that staff as well for all that they are doing. We are trying to continue to assimilate all of the agenda that is coming out of the State Department of Education and out of the Governor's office. For example, the last week the state informed the districts that there must be a distinction and attendance for students participating in person versus students that are participating virtually, either through temporary volunteer remote learning path or the hybrid learning. We were informed about this in early September. This has also caused us to have deeper conversations about how it is we can best serve our virtual learning students. Towards that end, who are attending tonight, have remaining concerns about that and I'd like you to know that we are very hopeful by week's end we will have all of these concerns shored up. I try to operate with the idea under-promise and over-deliver so I'm going to put it in this way: I am very hopeful that we will have this but end up by the end of the week for all of our sake because our students need that support. In summarizing my report, I'd like to agree with our student rep and agree that things have gone well as we've begun. Dr. Harrison's team and our team did an extraordinary job preparing for the system and the re-entry. As I have noted to some of you already, it has been noted to me that there isn't more that we really could have done to prepare to keep everyone safe. That said, there are problems and concerns. I have touched on some of them already and we are continuing to work out the kinks as we all try to stay nimble inflexible and work through this difficult time.

**Ms. Crotty** - I would just like to echo Dr. Ramos's words, you mentioned people remaining flexible with the continuing addendums. They tend to affect the Watertown district a little bit more than other districts that have gone completely remote or are completely hybrid throughout their entire District. Well we made a concerted effort to get K through 7 in safely, full-time, and 8 through 12 in the hybrid model. These addendums may have to make us make adjustments to our plans a little bit more than other districts who are completely remote or completely hybrid. I appreciate everybody's understanding that we still have to remain flexible and although things are going well, with the exceptions that Dr. Ramos laid out, we still have to ask for your flexibility as things may change moving forward.

#### **G. Discussion Regarding Watertown High School Mascot Petition**

**Ms. Crotty** – In response to a public request to the board to change the Watertown High School Mascot, I am formally recommending that the Board establish the Watertown Public Schools Mascot Committee (WPSMC) to begin a community engagement process that will examine the use of the current “Indian” name and mascot. Committee Membership: The WPSMC will be made up of four students, two current Watertown Public Schools parents or guardians, two community members, two faculty and staff members, the Athletic Director, two administrators, and two Board of Education members. I am recommending that the Committee be Chaired by Watertown High School Principal Janet Parlato, and that Cathie Rinaldi and Cindy Eastman serve as its Board representatives. The charge of the committee will begin immediately, and recommendations will be due to the Board of Education for their follow-up and possible action no later than January 19, 2021. The purpose of the WPSMC is to engage in a community discussion, with the assistance of experts in the field, on the subjects of race, culture, and the use of a Native American school mascot and name. As part of the process, the committee will host a Public Town Hall for residents and ensure that information about and resulting from their proceedings is made readily available on the Watertown Public Schools website. The committee's goal will be to inform the Board of Education of their findings on the matter and to present to the Board a recommendation about the use of the current name and mascot. Listening respectfully to one another's perspectives as well as to community members and experts in the field will be the primary focus of the WPSMC's work. It is important that the WPSMC engages in a community process to ensure the Board of Education, in collaboration with administration, makes informed decisions based on a thorough and transparent community process in which all voices are heard, respected and included. Once the Mascot Committee has made its recommendation, the Board will conclude the process with a final vote on the matter.

#### **H. Discussion Regarding the Appointment of an Interim Principal at Judson Elementary School, and the Appointment of an Interim Assistant Principal at Watertown High School.**

**Dr. Ramos** - As you may know, our principal at Judson is taking a maternity leave so we are working to have her job covered for the brief time that she will be away. We are recommending that Mr. Tom Hogrefe fill that vacancy for us during that time frame which is basically from the end of September through late October or early November. Also, in as much as Mr. Hogrefe will

be moving over to Judson, we are asking Ms. Nicole Lewis to step in and fill his place at the high school ss assistant principal. I have every confidence in both of them and I really appreciate their willingness as team players to step up at this time. It is very much appreciated.

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

**Ms. Krista Palmoba, 9 Cayuga Dr, WTN** - Discusses the mascot name change brought up last month. She would like to see the name/mascot stay unchanged.

**Ms. Coleen Murphy, 175 Woodruff Ave, WTN** - Discusses the mascot name change brought up last month. She would like to see the name/mascot fully changed.

**Mr. Mike Russo, 28 Orlando St., OAK** - Discusses the challenges of remote learning.

**Mr. Dan Cocchiola, 15 Flintlock Rd, WTN** - Discusses the challenges of remote learning.

**Ms. Allison Demarest, 116 Jason Ave, WTN** – Discusses the fact that the re-entry into the schools was hard work and has not gone unnoticed.

To hear the entire public participation, please go to:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFOJNLBnlUA>

**J. Communications – Secretary**

**Ms. Wilk** – Yes, Madame Chair, the Board of Ed received a letter from Ian Record, Vice President of Tribal Governance at the National Congress of American Indians.

Ms. Crotty – I know two of our public participants mentioned documents that were sent to the board today, those will be forwarded to all board members and also be available online to the community through the Watertown Public School’s website. The mascot issue will have its own section on the website and all of the materials that have been submitted both to the board and committee members will be there so everybody has the opportunity to see them.

**K. Committee Reports:**

**Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Ms. Cathie Rinaldi, Chair – Yes**

Requesting to have a future meeting (to pick a date for) specifically for the discussion on math. She would like to follow up on intervention at the high school level.

**Policy and Labor Committee, Ms. Janelle Wilk, Chair – No**

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

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

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

**L. Report from the Board Chair**



**No Report**

**M. Action Items – Adoption of Items to be Approved by Consent**

Agenda Item: M.1  
Subject: Consideration to Approve of the Appointment of an Interim Principal at Judson Elementary School

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

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Board appoint Mr. Thomas Hogrefe as the Interim Principal at Judson Elementary School, effective September 23, 2020 to November 9, 2020, at the per diem rate based on Step 5, \$131,621, of the Watertown Administrators Association contract.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None  
Abstained: None  
Vote: Motion passed

Agenda Item: M.2  
Subject: Consideration to Approve of the Appointment of an Interim Assistant Principal at Watertown High School

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

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Board appoint Ms. Nicole Lewis to the position of Interim Assistant Principal at Watertown High School, effective September 23, 2020 to November 9, 2020, at the per diem rate based on Step 1, \$122,025, of the Watertown Administrators Association contract.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

## Watertown Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes

Abstained: None  
 Vote: Motion passed

Agenda Item: M.3  
 Subject: Consideration to Approve of the Formation of a  
 Watertown Public Schools Mascot Committee

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

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Board approve of the formation of a Watertown Public Schools Mascot Committee as presented and move further that Dr. Janet Parlato serve as its Chair and that Ms. Cathie Rinaldi and Ms. Cindy Eastman serve as its Board representatives.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None  
 Abstained: None  
 Vote: Motion passed

**N. Future Agenda Items and Board Members Comments**

None

**O. Public Participation – (Please state your name, address and topic of discussion)**

**Becky Zadlo, 226 Beach Ave, WTN** – Looking for an update on fall sports at Swift. (It is still being worked on.)

**P. Adjournment**

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

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

|                     |                                       |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Text of the Motion: | Madame Chair, I move that we adjourn. |
| Discussion:         | None                                  |
| Opposed:            | None                                  |
| Abstained:          | None                                  |
| Vote:               | Motion Passes                         |

The meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mindi Davidson  
Recording Secretary

Janelle Wilk  
Secretary of the Board