

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

**Meeting Date:** October 26, 2020  
**Meeting Time:** 7:30 p.m.  
**Meeting Place:** Remote Meeting

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

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Dr. John Ramos – Interim Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Tom DiStasio – Business Manager  
Ms. Natalie Lindstrom – Student Council Representative

**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 October 13, 2020 Regular Board of Education Meeting

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

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Text of the Motion: | Madame Chair, I move that the Board accept the minutes of the October 13, 2020 meeting of the Board of Education as presented by Ms. Davidson. |
| Discussion:         | None   |
| Opposed:            | None   |
| Abstained:          | Ms. Rosa   |
| Vote:               | Motion passed  |

## E. Award Recognitions

### 2020-2021 Watertown Teacher of the Year Award

**Ms. Wilk** - The Watertown Board of Education wishes to recognize and congratulate Watertown's 2020-2021 District Teacher of the Year, Ms. Kelly Bainer. Ms. Bainer is a 2015 graduate of the University of Saint Joseph, where she earned a Master's degree in Special Education. She also holds a Bachelor's degree in Communication Disorders and a Minor in Psychology from Southern Connecticut State University. Ms. Bainer worked as a Teaching Assistant at Foundation School in Milford from 2013-2015 and was hired in June 2015 as a Special Education teacher at Polk Elementary School. Ms. Bainer's dedication to her students is evident. She is always looking for new ways to make connections with kids. She gets to know their interests and incorporates them into lessons and activities. You can often find her eating lunch with her students either in the cafeteria or during her weekly Friday "Lunch and a Movie" offering. Kelly also started and organized "Facelift Fridays" where participating staff greet students outside at arrival with music, signs, dancing and high fives. During the COVID-19 pandemic Kelly organized a parade for the Polk Students. She visited each of her students weekly at their homes, sent every student a care package and made a volcano with a struggling student in his driveway while observing social distancing. Every single student at Polk School knows who Mrs. Bainer is, regardless of whether they are one of her students. Additionally, Kelly knows just about every student in the school by name. Kelly's relationships with her colleagues and dedication to Polk School in general nearly matches her feelings and actions with kids. Kelly does things just to ease the load for her colleagues and to quite simply make school a positive place. Kelly does all of the school-wide bulletin boards without being asked or expected to, and they are often about recognizing students or staff. Some examples are as follows: "Be the "i" in Kind," where Kelly collected student nominations from staff, took students' pictures and then sent home copies to families with the certificate and "Taco 'bout how Great our Staff is!" which is a staff shout out bulletin board. Kelly likewise started "Feel Good Friday." Kelly seeks out information about what her colleagues are doing and then highlights them in specific and positive ways via this weekly email. Kelly always volunteers to help out her colleagues. She covers duties, provides support when someone is out sick and takes additional kids for small groups. Kelly's day to day interactions with students and staff really help to make Polk School a safe, happy and accepting place to be. We are very fortunate to have her in Watertown. We are so proud that Ms. Bainer represented Watertown in the State of Connecticut Teacher of the Year Program for 2020-21.

**2020-2021 Teacher of the Year Nominees**

The Watertown Board of Education would also like to congratulate and recognize the fourteen nominees, nominated for the 2020-2021 teacher of the year pool. Thank you for your diligent work:

|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Sarah Baker, Watertown High School                  | Susan Danaher, Polk School            |
| Kate DeSantis, John Trumbull Primary School         | Diana DeBiase, Judson School          |
| Chelsie Guerrera, Watertown High School             | Jennifer Gruettner, Judson School     |
| Sharon Heady-Labansky, John Trumbull Primary School | Nicole Lewis, Watertown High School   |
| Marlena McDonnell, Judson School                    | Kylee McIntosh, Judson School         |
| Tara Schulte, Polk School                           | Kathleen Sklanka, Swift Middle School |
| Molly Stepka, Judson School                         | Jeff Turner, Watertown Public Schools |

**F. Distinguished Service Award – Thomas A. Lambert**

**Ms. Crotty** - For 14 years, Tom Lambert was the patriarch of this Board of Education. Leading not only in Budget, Finance, Facilities, and Operations but in all other things that were deemed to benefit our students. Throughout his tenure, he both mentored and collaborated with Business Managers and Superintendents to ensure students would be provided for to the fullest extent possible, while being ever mindful of the financial responsibility he had to the residents of Watertown and Oakville. He was a champion of fiscally responsible budgeting and implementing new strategies of efficiency and savings. Under his leadership, the district saw positive changes in energy costs, building renovations to four of our schools, streamlined facility maintenance and detailed operational processes. A successful proponent of full day kindergarten, Tom toured half and extended day Kindergarten classes to gain perspective and understanding of the issues at hand. He appreciated the expertise of our educators and the work of every single staff member in the district. Tom knew how critical every employee's role was and served on negotiation teams always with great respect for each of them. He fought to expand technology and resources in our schools and he worked with local business owners and manufacturers to find new ways to ensure that Watertown's Transition Academy students gained the training and knowledge needed to enter the workforce. Tom's biggest passion and wish was for our students to have the freedom to explore a variety of career paths at Watertown High School, especially for those who did not see college in their future. He made sure the idea of apprenticeships and internships in manufacturing and the skilled trades became a reality within our District Improvement Plan. I am so proud to say that Tom's dream of our high school becoming partners with local businesses so our students have opportunities to graduate with the skills needed for competitive employment and careers in the trades is coming to a reality. Tom brought his personal manufacturing experience, business acumen, management skills and military experience to nine different interim and permanent Superintendents during his 14 years on the Board. We all benefited from his insight and historical perspectives, and if Tom had a story to share you knew it was going to be engaging, relevant and insightful. He was a man who understood the value of applying both practical knowledge and critical thinking, and he knew which was required and when. He always credited others for our successes, even though most of the time they would not have happened without

his support and guidance. Many have witnessed firsthand to what extent Tom took his role and responsibility as a Board Member: from nurturing new members and promoting school budgets, to turning chemical bottles upside down to ensure a solid seal and running his shoe over every tile in the high school main hallway to ensure its safety. On any given day he would call me about a gutter that needed readjustment or shingles that appeared to be loose. He was adamant that our facilities be maintained to protect the town's investments so that our students, employees, and community could be proud of their schools, gymnasiums and fields. When the lines in the parking lots were repainted every summer, he would make sure I knew he was glad, and would always find a way to make me feel like I had something to do with it. I have walked the inside and the grounds of every school in this town with Tom more than once, and what I would not give to do that with him again. If he called me with-in a few days after a board meeting, I knew there was going to be something important I needed to reflect on, and I could also anticipate a follow-up conversation or email a few days later with an encouraging word or two. I loved brainstorming board issues with Tom, and as his wife Loretta can attest, there were days over the years that I called on him frequently. We would throw around ideas and see what started to stick, and then, inevitably, he would say "I think you're onto something". Those conversations are memories I will always cherish. Watertown Public Schools is forever indebted to him for his unwavering dedication, leadership, guidance, and friendship.

**Ms. Rosa** - It was eight years ago, on the board of ed, but I first met Tom. He graciously said, "Welcome". Being that it was my first day on the board, I was a bit nervous. Tom sensed it, and with his bright smile said, "Don't be nervous, you'll be fine". This is Tom. A gentleman, a role model for all ages, a pillar of knowledge, a strength for all of us on this board to have had the privilege to experience. I have learned that people will forget what you have said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel. We love you Tom.

**Mr. Makowski** - Tom was warm-hearted, generous and gifted, but do not mistake his quiet nature for weakness. Tom always studied intently the person, the words, the room, the situation. And when he spoke, there was seldom a mincing of words. He said what he meant and he meant what he said. Tom was a true American Patriot. He honorably served his country in the United States Air Force. He proudly served his community through his many years on the Board of Education and other commissions here in town. But most of all, he did everything in his power to support, defend, and care for his family. It is each of these virtues and more that made Tom a mentor to so many. He is the type of person that we should each strive to be like. We know that he made the world a better place. Sometimes, just by the crack of his smile. We will do our best to continue your work, but it won't be the same. Do not hesitate to send down your words of wisdom; we are always listening.

**Ms. Bristol** - As I sat here and collected my thoughts about Tom, your dad, Grandpa; I did it with a tear running down my cheek and a smile on my face. I only knew Tom for a short period of time, but I learned so much from him. As one of the newer members of the Board of Education, Tom took me under his wing and taught me so much about the board, our community, and he did it in such a captivating way. He never told me what to do, how to vote or how to think; he told a story about the situation, providing me history and background and he wanted me to think and draw my own conclusion. He took the time to share knowledge with me so that I can

be the best board member, the best person I can be. So, as I wipe the tear from my cheek, and my smile grows bigger, and it all clicks. Amongst all of Tom's talents, one of his biggest talents was being an amazing teacher himself. It explains why his passion was to ensure that all children in our community received the best education in the best facilities and the best community. Thank you, Tom, for all that you did and thank you for sharing him with us.

**Ms. Rinaldi** - I only knew Tom through our work on the board and the occasional board get-togethers. Those of you who knew him longer than I have stronger, more cherished connections to his loss. But I do feel the absence of his presence as deeply as anyone. Tom's presence was subtle, not a glaring bright light, but a welcoming warm. When you missed, when it wasn't there. His commitment and care to the board and its members was a tangible thing. It showed up in the way he greeted each of us with a smile as we gathered, and then collected our name plates after the meeting. He was resolute without being insistent and he always made me feel as my contribution was equal to everyone else's. Unimportant acknowledgement for a new member on the Board. I saw and him a fierce protective nature towards our board and school community. And I felt grateful that we had this quiet strength that had our backs. One time, after a meeting, he asked if I drove a Subaru. I guess he saw me pull in one night. when I said, "Yes, an Outback", he said, "I knew I liked you" with his mirthful smile. I felt like I had arrived. Several months later, when we got a new car, a Nissan, I had always hoped he never noticed. I did not want my Subaru badge to be revoked. I knew Tom from the outside in a professional setting, and briefly at that, but I will miss him as if I had known him for years. I feel like he made everyone feel like a friend. My life has benefited from his presence in it.

**Mr. Malagutti** - The dictionary defines the word "gentleman" as a chivalrous, courteous, or honorable man. Mr. Lambert exhibited each of these traits and the most impressive fact was that it came naturally to him. From the moment I met Tom, I was in awe of the way he communicated and brought a sense of warmth to those around him. He possessed a unique style of expression, much like a talented performer where he would recite the most mundane of statements and yet make those around him break out laughing. I realized that the evening that we were sworn in together that he had a special presence and after hearing about his multiple life accomplishments, I began to understand the oppressive experiences that shaped him. A proud father, loving husband, grandfather, veteran, Civic Servant and successful local business leader are just a few of the many superlatives I would say of Mr. Lambert. I am personally, however, most honored to have called him a friend. You are missed, Sir, and will forever be known to me as the Father of the Board. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Loretta, Tom Jr, Kellie, his beautiful grandchildren, and your entire family. Rest in peace, we will always remember you and are grateful for your service.

**Ms. Wilk** - I'm going to make this short and sweet, not because there isn't much to say, but because it is so hard to say it. There isn't enough time or words to give the proper respect and credit to how wonderful Tom was. It is well known by many how dedicated Tom was to Watertown, to his friends, his work, and to his time on the Board of Education. But most importantly, was his love for his family. Tom had a huge impact on my life and I will forever be grateful for his knowledge that he has given me. He was a true gentleman and I will always remember his kindness, our talks about Lucy and Walter, places to park that are better so your car doesn't get hit, and then always being so caring towards others. I will forever miss my friend.

Thank you for sharing him with us. It was a true honor to be on the Board with him and to sit next to him.

**Ms. Rinaldi** - Words cannot express the Board of Ed shares over the loss of our friend Tom. Tom was a crucial member of the board of ed and it is difficult to imagine him not being with us. When I first joined the board, I didn't know Tom very well. I knew he was Kellie's dad oh, I knew he was a PTO liaison who came to each meeting with a thorough report and answered each question with respect and integrity. However, Tom quickly taught me being a part of the board of ed was more than just improving our educational system, which was extremely important to him. But we can't teach our students all they need to know to be successful if they didn't have a safe and up-kept building. I learned that pitchable land can cause leaks in the building; I learned about glycol levels; I learned about energy savings and so much more that if I even tried to reiterate any of it, I would butcher it so badly that even Tom would roll his eyes at me. I was very nervous to participate in my first campaign. I didn't know what to do or what to expect. But little did I know that I had the Campaign King on my side. We had the payment together. We went house to house, neighborhood to neighborhood and he taught me a lot about politics on our walk. He, and his caring sweet way, educated me on the way to handle things in a respectful and appropriate manner. When to speak up, but also went to just sit back and listen before making a decision. As the years went on and we spent more time together, on election days again, our conversations changed. We talked about our kids, our spouses, how we grew up, things going on with each of us. Our conversation was different this time because we weren't just two people on the board of it anymore; we were friends. Tom, I will always remember and always be grateful for how you mentored me when I first joined to the board of ed. And I will always cherish the friendship that we had. I know someday we will have to replace your seat at this table, but no one will ever be able to fill your shoes. Rest in peace, my friend.

**Ms. Crotty** - Tom would be really mad at us all right now and he would want us to get back to business. If I had a gavel, because we all knew Tom loved the gavel, I would bang it now. But instead, to Loretta: we would like to present you with Tom's Distinguished Service Award that hopefully you can see. It reads: "The Distinguished Service Award is presented to Tom A. Lambert. In recognition of 14 years of outstanding service to the Watertown Board of Education. October 26th, 2020. The inscription at the bottom reads, 'Leadership, Wisdom, and Friendship.'"

Before we go on this evening, if the Board is an agreement, I would like to insert Board Agenda item N now so that we may have our first round of public participation. Do any of the members of the public wish to address the board this evening?

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

**Kellie Lambert, 301 Oak Dr, OAK** – I just want to say thank you to everybody for all of your kind words. They definitely have helped right now and in this time. We are very, very grateful for the support of the community and the Board of Ed and it has made this difficult time much better. We probably would not have survived this as well without you, so thank you very much.

**H. Presentation – The Thomas A. Lambert Career Partnership Fund**

Dr. Janet Parlato presented the Thomas A. Lambert Career Partnership Fund. To see the entire presentation, please go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWdnGurira4>

If you would like to donate to the Thomas A. Lambert Career Partnership fund, please make out a check to Watertown High School and put “Lambert Fund” in the memo line. Please then send it to Watertown High School, 324 French St. Watertown, CT 06795.

**I. Report form Student Council Representative – Natalie Lindstrom**

**Ms. Lindstrom - John Trumbull** - Students are working hard at JTPS. We began the year with Writer’s Workshop, a program in which students build fluency and confidence in writing through continuous repeated exposure to the writing process. Students have been busy learning the routine of Writer’s Workshop. Students have been using assorted writing paper to capture their thoughts, selecting writing spots, conferencing with teachers and revising their work to meet specific individualized writing targets of small moment stories. We have also been working hard at creating our community of writers through sharing. Students have been sharing their writing pieces with the class. We’ve learned that everyone has a story to tell and we are all a community of authors! Kindergarteners have learned that it is easy to write about what we know and love, especially when we draw a picture first. First and second graders are writing narrative, small moment stories. They bring their stories to life by writing about things that have happened to them!

At **Judson**, third grade students are taking part in the 2nd annual Book Character Pumpkin Literacy Project. This literacy project encourages excitement around reading for students and the Judson community. Students are decorating fake pumpkins in the image of their favorite character from a book they have read or are currently reading. Over 70 pumpkins are currently being displayed in the front hallway. Fourth graders in Mrs. O’Toole’s class are working hard to create an environment where members trust one another, respect one another, and feel safe together. One activity they use to learn about one another is answering daily questions. Each day, a new question is posted, and each child has an opportunity to share his or her thoughts and ideas. Often these questions spark personal stories that allow members to get to know each other deeply on a personal level. In this way, each child feels valued and respected. Additionally, photos of the questions and answers are shared with parents on class dojo to help them feel included in the classroom too.

Recently we began a new initiative at **Polk** to shine a light on all of our amazing students and the positive things that they do each day! We want our students to know that their actions have a big impact, are noticed by others, and have the ability to change the culture of our school (and the world) for the better. All staff are encouraged to nominate students when they observe them exhibiting one of twelve characteristics. Whether it’s being recognized for being friendly, being a leader, or demonstrating honesty, our students are demonstrating each day that they have the ability to change the world- one positive act at a time. Students who are recognized have their photo taken in front of a schoolwide bulletin board and then make their mark by adding their handprint to the board. In addition, we highlight these students and their actions during morning announcements. Kudos for this idea and the hard work in getting things set up go to Kelly Bainer, Watertown’s 2019-2020 Teacher of the Year! After piloting the program last year, we are utilizing the Empowering Minds curriculum to support social-emotional learning at

Polk. Empowering Minds, which is specifically designed for this age group, is a mindfulness-based social-emotional learning curriculum and is founded on the principles and best practices of The Collaborative for Academic & Social-Emotional Learning (CASEL). The lessons blend the best of mindfulness, cognitive behavioral theory, and neuroscience in ways that are experiential, fun, and focused. Over the course of the school year, students will learn mindfulness tools to help with their feelings and emotions, make responsible decisions, and improve their overall self-management.

At **Swift Middle School** we held a “Go Pink” day on Friday the 23<sup>rd</sup>. What made this day unique is that it was organized “virtually” as Student Council members planned the event together on-line! The staff and students were asked to wear pink and make a donation. Monies raised will be sent to the “Quilts That Care” organization, a voluntary organization for cancer support, associated with the Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center. Staff members gathered together this past week to hold a brief remembrance ceremony for former Swift science teacher, Jonathan Sales, who passed away just before the shutdown last February. We planted a tree in Jonathan’s memory and told stories of his dedication to his profession, his attachment to the students and his indomitable school spirit. He is missed.

At **Watertown High School**, students in grades 9-11 with last names beginning with A-K took the PSATs last Wednesday. The PSATs provide our school, students, and families with important information about students’ progress in reading, writing, and Mathematics. Students with last names from L-Z will take the PSATs on Thursday, October 29. Students have been working on a variety of projects across their classes. In the past two weeks, Foods and Baking students have made a variety of soups and scones, Woods students are constructing a shed, Video Production students are making videos for broadcast and to provide a tour of our school, and Publishing students are finishing up the newsletter. We are proud of our students’ work and efforts on these projects. Teacher committees for this year are starting soon. This year we have the DREAM/Vision of a Graduate Committee, Midterm/Final Exam/Assessment Committee, Study Group about the book, Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain, and WHS Wellness Advocates. These committees will contribute ideas and programs for our school, and we are grateful for all of the teacher volunteers on each committee.

#### **J. Superintendent’s Recommendations and Report**

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

Mr. Jerry Aviles to the position of Network Coordinator II for Watertown Public Schools, effective October 19, 2020, being paid an hourly rate of \$27.94, Step 3 of the Custodial Contract.

##### **2. Transfers – (Information Only)**

None

##### **3. Resignations – (Information Only)**



Ms. Carol Crean from the position of school nurse at Polk School, effective October 5, 2020 for the purpose of retirement. Ms. Crean has worked for Watertown Public Schools for twelve years.

Ms. Robin Quadrato from the position of paraprofessional at Polk Elementary School, effective November 27, 2020 for the purpose of retirement. Robin has worked for Watertown Public Schools for 24 years.

#### 4. **Superintendent's Report**

**Dr. Ramos** - First of all, thank you Natalie for your wonderful report. Given that Watertown is now in the Covid-19 orange category, last Friday the Board of Education and Town Representatives worked together to coordinate our response. Our meeting tonight going virtually and the town council meeting as well is an example of items that came from the coordinated effort. At the same time, as a district we have released memos to both staff and students and families outlining our plans to provide remote learning should we have to close all of our schools, one of our schools, or even just one classroom due to Covid cases. So far, we have been fortunate and that the Covid cases coming into the district have not wreaked havoc on the district. In cooperation with the Torrington Area Health District, we have been able to contact trace and minimize lost school time. We hope that this trend will continue if any more cases do come to us at all, but we are positioning ourselves to do our best to handle whatever comes our way. We recognize that not all decisions were well with all people. We hope that our community understands we are doing our very best to make decisions that we hope will keep our students and our staff safe. We realize that the entire matter is not comfortable for any of us. Everyone is doing their best. We hope that our community will continue to cooperate in that same spirit. It's been remarkable how people have worked together. We appreciate that.

#### K. **Quarterly Budget Summary**

**Mr. DiStasio** - This is the 2020-2021 budget status report. Board members should have received the detailed status report and a breakdown of the Covid-19 related costs prior to the start of this meeting. We will start with the annual budget that is broken down into are five primary categories: Salaries and benefits, purchased services, utilities, contracted services, and supplies and equipment. You can see that our budget offset of \$900,000 was also applied and that is the excess cost reimbursement that we anticipate from the state for special education costs. Our budget is at about 46.5 million dollars. That is broken down at 77% salaries and benefits, 5% purchased services, 6% utilities, 10% contracted services, and 2% of supplies and equipment. The excess cost reimbursement for the purposes of this graph is assigned to the contracted services category.

Starting with salaries and benefits, we are projecting a deficit of about \$601,000. That is 1.67% of the budget and it is entirely due to covid-19 related costs and some of which are listed here. We have incurred custodial overtime and will continue to do so throughout the course of the year. We have increased our cleaning and sanitizing protocols as outlined and the school re-entry plan. We also added four new nurses, four additional building substitutes, special assignment substitute teachers, three additional hall monitors, and we have increased some hours for some of our paraprofessionals. This is all being done in order to best prepare us for

the safe return and safe continuance of and school learning of the district. There is also the accelerated timeline for the network coordinator. We had budgeted to hire the network coordinator halfway through the year, but as we developed our re-entry plan, we continued to increase the number of devices we had on hand and a district to better equip ourselves promoting hybrid learning. With only two dedicated IT staff, at the time we felt it was appropriate to accelerate this timeline. Moving onto purchased services, this report is quarter one and it really just takes us through a couple of months of the school year. At this point in time, there is nothing to indicate anything will change drastically from what we projected. For now, we are projecting full expenditure of the funds we budgeted and allocated for the services. On utilities we see a projected deficit of about \$29,000 which is only 1.1% of the budget for this category. Again, this is an area with some covid-19 related impact because of some storage costs that we have been incurring. We have been storing furniture that we had to remove from our schools in order to maximize the use of space. We will continue to encourage those cost each month that the schools are open and the furniture cannot be placed within the school. For contracted services, it is not projected to be drastically different than what is budget at this point in time. We are projecting a near full expenditure of these accounts and there is some small potential for some savings which is reflected on the report and that is due to having fewer school field trips with the current circumstances that we are in during the pandemic. When we shift to supplies and equipment, we see a large projected deficit about \$918,000, or 90.69% of what is budgeted on this line. Keep in mind this is only about 2% of the overall budget. taking us through some of the causes, again covid-19 impact is what is driving the deficit here and we can break it down into three categories: IT hardware and software, purchases of Chromebook and Chromebook cases as well as software upgrades that was necessary to prepare for hybrid and remote learning. As we ramped up our preparations for the new school year, we did have to make sure that we equipped ourselves to be ready for whatever was to be thrown our way when we reopened in the current situation. The next category would be PPE; we purchased the bulk of our PPE at the start of the school year and we are talking about masks, face shields, gowns, gloves, plexiglass, sneeze guards, touchless hand sanitizer units and stands as well as a number of other things we purchased and put around the building to make sure that we are prepared to keep our schools clean and people safely in school. We also have sanitizing wipes that we have purchased a number of and we continue to reassess and we are reordering as necessary as we go throughout the year. These projections include all anticipated costs to get us through the remainder of the year. The last category is equipment and furniture purchases and that totals about \$45,000. Most of the purchases have been made already in anticipation of returning to school. These were desks and chairs that we purchased so that students could eat lunch in the cafeteria without violating any social distancing guideline. That takes us through all five categories and leaves us with a total projected deficit of about 1.5 million for 3.2% of the budget. There are a few funding sources that have already been identified, applied for, and approved. There is the elementary and secondary school emergency relief fund (ESSER fund). Watertown Public Schools has been allocated \$175,000 through this fund and we applied for and it has been approved. Also, coronavirus relief funding has been made available to the district an amount of \$282,705. This was also recently approved after an application that was completed with the state. That leaves us with about 1.1 million dollars of anticipated funding that needs to be acquired. There is potential for FEMA reimbursement of up to 75% of allowable items. We are working with the town finance office and ensuring that we

apply for these items for reimbursement through FEMA to maximize the reimbursement that we can achieve.

**Ms. Bristol** - Thank you very much time for putting that together. I think we anticipated going into the school year and we knew we were going to have these additional costs. With FEMA and funding of the additional million that we are short guy, is it still at 75%? Is it still 75% of that they would fund and then we as a town would have to fund the additional 25%? Is that correct?

**Mr. DiStasio** - Yes that is correct. I worked with the town finance office to see who they have been working with. it is a town that applies for the FEMA reimbursement. The Board of Ed can only request it through the town. The guidance said they provided for me indicated that the board of education is to submit a request with the town for FEMA reimbursement which will cover up to 75% of allowable costs. The other 25% can be funded in other ways, for instance the town can seek funding through other grant funding as well. The Board of Education was allotted \$282,000 through the coronavirus relief funds.

**Ms. Crotty** - If there was anyone in the public that was unaware, Mr. DiStasio is moving on and his career and we are very grateful for the time that we had together. We reaped the benefits of your amazing intellect and ability to handle everything that has come your way since entering this District. This may be the last time that Tom presents to us and I want to thank him for his very thorough report.

#### **L. Discussion Regarding the 2021 Board of Education Meeting Dates**

**Ms. Crotty** - Board members received in their packets the suggested dates for the Board of Education meetings from January through December in 2021. All but one of the dates fall on a Monday. Any questions or concerns regarding those dates?

#### **M. Discussion Regarding the Schools Success Plans (SSP)**

Dr. Ramos - We are using the same format as was used last year. The school success plans connect directly to the district's 2022 strategic plan. At the same time, the 2021 plans will reflect and seek to address current circumstances for covid-19, and the one-time flexibility that was offered by the Connecticut State Department of Education for educator professional growth and evaluation. The school success plan has six primary goals. Three of which are school-based and three of which are district-based being carried out at the school level. The goal is to focus on support, climate, staff, students, and partners as you heard earlier and Dr. Parlato's report. We are happy to report that the school success plan is indexed to the district improvement plan and specifically to the strategic aspect of that plan. So, you have the overarching district improvement plan which, and part, includes the Strategic plan, indexed directly to it are the school success plans. So, there is coherence, from the district level to the building level. to accentuate that further and to make sure coherence goes all the way, we have also indexed the administrator evaluation to the school success plan. So the effort is to ensure that there is coherence throughout the district so that the right hand knows what the left hand is doing as it relates to where we put our stakes down. This district has put down its foundation points as representatives of the district improvement plan and we want to make sure that those ideas are

carried out throughout the system in a coherent way. Thus, the system is organized as it is. The school success plans are a key vehicle for all of that and I am happy to say but the schools have taken this work very seriously and it is well underway.

**N. Discussion Regarding Superintendent Search Update**

**Ms. Crotty** - There is no update from the last board meeting. Mary Broderick, our search consultant, is doing hard work in the background on the over 200 responses that we received in getting ready for everything that is needed to help us create the profile of our next superintendent candidate.

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

None

**P. Communications – Secretary**

None

**Q. Committee Reports:**

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

The Curriculum and Instruction Committee met this evening prior to the Board of Ed meeting. Ms. Fekete reviewed K-8 ELA, Math and IReady scores. We also discussed strategies going forward for the 2020-2021 school year and we look forward to meeting again after the first of the year to revisit our plan of action.

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

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

**Facilities/PBC/Operations Committee, Ms. Leslie Crotty – No**

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

**R. Report from the Board Chair**

No Report

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

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Agenda Item:         | R.1  |
| Subject:             | Consideration of the Approval of the 2021 Schedule of Meeting Dates for the Watertown Board of Education |
| Motion Presented By: | Ms. Rosa   |
| Motion Seconded By:  | Mr. Malagutti  |

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Text of the Motion: | Madame Chair, I move that the Board approve of the 2021 Board of Education’s meeting dates as presented. |
| Discussion:         | None   |
| Opposed:            | None   |
| Abstained:          | None   |
| Vote:               | Motion passed  |

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

**Mr. Makowski** – I just wanted to thank all of our teachers and staff members and administrators. Earlier in our meeting, we heard of a wonderful Teacher of the Year candidate, we heard of so many great nominations, but we are blessed to have a district full of teachers and support staff that give their heart and soul every day to help provide the best education possible and give each child the opportunity to learn and grow. I wanted to take this opportunity again, especially in the environment in which they are working today, we can’t say thank you enough for all that they do. As a parent and board member, I recognize it and appreciate it.

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

None

**V. Executive Session (8:45 p.m.)**

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Agenda Item:         | U.1   |
| Subject:             | To go into Executive Session  |
| Motion Presented By: | Mr. Makowski  |
| Motion Seconded By:  | Mr. Malagutti   |
| Text of the Motion:  | Madame Chair, I move that the Board go into an Executive Session for the purpose of interviewing a candidate for the position of Business Manager for Watertown Public Schools. Attending the Executive Session will be Dr. John Ramos, Leslie Crotty, Janelle Wilk, Cathie Rinaldi, Diane Bristol, Josephine Rosa, Cindy Eastman, Jason Malagutti, and myself, Rob Makowski. |

Discussion: None  
Opposed: None  
Abstained: None  
Vote: Motion passed

**W. Regular Session (10:03 p.m.)**

Agenda Item: V.1  
Subject: Consideration of the Approval of the 2021 Schedule of Meeting Dates for the Watertown Board of Education

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

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Board appoint Candidate A as the Business Manager for Watertown Public Schools with an effective date to be determined by and a salary rate to be negotiated by Dr. John Ramos.

Discussion: None  
Opposed: None  
Abstained: None

Vote: Motion passed

**X. Adjournment**

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

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

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

Discussion: None

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mindi Davidson  
Recording Secretary

Cathie Rinaldi  
Secretary of the Board