

Monday, August 24, 2020

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held August 24, 2020, at Bridgeport Regional Vocational Aquaculture School and by video call, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. Present were members Chair John Weldon, Vice Chair Hernan Illingworth, Secretary Bobbi Brown, Albert Benejan, Joseph Sokolovic, Joseph Lombard, Chris Taylor, and Joseph Lombard.

Superintendent Michael J. Testani was present

APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES:

Mr. Illingworth moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of August 19, 2020. The motion was seconded by Ms. Brown. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote. All members except Mr. Taylor voted in favor. Mr. Taylor abstained.

Mr. Illingworth moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of August 13, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote. All members except Mr. Taylor voted in favor. Mr. Taylor abstained.

Mr. Illingworth moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting, July 23, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote. All members except Mr. Taylor voted in favor. Mr. Taylor abstained.

Ms. Brown moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting, July 1, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote. All members except Mr. Taylor and Mr. Lombard voted in favor. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Lombard abstained.

Ms. Brown moved approval of the minutes of the Regular Meeting, June 22, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote. All members except Mr. Taylor and Mr. Lombard voted in favor. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Lombard abstained.

Ms. Brown moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting, June 22, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote. All members except Mr. Taylor voted in favor. Mr. Taylor abstained.

Ms. Brown moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting, May 20, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote. All members except Mr. Taylor and Mr. Lombard voted in favor. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Lombard abstained.

CHAIR REPORT:

Mr. Weldon said the item regarding uniform requirements for secondary school students that was referred by the Governance Committee has been withdrawn at the request of the superintendent.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/REFERRALS:

Mr. Illingworth said the Facilities Committee would meet shortly after the reopening of schools.

Mr. Sokolovic said the Finance Committee would meet Wednesday at Harding High.

Mr. Sokolovic said the Teaching & Learning Committee would meet tomorrow.

Mr. Benejan said the Students & Families Committee would meet this Thursday.

Mr. Sokolovic said the Ad Hoc Committee on Males of Color/Great City Schools would have another meeting or two to wrap things up, particularly in regarding to mentoring programs. He said he would propose an offshoot of the committee at the next meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT/AGENDA:

Supt. Testani said the virtual convocation for all staff will take place on Wednesday. He said there will be a video clip from the mayor and possibly from Dr. Cardona and Governor Lamont. He invited the board to attend in person.

Mr. Sokolovic said the board received information on staff retirements. He asked that data be provided on years of service and the reason for leaving.

Mr. Testani said many of the letters of resignation do not indicate whether the teacher is seeking other employment.

In response to a question, Supt. Testani said he would meet with Ms. Bagoly, principal of Columbus School, to come up with a way to survey parents and staff about the name of the school once school starts. Mr. Sokolovic said he was not as concerned with staff opinion as the opinions of students. The

superintendent said he would like to include community opinion because the school is located in a heavily Portuguese community, although he agreed that would not be part of removing the Columbus name.

Katie Smuckler was recognized for a telephonic question about ventilation. he superintendent said the filters used in schools are between MERV 8 and 13, depending on what the unit calls for.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Taylor said he was surprised there were only two persons online asking questions, while his e-mail and phone has been bombarded by inquiries.

Supt. Testani said he did a Facebook Live this morning that had about 700 viewers and he did a walk-through that was broadcast from Central High with News 12 that included over an hour of questions.

In response to a question, Mr. Testani said the first day of school would be a half day. He said the weather is watched closely for extreme heat and poor air quality. He said some buildings might have to cancel school or do a half day in some situations. Depending on the building, temperatures in the mid-80s begin to cause problems. He said he was keeping close eye on the 3rd floor at Bassick High.

Mr. Sokolovic said the lack of questions tonight was a testament to information getting out in Facebook Live events. He said when the public is informed, they understand. Supt. Testani said he would likely do weekly Facebook presentations.

In response to a question, the superintendent said he hoped the state would give leeway from the required 177 days of instruction.

Supt. Testani said about 11,000 new devices had been received by the district since the closure in March. He said there were enough laptop computers donated by the Connecticut Partnership for all high school students.

Ms. Brown said she believed today's Facebook Live event was very effective.

Ms. Brown moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod