

March 9, 2023 in the Central Office Conference Room at 7:00 p.m.  
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- **Mid-Spring Intramurals** - Volleyball has begun for boys and girls in grades 7-8. Students are playing now through April Break. They are enjoying this new intramural sport.
- **Drama Production** - Charlotte's Web for grades 2-5 has been a great hit. They are in the process of practice and getting their set together.
- **Connecticut State Assessment Individual Student Reports (SBAC, CTAA, CAPT, CMT, Skills Checklist)** - 2023 testing season is underway, and our teachers have completed training for our alternative assessment to administer to a select group of students who qualify for that specific test. CT SBAC is scheduled from April 24th-27th.

- **School Lunch Program** - School lunch continues to be free through the end of the year! During the month of March our School Lunch Program concluded the Comprehensive Audit on March 7th and 8th. This includes information regarding policies, compliance procedures and production. It also included an onsite visit by the State of Connecticut to review our program. Tom O'Connor and I have been working closely to complete the components of the audit for the past few months. For the past two days, we worked closely with the auditors to provide information and onsite support. The audit concluded and we passed with excellent reviews!
- **Upcoming:**
  - 3/1-3/3 Read Across America Grades K-4
  - 3/3-3/4 Guest Readers Brian Lanoue and Judge Ernest Green
  - 3/8 Unified Bowling Trip
  - 3/15 2PM Online Safety and App Presentation: CT State Police- Grades 6-8
  - 3/15 6PM Online Safety and App Presentation: CT State Police- All (YSB and VES)
  - 3/13-3/17 Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Fundraising Collection
  - 3/17 Spelling Bee Grades 5-8 (Early Dismissal 12PM)
  - 3/20 Preschool Teddy Bear Picnic (YSB and VES) 5:30-7:00 pm
  - 3/21 Down Syndrome Day Recognition (Crazy Socks)
  - 3/31 Disney Family Dance
- The Board discussed high school choices and enrollment numbers and also inquired about end-of-the-year special events for the graduating 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

### **Curriculum, Learning, and Instruction**

- **Professional Development** -Teachers and Paras continue with professional learning. Reading teachers are participating in professional learning related to the program implementation and technology PD is also being offered on the VUE Sonic boards. On early dismissal days, committee meetings, professional learning and grade level work takes place.
- **Teacher Evaluation Plan** - The State of CT will be releasing additional guidance this Spring regarding updates for the teacher evaluation programs. Additionally, the EDREFLECT platform will be discontinued and our PDEC committee will be reviewing other programs from surrounding districts once the State releases information.
- **Grants/Reports/Applications**
  - **Connecticut Office of Early Childhood** - The monthly School Readiness Reports for the Voluntown Elementary School Pre School and School Readiness Program are submitted through the ECE reporting system.
  - **FY 22 School Readiness and Quality Enhancement Grants** – Updated information has been provided by the Office of Early Childhood for the upcoming fiscal year and the grants were approved and are drawn down monthly in the grant system for expenditures.
  - **FY 23** allocations for the Priority and Competitive School Readiness Enrollment-based Grants have been disbursed. SR has received a lump sum of \$21,000 for programming. This money can be used to improve our program, which may be through building our Natural Playground.

### **Building, Grounds, and Transportation & Safety**

- Brian Kallio, Director of Maintenance, continues to review, implement, and address needs within our school building and on our grounds.
- Anne Michaud, Director of Transportation, continues to review and address needs within our transportation department.

### **Community and Public Relations**

- **PTO** - Suggestions are welcome for the school year. Contact Hailie Davis [hdavis@voluntownct.org](mailto:hdavis@voluntownct.org). Upcoming- Disney Family Dance scheduled for 3/31, a K9 Demonstration and a BMX assembly has been reserved with PTO and YSB.
- **Youth Service Bureau/Local Prevention Council** – The YSB-LPC Advisory Board meets virtually on the third Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. Contact Melinda Bryan [mbryan@voluntownct.org](mailto:mbryan@voluntownct.org). Many programs are underway.

## **2. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES** (Submitted by Lloyd A. Johnson, Ph.D.)

- ESY is Extended School Year. Many students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and a few students who receive SRBI (Scientific Research-Based Intervention) qualify for summer school. The justification is to prevent or mitigate regression of learned skills due to inactivity during the summer months. VES has run a summer school for many years. This year we are adjusting the dates of the school to respond to the school's closing for the asbestos abatement. The school historically runs for 2.5 hours/day four days a week for five weeks. This year we are planning to meet five days a week for four weeks.
- As the Tech and Magnet School acceptances are received, we begin transferring IEP and 504 documents to the 8th graders' schools of choice. We plan to schedule transition meetings for each of those students with their next school. The meetings are virtual and hosted by us with a representative of the receiving school. NFA will only attend meetings for students enrolling in their ABLE and ILSP programs; for all other students, they will rely on a records review. The Tech Schools have indicated a plan to conduct transition meetings for those students to determine their readiness to attend school. WHS and GHS will be invited to have a representative attend their students' meetings. As a reminder, once a student enters a State Tech High School, that school becomes its LEA.
- At this point in the year, most department members have developed or completed CT-SEDS IEPs or 504 Accommodation Plans. The time demands are significant. After-school hours are needed to complete the documents in a timely manner as required by statutes. The Bureau of Special Education offered an additional Stipend Grant. The application was submitted by Mr. Burrows and was approved. The funds may be spent through the Summer of 2023. Voluntown qualified for a grant of \$10,000. The funds may be used for planning time, learning time, and professional development. It may also be used for substitute coverage for in-district and out-of-district training opportunities.
- Dr. Emily Casey, our consulting psychologist, is leading department members in exploring the Feifer Assessments of Reading and Writing. She has administered these new assessments recently for a few of our students. These assessments are more accurate in identifying dyslexia and dysgraphia than those used previously. We purchased the evaluations for our department with grant funds. The training in the Feifer Assessment of Reading was completed in October/November. We're planning to engage in the training on the Feifer Assessment of Writing this coming Fall. Once trained, our Special Education teachers can administer these assessments when deemed necessary at a PPT with parent approval.
- As of March 9, 2023, this Director has chaired 109 PPT/504/Parent Meetings distributed among the following schools: VES, The Learning Clinic in Brooklyn, EastConn's Northeast School in Killingly, EastConn's Autism Program in Columbia, Norwich Free Academy, Griswold High School, Griswold Alternative School, Wheeler, The Marine Science Magnet High School in Groton, Norwich Transition Academy, and EastConn's Regional Transition Program in Danielson.

The census of students in Pre-K to 12+ receiving special services is as follows:

	10/1/2020		10/1/2021		3/9/2023	
	IEP	504	IEP	504	IEP	504
PreK -8	38	21	34	31	39	41
9-12+	22	11	20	15	16	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>58</b>

### 3. SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (Submitted by Adam S. Burrows)

- Calendar of Events for March and April 2023
- The District Enrollment Report noted 251 students in Pre-K to 8<sup>th</sup> grade and 113 high school students.
- As of 3/9/23, 68.51% or \$4,148,681.01 of the current 2022/23 budget has been expended.
- \$92,441.28 has been returned to the Town of Voluntown Undesignated Fund from grants, rebates, and other unanticipated savings received.
- ECS or Educational Cost Sharing Formula for 23/24 and 24/25 is Not Student-Centered: State Budget Proposal Creates a Financial Challenge for Local Taxpayers in Voluntown urging state

legislators to adjust the proposed grant for the next two years and help Voluntown avoid a loss of \$190,071 over the next two years as presented by the School Finance Project, a non-profit organization

- 22/23 School days cancelled/delayed/early dismissal report
- Remind Notice for High School Transportation updates for Voluntown Public Schools
- 22/23 Faculty/Staff Assignments and Extensions
- Superintendent's Spotlight on the Board of Education: School Boards Make a Difference
- Education Related Bills as of March 9, 2023
- Educator Growth & Evaluation – Proposed Design Elements
- Hartford Courant Article: *Teachers Decry New Special Ed System*
- CT State Department of Education: Student Assessment News
- CABE Policy Highlights – February 17, 2023 (New Data on Home Visits' Ability to Reduce Absenteeism); and March 3, 2023 (Youth Suicide Prevention – 988 Hotline; and Homeless – “No Matter What” Campaign)
- Segal Memorandum to the Office of the State Comptroller regarding the Updated Preliminary Partnership 2.0 Rate Development for July 1, 2023
- Mr. Burrows noted regarding the School Lunch Plan Comprehensive Audit that our school was one the best out of many schools audited because all documentation was up-to-date and accurate.

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

**MOTION # 2 (3/9/23) was made (Grant/Wicks) to adjust the order of Old Business Agenda items #6 and 7 (School Calendar for 23/24 and Vision of an 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduate) to the top; all in favor; motion passes.**

### **1. Vision of an 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduate**

A “DRAFT” of a Vision of an 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduate was provided. Suggested revisions were sent prior to the meeting and the revised draft was reviewed. Additional edits were suggested and another draft will be presented at the next meeting.

### **2. School Calendar for 2023-24 (2<sup>nd</sup> review)**

**MOTION # 3 (3/9/23) was made ((Wicks/Kalwara) to approve the 23/24 School Calendar as presented so it may be posted on the school website. It is understood that additional adjustments may be made, if needed. All in favor; motion passes.**

### **3. Budget Proposal for 2023-24**

This 3/9/23 draft of the budget proposal for 2023-2024 shows a total of \$7,047,778 and represents an increase of \$197,445 or 2.88% over the 2022-2023 town approved total of \$6,850,333. Copies of this proposal will be posted of the school web site, in the central office and the school office. Mr. Burrows reviewed the budget proposal with the Board and a Question/Answer session was held.

This proposal includes:

- Negotiated salaries for teachers and classified faculty and staff with non-certified to be negotiated.
- The projected cost for outplacement of Special Education students based on identified needs.
- Projected cost of tuition based on the numbers attending eight designated high schools.
- An initial projected increase of 10.5% in the cost of health insurance premiums. A slight reduction in the overall amount for the 2023-2024 health benefits is the result of resignations.

#### Timeline for the 2023-2024 Budget Development

Thursday	03-09-23	Updated 23-24 budget proposal presented to Board of Education
Thursday	03-16-23	23-24 Budget Proposal is sent to the Town Clerk for public review
Thursday	04-06-23	Public Hearing about the 23-24 education budget proposal and Board of Education approval of the 23-24 budget proposal
Thursday	04-17-23	Approved budget proposal for 23-24 sent to Town Clerk
Tuesday	05-23-23	Annual Town Budget Meeting – Tentative

**MOTION # 4 (3/9/23) was made (Grant/Kalwara) to approve the 3/9/23 budget proposal for 2023-2024 of \$7,047,778 that has an increase of \$197,445 or 2.88% over the 2022-2023 town approved total of \$6,850,333 and authorize the Superintendent to submit the Plan to the Voluntown Board of Selectmen for public dissemination; all in favor; motion passes.**

#### **4. Federal and State Grants**

The following is a summary of short-term grants:

- COVID Relief Fund (\$176,639 – Expended)
- Elementary/Secondary Emergency Relief Funds or ESSER I (\$32,674 – Expended)
- Elementary/Secondary Emergency Relief Funds or ESSER II (\$136,204 being expended)
- American Rescue Plan or ARP-ESSER III (\$306,105 being expended)
- Special Education Stipend Grant (\$20,000 Expended)
- ESSER II Special Education Recovery Grant (\$30,000 – Approved)
- ESSER II Bonus Special Populations Recovery Grant (\$25,000 – Approved)
- ESSER II Bonus Dyslexia Recovery Grant (\$3,250 - Approved)
- Homeless Grant (\$1,770 – Application Submitted)
- USDA School Lunch Program Equipment Grant (\$25,000 Expended)
- Comcast local grant to school systems (\$3,500 approved and being expended)
- Sp. Ed. Grants (\$10,000 for Certified and \$5,000 for Non-certified – Expended)
- HVAC Grant request of \$170,000 to State of Connecticut (submitted on 12/1/22)
- Special Education Stipend Grant #2: Application from CSDE will soon be distributed.

The above grants are additional allocations for a wide variety of COVID and other related priorities especially related to improving air quality in schools throughout the nation, addressing learning loss, supporting technology connectivity, additional PPE of Personal Protective Equipment, etc. These funds were not used to replace the day-to-day and year-to-year school expenditures for our local school budget. These federal grants require us to maintain a “Continuity of Services” during this time to implement health and safety protocols and addressing learning loss during the time of COVID.

#### **5. Building Committee Update**

##### **Asbestos Abatement (\$112,742.49 approved by a Town Meeting)**

Mystic Air who tested the school and then guided then wrote the specifications for this project has recommended Talevi Enterprises Inc. (\$44,800) as compared to HAZ-Pro Inc. (\$64,000) and Environmental Group (\$54,000).

There was another review of the timeline for completing the whole project in time for the opening of school as well as scheduling summer school. Based on school cancellations with the last day of school scheduled for June 15, 2023, a full schedule of summertime activities, and the potential cost for new flooring, there was a need to adjust the asbestos work schedule for this summer.

**MOTION # 5 (3/9/23) was made (Grant/Kalwara) to approve, as per the recommendation of the Building Committee, to verify the selection of Talevi Enterprises Inc. to work on the asbestos abatement project based on an adjustment to complete the “T” section in the 1953 and 1970 wings, and possibly classrooms 27 and 29. All in favor; motion approved.**

Mr. Kallio reviewed floor coverings and will research tile, carpets, and carpets squares and the projected costs of maintain various floor coverings. The committee will review options and make the decision at a future meeting.

##### **Solar Panel Committee**

The Solar Panel Committee has determined that we estimate receiving transmission savings of about \$23,000 per year because the electricity generated by the solar panels goes directly to VES. Recent invoices document the following overall Eversource costs for electricity in 2022-2023:

<i>Month</i>	<i>Supply</i>	<i>Delivery</i>	<i>Total for Month</i>	<i>CT Solar</i>
January	\$2,522.26	\$1,954.24	\$4,476.52	
February	\$2,703.51	\$2,398.26	\$5,101.77	
March	\$969.18	\$1,959.59	\$2,928.77	
April	\$136.02	\$1,779.99	\$1,916.02	
May	\$0.00	\$1,772.64	\$1,772.64	
June	\$0.00	\$1,773.31	\$1,773.31	
		<b><u>2022-2023 Budget</u></b>		
July	\$0.00	\$1,698.37	\$1,698.37	
August	\$0.00	\$1,747.29	\$1,747.29	
September	\$0.00	\$1,923.83	\$1,923.83	
October	\$0.00	\$1,928.72	\$1,928.72	
November	\$1,685.60	\$2,079.80	\$3,765.40	
December	\$2,665.60	\$2,148.91	\$4,814.51	\$1,983.81
January	\$5,705.59	\$1,862.97	\$7,568.56	\$1,983.81
February	\$3,795.51	\$1,701.22	\$5,496.73	\$1,983.81

The Solar Panel Committee will meet, as needed, during the 2022-2023 school year to follow-up on any concerns related to our monthly electrical costs, maintenance, or other issues.

Eversource announced the cost of electricity will be \$0.23 per KWH. The Solar Panel Committee recommended Constellation to secure a rate of \$0.1458 per KWH and this started on February 1, 2023.

#### 6. Technology

The minutes to the March 3, 2023, Technology Committee meeting were provided.

Cyber Insurance – Mrs. Wicks will set up a meeting with an insurance contact and include Mr. Burrows and Mrs. Loranger. They will review any recommendations in bundling options and filling any gaps. There will also be a follow up with CIRMA.

A 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of the IT Services and Support Technician Job Description was reviewed and tabled.

Mr. Burrows will explore the option of hiring an IT Technician.

#### 7. Capital Improvement Plan 2023-27

The Board reviewed and updated Capital Improvement Plan for 2023-2027. This plan has been reviewed by the Building Committee. Also provided was a quote from CRF Interior Systems to replace the Gymnasium Divider.

**MOTION # 6 (3/9/23) was made (Grant/Kalwara) to approve the 23-27 Capital Improvement Plan and authorize the Superintendent to submit the Plan to the Voluntown Board of Selectmen; all in favor; motion passes.**

#### 8. BOE Mid-Year Self-Evaluation for 22/23 (2<sup>nd</sup> review)

Additional edits were included in this draft and the evaluation will be completed and approved at the end of the year.

### IX. NEW BUSINESS

#### 1. Personnel

**MOTION # 7 (3/9/23) was made (Wicks/Wilson) to approve Carolyn Stands, Nicole Vitali, Heather Mihailides, and Kathy Stickman to split weeks as Camp Q Paraeducators; all in favor; motion passes.**

**MOTION # 8 (3/9/23) was made (Grant/Kalwara) to approve the leave of absence for Rachel Sahoo; all in favor; motion passes.**

## 2. Healthy Food Certification/Authorization for the Sale of Food and Beverages

### HEALTHY FOOD OPTION:

**MOTION # 9 (3/9/23)** was made (Wilson/Grant) pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, that the Voluntown Board of Education votes “yes” to participate in the healthy food option and certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups. All in favor; Motion Passes.

### FOOD AND BEVERAGE EXEMPTIONS (combined into ONE motion):

**MOTION # 10 (3/9/23)** was made (Wilson/Kalwara) The Voluntown Board of Education votes “yes” and will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales. All in favor; Motion Passes.

## 3. Tuition Policy and Regulation #3240 Review – No action was taken.

## 4. CT Communications Quote on Video Conferencing in BOE Meetings

A Work Order from CT Communications was reviewed for the installation of video conferencing equipment in the central office conference room.

**MOTION # 11 (3/9/23)** was made (Wicks/Grant) for the Board of Education to approve the 3/2/23 recommendation from the Building Committee install a video conferencing system for \$5,275.57 from CT Communications, through use of a \$3,500 Comcast grant and Board of Education Funds; all in favor; motion passes.

## 5. Gate Street Recreation Area Plan

The Gate Street Recreation Area Plan was distributed to the Board.

## X. UPCOMING MEETING(S)/AGENDA ITEMS:

- Public Hearing followed by a Regular BOE Meeting – Thursday, April 6, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Central Office Conference Room
- 2023-2024 Budget Proposal
- Building Committee Update
- Technology (Cyber Insurance, IT Technician Job Description)
- Personnel
- Vision of an 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduate
- Tuition Policy
- Griswold High School Presentation (May)

## **XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION # 12 (3/9/23) was made (Wicks/Grant) to enter Executive Session at 9:29 p.m. for the purpose of discussing Personnel; all in favor; motion passes.**

**MOTION # 13 (3/9/23) was made (Grant/Wilson) to invite the Superintendent of Schools to the Executive Session; all in favor; motion passes.**

The Board of Education came out of Executive Session at 9:35 p.m.

**MOTION # 14 (3/9/23) was made (Wilson/Kalwara) to authorize the use of the SLP grant to allocate \$5,000 from the School Lunch Program to be paid to Amy L. Suffoletto in recognition of the extensive work she has completed to maintain standards and implement procedures for the recent compliance standards for the food services program; all in favor; motion passes.**

## **XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION # 15 (3/9/23) was made (Wilson/Grant) to adjourn at 9:35 p.m.; all in favor; motion passes.**

	Date		Attest		Date
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Respectfully drafted and edited by:

*Dee Dee Jackman, Board of Education Clerk*

*Adam S. Burrows, Superintendent of Schools*

**APPROVED AT THE 4/9/23 BOE MEETING**