

VOLUNTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION
 195 Main Street, Voluntown, CT 06384
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SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS: Adam S. Burrows

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

January 14, 2021
 Virtual Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

This Zoom meeting was streamed live to the public on the Voluntown School YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3I7dOmnXMxoTlNHzaSZ1zw>

Public comments were able to be made by emailing djackman@voluntownct.org up to 1 hour prior to the meeting.

I. CALL TO ORDER Chairperson Kate Beuparlant called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Kate Beuparlant (Chairperson), Meagan Wicks (Vice Chair), Arikka Kalwara, Valerie Muschiano, Skart Paul (arrived at 7:08 p.m.), and Cathy Grant (Secretary) (arrived at 7:19 p.m.)

Absent: Christopher Wilson

Also Present: Adam S. Burrows (Superintendent), Amy Suffoletto (Principal), and Lloyd A. Johnson, Ph.D. (Director of Student Services), Dee Dee Jackman (BOE Clerk), and NFA Guest Presenters: Dr. Brian Kelley and John Iovino

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. CITIZENS / COMMENTS – None were received.

IV. GUESTS – Brian Kelly and John Iovino – NFA Annual Presentation

Brian M. Kelly, Head of NFA, and John Iovino, our assigned Administrative Liaison made a special presentation and highlighted the performance of our Voluntown students and graduates.

- A special 10-minute film featuring some of our students was presented.
- Brian and John reviewed the wide range of academic/elective courses, programs, sports and clubs that NFA has to offer and discussed the social/emotional support, guidance, community support and social services that are a focus at this time.
- Performance data about the progress of our Voluntown NFA students and their accomplishments after graduation were reviewed.
- There was time for questions and answers which reviewed career pathways and guidance for all students, and also support for students that may feel disconnected and how they are attempting to keep engaged.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

Prior to starting the agenda items, Chairperson Beuparlant read the BOE mission statement.

MOTION #1 (1/14/21) was made (Wicks/Kalwara) that the Board approves the Consent Agenda as presented; all in favor. Motion carries.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

1. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (by Amy L. Suffoletto)

COVID-19 School Closure Update:

- The VES Reopen Committee continues to meet weekly to review, discuss and address issues that arise and make modifications to the plan to be released in an updated version.

- Our building has undergone cleaning, removing of furniture, additional signage and purchases of materials to ensure our school can reopen safely. On a daily basis our school is cleaned thoroughly by two daytime and two evening custodians, in addition to our Director of Maintenance who oversees our custodians.

COVID-19 School Closure Timeline of Events (Fall/Winter 2020):

- Teachers worked from 8/24-8/28 on professional development regarding social emotional well-being, remote learning, curriculum development.
- Paraprofessional staff returned on 8/26 -8/28 and continued to work with teachers and staff on remote learning, and other training opportunities.
- ALL staff were trained in safety procedures, social distancing practices, hygiene on 8/26/20.
- Our school has devised a remote learning track for students in addition to our in-person model. teachers were supplied with cameras to support live lessons when offered. Google classroom is being used in grades 3-8 and PK-2 is using Seesaw.
- Students returned to school on 8/31/20 for a week of early dismissals and remote learning on Wednesday. Our students and staff have done an amazing job adapting to this new way of learning and the new environment that has been created.
- As of 9/8/20 students have attended full days of school and continue to remote learn on Wednesday for the time being.
- The remote learning track for grades 3-8 is now being supported by a remote learning teacher. This teacher is providing a combination of ELA, Math and offline support to students, in addition to their teachers providing Social Studies, Science, and Specials through Google Classroom.
- On 10/7/2020 we began our School Closure Schedule. This schedule will be used for short- and long-term closure.
- As of 10/8/20 we have received supplies of Chromebooks that were ordered.
- As of 10/13/20 VES has been open 5 days a week. We have returned to a regular schedule for K-8 students. Preschool still is on an adjusted/hybrid schedule.
- VES did not adjust the calendar for the November and December breaks. We have continued to attend school 5 days per week after each Recess.
- VES families, staff and students are commended for their efforts to stay healthy and in-person. Their dedication to remaining well is always noticed and appreciated.

Students as a Focal Point

- Parent Teacher Conferences were held on November 20, 2020. This was a full day that provided teachers with time to meet with parents and students throughout the day.
- Free meals have been extended through June, 2021 for all students through the school lunch program.
- Starting on December 1st, students in K-3 have been given a grab and go breakfast daily. Students in grades 4-8 are offered breakfast as they leave the building. Breakfast is also offered as students enter the building for grades 4-8 or any student that has not had breakfast.
- On December 4th, students in K-3 were sent home with a frozen lunch meal for the weekend and grades 4-8 were offered a meal as they exited the building.
- All chrome books have been distributed down through kindergarten. Younger classrooms are working on using a Chromebook, keypad and its applications.
- A trimester assembly was held on Friday, December 4th to highlight our honor roll students and our Trimester Student Award: Soaring Eagle Award. The event was livestreamed for our classes and then recorded to share with families on our website and social media.
- The week of 12/20 students were able to attend the Snowflake Shop, play school-wide BINGO and watch the PTO sponsored play “Scrooge”.

Curriculum, Learning, and Instruction

- Professional Development: There were no PD days in December. 1/15 is an upcoming professional day.

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 related to a safe reopening of school.
- Terry Chenette, Director of Transportation, modifies bus runs as schools open and close.

Community and Public Relations

- PTO - A PTO meeting was held on 12/7/20 through Google Meet. The PTO is looking to host more virtual events and any suggestions are welcome.
- Youth Service Bureau/Local Prevention Council – The YSB-LPC Advisory Board meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m., virtually at this time. There have been so many successful programs this winter thanks to the YSB.

2. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES REPORT (by Lloyd A. Johnson, Ph.D.)

- When the pandemic resulted in delayed required Special Education meetings, interruption of routine service models and limits on students access to school buildings, the CT Bureau of Special Education recommended that during Annual Reviews, the Planning and Placement Teams develop Individual Educational Plans for students with disabilities as though schools would be operating in a normal fashion. On 8/13/2020, the Bureau developed an expectation and recording form that documents revisions to the delivery of those IEP services caused by the hybrid service models being used. The form is titled: Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan. Recently, the Bureau informed districts that a random sample of up to 20% of the existing Learning Model IEP Implementation Plans statewide will be reviewed. Our department is up to date on the development of the plans which included informing parents of the revised services delivered. As conditions change, the plans must be revised accordingly. To date, no Voluntown student's Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan has been selected.
- Our department, following established procedures, use Pupil Personnel Services designation as an SRBI for related services to our youngest students. For the most part, this provides services to students with delays in Speech/Language, Fine and/or Gross Motor development. We're discussing a limit on the length of time those services may be provided before considering a referral to Special Education or our Section 504 Accommodation Planning Team. We have reached out to the other EastConn Region directors of student services for their input. The department will be discussing this issue on January 15th, 2021.
- The department continues to be engaged in working with their students and parents, Mrs. Vaillancourt, and Mrs. Suffoletto on the selection of high schools of choice and the submission to the receiving schools of records and recommendations.
- Student Services Department members are engaged in providing both face-to-face and distance learning instruction to their students dependent on whether they are in school or have chosen Remote Learning. Adjustments are made when student needs develop. Parents participating in virtual meetings have expressed appreciation for the caring contact the staff members are maintaining with their children both in school and online.
- As of January 14, 2021, this Director had chaired 92 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, The Marine Science Magnet High School in Groton, United Services Inc. in Willimantic, Ellis Technical High School in Danielson, Norwich Transition Academy and Norwich Technical High School in Norwich, EastConn's Regional Transition Program in Danielson, and EastConn's Quinebaug Middle College in Danielson.
- The census of students Pre-K to 12+ receiving special services:

	<u>IEP</u>	<u>504</u>
Pre-K to 8	39	26
9-12+	<u>21</u>	<u>13</u>
Total	60	39

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

- Calendar of Events for January and February 2021
- The District Enrollment Report noted 251 students in Pre-K to 8th grade and 129 high school students.
- \$16,215.20 has been returned to the Town of Voluntown Undesignated Fund from grants received.
- Memo to the Board of Education/Updates:
 - Projected last day of school is now Friday, June 11, 2021 based on one cancellation as of 1-14-21; Upcoming high school presentations to the BOE are NFA on 1-14-21, GHS on 2-11-21, and Wheeler on 3-11-21
 - Statement about students enrolled in high schools are officially recognized by the state as assigned to that accredited school and Voluntown is responsible for the tuition and transportation
 - Review of the channels of communication of issues to the Board of Education
 - Follow-through with meeting the needs of high school students and how high schools conduct surveys and report about the progress of students.
 - CABE Professional Development opportunities for members of the Board of Education
- CSDE notice: Priority Testing for Educators (COVID)
- CABE Liaison Newsletter for January 2021: Policy, Advocacy, and Professional Development
- CABE Policy Highlights on December 11, 2020: Key Roles Identified for Board Chairperson and 45th Anniversary of PA94-142 for All Handicapped Children now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).
- CABE Policy Highlights on December 25, 2020: Board Meeting Agenda Preparation
- CABE Policy Highlights on January 8, 2021: Questions Raised Regarding Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations for Students; Children in US may miss nine million vaccine doses in 2020, and Title IX Regulations
- Copy of the required Annual Meaningful Notice – 403(b) Plan and Appendix
- As noted in the Food Services Report for December 2020, our school system has seen a significant increase in USDA grant funds because of improved participation of students for lunch and the Grab and Go Breakfast.
- A special welcome is extended to Reverend Matthew McKay of the Voluntown Baptist Church who has already attended and been appointed as a member of the Voluntown YSP-LPC Advisory Board. Pastor McKay will also serve as a member of our School Safety and Security Committee.
- Received on 3-14-21 CSDE approval for all requests of \$176,639 for the COVID RELIEF FUNDS
- Received on 3-14-21 CSDE approval of using the CARES ACT grant funds to contribute to a Wi-Fi upgrade in the JHS wing, technology purchases, and purchasing Touch Screen Chrome Books for Kindergarten.
- The *CAPSS Blueprint to Transform Connecticut's Public Schools* articulates a comprehensive set of 30 recommendations that CAPSS believes will move Connecticut closer to assuring that every child receives the high-quality teaching and learning which they are owed. Within this Blueprint is an all-encompassing, equitable strategy for funding and improving public education in Connecticut, one which addresses the highest priority needs as expressed by Superintendents of Schools. These recommendations are aimed at State funding, legislation, and local and State action. Declaring the **CAPSS Blueprint** as “comprehensive,” signals that the plan goes far deeper than the ECS, for it addresses categorical grants, teaching and learning, systemic racism, accountability, health and SEL issues, technology and more – all driven by the imperative for equity and fairness. It is suggested that the Board of Education receive a copy of the Blueprint to prepare for a review at the next regular Board of Education meeting on February 11, 2021.
- Meagan Wicks inquired about the High School Student Surveys that were discussed at the previous BOE meeting. Mr. Burrows said contact has been made to the designated high schools and it was verified that most do survey their students. Griswold High School will be sharing examples of their surveys at our next BOE meeting. It was suggested that we invite NFA back to answer questions directly or respond by email on how they address student surveys. Valerie Muschiano agreed that parents need to follow the proper chain of command in communicating their needs/concerns, but also expressed the importance of parents knowing that there is someone who will advocate for them in this process. Mr. Burrows assured the BOE that he is willing to be (and has been) an advocate and can offer direction or call any of our designated high schools to assist in support for Voluntown students. Dr. Johnson, our Director of Student Services, has regular communications with all of the high schools as a follow-through in Special Education and 504

meetings to review student performance with parents, students, and school personnel. Mr. Burrows, as Superintendent of Schools, is readily available for parents who have concerns about students and has willingly helped with the follow-through regarding any of the designated high schools.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS – This section will be removed from future BOE Agendas as it is already covered under the Consent Agenda section.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. 2021-22 Budget Preparation Process

This 1-14-21 first draft of budget proposal for 2021-2022 is \$6,891,832 and represents an increase of \$106,635 or 1.57% over the 2020-2021 town approved total of \$6,785,196. It is apparent that this initial proposal will need to be reviewed and adjusted over these next few months as we prepare for the annual town meeting as well as consider the financial needs of the community and the state final ECS or Educational Cost Sharing grant for 2021-2022.

This initial proposal includes:

- Negotiated salaries for teachers, non-certified, and classified faculty and staff.
- The *projected* cost for the 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 8.0% in the cost of health insurance.
- *Projected* energy costs for heating fuel, propane, electricity, and diesel/gasoline.
- *Projected cost of a Foreign Language teacher.*

Thursday	02-11-21	Superintendent's updated 21-22 proposal submitted to Board of Education
Thursday	02-25-21	Board of Education "Budget" Meeting (if needed)
Thursday	03-11-21	Updated 21-22 budget proposal presented to Board of Education
Thursday	03-18-21	21-22 Budget Proposal is sent to the Town Clerk for public dissemination
Thursday	04-08-21	Public Hearing about the 21-22 education budget proposal and Board of Education approval of the 21-22 budget proposal
Thursday	04-22-21	Approved budget proposal for 21-22 delivered to Town Clerk for public dissemination
Tuesday	05-04-21	Possible projected date for annual Town Meeting to vote on the Town and Board of Education Budgets at Voluntown Elementary School gymnasium at 7:00 p.m.

It is important to note that the bottom line of this current proposal may change based on the upcoming work of the Board of Education in the budget development process, as well as receipt of the actual amount of state and federal grants for education. There are also adjustments that occur in January, February, and March as our Eighth Graders receive information about acceptance in designated high schools. We also receive verification of the tuitions rates for the next school year.

The overall goal is to make every effort to develop a budget proposal with a sincere understanding of the cost impact to local property taxes and meeting the educational needs of all students. There was a time for questions and answers about the budget proposal.

2. COVID-19 Update: Coronavirus Relief Grant and Reopen Committee Update

The Reopen Committee has had weekly meetings since July 2020 to coordinate issues related to meeting the challenges of COVID-19. This committee promotes the wearing of masks, social distancing, and washing of hands in the ongoing quest to maintain a healthy environment. The committee coordinates activities with the UNCAS Health District and the Office of the Voluntown First Selectwoman in follow-up activities that might involve monitoring any testing as well as contact tracing.

The have been many adjustments in the schedules of our seven designated high schools as they implement hybrid models to meet the challenges of COVID-19. These many changes have required continued adjustments for our Transportation Department.

VES has been fully opened for our Kindergarten through Eighth Graders since the start of this school year. Three Wednesdays were designated as remote learning days at the start of the school year to practice distance learning procedures. There were two early dismissal days, and VES has been open since October 13, 2020.

Pre-School has a hybrid model with some students in school and others working remote. Transportation has not been provided for Pre-Schoolers.

VES now has the capabilities to immediately implement adjustments to COVID-19 challenges. In October 2020, based on an outside of school contact, a small number of students and staff members were quarantined and safely returned to school. Recently after the holiday vacation, two grade levels required quarantine and we anticipate a safe return on January 19, 2021. Any adjustments are made in cooperation with the UNCAS Health District.

3. School Calendar 2021-22 (Third Review)

MOTION #2 (1/14/21) was made (Grant/Kalwara) to approve the 2021-22 School Calendar with the spring break the week of 4/18/22 to 4/22/22; all in favor. Motion carries.

4. Snow Removal -

MOTION #3 (1/14/21) was made (Grant/Kalwara) to approve the Snow Removal bid from AM Sealers based on the cost-savings adjustments presented by the Superintendent of Schools; all in favor. Motion carries.

5. Five-Year Facilities Plan

The previous Five-Year Facilities plan was approved by the Board of Education on March 12, 2020 and we have completed a number of projects since that time. Therefore, it is time to update the plan.

The 2021-2026 plan, after review and approval by the Board of Education, will be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen to officially recognize the priorities of our five-year Maintenance Facilities plan. It will remain on file to comply with State Department of Education guidelines.

Five-Year Maintenance Facilities Plan (*As required by the annual facilities report to SDE*)

“Requirement: district-wide plan that is complete and up-to-date, projecting at least five years out recognized by both the town and school board as an official plan”.

It is important to note that over the past several years the Boards of Education and Selectmen have authorized and funded the completion of several major projects. Therefore, our facilities, even with a 1953 section, are in good order and have a short list of upcoming projects. This is helpful during these difficult economic times.

MOTION #4 (1/14/21) was made (Grant/Muschiano) to approve the 2021-2026 Five-Year Facilities Plan and authorize the Superintendent of Schools to forward it to the Board of Selectmen to acknowledge receipt to document compliance with SDE guidelines. all in favor. Motion carries.

6. Preparation for Special BOE Meeting with Nick Caruso, CABA Consultant

This is a Special Meeting for the purpose of completing a CABA Professional Development program with Nick Caruso, a Consultant from the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education. It is anticipated that the meeting will open and then move into Executive Session for the purpose of a Board of Education Professional Development.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- 1. **Policy, Regulation and Appendixes # 4000.1 (Personnel) and 5145.44 (Students) – Title IX** (First reading)
- 2. **Bylaw # 9327.1 – Board Member Use of Internet/Social Networks** (First reading)

X. SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING

- Upcoming BOE meetings: January 28, 2021 (Special BOE Meeting- Nick Caruso, CABA Consultant) and February 11, 2021 (Regular Meeting including GHS Presentation)
- Budget Preparation Timeline and Process for 2021-22
- COVID-19 and Reopen Committee Updates
- CAPSS Blueprint
- Policy, Regulation and Appendixes # 4000.1 (Title IX for Personnel)/5145.44 (Title IX for Students) (Second reading)
- Bylaw # 9327.1 – Board Member Use of Internet/Social Networks (Second reading)

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION #5 (1/14/21) was made (Grant/Kalwara) to move into Executive Session at 9:46 p.m. for the purpose of discussing Negotiations and Personnel: Qualified Tuition Plan; all in favor. Motion carries.

MOTION #6 (1/14/21) was made (Grant/Muschiano) to move out of Executive Session at 9:53 p.m.; all in favor. Motion passes.

MOTION #7 (1/14/21) was made (Wicks/Kalwara) to ratify the Contract Between the Voluntown Board of Education and the Voluntown Non-Certified Employees CSEA, SEIU, LOCAL 2001 for July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023 and authorize the Board Chair and the Superintendent of Schools to sign the contract; all in favor. Motion passes.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION #8 (1/14/21) was made (Grant/Kalwara) to adjourn at 9:55 p.m.; all in favor. Motion carries.

Witness	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 2/11/21 BOE MEETING