

VOLUNTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION
 195 Main Street, Voluntown, CT 06384
 Phone: (860) 376-9167 www.voluntownct.org
 SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS: Adam S. Burrows

BOARD OF EDUCATION ANNUAL RE-ORGANIZATION
ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

November 12, 2020
 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 The Superintendent called the Annual Re-organization meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE **Present:** Kate Beuparlant (Chairperson), Meagan Wicks (Vice Chair), Cathy Grant (Secretary), Arikka Kalwara, Valerie Muschiano, Christopher Wilson (joined meeting at 7:13 p.m.) and Skart Paul (joined meeting at 8:14 p.m)

Absent:

Also Present: Adam S. Burrows (Superintendent), Amy Suffoletto (Principal), and Lloyd A. Johnson, Ph.D. (Director of Student Services)

ELECTION OF OFFICERS With five Board members present and a quorum established, the Superintendent of Schools, Adam Burrows, opened the floor for nominations for the annual election of the Board of Education Officers for the following positions: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary. Due to meetings being held virtually at this time, a “show of hands” vote was used in lieu of ballot voting. Board Members present for the nomination and election of officers were Kate Beuparlant, Meagan Wicks, Cathy Grant, Arikka Kalwara, and Valerie Muschiano.

Arikka Kalwara nominated Kate Beuparlant for BOE Chairperson. Cathy Grand seconded. No other nominations were made.

MOTION #1 (11/12/20): was made (Kalwara/Board) that the Board nominate and elect Kate Beuparlant as the Board of Education Chairperson; SHOW OF HANDS RESULTS: All 5 members present were in favor. Motion passes.

Chairperson Beuparlant took the floor and opened the nominations for Vice Chair.

Cathy Grant nominated Meagan Wicks for BOE Vice Chair. Seconded by Arikka Kalwara. No further nominations were made.

MOTION #2 (11/12/20): was made (Grant/Kalwara) that the Board nominate and elect Meagan Wicks as the Board of Education Vice-Chairperson; SHOW OF HANDS RESULTS: All 5 members present were in favor. Motion passes.

Meagan Wicks nominated Cathy Grant for BOE Secretary. Seconded by Kate Beuparlant. No further nominations were made.

MOTION #3 (11/12/20): was made (Wicks/Beuparlant) that the Board nominate Cathy Grant as the Board of Education Secretary; SHOW OF HANDS RESULTS: All 5 members present were in favor. Motion passes.

Chairperson Beauparlant called the regular meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

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

III. **CITIZENS / COMMENTS** – None were received.

IV. **GUESTS** – None

V. **CONSENT AGENDA**

MOTION #4 (11/12/20) was made (Grant/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 Updates:

- The VES Reopen Committee meets 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:

SPRING 2020:

- As of March 16, 2020, VES closed due to COVID and is now closed for the remainder of the academic year per Gov. Lamont.
- March 25 to April 9 - All students were given at-home learning packets. Parents collected packets and other belongings, as available, on March 25.
- As of April 20, grades 3-8 moved to online learning through Google Classroom and are provided weekly learning plans.
- As of April 20, grades K-2 continued with a set of 9-day lesson plans and packets were picked-up by parents on this date. Beginning May 4, grades K-2 are using a blended approach to learning.
- Preschool students have been provided a calendar of learning experiences and suggested activities by teachers. As of May 4, preschool students were also provided additional activities on Seesaw for learning.
- As of April 20, faculty and students began using Google Meets/Hangouts for individual, small group and whole group learning experiences. These Meets are initiated at the teacher's discretion and needs.
- Classroom teachers, service providers, and the K-4 interventionist are providing support services to students to the greatest extent possible.
- Our Technology Director, Jim Ward, loaned approximately 100 Chromebooks to families in need. He has worked with families in providing technology support. He provided technology support on a daily basis with devices and gave information on how to secure free internet. Additionally, he managed our online platforms to ensure teachers, students and families have access to available sites. Our website has been updated by faculty and administration to provide families with information and additional learning resources.
- Our Food Service Director, Tom O'Connor, and the Child Nutrition Meal Service program continues to offer meals Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at Griswold Middle School Cafeteria to all Voluntown Students. Families receive meals for two days at a time for all children under the age of 18.
- Our Director of Maintenance, Brian Kallio, has been working with maintenance staff during the a.m. and p.m. shifts to continue cleaning procedures according to the state recommendations. He and his staff have also been completing repairs and maintenance within the building.

SUMMER 2020:

- Our Technology Director, Jim Ward, has been working to secure Chromebooks and digital platforms to prepare for the fall. He has recollected all loaned Chromebooks to repair and complete routine maintenance in preparation for their use this fall. Jim has also created professional development and training for teachers digitally.
- Our Director of Maintenance, Brian Kallio, has worked closely with his summer custodial staff to remove items from classrooms, clean classrooms and other areas, as well as rearrange spaces for maximum use. He has participated in training regarding cleaning practices for a safe return.
- Our Food Service Director, Tom O'Connor and the Child Nutrition Meal Service Program has communicated regarding the need for remote lunch pick-up this fall. We are working on a plan for onsite meal distribution this fall for students who are remote learning or if we move to distance learning.
- Our website has been updated frequently to provide needed information to families and community members.

FALL 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.
- 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 10/13/20 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.

Students as a Focal Point

- Students returned to school at 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. Our students are resilient with their abilities to adapt to the ever-changing environment with COVID-19.
- As of 9/8/20 students have attended full days of school and continue to remote learn on Wednesday for the time being.
- We have enough Chromebooks to supply our grades 3-8 students each with an in-class Chromebook at this time. We are currently waiting for the shipment of Chromebooks expected in late September/October.
- As of 10/8/20, we have received supplies of Chromebooks that were ordered. We are working to continue to distribute those to students and upgrade other Chromebooks as well.
- On 10/7/20, we implemented our closure schedule which includes instruction for students live and offline if/when there is a school closure.
- The week of 10/22/20 we celebrated VES Spirit Week. It was a great week for students and staff to show their school spirit. So many staff and students participated in the fun-filled week.
- In-person instrument lessons have begun. NFA made bell covers and adjustable mouth covers for students to continue with instrument lessons.
- Free meals have been extended through June 2021 for all students through the school lunch program.

Curriculum, Learning, and Instruction

- Grants/Reports/Applications: Connecticut Office of Early Childhood - the Monthly School Readiness Reports for the Voluntown Elementary School Pre School and School Readiness Program have been

updated for submission by the monthly due date each month. FY 21 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

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.
- Terry Chenette, Director of Transportation, has worked with each high school to plan and coordinate transportation for students. As of now, she is modifying bus runs as schools open and close.

Community and Public Relations

- PTO - A PTO meeting was held on 10/27/20 through Google Meet. Upcoming PTO meetings will be held virtually and be determined in the future. Our scholastic virtual book fair ran through the last week of October. We appreciate all of the book purchases. The butter braid fundraiser is currently underway.
- 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 fall thanks to the YSB.

Following Amy Suffoletto’s verbal update, she addressed the Board’s questions on how distance learning was succeeding for remote learners and the status on how prepared students are to go fully remote if needed; safety drills are being conducted as required; honesty and transparency from families/students/staff on travel notifications. She also gave special recognition for the great job our new school nurse, Linda Hanson, is doing under the circumstances of starting this new job in the time of a pandemic.

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

- The progress on completing the Section 504 and PPT Annual Review meetings delayed by the pandemic has been going well. We expect to be “caught up “ by the end of November at the latest. I want to thank the general education and special education staff for their hard work and cooperation to attend and complete documents for these many meetings.
- 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 November 12, 2020, this Director had chaired 59 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 in Pre-K to 12+ receiving special services:

	<u>IEP</u>	<u>504</u>
Pre-K to 8	39	21
9-12+	<u>22</u>	<u>12</u>
Total	61	33

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

- Calendar of Events for November and December 2020
- The District Enrollment Report noted 248 students in Pre-K to 8th grade and 130 high school students.

- \$16,215.20 has been returned to the Town of Voluntown Undesignated Fund from grants received.
- School Lunch Program Annual Revenue and Cost Expenditure Report for the 2019-2020 School Year
- CABE Liaison Newsletter from November 2020 which includes information on upcoming Professional Development Webinars on the following topics: Principles of Disaster Psychology in the Management of School District Response to the COVID-19 Virus; Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members and Superintendents; Continuing the Conversation: What We've Learned and What We Still Need to Think About
- CABE Policy Highlights (October 30, 2020 Issue) - Topics include: Applicability of School Rules to Remote Learning; Virtual/Remote Learning Code of Conduct; Policies Pertaining to COVID-19 Added to Core Manual; Title IX Policy, Grievance Procedure, Training
- Letter from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development listing the 2020 Connecticut's Distressed Municipalities list. Voluntown is on the list.
- CABE Board of Director's recommended "Code of Ethics" based upon "Standards in Leadership for Members of the Boards of Education"
- Letter from Tracey Hanson, First Selectman, notifying Board and Committee Chairs of the following newly approved policies and guidelines: Zoom Meeting/YouTube Livestream Policy; Guidelines for Public Meetings; Protocol for COVID Exposures for Voluntown Municipal Employees; Connecticut Department of Public Health Town-Level COVID Response Framework
- The annual updated and comprehensive ALL HAZARD PLAN for 2020-2021 has been submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Homeland Security by the mandated November 1, 2020 deadline. This Plan has received a sign-off from the Voluntown Emergency Management Coordinator, Fire Chief, Medical Officer, UNCAS Health District Director, First Selectwoman, Board of Education Chair, VES Principal, Superintendent of Schools, and the State Police.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS – Reviewed under the Consent Agenda

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. 2021-22 Budget Preparation Process

Thursday	11-12-20	Review 21-22 projected costs for Transportation and Maintenance
Thursday	12-10-20	Current curriculum initiatives and projected 21-22 curriculum priorities
Thursday	01-14-21	Initial Superintendent summary proposal of 21-22 budget to the Board
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.

Mr. Burrows submitted to the Board a letter on the 2021-22 Budget Preparation and Historical Perspective that reviewed the following:

- Summary of Voluntown School budget documenting the cost-saving efforts of the Board of Education
- Board of Education and Board of Selectmen Budget History
 - 2017-2018 equaled \$8,403,537 with BOE at 80.75% and Town at 19.25%
 - 2018-2019 equaled \$8,709,235 with BOE at 79.10% and Town at 20.90%
 - 2019-2020 equaled \$8,749,273 with BOE at 77.55% and Town at 22.45%
 - 2020-2021 equaled \$8,801,670 with BOE at 77.09% and Town at 22.91%
- History of Funds Deposited to the Town of Voluntown Undesignated Fund
 - 2017-2018 \$77,542.59

2018-2019	\$96,408.40
2019-2020	\$69,420.26
2020-2021	\$81,123.75 (Projected average of the above total \$243,371.25)

- Special Education Excess Cost Grant history
- Heating Oil Tank Replacement Project
- Maintenance: \$399,732 as the 12-year average with \$385,303 projected for 2020-2021
- Transportation: \$443,166 as the 15-year average with \$447,518 projected for 2020-2021
- Capital Improvement Plan: \$0.00 Request from the School System to the Town for 2020-21
- Academic Achievement of VES Students
- COVID-19 info
- Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER): \$32,674 for technology
- Coronavirus Relief Fund: Recently approved to receive \$176,639
- School Readiness Grant
- School Security and Safety: ALL HAZARD PLAN for 20-21 submitted to the State
- Designated High Schools
- Education Cost Sharing Grants

Mr. Burrows also submitted a report on the actual versus budgeted history of Health Benefits from 2013 to present.

2. COVID-19 Update

A CRF or Coronavirus Relief Fund allocation of up to \$260,474 was awarded to Voluntown for expenses that meet the requirements of the grant. These funds cover COVID-19 identified expenses from March 16 through December 31, 2020.

The school system is required to expend the funds and seek reimbursement for “eligible” expenditures. This means the funds, expended from the BOE budget, may require deposit in the Undesignated Fund of the Town of Voluntown. If this happens, the town will need to authorize allocating these funds to the Board of Education.

An application requesting \$207,340 of identified expenses was submitted to the CSDE by the November 2, 2020 deadline. We recently receive a response from the CSDE and were approved an allocation of \$176,639 that must be expended by December 30, 2020.

The original allocation of \$260,474 will now have a remaining balance of \$83,835 which might not be available to Voluntown based on recent changes in the grant guidelines. The original allocated amount had a van listed as well as costs that went beyond December. There were requests to encumber the funds for projected costs but the CSDE denied this portion of the application.

MOTION #5 (11/12/20) was made (Kalwara/Grant) that the Board of Education approves the expenditures of \$176,639 Coronavirus Relief Fund allocation as approved by the CSDE or Connecticut State Department of Education; 6 in favor, 1 opposed (Paul). Motion carries.

3. Reopening Update

Members of the Voluntown REOPEN Committee in the Time of COVID-19

Adam S. Burrows -----	Superintendent of Schools, Chair and Point of Contact
Amy L. Suffoletto -----	Principal and LEA COVID-19 Health and Safety Liaison
Lloyd A. Johnson -----	Director of Student Services
Linda Hanson -----	School Nurse
Brian Kallio -----	Director of Maintenance and Facilities
Terry Chenette -----	Transportation Coordinator
Thomas O'Connor -----	Director of Food Services
Rachel Ricard -----	Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and Parent
Andrea Kelly -----	SRBI Teacher and VEA

Angela Gardella -----	Paraprofessional and CSEA
Kate Beuparlant -----	Board of Education Chair and Parent
Jim Ward -----	Technology Consultant
Kathy Groth -----	Counselor/Social Worker
Tracey Hanson -----	First Selectwoman and Parent
Patrick McCormick -----	UNCAS Health Director
Amanda Page -----	Parent
Toula Wyland -----	Preschool Teacher

The Reopen Committee has been meeting each week since July 7, 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. There was currently a need to review the return to school after the Thanksgiving break. The committee determined that the current schedule as noted in the 2020-2021 calendar will be followed.

4. Personnel

MOTION #6 (11/12/20) was made (Grant/Muschiano) that the Board of Education approves Linda Hanson as the School Nurse; all in favor. Motion carries.

5. Faculty and Staff Assignments for 2020-21 – An updated report was provided.

6. Policy, Regulation and Forms #4000.1 – Title IX (Changing number series from 4000.1 to 5145.44) **MOTION #7 (11/12/20) was made (Wilson/Grant) that the Board of Education approves changing the number series for Policy, Regulation and Forms #4000.1 on Title IX (approved on 10/8/20) to Policy, Regulation and Forms #5145.44 as recommended by CABE to follow their number sequencing; all in favor. Motion carries.**

7. Policy and Forms #5111 – Admission/Placement (Fourth reading)

Mr. Burrows followed up with our school attorney, Fred Dorsey, as per the Board's request, and legal information was provided to the Board to verify that Immigration and Citizenship (*Plyler v. Doe*, 1982 Supreme Court Decision) cannot be used to determine residency for admissions.

Also submitted was a summary from the American Immigration Council regarding Public Education for Immigrant Students: Understanding *Plyler v. Doe*.

As per the suggested CABE policies there are several other documents, such as a lease agreement, mortgage document, property tax record, rent receipt, homeowner's insurance, current utility bill, current proof of government benefits, etc. that can be used to determine residency.

MOTION #8 (11/12/20) was made (Kalwara/Muschiano) that the Board of Education approves Policy and Forms #5111 on Admission/Placement as presented; 5 in favor, 2 opposed (Wilson, Paul). Motion carries.

8. Policy #5112 – Ages of Attendance (Fourth reading.)

MOTION #9 (11/12/20) was made (Grant/Kalwara) that the Board of Education approves Policy and Forms #5112 on Ages of Attendance as presented; 5 in favor, 2 opposed (Wilson, Paul). Motion carries.

9. Distance Learning -

A Distance Learning Policy (#6172.61) has been submitted to the Board to review for during these past few months. After further discussion, the Superintendent, Principal, and Director of Student Services recommend that the wording from this "optional" CABE policy be added to our "Distance or Remote Learning Administrative Guidelines". There have been frequent changes and updates in the dynamics of distance/remote learning and establishing guidelines will allow for frequent revisions.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Snow Removal** – Tabled to the December meeting as no bids have been received.
2. **Committee Preferences of Board of Education Members**
There was a review of committee assignments due to recent changes on the Board of Education. Adjustments were made and the revised list of committee membership will be distributed at the next meeting of the Board of Education.
3. **Board of Education Meeting Schedule for 2021**
MOTION #10 (11/12/20) was made (Wilson/Grant) to approve the Board of Education Meeting Schedule for 2021 as presented; all in favor. Motion carries.
4. **2021-2022 School Calendar (First Draft)**
The first draft of a 2021-2022 school year was reviewed. There is a need to review and develop a consistent calendar in the LEARN and EASTCONN RESC areas. Voluntown has eight designated high schools that are located in each RESC area and a coordinated calendar will allow for savings in transportation as well as consistent school days.
The next draft of the 2021-2022 calendar will be reviewed at the December 10, 2020 Regular Board of Education Meeting. Traditionally, this process has required three or four drafts before a final calendar is approved by the Board of Education.
5. **BOE Special Meeting January 28, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.** (Nick Caruso, CABA Sr. Staff Associate for Field Services)
MOTION #11 (11/12/20) was made (Grant/Wilson) to approve calling a BOE Special Meeting on January 28, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. for a guest presentation by Nick Caruso from CABA; all in favor. Motion carries.
6. **Job Description Update (Executive Assistant to the Superintendent)**
This is a first reading of a job description and a second reading and possible approval will be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Board of Education.
7. **Substitute Teacher's Pay**
The current daily rate of pay for Substitute Teachers has been in existence for several years and is now lower than the surrounding school systems. In order to be competitive, it was recommended that an increase is needed, especially to expand our current list of potential substitute teachers. This item was table to the December meeting.

X. SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING

- Upcoming BOE meeting: December 10, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.
- Personnel/Staff Assignments for 2020-21
- Budget Preparation Timeline and Process for 2021-22
- COVID-19 Update
- Reopening Update
- School Calendar 2021-2022
- Snow Removal
- Personnel
- Job Description Update - Executive Assistant to the Superintendent (Second reading)
- Substitute Teacher's Pay

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION #13 (11/12/20) was made (Wicks/Wilson) to move into Executive Session at 9:28 p.m. for the purpose of discussing Negotiations and Personnel; all in favor. Motion carries.

MOTION #14 (11/12/20) was made (Wilson/Muschiano) to move out of Executive Session at 9:52 p.m.; all in favor. Motion passes.

No action was taken.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION #15 (11/12/20) was made (Wilson/Paul) to adjourn at 9:52 p.m.; all in favor. Motion carries.

_____	_____	_____	_____
Witness	Date	Attest	Date
Respectfully drafted and edited by:			
<i>Dee Dee Jackman, Board of Education Clerk</i>			
<i>Adam S. Burrows, Superintendent of Schools</i>			

APPROVED AT THE 12/10/20 BOE MEETING