

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 MEETING MINUTES

July 9, 2020

Virtual Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

This meeting was live-streamed at the following link:

<https://stream.meet.google.com/stream/d94df0ee-b257-46ab-9d35-8ae50bfdac39>

A recording of the meeting will be posted on the school website within seven days of the meeting date.

- I. CALL TO ORDER** Chairperson Beuparlant called the virtual meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.
- ATTENDANCE** **Present:** Kate Beuparlant (Chairperson), Arikka Kalwara, Meagan Wicks and Christopher Wilson
Absent: Kristen Trahan (Vice Chair), Cathy Grant (Secretary) and Skart Paul
Also Present: Adam S. Burrows (Superintendent), Amy Suffoletto (Principal) and Lloyd A. Johnson, Ph.D. (Director of Student Services)
- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** - The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- III. CITIZENS / COMMENTS** - None
- IV. GUESTS** – Thomas O’Connor – Food Services Director
- Mr. O’Connor attended this July meeting to give an annual update about the food services program.

MOTION #1 (7/9/20) was made (Wilson, Kalwara) that the Board approves the price increase of a full student lunch to increase to \$3.25 for 2020-21; all in favor. Motion carries.

- During the recent closing of school due to COVID-19, schools and institutions that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program, and Special Milk Program (SMP) as applicable, must continue to determine eligibility for and make available free and reduced-price meals and snacks and free milk to all eligible students.
- Schools and institutions must comply with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) regulations and policies for school meals and milk including the meal pattern requirements. Schools and institutions that participate in the NSLP are required to claim meals/milk provided to eligible students using accurate counting and claiming methods.
- When schools were closed in March 2020 Voluntown teamed up with Griswold in a regional approach to serve a free Grab-and-Go Breakfast and Lunch for students. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday were drive by pick-up times for two days of servings for both breakfast and lunch.
- Mr. O’Connor mentioned that Voluntown had an Administrative review of our Food Services by the State scheduled for this spring and that this was postponed to the upcoming year due to COVID-19. The next review after that will follow a five-year cycle format.
- The food warmer in the kitchen needs to be replaced and Mr. O’Connor anticipates grant funds may be available on July 22, 2020. He intends to submit the grant to hopefully secure funds for this replacement.

Mr. Burrows noted that information about the Food Services Reopen Plan will be included in the plan being submitted to the State:

- Voluntown, with the REOPEN, will return to breakfast and lunch being served at the school and prepared in our kitchen. Students will have ample room for social distancing as they eat in the cafeteria because we have several lunch waves. New travel patterns will be put into place to maintain social distancing.

- Off-Site Meal Service will be offered to students who are remote learning. Our local school district lunch program, standing operating procedures, and policies are all in compliance with USDA. Over these past 15 years we have successfully completed any state accreditations or review procedures. We have made excellent use of the USDA commodities program and complied with our Student Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy 6142.101.
- At each regular monthly meeting of the Board of Education a comprehensive updated report with six years of history is presented to document the number of meals served, total student enrollment, and free and reduced enrollment. The Director of Food Services for our program is shared with Griswold in a collaborative approach and all NSLP procedures and nutritional standards for menus are fully implemented.
- Cleaning and Sanitation: Work in consultation with the appropriate local health departments on updated safety protocols, including standard operating procedures for sanitation of school kitchens, cafeterias, food warehouses, alternative meal distribution locations, and central production kitchens.
- We have made arrangements to use the large gymnasium and space cafeteria tables at great distance from each other during the several lunch periods.
- Social distancing rules will be used for the lunch lines. Plexiglas will be used for the cashier area. Recyclable trays will be used.
- Our commodities were ordered last January and therefore we intend to have a lunch line.
- The Superintendent thanked Tom O'Connor and his entire staff for all their efforts on preparing and distributing the many breakfasts and lunches.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #2 (7/9/20) was made (Wicks, Wilson) that the Board approves the Consent Agenda with an amendment to the June 11, 2020 BOE Minutes; all in favor. Motion carries.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

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

Principal Suffoletto publicly congratulated all the families for sticking it out through the entire distance learning process.

COVID-19 School Closure Update:

- An 8th grade graduation outdoor ceremony took place on June 15th at 5pm for graduate immediate family members, staff and BOE members. The event highlighted each graduate's success.
- A Drive Through "Summer Send Off" was held on June 17th. Families drove through the front parking lot while staff waved them on. This send off was featured on WFSB Channel 3 "The Bright Spot" on June 24.
- Governor Lamont and Commissioner Cardona have released guidelines for school reopening. At this time, we are working with our Reopening Committee to adhere to the guidelines for reopening scenarios.

COVID-19 School Closure Timeline of Events:

- 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 25th - April 9th - All students were given at home learning packets. Parents collected packets and other belongings as available on March 25th.
- As of April 20th, grades 3-8 moved to online learning through Google Classroom and are provided weekly learning plans.
- As of April 20th, grades K-2 continued with a set of 9-day lesson plans and packets were picked-up by parents on this date. Beginning May 4th grades K-2 is using a blended approach to learning.
- Preschool students have been provided a calendar of learning experiences and suggested activities by teachers. As of May 4th, preschool students were also provided additional activities on Seesaw for learning.
- As of April 20th, 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.
- 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.

Students as a Focal Point

- Graduation Awards: Awards were presented this year at our outdoor graduation ceremony. Students were awarded numerous awards for their accomplishments. Additionally, six high school seniors were mailed a certificate, check and letter of recognition for the Lucy Peabody Award for academic achievement.
- End of Year: Report cards, summer learning information and other necessary items were mailed to students on Wednesday, June 23rd.

Curriculum, Learning, and Instruction

- Professional Development: Faculty and Staff are continuing with ongoing professional development regarding online platforms, remote instruction, and the use of digital tools.
- 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.
 - FY 19 School Readiness and Quality Enhancement Grants - Both of these grant applications have been waived by the State of Connecticut for the 19-20 school year.
 - ED 166: Discipline report and the Restraint and Seclusion Report have been submitted

Building, Grounds, and Transportation & Safety

- Summary of the 2019-2020 Safety Drills: Fire (5); Earthquake Drill (1); Lockdown Drill (1); Evacuation Drill (1)

Community and Public Relations

- PTO - There are no meetings at this time.
- Youth Service Bureau/Local Prevention Council – Meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m., virtually at this time.

Superintendent Burrows thanked Mrs. Suffoletto for what she has done with curriculum, supporting staff, maintaining communication with parents and bringing people together to make things happen. Chairperson Beauparlant also thanked Amy and the Staff and Administration for going above and beyond to ensure smooth transitions between the end of the school year and the upcoming start of next year. Board Member Wicks also noted the challenges that Connecticut received in not being given much time and notice from the Governor.

Superintendent Burrows thanked Lloyd Johnson and his staff in delivering Special Education Services in these challenging times and for guiding everyone through the process and continually getting updates from the State Department of Education.

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

- The Student Services department has implemented a Virtual Extended School Year Service this summer for our students with IEPs who are at risk for regression. The dates for this summer school are June 29 to July 30, 2020. Three of our special education teachers and one of the speech therapists are providing services. Each participating student receives an online tutoring session with their special education teacher for 30 minutes a day, four days a week; Monday through Thursday. The students receiving speech therapy receive a 30-minute session once a week (our usual summer session service).

- During this summer we will be meeting to plan activities and services for our opening in September. Time will be devoted to reviewing and revising our Distance Learning process should we need to return to that mode of instruction during the next school year.
- Since May 5th we began hosting Virtual PPT/504 meetings using Google Meets. We have “caught up” on the Annual Reviews missed during the shutdown while also conducting those meetings needed to be held for our 8th graders with their chosen high school representatives and for students needing Transition/Vocational Services post-high school. I’d like to praise the flexibility and patience demonstrated by staff, students, and parents in the conducting of these virtual meetings. We are planning to equip the Student Services Conference room with the devices needed to conduct virtual meetings from that office. Our hope is that parents who find it challenging to attend meetings in the school will be able to attend from home or their workplace.
- As of June 18, 2020, this Director has chaired 172 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	43	24
9-12+	19	11
Total	62	35
- Dr. Johnson will soon have the capability to hold virtual conferences/meetings from the office which can support the continued need for social distancing as well as offer working parents more convenient options.

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

- Calendar of Events for July and August 2020
- The District Enrollment Report noted 265 students in Pre-K to 8th grade and 128 high school students.
- The BOE received grants, tuition payments and other funds that have been returned to the Town account. (\$77,542.59 in 2017/18; \$96,408.40 in 2018/19; and \$69,420.26 has been returned to the Town for the current 2019/20 fiscal year.
- NFA letter announcing Dr. Brian Kelly as the new NFA Head of School
- CABE Liaison for July
- We will receive a CIRMA Equity entitlement of \$1,894 which will be deposited in the Undesignated Fund of the Town of Voluntown
- We currently have a remaining balance of \$2,383.34 in the 19-20 BOE Budget which will be deposited in the Undesignated Fund of the Town of Voluntown.
- Jack Wesa, EDC Chair, sent a note that the Farmers Market begins on Sunday, July 12.
- Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) webinar on “Adapt, Advance, and Achieve; Connecticut’s Plan to Learn and Grow Together” notice
- There are efforts to end injustice and systemic racism. We will be hearing more about efforts to take positive action in being part of the solution leading to true equity in criminal justice, education, housing, health and access to opportunity.
- In 1644, Connecticut enacted a law ordering every township within the jurisdiction, after it had increased to fifty (50) householders, to appoint one within their town to teach all children to read and write. In 1650 Connecticut wrote its Code on Schools. On October 9, 1662 in Hartford, Connecticut a charter was read establishing a corporate government. Shortly after, it emerged that the towns became like little republics of freemen and possessed under legislations all the necessary powers to adjust local and prudential concerns. “Education of children was considered to be of singular behoofe and benefit to any commonwealth” (Trumbull, History of Connecticut).
These early events in the history of Connecticut established the foundations of local Boards of Education in the decision-making process for addressing the needs of education.
Our Voluntown Board of Education has a rich history of establishing educational programs that meet the needs of the youth of our community. Local control of our small school system allows active participation

at the town level to work together to establish a wide range of education opportunities for our youth.

Voluntown is carrying on with traditions and legislation that was first introduced hundreds of years ago.

- **ESSER Application on Hold:** It is important to note that just a few hours prior to this meeting, the following communication was sent to school systems in Connecticut. This represents a significant change from the established procedures because the executive branch is seeking to change legislation and redistribute grants for local education funds to private schools. “Due to the latest ruling from the USDE, we are looking at revisions to the ESSER application. Until revisions are complete, the ESSER Application is closed for further changes. Districts that have started the application will be prevented from changing to the next workflow status. We will contact you when the application is reopened. The July 23, 2020 due date is extended to a new due date and will be announced when the application is reopened.” - Kathleen Depsey, CSDE Chief Financial Officer on July 9, 2020 at 4:06 p.m.
- The U.S. House of Representatives passed the HEROES ACT last month and this proposal has direct allocation to municipalities throughout the nation. Based on a review of allocation posted online, the Town of Voluntown was “proposed” to directly receive \$834,352 in 2020 and \$417,176 in 2021 for support during this time of COVID-19. The U.S. Senate has not taken any action with regards to this proposal.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS – Reviewed in Consent Agenda and in the report by the Superintendent

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. **Wheeler High School; Policy #5111.11 on Designated High Schools** - The approved and signed contract was provided to the Board.

MOTION #3 (7/9/20) was made (Wilson, Kalwara) that the Board approves adding Wheeler High School to Policy #5111.11 on Designated High Schools; all in favor. Motion carries.

2. **2019-20 Budget** - End-of-Year update and projected remaining balances was reviewed.
 - The Board of Education each month reviews a Function Object report that presents the details of the “encumbrances” and “expenditures”. *A remaining balance of \$2,383.34 is the current projected return to the Town of Voluntown to deposit in the Undesignated Fund of the Town of Voluntown. This balance may slightly change because of price adjustments in current purchase orders that are currently being processed.*
 - This is the 15th year in a row that the Board of Education has not had to go back to the town for an additional request. The Board of Education has shown consistency in planning ahead and effectively using the funds that are allocated each school year. This has helped the town maintain a healthy undesignated fund balance.
3. **2020-21 Budget** - Beginning-of-year update
The approved budget for 2020-21 of \$6,785,196 which represents an 0% increase or 0% over the 2019-20 approved budget of \$6,785,196 that was approved at the virtual town meeting held on June 9, 2020. In the process of developing a 0% budget increase, there were decisions to delay capital improvement items, additional high school tuitions, and technology upgrades.

A summary of the cost savings efforts of the Board of Education: Decrease of \$11,860 over four years

- 2017-2018 budget was a decrease of \$11,403
- 2018-2019 budget was an increase of \$104,165
- 2019-2020 budget was a decrease of \$104,622
- 2020-2021 budget was \$0.00 or 0%

Education Cost Sharing Grant or ECS decreases of \$96,332 per year by the State of Connecticut

- 2017-2018 Received a decrease of \$327,766
- 2018-2019 Received an increase of \$118,357 (Thank you for a last-minute vote by legislators)
- 2019-2020 Received a decrease of \$86,575
- 2020-2021 Receives a decrease of \$89,346

The above decreases in the school budget and ECS grants verify that the Board of Education has carefully reviewed expenditures, made budget reductions to absorb significant reductions in state funding to our community, and contributed to the recent no increase in the MIL rate for the 2020-2021 budget.

The approved 2020-2021 budget includes:

- Negotiated salaries for teachers, and classified faculty and staff with the non-certified being negotiated
- The projected cost for the outplacement of Special Education students based on identified needs
- Projected cost of tuition based on the estimated attendance at seven designated high schools
- A projected increase of 5.0% in the cost of health insurance
- Projected energy costs for heating fuel, propane, diesel/gasoline and electricity (with estimated savings due to recent energy efficient upgrades)
- Continuation of the 10-11-18 Board decision to eliminate a full-time Assistant Principal
- Continuation of savings by reducing a teacher in 2019-2020 due to declining enrollment
- Elimination of an SRBI (Scientifically Researched Based Intervention) Tutor
- Elimination of a current 1.0 FTE School Counselor position and reassignment of responsibilities to the current 0.5 Social Worker to a 1.0 FTE position for budgetary savings
- Elimination of a 7th and 8th grade writing teacher due to declining enrollment and reassignment to SRBI needs and continuation of existing library responsibilities
- A proposed reduction in transportation costs due to declining enrollment and efficiency initiatives through being one of a few school systems with our own department that offers flexibility and cost savings to meet all projected needs
- Technology upgrades using an obsolescence strategy for upgrades within a consistent budget
- Delay of any Capital Improvement requests for the town by use of the school operating budget
- This budget does not include a Foreign Language Teacher, now under review for several years.

4. 2019-20 Evaluation of the Superintendent (Second reading)

MOTION #4 (7/9/20) was made (Wicks, Kalwara) to move the 2019-20 Evaluation of the Superintendent to Executive session; all in favor. Motion carries.

5. COVID-19 Update

- Schools and other organizations throughout Connecticut were closed by Executive Order by the Governor on March 16, 2020 for the remainder of the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This required suspension of scheduled events. The school administrators along with the faculty and staff implemented a series of distance learning programs that were well attended and quite successful for our youth.
- The Connecticut Department of Education is now following through with guidance to have all students, in all districts, return to schoolhouses for full-time instruction at the beginning of 2020-21, so long as public health data continues to support this model. This model will be supported with more intensive mitigation strategies and specific monitoring, containment and class cancellation plans.
- LEAs must be prepared to modify their plans to support a partial reopening or to allow for scaling back at a future date if the public health data changes. Identify gaps and develop action plans for reopening that specifically address inclusion, equity, and access for all learners with strategies and clearly defined action steps.
- The Commissioner of the Connecticut State Department of Education required each school system to create a Reopening Committee to coordinate activities and also submit a REOPEN Plan by July 24, 2020. The Voluntown Reopen Committee has already met on July 2 and July 7, 2020 to begin a lengthy process to systematically go through a state template to describe our plans.
- **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
 Holly Santiago ----- 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 Beauparlant ----- 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

MOTION #5 (7/9/20) was made (Wicks, Kalwara) to schedule a Special Board of Education online meeting on Thursday, July 23, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. to review the Voluntown Reopening Our School Plan, including any school calendar adjustments, that are based on “critical” requirements as published by the State Department of Education; all in favor. Motion carries.

6. **BOE Mission Statement** (Third reading)

7. **BOE Goals for 2020-21** (Third reading)

MOTION #6 (7/9/20) was made (Wicks, Wilson) to approve the BOE Goals for 2020-21 as amended; all in favor. Motion carries

8. **Administrative Goals for 2020-21** (Second reading)

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Title IX Coordinator for 2020-21**

MOTION #7 (7/9/20) was made (Wilson, Wicks) to appoint Kathy Groth as the Title IX Coordinator for 2020-21; all in favor. Motion carries.

2. **School Readiness Liaison for 2020-21**

MOTION #8 (7/9/20) was made (Wicks, Kalwara) to confirm the Voluntown Board of Selectman’s appointment of Amy L. Suffoletto as the School Readiness Liaison to the Office of Early Childhood to the State of Connecticut for 2020-21; all in favor. Motion carries.

3. **School Medical Advisor for 2020-21**

MOTION #9 (7/9/20) was made (Wilson, Wicks) to appoint Dr. Galan as the School Medical Advisor for 2020-21; all in favor. Motion carries.

4. **Projected Faculty and Staff 2020-21**

5. **Budget Preparation Timeline and Process for 2021-22**

Thursday	07-09-20	Review “DRAFT” of the Board of Education 21-22 Budget Preparation Timeline and the information about the history of the costs of maintenance, heating oil, propane and electricity.
Thursday	09-10-20	Finalize all transfers in the 19-20 budget to officially document actual expenditures. The Board adjusts current 20-21 salary and health insurance accounts based on faculty and staff changes
Thursday	10-08-20	Review a comprehensive six-year history of all “actual” budget expenditures
Thursday	11-12-20	Current curriculum initiatives and projected 21-22 curriculum priorities

Thursday	12-10-20	Review 21-22 projected costs for Transportation and Maintenance
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.

6. Personnel

MOTION #10 (7/9/20) was made (Wilson, Wicks) to approve Julia Stands as a Summer Certified Special Education Teacher one on one Tutor; all in favor. Motion carries.

MOTION #11 (7/9/20) was made (Kalwara, Wilson) to approve Nancy MacBride as a Certified Teacher one-on-one High School Tutor; all in favor. Motion carries.

MOTION #12 (7/9/20) was made (Wilson, Kalwara) to approve Bonnie Gaudreau as a Summer Custodian for painting; all in favor. Motion carries.

X. SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING

- Upcoming BOE meetings: Special BOE meeting on July 23, 2020 and a Regular meeting on August 13, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.
- BOE Mission Statement (Fourth reading)
- Administrative Goals for 2020-21 (Third reading)
- COVID-19 Update
- Reopening Update
- Approve Adjustments and/or Transfers for the 2019-2020 Budget
- Budget Preparation Timeline and Process for 2021-22
- "Performance Matters: News from the CSDE Performance Office" (A 10-page report)
- Information about a recent court case related to IDEA Eligibility Extended to age 22

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION #13 (7/9/20) was made (Wilson, Wicks) to move into Executive Session at 9:10 p.m. for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent's Evaluation and Contract; all in favor. Motion passes.

MOTION #14 (7/9/20) was made (Wicks, Wilson) to authorize the BOE Chair to review comments with the Superintendent and then sign the Superintendent's Evaluation for 2019-2020; all in favor. Motion passes.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION #15 (7/9/20) was made (Wilson, Kalwara) to adjourn at 9:23 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> <i>Rachel Ricard, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools</i>			
APPROVED AT THE 8/13/20 BOE MEETING			