

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

**BOARD OF EDUCATION “SPECIAL” MEETING MINUTES**

January 28, 2021  
 Virtual Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

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*This Zoom meeting was streamed live to the public on the Voluntown School YouTube Channel:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3I7dOmnXMxoTlNHzaSZIzw>  
 Public comments were able to be made by emailing [djackman@voluntownct.org](mailto:djackman@voluntownct.org) up to 1 hour prior to the meeting.*

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- I. CALL TO ORDER** Chairperson Kate Beauparlant called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**ATTENDANCE**    **Present:** Kate Beauparlant (Chairperson), Meagan Wicks (Vice Chair), Arikka Kalwara, Valerie Muschiano and Christopher Wilson  
**Absent:** Skart Paul and Cathy Grant (Secretary)  
**Also Present:** Adam S. Burrows (Superintendent), Dee Dee Jackman (BOE Clerk), and CABA Guest Presenter: Nick Caruso

**CITIZENS / COMMENTS** - None were received.

Kate Beauparlant, Board of Education Chairperson, distributed a written summary of a CABA sponsored “Civility” webinar that she and Mr. Burrows recently attended with many participants from throughout Connecticut. She briefly reviewed strategies that promoted productive Board of Educations and welcomed Nick Caruso, CABA Consultant. Nick was scheduled to present to our Board of Education in March of 2020, but the challenges of COVID-19 throughout our region created the need to reschedule this Professional Development opportunity for our Board of Education.

- II. GUEST** – Nick Caruso, CABA Senior Staff Associate for Field Services

Mr. Caruso introduced himself and expressed that CABA attempts to help Boards of Education become more efficient and effective with the focus on student achievement and giving each child a quality education. CABA is always available to assist/teach Board Members. The Board individually expressed their topics of interest for him to focus on in his presentation.

The Eisenhower Matrix was displayed showing the importance of prioritizing agenda items on what is important and urgent, especially in this time of the pandemic, and expressed the importance of supporting the Superintendent. He noted a priority in these difficult times of COVID that the main focus of board agendas should be on health and safety, academic integrity and the social/emotional well-being of students and staff.

State Statutes were reviewed regarding the legal responsibilities of board members such as:

**Constitution of the State of Connecticut – Article Eighth, Section 1**

“There shall always be free public elementary and secondary schools in the state.”

**CT Gen Stat 10-220 – Duties of Boards of Education**

“Each local or regional board of education shall maintain good public elementary and secondary schools, implement the educational interests of the state, as defined in section 10-4a, and provide such other educational activities as in its judgment will best serve the interests of the school district...”

**CT Gen Stat 10-4a – Educational Interests of States Identified**

“For purposes of sections 10-4, 10-4b and 10-220, the educational interests of the state shall include, but not be limited to, the concern of the state that (1) each child shall have for the period prescribed in the general statutes equal opportunity to receive a suitable program of educational experiences; (2) each school district shall finance at a reasonable level at least equal to the minimum budget requirement pursuant to the provisions of section 10-262i an educational program designed to achieve this end; (3) in order to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation, each school district shall provide educational opportunities for its students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds and may provide such opportunities with students from other communities; and (4) the mandates in the general statutes pertaining to education within the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education be implemented.”

**CT Gen Stat 10-157 – Superintendents**

“Any local or regional board of education shall provide for the supervision of the schools under its control by a superintendent who shall serve as the chief executive officer of the board. The superintendent shall have executive authority over the school system and the responsibility for its supervision. Employment of a superintendent shall be by election of the board of education... The board of education shall evaluate the performance of the superintendent annually in accordance with guidelines and criteria mutually determined and agreed to by such board and such superintendent...”

Mr. Caruso noted that the Superintendent is the CEO of the District/Board and has executive authority over the school system and the responsibility for its supervision.

**CT Gen Stat 10-151b – Teacher Evaluations**

“The superintendent of each local or regional board of education shall annually evaluate or cause to be evaluated each teacher... The superintendent shall report (1) the status of teacher evaluations to the local or regional board of education on or before June first of each year...”

Mr. Caruso commented on the importance of what board members say because “words do matter”.

**CT Gen Stat 10-222 – Appropriations and Budget**

“Each local board of education shall prepare an itemized estimate of the cost of maintenance of public schools for the ensuing year and shall submit such estimate to the board of finance in each town or city having a board of finance, to the board of selectmen in each town having no board of finance... The money appropriated by any municipality for the maintenance of public schools shall be expended by and in the discretion of the board of education... any such board may transfer any unexpended or uncontracted-for portion of any appropriation for school purposes to any other item of such itemized estimate.”

**Ct Gen Stat 10-248 – Indemnification**

“Each board of education shall protect and save harmless any member of such board... which acts are not wanton, reckless or malicious... within board member’s statutory authority...”

A questions/answers session was held. It was mentioned in prior meetings that board members with conflicting opinions were raising voices and being derogatory and that points of order can be taken in the future. Mr. Caruso noted that when fundamentals are being challenged it may be appropriate to call a recess and/or the Chair can set up the floor and assign set time limits for members to voice their opinions/thoughts on agenda items. Discussions should only occur when a motion is on the floor and keeping on-topic with short, succinct comments is essential for a successful and effective meeting.

There was a discussion about continuing to follow health and safety guidelines during this time of COVID-19. Nick expressed recognition of the successes our school system has had with being able to maintain an in-school schedule for our K through 8<sup>th</sup> graders during this 2020-2021 school year.

Mr. Caruso emphasized that the Board of Education receives approval of an annual budget or an annual spending plan. Each Board of Education in Connecticut has the legal authority to make adjustments or

transfers within this approved budget. This allows the Board of Education to make decisions based on the changing of needs of students. Mr. Burrows noted that in March 2020 the Voluntown Board of Education approved budget transfers that resulted in the successful approval of a 0% budget increase for the current 2020-2021 budget. This resulted in a no MIL increase and eased the burden of Voluntown tax-payers.

The meeting ended with the hope for things to return to normalcy soon.

III. **NEXT BOE MEETING** – Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

VI. **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION (1/28/21) was made (Wicks/Muschiano) to adjourn at 8:59 p.m.; all in favor. Motion carries.**

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| <b>Witness</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Attest</b> | <b>Date</b> |

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