

**VOLUNTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
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 Phone: (860) 376-9167 [www.voluntownct.org](http://www.voluntownct.org)  
 SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS: Adam S. Burrows

**BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**

September 24, 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/UC3I7dOmnXMxoTINHzaSZ1zw>  
 Public comments were able to be made by emailing [djackman@voluntownct.org](mailto:djackman@voluntownct.org) up to 1 hour prior to the meeting.*

**I. CALL TO ORDER** Chairperson Beauparlant called the virtual meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**ATTENDANCE**    **Present:** Kate Beauparlant (Chairperson), Cathy Grant (Secretary), Arikka Kalwara, Meagan Wicks and Christopher Wilson  
**Absent:** Kristen Trahan (Vice Chair) and Skart Paul  
**Also Present:** Adam S. Burrows (Superintendent), Amy Suffoletto (Principal), Lloyd A. Johnson, Ph.D. (Director of Student Services) and Tracey Hanson (Selectwoman)

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

**III. CITIZENS / COMMENTS** - None

**IV. VOLUNTOWN REOPEN PLAN** – Review of the Date of Students Returning to School on Wednesdays

The Superintendent and Principal requested the Board of Education Chair to schedule this meeting because there have been some challenges with preparing for the return to school for our Pre-K through Eighth Graders for an early dismissal day on Wednesday, September 30, 2020, as previously voted upon at the 9/10/20 BOE meeting. This is a request to allow the faculty more time to work to enhance remote learning for the 58 students who opted for remote learning and do not come into the school building during this time of COVID-19.

Mrs. Suffoletto reviewed the following:

- Students and families continue to need support with Wednesdays at home, and should there be a school closure, they will need to be proficient at manipulating the platforms. We are able to address these issues in school on Thursday or during the day on Wednesday.
- Staffing will become an issue as we are closed Wednesday in addition to our local schools where our faculty's students attend. There are currently not enough subs to cover empty classrooms at this time.
- Data is showing schools closing in CT and we need to be ready for movement to a closure, which requires preparedness and we are not prepared at this time.
- Right now grade 3-8 teachers are instructing students both live and in-person four days per week, and without Wednesday, they may be unable to plan and account for those lessons for remote students at this time. There is no additional time in the teacher's schedules to teach remote students or plan.
- We will need some additional staff to monitor the remote learning for grades 3-8 or shuffle existing staff and find replacements.
- Band, Chorus lessons will not happen on Wednesday, nor be accounted for in our schedule once we move away from Wednesday.
- These are a few of the items that we need to be able to have answers for prior to changing the calendar. The more the weeks go on, the more we realize we have more work to be done to assist with the transition back to school on Wednesdays.

There continues to be a to review Addendum 12 regarding the state requirements for remote learning. Mrs. Suffoletto reported that online platforms were being researched and reviewed for a possible instructional format for our K-8 remote learners. But it was decided to take some additional time to enhance our existing remote learning support by maintaining the connection with the curriculum objectives of the Voluntown Public Schools.

At this time, VES should remain closed on Wednesdays as a Distance Learning Day with all students learning from home. This will allow time to enhance our remote learning strategies on Wednesdays. It will also allow time to schedule existing faculty and staff to make schedule adjustments to support remote learners. Mrs. Suffoletto noted this day is extremely important for students to become used to logging into devices, joining meets and working within grade level programs. Tech and teacher support is available at school on Wednesdays as well and helps support our preparedness for being out at any point.

Mr. Burrows therefore noted that the Board should consider rescinding the 9/30/20 return on Wednesdays and schedule a review of students returning to school on Wednesdays at the next Board of Education meeting (10/8/20).

#### Review of VES Hybrid Model

The Reopen Committee has reviewed the possible delay of implementing an Early Dismissal in-school day until after September 30, 2020, and was appreciated of this Special Meeting of the Board of Education to review the need for more time.

#### Food Services and CSDE Addendum 13- School Nutrition Update

- The USDA is offering a program to provide free Grab & Go breakfast and lunches to the entire student population beginning 9/8/20 through 12/31/2020. Curbside meal pick-up is on Monday (remote students) and Wednesdays (all students) supplying free meals until 9:00-10:30am. We provide meals to anyone who needs them for their children (PK-12th).
- Amy Suffoletto submitted the completed Application for Area Eligibility and the Central Office submitted the completed Application for Meal Service. The program will need to evaluate cash flows and accounting for this new set up while we wait for reimbursements to come in.
- Corinne Proulx is the School Lunch Program's new Head Cook.

#### Transportation Update

- The VES arrival and dismissal processes and procedures have been well organized.
- Social distancing has been maintained at all times whether students use private vehicles or school busses.
- Mrs. Suffoletto noted the arrival and dismissal processes are being reviewed daily and changes are made to help ensure as much efficiency as possible while ensuring student safety.
- There are three high schools (Ellis Tech, Norwich Tech, and the MSMHS) that require midday bus transportation, which means our K-8 grade dismissal on Wednesdays will need to occur at Noon rather than the usual 1:00 p.m.early dismissal time. Mrs. Suffoletto is exploring boarding bus students at 12:00 p.m. and then having parent pickups occur after the busses depart to allow adequate time for the high school runs.

#### Budget Considerations

- Adam S. Burrows reviewed the Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) Grant provided for by the SDE. Yesterday evening (9-22-20), CSDE released the procedures for obtaining funds. The CRF Grant application must be submitted to the state by October 2, 2020 for requesting up to \$260,474 that was awarded to Voluntown. Allocations awarded or listed by CSDE for our school system include: PPE - \$692, Transportation - \$7,081 (Bus Monitors, etc.), Cleaning , Health, and Safety - \$222,000 (includes a ventilation system upgrade and completion of A/C in the school), and Transportation - \$30,701 (hopefully a new van) for reimbursement of purchases between 3/1/2020 – 12/30/2020.
- Mr. Burrows mentioned to First Selectwoman Tracey Hanson that this is a grant that requires spending up to \$260,474 from the school budget, and any funds received will be deposited into the Town of Voluntown Undesignated Fund. Therefore, the school system may need to go back to the Town for the first time in over 15 years to ask for an addition allocation. It is important to note that this grant allows

