

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE NEXT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
CHESTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION  
March 23, 2017**

The regular meeting of the Chester Board of Education was held on Thursday, March 23, 2017. In attendance were David Fitzgibbons, Tom Englert, Becky Iselin, John Stack, Arthur Henick, Charlene Fearon, Maria Scherber, Rob Bibbiani (7:12 Arrival) and John Ropiak. Also in attendance were Dr. Ruth Levy, Superintendent, Kristina Martineau, Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Joanne Beekley, Principal, Garth Sawyer, Business Manager and Kelley Frazier, Clerk. Absent:

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Fitzgibbons at 7:00p.m.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Upon a motion made by Tom Englert and seconded by Arthur Henick, the Chester Board of Education **VOTED** unanimously to approve the minutes from the January 26, 2017 regular meeting and the Accounts Payable report.

**STUDENT REPORT**

Dr. Beekley introduced Lori Lenz who is the coordinator for the STEAM Fair. Ms. Lenz introduced four inventors who will be going to the state regional finals. Problem solving is the focus. Sydney Liggett, Emily Mezick, Hannah Gessner, Morgan Toth presented their inventions. Dr. Beekley thanked Ms. Lenz and the staff who helped to bring the STEAM Fair to Chester Elementary.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No Comment

**OTHER ITEMS:**

**Principal's Update**

Dr. Beekley gave a brief update. Kindergarten orientation will be held next week. There are 27 confirmed Kindergarten students for next year and 6 families that are undecided. Two staff members, Lisa Hanfield and Leanne McKenna, presented information on the Foundations program which is for students in K-2. All students are followed carefully to make sure they have mastered the skills. The continuity of skills is valued.

**REPORTS:**

**Financial Status Report – Mr. Garth Sawyer**

Mr. Sawyer gave a brief update on the financial report for Chester Elementary. Chester Elementary is currently projecting a small surplus. Mr. Sawyer will remain vigilant of any unforeseen circumstances and will keep the Board informed of any developments as they arise.

### **Cafeteria Report – Mr. Sawyer**

There continues to be a reduction in sales.

### **VOTE on Recommended Budget Transfer for 2016-17**

Upon a motion made by Rob Bibbiani and seconded by Arthur Henick, the Chester Board of Education **VOTED** unanimously to approve the recommended budget transfers for 2016-17.

### **Committee Reports**

The Finance Committee will meet on March 28, 2017.

Curriculum discussed the Bridges math program. Presentation and discussion led by Lori Lenz, Chester Elementary Art teacher, on K-6 art curriculum and instruction. She also presented the information on new CT Art Standards K-12.

Policy discussed graduation requirements. Various CAFE policies were reviewed and deleted if they were outdated.

### **OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Supervision District Committee Update**

The budget is complete and has gone through a public hearing. Money was returned to the towns.

### **LEARN**

A lobbyist gave an overview of the legislative session. There are many items being considered that could affect our towns. The changes to ECS will have a financial impact. There may be a mandate relief bill and movement of the teacher's pension to the towns. MBR may be lifted.

### **Assistant Superintendent's Report**

K-5 teachers are meeting in groups and diving into the Bridges math program so that they are prepared to implement the program next year. Grade Six math resources are being reviewed. The next generation science pilot will not occur in Chester because they are participating in NAEP.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Budgets are currently being worked on. Dr. Levy testified at the Capitol regarding the proposed changes. This is a challenging year. The Excess Cost grant was discussed. The formula proposed for ECS is based on the wealth of the town. This is not easily done nor does it look at the individual needs of the students. There is a need for financial reform in special education costs, but a study into what would work best is needed. The mandate relief legislation has many proposals. One consideration was to eliminate superintendents of small towns and to have a regional superintendent. Mandates for professional development and training are also being suggested. It is projected that the state will not have a budget before August which is challenging for the towns.

Celebrate Learning will be at Deep River Elementary School this summer. Breakfast and lunch will be provided for anyone under 18. Lunch must be eaten on site. Board members requested a reporting of the numbers of students served last summer.

The High School performance of *Aida* was great. The NEASC report is in the final stages and will be reported to the Board in the coming weeks. We will be hosting students from China this summer along with two teachers. Dates are still being decided. They will be here for 11-12 days. We will accept 4 tuition paying students from China for the next school year. This will offset the expense of bringing the I/B program to our district. The scheduling change was approved by the Region 4 Board. Next year we will have a modified 7 period block. A Clinical Day program for Region 4 students is being considered. This will better serve the students and keep students in house. The manufacturing program may be expanded.

The Strategic Planning committee has been working on developing a plan. The Board will be an active part of Strategic Planning. The findings and action plans will be discussed in the future. Mr. Fitzgibbons discussed the priorities. The Board and Administration will develop mutual goals. Cohesiveness is important. Each Board is at a different place and has a different culture, but we should still have the same goals. Dr. Levy will coordinate a time for Mr. Costa to review the plan with the Boards.

#### **Discussion Regarding Any Pending Policies – Standing Item**

No policies to discuss.

#### **Discussion and possible VOTE to adopt proposed 2017-18 Chester Elementary School budget to be presented to the Town.**

Dr. Levy discussed the budget.

On a motion made by Mr. Henick seconded by Mr. Fitzgibbons, the Chester Elementary School Board of Education unanimously **VOTED** to approve the 2017-2018 budget of \$4,580,958 (four million, five hundred eighty thousand, nine hundred fifty eight dollars) and to recommend this be brought to the Town of Chester. Ayes: David Fitzgibbons, Becky Iselin, John Stack, Arthur Henick, Charlene Fearon, Maria Scherber, Rob Bibbiani, John Ropiak. Nays: Tom Englert

#### **Discussion Regarding School Lunch Prices**

The Joint Board agrees that prices should be raised. The proposal for the cost of a student's lunch at the elementary schools is to be raised to \$3.00 and to \$3.25 for the Middle School student's lunch. The price of a student's lunch would be raised to \$3.50 at the High School. There will also be an increase in the adult lunch prices to \$4.50. A comparison was done with other towns. The Board feels that this is fair. This does not affect free and reduced lunch costs. Mr. Fitzgibbons would like the entire cafeteria program reviewed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No Comment.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION –PERSONNEL**

No Executive Session needed.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Henick and seconded by Mr. Bibbiani, the Chester Elementary Board of Education unanimously **VOTED** to approve the Staff Non-Renewal Notice as recommended by Superintendent Levy.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Next Joint BOE meeting April 6, 2017
- Next Chester BOE Meeting is May 25, 2017 @ 7:00pm

**ADJOURNMENT**

On motion duly made and seconded the Board unanimously **VOTED** to adjourn at 8:44p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelley Frazier, Secretary