



Board of Education Regular Meeting

September 8, 2020 7:00 PM

The Morgan School Cafe

71 Killingworth Tpke

Clinton, CT 06413

Attendance Taken at 7:00 PM:

Present Board Members:

Erica Gelven

Jason Adler

Michael Hornyak

Christopher Passante

Catherine Staunton

Absent Board Members:

Omar Francis

Kimberly Russo

1. Opening Exercises

1.A. Roll call

Discussion:

Also present were Superintendent O'Donnell, Assistant Superintendent Famiglietti, Business Manager Carolyn Dickey and Student Representative Emma Lindsay.

1.B. Pledge of Allegiance

Discussion:

All participants stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public participation/recognition

Discussion:

None.

3. Minutes – Approval

3.A. Regular Meeting of August 17, 2020

Motion Passed: To approve the minutes from the regular meeting of August 17, 2020, passed with a motion by Catherine Staunton and a second by Christopher Passante.

5 Yeas – 0 Nays

Erica Gelven	Yes
Jason Adler	Yes
Omar Francis	Absent
Michael Hornyak	Yes
Christopher Passante	Yes
Kimberly Russo	Absent
Catherine Staunton	Yes

3.B. Special Meeting of August 27, 2020

Motion Passed: To approve the minutes from the special meeting of August 27, 2020, passed with a motion by Christopher Passante and a second by Catherine Staunton.

4 Yeas – 0 Nays – 1 Abstention

Erica Gelven	Yes
Jason Adler	Abstain
Omar Francis	Absent
Michael Hornyak	Yes
Christopher Passante	Yes
Kimberly Russo	Absent
Catherine Staunton	Yes

4. Communications

Discussion:

A thank you note from retiree Maggie Steendam was read. The Board wished her a happy retirement.

5. Report of Student Representatives

Discussion:

E. Lindsay reported on the first day of classes at each school. All reports indicated a positive day with buses and classes running smoothly. The timeline to fill the two open positions of student representatives to the Board was discussed.

6. Administrative Reports

6.A. Administrators, Program Directors and Teachers

6.A.1. Food Service Summer and Reopening Report

Discussion:

Food Service Director Jon Siciliano provided an update on the summer meal program and preparation for reopening of school. He discussed the transition from PowerLunch to Mosaic, a more robust parent communication and reporting application. He also talked about the State's administrative review that was conducted in January 2020. He reported that Joel and Eliot students are eating in their classrooms while Morgan lunches are served in two locations in the school. He explained the new method of gathering lunch orders using Google Forms.

The State has extended the free meals waiver through December 31. J. Siciliano encouraged parents to fill out new 2020-2021 applications so that when we have to transition back to payment for meals, eligibility for free or reduced lunch is already established. There have been no charges for meals at any location for any students since March 18. J. Siciliano praised his cooks, Cindy Ellison, Sabrina Earp, Michele Locke, Carol Cullen, Jill Powers, and Liz Kowalsky, for pitching in this spring and summer to make sure students did not go hungry during this unprecedented time.

M. O'Donnell and the Board thanked J. Siciliano and his team for their commitment and for making it "look easy".

6.A.2. Fall Sports Update

Discussion:

Athletic Director Lew Pappariella updated the Board on the status of Fall Sports at Morgan. The first week of practices started on September 3. Reports indicate the practices are safe and well organized. Participation numbers are consistent with previous years. Work continues with other district athletic directors to figure out a varsity regional schedule against other shoreline opponents. There were questions regarding whether or not a football season is viable. Solutions are being sought by the CIAC to change football from a high-risk sport to a moderate-risk sport. Conditioning and skill building is taking place at all practices. Discussion followed regarding fans and spectators. The Board thanked L. Pappariella for all his work, and his willingness to navigate ways to give athletes authentic sports experiences while keeping them safe.

6.A.3. Notification of Donation: Pixellot Camera

Discussion:

The Morgan Booster Club has donated funds for Pixellot cameras to be installed in the Morgan gym to view athletic contests. L. Pappariella explained how the cameras work, their ease of use, and their integration into other systems. He indicated a number of benefits to the athletic program. M. O'Donnell endorsed the donation and the Board expressed no objections to the purchase and installation of the cameras.

6.A.4. General Update

6.B. Assistant Superintendent's Report

6.B.1. Professional Development Update

Discussion:

M. Famiglietti detailed the professional development activities for teachers that took place the week of August 31. Teacher training focused on several areas including social-emotional learning, virtual learning, Chromebook infused instruction, and unit design. Teachers, paraeducators, and substitutes participated in health and safety training.

6.B.2. General Update

Discussion:

M. Famiglietti mentioned the delay in shipment of Chromebooks and how the delay affects the district. He and the tech department have created temporary workarounds until the Chromebooks arrive.

Regarding the temporary remote learning plan, about 14% of students are taking advantage of it. Kindergarten through grade 5 will be working with the same teacher and grades 6-12 teachers have been identified and loaded into Odysseyware, a remote learning application.

6.C. Business Manager's Report

6.C.1. Bills Payable

Discussion:

There were no questions regarding bills payable.

6.C.2. Transportation Contract Update

Discussion:

C. Dickey stated that expectations during the hybrid period are being memorialized with M&J Bus Company and will not alter the underlying contract. Strict adherence to cleaning protocols is being stressed. Any changes to the contract will be discussed as needs dictate.

6.C.3. Notification of Pending Class Action Lawsuit

Discussion:

A class action lawsuit has been filed in New York and mentions almost every school district in the country. It alleges that districts did not provide free and appropriate schooling for special education students during closures due to the pandemic. At this point, no further action is required by the defendants, including Clinton.

6.C.4. General Update

Discussion:

An audit is pending with new auditors. C. Dickey discussed the purchase of pandemic-related supplies and end-of-year state reporting.

7. Superintendent's Report

7.A. Non-Lapsing Account Update

Discussion:

On August 26, the Town Council approved the transfer of up to 2% of the district's unexpended combined operating and capital budget appropriation into a non-lapsing account to be used for unplanned and unanticipated special education costs or capital expenses. M. O'Donnell reviewed the Memorandum of Understanding that outlines the management of the fund.

7.B. Joel & Eliot Roof Projects Update

Discussion:

The Eliot roof project is substantially complete except for a few finishing materials. The Joel project is underway and good progress is being made. No tearing work is taking place during school hours and workers are following all safety protocols.

7.C. School Reopening Update

Discussion:

The opening of school was incredibly successful. Bus operations went smoothly and M. O'Donnell presented a transportation analysis showing different buses, total number of students, trip lengths, etc. Students followed mask and other safety protocols well. Everyone's contributions, staff, students, and parents, paid off. October 5 is still the target date for a full return to school. Discussion followed regarding the advantages of full remote learning, attendance, and showing parents how to support their students.

7.D. Enrollment Update

Discussion:

The state is requesting weekly and monthly snapshots of attendance. M. O'Donnell discussed the number of temporary remote students, those withdrawn to homeschool, and others who have opted for online options or private schools. The projected enrollment for 2020-21 was 1,620 students. On the first day of school, the enrollment number was 1,608. A more accurate snapshot will be shared with the Board at the next meeting.

7.E. General Update

Discussion:

The Town Council chose not to act to reject the administrators' contract.

The Board thanked administrators for their hard work.

8. Reports of Board of Education Subcommittees and Special Committees

8.A. General Updates

Discussion:

Upcoming dates were discussed. Buildings and Grounds will need to meet to work on the capital plan. Public Relations needs to meet regarding next steps in marketing. Committee work will pick up in October.

9. First Reading of Policies

9.A. Use of Face Coverings in School

Discussion:

The Board had a first reading of a new policy regarding the use of face coverings in school. The policy will be up for approval at the next Board meeting.

10. Personnel Information

Discussion:

It was noted that Alan Samet, Morgan math teacher, had announced his retirement after over 40 years of teaching. The district is looking for a math teacher to fill that role. The Board thanked him for his service to the district and wished him well.

11. Adjournment

Motion Passed: To adjourn at 9:10 PM passed with a motion by Christopher Passante and a second by Catherine Staunton.

5 Yeas – 0 Nays

Erica Gelven	Yes
Jason Adler	Yes
Omar Francis	Absent
Michael Hornyak	Yes
Christopher Passante	Yes
Kimberly Russo	Absent
Catherine Staunton	Yes

Michael Hornyak, Secretary of the Board

Allison Friday, Clerk of the Board