

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Library

Tuesday, January 3, 2023
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, January 3, 2023, in the Colchester High School Library. Board members in attendance were Board Chair Lindsey Cox, Board Directors Nic Longo, Ben Yousey-Hindes, Felix Anderson, Laurie Kigonya, and Student Board Representative Olivia Dallamura. District administrators in attendance included Superintendent Amy Minor, Director of Curriculum Gwendolyn Carmolli, Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz, and Business and Operations Manager George Trieb. There were five CSD employees in the audience as well as four current CHS students and one alum.

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Lindsey Cox called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Citizen Participation

None.

III. Black Lives Matter Flag

Action

In October, at the request of students in the Social Justice Alliance (SJA), the school board approved flying the Black Lives Matter (BLM) flag at all schools for three months per the district's Flagpole Request Policy. With the flag nearing the end of the three-month period, CHS Principal Andrew Conforti provided the board with an overview of the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work that students and staff members have engaged in this school year, including a recent leadership retreat. Their goal is to develop and propose a framework and action plan for a long-term solution for the BLM flag. They are currently engaging students in the broader school community for additional input, feedback, and support to co-create a solution. The group is working to plan a culminating event to be held at the end of the school year where they will present their plan and celebrate the district's long-term commitment to the BLM flag. Mr. Conforti thanked the SJA and acknowledged their group has been largely responsible with keeping the flag up. He emphasized the importance to empower and embolden their voice by including the support of more students and staff members.

Gloria Kigonya, CHS and SJA alumni appreciated that there will be a ceremony or acknowledgement when the flag eventually comes down and emphasized the importance of not taking it down silently. Student School Board Member Olivia Dallamura echoed Gloria's statement and as a member of the SJA, she also encouraged administrators to allow more time for students to work on the action plan. District DEI Coordinator Jamilah Vogel agreed and said administrators are working to expand opportunities with their partnership with Up for Learning, the organization that helped facilitated the recent Leadership Retreat. Jaelynn Neal, a CHS student and member of the SJA, shared that students in the group have a lot of ideas and are excited to do this work. She noted that the group's members believe deeply in its cause and feel it is important to show up for things

and people that they care about. Olivia added that the flag staying up through the end of the school year is a nod to the progress the group has made so far.

Each board member shared their appreciation for the students and staff members in attendance for sharing their work and speaking about a cause they believe in. They echoed their support for all the statements made during the presentation and voiced their excitement to hear what they develop for the end of the year.

Director Longo moved to raise the Black Lives Matter flag at all CSD schools for an additional three months beginning on January 8, 2023. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Approval of letter of Support for Colchester Recreation Center Project Action

The Town of Colchester recently presented their proposal to build a Colchester Recreation Center on the town-owned land across from CHS. The building will be paid using Local Option Tax (LOT) funds and will not increase taxes. Operating costs will be offset by membership and facility use fees. The Selectboard approved the proposal, and the next step will be to obtain voter approval on Town Meeting Day. The School Board was unanimous in their support for the proposal and agreed to draft a letter of support of the project.

Director Anderson moved to approve the board's letter of support for the Town of Colchester's Recreation Center Project. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Approval of Colchester School District Announced Tuition Rates Action

Each year, districts are required by law to announce their anticipated tuition for students attending Colchester Schools from other districts that do not have a high school or middle school. The majority of tuition students attending CSD are from the Grand Isle Supervisory Union and the town of Georgia.

Director Yousey-Hindes moved to approve the announced tuition rate for FY 2024 at \$13,800 for elementary grades (k-6) and \$19,100 for secondary grades (7-12). The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Second and Final Reading of Animal Dissection Policy: G4 Action

There were no edit made since the first reading.

Director Kigonya moved to approve the second and final reading of the Animal Dissection Policy. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Second and Final Reading of Nondiscriminatory Mascots and School Branding Policy: C2 Action

There were no edit made since the first reading.

Director Anderson moved to approve the second and final reading of the Animal Dissection Policy. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. FY'24 Budget Discussion

Information

At the last meeting, Superintendent Amy Minor and several district administrators provided an in-depth presentation explaining the rationale for various needs throughout the district. The previous presentation included both immediate requests and long-term goals. This presentation outlined the cost associated with those various additions when calculated into the state's funding formula that uses variables such as the dollar yield, income yield, common level of appraisal, and net equalized pupils. Superintendent Minor and Business and Operations Manager George Trieb provided six scenarios with various levels of additions and their associated costs. The first scenario added nothing and only keeps the current level of staffing and programming for students; that results in an estimated tax increase of 2.225% and a 8.56% increase in per pupil spending. The scenarios increased slightly and topped off with adding two support staff positions and 6.4 FTEs which would result in an estimated tax increase of 4.382% and a 10.85% increase in per pupil spending. The board engaged in a discussion on the various factors in the funding formula and recounted the rationale and need for these positions to increase learning and social emotional outcomes for students.

Superintendent Minor noted that the language on the ballot is set by statute and only includes the dollar amount of the budget and the percentage increase in per pupil spending. She highlighted the importance of the district's communication plan that will inform the community, emphasizing that the estimated tax increase is lower than the per pupil spending increase, yet it does not appear on the ballot.

The board discussed the various scenarios and what tax impacts they felt comfortable with; balancing what is best for students while remaining fiscally responsible to taxpayers. Director Yousey-Hindes and Kigonya agreed that it is so important to invest in students considering the intensity of the needs presented at the last meeting. Board Chair Cox agreed but also noted that a failed budget can be detrimental to students, staff morale, and community trust. After a lengthy discussion, the board requested administrators to bring back some amended scenarios and look for other areas that could potentially be reduced to make room for the additions requested. They agreed to add a special meeting to review those new scenarios on Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

IX. Approval of Consent Agenda

Action

The board reviewed the following Consent Agenda. There were no licensed professionals listed, so no action was required by the board.

CONSENT AGENDA

Board Meeting Date: January 3, 2023

Licensed Employees (Teacher/Administrator)

Contract Typ	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
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Non-Licensed Employees (Support Staff), Board Approval Required

Contract Typ	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
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Non-Licensed Employees (Support Staff), Informational

Contract Typ	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
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Support Staff	Courtney	Thibault	New Hire	Behavior Interventionist	35	MBS	Notice of New Hire	Jensen Radner	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Kelsey	Sadewicz	Resignation	HR Coordinator	40	CO	Notice of Resignation			
Support Staff	Catherine	Anderson-Nguyen	Resignation	Spec. Ed Paraeducator	32.5	MBS	Notice of Resignation			
Support Staff	Olivia	Coon	New Hire	Behavior Interventionist	35	MBS	Notice of Hire	Christopher Coleman	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Nicole	Bowen	New Hire	Behavior Interventionist	35	TBD	Notice of Hire for 23/24	TBD	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Joy	Eidsheim	Resignation	Paraeducator	32.5	UMS	Notice of Resignation			

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X. Approval of Meeting Minutes: December 20, 2022 **Action**

Director Longo moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on December 20, 2022. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. Board/Administration Communication, Correspondence, Committee Reports **Information**

- Town Meeting will be held in person in the CHS PAC on Monday, March 2. The School District will present second.

XII. Future Agenda Items **Information**

- FY24 Budget Development
- Continuation of policy review

XIII. Adjournment

Director Anderson moved to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Recorder:

Board Clerk:

Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Ben Yousey-Hindes
Board Clerk

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