

# COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting  
Colchester High School Media Center

Tuesday, August 20, 2024  
7:00 p.m.

## MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, August 20, 2024, in the Colchester High School Media Center. Board members in attendance were Board Chair Lindsey Cox, Directors Nic Longo, Ben Yousey-Hindes, Laurie Kigonya, and Jennifer Fath. District administrators and employees in attendance included Superintendent Amy Minor, Business and Operations Manager George Trieb, Director of Curriculum Gwen Carmolli, and Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz. There was one audience member.

### 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. Presentation of CSD Policy Adoption and Review Cycle

**Information**

Superintendent Amy Minor provided an overview of the school board's responsibility as it pertains to policy governance. The review cycle intends to ensure each policy comes before the board for review approximately once every five years. During the review process, the board considers model policies from the Vermont School Board Association (VSBA), regional and state benchmark policies, the equity policy audit analysis, and input from applicable review teams.

### IV. Approval of Maintenance Truck Purchase

**Action**

Business and Operations Manager George Trieb requested approval to purchase a new maintenance truck. The vehicle it would replace is a 2011 and will no longer pass inspection. The proposed purchase is planned and budgeted for.

*Director Kigonya moved to approve the purchase of a new maintenance truck as recommended. The motion passed unanimously.*

### V. Presentation of School Facility Needs

**Action**

Superintendent Amy Minor and members of the School Board provided a high-level overview of the needs of school facilities in the District. The board has held many retreats over the past year as they worked to reignite action plans laid out by previous boards. Board Chair Lindsey Cox gave a timeline of this work, starting in 2013 when the significant needs of several aging buildings became apparent and started impacting student learning. In 2020, the District consulted with architect and engineering experts, conducted traffic and septic studies, and were preparing for community engagement when the pandemic halted their work. In 2023, the board resumed its work by updating building renovation plans that were previously created, and held engagement sessions and focus groups to get input from students, families, employees, and residents. They signaled that they are now ready to propose a facilities bond to the community. The overarching scope of the project includes some level of infrastructure updates (windows, roofs, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, etc.) to all five schools, with

significant renovation and additions at Union Memorial School, Porters Point School, and Colchester Middle School. Superintendent Minor showed pictures and highlighted the current state of the facilities and the problems that renovations would solve, including the lack of ADA accessibility, safety updates to bring the buildings up to fire codes, and adjusting the main entry points of the school to increase visitor screening and visibility for security. She also highlighted the notes of experts who have examined the buildings and determined that most of the original infrastructure has outlived its useful life and is considered obsolete. Facility reports conclude that the buildings lack insulation, air ventilation, and need new electrical systems and plumbing, among other things. She shared the lack of space in the various buildings, illustrating in photos how many supportive services are provided to students in hallways or closets.

Director Longo shared how monumental this decision has been for the board; however, the increasing need over the last decade has led them to ask the community to provide the funds necessary to address aging infrastructure across the District. He noted that the District is a low-spending district in Vermont, but that designation has resulted in piecemeal facility projects. He stated that the cost of the whole bond project will continue to rise in the coming years. Experts have shared that inflation is leveling off and contractor availability is improving, which makes this an opportune time to consider a bond. Director Longo acknowledged that schools have served the community well for decades, pointing out that several were constructed at the end of World War II. The board is committed to preserving the history of the District and the character of the neighborhood schools with these proposed improvements. The aging facilities are now directly impacting Colchester's students and the employees who are working to provide safe and supportive learning environments. He stressed the board's confidence that this bond represents strategic fiscal responsibility. Doing this work as a single large-scale project will address issues at all five schools in one single bond and ultimately save taxpayers money in the long run.

Director Yousey-Hindes acknowledged the superintendent's overview of the District's current state and shared support for a facilities bond in November. He noted that his support is not blind and that he has listened carefully to the community, district officials, and experts. He is reassured that the District has achieved high-quality education, teaching, support, and learning in the current school buildings. He stated that while it is a significant bond, the renovations and additions would bring the schools up to basic code, make the buildings safe and accessible for all people, and create more space for teaching, learning, and supporting students. He praised the District and past boards for their excellent track record of maintaining the buildings to the best of their ability, but he acknowledged that the facility demands are overwhelming now.

Board Chair Cox shared her experience being on the school board for the last decade during all of the planning that led up to this proposed bond. From her tenure, she stated that the Colchester community truly understands the value of the schools. Even in challenging times, she feels confident that once the community understands the needs, they will come to the same conclusion as the board.

Director Fath noted that she is the board's newest member, having joined in March. She shared that she is a long-time parent in the District with three children having graduated from the high school. She shared that her children will not benefit from the improvements made to facilities but still feels very supportive of it because she knows the schools' important role in the lives of her children. She stated this bond is a way for community members to support future generations and give them a place to come back to raise their own families. She expressed that learning does not just happen in one corner of a classroom; it is in every part of the school, and children deserve to have facilities that reflect what they are capable of.

Director Kigonya echoed Director Fath's comments, sharing that she also had multiple children who graduated from the District and would not experience the renovated facilities. She shared her full

support for the bond and emphasized the due diligence that was put into the proposal. She stated that even though some people may not feel like this is the right time, there is an urgency, and the community should not wait another decade to complete this work. She shared the many ways that community members can get informed about the bond proposal, including visiting a comprehensive website, watching videos, coming to building tours, and hearing in-person and on-demand presentations.

***Director Longo moved to approve the following language be placed on the November 5, 2024 ballot. "Shall the Colchester School Board incur bonded indebtedness for the purpose of districtwide facility renovations and improvements at \$115 million dollars which is the estimated total project cost? The District is responsible for all costs incurred in connection with any borrowing." The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.***

***Director Yousey-Hindes moved to approve the Colchester School District bond ballot language be mailed to all active voters for the November 5, 2024 general election. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.***

## **VI. Approval of Consent Agenda**

**Action**

The board reviewed the following consent agenda.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**REVISED 8/20/2024**

**Board Meeting Date: 8/20/2024**

***Licensed Employees (Teacher/Administrator)***

<b>Contract Type</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>FTE/Hours</b>	<b>Building</b>	<b>Agenda Information</b>	<b>Person Replacing</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Admin Support</b>
Teacher	Danielle	Wolf	LOA	Driver's Ed.	0.1	CHS	Request for LOA 24/25			Y
Teacher	Pat	Phillips	New Hire	Driver's Ed.	0.1	CHS	Request to Hire 1 year only	Danielle Wolf	Y	Y
Teacher	Danielle	Brizzolara	New Hire	Math Teacher	1.0	CHS	Request to Hire	Jaclyn Dixon	Y	Y
Teacher	Casey	Hansen	New Hire	Alternative Education Teacher- Math and Science	1.0	CHS/CAP	Request to Hire	Phil Gulizio	Y	Y
Teacher	Josh	Parker	New Hire	Math Dept. Team Lead	0.2	CHS	Request to Hire	Jaclyn Dixon	Y	Y

***Non-Licensed Employees (Support Staff), Board Approval Required***

<b>Contract Type</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>FTE/Hours</b>	<b>Building</b>	<b>Agenda Information</b>	<b>Person Replacing</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Admin Support</b>
Support Staff	Pamela	Lash	LOA	Paraeducator	32.5	CMS	Request for LOA until 9/9			

***Non-Licensed Employees (Support Staff), Informational***

<b>Contract Type</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>FTE/Hours</b>	<b>Building</b>	<b>Agenda Information</b>	<b>Person Replacing</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Admin Support</b>
Support Staff	Hannah	Ladd	New Hire	Paraeducator	32.5	UMS	Notice of Hire	Jeffrey Pickup	Y	Y
Support Staff	Bryan	Tandy	Resignation	Maintenance	40.0	DW	Notice of Resignation			
Support Staff	Ashley	Klein	New Hire	Paraeducator	32.5	CMS	Notice of Hire		Y	Y
Support Staff	Donna	Thompson	Resignation	Food Service	32.5	MBS	Notice of Resignation			
Support Staff	Kateland	Russell	New Hire	Behavior Interventionist	32.5	UMS	Notice of Hire	Haylee Patch	Y	Y
Support Staff	Deb	Gay	New Hire	Paraeducator	20.0	CMS	Notice of Hire		Y	Y
Support Staff	Shauna	Knapp	Transfer	ML Paraeducator	32.5	PPS	Notice of Transfer	Tina Al-Amoody	Y	Y
Support Staff	David	MacMurtry II	Resignation	Van Driver	32.5	District	Notice of Resignation			
Support Staff	Liubov	Panfilenko	New Hire	Food Service	32.5	CHS and MBS	Notice of Hire	Donna Thompson	Y	Y
Support Staff	Onyx	Johnson	New Hire	Behavior Interventionist	35	MBS	Notice of Hire		Y	Y
Support Staff	Charlton	Whitney	Transfer	Administrative Assistant for Special Education	40	District	Notice of Transfer	Meghan Mead	Y	Y
Support Staff	Hiller	Sherrie	New Hire	Paraeducator	32.5	MBS	Notice of Hire		Y	Y

Support Staff	Everett	Haddock	New Hire	Support Staff	32.5	UMS	Notice of Hire	Melissa Nutting	Y	Y
Support Staff	Alex	Daigneault	New Hire	ML Paraeducator	32.5	CHS	Notice of Hire		Y	Y
Support Staff	Robyn	Terranova	New Hire	Van Driver	32.5	District	Notice of Hire	David MacMurtry	Y	Y
Support Staff	Cleoplace	Munanga	New Hire	Van Driver	32.5	District	Notice of Hire	Charlton Whitney	Y	Y
Support Staff	Xan	West	New Hire	Paraeducator	32.5	PPS or MBS	Notice of Hire		Y	Y
Support Staff	Nicholas	Balsamo	New Hire	Behavior Interventionist	35	MBS	Notice of Hire	Daniel Ralston	Y	Y
Support Staff	Jonathan	Ellwanger	New Hire	Behavior Interventionist	35	UMS	Notice of Hire			
Co-Curricular	Clifford	Collins	New Hire	Freshman Girls Volleyball Coach		CHS	Notice of Hire		Y	Y

There was a personnel item on the agenda that the board requested to discuss further in executive session. The motion was held until after that discussion.

- VII. Approval of Meeting Minutes** **Action**
- **June 18, 2024 (General)**
  - **June 18, 2024 (Special)**
  - **August 12, 2024 (Special)**
  - **August 19, 2024 (Special)**

*Director Kigonya moved to approve the minutes from the meetings held on June 18, August 12, and August 19, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.*

- VIII. Board/Administration Communication, Correspondence, Committee Reports** **Information**
- School starts next week on Monday, August 26.
  - The District is still hiring for several positions.

- IX. Future Agenda Items** **Information**
- Facilities Bond Project
  - School Reports
  - Policy Work

- X. Executive Session to Discuss the Superintendent's Contract and a Personnel Matter** **Action**

*Director Yousey-Hindes moved to enter executive session at 7:59 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter and the superintendent's contract. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Director Kigonya moved to exit executive session at 8:40 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Director Fath moved to approve the licensed employee section of the consent agenda and deny the non-licensed employees section that requires board approval. The motion passed unanimously.*

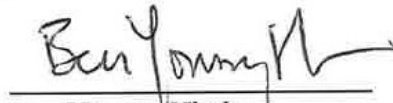
- XI. Adjournment**

*Director Yousey-Hindes moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m.*

Recorder:

  
Meghan Baule  
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:

  
Ben Yousey-Hindes  
Board Clerk