

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Media Center

Tuesday, November 19, 2024
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, November 19, 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 and Instruction Gwen Carmolli, Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz, and Director of Nutrition and Food Services Steve Davis. There were two audience members.

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. Hear Update on Facilities Bond

Information

The board celebrated the successful passage of the facilities bond on the November 5, 2024, ballot. Board Chair Lindsey Cox expressed profound gratitude to the community for its support and emphasized the board's commitment to being responsible stewards of tax dollars. She highlighted the critical contributions of district administrators and the communications team in ensuring that voters were well-informed about the proposal. Board Chair Cox also acknowledged the concerns raised by community members about the financial impact and assured them that the board does not take its responsibility lightly. She affirmed that the investment would be used to benefit students and district facilities for generations to come. Superintendent Amy Minor reflected on the bond approval as a significant milestone, describing it as one of the proudest moments of her tenure. She praised the community's engagement through conversations and tours, emphasizing that the bond represents more than just a financial commitment—it is an investment in creating safe, efficient, and modern spaces for multiple generations of Colchester students. Superintendent Minor reaffirmed the district's responsibility to transparency and efficiency, noting that regular updates on the bond's progress would be shared during board meetings, through social media, newsletters, and the bond website (csdbond.org). The next steps involve meeting with architects to refine project plans and timelines.

IV. Hear Food Services Presentation

Information

Director of Food and Nutrition Services, Steve Davis, provided an overview of the district's food service program, describing its evolution over the past two decades. He highlighted the program's adaptability to changes in nutrition standards, the impact of COVID-19, and the implementation of Universal School Meals. Davis noted the excitement in cafeterias, with over 70% of students participating in the lunch program daily, and emphasized the program's focus on offering healthy, locally sourced meals. Despite financial challenges, including rising food costs, supply chain disruptions, and stringent nutritional requirements, the department prioritizes providing high-quality meals over breaking even. For several years, the school board has supplemented the program using the general operations budget and he made a recommendation for that to continue. This is a common practice in other districts because meal reimbursements from state and federal governments do not

cover all of the program's expenditures. The program is fully staffed, with most employees having over 10 years of service, though competition from neighboring districts offering higher wages remains a challenge. In response to board questions, Davis explained that leftovers are reused whenever possible, shared with families in need, or placed on "share tables." He acknowledged that factors such as cultural preferences, allergies, and a preference for home-packed meals will always prevent some students from eating school meals. Still, they are pleased with the high participation rate, which is continuing to grow. On the topic of Universal School Meals, Davis expressed concern about its uncertain future, noting potential legislative challenges despite advocacy efforts to make it permanent.

V. FY'26 Budget Discussion **Information**

Business and Operations Manager George Trieb presented an initial overview of planning for the FY'26 budget. He outlined a timeline for future meetings, during which the board will review expenditure and revenue items, discuss the baseline budget, and gather input from board members, employees, and the community. Mr. Trieb detailed expected increases across key categories, including salaries, benefits, transportation, food services, supplies, utilities, and technology. He also emphasized the need to maintain existing facilities even as they prepare for renovations at other buildings, highlighting a necessary roof repair at MBS that is currently in the draft FY'26 budget. Supplemental documents provided further insights into the budget assumptions and projected percentage increases in various categories. Superintendent Amy Minor complemented the presentation with an update on enrollment projections based on data from McKibben Demographics. She explained that Colchester's enrollment is expected to grow steadily over the next decade, keeping the district at the upper limits of Vermont's Education Quality Standards for class sizes. Minor also provided historical and projected enrollment data by grade and discussed how tuition students from towns with school choice impact overall enrollment.

VI. Second and Final Reading of Student Freedom of Expression in School-sponsored Media Policy: F36 **Action**

The board adopted changes to the policy to bring it to the current version of the Vermont School Boards Association's model policy.

Director Longo moved to approve the second and final reading of the Student Freedom of Expression in School-sponsored Media Policy: F36. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Second and Final Reading of Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Policy: F10 **Action**

No changes were requested.

Director Kigonya moved to approve the second and final reading of the Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Policy: F10. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Approval of Consent Agenda **Action**

The board reviewed the following consent agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

Board Meeting Date: 11/19/2024

Licensed Employees (Teacher/Administrator)

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Teacher (LTS)	Lucy	Kraus-Cuddy	New Hire	Long Term Substitute Grade 4	1.0	MBS	Notice of Hire	Ari Marks	Yes	Yes

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

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	Hours/Wk	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Support Staff	Xan	West	Leave of Absence	Paraeducator	32.5	MBS	Request for LOA 11/5/24-12/3/24			

Non-Licensed Employees (Support Staff), Informational

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	Hours/Wk	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Support Staff	Chadwick	Cioffi	New Hire	Behavior Interventionist	35.0	CHS	Notice of Hire	N/A	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Phenpitcha	Srisopa	New Hire	ML Paraeducator	32.5	MBS	Notice of Hire	Deena Murphy	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Victoria	Iaria	New Hire	Food Service	26.0	MBS	Notice of Hire	Stacy Vincent	Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Kimberly	Beaudoin	New Hire	Preschool Paraeducator	20.0	MBS EEE	Notice of Hire		Yes	Yes
Support Staff	Michelle	Norton	New Hire	Paraeducator	32.5	PPS	Notice of Hire	Lauren Walker	Yes	Yes

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.

IX. Approval of Meeting Minutes **Action**
• November 5, 2024

Director Yousey-Hindes moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on November 5, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

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

None.

XI. Future Agenda Items **Information**

- School Reports
- FY26 Budget Development
- Policy Work

XII. Executive Session to Discuss Contract Negotiations and a Personnel Matter **Action**

Director Longo moved to enter executive session at 8:27 p.m. to discuss contract negotiations. The motion passed unanimously.

Director Kigonya moved to exit executive session at 9:32 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Director Yousey-Hindes made a motion regarding the consent agenda to approve the licensed section and deny the non-licensed section. The motion passed unanimously.

XIII. Adjournment

Director Fath moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:34 p.m.

Recorder:

Board Clerk:

Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Ben Yousey-Hindes
Board Clerk