

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Media Center

Tuesday, January 21, 2025
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, 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, 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. Approval of FY'26 Budget and Warning

Action

Superintendent Amy Minor provided a recap of the previous budget presentations, including stable enrollment, key term definitions used in the state's education funding formula, and how the variables impact the local estimated tax rate. She outlined top priorities for the FY'26 budget, including maintaining resources to support multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) in academics, social-emotional learning, and inclusion; adhering to Vermont Education Quality Standards for class sizes; prioritizing early literacy and mathematics proficiency; continuing co-curricular activities; protecting services for the district's most vulnerable students and families; exploring system efficiencies to ensure fiscal responsibility; and retaining current levels of professional staffing while monitoring future needs identified by school principals.

The board supported the budget priorities outlined by administrators. Based on that feedback at the previous meeting, the board decided to cut 14 support staff positions. This results in a proposed budget of \$64,889,466 and an estimated tax increase of 3.01%. The major drivers of the budget are salaries, the state mandated district contributions to employee health benefit increase of 11.9%, the bond payment, out of district placements, the food services fund transfer, and transportation.

Superintendent Minor noted that Vermont's Tax Commissioner forecasted that the estimated school tax increase across the state would be 5.9% and the district is below that prediction.

Superintendent Minor then went over the impact of the dollar yield, a component set by the state that significantly impacts the local tax rate. She noted that each year, the dollar yield is set by the legislators at the end of the legislative session. This is a key variable in the funding formula that the district does not have local control over. Superintendent Minor showed what would happen if the state decided to change the dollar yield by \$100 or \$200, which would raise the estimated tax rate. Superintendent Minor noted that in both scenarios the estimated tax rate would still be below the 5.9% increase predicted by the tax commission in the December 1 letter. If the dollar yield rises, then the estimated tax rate to Colchester tax payers would be lower than the estimated 3.01%. She emphasized

that the district does not know if the state will change the yield but felt it was important for the board to know the possibility exists.

Director Longo moved to adopt a budget of \$64,889,466 for the support and operation of the Colchester School District for the year beginning July 1, 2025.

IV. Approval of Central Office Lease

Action

The Colchester School District's Central Office is located at 59 Rathe Road in a rental space. This lease is due to expire at the end of February. Business Manager George Trieb shared the details of the lease and recommended that it be renewed for another three years. Superintendent Amy Minor shared that the rental space has worked well for district personnel. The old Central Office located at 131 Laker Lane is now the home of the Colchester Alternative Program and its proximity to CHS has increased opportunities for students. The long-term plan would be to bring Central Office back to the main campus.

Director Kigonya moved to authorize the business manager to sign a 3-year lease for rental space to house the district's central office personnel as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Approval of Consent Agenda

Action

The board reviewed the following consent agenda and requested to discuss a portion of it in executive session before making a motion.

- VI. Approval of Meeting Minutes** **Action**
- January 7, 2025
 - January 14, 2025

Director Yousey-Hindes moved to approve both sets of minutes from the January 7, 2025 and January 14, 2025 with the corrections as noted. The motion passed unanimously.

- VII. Board/Administration Communication, Correspondence, Committee Reports** **Information**
- The PPS and UMS renovation teams will be touring Winooski Schools this Friday.

- VIII. Future Agenda Items** **Information**
- School Reports
 - FY26 Budget Development
 - Weapons and Firearms Policy

- IX. Executive Session to Discuss Contract Negotiations** **Action**
- Director Kigonya moved to enter executive session to discuss contract negotiations and a personnel matter. The motion passed unanimously.*

Director Kigonya moved to exit executive session at 8:27 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Director Yousey-Hindes moved to approve the licensed employee section of the consent agenda and to deny the support staff section of the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

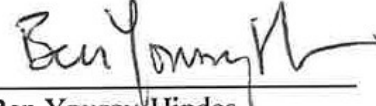
- X. Adjournment**

Director Longo moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Recorder:


Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:


Ben Yousey-Hindes
Board Clerk