



Colchester Board of Education Special Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, January 29, 2015
Time: 7:00 PM
Place: William J Johnston Middle School
Library Media Center

Board Members Present: Ronald Goldstein, Donald Kennedy, Brad Bernier, Michael Voiland, Mike Egan, Mary Tomasi, Student members Mitchell Hallee and Lauren Hickey

Board Members Absent: Mitchell Koziol

Administration Present: Superintendent Jeff Mathieu, Interim Principal Don Gates, Principal Chris Bennett, Principal Deb Sandberg, Interim Principal Amity Goss, Director of Teaching and Learning Barbara Gilbert, Director of Pupil Services Kathie Shaughnessy, Chief Financial Officer N. Maggie Cosgrove, Director of Educational Operations Ken Jackson, Board of Finance Vice Chairman Rob Esteve

1. Call to Order

Chairman Ronald Goldstein called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

2. Citizen Comments

None

3. Additions to the Agenda by the Board of Education

Erroneously included on agenda (this is a Special Meeting)

4. Citizen Comments on Additions to the Agenda

N/A

5. Communications/Correspondence

None

6. Technology Grant Application (Handout Provided)

Director Gilbert presented grant goals and technology requests for the CSDE Technology Grant. The grant application is for \$411,927; with a 31.9% cost share of the district. Director Gilbert will submit the application for the February 13, 2015 due date, to be awarded in May and utilized June 1, 2015-June 1, 2016. The district cost share has been included in the Superintendent's Proposed Budget.

Motion by: D. Kennedy

To approve submission of the Technology Grant application as presented by Director Gilbert.

Seconded by: M. Tomasi

Vote: Unanimous for approval

7. 2015-2016 Proposed Superintendent Education Budget Overview

Superintendent Mathieu presented his proposed budget for Colchester Public Schools, with the theme “Engagement: Together We Can.” The theme was introduced at staff convocation in August. Social media is being used as a method of increasing parent and community awareness. The CPS At-A-Glance is continually updated, with recent testing results added, and is available on the district website. The Superintendent informed the Board that he added education mandates to Section 7 of the proposed budget packet. Superintendent Mathieu highlighted a 2013 study completed by the Yankee Institute for Public Policy which ranked Colchester Public Schools as the most efficient of the 111 Connecticut school districts they surveyed for educating students. The proposed budget has an increase of \$333,575, which is a 0.84% increase over the current year. This proposed increase represents the lowest in many years.

The Superintendent then provided details of the proposed budget. He explained that the reduction in transportation costs was due to the elimination of one bus. Insurance costs are lower as are legal fees. There has been an increase in private tuition for special education student placements. There was no change in capital outlay, in response to the Board’s commitment to continue to fund capital. There was also a reallocation in staffing to help fund an increase from a contracted part-time to a District employed full-time Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), requiring an additional funding of \$34,768 from the 2015-2016 budget (see below for additional information on this position that was provided by Director Shaughnessy during her presentation). Due to the C3 anticipated grant reduction from the Graustein Memorial Fund, additional funds (\$10,000) were requested for the Early Childhood Coordinator. Superintendent Mathieu stated that this budget is a responsible budget. While making data-based decisions and continuing to improve student performance, it will also continue to move the district forward. The Superintendent then showed a video, created by Bacon Academy’s Video Productions 2 class, which highlighted each school’s accomplishments.

- Director of Teaching and Learning Barbara Gilbert presented the Curriculum and Instruction Budget. Highlighted were reductions to costs for library databases, as the state is now offering these databases as part of iCONN. Curriculum focus areas for 2015-16 are social studies, science, and math to meet new standards. Professional development opportunities highlighted are for AP Physics, US History, and new course AP European History. The technology portion consisted of one time expenditures that may be augmented with the CSDE Technology Grant to fund wireless improvement, thin clients, replacement projectors, servers, and iPad and Chromebook carts, among other items.
- Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Katherine Shaughnessy presented the Special Education budget. In the past decade the number of Colchester students requiring special education has remained about the same, with only a slight increase. Currently 21% of students receive these services. The average rate across our District Reference Group is 20.9%. State Agency Placements have increased for the 2015-2016 school year. Proposed is an increase in the Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) to a full-time district-wide position; we currently fund a contracted behavior analyst one day a week for the entire district. A BCBA would observe and conduct an assessment of students identified and then interpret results. He/she would then develop a behavior intervention plan and then teach educators how to implement the plan.
- Director of Facilities and Operations Kendall Jackson reviewed the Facilities budget. The majority of accounts reflect a zero increase. Electricity generation rate locked in at .0871

for three years. Although the rate has gone down, the delivery fee has increased. Fuel oil was locked in at \$2.90/gallon for one year. Director Jackson pointed out that due to declining student population there was a reduction in transportation due to the elimination of one bus. The capital funding level has remained the same as this current year at \$259,430. Director Jackson recommended setting aside \$100,000 of that allocation with the town in a long-term capital reserve account to provide funding for needs identified in the Town/BOE Capital Plan released last year.

Discussion followed with Board members. Chairman Goldstein asked for questions and comments from citizens.

8. Chairman's Report: Budget Communication Plan

Chairman Goldstein announced that the budget presentation and information would be available on the district website. Once approved, the Board of Education will present the budget to the Board of Finance on March 3, 2015. There will be more discussion on how to reach out to community groups to communicate information about the budget at the next meeting.

9. Citizen Comments

None

10. Executive Session

Motion by: D. Kennedy

To move into executive session to discuss item 10.1 and invite Superintendent Mathieu.

Seconded by: M. Tomasi

Vote: Unanimous for approval. Time 9:02pm

10.1 Discussion Concerning ratification of Contract between the Colchester Board of Education and the Colchester Board of Education Nurses, United Public Service Employees Union (UPSEU)

Chairman Goldstein brought the Board out of Executive Session at 9:10 pm.

11. *Possible Action Concerning Ratification of Contract between the Colchester Board of Education and the Colchester Board of Education Nurses, United Public Service Employees Union (UPSEU)

Motion by: D. Kennedy

To ratify the above stated contract, as proposed.

Seconded by: B. Bernier

Vote: Unanimous for approval.

12. Adjournment

Motion by: D. Kennedy

To adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by: M. Tomasi

Vote: Unanimous for approval.

Chairman Goldstein adjourned the meeting at 9:12 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michele Morgan
Recording Secretary