

# BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION

January 25, 2021

## MINUTES

### REGULAR MEETING

Attendance: Julia Dennis  
Steven Jenkins – Arrived at 6:03 p.m.  
Jaymee Miller - Absent  
Timothy Oakes  
Mark Pruzin  
Adam Salina  
Kari Sassu, Ph.D.  
Tracy Sisti  
Stephen Weber  
Student Representatives: Ryan McGowan  
Lindsey Leary

Also in attendance: Superintendent of Schools Brian J. Benigni; Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Erin McGurk; Director of Business Operations Jeffrey Cugno; Finance Director Ashley Dorsey; Director of Human Resources Denise Parsons; Principal of Berlin High School Eileen Eustis; Principal of McGee Middle School Salvatore Urso; Lead Teacher of Griswold School Cara Quinn; Principal of Hubbard School Alfred Souza; Principal of Willard School Megan Sirois; and K-12 Physical Education Health Coordinator David Francalanga.

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Dennis called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. in the Dr. Robert P. Long auditorium at Berlin High School, 139 Patterson Way, Berlin, Connecticut. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. A moment of silence was held to honor Fred Russo, retired Berlin High School Science teacher, who recently passed away.

#### **II. NEW BUSINESS**

Policy Review/Revision – Second Reading/Adoption – Revised Policy #9085 – Time, Place and Notice of Meetings

A second reading of revised Policy #9085 took place. Revisions have been made to this policy to reflect action taken by the Board at its meeting on December 14, 2020, to have one regular meeting per month, generally on the second Monday of each month, beginning in February 2021. A first reading took place at the January 11 Board meeting.

**Moved by Mr. Salina, seconded by Mr. Pruzin, that the Board adopt revised Policy #9085, as presented.**

**FAVOR: ALL**

**MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Dennis**

**III. BOARD WORKSHOP**

Discussion of the Superintendent's Proposed Budget for 2021-2022

The Board discussed the Superintendent's Proposed Budget for 2021-2022, which was presented to the Board at meetings on January 11 and 13. Ms. Dennis thanked Superintendent Benigni for proposing a fiscally responsible budget during this difficult time.

Superintendent Benigni stated his proposed budget was designed to preserve staff and programs to maintain favorable class sizes and course offerings at the high school. There are requirements that need to be maintained at the high school in terms of graduation as well as statutory requirements for Special Education.

In response to Mr. Salina's question if the proposed budget provides adequate funding for personnel and transportation for the summer school program, Superintendent Benigni stated his proposed budget does not contain COVID precautions, and if there is still a need, to the same degree as last year, the contingency CHOICE funds will be needed.

Mr. Salina thanked the administration for the work they have done with technology over the past several years and acknowledged, if not for the budgeting and acquisition of technology, the district would not be able to have distance learning at the capacity it is right now. Mr. Salina stated, considering COVID and the current financial situation, the overall requested increase of 4.56% is a large amount; however, considering the only new staff being proposed are three paraprofessionals, many line items are a flat increase, recurring contractual obligations are the largest impact on the proposed budget and the Special Education programs to keep students in district, he does not have any issue and is comfortable with the Superintendent's proposed budget.

Mr. Jenkins applauded Superintendent Benigni and the administration for their commitment to students and learning and for the increase in staff that support the social and emotional needs of students.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

**At 6:12 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Pruzin, seconded by Mr. Jenkins, to adjourn.**

**FAVOR: ALL**

**MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Dennis**

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy Sisti, Secretary, Berlin Board of Education