

**BERLIN BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**February 10, 2020**  
**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING**

Attendance: Richard Aroian  
Julia Dennis  
Mary Ellen Maloney  
Jaymee Miller - Absent  
Timothy Oakes  
Adam Salina  
Kari Sassu, Ph.D.  
Tracy Sisti  
Matthew Tencza  
Student Representatives: Jenna Smalley  
Ryan McGowan

Also in attendance: Superintendent of Schools Brian J. Benigni; Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Erin McGurk; Director of Business Operations Jeffrey Cugno; Director of Pupil Personnel Services Linda Holian; and Director of Human Resources Denise Parsons.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. in the Berlin High School Auditorium at 139 Patterson Way, Berlin, Connecticut. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**II. COMMITTEE REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE TO THE BOARD**

A. Report of Student Representatives

Miss Smalley reported the Elective Expo for incoming freshman and parents will be held on February 26, 2020; last week Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Commissioner of the Department of Education, visited Berlin High School, Berlin grounds and attended classes; and the ADL's Truth About Hate Program will be held for freshman and sophomores on February 12, 2020. Miss Smalley provided sports highlights for girls basketball, girls indoor track and boys basketball.

Mr. McGowan reported the Rho Kappa Social Studies Honor Society Induction will be held on February 20, 2020; tickets are on sale for *Les Miserables*; and recently, three students in the Junior Achievement Club placed first in the entrepreneur challenge.

B. Committee Reports

Ms. Dennis reported the Community Engagement Committee met on January 30, 2020 and discussed various ways of communicating with the public, such as revisiting social media, meet and greet at local businesses, website, *Berlin Citizen* columns, PTOs, and other venues to share information and talked about other topics that can be discussed in the *Berlin Citizen* column. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for this Wednesday afternoon.

Ms. Sisti reported Arby's has reached out to the Committee and offered to supply coffee and cookies. Since then, other businesses have also reached out. The Board discussed which day of the week and time the Board would prefer to host the meet and greet. The Committee will report back after their next meeting with available weekend dates.

Mr. Tencza reported the Finance and Operations Committee met on February 3, 2020 and reviewed Superintendent Benigni's recommendations to meet the Board's request to reduce his Proposed Budget for 2020-2021 by \$500,000. The Committee also discussed the close out of the Berlin High school renovation project, the discrepancy of where the ductwork actually stands, whether or not the Board should agree to close out the project and whether a firm should be hired to look at the ductwork and report its findings and recommendations.

C. CREC Report

Ms. Sisti reported the Capital Region Education Council will meet Thursday after the Legislative Breakfast.

D. Correspondence to the Board

Mr. Oakes reported on his opportunity yesterday to be a speaker at the Southern New England Advocacy Conference at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

**III. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS**

Nothing to report.

**IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Approval of Minutes
  - 1. Regular Meeting of January 13, 2020
  - 2. Regular Meeting of January 27, 2020
  - 3. Special Meeting of January 15, 2020
- B. Monthly Budget Report – Period ending January 31, 2020
- C. Overnight Field Trip Requests – Berlin High School
  - 1. Hartford & Farmington, CT – March 13-15, 2020

Berlin High School Principal Eileen Eustis requested permission for approximately 15 students to attend the Youth & Government State Conference in Hartford on March 13-15, 2020. Participants will become immersed in all aspects of the political and legislative process by participating in a mock legislative session using the Connecticut State Capitol and Legislative Office Building. They will experience being elected officials, senators, representatives, press corps members, or lobbyists. Overnight accommodations for the three-day event will be at the Hartford Marriott in Farmington.

- 2. Maryville, TN – April 11-18, 2020

Berlin High School Principal Eileen Eustis requested permission for twelve students to participate in the Habitat for Humanity Spring Break Build in Maryville, TN, on April 11-18, 2020 (April break), to work with Habitat for Humanity to build houses for people in need.

**Moved by Mr. Oakes, seconded by Mr. Salina, to approve the consent agenda as presented.**

**FAVOR: ALL**

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

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Facilities Related Updates**

Director of Business Operations Jeffrey Cugno reported the third round of the security grant, which was revised as the needs of the district have changed since the application was made two and one half years ago, was approved by the State on January 28, 2020.

Mr. Cugno reported in 2013 Friar Associates completed a facilities study of all schools and included in the study is the lavatories for the elementary schools and McGee Middle School. Friar Associates will be providing an update to that study. Mr. Cugno reported he will be securing cost estimates to improve the Griswold lavatories, and in the coming week, Griswold's lavatories will be inspected to provide additional maintenance quickly to get those facilities in better shape. In response to Mr. Aroian's question if the issues are just maintenance or rebuilding and reconstruction, Mr. Cugno responded, it is both. In response to Mr. Aroian's question if the Board will have the cost estimates for discussion for next year's budget process, Mr. Cugno responded that is the plan, and he anticipates to have them by the end of this year in the event there are excess funds available.

**B. Discussion – Close Out of the BHS Renovation Project**

Mr. Tencza reported, in order to close out the Berlin High School Renovation Project, it is important for the Board to know there is approximately \$4.3 million in total, with \$3 million in reimbursement from the State and \$1.3 million left over from the original project. The Town would like to close out the project to have access to those funds; however, there are concerns about the ductwork on the roof of the building. Also, in the event the Board found the ductwork to be 100% acceptable, there may have been an opportunity to improve the field in the back by moving it from a grass field to a turf field with the \$1.3 million.

Mr. Salina reported on the January 23, 2020 meeting that consisted of the Town Manager, representatives from the Public Building Commission (PBC) and the Board of Finance, Mayor Mark Kaczynski, Jeffrey Cugno and himself, regarding the close out of the high school project. Mr. Salina reported, at that meeting, he expressed the Board's concerns with the ductwork and reported the PBC representatives were clear they believe the ductwork was fine. Mr. Salina believes everyone is on the same page in wanting to close out the project as quickly as possible but understands the project cannot be closed out unless the ductwork is adequate and will last. Mr. Salina acknowledged the potential motion on the agenda and suggested the Board hold off on that motion as the mindset is to reconvene with the same group of individuals to understand what needs to happen and to work cooperatively to determine, if need be, who will contract the third party to inspect the ductwork and come up with a recommendation to resolve the ductwork.

In response to Mr. Aroian's question if there is anything else other than the ductwork that is a major issue, Mr. Salina responded all punch list items, integral to the actual project, have all been completed, and it is only the ductwork.

C. Review and Possible Adoption of the Proposed Board of Education Budget for 2020-2021

The Board of Education has reviewed and discussed the Superintendent's Proposed Budget for 2020-2021. The Board met on January 27 to review the budget details, including information from presentations by central office administration. Earlier this evening, the Board held an informational meeting for the public so community members could provide input on the budget prior to approval. The Board of Education and the Board of Finance will hold a joint meeting on March 4 to discuss the budget.

**Moved by Mr. Salina, seconded by Mr. Tencza, to adopt the Board of Education Operating Budget for 2020-2021 in the amount of \$47,387,504.**

Mr. Tencza remarked the parent comments made earlier this evening at the informational meeting, concerning the ice hockey program, do not provide any reason to delay adoption of the 2020-2021 Operating Budget. Mr. Aroian requested Superintendent Benigni gather additional information regarding the program. Ms. Maloney reported she spoke with the parents, following the informational meeting, and asked that they send her an email with the information they have, which will be shared with all Board members.

Mr. Tencza provided historical information concerning the 2019-2020 adopted budget.

**FAVOR: ALL**  
**MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Aroian**

**Moved by Mr. Oakes, seconded by Mr. Tencza, to take from the table the item from the January 13, 2020 meeting regarding the 180<sup>th</sup>/181<sup>st</sup> day.**

Mr. Oakes indicated this item was originally tabled at the January 13, 2020 meeting, and for discussion, the purpose of taking this action, in this manner, is Parliamentary Procedure. If the item is not acted on during this meeting, the item will die.

**FAVOR: ALL**  
**MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Aroian**

**Moved by Mr. Oakes, seconded by Mr. Tencza, to postpone the discussion and action regarding making the 180<sup>th</sup> day a half-day for students and the 181<sup>st</sup> day a full-day for professional development for the teachers.**

Mr. Oakes indicated the action of a postponement creates an indefinite capability; therefore, the possibility remains if the Board wishes to revisit this item.

**FAVOR: ALL**  
**MOTION CARRIED: 8:0; including President Aroian**

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

**At 7:36 p.m., a motion was made by Ms. Dennis, seconded by Mr. Salina, to adjourn.**

**FAVOR: ALL**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Dennis, Secretary Berlin Board of Education