

WILLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

January 10, 2023
Virtual Meeting: Zoom
7:00 p.m.
Minutes
Zoom Recorded

Members Present (all present remotely through Zoom)

Ann Grosjean- Vice-Chair
Herb Arico - Secretary
Tracey Anderson
Laura Rodriguez
Donna Cook

Member Absent

Michelle Doucette Cunningham - Chair
Briana Ross

Also Present

Phil Stevens, Superintendent of Schools, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Erin Conley, 7th grade science teacher at Hall School, Katie Rychling and members of the public.

1. Call to order

A. Grosjean called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

A. Grosjean led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Present to speak

Arthur Christensen, 14 Birch Meadow Lane, thanked Superintendent Stevens for presenting the three projects to the ARPA commission last night. He hoped all three would be passed.

Nick Tella, 49 Mirtl Rd, inquired for the board of education to look into the costs of the upgrades for the schools as the school building committee continues to state it will cost too much and that it is not in their charge. He stated that he believed these numbers should be shared with the public. He explained how he would like to see the upgrades happen.

4. Chairman's report

None.

5. Communications

Ralph Tulis-regarding meeting minutes missing from the town website.

6. Old Business

a. Field Trip Update: Proposal for 8th Grade field trip to Washington DC

Mary Kay Tshonas, the principal at HMS gave an updated presentation regarding the 8th-grade field trip to Washington, DC.

D. Cook inquired about food allergies, extra food available on the bus, and ways to raise money.

A. Grosjean moved to approve a field trip for the 8th-grade class to Washington, DC in June 2023.

T. Anderson seconded the motion.

D. Cook inquired about any contingencies being put into motion.

A. Grosjean explained why the motion could be as stated for now.

5 yes, the motion passes unanimously

7. Superintendent Report

a. General update

Superintendent Stevens shared how a prior board of education member, David Tharp had passed away unexpectedly and that they are sending their condolences to his family. He discussed the flood they had on Christmas Day at Center School. He also addressed the meeting that took place last night regarding the ARPA submissions. He wanted to remind everyone about the budget workshop that is coming up on Tuesday, January 17th at 6 pm. He shared all the future dates as well. He shared his efforts with the School Building Committee and all the presentations that have taken place and reminded everyone of the meeting at Center School on Wednesday, January 11th at 6:30 pm. He shared there would be pizza and childcare. Also, he will be at the Transfer Station sharing information regarding the school project as well. It is hoped that the SBC will make a decision by February 1st on which project they want the town to vote on.

b. Staffing

Superintendent Stevens discussed the hiring of the 4th-grade teacher, Madeleine Gallo. Also, Michelle Shine who taught 4th grade is now going to the Middle School to teach math.

c. Plumbing

Superintendent Stevens updated everyone on what they were using the approved plumbing funds for throughout the schools.

D. Cook requested for Superintendent Stevens to identify the items that are contractual in the budget to help with the process. She also expressed concern about leaking sewage pipes. She would like things like that to be brought to the board's attention sooner than later. She also discussed her concern that a newer unit is having issues and wanted to know if all the units are being looked at.

Superintendent Stevens explained when they choose a long-term or short-term fix. Sometimes it depends on the funds and when they are available. He reassured D. Cook that it's not like running sewage. He also explained how they are looking at the systems and piping options and trying to be proactive.

A. Grosjean explained that this is exactly why the School Building Committee is working hard to create a more updated and efficient learning environment for their students.

8. Financial Report

a. January 2023 financial report

Attachment #1

Superintendent Stevens shared the January financial report. He explained that it stayed pretty consistent and that the only major change was in special education.

9. New Business

a. Approve minutes 12.13.22 meeting

Attachment #2

H. Arico moved to approve the regular meeting minutes from December 13, 2022.

L. Rodriguez seconded the motion.

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstain
D. Cook			x
H. Arico	x		
T. Anderson	x		
A. Grosjean	x		
L. Rodriguez	x		

4 yes, 0 no, 1 abstain, motion passes.

b. Approve minutes of the 12.15.22 meeting

Attachment #3

L. Rodriguez moved to approve the curriculum meeting minutes from December 15, 2022.

T. Anderson seconded the motion.

Vote:	Yes	No	Abstain
D. Cook			x
H. Arico	x		
T. Anderson	x		
A. Grosjean	x		
L. Rodriguez	x		

4 yes, 0 no, 1 abstain, motion passes.

c. Science curriculum first reading

Superintendent Steven discussed what the curriculum committee had been working on and that it had been sent to the board to review. Dr. Conley shared an overview of the science curriculum. This included numerous links that will be shared on their website for parents, families, and community members. Katie Rychling who is a 7th-grade science teacher at Hall School shared her experience with the science curriculum.

L. Rodriguez discussed her experience with this type of science curriculum, how successful it is, and how much she appreciates it.

The Board discussed; their excitement for this curriculum, how it covers the standards, the ability to reach all students and their needs, the vocabulary throughout the curriculum, and the assessment process.

Superintendent Stevens suggested if anyone on the board had specific questions to email them to him.

d. 2023-2024 BOE calendar of meetings

Attachment #4

Superintendent Stevens shared the calendar for future meetings for the BOE.

A. Grosjean moved to approve the Willington Board of Education calendar of meeting dates for the 2023/2024 school year.

H. Arico seconded the motion.

D. Cook inquired about the April meeting being during school vacation week and if it should be rescheduled.

A. Grosjean shared that with the meetings being on Zoom she felt it was easier to meet.

5 yes, the motion passes unanimously

e. 2023-2024 Willington Public Schools calendar

Attachment #5

Superintendent Stevens shared the draft for the 2023-2024 school calendar. He discussed early release days, professional development days, the first and last day of school, and April vacation dates.

D. Cook inquired about the May staff development day and the timing and then not having any in April. She also wanted to know how having childcare during these days was received this year.

Superintendent Stevens explained what would take place during these days. He also explained the childcare was never maxed out but thought it should be able to continue if needed. He also shares this with the unions for more input.

The Board did not have any changes that they wanted to make. They discussed providing childcare for the Friday early release days. They also discussed the meet and greet before school starts and it taking place in both schools.

10. Old Business

a. Emergency leave

A. Grosjean moved to go into an executive session to discuss an emergency leave and invite the Superintendent.

L. Rodriguez seconded the motion.

5 yes, the motion passes unanimously

Executive session began at 8:42 pm

Executive session ended at 8:57 pm

A. Grosjean moved to approve a continuation of Christine Colenbaugh's emergency leave until the next board meeting on February 14, 2023.

D. Cook seconded the motion.

5 yes, the motion passes unanimously

b. Free breakfast/lunch extension

Superintendent Stevens discussed the process they need to do when ending the free breakfast/lunch option. The extension funds were approved through the end of February. He discussed the unused funds and that he felt they should be used to extend this service again. He is hoping it can continue to be extended.

A. Grosjean moved to extend the free breakfast and lunch program free to all students through April 2023.

H. Arico seconded the motion.

The Board discussed how much net a month this costs and it was stated to be about \$30,000.

5 yes, motion passes unanimously.

11. Present to Speak

Michelle Christensen, 14 Birch Meadow Lane, thanked D. Cook for bringing the current state of the school to everyone's attention. She stated she appreciated and supported the SBC and their need to address a new or updated school. But she explained that doesn't excuse the current state of the schools. She expressed her concerns about the environmental safety of the schools, especially for the health of the students.

12. Board Comment

H. Arico thanked Erin for her presentation on the science curriculum and he looks forward to further discussions about it. He also wanted to recognize Phil Stevens for his hard work with the new school and he stated he hopes for a good turnout at the sessions they are going to be having. He felt there were many people in town that didn't know anything about the new school or what the projects might be. He discussed the budget process and was hoping for an advance copy to look

over. He understood that can be difficult.

L. Rodriguez thanked Erin and Katie for their science presentation and she is very excited about it. She also wanted to thank Matt, Shawn, and Phil for their efforts with the flood on Christmas Day. She also wanted to welcome Madeleine Gallo as the new 4th-grade teacher. She wished everyone a Happy New Year.

T. Anderson echoed what had been so far. She also wanted to thank Mary Kay for an update regarding the 8th-grade trip.

D. Cook wished everyone a Happy New Year. She also wanted to request a meeting with Tammy Nuccio and Jeff Gordon as they help towns get money. Since Willington will be needing lots of money whether they; fix what they have, renovate Hall, or build new it would be prudent to have somebody that might have some power. Maybe they could hear what everyone was thinking and give some guidance. She felt it would be good to know gross and net reimbursement should neither of the SBC projects get approved. She also inquired once again about the sex education curriculum. The email she received regarding this was very general and did not have the detailed information she was looking for. She also expressed her appreciation for all the efforts that went into the science curriculum. She stated that she had a lot of fun looking into the experiments and felt that after seeing on YouTube the elephant toothpaste experiment, it should be done outside. She then suggested having a family science experiment night might be a fun idea for the kids to show off what they are learning. This way parents and community members can see what they are learning.

A. Grosjean wanted to thank Phil, Shawn, and Matt for Christmas Day. She felt it was above and beyond the call of duty. She also wanted to send her condolences to the Tharp family for their loss. She wanted to thank Katie, Erin, and Mark Kay for presenting tonight.

13. **Adjournment**

A. Grosjean made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 p.m.

H. Arico seconded the motion.

5 yes, motion passes unanimously.

Nicole Fusco
Recording Secretary

Next regular meeting February 14, 2023

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