

**Willington Board of Education**  
**July 24, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Town Office Building, Lower Level Meeting Room**

Audio Recording      yes  
Notes Taken            yes

**Members present at meeting:**

Tracey Anderson  
Herb Arico  
Chiara Bambara  
Michelle Doucette Cunningham  
Ann Grosjean  
Elena Testa

Also present: Superintendent of Schools Phil Stevens

**1. Call to Order** at 7:03 p.m. by M. Doucette Cunningham.

**2. Present to Speak**

M. Doucette Cunningham stated that there would be an additional time to speak later in the meeting and asked for comments regarding the board vacancy be held until the board was ready to address that issue. No comments at this time.

**3. Communications**

Received the resignation of board member Marybeth Wallett effective 6/29/18.  
Received a letter from Stephanie Summers nominating herself for the open seat on the Board of Education. Also received two letters supporting the nomination of Joy Wrona.

**4. New Business**

**A.** Approve Candidate for the Center Elementary School Principal Position

P. Stevens thanked the administrative team and search committee for their work during the search process. He introduced Jen DeRagon as the finalist for the Center Elementary School position and shared her background.

**Motion** by A. Grosjean to approve the hiring of Jen DeRagon as the principal of Center Elementary School.

Seconded by C. Bambara.

<b>VOTE:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain
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Tracey Anderson	X	----	----
Herb Arico	X	----	----
Chiara Bambara	X	----	----
Michelle Doucette Cunningham	X	----	----
Ann Grosjean	X	----	----
Elena Testa	X	----	----

**Motion** passed

## **5. Board of Education Chairman's Report - none**

## **6. Superintendent Reports**

Teacher Retirement/Resignation:

Connie Wilde retired after 30 years in Willington. Ashley Springsteen resigned. P. Stevens thanked both teachers for their service.

New Staff:

Tracie Canistrari was hired as the HMS Band teacher. Alison Spector was hired as the art teacher. James Blustein was hired to teach 6<sup>th</sup> grade math. April Basch was hired to teach 6<sup>th</sup> grade SS/Science. There are still two positions open - CES .050 FTE Spanish teacher and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math.

HMS Oil Tank:

We have received grant approval from the state. P. Stevens, Business Manager Donna Latincsics, and an engineer will be going to a required meeting tomorrow regarding the oil tank. Receiving permission for the project should take about 6 weeks. After permission is received the oil tank can be ordered. It will take another 6 weeks for the oil tank to arrive. The estimated timeline for putting in the oil tank is October.

Edutrak Update:

We are in the final stage of setting up the Edutrak system for online bill pay. Information will be shared with parents in a letter being sent out in August.

CIP Projects:

The Board of Finance approved a total amount that is less than the amount needed for all of the projects. We have to complete the work in the boiler room as a first priority, and then use the balance of the money for the classroom ventilator project. However, we have to provide air conditioning in two classrooms per special education requirements. The school has some portable air conditioners that were being moved around, but they are ineffective. Phil Stevens got an estimate from one company on a dual heating/cooling unit for six classrooms. Phil shared that information with the Board of Finance. The Board of Finance asked for more information about the efficiency of proposed solution.

Magnet School Enrollment:

Currently looking at nine students in the district going to magnet schools next year. Last year four students were at magnet school. Willington is responsible to pay the tuition up to a certain dollar amount. There will be a budget shortfall in this area. A transfer will be needed to fill the void. Phil Stevens offered to survey parents to get more information about why they are choosing magnet school over Willington schools.

**CABE Conference:**

Phil Stevens plans to attend the CABE conference and encouraged the board members to do the same.

**Policy Series 6000, Instruction:**

Phil Stevens has not reviewed the Series 6000 yet. Will move this topic to the August meeting.

**7. Financial Reports:**

Attachment # 1

Working on closing the books for fiscal year 17-18. There is a remaining balance of about a tenth of a percent. Some items are still being finalized. FY18-19 is a lean budget year. It might make sense to ask the Board of Finance to approve putting the balance into a non-lapsing account.

**8. Committee Reports- none**

**9. New Business (continued)**

**B. Approve Filling Board Vacancy**

M. Doucette Cunningham opened the meeting for those present to speak regarding the board vacancy.

Robert Jellen, 38 Lucerne Dr, would like to support the nomination of Stephanie Summers. Stephanie is an active member of the Democratic Town Committee and would bring a positive perspective to the Board of Education.

John Blessington, 29 Mason Rd, spoke about a town tradition in which the party that had captured the seat in the last election would be able to name the replacement. He suggested that the tradition be upheld and that the seat be filled by the Sentinel party.

Matthew Clark, 42 Burt Latham Rd, supports keeping the board diverse. He supports the nomination of J. Wona.

Peter Latincsics, 97 Trask Rd, thanked Marybeth Wallett for her service to the board. He would like to see J. Wrona continue in her place.

M. Doucette Cunningham asked both of the nominated candidates to share why they want to serve on the board.

Stephanie Summers, 4 Y Rd, shared that she is grateful to Willington Schools. She is pleased by the expansion of the pre-school program. The schools are an integral part of the quality of life in a town and she would like to be a part of that.

Joy Wrona, Willington Rd, shared her educational experience and background in teaching. She would bring professional and parental knowledge and experience to the board.

**Motion** by C. Bambara to appoint Stephanie Summers to fill the Board vacancy.

Seconded by T. Anderson.

Discussion followed. E. Testa would like the board to support the tradition of filling a vacant position with a candidate from the same party. She believes that J. Wrona is more qualified and was next in line at the last election to get a position on the board. She called for the board to respect and honor the voters and the political history of the town.

The board discussed the wording of the motion and the process for voting. Marybeth Wallett's term would have ended in November 2019, so the candidate that fills the vacancy will be on the board until the election in November 2019.

M. Doucette Cunningham shared that she believes diversity comes from people with different experiences. There is diversity within political parties. There is a state statute that safeguard minority representation on the board and that is already being met.

C. Bambara agrees with M. Doucette Cunningham. The voters vote for the individual and not for the party, so she does not see it as a lack of respect to the voters.

H. Arico stated that both candidates would do a great job.

Each board member stated the name of the candidate that they would prefer to appoint.

C. Bambara withdrew the previous motion. **Motion** by Chiara Bambara to appoint Stephanie Summers to fill the Board vacancy. Seconded by A. Grosjean.

<b>VOTE:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain
Tracey Anderson	x	----	----
Herb Arico	----	x	----
Chiara Bambara	x	----	----
Michelle Doucette Cunningham	x	----	----
Ann Grosjean	x	----	----
Elena Testa	----	x	----

**Motion** passed.

A. Grosjean thanked J. Wrona for coming forward and being willing to serve. Welcome to Stephanie.

**C. Approve minutes of June 12, 2018 meeting**

**Motion** by T. Anderson to approve the minutes of the June 12, 2018 BOE meeting.

Seconded by A. Grosjean.

H. Arico suggested the deletion of the words, “and ex officio member of the BOE”, in regards to the First Selectwoman found on page four of the minutes.

T. Anderson amended the motion to approve the minutes of the June 12, 2018 BOE meeting with the deletion of the words “and ex officio member of the BOE” in relation to the First Selectwoman.

<b>VOTE:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain
Tracey Anderson	x	----	----
Herb Arico	x	----	----
Chiara Bambara	x	----	----
Michelle Doucette Cunningham	x	----	----
Ann Grosjean	x	----	----
Elena Testa	x	----	----

**Motion** passed

**D. Establish breakfast/lunch and milk prices for 2018-2019**

P. Stevens shared that the state recommended prices for lunches are significantly higher than current lunch prices and suggests slightly increasing prices. The serving size is the same at CES and HMS.

**Motion** by A. Grosjean to increase the Willington Public Schools breakfast prices from \$1.55 to \$1.65 and increase the milk price from \$0.50 to \$0.55. In addition, to increase the Center School lunch price from \$2.30 to \$2.50 and to increase the Hall School lunch price from \$2.45 to \$2.50.

Seconded by C. Bambara.

<b>VOTE:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain
Tracey Anderson	x	----	----
Herb Arico	x	----	----
Chiara Bambara	x	----	----
Michelle Doucette Cunningham	x	----	----
Ann Grosjean	x	----	----

**Motion passed****E. Modification of WPS 2018-2019 School Calendar**

P. Stevens shared that 189 days were put in the calendar, but the teacher's contract is only for 188 days. The administrative team put together four options for consideration. They favored changing February 19 to a full day for students and moving the last day for students to June 11.

**Motion** by H. Arico to approve modifying the WPS 2018-2019 School Calendar by changing February 19 to a full day for students and moving the last day for students to June 11. Seconded by C. Bambara.

<b>VOTE:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain
Tracey Anderson	-----	x	-----
Herb Arico	x	-----	-----
Chiara Bambara	x	-----	-----
Michelle Doucette Cunningham	-----	x	-----
Ann Grosjean	x	-----	-----
Elena Testa	x	-----	-----

**Motion passed****F. Review Medicare/CompuClaim participation**

P. Stevens shared that legislation changed so that we no longer have to participate in CompuClaim if we do a cost analysis that demonstrates it is not worth the staff's time. Parental consent is required and 27 students in the district are eligible. Staff has only been able to get consent for 5 students. As a result, we are expecting to receive a \$127 check. Staff is required to collect data on all of the students regardless of consent and this takes a considerable amount of staff time. The cost analysis documentation will come out by September 1.

**10. Old Business****A. Determine need for additional kindergarten class and Center School**

There are 37 students registered for kindergarten. P. Stevens shared that the FY18-19 budget has money to cover hiring a kindergarten teacher. The board discussed class size, budget in future years, the possibility of having to let the teacher go next year, and the needs of the students.

**Motion** by A. Grosjean to approve the addition of one kindergarten classroom to create three kindergarten classrooms.

Seconded by T. Anderson.

<b>VOTE:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain
Tracey Anderson	x	----	----
Herb Arico	----	----	x
Chiara Bambara	x	----	----
Michelle Doucette Cunningham	x	----	----
Ann Grosjean	x	----	----
Elena Testa	----	----	x

**Motion** passed

## **11. Present to Speak**

Stephanie Summers thanked the BOE for appointing her. She is not an educator, but she will bring decades of experience and hopes to serve well.

Matthew Clark, 42 Burt Latham Rd, was disappointed that the majority of the board voted to seat a new person in their party.

Peter Latincsics, 97 Trask Rd, felt that the people of Willington got shut out in the appointment of Stephanie.

Mike Cioe, teacher at HMS, appreciates the discussion and liked to see that everyone was listening to each other.

Robert Jellen commented that the First Selectwoman would be an ex officio member without voting rights.

## **12. Board Comments**

T. Anderson welcomed P. Stevens to his first meeting as superintendent. Thanks to Connie Wilde for her years of service; she was a wonderful asset to the school community. She wishes the other teachers well and welcomes the new hires.

H. Arico thanks Connie Wilde and the other members of the staff. Thanks to Marybeth Wallett for her service. Welcome to the new principal and welcome to Stephanie Summers.

C. Bambara thanks to Marybeth Wallet for her service. Thanks to Stephanie Summers and Joy Wrona for their willingness to serve.

M. Doucette Cunningham thanked Phil Stevens for his work on the oil tank and the board members for their service.

A. Grosjean welcomed the new principal. She would like to carefully watch the 1<sup>st</sup> grade class sizes.

**13. Adjournment at 9:14 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Bekah Rupert  
Recording Secretary