



**REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES  
AVON BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**AVON HIGH SCHOOL  
Avon Community Room  
Tuesday, April 24, 2018—7:00 p.m.**

**Attendance**

**Members Present:** Jackie Blea, David Cavanaugh, Debra Chute, Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Jason Indomenico, Houston Putnam Lowry, Bogdan Oprica, Jay Spivak, Laura Young

**Member(s) Absent:** None

**Administration Present:** Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla, Superintendent of Schools; Heather Michaud, Director of Fiscal Affairs; Dr. Kimberly Mearman, Director of Pupil Services; Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent

- I. Call to Order  
*The meeting was called to order by Debra Chute, Board Chair at 7:02 pm.*
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Avon Achievers
  - A. Elizabeth Abshire, TBS Parent – in recognition of her exceptional and magnanimous work on the TBS PTO Board. Ms. Abshire’s leadership of the PTO through the years has had a clear agenda that focused on student learning and staff support.
  - B. Ms. Laura Ward, TBS Parent – in recognition for her exceptional work on the TBS PTO Board. Ms. Ward’s role in overseeing the website has made information easily accessible with current and accurate information for students, parents and teachers.
- IV. Approval of Minutes
  - A. Board of Education Regular Monthly Meeting, March 20, 2018  
*Motion by Houston Putnam Lowry and seconded by Laura Young to approve the March 20, 2018 Regular Monthly Meeting minutes as presented.*  
  
*The motion carried 9-0-0.*
- V. Communication from Public

There was no communication from the public.
- VI. Items of Information and Proposals
  - A. Student Representatives Reports – Amir Johnson and Heather Monroe, Student Representatives
    - SATs were held at the high school on April 24<sup>th</sup>. The high school production of Crazy for You will be held April 27, 28 and 29<sup>th</sup>. April 30<sup>th</sup> ends the third marking quarter and parent/teacher conferences will begin at Avon High School. Capstone presentations have also concluded.

B. Financial Report – Heather Michaud, Director of Fiscal Affairs

- An additional \$910,000 in encumbrances were added between February and March 2018. Forecast shows there will be approximately \$800,000 in unencumbered funds by year end.
- Ms. Michaud read into record that Avon Public Schools has averaged during the past three fiscal years over \$700,000.00 in unencumbered funds at year end. This trend relates directly to additional unbudgeted Open Choice tuition revenue and savings within the salary lines, annual trending between \$380,000 and \$595,000. Avon Public Schools’ participation in the Open Choice program generates a substantial unbudgeted revenue source yearly, which is mandated by statute, to be spent on education. In the past three years we have received approximately \$400,000 in additional revenue for the District from the Open Choice program, thus increasing the year end unencumbered balance accordingly. Our salary savings are primarily a result of unexpected unpaid staff leave, staff turnover and unfilled positions year over year. In the current fiscal year, we have had 11 certified leaves of absence resulting in an average of \$25,000 in unpaid salary per individual. Additionally, turnover in personnel has generated approximately \$80,000 in savings. Lower needs for substitute custodial staffing, unfulfilled degree changes, and unfilled positions have created an estimated \$210,000 variance. We are proud that we have been able to accomplish so many positive initiatives for our students and school community through fiscal responsibility and continually seeking efficiencies and savings in our budget. Some of the ore successful uses of the unencumbered balances have been:
  - Special Education Escrow Account
  - Telephone System
  - Textbooks
  - Furniture
  - Activity Bus
  - Technology (Chromebooks/Access Points)
  - Professional Development

VII. Committees & Liaison Reports

A. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum & Professional Practices

Ms. Blea, C&PP Committee Chair, shared that retention was discussed as well as the homework policy with the revised policy suggestions to be brought to the Policy Committee for their review. AP/ECE curriculum was also broadly discussed. Next meeting will be Tuesday, May 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 pm.

2. Finance

Mr. Spivak, Finance Committee Chair, reviewed that the committee received the audit report from Blum Shapiro showing a clean audit. The report suggested a fraud risk assessment be conducted; which is the Town’s responsibility to set up and a tip line, which the Board has already put in place with both a phone number and email address. Fees were also reviewed which will be discussed with the full Board later in the meeting. The Open Choice supplemental appropriation was also discussed which will also be brought before the Board later in the meeting. The update for maintaining the athletic fields was also discussed. Next meeting will be on May 8 at 6:00 pm.

3. Negotiations

Mr. Indomenico, Negotiations Committee Chair, stated that an agreement has not been reached with the Safety and Security personnel despite great efforts. This will be discussed at greater length in Executive Session.

4. Policy

Ms. Young, Policy Committee Chair, stated that the Policy Committee did not meet in April but will meet in May. Ms. Young has been meeting with the superintendent to examine how the committee can be reflective in reviewing the policies and will now use the lenses of CABA as well as Shipman & Goodwin to look more strategically at District policies. Next meeting will be held on Monday, May 14 at 7:00 pm.

B. Liaison Reports

- Board Representative to Curriculum Professional Development Council  
Ms. Chute shared that the CPDC did not meet last month.
- Board Representative to Avon Board of Finance  
Mr. Cavanaugh reported that at the April 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting the security improvements to the District, of approximately \$1 million, were discussed. These improvements are to take place during the summer with the majority of the security changes to be in place by the start of school. The reallocation of funds from the middle school science labs for security updates was approved with a vote of 8 to 1 abstention.
- Board Representative to Avon Town Council  
Ms. Young shared that much of the meeting was regarding the turf field project. Ms. Young read from her written notes on the meeting. Her notes are attached to these minutes.
- Board Representative to Capital Region Education Council  
Ms. Blea shared that although she did not attend the last meeting, however, CREC is concentrating its attention on the funding of magnet schools and the executive director is putting together a working committee to discuss the impact for the upcoming school year.

VIII. Chair's Report – Debra Chute, Board Chair

Ms. Chute did not have anything to report.

IX. Superintendent's Report – Dr. B. Heston Carnemolla

- A. Hiring Report – The report showed hiring of certified and non-certified staff as well as a resignation and two retirements.
- B. Enrollment – Enrollment is up by two students since last month and down 80 students from April of the previous year.
- C. School Security Update – Dr. Carnemolla added to what was already said regarding security updates that the District has been working closely with the Avon Police and Fire Departments to collaborate on and prioritize the updates. Some projects have already begun as they are being funded by the current year's Capital Improvement budget; the rest will be coming and funded by the reallocation of the funding of the middle school science lab project. The majority of the work will be done during the summer but it will be difficult to have them all completed before the start of school. Dr. Carnemolla will continue to update the Board members. A meeting is scheduled in two week with administrators, SRO, along with town administrators (Town Manager, Police Chief, Fire Chief, and Fire Marshall) to review the district level safety and security plan which covers every type of hazard. This then needs to be sent to the State. Bringing all the administrators and Town officials together will bring a better level of understanding and collaboration from the very start. Dr. Carnemolla thanked Director of Security, Jim Connelly, for his persistence in arranging with Dept. of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) an all-hazard safety and security training for schools and local first responders which will be held in June and free of charge. Dr. Carnemolla, Mr. Connelly, and Mr. Altimus (Director of Operations) have already attended the training and will not be attending to allow others to attend.

Dr. Carnemolla also added that along with the ongoing conversation with high school administrators, one of Avon Police Department's first recommendations to the district related to safety and security was to close the campus of Avon High School. Currently the practice is that if a student has an open period (not scheduled for a class) they can leave the campus and return. This makes it difficult to account for students with a mass number of students coming and going. At the high school safety and security meeting, which is held at all schools, the committee, comprised of a cross section of the high school community, unanimously agreed to move forward to close the campus with a modified version of senior privilege beginning with the start of the new school year to allow enough opportunity to effectively communicate with students and parents. To ensure the safety of students, currently, only seniors who are in good standing and have senior privileges will be allowed to leave and must have the permission of parents. Moving forward, seniors who are in good standing, have senior privileges and have parent permission, may arrive late if they do not have a first period class. If they have no classes scheduled for fourth period they may leave early. Coming and going during the middle of the day will be eliminated. This means that students will be required to be scheduled in classes or study halls or the cafeteria. This will allow time for students to eat, study or socialize but remain on campus so the safety of students and the building can be maintained. Conversations will be ongoing; a letter was sent out this afternoon to parents regarding the plan.

#### Questions and Comments

- Ms. Blea expressed her appreciation as a parent and found the letter very informative and has gotten positive feedback from others.
- D. Artificial Turf Field & Current Field Update – Dr. Carnemolla thanked Ms. Young for her previous comments regarding the artificial turf. After speaking with Town Manager, Brandon Robertson and Athletic Director, Tim Filon, Dr. Carnemolla has gotten a better sense of the situation with the fields and the District's needs moving forward, especially after taking part in a recent conference call with the field architect. Dr. Carnemolla shared that there have been changes to the plans. On March 26<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Robertson and Town Council asked the Board to furnish him with a letter should the Board be interested in pursuing the project. Dr. Carnemolla and the Town Manager both agreed that it may be best to arrange a joint meeting with the Town Council and Board of Education to review the current status of the plans as not everyone may have the same information and have different variations of the project. A determination needs to be made as to how much of the project will be taken on to move forward as well as how the funding will be procured. If the Board does not see the need to meet with the Town Council, a letter can be presented to the Council to move the project forward. The timeline if the project moves forward will begin Spring 2019.

Currently, the field hockey field is “resting” for the Spring and Summer but will be available for the Fall. Dr. Carnemolla suggested to the Town that the District “piggyback” with the Town through their subcontractors in maintaining the school fields. A company will come to assess all District fields and give recommendations to keep in line with CAIC regulations. This will enable the District to take proactive measures in taking care of the fields.

#### Questions and Comments

- Mr. Fleischman agreed more conversation is needed, however, the biggest change has been to the funding. Initially there were three legs to the funding – State funding, Town funding and private fundraising. Two legs are now nonexistent. The question is whether we want the field or we want the Town to pay 100% of the field. Mr. Fleischman suggested that the Board of Finance be brought into the conversation as well.

- Mr. Spivak said that turf fields are evident in most every other town and is no longer considered a luxury but the norm and expressed his disappointment nothing has advanced after a letter, dated Dec. 29, 2016, stated the Board was supporting the turf field subject to concurrence to the turf fill and presence of a Board of Education member on the building committee. Mr. Spivak does not think action is needed since it will not delay anything, but does not understand why the Town still does not have a turf field given what is in so many other districts and is a disservice to our community, value to our homes and limits the ability of our children to participate in various sports through the seasons.
  - Ms. Blea asked whether the upkeep to the fields was through the Board of Education which Dr. Carnemolla replied yes. Ms. Blea also shares Mr. Spivak's concerns and asked what happens procedurally to the vote previously taken by the Board. Dr. Carnemolla replied the question now is as Mr. Fleischman previously asked regarding the funding and version of the project. When the vote was previously taken funding was expected from not just the Town. Dr. Carnemolla added that she thinks sending a letter will not suffice but rather to meet and have a conversation with the various Boards and Town Council. Depending on dollar amount, it may or may not go to referendum. The total project is estimated to be approximately \$5 million.
  - Mr. Cavanaugh stated that the State will not fund various items and now Avon needs to pay totally for this project which needs to be addressed, through referendum if necessary to allow the people to vote.
  - Mr. Lowry added that he does not see the Board doing more than holding a three party meeting since discussion cannot be had about proposed modifications to the project as the modifications are not known and does not want to proceed without having a recommendation from administration which cannot be given with knowing details of the project, including the turf fill.
  - Mr. Indomenico is in agreement of the need of a meeting. Another cost to be considered is the cost of maintaining the fields which may be approximately \$100,000 a year. There needs to be a clear understanding of how the fields will be maintained moving forward.
  - Ms. Young is hopeful that under the leadership of the superintendent it will be a collaborative effort with the Town as the fields will be community fields allowing recreational programs use during the summers which the Town will receive revenue. District student lose the sense of community when they cannot use their own fields and must go elsewhere to play. Any field is technically owned by the Town, but we are one community. Private fundraising is a possibility, but not for a third of a \$4.6 million project. Ms. Young asked if we worked closer with our state legislature perhaps we would be given more funding.
  - Chair Chute agreed with the comments of everyone and though it was voted by the Board previously agreed it was best to have a meeting to further discuss the project. Dr. Carnemolla will have a conversation with the Town Manager requesting a meeting.
- E. Photography Bid Update – Dr. Carnemolla shared that this was not discussed at the Finance Committee as it was a Special Meeting and could not be added during the meeting to the agenda. At this time, the District is not moving forward with the bid process for photography with the recommendation that the District continues with the K-8 PTOs running the process utilizing this as a fundraiser and creating the yearbooks. To maintain compliance with the data privacy laws schools will ensure the parents have signed off with the information to the photography companies. Also, the companies must sign off with the Business Office of how that data is to be maintained. The PTOs have been told to continue as they have in the past.

X. Consent Calendar

Any member may remove an item from the consent calendar and it will be considered in full in the ordinary course after the consent calendar is voted upon.

A. 17-18/105 Approval of Budget Transfers

B. 17-18/106 Approval of Summer Maintenance Assistant Job Description

C. 17-18/107 Approval of Grade 8 ELA and Grade 10-12 Mathematics Primary Instruction Materials

***Motion by Houston Putnam Lowry and seconded by Jason Indomenico to approve Items 17-18/105 to 17-18/107 as listed on the Consent Calendar.***

***The motion carried 9-0-0.***

XI. New Business

A. 17-18/108 Supplemental Appropriation – Ms. Michaud explained that the District cannot ask for funds until the Town has received the funds from the state. The Town has now received the funds for the Open Choice revenue on March 9<sup>th</sup> and the District cannot ask for the funds to be used on education.

***Motion by Houston Putnam Lowry and seconded by Jay Spivak to approve a request to the Town of Avon for a supplemental appropriation totaling \$412,016.00 in additional unbudgeted Open Choice Tuition revenue.***

***The motion carried 9-0-0.***

B. 17-18/109 18/19 Fee Schedule – Ms. Michaud explained that the Finance Committee collected data from surrounding districts regarding their fees for review. Ms. Young added that a letter regarding preschool fees was sent to parents and will be staying the same for this year.

***Motion by Laura Young and seconded by Houston Putnam Lowry to approve the FY 2018-2019 Fee Schedule including, Avon High School Parking Fees, Pay to Participate Fees, Gate Fees and School Lunch Prices.***

***Approve – Blea, Cavanaugh, Chute, Fleischman, Indomenico, Lowry, Spivak, Young***

***Oppose – none***

***Abstain – Oprica***

***The motion carried 8-0-1***

C. 17-18/110 Healthy Food Certification – Ms. Dreher, Director of Nutrition Services, explained that the Board needed to vote on participating in the annual certification and its exemptions. By participating and complying with the strict nutritional regulations 10 cents per lunch served is received from the State. Ms. Dreher recommended that the District continue to follow the regulations as there are similar Federal regulations which the District currently follows. CT does a very good job in trying to serve healthy meals to students.

Questions and Comments

- Ms. Blea asked where Bake Sales fall in the regulations to which Ms. Dreher answered that Bake Sales can be held after school if it met the three exemptions as well as the wellness policy. In other words, Bake Sales will never be allowed as it did in the past.

***Motion by Houston Putnam Lowry and seconded by Laura Young to approve the healthy food option – Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Board of Education or governing authority***

*certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or by non-school organizations and groups. The Food Director is authorized to execute any necessary documents to transmit the certification to the State of Connecticut.*

*The motion carried 9-0-0.*

*Motion by Houston Putnam Lowry and seconded by Jason Indomenico to approve the exemption for Food Items – The Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An "event" is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals and debate team meetings are not. The "regular school day" is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. "Location" means where the events is being held.*

*The motion carried 9-0-0.*

D. 17-18/111 Avon High School Graduation Date – Dr. Carnemolla recommended to the Board that they approve the graduation date of June 19<sup>th</sup>.

Questions and Comments

- Mr. Lowry stated that there is a Board meeting scheduled for June 19 and asked if the Board meeting would be held that evening or changed. Ms. Chute suggested that the Board meeting would be moved and a survey would be sent to Board members to select an alternative date.

*Motion by Jackie Blea and seconded by Jay Spivak to approve the Avon High School graduation date of June 19, 2018.*

*The motion carried 9-0-0.*

XII. Communication from Avon Board of Education Members

Mr. Lowry shared that a Dollars for Scholars scholarship was created in honor of Interim Superintendent, Dr. JeanAnn C. Paddyfote for her service to the District. Any Board member wishing to do the same can add it to the scholarship.

Ms. Young added some more thoughts regarding the artificial turf – that the project can be done in phases and that due to the climate of our community, we are weather dependent on the condition of the fields.

XIII. Communication from the Public

Mary Deppe stated her dismay that the Office of Policy and Management never replied to letters sent from Avon's three State Representatives or the Town Manager regarding the artificial turf. Parents are

concerned with the condition of the fields and have brought it back to the attention of the Town Council in January to revive the project. It was stated how Avon is one of the only towns in its conference to not have turf fields and is impacting the infrastructure of our town and property values but our youth leagues and varsity teams and they cannot practice and play competitively. The resident asked what can be done for the teams that practice on grass but need to play on turf. Worn fields also present a danger to the athletes.

Amir Johnson, Student Representative, asked about clarification regarding Bake Sales to which Ms. Dreher replied that if you have someone give money for baked goods it is considered a Bake Sale. Ms. Dreher suggested selling items according to the regulations which she would be happy to work on with Student Council.

XIV. Executive Session

A. Update on contractual negotiations

B. Discussion and possible action regarding the superintendent's contract regarding holidays

***Motion by Houston Putnam Lowry moved to enter Executive Session which was approved by unanimous consent.***

***The motion carried 9-0-0.***

***The Board recessed at 8:24 pm.***

***The Board entered Executive Session at 8:30 pm.***

***The Board left Executive Session and entered Public Session at 8:50 pm.***

***Motion by Jeffrey S. Fleischman and seconded by Houston Putnam Lowry to authorize the Board of Education Chair to amend the Superintendent's contract, specifically the Holiday section with language used in existing contracts.***

***The motion carried 9-0-0.***

XV. Adjournment

***The Board adjourned Public Session by unanimous consent at 8:51 pm.***

Minutes prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary

*Jeffrey s Fleischman 4/30/18*