



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

**AVON HIGH SCHOOL
Avon Community Room
Tuesday, October 17, 2017—7:00 p.m.**

Attendance

Members Present: Ken Birk; Jackie Blea; Deb Chute; Jason Indomenio; Houston Putnam Lowry; Peggy Roell; Jay Spivak; Laura Young; Kathy Zirolli

Member(s) Absent: none

Administration Present: Dr. JeanAnn C. Paddyfote, Interim Superintendent; Heather Michaud, Director of Fiscal Affairs; Dr. Kimberly Mearman, Director of Pupil Services; Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent

- I. Call to order
Chair Houston Putnam Lowry called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Avon Achievers
 - A. Josie Jordan, RBS staff member – recognition of being a para-educator extraordinaire, serving her students and school with an ever-present smile and a “We can always do this!” attitude. Her sense of love, care and grace with everyone she comes across makes Ms. Jordan a truly invaluable member of the RBS community.
 - B. Keith Archer, RBS staff member – recognition of efforts as one of RBS’ custodial plant/facilities team. Mr. Archer demonstrates a sense of pride in his work, a passion to help ensure RBS is in tip-top share and a work ethic that exemplifies your “We can get this done!” outlook.
- IV. Approval of Minutes
 - A. Board of Education, Regular Meeting, September 19, 2017
 - B. Communication/School Climate & Culture Committee Meeting, September 25, 2017
 - C. Policy Committee Meeting, October 2, 2017
 - D. Capital Budget Meeting, October 10, 2017
 - E. Finance Meeting, October 10, 2017

*Peggy Roell moved and seconded by Jackie Blea to approve the September 19, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes.
The motion passed 9-0-0*
- V. Communication from Public - None
- VI. Items of Information and Proposals
 - A. Superintendent Search Process and Timeline Update – Dr. Joseph Erardi, Consultant
 1. Student Reps, Heather Monroe and Amir Johnson shared comments expressed at a meeting Dr. Erardi held with high school students. Students would like the new superintendent to take things slow and take time to understand the Avon community before implementing changes; communicate with students and caring about what students say; and to be present at school events to interact with students.

2. Dr. Erardi has had 18 focus group meeting and has met with staff at every school and each parent organization. All candidates running for the Board of Education have been notified of the upcoming meetings. After a meeting with department leaders and one more open session, there will have been a total of 20 focus group meetings. Over 100 surveys have been tabulated. The community profile, suggested interview questions and suggested candidates' resumes will be brought to the Board on November 8th.
3. Questions & Comments:
 - Ms. Chute asked that another reminder be sent out to the public regarding the survey.
 - Mr. Lowry asked about the number of applicants which Dr. Erardi stated that the pool is larger than the previous superintendent search which had twelve applicants.
- B. Student Representatives Reports – Amir Johnson and Heather Monroe, Student Representatives
 1. Miss Monroe reported that Spirit Week will take place next week; the Pep Rally is on Friday; Juniors and Sophomores took PSATs on October 11th; and the blood drive will be October 25th.
 2. Mr. Johnson reported that the annual Turkey Trot will be held November 8-15; the school dance will be Dec. 8; and the AHS Veterans' Day program will be on November 13th.
- C. Financial Report – Heather Michaud, Director of Fiscal Affairs
 1. Ms. Michaud's fiscal year to date report was similar to last year. Last year, there were 7.0 FTE additional unbudgeted positions totaling \$357,000 that needed to be mitigated. This year there are 2.0 FTE positions totaling \$103,000. The first transportation invoice was just received and will be paid next week. Health insurance will be journaled the first time in January and runs through the payroll. Pending the outcome of the bargaining negotiations, there may be a shift in the salary line.
 2. Ms. Michaud also reported on the meeting she and Dr. Paddyfote had with the Town Manager and the Director of Finance on October 13th regarding the uncertainty of the State budget and the impact on Avon. It may not be until May that the State passes a budget. Avon may see a potential variation in revenue of \$1.4 million. The Town of Avon has implemented a soft freeze to review all transaction before processing. The Town is also reviewing open capital project items and looking at the possibility of needing to utilize the funds should there be a worst-case scenario. Currently, Avon Public Schools (APS) has the two largest open capital projects – AMS Science labs and AHS boiler.
 3. Questions & Comments
 - Mr. Lowry asked if APS were looking at any reductions of funds from the state. Ms. Michaud expressed that her concern was the liability APS has with the city of Hartford for additional special education related services. Bills are being rendered to Hartford.
 - Mr. Lowry also inquired of the rent at Battison Pond. Ms. Michaud replied that \$2,000 was given for them to open the pond.
 - Mr. Lowry commented that the biggest risk for APS would occur if the City of Hartford were bankrupt.
 - Mr. Birk asked if there were any discussion of a 2.5% cap. Ms. Michaud stated there was no mention and APS is in compliance.
 - Mr. Birk also asked if administration was prepared to put forth an operating budget that would sustain a hit. Dr. Paddyfote replied that it was too premature to tell.
- D. October Hiring Report – Dr. JeanAnn Paddyfote, Interim Superintendent
 1. Dr. Paddyfote reviewed the hiring report that showed there were three new hires, two resignations and one retirement.
- E. October Enrollment Report – Dr. JeanAnn Paddyfote, Interim Superintendent
 1. Dr. Paddyfote shared that enrollment is down compared to the prior year and right on target for what was projected for this year.

VII. 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. 17-18/61 Approval of Budget Transfers
- B. 17-18/62 Approval of Use of Facilities Funds – TBS Tennis Court Repair
- C. 17-18/63 Approval of AHS Music Field Trip to Orlando, FL, Feb. 16-20, 2018
- D. 17-18/64 Approval of AHS Swim Team Field Trip to Ft. Lauderdale, FL, Feb. 16-20, 2018
- E. 17-18/65 Approval of AHS SS Field Trip to Munich, Prague, Vienna, & Budapest, Apr. 4-14, 2018
- F. 17-18/66 Approval of Donation of school supplies from Dr. Das to PGS

Excluding Consent Items 17-18/63 through 17-18/65, Kathy Zirolli moved and seconded by Jay Spivak to approve the Consent Calendar.

The motion passed 9-0-0.

VIII. New Business

The Board discussed the removed Consent items regarding field trips.

- Mr. Indomenico stated that he thought the field trips were good things to offer and supports them but extravagant to offer during these times and a security risk given what has happened recently in high traffic areas and overseas. Mr. Indomenico felt while he is supportive of offering the opportunities to the students the Board should acknowledge the circumstances. He appreciates that the risks and who assumes the risks are spelled out in Board policy and feels it is up to individual families to decide whether or not to participate in field trips.
- Ms. Zirolli asked if all field trips being asked for approval had insurance. Ms. Michaud responded that individual field trips are underwritten by the student accident insurance company used by Avon Public Schools and is a budgeted item.
- Ms. Zirolli also added that she appreciated that the field trips take place during school breaks as she is not in favor of field trips taken not during breaks.
- Mr. Lowry asked how much insurance was carried. Ms. Michaud replied that the underwriting has a sliding scale according to location of the trip.
- Ms. Blea asked if security is consulted. Mr. Lowry replied that if the State Dept. had a travel advisory issued APS would either cancel the trip or change the location. Ms. Roell also added that according to Board policy it is at the superintendent's discretion to cancel a field trip.
- Ms. Young commented on how invaluable the overseas trips can be.

Peggy Roell moved and seconded by Laura Young to approve the three field trips, Items 17-18/63 through 17-18/65.

The motion passed 9-0-0.

A. 17-18/67 Budget Transfer Item 2018-010

1. Ms. Michaud explained the salary variance transfer and an amendment to the transfer to leave enough funds to hire an FTE, which would probably not take place until January.
2. Questions and Comments:
 - Ms. Blea asked for confirmation that a social worker would be hired in January. Ms. Michaud responded she was asked to leave enough funds in the line item for salary.
 - Mr. Lowry asked Mr. Spivak, Chair of the Finance Committee, their recommendation. Mr. Spivak replied that the Finance Committee requested that this item be removed from Consent to be able to discuss this with the Board.
 - Mr. Spivak asked Dr. Mearman how this funding would fit into her future plans. Dr. Mearman replied that she is requesting a 1.0 FTE position in the 2018-2019 budget and this transfer will enable it to happen more quickly.

Jay Spivak moved and seconded by Kathy Zirolli to Budget Transfer Item 2018-010 to reflect a reduction of \$32,443.59 from account number (01.8.2110.111) Certified Salaries/Family Engagement/DW and to increase account number (01.8.110.152) Degree Change Stipends/Salaries/DW by \$32,443.59.

The amended budget transfer would allocate a total of \$71,114.41 from the Certified Salaries/Family Engagement/DW account and \$119,621.38 from the Degree Change Stipends/Salaries/DW to the annual salary variance transfer. \$32,443.59 would remain in the Certified Salaries/Family Engagement/DW account.

The motion passed 9-0-0

B. 17-18/68 Proposed Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Capital Budget Projects

1. Mr. Altimus, Director of Operations, shared the details of the 2018-2019 Capital Budget Projects and provided updates of the 2017-2018 Capital Budget Projects. The 2018-2019 Capital Budget Project requests total is \$902,000, which includes district security upgrades; AHS fire alarm replacement; AHS air handling/RTU replacement; LED light replacement; field mower replacement; PGS water boiler replacement; AHS baseball field repair and TBS carpet replacement.
2. Questions and Comments:
 - Mr. Birk, Chair of the Capital Budget Committee, agreed with all Mr. Altimus presented. He added that a security grant has been submitted and acknowledged there are additional equipment that are near the end of their lifespan but will be monitored.
 - Ms. Zirolli asked a question about the life of the AHS fire alarm. Mr. Altimus will obtain the answer and reply.

Ken Birk moved and seconded by Laura Young to approve the Proposed Capital Improvement Plan for the next fiscal year, 2018-2019

The motion passed 9-0-0.

C. 17-18/69 Policy 1120 – Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings, First Read

Ms. Zirolli, Chair of the Policy Committee, explained the Interim Superintendent requested the policy be changed to reflect current practice.

D. 17-18/70 Policy 1250 – Visits to the Schools, First Read

Ms. Zirolli explained that this is a new policy recommended by the Director of Security, James Connelly. Currently there is only a regulation in place. Ms. Zirolli added that another revision will be made to this policy to include references to the current policy regarding volunteers and to pick-up procedures found in student handbooks. She also reminded the Board that regulations were included as information only as the Board does not approve regulations.

Questions and Comments:

- Ms. Blea asked how this policy affects parents needing to drop off items for their children as the wording was strict. Ms. Zirolli explained that the intent is to prevent unnecessary visitors from detracting from the business of the school, not to prevent parents from such activities.
- Mr. Spivak asked why the visitors' log book at the high school differed from other schools and the times in and out are important pieces of information that should be required at all schools. Ms. Zirolli explained that it is Mr. Connelly's goal to make all log books the same. Dr. Paddyfote added that currently the regulations reflect current practice and may change as procedures are updated and will discuss adding the time in and out at all the schools with the Director of Security.
- Ms. Young stated that she too thought the policy and regulations were overly restrictive and is not visitor or community friendly. Ms. Zirolli responded that the policy is to help avoid visitors from

going into classrooms with no specific reason. Ms. Chute, a member of the Policy Committee, shared that she also initially felt the policy was not very welcoming and hopes that by adding references to volunteers and pick-up procedures it will clarify the policy is meant for unscheduled “pop-in” visitors walking into classrooms for the sake of curiosity and does not apply to those who have signed up to volunteer following the volunteer procedures. Ms. Zirolli added that the Director of Security requested this for the safety of our students; the intent of the policy was to be protective. Dr. Paddyfote understood everyone’s concern but reminded the Board that the greater concern was the safety of the students. When parents come to the school and sign in for a dedicated purpose such as dropping off items or a scheduled appointment that is routine business. This policy is more for the unanticipated drop in visit.

- Ms. Young asked if appointments could be made for visits and tours of the schools for families moving into town. Dr. Rusack explained that once a student is registered they can make an appointment to see the schools but until then parents are referred to the website where they can find information online regarding the schools and curriculum. Principals and administrators are open to phone calls to answer questions but drop in visits are not allowed at the schools.
- Mr. Indomenico, also a member of the Policy Committee, shared that while he initially shared the same concerns of other Board members, he feels the spirit of the policy makes sense and is to protect the schools but not give parents who have legitimate reasons to be in the schools a hard time. Perhaps what is needed is a better definition of what a visitor is.
- Dr. Paddyfote reminded the Board that while they currently do not have a policy for visitors, what is written mirrors what is currently being done at the schools.
- Ms. Young asked what neighboring districts do as she would not like Avon to be known as the “unfriendly” district. Chair Lowry added that there is nothing to prevent families from seeing the school off hours but should not disrupt the learning hours.

E. 17-18/71 Policy 1251 – Loitering or Causing Disturbance, First Read

Ms. Zirolli explained that this is another new policy suggested by the Director of Security to give support to administrators against those who may be loitering.

F. 17-18/72 Bylaw 9132 – Standing Committees, First Read

Per the suggestions of the Interim Superintendent and the Policy chair, changes were made to help the Board with efficiency. Ms. Zirolli explained that the committee reviewed the list of the committees and made the following changes. Consolidated all finance-related committees into one Finance Committee, including Audit and Capital Budget. Personnel Committee was renamed Negotiations Committee in keeping with what they are actually doing. Policy Committee remains the same. The Communications/School Culture & Climate Committee (CSCC) would be changed to Curriculum and Professional Practices, which would adopt the spirit and intent of the CSCC Committee as well as give input to recommendations for curriculum and professional development.

Questions and Comments:

- Chair Lowry added the policy would be revised to say “the committees will regularly report to the Board of Education.” Mr. Lowry also stated the reason for the change is to limit the number of meetings Board members need to attend and to better utilize everyone’s time. Also, Mr. Lowry would like the new structure to be in place for the new Board when it takes affect in January.
- Ms. Blea, Chair of the CSCC Committee shared her excitement of the changes to her committee especially since many of the neighboring districts have committees regarding curriculum.
- Dr. Rusack added that it would be nice to have a venue to have longer, in-depth conversations regarding the work around curriculum so that some of the Board members would have a deeper understanding.
- Mr. Spivak appreciates the thought of having fewer committees, but now the committees will have more responsibilities and would not like to forget about the important work of Alternative Resources and Regional Services. Mr. Spivak also asked for clarification on its charge regarding

the budget. Mr. Lowry explained that the budget presented is not the budget of the Finance Committee but of the superintendent.

- Ms. Young expressed that the Audit Committee offers financial accountability and additional oversight and has a different function than the Finance Committee. Mr. Lowry shared that the thought was discussed.

G. 17-18/73 Bylaw 9323 – Agenda Preparation and Dissemination, First Read

Ms. Zirolli explained the edit is to correlate to what is currently done.

H. 17-18/74 Bylaw 9325.2 – Agenda Format, First Read

IX. Chair's Ruminations – Houston Putnam Lowry, Board of Education Chair

This business is not intended to be the subject of any motions, but is intended to be an opportunity for the Board to have a short discussion on the topics indicated.

A. Semester grades at the High School instead of year-long grades and how this was communicated.

Chair Lowry stated that there have been concerns stated on both sides of year-long grades vs. semester grades and how it was communicated to the various parties. It has been suggested that how the grading is done upon entering the high school should follow a student up to graduation.

Questions and Comments:

- Ms. Chute asked for a brief review of how this all came about and thanked Ms. Zirolli and Dr. Paddyfote for their research into the matter. Ms. Zirolli stated that to have to revise a policy three times in three years is not ideal. Policy 6146.1, Basis for Grading was changed each year beginning in 2015 through 2017. In 2016, an implementation change was also discussed. While the Policy committee supported administration's recommendation for implementing year-long grading, the committee stated AHS administration needed to communicate this change. The committee reported the proposed change to the full Board. However, communication to students and parents did not occur as promised due to turnover in AHS administration. The Policy committee's inquiries for updates of how changes were being implemented were not provided. This implementation change could not be supported as the communication was not given in a timely manner.
- Ms. Zirolli requested that AHS administration take a fresh look at this grading policy, review best practices/comparisons to other districts, develop mock transcripts, obtain student input; and report to the Policy committee its findings and suggestions.
- Mr. Lowry believes one of the issues was there was a Board discussion that did not result in a motion but a consensus from the Board. The objective is not to cast blame but ensure that things are done in a more rigorous fashion in the future.
- Ms. Young, who served on the Policy Committee at the time of this decision, stated the decision was made thinking of how best to serve the students.
- Mr. Spivak stated that he appreciated Dr. Paddyfote's suggestion that any changes be implemented with the incoming 9th grade class and hoped that students and the guidance department are involved in any conversations. It seems the issue was a lack of communication to those affected by the change.

X. Superintendent's Update – Dr. JeanAnn Paddyfote

A. Update on planned IT upgrades

Dr. Paddyfote clarified that anything going forward regarding IT upgrades will be in her proposed budget for the upcoming school year. The update detailed resolved, current, and future items.

Questions and Comments:

- Ms. Young referred to the revised Organizational Chart and asked for the financial update to show what was told at the June Board meeting that the changes would be net neutral. Ms. Michaud explained that during the June Board meeting she did not have all the information as the changes were not net neutral. The variance following the reorganization is \$18,357.46.

- Mr. Lowry asked if the plan for consolidation of servers is to move to a single place or a consolidation of one server to handle multiple places. Dr. Rusack said that is being reviewed as to how best to use the servers to work smarter, not harder.

B. Update on Hanover report

Dr. Paddyfote stated that she and Dr. Rusack have been meeting with the principals to establish school goals and their student learning outcomes for the year as part of their annual evaluation and each principal will be addressing the results of the Hanover Report with their staff. Ideas Principals have to address the results are: Identifying and providing additional supports for the various subgroups of the student population (low income families, gifted and talented or special education students); researching practices for culturally responsive instruction and leadership; developing enrichment clusters and opportunities for all students; providing opportunities for family connections on evenings of school sponsored events; and proactively helping with transportation and scheduling.

Questions and Comments:

- Ms. Young asked if the Hanover Report were available online. Dr. Paddyfote said it was not but would make it available.

XI. Such Other and Further Business That May Come Before the Meeting - None

XII. Communications from Board Members - None

XIII. Committee Reports & Future Meeting Dates

A. Alternative Resources/Regional Services - Mr. Spivak

Has not met and under the direction of the Policy Committee will be phasing that into the Finance Committee.

B. Audit - Ms. Young

Have not yet received information but will meet once received. Ms. Michaud stated that the fieldwork for the auditors would commence the week of October 23rd.

C. Capital Budget - Mr. Birk

The next meeting will be with the Town Council on November 2nd.

D. Communications/School Climate & Culture - Ms. Blea

Ms. Blea thanked the administration for making all staff emails available online. The committee has discussed the resource page, setting new goals of increasing communication, identifying implementation of best practices and discussion will continue as the committee incorporates the new direction and framework the committee will take.

E. Finance - Mr. Spivak

Mr. Spivak thanked Ms. Michaud for how the financial information has been presented in an open and transparent manner. The committee worked as it should addressing questions, and bringing it to the full Board to resolve. Next meeting is Nov. 14

F. Personnel - Ms. Roell

Have been meeting with the secretaries, para-educators, administrators, and security. More will be reported during Executive Session.

G. Policy - Ms. Zirilli

Pending items include second reads; Bylaws 9130, Committees, and 9325.21, Consent Agenda; and Policy 5114.12, Handbooks. The next meeting is Thursday, November 9th; and will be a Special Meeting as the date was moved due to Election Day.

H. Board Representative to Curriculum Professional Development Council - Ms. Chute

The meeting will be Oct. 26th, 8 am-3 pm. Board members are invited to attend.

I. Board Representative to Avon Board of Finance - Mr. Birk

Board of Finance approved the technology lease and spoke on the changing budget. Next meeting is on Oct. 30th.

J. Board Representative to Avon Town Council - Ms. Roell was unable to attend.

K. Board Representative to Capital Region Education Council - Ms. Blea

Discussed the situation with the budget and celebrated the CREC Teacher of the Year.

XIV. Communication from Public

Ms. Roell shared that Veterans' Day is on Saturday, Nov. 11th this year, but on Friday, Nov. 10th the veterans will start their day at the Middle School and then go to Roaring Brook, Pine Grove and then Thompson Brook. Because Avon High School has a half-day on Friday, the veterans will have an assembly and lunch on Monday, Nov. 13th. Board members are invited to join any part of the program.

XV. Executive Session

Peggy Roell motioned and seconded by Jackie Blea to enter into Executive Session to discuss confidential document, possible action concerning ratification and updates on other contractual negotiations and to invite in Ms. Michaud and Dr. Paddyfote.

The motion passed 9-0-0.

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:57 p.m.

- A. Discussion concerning confidential documents related to collective bargaining with the secretaries and administrators.
- B. Possible action concerning ratification of a proposed successor collective bargaining agreement with the secretaries and administrators.
- C. Update on other contractual negotiations.

Motion by Chair Lowry to move into Public Session at 9:19 p.m. carried unanimously.

Motion made by Peggy Roell and seconded by Houston Putnam Lowry to approve a new three year contract for the Administrators beginning July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2021. The total cost percentage increase for each of the three years is; Year 1, 2.49%, Year 2, 2.1%, Year 3, 1.83%.

The motion passed 9-0-0.

XVI. Adjournment

Motion by Peggy Roell to adjourn at 9:20 p.m. carried unanimously.

Minutes Prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Kathy Zirolli, Board Secretary

Katharine F. Zirolli

October 23, 2017