



Monthly Meeting
Avon Board of Education
34 Simsbury Road, Avon, Connecticut

Mission Statement

Our mission is to inspire in each student a joy and passion for learning and a commitment to excellence, personal integrity, and social responsibility.

Tuesday, October 15, 2019, 7:00 pm

Avon High School, Community Room

Minutes

Attendance

Members Present: Jackie Blea, David Cavanaugh, Debra Chute, Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Houston Putnam Lowry, Bogdan Oprica (arrived 7:06 pm), Jay Spivak, Laura Young

Member(s) Absent: Jason Indomenico

Administration Present: Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla, Superintendent of Schools; Roberto Medic, Director of Human Resources; Heather Michaud, Director of Fiscal Affairs; Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent

- I. Call to Order
The October 15, 2019 Board of Education Regular Monthly meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Chute.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
The Board Chair led the pledge and read the District's mission statement.
- III. Avon Achiever -
 - A. Yvonne Bourgoïn (PGS bus driver) – in recognition for the positive impact she has on the children of Bus 15 each day. Ms. Bourgoïn goes above and beyond in her efforts to make students feel welcome and safe.
- IV. Approval of Minutes
 - A. Board of Education Regular Monthly Meeting, September 17, 2019
Mr. Lowry moved, Ms. Blea seconded, to approve the September 17, 2019 minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting as presented.
The motion carried 8-0-0.
- V. Communication from Public
Catherine Lewis, Avon resident and parent, spoke in the capacity of Board certified psychiatrist. Ms. Lewis brought to the Board's attention that a book utilized at the high school was not properly vetted, posted on the curricular website nor were proper procedures followed prior to being used in the classroom. Ms. Lewis first brought her concerns to a Curriculum & Professional Practices meeting stating that numerous district policies had been violated when a violently graphic book

was used at the high school without following proper procedures. Ms. Lewis clarified that she is not looking to ban material, as she stated to the Assistant Superintendent, but asks that all material follow district policy in notifying parents for parental approval and allowing students alternative material if desired. Lewis added that “The Kite Runner” an R rated movie was shown in the high school also without notifying parents and without parental approval. Ms. Lewis reminded Board members that the responsibility rests with them and the superintendent to ensure District policies are followed. Ms. Lewis referred to the books, “Speak,” “The Kite Runner,” and “Thug Life.”

Caroline Hart, an Avon resident and junior at AHS shared her thoughts regarding additional security. Miss Hart has been researching safety and security measures since last Spring and has shared her thoughts with Jim Connelly, the District’s Director of Security as well as with the Superintendent. Miss Hart asked the Board to consider investing in a specific door lock, which would work with current classroom locks, as an additional mechanism in an active shooter situation or when an intruder has already entered the building. The cost would be approximately \$250,000.

VI. Items of Information and Proposals

- A. Student Representative Report – Alvin Guo, & Addisen Ganiats, AHS Student Representatives
Mr. Guo reported that the past month was relatively smooth with an upcoming pep rally and bon fire on Oct. 18 which has generated much student involvement. Mr. Guo added that Fall sports are winding down. Ms. Ganiats shared that she personally noticed an increase in school spirit and student involvement from previous years. Also, there is a blood drive and Gifts of Love toiletry drive which are student led. Chair Chute thanked both students for the reports of the effort the students are putting behind the school events. Ms. Chute also acknowledged Principal Renkawitz’ encouragement of these events.
- B. Financial Report – Heather Michaud, Director of Fiscal Affairs
Ms. Michaud report that the largest change were increases to tuition and transportation. There was also \$672,000 in unencumbered balance change from the month prior.

VII. Committees & Liaison Reports

A. Committee Reports

- 1. Curriculum & Professional Practices – Jackie Blea, Chair
Ms. Blea reported that the next meeting of the committee will be held at the Central Office on October 22nd at 6:00 pm.
- 2. Finance – Jay Spivak, Chair
Mr. Spivak shared that the most important topics were the Capital Budget and fees and tuition schedule which will be discussed later in the agenda. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12 at 6:00 pm.
- 3. Negotiations – Jason Indomenico, Chair
Mr. Indomenico was not present to give a report.
- 4. Policy – Laura Young, Chair
Ms. Young reported that at the last meeting counsel, Attorney Matt Ritter, was brought in to discuss current changes to state statute and data collection/retention of information issues. Also discussed during the committee meeting was the nondiscrimination policy as it relates to curriculum, which will also be discussed later in the evening. Dr. Carnemolla added that the first read on the non-discrimination policies for both students and personnel was had at a previous board meeting. The changes were primarily due to changes in law and also in reporting procedures. The policies were made to mimic the

procedures found in sexual harassment and Title IX policies for consistency in process. Dr. Carnemolla explained the removal of a policy is due to it duplicating a policy already in place and not being reflective of the changes made in similar policies or consistent with current district procedures.

B. Liaison Reports

1. Board Representative to Curriculum Professional Development Council – Deb Chute
Ms. Chute reported that the first CPDC meeting was scheduled for Thursday, October 17th.
2. Board Representative to Avon Board of Finance – David Cavanaugh
Mr. Cavanaugh shared that at the September 23rd meeting, the Board of Finance approved the District's lease agreement for HP chromebooks and PCs. Mr. Cavanaugh also shared his personal thoughts with the Board of Finance that the state will look for a contribution to the teachers' pension and suggested to the Board of Finance that coordination should be had with the Board of Finance, Town Council and Board of Education as to how that expense is recorded in financial systems so that it may be referenced during negotiations.
3. Board Representative to Avon Town Council – Jason Indomenico
In Mr. Indomenico's absence, Ms. Chute read a report from Mr. Indomenico. The report stated that several Town Council members spoke highly of the high school internship presentations. The final meeting for the artificial turf is scheduled for Oct. 30, after which the Town will officially turn the field over to the Board of Education. There is also approximately \$20,000 left of contingency money.
4. Board Representative to Capital Region Education Council – Jackie Blea
Ms. Blea stated that she will be attending the upcoming meeting.

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

A. Board Chair Update

Chair Chute stated she had nothing else to report.

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

A. Hiring Report

Dr. Carnemolla shared that the assistant principal was hired for the middle school and will be starting on Nov. 4th; a school psychologist is being sought; a replacement safety and security specialist at the middle school was recently hired and the process to hire an assistant of nutrition services was also finalized.

B. Enrollment Reports

The report showed the District is in exactly the same spot as last month.

C. Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Carnemolla reminded Board members to participate in the Doodle poll to schedule the Board meeting to discuss the changes to the plan and Board feedback.

D. Updates

Regarding the turnover of the field from the Town to the District, the Superintendent stated that with the closing out of the field's construction project she; District of Operations, Mr. Altimus; Athletic Director, Mr. Filon, and the Town have begun talking about the possible official turnover date of Nov. 7. The plan is to have the grand opening on Saturday, Nov. 9 with a short program before a scheduled game.

X. Consent Calendar

A. 19-20/13 Approval of Budget Transfers

- B. 19/20/14 Approval of RBS Estimated Donation from Dean and Valerie Kapura and Kapura General Contractors estimated at \$1,608.00
- C. 19-20/15 Approval of Removing Policy 0521 – Equal Opportunity – Nondiscrimination
- D. 19-20/10 Approval of Policy 4118.11 – Nondiscrimination (Personnel), Second Read
- E. 19-20/11 Approval of Policy 5145.4 – Nondiscrimination (Students), Second Read

Mr. Fleischman asked to remove Item 19-20/13 - Approval of Budget Transfers

Mr. Lowry moved, Ms. Young seconded, to approve the Consent Calendar as presented minus Item 19-20/13 - Approval of Budget Transfers.

The motion carried 8-0-0.

Mr. Fleischman asked for further details regarding the Budget Transfers as the Finance Committee minutes were not yet posted. Mr. Spivak, Chair of the Finance Committee said there was nothing of significance discussed during the Finance meeting as all the budget transfer items were under \$3,000.00. Ms. Michaud explained the various budget transfers 2020-15 through 2020-18 were transfers used for additional supplies due to increased enrollment. Budget Transfer 2020-20 was for the purchase of an additional item of previously purchased items (BOSE sound speaker); 2020-21 was for flexshare stations which are chromebook charging stations used in the science labs at the high school; 2020-22 is for a required wheelchair for a student and 2020-23 is a request by the high school guidance department to assist students with introductions to colleges.

Mr. Fleischman moved, Mr. Cavanaugh seconded, to approve the Budget Transfers as presented.

The motion carried 8-0-0.

XI. New Business

- A. 19-20/16 Policy 6121 – Nondiscrimination in the Instructional Program, First Read

Mr. Medic explained that other policies were reviewed in prior meetings that were connected with nondiscrimination. Changes were made to this policy to eliminate language that dealt with employment. Changes made to mimic those made to other nondiscrimination policies and then reviewed by counsel.

- B. 19-20/17 Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021

Mr. Altimus, the District's Director of Operations, presented the Capital Improvement Plan and also gave a quick overview of the current capital projects which were submitted and approved last year.

This year's recommendations in order of priority –

- RBS roof replacement (phase II) - \$210,000
- AMS entryway paver replacement - \$130,000
- AHS air handling/RTU replacement (phase I) - \$250,000
- DW security upgrades (phase III) - \$60,000
- RBS intrusion alarm replacement - \$30,000
- DW LED light replacement (phase I) - \$40,000
- RBS roof replacement (phase III) - \$400,000

Mr. Spivak moved, Mr. Cavanaugh seconded, to approve the Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 as presented.

The motion carried 7-0-0 (Ms. Young was not present in room for the vote.)

C. 19-20/18 Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Fees and Tuition Schedule

Ms. Michaud requested the Board increase two fees categories, Preschool tuition and daily lunch. Ms. Michaud informed the Board that last year the prek 3 program tuition was adjusted as the program was expanded to a full day program. Preschool tuition rates in Avon remain substantially lower, over 40% less, than neighboring districts with similar programs. Ms. Michaud asked the Board to consider a 25% incremental increase, approx. \$1,300 each year over three years. If the tuition increase is approved, the new rate will be \$6,957.50 the first year and still below area programs.

Ms. Michaud also explained the request to increase lunch prices, which are lunch only meals at all buildings, by 25 cents. The last increase was during the 2016/2017 school year. Dr. Carnemolla added that with a 14% food rise in food costs, 25 cents will not meet the increase; the program is self-funded, and not run as a profit maker. The increase of \$0.25 will bring the cost for the regular daily lunch to \$3.50 at AHS, AMS and TBS; \$3.25 at PGS and RBS. Subcategories such as milk, breakfast, specialty sandwiches will not be increased.

The Board committees asked for further explanation as to preschool tuition in comparison to surrounding areas to which Avon was significantly lower and will continue to be lower even with the three year increases. The Board did request that adequate notice be given to families regarding the increase and the District work with families in need of financial help for both preschool tuition as well as for lunches. Discussion was also had as to how students were selected to enroll in the preschool program. The Superintendent explained that preschool is not a requirement of the state unless the child is identified with special needs or from the Choice program. Nondisabled peers are selected through a lottery and the ones who pay tuition.

The Board asked if optional items should be considered in the increased price of lunches to which Director of Nutritional Services, Maggie Dreher, and the Superintendent explained there is a formula mandated by the State. The District is regulated in what it can charge because we are a public school system, the District cannot make revenue on items using the lunch price equity formula set by the State. Ms. Dreher also gave further explanation as to how families can qualify for free and reduced lunch.

The Board asked if a comparison could be given of magnet school enrollment data. The Board also asked for clarification as to the basis of what the District charges for tuition and whether the tuition covers the costs of the program. Ms. Michaud replied that the tuition currently does not cover the costs and is unsure how the initial amount was determined when the program first began. Other sources of revenue including a portion of the Open Choice Funds' Early Beginnings Grant gives an additional \$4,000.00-\$5,000.00 per student for full day preschool. Mr. Spivak, the Chair of the Finance Committee brought to the attention of other Board members the cost per day of \$30.92 and reiterated the importance of communicating the increase to families. Dr. Carnemolla added that all public schools must provide preK for disabled 3 and 4 year olds and adhere to the peer model of preschool with disabled and nondisabled students.

Mr. Lowry moved, Mr. Spivak seconded, to approve the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Fees and Tuition Schedule as presented.

The motion carried 8-0-0.

XII. Communication from Avon Board of Education Members

Ms. Young expressed her concern that the Avon Planning and Zoning was considering the request to build approximately 270 apartments at 64 Avonwood Road. Ms. Young was gravely concerned how the apartments would impacts the schools with the increased enrollment, especially at Pine Grove School.

Wanting to be proactive of gifted and talented students, Mr. Lowry requested information on enrichment programs in the District. Dr. Carnemolla stated that the topic will be discussed at the next C&PP on Oct. 22nd. Ms. Blea added that she saw the Makerspaces and was excited about how this will be used toward enrichment.

XIII. Communication from the Public

There was no additional comments from the Public.

XIV. Adjournment

***Mr. Lowry motioned, Ms. Young seconded to adjourn the meeting.
The Board adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:18 pm.***

Minutes prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary

Jeffrey S. Fleischman, October 24, 2019

Board minutes are approved at the next regular monthly Board meeting, and any corrections to the minutes, if needed, will be made at that time.