



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, September 17, 2019, 7:00 pm

Avon High School, Community Room

Minutes

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; Roberto Medic, Director of Human Resources; Heather Michaud, Director of Fiscal Affairs; Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent

I. Call to Order

The September 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.

I. Avon Achiever -

- A. Judy Allyn, Sharon Schreiber & Shelly Stewart (RBS staff) – in recognition for their work on the RBS' Nutrition Services team. Their service to the students and staff is done with smiles, energy and a feeling of positivity and exhibit true school spirit.
- B. Kevin Pelletier (RBS staff) – in recognition for having demonstrated truly exemplary leadership and initiative, most notably in his help to ensure that RBS was ready for the first day. As the school's Day Custodian, Mr. Pelletier exemplifies what it means to be an individual with "pride in his work."

II. Approval of Minutes

- A. Board of Education Regular Monthly Meeting, August 20, 2019
- B. Board of Education Special Meeting, September 9, 2019

Mr. Lowry moved, Ms. Blea seconded, to approve the August 20, 2019 and September 9, 2019 minutes with the condition to correct time from 1:31 am to 1:31 pm on the Sept. 9, 2019 minutes. The motion carried 9-0-0.

III. Communication from Public

Scott Cuyler, Avon resident and parent of three students, spoke on behalf of FAME (arts and music education booster club). Mr. Tyler informed the Board that over 750 students are involved in the arts and music programs in the District and asked the Board to consider ways on improving the auditorium over time to bring it on the same level as the newly finished gym floors and new athletic field.

Daniel Jobe, Avon resident and parent of two high school children in the band program, also spoke on behalf of FAME and asked to reinstate the middle school director. Mr. Job expressed his concern that a large number of students will be coming through from TBS and asked the Board to provide the middle school music program with adequate staffing.

IV. Items of Information and Proposals

A. Student Representative Report – Addisen Ganiats & Alvin Guo, AHS Student Representatives
Chair Chute welcomed back Addie Ganiats, Senior Representative, and introduced and welcomed Alvin Guo as the Junior Representative.

Addie Ganiats commented that it was a great start to school year with sports and clubs. New safety precautions, which include ID badges/lanyards for all students and lock down buttons, were implemented and well received by the students at the high school.

Alvin Guo thanked Board members for welcoming him and shared that Junior year was also off to a great start.

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

Ms. Michaud highlighted the encumbrances and gave a comparison of the last fiscal year and this year. Encumbrances this year is at approximately \$41,000,000 and last year was \$37,900,000. There was a 9.3% increase and shows the District in good shape.

V. Committees & Liaison Reports

A. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum & Professional Practices

Ms. Blea reported on a positive and productive meeting which reviewed the data of students making course changes in core areas; the District will continue to monitor the Algebra track to ensure no additional changes need to happen. The Committee also reviewed a 3-year comparison of AP enrollment which showed an increase of 81 AP enrollments from the previous year.

2. Finance

Mr. Spivak spoke of the budget transfers, facility use fund and student activity account. Next meeting is Tuesday, October 8th at 6:00 pm.

3. Negotiations

Mr. Indomenico reported that there are currently no negotiations.

4. Policy

Ms. Young briefly shared about the thorough summary AHS Principal, Mr. Renkawitz, gave regarding the use of mobile phones at the high school. Mr. Renkawitz will report back to the Committee on the use of the phone trees in the Spring. The thought of creating a policy concerning mobile phones may be considered at a later time. The

Nondiscrimination policy will be discussed with the Board later in the meeting. Next meeting is Tuesday, October 1st.

B. Liaison Reports

1. Board Representative to Curriculum Professional Development Council

Ms. Chute shared that there has not yet been a CPDC meeting. The first meeting is scheduled for Oct. 17th.

2. Board Representative to Avon Board of Finance

Mr. Cavanaugh reported that the August 26th meeting discussed the positive progress and on time completion of the turf field. Also discussed was whether the Town would be billed by the state for the teachers' retirement plan contributions and the capacity of Avon schools with the new development taking place in the Town. Next meeting is September 23rd.

3. Board Representative to Avon Town Council

Mr. Indomenico stated that the Town Council spoke well about convocation. Cyber security was discussed and requested a brief update on how the District is handling the issue. The District's technology lease for Chromebooks was approved. Also approved was a new benefits consultant, Lockton, to replace Milliman.

Regarding the turf field, the Sept. 11th meeting discussed additional security cameras, and storage. Approved were 6 garbage cans and 2 cans for recycling.

4. Board Representative to Capital Region Education Council

Ms. Blea shared that September 18 is the first meeting of the year.

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

A. Board Chair Update

Chair Chute thanked Board members for their participation in the various Open Houses and reminded the Board of the high school internship presentation on Thursday, September 19 from 5:00 – 6:30 pm and the Middle School Open House is also on Sept. 19th and begins at 6:30 pm.

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

A. Hiring Report

The Superintendent reported that the hiring of most of the outstanding positions had been completed and interviews were continuing for the Middle School's assistant principal position. There are also some open para positions due to the changing needs of students.

B. Enrollment Reports

Enrollment is holding steady and has slowed down but the Superintendent stated there are still some fluctuations.

C. Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Carnemolla shared briefly the work being done on the Strategic Plan and that discussion continue between the work being done at the school level and the work being done as an administrative team. At a later date, the plan will be brought to the Board to explain how it will be used as a 3-year plan to provide for a longer guiding vision.

D. Water Main Repair at Pine Grove School

Director of Operations, Myles Altimus, explained that Pine Grove School sprung a leak a week ago by the back parking lot and playground. A tube connecting to the water main had failed and the repair requires the water company to dig down 4-5 feet in order to replace the pipe which is scheduled for Sept. 30th. The estimated cost is between \$7,000-\$10,000 depending

on the damage, parts needed and extent of asphalt that must be dug up. Discussion was had regarding how the pipe is on our property and the cost of the repairs is the District's, which is unknown until the ground is dug up and damage revealed. The Superintendent reminded the Board that this is an emergency repair and enacted a bid waiver that enables work to be done without the process of an RFP.

E. Updates

The Superintendent thanked all the faculty and staff for a very smooth opening of the school year. There were some bus issues due to changes of staffing at Specialty Bus Transportation and the District is still dealing with some bus stop issues but the buses are running on time. The Superintendent also gave her compliments to the facility crew for their work in making the schools look spectacular for the first day.

Dr. Carnemolla and Mr. Altimus updated the Board on the Lights on Avon fundraiser. Ms. Rietano Davy who is heading up the fundraiser is making available to donors bricks to be engraved and permanently placed by the fields; there is also no cost to be incurred by the District. The Town Manager asked for confirmation from the Board that a conversation was had and for approval of where the bricks would be laid. Mr. Altimus expressed no concern as to the location of the bricks in regards to maintenance and snow plowing. Board members commented that communication and coordination must be had between any outside workers and Mr. Altimus to ensure bricks were placed correctly on school property. Concern was also expressed about the process and the District's responsibility to maintain the area. Mr. Indomenico said the building committee overseeing the artificial turf approves of the fundraiser but felt the efforts were outside the scope of the committee. The Superintendent will look into the situation of the lights and bricks if funds are not met. If the funds are met, conversations regarding the installation of the lights will involve the Town Manager, Building Committee and the Superintendent. Dr. Carnemolla also reminded the Board that they will need to accept the lights as a donation at a later point of time.

Consent Calendar

- A. 19-20/08 Approval of Budget Transfers
- B. 19-20/09 Approval of RBS Donation of \$7,000 from the Nicholas Family
- C. 19-20/02 Approval of Contract for Assistant Superintendent

***Mr. Lowry moved, Mr. Indomenico seconded, to approve the Consent Calendar as presented.
The motion carried 9-0-0.***

VIII. Old Business

A. Turf Field Update

Mr. Indomenico provided the Board members with an update on the turf field and stated the field will be officially turned over to the District when the field is completed. Mr. Indomenico also summarized the various conversations had at both the Town Council and Building Committee meetings such as finalizing the issue of security cameras, the issue of storing and protecting the equipment and netting from the elements, and management of the field. The maintenance work will be done as a team with the Town. Board members continued the discussion and spoke about the need to save for replacement costs as the lifespan of artificial turfs is 10 years. The Board also spoke on providing to the public guidelines regarding the usage of the field.

Mr. Altimus provided further updates on the field which included the netting to the field, delivery of the shed on Sept. 24th, delivery of the grooming machine, landscaping, porta potties, snack shack

and bleachers renovations. Mr. Altimus also shared that the Athletic Director has a plan as to the storage of equipment. Designated people from both the Town and District will be trained in the use of the grooming machine. The Board asked how the use of the field was scheduled to which Mr. Altimus explained that the Athletic Director will keep a schedule. Just as with the use of any other school field, requests must be submitted for use of the artificial turf field. The Board continued this discussion to ensure the community had access to the field and a suggestion was made to keep an accurate inventory of all the new equipment with the District's scanner as done with IT/Tech equipment. Ms. Michaud added that all the equipment is covered under the District's insurance. The town also sets aside funds for replacement of equipment. Dr. Carnemolla reminded the Board that chairs and raisers cannot be set up on the field so graduations can no longer be held on the high school field. Portable lights also cannot be placed on fields due to potential damage which would void the warranty. The Superintendent suggested signage be placed by the field to get information to the public as to the use of the field. The Board suggested this also be shared with coaching staff and possibly put online.

Mr. Indomenico stated that the security cameras will be selected and installed so the District should be prepared to monitor once fields are completed. Mr. Altimus added that the cameras have been identified and \$20,000 has been set aside by the Building Committee. Mr. Altimus is confident the field will be covered including night sight and will meld into current system.

IX. New Business

A. 19-20/10 Policy 4118.11 – Nondiscrimination (Personnel)

Ms. Young explained the Nondiscrimination policy was up for a first read. The policy was separated for staff and students and forms were also made more consistent. Attorney and administration input was sought in the development process. Mr. Medic explained that the policy focuses on nondiscrimination and how it affects employment and ensuring a safe work environment. The process was streamlined and the process is consistent with the sexual harassment policy.

The Board asked for clarification as to whether a policy is a first or second read and that they be so indicated on future agendas. The Nondiscrimination policies are both first reads.

B. 19-20/11 Policy 5145.4 – Nondiscrimination (Students)

Mr. Medic explained that this policy was delineated to focus on student issues in regards to educational programs. It also mirrors procedures for sexual harassment complaints.

Board discussion centered on how much verbage was dictated by attorney or Avonized. Mr. Medic explained that the vast majority of the policy comes from Board counsel with the recent updates to federal and state statutes. The Policy Committee discussed philosophically and in depth the key statements regarding the area and basis of discrimination. Dr. Carnemolla further explained the policy was very similar to the sexual harassment policies due to the changes in legislature. The policy kept very close to the model policy provided from Board counsel to ensure we were covered under the umbrella of the law. Ms. Young also added that the Committee had considerable analysis and discussion around the material that was provided by Mr. Medic and was not as Avonized as other policies. More detail was given to the student policy versus the staff policy in terms of what should be consistent and what needs to be specifically delineated between the two policies. Mr. Lowry, who is also on the Policy Committee explained the depth of the analysis that was done and believes while not Avonized the policy is a better one than when first provided by legal counsel; revisions were brought back to legal counsel for their review.

- C. 19-20/12 2020-2021 Board of Education Operating Budget Development Time Line
Mr. Spivak moved, Mr. Cavanaugh seconded, to approve the fiscal year 2020/2021 Board of Education Operating Budget Development Timeline as presented.

X. Communication from Avon Board of Education Members

Mr. Indomenico expressed concern regarding a question on citizenship. Dr. Carnemolla explained that the question is part of the state demographic requirements, and in turn the federal government, to have that information from school districts. While the question is asked at the time of registration, it is not a condition of registration. Dr. Carnemolla also stated that she reached out to Board council and reviewed our registration process and forms. It was recommended that an adjustment be made in how the information was obtained. The question has now been reframed and has been separated entirely from the registration process. The Board had a discussion of the usage of the data that is generated that could identify students or staff. A suggestion was made to have Policy Committee look into this in regards to student privacy. Dr. Carnemolla will invite Board counsel to the Policy meeting.

Mr. Indomenico also expressed his concern for the students walking on West Avon Road between AMS and AHS at dismissal and suggested the possibility of getting a crossing guard. Mr. Altimus will look into the situation.

Mr. Indomenico asked if there was a District sports calendar that parents can subscribe to for the most updated information. Dr. Carnemolla said will look into it.

Mr. Indomenico also asked Mr. Altimus if bus drivers could be reminded that for the safety of the children to use common sense in their driving routes.

Ms. Blea thanked the Nicholas family for the generous donation to Roaring Brook School.

Ms. Blea attended the 9/11 ceremony at Avon Volunteer Fire Dept. Ms. Blea expressed her appreciation of the Fire Dept and said the high school Camerata Singers did a fantastic job performing. Mr. Lowry reminded everyone that Avon also shared in the tragedy when a former Board member's daughter died at the World Trade Center. A statue of Amy Toyen can be found outside the public library.

XI. Communication from the Public

Lisa Seminara, an Avon resident, requested that the porta potty by the field be handicap accessible.

XII. Adjournment

***Mr. Lowry motioned, Ms. Blea seconded to adjourn the meeting.
The Board adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:32 pm.***

Minutes prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary

Jeffrey S. Fleischman, September 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.