

LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

Regional School District #18

A Private School Experience



in a Public School Setting

Regular Board of Education Meeting

April 1, 2020

This meeting was held virtually through Google Meet app and livestreamed on the district website.

Board Present: Diane Linderman, Chairwoman; Martha Shoemaker, Vice Chair; Jean Wilczynski, Treasurer; Steven Wilson, Secretary; Rick Goulding, Stacey Leonardo; Jennifer Miller; Mary Powell St. Louis; Suzanne Thompson

Administration Present: Ian Neviasher, Superintendent of Schools; Mark Ambruso, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School; James Cavalieri, Principal of Lyme Consolidated School; Michelle Dean, Director of Curriculum; Melissa Dougherty, Director of Special Services; Kelly Enoch, Principal of Mile Creek School; Holly McCalla, Business Manager; Jeanne Manfredi, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School; Noah Ventola, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School; James Wygonik, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Chairwoman Linderman. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Dr. Goulding made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Shoemaker, to approve the minutes of Regular Meeting of March 4, 2020 and Special Meeting of March 16, 2020.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

III. Administrative Reports

1. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Neviasher reviewed the April personnel report noting the retirement of John McGannon, World Language Teacher at LOLHS, effective at the end of the current school year and the resignation of Jaime Stevens, instructional assistant at Mile Creek School. He also reported that Andrew Tyrol has moved

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from substitute status to employee as a Special Education Teacher at LOLHS. Mr. Neviasser also reviewed the vacancies posted for the 2020-2021 school year.

Mr. Neviasser reviewed the April enrollment report which reflected a total of 1,302 students, an increase of four students since last time this month. Mr. Neviasser noted that they are still getting inquiries from families about the Lyme-Old Lyme Schools despite the Coronavirus pandemic.

Mr. Neviasser reported that there have been a number of changes due to the Governor's executive orders in response to COVID-19. Specifically, Executive Order No. 7B which suspends the requirements (statutory, charter, ordinance or regulation) that public agencies hold open meetings and specifically allows public agencies to prohibit in-person public access to such meetings upon meeting certain conditions. Executive Order No. 7B further permits public agencies to “to hold such meetings or proceedings remotely by conference call, videoconference or other technology” on the condition that public access to the meeting and actions taken at such meeting be provided as follows:

- A. The public must have the ability to view or listen to each meeting in real time, by telephone, video or other technology;*
- B. Any such meeting must be recorded or transcribed and posted on the Board's website within 7 days of the meeting or proceeding;*
- C. The notice and agenda must be posted on the Board's website with information about how the meeting will be conducted and how the public can access it;*
- D. Any materials relevant to matters on the agenda must be submitted to the agency at least 24 hours prior to the meeting and posted to the agency's website for public inspection prior to, during and after the meeting;*
- E. All speakers that take part in the meeting must clearly state their name and title, if applicable, before speaking on each occasion that they speak.*

Mr. Neviasser reported that the district's budget process has also been adjusted due the Governor's executive orders. Mr. Neviasser reviewed the following responses from counsel regarding this process.

- A. Executive Order No. 7I allows the Board of Ed to approve the budget without going to a town meeting or referendum but it provides that:
In so acting, the regional board of education shall comply with public meeting requirements consistent with requirements set forth in Executive Order 7B and take all reasonable steps to publicize the proposed budget for said fiscal year and to receive public comment thereon, including, but not limited to, publishing draft budgets on the website and providing an email address or other means for the public to submit timely comments on the proposed budget. [Counsel further advises]...try to mirror your usual budget process as much as possible. For example, maybe have a public hearing in April and vote on the budget the first week of May.*

B. To ensure compliance with Executive Order No. 7I, I would post the proposed budget on the District website and provide an email address where comments can be emailed. You should also hold a telephonic public hearing on the proposed budget.

C. To be consistent with previous practices, it may be worth adopting the budget in early May. Perhaps do a telephonic annual meeting on the first Monday in May and have the Board of Ed approve the budget on Tuesday, May 5, when the referendum would normally be held.

D. If you have not already, I would also let the First Selectman of your member towns know what your budget will be because it will impact their budget process. You may also want to get a sense on their timing for adopting budgets. It may have changed because of the new Executive Order.

E. When the Board of Ed does vote to approve the budget, a good resolution would be as follows: "Resolution to approve the District's fiscal year 2020-2021 budget."

Mr. Neviaseer reported on the particulars of how future Board meetings, including the April 6 District Budget Hearing, would be posted now that the meetings are being held virtually.

Mr. Neviaseer reported that due to additional savings in the area of health insurance, the proposed 2020-2021 budget stands at a decrease of .05%.

Mr. Neviaseer reviewed a document from the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education entitled, *Memo II regarding the implications for and impacts on school districts of Governor Lamont's Executive Orders*. Mr. Neviaseer explained that the first memo was a summary and analysis of the suspension of sections of the FOIA in Executive Order 7C. This second memorandum summarizes and discusses the impact of the suspension of in-person requirements for the adoption of regional school district and municipal budgets found in Executive Order 7I.

Mr. Neviaseer noted that there would be no updates to the district goals this month. Instead, he updated the Board on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The following are his talking points.

- Thanks extended to current and previous Board members for the support of technology and personnel to support technology and training of staff and students. Thanks also extended to the staff for their commitment to the students during this difficult time.
- Distance Learning Week 2. Adjusting and adapting as needed. Staff has run with it; balancing family needs with amount of work.
- Parent/Student/Staff Surveys. Going out on Saturday. Will adapt based on survey results.
- Regular Communication. Daily from teachers; weekly on Saturdays from district so as not to overwhelm families. Calls being made from teachers to all families during the next week to personally check in on how students are doing.

- Monitoring information from the state. What grading looks like, special education, taking attendance, contractual issues (transportation, employees, etc.). Many changes, preparing for long term outage.
- All employees working. Administrative and office staff, teachers, custodian/maintenance, instructional assistants and tutors.
- Food distribution. Averaging around 145 families per day; right now costing the district about 25 cents per meal but cost could go down due to grant funding.
- Calendar. April vacation days spread out (long weekends) to provide a break for families and staff. Trying to provide a consistent schedule for families schooling at home; total of 179 student days, 185 teacher days.
- Facilities. All closed except the track; security staff present to keep people off playgrounds, etc. Closure is providing an opportunity to not only deep clean the buildings but start on some major facilities projects and some summer work. Donations made to L&M Hospital of gloves and masks from the district nursing department.
- Board of Ed meetings. The use of Zoom for foreseeable future for Board meetings including the budget hearing scheduled for April 6 and sub-committee meetings.

Mrs. Thompson asked for clarification on what district athletic venues were closed to the public. The tennis and basketball courts, along with the playgrounds are closed; the track remains open to the public.

2. Business Manager’s Report

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Executive Budget Summary as of March 31, 2020. Fluctuations of note: *Special Ed*: Encumbrances entered as student needs are determined, but trending down considerably year over year.

Admin Service: Greater purchasing in Admin Tech Equipment and Purchased Services last year to date vs. this year to date. Errors in account coding were identified and corrected by year end. Spending this year is reflected in Instructional Programs.

Employee Benefits: Actual allocation rates less than budgeted.

Transportation: Due to use of grant funds to offset this year’s costs.

Support Services: Last year to date increased spending on library books and equipment/purchased services. Spending is in line with previous years.

Year To Date Revenue Report

	2018-2019 Received	2019-2020 Received YTD
Town of Old Lyme	\$26,343,259	\$18,988,639
Town of Lyme	\$6,748,520	\$4,533,720

Encompasses payments through March 31, 2020.

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Contingency Maintenance Report.

\$73,524 in new expenditures

\$69,690 for new grinder pump.

\$1,118 for leak in custodial closet at Center School
\$2,716 miscellaneous net changes on previously reported projects

The remaining contingency as of March 31, 2020 is \$28,380.

IV. Chairman & Board Report

Mrs. Linderman reported on communications received from and upcoming presentations and conference calls with the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education. She asked Board members to contact her if they would like more information on same.

V. New Business

1. Nonrenewals of Non-Tenured Staff

Mr. Neviasher reported that to ensure compliance with state statute, and in accordance with Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-151(b), which gives authority to the Superintendent to determine whether a non-tenured teacher should be offered a contract for the subsequent school year, he recommended the nonrenewal of all non-tenured teachers. Notices were previously hand delivered to all non-tenured teachers indicating that this action would take place at this meeting.

MOTION: Mrs. Shoemaker made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Wilczynski, that pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-151, the Region 18 Board of Education nonrenew the teacher contracts of all non-tenured teachers at the end of the 2019-2020 school year as recommended by the Superintendent. Further move that the Superintendent of Schools be directed to communicate this action of the Board in writing to named staff members.

VOTE: the Board voted in favor of the motion with the exception of Dr. Goulding who abstained from voting. Motion passed with a vote of eight in favor and one abstention.

2. Annual Review of Tuition Policy/Rate

Mr. Neviasher explained that per policy #2420, the Board is required to set a tuition rate for non-resident students by May 30. The current tuition rate is as follows with the recommendation not to change the rate for the 2020-2021 school year:

A) Tuition Student Rates

- *Grades 9-12 - \$19,000*
- *Grades 6-8 - \$17,000*
- *Grades K-5 - \$15,000*
- *Grade PreK - \$10,000*

B) Students attending under Attendance Agreements (unless a multiple-year agreement to provide education facilities is entered into with another Board of Education)

- *PK-12 \$19,000*

C) Children of current staff members will be charged 50% of the applicable tuition.

D) Children of active military parents will be charged 80% of the applicable tuition.

E) Foreign students attending under an F-1 visa as required by SEVIS will be charged 150% of the applicable tuition.

F) Multiple students from the same family attending together will be required to pay the following amounts:

- 1st child– 100% of the applicable tuition*
- 2nd child– 75% of the applicable tuition*
- 3rd child– 50% of the applicable tuition*
- Any additional children will be charged 50% of the applicable tuition.*

MOTION: Dr. Goulding made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Wilczynski, to approve the tuition rate for the 2020-2021 school year as presented.

Follow-up discussion included how the rate has remained consistent over the last 4-5 years and how these rates are in-line with tuition charged by area Catholic schools.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

3. New Policy 6114.81 Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness

Mr. Neviaser explained that after discussion with his colleagues in surrounding districts, he is recommending the Board adopt this policy as written. While the entire Board has been very supportive in allowing the administration to make decisions in response to this pandemic, Mr. Neviaser believes this policy will protect the district in the future should there be a need to take further emergency action. Since the future of this is so hard to predict, this gives the administration the ability to respond quickly to this ever changing environment.

Mr. Neviaser reviewed the section of the policy related to the temporary powers given to Superintendent of Schools during the COVID-19 pandemic:

The Board grants to the Superintendent the following temporary powers to address the COVID-19 pandemic emergency:

- 1. Authority to temporarily waive such Board policies or provisions of Board policies as the Superintendent shall deem necessary to comply with guidance from appropriate health or governmental authorities or necessary for other effective response.*
- 2. Authority to take any lawful actions necessary to ensure the continuation of public education, to provide for the health and safety of students and employees, or to respond to direction from appropriate health and government authorities. Such action may include, but are not limited to,*

adjustments to the curriculum and the provision of alternate educational program options; modifications to the school calendar; adjustments to the delivery of school-provided meals; limitations on access to District property; applying to any governmental body for financial or other aid as may be available; and applying to any governmental body for waiver of regulations or requirements, compliance with which is affected by the COVID-19 pandemic emergency.

3. *Authority to enter into contracts without Board approval for any dollar amount for the purchase of materials, equipment, supplies, or services for sanitation, cleaning, technology, or other needs directly related to the COVID-19 emergency situation, provided such action is consistent with all applicable State and Federal laws.*
4. *Authority to close any school facility without further action by this Board. Such closure shall continue during the emergency created by the COVID-19 pandemic until such time as the Superintendent, in consultation with appropriate health and government authorities, deems it in the best interests of the District and its students to open schools.*
5. *Authority based upon the needs of the District and the guidance from health and government agencies disseminated by CSDE, to direct staff assignments during District closures, including, but not limited to, essential employees who must report to work, employees who may be reassigned, and employees whose services are not needed.*
6. *Authority to limit access to public school grounds and District buildings during school closures.*
7. *Authority to waive the requirements requiring advertising for bids and competitive bid procedures for purchases, which may be necessary due to the emergency. The Superintendent will document the reasons for which prompt remedial action is necessary to prevent physical injury to persons or to property of the District.*

MOTION: Mrs. Shoemaker made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Miller, to waive the first reading of Policy 6114.81 Emergency and Disaster Preparedness and to approve the policy as presented.

Mr. Wilson suggested that the wording under the #3 bullet include the word *reasonable* amount and to read “Authority to enter into contracts without Board approval for any reasonable amount....”

Further discussion centered on Mr. Wilson’s concern on the period of time being defined in the policy. Mrs. Linderman noted that this policy is event driven and she directed Mr. Wilson to the wording on “Temporary powers to address the COVID-10 pandemic emergency” and to the section on “Suspension of Polices.”

There was further discussion on the wording in Bullet #7 and that the policy was specific to COVID-19 and whether this would have to be updated in the future.

AMENDED MOTION: Mrs. Shoemaker amended the motion to read: waive the first reading of Policy 6114-81 Emergency and Disaster Preparedness and to approve the policy with the amendment of including the word “reasonable” in Bullet #3 as follows:

Authority to enter into contracts without Board approval for any reasonable dollar amount for the purchase of materials, equipment, supplies, or services for sanitation, cleaning, technology, or other needs directly related to the COVID-19 emergency situation, provided such action is consistent with all applicable State and Federal laws.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the amended motion.

4. Approval of Members of the Sustainability Committee

Jennifer Miller gave a brief update on the progress to date of this committee. The committee met on March 10 and agreed to the structure and meeting protocol. They also brainstormed contacts, key participants, expertise/roles required. The core team members to date include:

Jennifer Miller, Board of Ed member, Committee Chair

Ron Turner, Director of Facilities and Technology

Heather Fried, Region 18 Staff Member, Environmental Club, workstream lead - education

Karen Taylor, Region 18 parent, substitute staff member, workstream lead – 3R (reduce, reuse, recycle)

Rebecca Waldo, Region 18 parent, business officer, workstream lead – renewable energy

Diane Linderman, Board of Ed Chair

Ian Neviaser, Superintendent of Schools

Rachel Carrion, Region 18 Staff

Paula Gaudet, Region 18 Staff

Connie Pan, Region 18 LOLHS Student

Phil Parcak, Old Lyme Facilities Director

As this is an ad hoc committee of the Board of Education, its membership requires Board approval.

MOTION: Dr. Powell St. Louis made a motion, which was seconded by Dr. Goulding, to approve the membership of the Sustainability Committee and core team as presented.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

VI. Old Business

1. Closing of LOLHS Project

The district is still waiting for the final change order from the State so there is no action required on this agenda item.

2. Report of Committees:

- a. *Facilities*. Mr. Neviaser reported that the public forum on the turf field has not been rescheduled.
- b. *Finance*. No report.

- c. *Communications.* The *Focus on Education* newsletter has been sent out. Mr. Neviasher reported that in addition to local distribution, this newsletter is mailed to approximately 1,900 non-resident taxpayers.
- d. *Policy.* A meeting is scheduled for April 8. Mr. Neviasher reported that he has one policy to be reviewed by the committee along with the job description for the communications position included in next year's budget. This meeting will take place virtually.
- e. *LEARN.* Mrs. Linderman reported that there was a meeting in March when the pending closing of schools was the focus of the conversation, which now seems like old news. The LEARN Board is meeting again next Thursday.
- f. *LOL Prevention Coalition.* Mrs. Shoemaker updated the Board on the extension of state grants for the Coalition, which would guarantee funding through September 2021 with the possibility of five year grant extensions after that. Mrs. Shoemaker also reported that Arianna DelMastro, LOLHS student and youth advocate, has compiled wellness activities for relieving stress, etc., during the school shutdown. These can be accessed via Instagram.

Mr. Neviasher fielded questions from the Board on the following subjects:

Teacher Evaluations: per Governor Lamont's executive order, teacher evaluations will not be occurring this year.

AP Exams: College Board is allowing students to take them at home; videos are available on the College Board website to help prep for these exams.

SAT and SBAC Testing. These tests are not going to be administered this year. There might be an opportunity for students to take the SAT in the fall of their senior year.

College Admissions. Colleges are aware of this highly unusual and unprecedented event, and there will be changes to how they admit students and review applications.

Parent/Student/Staff Survey on Distance Learning Program. Being sent out on April 4. The administration will be adapting and adjusting the distance learning program as needed and will do so if responses warrant changes.

Mrs. Linderman commended the entire staff for their monumental accomplishments during this difficult period. She extended thanks to all on behalf of the Board.

VII. Correspondence

There was no correspondence to report.

VIII. Adjournment

The regular meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m. upon a motion by Mrs. Shoemaker and a second by Mrs. Wilczynski.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Wilson, Secretary