



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, April 21, 2020, 7:00 pm

via Remote Meeting

Avon Board of Education
34 Simsbury, Avon, Connecticut 06001
Via Zoom

Minutes

Attendance

Members Present: Jackie Blea; David Cavanaugh; Debra Chute; Jeffrey S. Fleischman; Jason Indomenico; Bogdan Oprica; Lisa Seminara; Jay Spivak; Laura Young

Members Absent: none

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

I. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Deb Chute, Board Chair, at 7:00 pm.

II. **Pledge of Allegiance**

After the Pledge of Allegiance, a moment of silence was held in remembrance of Linda Jablonski, Finance Assistant. The mission statement was read by Chair Chute.

A roll call of Board members was also taken.

III. **Presentations**

A. Avon Achiever

Lori Arnold (PGS staff) – in recognition of her leadership as a teacher. As a Special Education team leader, Ms. Arnold has helped form strong partnerships with students, parents and staff which ultimately impacts student success.

B. Elizabeth Ferry (Districtwide staff; submitted by RBS) – the entirety of Avon Public Schools is honored to have Ms. Ferry as part of the District team. She is a critical, pivotal, invaluable teacher and leader who has helped the District move towards a remote learning environment with confidence and success thanks to her skill set and her amazing ability to connect with all.

Chair Blea moved to amend the agenda under New Business, adding Item C, 19-20/59 Supplemental Appropriation, Open Choice Tuition. Jay Spivak seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous consent.

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education Regular Monthly Meeting, March 17, 2020

Jackie Blea moved to approve the March 17, 2020 minutes of the Board of Education Regular Monthly Meeting. David Cavanaugh seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous consent.

V. Communication from Public

Chair Chute read the one email received for public comment from Avon resident, Kathleen Gill. Ms. Gill commented on Avon teachers' salaries compared to neighboring towns as well as Fairfield County. Ms. Gill also commented that teacher bonuses should be directly beneficial to students and performance based instead of providing bonuses for things such as perfect attendance or when retirement letters are submitted. Ms. Gill also expressed concern about giving teachers an incentive to come to work when they may be feeling sick. Ms. Gill asked the Board to review the budget and make tradeoffs where necessary to keep the budget flat.

VI. Items of Information and Proposals

A. Student Representative Report – Addisen Ganiats & Alvin Guo, AHS Student Representatives
Addisen Ganiats reported that the high schools students have been trying to stay positive especially the seniors who have been in discussion with high school principal, Mr. Renkawitz, about alternative plans for graduation. Miss Ganiats also reported that online school has been going well. Alvin Guo agreed that the transition to online schooling has been smooth and commended the administrators and teachers for their efforts. Students have had minor concerns with finals and testing and how the new grading would affect GPAs. Students have asked that teachers coordinate the amount of work assigned during online schooling.

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

Ms. Michaud reported that the employer health contributions were made for the months of December through March. For active employees the total was \$1.6 million and \$94,000 for retirees. The journal entry for stop loss and admin fees was also entered for the months between January and March totally \$244,000. Prebuying processes has begun and open order purchase orders are currently being reviewed.

VII. Committees & Liaison Reports

A. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum & Professional Practices – Jackie Blea, Chair

Ms. Blea reported that a meeting was planned for May 6.

2. Finance – Jay Spivak, Chair

Mr. Spivak reported budget transfers were discussed as well as the Executive Order and school closure update which are all on the agenda for tonight's meeting. The next meeting is Tuesday, May 12th.

3. Negotiations – Jason Indomenico, Chair

Mr. Indomenico stated that negotiations are ongoing with the secretaries and food workers unions and hoped to resume meetings when able.

4. Policy – Laura Young, Chair

Ms. Young reported that three of the policies reviewed as well as some bylaws are on the agenda for tonight. The Bullying policy was of primary attention with a summary of changes provided to the Board members.

B. Liaison Report

1. Board Representative to Capital Region Education Council – Jackie Blea, Board Rep.

Ms. Blea shared that CREC recently held a virtual meeting discussing the issues with the closure including the lack of Chromebook in many districts. It is also assumed that the Legislature will be foregoing their regular sessions and only holding Special Sessions. Next meeting will be on May 20.

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

A. Board Chair Update

Chair Chute thanked the many frontline workers, which also included administrators, who helped distribute Chromebooks in the district. Ms. Chute acknowledged the hard work of the IT Department who have become indispensable during the school closure, the food service workers who have been distributing meals to the families, and the custodians who have been diligently cleaning the schools.

Ms. Chute also thanked the Avon community for any of their comments and to continue to feel free to reach out to any of the administrators as they continue to meet during the closure.

IX. Superintendent’s Report – Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla

A. Hiring Report

The Superintendent showed that there has not been any hiring recently though there are postings of vacancies.

B. Enrollment Report

Dr. Carnemolla explained that enrollment was continuing up to the closure showing an increase of 27 from the same time last year. Registration will be moved online.

C. Updates

Food services continues to provide a week’s worth of breakfast and lunch meals on Mondays and Wednesdays to 30-50 students a week for a total of 1,576 meals.

X. Consent Calendar

A. 19-20/56 Approval of Budget Transfers

David Cavanaugh moved to approve the Consent Calendar as presented, Jay Spivak seconded. The motion carried 9-0-0.

XI. Old Business

A. 19-20/51 Policy 5131.911 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention, Second Read

Dr. Carnemolla reviewed that the policy was updated to reflect the current statute and consistent to current practice in the District. Mr. Medic added that cyberbullying and teen dating violence was now included in the policy to be in compliance to the current state laws. Communication was also streamlined to one school day and key points added in regards to school climate.

Laura Young moved to approve Policy 5131.911 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention as presented, David Cavanaugh seconded.

The motion carried 9-0-0.

B. 19-20/52 Bylaw 9132 – Standing Committees, Second Read

C. 19-20/53 Bylaw 9133 – Ad Hoc Committees, Second Read

D. 19-20/54 Bylaw 9325 – Meeting Conduct, Second Read

E. 19-20/55 Bylaw 9325.2 – Agenda Format, Second Read

Debra Chute moved to approve Bylaw 9132 – Standing Committees, Bylaw 9133 – Ad Hoc Committees, Bylaw 9325 – Meeting Conduct and Bylaw 9325.2 – Agenda Format as presented, Lisa Seminara seconded.

The motion carried 9-0-0.

F. 18-19/44 2020-2021 School Year Calendar

Dr. Carnemolla explained when the 2020-2021 School Year Calendar was first approved March 2019, the April vacation was held the week after Good Friday. Since then, surrounding districts have published their calendars showing the April vacation the week after. Dr. Carnemolla asked that the April vacation be moved to the week of April 12th to align with the surrounding districts in the Farmington Valley to alleviate staffing concerns.

David Cavanaugh moved to approve the 2020-2021 School Year Calendar as amended with the April vacation week April 12th through April 16th, Jackie Blea seconded.

The motion carried 9-0-0.

XII. New Business

A. 19-20/57 Healthy Food Certification – Maggie Dreher, Director of Nutrition Services

Ms. Dreher explained the vote to renew the Healthy Food Certification. The first part is to vote to certify to comply with the healthy food certification, which are CT's nutritional standards that are higher than the federal standards. The District will receive from the state six cents per lunch sold for complying with the regulations. The second part is in regards to exemptions to the regulations Ms. Dreher further explained. Ms. Dreher recommended to the Board to vote in favor of both parts.

Debra Chute moved that Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Avon Board of Education 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, 2020, through June 30,2021. 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, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups. Jeffrey S. Fleischman seconded the motion.

The motion carried 9-0-0.

Debra Chute moved that the Avon Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes 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 and beverage 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 event is being held. Jason Indomenico seconded the motion.

The motion carried 9-0-0.

B. 19-20/58 School Closure Updates

Ms. Michaud gave a financial overview of the Governor's 7R Executive Order and how it affected Avon.

- All grant funds through year-end are to be disbursed as awarded by June 30th.
- Employment and payroll is to be continued; Avon will maintain all employees as of closure.
- Transportation contracts are to be maintained, with three years of contract remaining. The District's legal counsel is renegotiating terms for services that are not rendered due to the closure. If funds are returned they will be turned over directly to the Town.
- Special Education providers are to be maintained so that students continue to receive services.

A large savings is expected through Kelly Services and is now embarking on a building sub for two of the schools added Ms. Michaud. Dr. Carnemolla stated while there is potential savings due to the closure there is also potential unexpected loss, such as in food services with an estimate deficit of over \$200,000. The Superintendent and District administrators highlighted important aspects while transitioning to the school closure and remote learning including:

- A distant learning website providing all information to assist students and families
- List of all District contact information including support staff and community resources for additional support
- Move to online registration
- Development and distribution to staff and families of a remote learning plan and protocol
- Development of common lessons and lesson planning
- Addressing the needs of individual families
- Academic progress and standards
- Support services for students with needs
- Continuity of student connection to their teachers, including accessibility to teachers
- Resources available to students at home – art supplies, musical instruments, etc.
- Professional development
- Student morning announcements
- Technology issues
- Balancing workloads/volume of work
- Consistency of experience for all students
- The whole child, staying connected to the students on all levels
- Communication
- Students seeing teachers in a different light
- Keeping student spirit up/Spirit week
- Final exams
- Grading/Pass Fail/GPA
- ECE/AP
- Transcripts and accurate recording of grades

Discussion continued with question from Board members. Dr. Nestler-Rusack also gave a quick summary of the professional development opportunities including tutorials online. Dr. Carnemolla shared that a survey would be sent out to families asking for comments about remote learning. Requests for Chromebooks continue to come in and the technology staff have been helping with technology issues students and staff may be having. While all students now have internet connection, Dr. Carnemolla explained that the District is accessing students' connectivity to learning and reaching out to families and students.

C. 19-20/59 Supplemental Appropriation, Open Choice Tuition

Ms. Michaud explained she had recently learned what the appropriation would be including the additional entitlement funds from the State Department. For the 19/20 school year, 110 students had been budgeted for enrollment but according to the Oct 1 enrollment there were 120 students, which gave an additional \$60,000 in unexpected revenue. Separate from Open Choice tuition, the District has again received Early Beginnings Grant funds as well as Additional Entitlement dollars through the Open Choice program. A total of \$115,500.00 was received in March, or \$5,500.00 per each of the 21 enrolled PK and K students. Furthermore, the Open Choice program has awarded Avon \$31,028.00 in Additional Entitlement funds to be paid in the 4th quarter. Neither funding source was included in the current fiscal year's budget; therefore, it is unanticipated revenue totaling \$146,528.00. At this time, a supplemental appropriation totaling \$206,528.00 should be requested. These dollars are instrumental in funding programmatic and special education needs for the District.

Jay Spivak moved to approve a request to the Town of Avon for a supplemental appropriation totaling \$206,528.00 in additional unbudgeted Open Choice Tuition revenue. Laura Young seconded.

The motion carried 9-0-0.

XIII. Communication from Avon Board of Education Members

There was no communication from Board members.

XIV. Adjournment

Jackie Blea motioned to adjourn the meeting, Laura Young seconded.

The Board adjourned by unanimous consent at 9:58 pm.

Minutes prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary

Jeffrey S. Fleischman, May 15, 2020

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.