

ANSONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

MINUTES

PLACE: ANSONIA HIGH SCHOOL, Media Center **DATE:** 11 July 2018 **TIME:** 6:00 P.M.
MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY: Fran DiGiorgi, vice president

- I. **OPENING**
- A. Pledge of Allegiance
- B. Roll Call – Ms. Fran DiGiorgi called a quorum

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	PRESENT	ABSENT	LATE
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO	X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI	X		
MR. JOHN IZZO	X		
MR. JOE JEANETTE		X	
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS, president		X	
MR. CHRISTOPHER PHIPPS	X		
MR. VINCENT SCARLATA	X		
TOTAL	5	2	0

II. Public Session--

Ms. DiGiorgi read a disclaimer for anyone wishing to speak during Public Session.

Jeremy Musnicki, 16 Holbrook Street. Mr. Musnicki stated a little over a month ago, schools were going to shut-down. He said there was an emergency injunction that was awarded. He said a \$500,000 amount was given for payroll. He said his question is for the payroll dates, how much of that \$500,000 has been used for payroll? Superintendent Merlone asked him to leave his address and he will be answered in a letter. Mr. Musnicki asked if they were not aware of the budget. Superintendent Merlone answered they are aware of the budget. Superintendent Merlone said Ms. Digiorgi said they will not be answering questions during this meeting. Mr. Musnicki asked if they do not want to answer where their budget is. Ms. Digiorgi added, he will get a letter from the Board of Ed with the information that was requested. She added they are in the middle of conducting a meeting and it is not time for an argument. Mr. Musnicki stated he is not arguing. Superintendent Merlone said he can also remain at the meeting when Ms. Jones talks about the budget. Mr. Izzo added he can answer. He said month to date there was zero that was debited against the \$500,000. Mr. Musnicki said that basically his child was used as a pawn to get an emergency injunction and it is end of year and payroll was met. A member of the audience asked Mr. Musnicki how is able to say he is not arguing, when clearly he is trying to yell and argue. She said his question was answered and they said he can stay for the rest of the meeting and he continues to yell. Ms. Digiorgi asked everyone to please sit down and if there was anyone else that wished to speak.

Javier Arguello, 39 Jewett Street. He said he would like to know what is going to happen from here. He said there will be those continuing to come and argue just for the fact of confrontation. He said moving forward what will happen with the children of Ansonia. He said instead of bickering on what was, he would like to know what can be done to rectify the situation from here. He said the school year is coming up and he would like to bridge the gap between the city and the Board of Education. He said he thinks it's time, moving forward, to just heal rather than to continue to come and confront. He said he would like to know what is being done to have greater and clearer communication. He said when the state continues to remain fickle and decides to continue to short fund, what will the city and the Board of Ed do. Mr. Arguello said he wanted to remind the people that more than 50% of the budget comes from the state. He said when the city says they give the Board of Ed all this money, it is the state.

A member of the audience who did not provide her name, said she wanted to address what Mr. Musnicki said. Ms. Digiorgi said this is a meeting. The member of the audience said the Board does not listen. She said it was not nice if they are not listening to what Mr. Musnicki is saying and he is passionate and he never got an apology. Ms. Digiorgi

reminded the member of the audience that she is out of order and it is a conducted meeting. Several side conversations began to take place and Ms. Digiorgi reminded the room it is a meeting.

Brian Perkins, resident of Ansonia, currently stationed out of state. He read from an article that was published regarding a separate city meeting. He said his question was when did the \$600,000 become a loan and who signed off on this loan. He said a loan is a contractual agreement signed by two parties. He said is there is no signature from one side you do not have to give the money back. He said the Alliance School District grant that was received said they can't use it for funds that are not allowed. He asked why the city keeps stating this grant money should have been used. He said the \$1.8 million could not have been used for certain things. He said for Superintendent Merlone to be accused of mishandling money is wrong. He said also, she is an administrator and her job is not only to assist with the budget but many, many other jobs as well.

Sharon Varoshak, 16 Chester Street, said she was addressing the fact that no apology was given to the man that is so passionate. She said the first time everyone asked if it was the budget and everyone was told they got the budget, this was not true. She said then a press conference was held and it was said there was no school the next day. She said she just an apology would be so important.

Philip Tripp, resident and 2nd Ward Aldermen, City of Ansonia. He said he is very familiar with the entire budget process. He said on a number of occasions he has sat in on the Finance Committee meetings. He said he finds it interesting that a specific amount was given to the Board of Education. He said when he was there, there was no mention of a loan in calendar year 2017. He said after the first of January 2018 is when the word loan began to be used. He added, looking at the budget, the Board of Ed was within the original amount. He said it wasn't until the city decided to pull out \$600,000. He said it was illegal and is going to court and the City of Ansonia is going to lose the case. He said if there is any apology that needs to be made, it is from City Hall to the Board of Education.

Ms. Digiorgi asked three times if anyone else from the public wished to speak. Public session was closed.

Mr. Phipps said he has one comment regarding questions during Public Session. He said he would like to see the answer to the questions put in the minutes for that meeting. He said he would like this Board to start doing this and hopes other Boards in the city will also follow.

III. Action Items, consideration of approving:

A. Accepting BOE meeting minutes dated June 5, 2018(special), June 11, 2018 (special), June 13, 2018 (regular)

**MOTION: To accept minutes dated
June 5, 2018 (special) meeting,
June 11, 2018(special) meeting,
June 13, 2018(regular) meeting.**

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		
MR. JOHN IZZO		X		
MR. JOE JEANETTE				
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS, president				
MR. CHRISTOPHER PHIPPS	1	X		
MR. VINCENT SCARLATA	2	X		
TOTAL		5	0	0

B. Healthy Food Certification.

Superintendent Merlone said this literature is presented every year from the state and the Board endorses it regarding the Healthy Food Certificate. Superintendent read the following statement:

Food Exemptions: The board of education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards 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 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. The "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, and must be the same place as the food sales.

Beverage Exemptions: The board of education will allow the sale to students of 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 beverages 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. The "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, and must be the same place as the food sales.

MOTION: To accept the statutes from the state regarding the Healthy Food Certificate for Food Exemptions and Beverage Exemptions.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		
MR. JOHN IZZO	X	X		
MR. JOE JEANETTE				
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS, president				
MR. CHRISTOPHER PHIPPS		X		
MR. VINCENT SCARLATA	X	X		
TOTAL		5	0	0

C. Revised 2018-2019 Budget.

Discussion Ms. Lisa Jones, Business Manager, stated that in the meeting packet there is a revised 2018-19 budget. She said she revised the budget that was originally submitted to the Board. She said originally she submitted a budget for \$32,590,000. She added the revised includes reduction of line items for the amount to reflect the \$31,260,000 that was approved by the Board of Aldermen. She said she is looking to be proactive this year and put the budget into the system and seeking approved appropriation from what was revised. Mr. Izzo asked how many new hires does the budget anticipate and what the dollar amount is. Ms. Jones said there is no new hires this budget. Mr. Izzo asked if they are bringing back any of the laid off teachers. Superintendent Merlone answered they do not have the money to bring back anyone. She said her answer is no. She said the Middle School is being restructured because there are not enough teachers. Mr. Scarlata asked if they can get a breakdown of what the school system looks like now that these cuts have been made. Superintendent confirmed that can be handed out to anyone that wants it. Mr. Phipps said to be clear, there will now be an assistant principal floating in between Mead School and Prendergast. Superintendent Merlone confirmed. Mr. Phipps asked what the Middle School administration looks like. Superintendent Merlone said she will be moving the Assistant Principal from Prendergast School to the Middle School because she has to have two at that school. Mr. Izzo asked if the non-union employees that were being recommended for renewal included in the 2018-19 budget. Superintendent Merlone confirmed they are.

MOTION: To approve the revised 2018-19 school budget

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		
MR. JOHN IZZO		X		
MR. JOE JEANETTE				
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS, president				
MR. CHRISTOPHER PHIPPS	1	X		
MR. VINCENT SCARLATA	2	X		
TOTAL		5	0	0

D. Rescinding of letters given to teachers regarding non-renewals.

Discussion: Superintendent Merlone said these rescinded staff are from the 37 teachers who received non-renewal letters in the spring. Superintendent Merlone stated the non-renewal process is basically done every year. They are

teachers that were either put in different positions or were called back. She said the teachers in this list are not new hires and are not part of the staff that was ultimately let go. She said she will be sending out letters once the Board gives the endorsement.

MOTION: To rescind the letters given to teachers regarding non-renewals.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO	2	X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		
MR. JOHN IZZO		X		
MR. JOE JEANETTE				
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS, president				
MR. CHRISTOPHER PHIPPS	1	X		
MR. VINCENT SCARLATA		X		
TOTAL		5	0	0

E. Superintendent's recommendation for non-union 2018-19 contract extension/employment.

Discussion Ms. Digiorgi said they have decided to table this. Mr. Izzo asked for what reason. Mr. Phipps said he was the one who brought it up and wanted to do some research and due diligence and ask any questions as well as perform any evaluations that as a Board will have to do. Mr. Izzo concurred and agreed with Mr. Phipps saying he would like to see performance evals and the recommended pay increases. Superintendent Merlone said this was to extend the contracts, this was not for pay increases. She said as they know the only evaluation that can be seen is hers. She added, they cannot see evaluation for others. Mr. Izzo asked if they can vote not to renew certain ones on the list. Superintendent Merlone answered they all were voted on together in the past. He said if there was an underperformer, they can't make a recommendation? Superintendent Merlone said they would not know this since the only evaluation they can see is hers. Mr. Phipps said he would assume that because they are all being recommended they have all had their review. He said he also has the same concern as Mr. Izzo, perhaps someone didn't have the greatest review. He said he would not want to automatically give someone a three year contract if they are not doing well. He said he would like to table this and revisit. Mr. Scarlata said he would like to remind everyone that the Board's responsibility is not to micro manage the staff. He said that is to be left up to their administrators. He said they have to take their recommendations for face value. Mr. Phipps said he wanted to be perfectly clear that his concern has absolutely nothing to do with extending the Superintendent's contract. He said he supports Dr. Merlone fully and it has nothing to do with her. Mr. Phipps said he sees a few extend to 6/30/2019, and he will assume the contract ends 6/30/2018? Superintendent Merlone confirmed. She said these people will have no contract. Mr. Phipps said he would like to renew any member whose contract expired 6/30/18 and renew for one year. Mr. Izzo asked if there was any requirement to give them notice. He said it would be nice to let them know. Ms. Digiorgi said there are eight people who have contracts expiring.

MOTION: To renew contracts of the eight employees who have an expiration of 6/30/18 expiration.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		
MR. JOHN IZZO		X		
MR. JOE JEANETTE				
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS, president				
MR. CHRISTOPHER PHIPPS	1	X		
MR. VINCENT SCARLATA	2	X		
TOTAL		5	0	0

F. Participation agreement letter re: Sound School.

Discussion: Superintendent Merlone reminded the Board that at the last meeting there was a vote to put the Sound School on the list for Ansonia students. She said after some research, it is going to cost more money than originally thought. She asked Lisa Jones to explain. Ms. Jones said there were a couple of parents that expressed interest in the

Sound School. She said the additional expense would be \$60 per day for transportation as well as the Special Education needs for one of the students that have been accepted into the school. Ms. DiGiorgi asked if this was per student, per day. Ms. Jones told her it is not. She said once a second school is identified, they will have to send students from here forward and the only way to opt out is if there are no students attending for a period of three consecutive years. She said she has a request in to meet with Mr. Visal from the Sound School to talk about logistics. Mr. Izzo asked if we closed the books for June 2018. Ms. Jones said we have not closed the books for June 2018. She said they are tying up invoices for the year for existing. Mr. Izzo asked for the \$31,260,000 for last year's budget we have extended \$31,030,000 and he sees a positive for \$200,000 from the budget that was presented in this packet. He said of the \$230,000 he is trying to see what kind of surplus there is. Superintendent said they did not finish and they cannot use this year's funds for next year's services. Mr. Izzo said he will revisit because he still has budget questions. Mr. Phipps said he there may be a fact that they acted prematurely but they cannot go back on their word after agreeing. Mr. Scarlata asked where the funds will come from. Ms. Jones said it will have to come from somewhere within the budget. Mr. Izzo said there will have to be something cut because it is not right to go back after accepting the Sound School on board. Ms. Jones said the other point is that now there will be two participating schools and this will cost the Board money. She also reminded the Board that there has to be three years of no student participating in order for them to be able to remove as participating. Mr. Phipps said he would like to look at removing Nonnewaug as a participating school since it is costing the Board approximately \$30,000 per year for transportation. Mr. Izzo asked if there is an option to charge for tuition like a private school or another school of choice. Superintendent Merlone said they cannot charge and the district is responsible for tuition.

MOTION: To sign The Participation letter regarding The Sound School.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO	2	X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		
MR. JOHN IZZO		X		
MR. JOE JEANETTE				
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS, president				
MR. CHRISTOPHER PHIPPS		X		
MR. VINCENT SCARLATA	1	X		
TOTAL		5	0	0

V. Informational Items.

A. Assistant Superintendent's Report

Dr. DiBacco said his notes are somewhat brief. He will be meeting with Milone & MacBrom and Silver & Petrucelli for reports. He said this report will be available shortly. He also said the Cambridge Report will also be presented to the Board. He said the district has been selected for the "Portrait of a Graduate" grant which visits all aspects of students and avenues that can be available for a graduate. Dr. DiBacco said the district has become a member of the TEACH collaborate with CSDE that will combine to improve staffing and hiring. He also mentioned the Reading Rocks event that took place on June 23rd was a huge success. Superintendent Merlone read a thank you letter from the Christ Episcopal Church, South Cliff Street, where the event took place. Dr. DiBacco also wanted to congratulate the district on some of the highest SBAC scores to date. He said from SAT, SBAC literacy and math have increased and everyone needs to be thanked for their efforts.

B. Technology Report

Mr. Vinny Pastore gave a brief summary of the activities the IT Department will be performing while school is not in session.

C. School Business Administrator Financials

1. **2017-2018 Year-to-date** - Ms. Lisa Jones stated she provided financials for the 2017-18 fiscal year with numbers that are reflected up to June 30, 2018. She said the \$31.8 million was the original appropriation that was made to the Board of Education and she wanted to note that the revised in front of them reflects the \$31.2 million approved by the Board of Aldermen. She said in order to achieve the budget she did not do any adjustments to any line items based on when the appropriation came about. She said she added a line item to the bottom and it shows a credit of \$600,000. She said at the end of June 2018 the report reflects the encumbrances. She said there are some payouts that are not showing such as a payroll accrual and other expenses. Ms. Jones explained in detail the line items and expenses after adjustments were made. She said the report breakdown shows how all funds were spent down to approximately \$3.00. Mr. Phipps added this will answer the earlier question made regarding the \$500,000. He said the funds were encumbered for salaries and other line items noted. Mr. Izzo said the numbers do not tie. Ms. Jones asked what he was referring to. Mr. Izzo said the city closed its books on June 30th and they have the final and payroll was taken into consideration. He said there were statements made that they were not able to make payroll and were broke. He said the town was put in hysteria and there was a huge embarrassment to the city. He said not only was the money there to meet payroll, it was known that the money was there.

He asked if the city pays the bills and does the checkbook. Ms. Jones answered that the city transfers funds into the Board of Education's account and the Board pays the bills. Mr. Izzo says according to the balance sheet, there is a balance \$533,000 not including the \$500,000 settlement that has not been encumbered yet. He said he is not sure what is wrong but her budget does not tie to the city's budget at the moment. Ms. Jones said she believes he is mixing apples and oranges. She said what she provided is what is provided every month based solely on the Board of Education. He said it does not tie to the balance sheet of the city. Ms. Jones said the intent of the report is not based on being tied to the city's budget, nor does she do this on a monthly basis. She said the report is based only on the Board of Ed through the month of June. Mr. Izzo said she should know via the purchase order and requisitions how much is coming in. She said that is what the report reflects and where her numbers come from. Mr. Izzo asked if there is or is not a balance of \$500,000. Mr. Izzo said the city has a public document and it is available. Ms. Jones said her report is based on their spending and their references and there is a process. She said until the process is complete, there will not be that reconciliation. She said that is a discussion that she has been having with the city. Mr. Izzo said it appears the money was there in April and May and they knew the money would be there to make payroll. He said there appears to be a problem with the balances. Superintendent Merlone asked Mr. Izzo to come over tomorrow to sit and look at the balances. She said she can show him everything. He said his point is the whole town was upset and the money was actually in the bank. Superintendent Merlone said it will be for the auditor to decide. Ms. Jones said they do not have the money in the bank and when they submit request for payment, the funding is transmitted by the city. She said the important piece is based on the encumbrances at that time. She added, if the Board continued to move in the manner they originally planned with the original funds they were given for the school year, there absolutely would not have been enough funding available to move forward with payroll. As of January, when the Board of Aldermen reduced the budget, she said there were spending cuts and further encumbrances stopped. Mr. Izzo said we can agree to disagree. Mr. Scarlata said he does not know the dynamics with what was just discussed but wanted to know the cooperation level between Richie's office and hers. Ms. Jones said they have conversations almost daily and discussion takes place regarding the balances. She said there are outstanding requests for funds that are not released as of today. She said they have not spent the full allocation.

2. Athletics –

Ms. Digiorgi said any questions can be directed to Mr. Brockett since he was not at the meeting.

Mr. Phipps asked if there was a breakdown of the cuts being made to this department. Ms. Jones said she does not have a breakdown but will provide this. Mr. Phipps said he will contact Mr. Brockett and get the details.

3. Food Services –

Ms. Digiorgi asked anyone with questions to direct them to Mr. Golja.

4. Grants and other income –

Superintendent Merlone told the Board any question can be directed to Ms. Ehman's office and they will be answered.

D. Notes from the Desk of the Superintendent

Attachment #9

Superintendent Merlone gave her report and summary of the newsletter that was handed out. She wanted to remind the Board that due to the numbers which Ms. Jones discussed earlier, she is very upset, but none of the teachers let go will be able to be called back. She said there will be approximately 30 or more students in classrooms. She said all administrators as well as union representatives worked together to make the teacher cuts. She said losing 17 teachers is devastating and she has never done this in her life. Besides teachers there are 1.5 administrators, supplies, athletics and several other cuts.

She moved on to discuss the regionalization of Ansonia and Derby School Committee that has formed and had their first meeting. She asked Mr. Izzo to review. Mr. Izzo said it was the first of a two year process. He said the meetings will be every month. He said it was just the beginning of a long process and was a good meeting. He said with support from the state the committee will do the research. He said the research out there is outdated. He said he does not know where this will go and there is a whole population out there that feels that most of this will mean just going through the motion. He said there are a number that say they will never support regionalization. He added there are some tax payers who think it is a great idea. Mr. Izzo said mainly they need to figure something out that will not harm the students. He said the common goal will be the students. He said the next meeting is July 23, 2018.

Superintendent Merlone said evaluations were finalized and will be forwarded to the state. She continued with the Facilities Report and projects currently underway. She also reviewed all end of the year activities that took place in all schools. She congratulated all 2018 graduates. Graduation was held on June 18, 2018 indoors due to threat of thunderstorms.

H. Additional; Administration or Board of Education

It was asked if the Narcan training has been done. Superintendent Merlone confirmed it has been completed and all participating staff is prepared.

Mr. Phipps said traditionally the August meeting is dropped and he wondered if the Board wished to do the same this year. Superintendent Merlone said if there is a need, a Special Meeting can be called. Ms. Digiorgi asked the entire Board if everyone was on board with cancelling the August 2018 meeting. Everyone agreed.

VI. Executive Session re: Expulsion.

MOTION: To enter into Executive Session at 7:30 p.m. for the purpose of conducting expulsion hearing and further invite Superintendent Merlone into Executive Session.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		

MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		
MR. JOHN IZZO		X		
MR. JOE JEANETTE				
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS, president				
MR. CHRISTOPHER PHIPPS	1	X		
MR. VINCENT SCARLATA	2	X		
TOTAL		5	0	0

To return to regular meeting.

VII. Action as needed. As a result of Executive Session.

MOTION: To accept Superintendent Carol Merlone's recommendation.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO	1	X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		
MR. JOHN IZZO	2	X		
MR. JOE JEANETTE				
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS, president				
MR. CHRISTOPHER PHIPPS		X		
MR. VINCENT SCARLATA		X		
TOTAL		5	0	

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		
MR. JOHN IZZO		X		
MR. JOE JEANETTE				
MR. WILLIAM NIMONS, president				
MR. CHRISTOPHER PHIPPS	2	X		
MR. VINCENT SCARLATA	1	X		
TOTAL		5	0	

Respectfully submitted,



Cassie Venson
Recording Secretary
Date 07/13/2018