

# LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

*Regional School District #18*

*A Private School Experience*



*in a Public School Setting*

## **Regular Board of Education Meeting**

December 2, 2020

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

*Present Via Telephone:* Jean Wilczynski

*Administration Present:* Ian Neviaser, 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; Ron Turner, Director of Facilities & Technology; Noah Ventola, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School; James Wygonik, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School

*Others Present:* 12 Community Members from LOL

### **I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Superintendent Neviaser. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

#### **1. Election of Board Officers**

Mrs. Miller made a motion to nominate Diane Linderman as the Chair of the Board of Education. A paper ballot vote reflected all Board members voting for Diane Linderman as the Chair of the Board.

Mrs. Wilczynski made a motion to nominate Martha Shoemaker as the Vice Chair of the Board of Education. A paper ballot vote reflected all Board members voting for Martha Shoemaker as the Vice Chair of the Board.

Mrs. Thompson made a motion to nominate Steven Wilson as the Secretary of the Board of Education. A paper ballot vote reflected all Board members voting for Steven Wilson as the Secretary of the Board.

**49 Lyme Street, Old Lyme, Connecticut 06371**

**T: 860-434-7238 F: 860-434-9959 E: [neviaseri@region18.org](mailto:neviaseri@region18.org) [www.region18.org](http://www.region18.org)**

Mrs. Shoemaker made a motion to nominate Jean Wilczynski as the Treasurer of the Board of Education. A paper ballot vote reflected all Board members voting for Jean Wilczynski as the Treasurer of the Board.

## **II. Approval of Minutes**

MOTION: Dr. Powell St. Louis made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Shoemaker, to approve the minutes of Special Meeting, Regular Meeting and Executive Session of November 4, 2020 and Special Meeting of November 24, 2020 as presented.

Mrs. Miller made a correction to page 4 of the Regular Meeting Minutes of November 4, 2020 in which she added the word “cumulative” to the section on the grass field construction costs.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion with the inclusion of the change recommended by Mrs. Miller.

## **III. Visitors**

### **1. CAPSS Student Recognition**

This agenda item was postponed due to the pandemic. It will be rescheduled when in-person attendance of visitors to Board meetings has resumed.

### **2. Report from Student Representatives**

Isabella Hine and Ellery Zrenda reported on the following activities taking place at the schools:

*At LOLHS:* On November 10, the music department successfully held an outdoor concert. The weather cooperated. Many turned out for the event. The music was first class. With a combined effort of the Community Service Club, National Honor Society and the local Cub Scout troop, the annual Thanksgiving Food Drive delivered two truckloads of food to the Food Bank. On November 23 and 24, the high school held virtual parent/teacher conferences. We received an abundance of positive feedback on the experience. The National Honor Society is holding its annual Holiday Toy Drive. Anyone interested in donating a new, unwrapped toy can drop it off at the high school in the next two weeks. The Student Leaders and Music Department are working on a joint effort to live-stream the annual holiday assembly on December 23.

*At LOLMS:* The middle school remained active in the month of November. On November 11, the students recognized Veterans Day by writing thank you cards to active service members and by decorating the front of the middle school with nearly 300 American flags. Over 100 students submitted entries to the annual Patriots Pen essay contest. The winning essays were chosen by the Old Lyme VFW. The students also participated in the Turkey Dance Challenge. The Turkey Dance was a fun community building activity which also raised two truckloads of non-perishable food items that will benefit Southeastern Connecticut. In addition, the middle school staff hosted parent-teacher conferences with over 200 Zoom parent-teacher conferences occurring on November 23 and 24. The middle school staff continues to teach and reinforce the COVID mitigation strategies as the winter season approaches.

*At Lyme Consolidated School:* Lyme School was very busy during the month of November. On November 5, the third graders received dictionaries from the local Rotary Club. Veterans Day was celebrated by watching the district video and making thank you cards for the local veterans. Each student placed a flag in the ground in front of the school and were encouraged to wear red, white and blue to school. The Lyme School would like to thank Mr. Noah Ventola for preparing the Veterans Day video and for providing the flags. Project Paws spent 20 minutes in each of the classrooms on November 18 and 19. A second "Virtual Town Meeting" of the year was held on November 20. Report cards were set home on November 20 for students in grades 1 through 5. Virtual parent/teacher conferences were held on November 23 and 24. Lyme School has joined the Trex Challenge that collects recyclable plastic materials. Thanks were extended to Lyme School parent Karen Taylor for helping to organize this event.

*At Mile Creek School:* The month of November was very busy at Mile Creek. Students celebrated Veterans Day by sending cards to local veteran groups, by contributing to the district's Veterans Day video, by planting American flags in front of the school and by wearing red, white and blue. The school had their first visit of the year from Project Paws Pals during recess time. The fifth grade students engaged in a live Zoom meeting with Channel 3 meteorologist Bruce DePrest as part of their study of hurricanes. Students drew pictures of Thanksgiving floats, and fifth grader Woody Goss utilized the drawings to create an animated Thanksgiving Parade enjoyed by the whole school. A Zoom meeting Spirit Day also took place. Students wore fancy clothing on the top and casual clothing on the bottom. The outfits were very creative. The Trex Challenge has begun, and we have been collecting an impressive amount of recyclable plastic materials. This month parent-teacher conferences also took place.

*In the Preschool Program:* The preschool ended the month of November with the spirit of giving. The book *Stone Soup* is a tradition in preschool and teaches students about a community who shares with each other during difficult times. Typically, after reading the story, the classes make Stone Soup to share as a classroom community. In keeping with the theme of "flexibility" this year, the preschool adjusted their tradition by collecting non-perishable food items and made a donation to the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut to benefit their Food Center program. Staff and students thank all who made donations. The theme of giving will continue in December as students learn about helping the community and celebrations. They will learn about the letters G, H and I and will study snowflakes when they talk about patterns in math. December will also include books about gingerbread and winter. Spirit Days are scheduled and students will participate in different fun activities like Crazy Hair Day and Pajama Day. On December 16, all students will attend a virtual "field trip" at the Florence Griswold Museum. During the field trip, they will have an art lesson through Zoom with museum staff. Their works of art will be wrapped as gifts for their parents. The preschool wishes everyone a happy winter holiday season.

### 3. Public Comment

Bill Folland, an Old Lyme resident, spoke to environmental concerns of the proposed artificial playing field; specifically, possible drainage to the pond behind the high school. He recommended that the Board have soil samples taken from the pond before approving the construction of this field, which he believed

would alleviate community concerns about contamination. Mr. Folland also recommended that the funding of this field be decided by a vote of the townspeople.

Brian Cole, a resident of Old Lyme, read the following statement:

*My name is Brian Cole and I appreciate the opportunity to address the Board on the turf field issue. My wife and I have lived in Old Lyme for 36 years. Each of our 3 children has played sports for and graduated from Lyme-Old Lyme Schools. Our children have played soccer, baseball, softball, track and volleyball at Lyme-Old Lyme. Over the years, I have served as President of the Lyme-Old Lyme Soccer Club and have coached my children in a number of their activities.*

*While my wife and I are very happy that our children attended Region 18 schools, there can be no doubt that our athletic facilities have lacked one important component over the years: a turf field. Children in neighboring towns have had the ability to practice and play year-round on their respective turf fields, but our children have been hindered by a shortage of available field space.*

*I have attended Zoom meetings and spoken with numerous people about this issue. While I can appreciate the rights of those who oppose moving forward with this project to express their views, I cannot agree with them. Many of the objections that have been voiced appear to be the result of misinformation about the project or a lack of understanding about sports.*

*Environmental and budgetary issues have been addressed at some length by the Board and the various subcommittees who have worked for years on a practical, responsible plan for our towns and our children.*

*Sports play an important role in the lives of our children as they grow up, not to the detriment of academics, but as an enhancement. As an example, "A survey of 400 female corporate executives found 94% played a sport and that 61% say sports contributed to their career success." (EY Women Athletes Business Network/espnW, 2014).*

*A turf field is long overdue in our community (I only wish my own children had the opportunity to play on turf fields). I implore the Board to proceed with this worthwhile endeavor and not allow the voices of a few to derail the wishes of the many. Moving forward with this project is the right thing to do and many years from now, after your service to Region 18 is complete, you'll know that you were on the right side of history on this issue.*

Mona Colwell, a resident of Old Lyme, cautioned the Board members over bending to the wishes of a few against the voices of many regarding the proposed artificial playing surface. She voiced the environmental concerns of using crumb rubber and the potential of contamination and voiced support for using safe organic material instead. She also agreed that it was financially irresponsible if this was not brought to the community for a vote. She encouraged Board members to think long and hard about this decision, and she recommended that they talk to the taxpayers as they elected the Board to represent them.

Martha Grossel, a resident of Old Lyme, voiced concern over the effect to the environment of using crumb rubber fill for the artificial playing surface and recommended the use of safer, less toxic materials for construction of the field. She also noted that there are many in the community who are unaware of this proposal.

Jennifer O'Brien, a resident of Old Lyme, voiced support for a turf field but recommended that the Board consider other non-toxic material vs. crumb rubber. She noted that many towns have banned crumb rubber because of environmental concerns and studies are not yet complete on the effect of crumb rubber. She questioned why the district would consider the usage of crumb rubber when other towns are banning its use and that they would risk the health of students.

#### **IV. Administrative Reports**

##### **1. Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Neviasser reviewed the December personnel report. Of note, Fawn DeMello has been hired as the payroll clerk in the Business Office.

Mr. Neviasser reported that the state has changed their guidelines on the requirements for those who want to substitute teach (only need high school degree vs. bachelor's degree). He encouraged former Lyme-Old Lyme graduates to apply as substitutes, especially those who are studying to be teachers.

Mr. Neviasser reviewed the December enrollment report. There are currently 1,283 students in-house, an increase of three students since last month this time.

Mr. Neviasser reviewed the schedule of upcoming budget-related meetings in January and asked that the Board members mark their calendars for the series of meetings to develop the 2021-2022 budget.

Mrs. Thompson inquired whether the Board would continue to meet in-person in January/February. Mr. Neviasser reported that the Board would meet in-person as he believed it was not fair to ask students and staff to report to school in-person and then hold Board meetings remotely. He noted that the Board meetings would continue to be livestreamed with the call-in capability for those Board members who cannot attend.

Mr. Neviasser gave an update on the progress towards the district goals.

*Curriculum. Provide a rigorous educational experience for students, in all modes of instruction (remote or in-person), that is in alignment with the high standards and expectations of the communities we serve.*

- Seamless transition to full time remote learning for quarantine grade levels.
- Utilizing new remote learning schedules providing more engagement per day.

*Human Resources. Provide additional support for staff to ensure existing and new employees have the resources necessary to perform the duties of their jobs at the highest level possible.*

- All instructional assistants have technology to work remotely.
- Tutors running reading groups remotely.

*Community. Support the social emotional needs of students and staff, with emphasis on self-care and community responsibility during this time of uncertainty.*

- Giving teachers and instructional assistants the ability to work remotely when necessary.
- Successful fall season of activities – trying to run same programming as normal by being creative in traditions, i.e., virtual Veterans Day program, outdoor band concert, etc.
- Spending the time to do contact tracing and only shutting down when absolutely necessary; kudos to administration and nursing staff.

*Facilities. Monitor and evaluate five-year facility, safety, and technology plans to ensure appropriate improvements and maintenance of buildings, grounds, and infrastructure in line with recommendations from the DPH and the CSDE.*

- Lyme School HVAC system installed; gym floor will likely be completed during February vacation.
- Submitted School Security and Safety Plan to the state.
- Utilization of existing staff to cover illnesses and keep buildings open.

*Board of Education. Provide resources to support students and staff through a variety of different means during this time of uncertainty.*

- Commencement of budget season.

Mrs. Wilczynski inquired about the status of volunteers helping in the cafeterias. Mr. Neviasser noted that this is running more smoothly after expectations were clarified. Volunteers are assisting with packaging and delivering food to classrooms. There is more participation because meals are free. There will be a district cost if more Chartwells employees are needed.

Mrs. Wilczynski inquired about the need for a crosswalk at Cross Lane and Mile Creek Road due to the increase in walkers and bikers. Kelly Enoch, Principal of Mile Creek School, explained the various routes these children take to school to avoid that busy intersection. Parents are also involved in walking their children to school.

## 2. Business Manager's Report

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Executive Budget Summary as of November 30, 2020. Fluctuations of note: *Spending year to date is on track with last year to date.*

*Special Education is down year over year due to reduced tuition costs.*

*Transportation is down due to credits for collapsed/reduced routes due to driver shortage and reduced ridership.*

*Debt Service: due to refunding from January 2020 - movement of payment to August.*

## **Year To Date Revenue Report**

	2019-2020 Received	2020-2021 Received YTD
Town of Old Lyme	\$27,556,679	\$10,560,850
Town of Lyme	\$6,579,421	\$2,443,597

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Contingency Maintenance Report. There was \$1,687 in new spending for a chemical feed pump. Balance is at \$169,036.

Mrs. McCalla reported that recent communication from FEMA indicates the district will be receiving \$5,330 for the Q2 claim. There is no indication as to when the funds would be released. The district has been granted an additional \$13,574 in Corona Virus Relief Funds, bringing the total to \$343,315, all of which must be spent by December 30, 2020.

### **V. Educational Presentation**

#### **1. Special Education Update**

Melissa Dougherty, Director of Special Services, gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Understanding Special Education Costs* which included information on the constant and variable costs in the special ed budget; causes of the variability; out of district placement examples and costs; and special ed therapy and evaluation examples and costs. A copy of Mrs. Dougherty's presentation is attached to these minutes for informational purposes.

Follow-up on the presentation included discussion on the educational and residential costs and different services/environments of the out-placement facilities.

### **VI. Chairman & Board Report**

Mrs. Linderman reported on the various communications sent to the Board; she encouraged Board members to share correspondence that is not sent to the entire Board.

### **VII. New Business**

Mrs. Linderman asked for a motion to add an additional agenda item to New Business: addition of a member to the Sustainability Ad Hoc Committee.

**MOTION:** Mrs. Miller made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Thompson, to add a New Business item to the agenda (addition of member to the Sustainability Committee).

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

#### **1. 2021-2022 School Calendar**

Mr. Neviasser reviewed a draft of the proposed 2021-2022 school calendar for the Board's review. He noted that the unions have reviewed the draft and have approved the calendar as is being presented.

Mr. Neviasher reviewed key points of the schedule which mimics previous year's calendars in many aspects.

Mrs. Shoemaker asked for some clarification on the professional development day scheduled for December 23. Mr. Neviasher addressed the question explaining that the teachers can work remotely in the afternoon of this early dismissal day to complete the safety training that is required of all staff.

The calendar will be voted on at the January Board meeting.

**2. Renewal of Auditor Contract**

Mr. Neviasher noted that this is the third contract with this auditor who is not increasing her costs through June 2023.

Motion: Mrs. Miller made a motion, which was seconded by Dr. Goulding, to approve the renewal of the auditor contract of Sandra E. Welwood, LLC, through June 30, 2023.

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

**3. HVAC Controls Contract**

Ron Turner, Director of Facilities and Technology, provided the following background information on this agenda item: Connecticut Controls is the district's current provider of onsite and remote support for the HVAC building control systems and has been under contract with the district in this capacity for approximately eight years. The staff of Connecticut Controls are very familiar with the buildings and systems, and they have been extremely responsive and efficient whenever there is a call for service. A brief example of their responsiveness occurred during the COVID response prior to the opening of school. When the CT DPH and others provided recommendations in July for HVAC intervention to safely open school buildings, Connecticut Controls was able to make the district a priority and complete a function check of the entire HVAC system. This check allowed the district to open the schools with the reassurance that the district's systems were all functioning to the best of their capabilities. This contract value is in the anticipated range for the current budget and will be appropriately added to the 21/22 FY budget.

MOTION: Mrs. Shoemaker made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Thompson, to award Connecticut Controls Corporation a three-year service contract to continue to provide onsite support of the district's HVAC automated control systems for \$16,900.00 annually and to waive the bidding process.

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

**4. Policy Review: 5145.44 Title IX**

Mr. Neviasher reported that the district recently received recommended updates to the Title IX Policy from CABE. The interpretation of this policy has changed and districts can be penalized if they don't respond



appropriately. Mr. Neviaser reviewed the adjustments, approved at the policy committee level, on several pages of the recommended policy, mostly so that it was more in-line with district verbiage.

There was a question on whether this policy should appear in the student and personnel section of the policy book. Mr. Neviaser explained that they are trying to avoid duplication of policies for efficiency reasons. It was suggested that the word “Students” be removed from the title of the policy because the policy referred to students and employees.

**5. Addition of Member to the Sustainability Committee:**

Mrs. Miller requested that Steven MacAusland be added as a member of the Sustainability Committee. She cited Mr. MacAusland’s experience with environmental initiatives as a reason for this addition to the committee.

**MOTION:** Mrs. Miller made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Thompson, to add Steven MacAusland as a member of the Sustainability Ad Hoc Committee.

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

**VIII. Old Business**

**1. Approval of AP Computer Science Textbook**

The Board approved the addition of the AP Computer Science course at the November meeting. The administration is now seeking approval of the textbook for this course. This is being funded through a grant.

**MOTION:** Dr. Goulding made a motion, which was seconded by Dr. Powell St. Louis, to approve the textbook recommendation for the AP Computer Science course.

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

**2. 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.

**3. Report of Committees:**

- a. *Facilities.* Dr. Goulding commended the administration for the in-person education the students are receiving as studies are showing that students are doing better health wise when in a controlled environment. On another matter, Dr. Goulding referred to the information currently on the district website to educate the community on the proposed artificial playing surface. He thanked Jennifer Miller for the “Summary of Options Considered and Proposed Alternative” which she recently put together relating to the multipurpose field proposal.
- b. *Finance.* No report.

- c. *Communications*. Mrs. Thompson referred the Board to the minutes from the Policy and Communications Committee meeting of November 18, 2020. She welcomed Board input on helping this committee identify areas where they need improvement in communications.
- d. *Policy*. No report.
- e. *LEARN*. Mrs. Linderman reported on her recent involvement with LEARN's teacher union negotiations and their work on a teacher residency program to bring more diversity to the region. She also reported on a "Thought-Exchange" survey program which help groups pose questions to the community, get responses and analyze results.
- f. *LOL Prevention Coalition*. Mrs. Shoemaker reported on a recent presentation on vaping. She noted that they are finding higher attendance at their meetings when they are held remotely.
- g. *Sustainability*. Mrs. Miller gave an update on some of the initiatives of this committee including working with the high school's Environmental Club, getting the middle school more involved, and holding presentations at staff and PTO meetings to increase awareness of the 4R's recycling campaign. Mrs. Miller also gave an update on the Trex Challenge (plastic film recycling initiative) with bins being added at the Lyme and Old Lyme town halls and the Lymes' Youth Service Bureau. Mrs. Miller also noted that this committee is working on the pros and cons of the proposed artificial playing surface. They are also working with the group "Sustainable CT."

#### **IX. Correspondence**

There was no correspondence to report.

Mrs. Linderman noted that this agenda item would be eliminated going forward as the majority of correspondence to the Board is via email and is shared with all Board members.

#### **X. Executive Session**

There was no need for an executive session.

#### **XI. Adjournment**

The regular meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m. upon a motion by Dr. Golding and a second by Mrs. Shoemaker.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Wilson, Secretary

# Understanding Special Education Costs

Melissa Dougherty

December 2, 2020

## The Budget...

### Constant:

- Supplies
- Dues
- Professional Development

### Variable:

- Public Tuition
- Private Tuition
- Special Education Therapy and Evaluation
- Transportation

## What Causes the Variability?

Our obligation to educate all students in their least restrictive environment.

Individuals with Disabilities Act (rev. 1990)

Education of all Handicapped Children Act 1975

District recommends an out of district placement to meet the student's needs

Students move to the district and were previously placed by sending district

DCF involvement

Unilateral Placements

Parent requests for Independent Educational Evaluations

Additional supports/evaluations required for educational programming

## Out of District Placement Examples

School Name	Daily Rate	Yearly Tuition	Transportation
Natchaug Hospital	\$353	\$66,717	\$2,472
Waterford Country School	\$347	\$64,195	\$22,341
Meliora		\$138,420	\$32,720
Foundation School		\$68,500	\$37,026
LEARN		\$104,763	\$22,000
Public School		\$22,412	N/A



## Special Education Therapy and Evaluation Examples

Professional Services	Cost Per Year
Behavioral Supports	\$83,500 per student
Independent Educational Evaluation	\$5,000 ea.
District Evaluation Request/Consultation	\$5,000 ea. / \$1,350 ea.

## Sample Budget

Example: Projected 2020-21 Special Education Budget					
Student	School	Tuition	Transportation	SpEd Therapy and Evaluation	Total
Student A	School Z	\$76,700	\$22,300		\$99,000
Student B	School Y	\$62,190	\$20,635		\$84,825
Student C	School X	\$138,420	\$33,697		\$172,117
Student D				\$83,500	\$83,500
Student E				\$5,000	\$5,000
Projected Budget: \$444,442					
Student F	School W	\$247,224	N/A		\$247,224
Student G				\$5,000	\$5,000
Student H & I				\$167,000	\$167,000
Projected Increased Expenditure: \$419,224					
Projected Adjusted Expenditures: \$444,442 + \$419,224 =					\$863,666

Questions?

---

Thank you

