

# LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

*Regional School District #18*

*A Private School Experience*



*in a Public School Setting*

## **Regular Board of Education Meeting**

August 4, 2021

*Board Present:* Diane Linderman, Chair; 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 Neviaser, Superintendent of Schools; Melissa Dougherty, Director of Special Services; Holly McCalla, Business Manager; Ron Turner, Director of Facilities & Technology

*Others Present:* three community members from Lyme-Old Lyme

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

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

Mrs. Linderman noted that per Governor Lamont's recent executive order, masks must be worn in school buildings until September 30, 2021.

### **II. Approval of Minutes**

MOTION: Dr. Powell St. Louis made a motion, which was seconded by Dr. Goulding, to approve the minutes of Regular Meeting and Executive Session of June 2, 2021 and Special Meeting of June 11, 2021 as presented.

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

### **III. Visitors**

#### **1. Public Comment**

Mrs. Linderman noted that the Board will honor the girls tennis team at their September meeting in recognition of the team winning the state championship .

*49 Lyme Street, Old Lyme, Connecticut 06371*

*T: 860-434-7238 F: 860-434-9959 E: neviaseri@region18.org www.region18.org*

Jim Miller, a resident of Lyme and parent of two students, thanked the Board and staff for providing in-person learning to the students last school year. He commended them on the spectacular work and providing a great learning environment. On another subject, Mr. Miller cited the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)'s discrimination policy (PO521) and its verbiage. He proposed that the Board adopt the following resolution regarding this subject:

*Whereas, Regional School District 18 (The "District") intends at all times to comply with all applicable Federal and State laws and regulations, and relevant Supreme Court Decisions, including Wooley v. Maynard. Whereas, further, the District intends at all times to treat all of its constituents fairly, as provided in CABE's nondiscrimination policy PO521(a):*

*Now therefore, Regional School District 18 adopts the following policies forthwith:*

- 1) The District, including any third parties subject to the district's control, will not direct or otherwise compel any student, teacher or staff member to personally affirm, adopt or adhere to any of the following tenets:*
  - a) That any sex, race, ethnicity, religion, color, or national origin is inherently superior or inferior;*
  - b) That individuals should be adversely treated on the basis of their sex, race, ethnicity, religion, color or national origin; or*
  - c) That individuals, by virtue of sex, race, ethnicity, religion, color or national origin, are inherently responsible for actions committed in the past by other members of the same sex, race, ethnicity, religion, color, or national origin.*
    - i) No distinction or classification of students shall be made on account of race or color.*
    - ii) No course of instruction or unit of study directing or otherwise compelling students to personally affirm, adopt, or adhere to any of the tenets identified in paragraph 1) of this subsection shall be introduced in the District.*
  - d) Nothing in this section should be construed to prohibit the required collection or reporting of demographic data as may be required by statute.*
- 2) The District, including any third parties under the District's control, will not require or otherwise compel any teacher, staff member, or student become involved in activist activities, including but not limited to protest marches, letter writing campaigns or other activities designed to influence public policy.*

Richard Steiner, a resident of Old Lyme, noted that he understood the district is under an executive order regarding mask wearing, but he asked for clarity about mask mandates for the students. He voiced his concern over mask wearing noting the various negative effect it has on the children. He also noted the high vaccination rate in the Lyme-Old Lyme community.

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

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

Mr. Neviasher reviewed the August personnel report and reported on current vacancies to be filled and several new hires for the upcoming school year.

Mr. Neviasher reported on the significant increase in the interest level of families looking at the district's schools. There has been an enrollment of 18 new students this summer at LOLHS.

Mr. Neviasher reported on the annual staff convocation taking place on August 25 at 7:15 a.m. at Lyme-Old Lyme High School, and he extended this invitation to all Board members. He also reported that plans are underway for the annual new staff orientation taking place in mid-August.

Mr. Neviasher reviewed the latest guidance and regulations regarding the reopening of schools and how that may impact planning. Governor Lamont's executive order #13 mandates mask wearing indoors for all students and staff through September 30. Mr. Neviasher reported that they will reassess at that time.

Mr. Neviasher reported on some other pandemic-related measures that have been modified for this upcoming school year which include the elimination of plastic shields, social distancing reduction to 3.5 feet, and no mask requirement during lunch which will be held in the cafeterias. The music program will still be impacted with similar precautions taken as were in place last year. Mr. Neviasher noted that they recognize the majority of parents don't want their children in masks, but the district will be following the mandates from the state and advice from the health professionals.

Mr. Neviasher updated the Board on the before/after care program being offered by the Old Lyme Children's Learning Center. Bussing will be available to the elementary schools for Prek through grade 5. Information about this program will be distributed at the open houses.

Mr. Neviasher reviewed the plans for the strategic planning process. The strategic plan outlines expectations and goals in the areas of curriculum, human resources, facilities, and community as well as the metrics of success in each area. Cooperative Educational Services will facilitate this process. They will host forums and will be looking for input from members of the communities. Those forums are scheduled for October 27 and December 8 at 6:00 p. m. in the Middle School auditorium. Mr. Neviasher encouraged Board member participation in this process.

Mr. Neviasher reminded the Board of the annual retreat scheduled for August 5 at Saybrook Point Inn beginning at 6:00 p.m. headed by CAGE representative Nick Caruso.

Mr. Neviasher updated the Board on the pandemic impact to the sports season this year. Sports will be taking place but the decision on masks being required is yet to be made.

Mr. Neviasher reported that the staff childcare services that were offered last school year will not be offered during this upcoming school year, but they have the capability to transition to offering this service quickly should the need arise.

Mr. Neviasser noted that quarantine rules are going to be very different this year, i.e., they are being asked to not close entire schools, and classrooms will not be required to quarantine if a student has COVID if all students are masked and 3.5 feet apart.

Mr. Neviasser confirmed that per state statute there will be no remote learning offered this year in grades PreK-8. It can be offered at the high school level in special circumstances if a local board develops a policy in accordance with the guidelines from CSDE. Lyme-Old Lyme does not intend to offer remote learning except in cases of quarantine where it will be utilized as determined by the administration.

## 2. Business Manager's Report

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Executive Budget Summary as of July 30, 2021. Fluctuations of note: year over year spending is up slightly compared to last year due to facilities projects and technology purchasing; however, it is too early in the year for true comparison to last year at this time.

### Year To Date Revenue Report

	2019-2020 Received	2020-2021 Received YTD
Town of Old Lyme	\$27,556,679	\$726,168
Town of Lyme	\$6,579,421	\$161,227

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Contingency Maintenance Report which reflected a \$6,000 expenditure for labor/material/equipment to remove berm from the Middle School courtyard. The balance of this account stands at \$194,000.

## V. Chair and Committee Reports

Mrs. Linderman reported on the process for the strategic plan with all Board members encouraged to be involved. Mrs. Linderman stressed the importance of all being flexible and adaptable this school year with the many unknowns before them.

- a. *Facilities*. This report will come later in the meeting.
- b. *Finance*. No report.
- c. *Communications*. No report.
- d. *Policy*. No report.
- e. *LEARN*. No report.
- f. *LOL Prevention Coalition*. Mrs. Shoemaker reported on this group hosting a free NARCAN and Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) training session on August 19. NARCAN is an opiate antidote.

## VI. Educational Presentation

### 1. Facilities Update

Angela Cahill and Rusty Malik from QA&M were present and provided an update on the progress to date

in terms of their evaluation of the four school bonded project. QA&M was hired to develop a facilities study reviewing interior and exterior building conditions and site needs for the Middle School, Lyme School, Mile Creek, and Center School. The project will include:

- Review of existing building documentation and building history.
- Field surveys and evaluations of existing interior and exterior building conditions.
- Field reviews and evaluations of existing building mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- Field survey and evaluation of existing site conditions.
- Meetings with administrators and staff.
- Solutions and recommendations accompanied by graphic documentation.
- Budget cost estimation with implementation timelines.

Follow-up discussion followed their presentation and included discussion on clean energy; holding public forums for obtaining robust input from the community and communicating what they are doing and why they are doing it; holding key meetings with administration and staff with possible Board representation; importance of providing flexibility for different grade configurations should the need arise; the need for accurate and timely enrollment projections; and finding storage solution to replace portable spaces currently used at Center School.

Ron Turner, Director of Facilities and Technology, followed this presentation with an update on the summer projects completed, ongoing, and planned for the fall. These include:

- New front steps at Lyme School.
- Renovation of the Middle School courtyard with the addition of an outdoor classroom.
- Construction of the turf field at LOLHS.
- Renovation of the Lyme tennis courts.
- Renovation of the Middle School gym floor.
- Playground equipment upgrades at Lyme School, Center School and Mile Creek.
- Membrane replacement in the wastewater treatment plant.
- Air conditioning was added to the Middle School kitchen.
- New sound systems for the Mile Creek gym and cafeteria.
- Viewsonic boards will arrive for the ongoing Smartboard replacement program.
- Switches upgraded at the Middle School, Lyme School, Mile Creek and Center School.
- Additional camera placements for increased security coverage of middle and high schools.
- Continued work on the Mile Creek outdoor classroom by Vinal Tech students.
- Added solar panels to Center School

## **VII. New Business**

### **1. Additional Staff**

Due to increased enrollments, Mr. Neviasser recommended the addition of another section of fifth grade at Mile Creek School and two sections of English at LOLHS making them more in line with class size guidelines. This requires Board action per Policy 4113.4.

Mr. Neviaser explained that the 5<sup>th</sup> grade position is potentially a one-year position as they don't anticipate having to add a sixth grade teacher next year as this 5<sup>th</sup> grade class moves up. This will be relayed to the candidate of choice.

MOTION: Dr. Powell St. Louis made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Thompson, to approve the staffing request of a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Mile Creek School and .2 FTE English Teacher at Lyme-Old Lyme High School.

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

## 2. Tuition Student Request for LOLHS

Mr. Neviaser requested Board approval of a tuition student request for an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student to attend Lyme-Old Lyme High School.

MOTION: Mrs. Shoemaker made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Wilczynski, to approve the tuition student request as presented.

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

## 3. District Goals for 2021-2022

Mr. Neviaser referred to the goals from the 2020-2021 school year to help begin the discussion on the 2021-2022 goals. Areas of focus for the coming year include:

- Education during a pandemic, which could cover numerous areas from safety and security to addressing learning loss.
- Continued focus on SEL, normalcy, etc.
- Sustainability as a result of the carbon reduction commitment, especially in the area of facilities as we consider a long-term project.

Mr. Neviaser noted that the idea is to use these concepts to provide the administration an idea of what goal areas the Board would like a focus on. Based on the Board's feedback, the administration will develop a draft set of goals for the September meeting.

The Board provided input and direction on the goals they would like to see included for the 2021-2022 school year. These included:

- Renewed focus on testing and the amount of learning loss due to the pandemic.
- Comparison data with other districts and within the district.
- Recovery strategies from the pandemic year.
- Timeline on education gaps and when they can be filled.
- Sustainability: reduce plastic and waste since they couldn't make progress on this during the pandemic.
- Energy usage, i.e., feasibility of electric buses.

- How outdoor classrooms are being used; how teachers feel about them; what are they being used for.
- Communication to community on various initiatives, i.e., facilities study, strategic plan.
- Community relationships / seeking information from the community on important issues via public forums.
- Professional development of staff to assist students that need social/emotional help.
- Providing students with coping mechanisms.

#### 4. Microsoft Annual Licensing Agreement

Ron Turner, Director of Facilities and Technology, provided the following background information on this agenda item: the RESC Alliance has completed bidding the Microsoft annual licensing agreement for the 2021-2022 school year. SHI International is the RESC Alliance recommended lowest bidder, and the pricing is within the budgeted value.

MOTION: Mrs. Shoemaker made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Wilson, to approve the renewal of the Microsoft licensing, which includes Microsoft Office products, the Windows operating system for PCs, and Windows Server and SQL Server licenses for its servers for \$34,484.60.

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

### **VIII.** Old Business

#### 1. Policy 6114.81 *Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness*

This was a second reading of this policy. It was adopted in April 2020 during the pandemic and has been modified to be more broad in nature and not just related to the pandemic.

MOTION: Dr. Goulding made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Wilson, to approve Policy 6114.81 *Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness* as presented.

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.

### **IX.** Executive Session

There was no need for an executive session.

**X. Adjournment**

The regular meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m. upon a motion by Mrs. Leonardo and a second by Mr. Wilson.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Wilson, Secretary