



**Minutes**

Board of Education – Regular Meeting

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

7:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://ctreg14-org.zoom.us/j/91289560458>

Meeting ID: 912 8956 0458

Phone: (646) 558-8656

**Present:**

George Bauer, Chairman  
James Crocker  
Michael Devine  
Jonathan Kapstein  
Tikva Rose  
David Butkus  
Christopher Matta

**Absent:**

Carol Ann Brown

**Also Present:**

Wayne McAllister, Acting Superintendent  
Tina Tanguay, Director of Finance and Operations  
Wendy Nelson Kauffman, Director of Teaching and Learning  
Donna Marcinek, Director of Student Learning  
Edward Belinsky, Director of Agriscience

Patricia Paige, Board Clerk  
Patrick DiSarro, Communications Specialist (Zoom)

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**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Mr. George Bauer, Chairman of the Board

**Introductions**

The board members introduced themselves

**Approval of Minutes**

- A. District Meeting (Budget) May 3, 2021  
A motion was made by Michael Devine and seconded by Chris Matta to accept/approve the minutes as presented; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.
  
- B. Regular Meeting, May 3, 2021  
A motion was made by David Butkus and seconded by Michael Devine to

accept/approve the minutes as presented; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

### **Mr. Wayne McAllister, Acting Superintendent's Report**

#### A. FFA Student Success

Across the state, there are approximately 3,400 Agriscience students, who are required to have three circles of education; academic, FFA, and work experience. Annually, they are afforded the opportunity to compete for a Proficiency Award, which highlights their SAE projects. This year, 23 categories were judged as each of the 20 Agriscience centers submitted their chapter winning applications. Woodbury accomplished 13-first placed standings and one second-placed, an extremely good year. Edward Belinsky, the Director of the Agriscience Program invited each of the student winners to introduce themselves and provide their name, town, job, award won and plans for after high school.

Several additional students were recognized for their Leadership Development contest winnings in Creed Speaking, Prepared Public Speaking, Farm Business Management Team and Extemporaneous Public Speaking. These students will be competing in the fall at the National FFA Convention.

#### B. Leadership Update

Ms. Wendy Nelson Kauffman, the Director of Teaching and Learning and Ms. Donna Marcinek, the Director of Student Services, spoke to the Region 14 Summer School program and the ESSER II grant funds, which helped to design it. The Summer School program will be available to 40 students combined in grades K-8 and is one avenue of addressing lost instructional time. It will support students' efforts to make academic gains prior to school starting in the fall. The program will run concurrently with the ESY (Extended Year Program), a program for students who require on-going services; the high school will continue with their usual Credit Recovery Program. Ms. Nelson Kauffman provided additional program details including hours, learning structure, student- to-teacher ratio and curriculum.

Ms. Marcinek noted that approximately \$30,000 of what was allocated was set aside for this summer, which will also help to cover the cost of transportation. The remaining funds will be allotted to the math and reading interventionists.

The Title IV Grant, an enrichment grant for students, will be used specifically for virtual field trips, one for every grade level and a few traveling programs so that students can have a broader summer experience.

#### C. TeachRock Grant

The Connecticut State Department of Education invited districts to complete an application to participate in a partnership with TeachRock, a standards-aligned, arts integrated curriculum that uses the history of popular music and culture to help teachers engage students. If selected to participate, TeachRock will work with participating school districts, on the integration of

classroom lesson plans that connect history, music and culture in a way that is designed to resonate with students. Up to 10 districts will be selected to participate in the first cohort (Maximum 50 participating teachers). Of note, participating districts will receive walkthrough support with founder Steven Van Zandt, the TeachRock team and CSDE staff.

Dr. Jason Bouchard, with the support of Ms. Wendy Nelson Kauffman, applied to the state to participate in the first cohort of districts. There are no funds associated with this partnership, only resources for training teachers.

A motion was made by David Butkus and seconded by Jonathan Kapstein to allow the Acting Superintendent to contract with and sign the district partnership agreement to participate in the TeachRock partnership district program; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

#### D. Summer Integrated Pre-School Program Grant

The Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education, has informed the Acting Superintendent, that Ms. Marcinek's application for a Covid-19 stipend has received final approval in the amount of \$20,000. The purpose of the stipend is to supplement the Covid-19 Special Education Recovery efforts. The application process examined how the district would appropriate the funds if they were to be awarded the grant. Ms. Marcinek focused on a proposal that would offer an extension of the district's Pre-School program, which would be at no cost to parents. This would allow for extended year special needs students to be in a program for the month of July with their typical peers. If approved, the program be offered at Bethlehem Elementary School.

A motion was made by James Crocker and seconded by Tikva Rose to accept/approve the State Bureau of Special Education Covid-19 grant in the amount of \$20,000 as presented; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

#### E. Donation of Grand Piano

Ms. Lisa Kallquist of 63 Main Street North, Woodbury, donated a Whitney Baby Grand Piano manufactured by the Kimball Piano Company. The piano, valued at \$4,000, was inspected by Dr. Jason Bouchard and Mr. Todd Gorski, and will be used as a rehearsal piano in the high school music room. The district will incur the moving expense of \$300.

A motion was made by James Crocker and seconded by Chris Matta to accept/approve the donation of the piano; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

#### F. Financial Update on Cost of Investigation

The financial update this evening encompassed the ongoing investigation. Reflecting on a number of lawsuits from 2013/2014, Mr. McAllister noted that it was the practice of the administration to provide a monthly report until the issues were resolved. In keeping with that practice, and for the purpose of transparency, he shared with the board the financial impact associated with the current investigation. Year-to-date as of today and through April 30, 2021,

the costs for the law firms of Pullman and Comley and Rose Kallor are \$23,383 and \$31,506 respectfully, for a grand total of \$54,889 to date. The invoice for May is expected in early June. Discussions ensued regarding the responsibilities of each firm, how the district was charged and when the investigation will conclude.

#### G. MES Principal Update

The application deadline for the Mitchell Elementary School Principal search was posted as May 30<sup>th</sup>, with a goal start date of July 1<sup>st</sup>. Thus far, 41 applications were received. Mr. McAllister expects to have parents, teachers, administrators and two board members on the selection committee, with plans to notify those individuals sometime next week. By June 1<sup>st</sup> applications will be available for review and meeting dates established. Mr. McAllister explained the process for the board's newest members.

#### H. Covid 19 Updates

Mr. McAllister provided the latest Covid-19 statistics, which noted trends are heading down; Region 14 is in a good place. The district's Covid-19 dashboard indicates that one student is currently quarantining with none noted in the remaining categories.

The new CDC regulations, dated May 15, 2021, were not clear with regards to schools continuing with their mask policies and Covid 19 strategies for the remainder of the 20/21 school year. Though changed for the general population, schools should continue to wear masks in and out of the buildings through the school year to continue the safe mode the district has been operating in. Neal Lustig, of the Pomperaug Health District, confirmed this information.

### **Committee Reports**

There were no committee reports

### **Board Chair's Comments**

#### **Referendum**

Mr. Bauer expressed words of gratitude to the Region 14 communities with regards to the affirmative budget vote. The board will work hard and efficiently with the monies they were entrusted with to educate the students.

#### **20/21 School Calendar**

At the last board meeting, the board established and set the last day of school as June 22<sup>nd</sup> for the 20/21 school year. Though the state waived the 180 day requirement to 177 days, there was some concern with regards to lost instructional time. Mr. Bauer recognizes that they district, per the teachers' contract and with the decrease in the number of days, will owe and pay the teachers their full pay, per contract.

### **Privilege of the Floor/Response**

In response to a comment at the last board meeting, Mr. Bauer reviewed the various operations the board implemented with regards to questions and comments through Privilege of the Floor. Privilege of the Floor was established to allow constituents the opportunity to ask questions and make comments during board meetings and are typically addressed by the board through a variety of means.

### **Social Media**

Mr. Bauer offered several comments regarding recent social media postings involving attempts to demean board members and several valued employees. The board finds these posts vulgar, repulsive and distasteful and do not reflect the values of Region 14 or anything remotely constructive with regards to education, never mind their truthfulness.

Understanding the limitations that may exist on what legal recourse can be taken, the board is exploring their legal options. The board fully supports the Region 14 staff and administration.

### **Privilege of the Floor**

Will Chapman, Woodbury

Curious as to the status of the Safety Committee; hasn't met in quite some time. Would be happy to volunteer his time if for lack of parent input; would like to see some headway.

### **Old Business**

A. Building Use Fee Schedule

Second review; revised schedule with suggestions from last meeting by separating fees for profit and non-profit.

A motion was made by Ms. Tikva Rose and seconded by Mr. David Butkus to accept/approve the Building Use Fee Schedule as presented; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

B. Region 14 School District 2021/2022 Calendar

Discussion ensued regarding the start date for the 2021/2022 school year and perhaps moving it up a bit; most districts are starting the year prior to Labor Day. Several administrators expressed concern, since it was adopted five months ago and restrictions have been lifted on travel, that the majority of staff have made their vacation plans based on calendar that has been adopted. It was the consensus that, given all that was asked of staff this past year, to allow them to keep their plans and to review start date prior to Labor Day in subsequent years.

**New Business**

A. Resolution for ION Bank

A motion was made by David Butkus and seconded by Michael Devine to adopt a resolution for ION Bank to authorize the removal of George Bauer and Wayne McAllister and to add James Crocker and Tina Tanguay to the following ION bank accounts ending in:

2331 General Fund

2258 School Lunch Deposit

2282 Student Activities

2426 Principal Activities

All in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

**Adjournment**

A motion was made by James Crocker and seconded by Jonathan Kapstein to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m.; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia Paige". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

*Patricia Paige  
Board Clerk*

*Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Patricia Paige, Board Clerk*