

**Minutes**

Regular Meeting of the BoE  
**Tuesday, November 17, 2020; 7:00 p.m.**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/98750784877>

Meeting ID: 987 5078 4877

Phone: 646-558-8656

**Present:**

Pamela Zmek, Vice Chairperson, Presiding Board Member  
Janet Morgan  
Carol Ann Brown  
Michael Devine  
Jonathan Kapstein  
Tikva Rose  
James Crocker

**Absent:**

George Bauer

**Also Present:**

Dr. Joseph Olzacki, Superintendent  
Wendy Nelson Kauffman, Coordinator of Teaching and Learning  
Bill Nemecek, Principal, Woodbury Middle School  
Wayne McAllister, Director Finance and Operations  
Tina Tanguay, Assistant Director of Finance and Operations  
Mark Harutunian, Covid 19 Liaison  
Neal Lustig, Pomperaug Health Director  
Rob Rubbo, Torrington Area Health Director  
Patricia Paige, Board Clerk  
Patrick DiSarro, Communications Specialist

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**1. Call to Order**

Presiding Board Member and Vice Chairperson Ms. Pamela Zmek called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**2. Introductions**

Members of the board introduced themselves

**3. Approval of the Minutes**

A. Regular Meeting, Monday, October 19, 2020

A motion was made by Ms. Janet Morgan and seconded by Mr. Jonathan Kapstein to accept/approve the minutes as presented; all in favor; none opposed; motion carried unanimously.

#### 4. **Superintendent's Report**

##### A. Math Presentation:

Dr. Olzacki addressed the district's test scores, specifically the Math, explaining that he had inherited the weak scores when he arrived in the district and has since, rolled out a 3 to 5 year plan to remedy them. Part of the plan entailed spending time in the classroom observing and gathering information on what specific areas of Math were in need of improvement. Ms. Nelson Kauffman continues to work toward aligning curriculum beginning with Kindergarten, offering relevant professional development and collaborating with other districts.

The Covid Pandemic has had a major impact on what is being accomplished and thus, it will be hard to predict if test scores would show any significant changes because of. Math teachers remain dedicated, understand the challenges, and are making some really great strides given the circumstances.

Conversations will continue. The board has offered their full support to administration. Those at the state level are still expecting to administer the SBAC testing in the spring.

##### B. Covid19 Update: M. Harutunian

The upward tick in Covid diagnoses continues. The issue remains the lack of substitutes to cover classes. Surrounding towns are experiencing the same difficulty. To date 44 staff members and 119 students in Region 14 have had to quarantine from either a positive diagnosis or from direct contact with someone who had tested positive.

What occurs outside the confines of the school day, has a fallout. Not everyone is adhering to social distancing and mask wearing safeguards. Covid restrictions stifle what the administration is able to propose as an effort to ease the substitute shortage i.e., combining classrooms. Parents are finding it difficult to work if students are learning from home and it was suggested to reverse the decision for remote synchronous learning for at least those students at the elementary level to ease the burden on working parents.

Neal Lustig and Rob Rubbo, area Health Directors, provided reports which validated the uptick in Covid diagnoses. The ensuing holiday break and its related travel arrangements and family gatherings, also raised concerns for an increased risk of additional Covid19 findings.

The use of remote synchronous learning will be re-evaluated weekly prior to the anticipated return date of January 19<sup>th</sup> and modifications to be considered according to the data at that time.

C. Region 14's Finest

Mr. Mark Harutunian was selected as this month's Region 14's Finest for his positive impact and work within the district. He has served in a number of capacities, most recently, as the Covid 19 Liaison.

5. **Committee Reports**

A. Public/Community Relations

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> and will be held via Zoom. The committee meets every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month. Plans are to invite the Guiding Coalition to the meeting so that the committee can continue their work on Vision of a Learner.

B. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met earlier this evening and reviewed a number of topics including the monthly budget, Nonnewaug High School funding, food services, and the AgriScience enrollment.

Mr. McAllister was congratulated on his plan to retire from the district in January.

6. **Board Chair's Comments**

Two letters were read into the record.

**Mr. James Colby**

Asked for clarity on the decision to close school as well as the (or not) balance of the fall sport season.

**Mr. Michael Burke**

Inquired about the plan to get the high school back full-time and what repurposing is proposed to accommodate lunch space.

**Board Chair's Comments**

Transitioning to Remote Synchronous learning this week for a limited time as necessary; decision was not made without planning. Many factors in the decision process including staff, student, and community health and safety, local conditions, and state data regarding test positivity rates. Encouraged everyone to abide by safety protocols in order to get the students back in school.

7. **Old Business**

None

8. **New Business**

A. 2021/2022 School Calendar

A first read with no action. To be discussed in depth at the next board meeting.

9. **Other Business**

None

10. **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Ms. Janet Morgan and seconded by Mr. James Crocker to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 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*