



PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CENTRAL OFFICE
27 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE
TERRYVILLE, CONNECTICUT 06786

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Plymouth Public Schools is to challenge, inspire, and prepare all students for success in an ever-changing and complex world.

PLYMOUTH BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
BORKOWSKI FAMILY AUDITORIUM
TERRYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL
33 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE
TERRYVILLE, CT 06786

IN PERSON MEETING WITH THE PUBLIC

MASKS ARE REQUIRED

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2021

7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Present: Mr. Seaman, Mrs. Kulesa, Mrs. Lucian, Mr. Showers, Mrs. Fusco, Mr. Foote, Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani, Mr. Perugino and Mr. Zbuska, Jr.

Also Present: Mr. Falcone, Acting Superintendent, Mrs. Mozak-Pezza, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Mrs. Melillo, Director of Pupil Personnel & Special Education Services, Mr. Tencza, Business Manager and Mr. Trudeau, Director of Technology

1. Call to Order & Pledge to the Flag

Mr. Falcone called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. The group joined in the Pledge to the Flag.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

MOTION: To entertain a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion passes.

3. Nomination & Appointment of Temporary Chairperson

Mr. Falcone opened up nominations for a Temporary Chairperson.

Nominations for Temporary Chairperson:

Mr. Showers, was nominated by Mr. Seaman, second by Mrs. Kulesa

MOTION TO CLOSE NOMINATIONS: Motion Mr. Foote, second Mrs. Lucian, motion passes unanimously.

Based on only one Board Member being nominated,

Mr. Showers was nominated temporary chairperson.

Temporary Chair now resides over the meeting.

4. **Caucus for the Purpose of Election of Officers for the Plymouth Board of Education**

Mr. Showers, Temporary Chairperson, made the following motion:

MOTION: To entertain a motion to eliminate going into Caucus and proceed directly to the election of Officers for the Plymouth Board of Education. Motion Mrs. Kulesa, second Mr. Seaman, all in favor, any discussion, any abstentions, any opposed, motion carries.

5. **Election of Officers for the Plymouth Board of Education**

Mr. Showers, Temporary Chairperson, opened up nominations for Chairperson.

(a) NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF CHAIR

Mr. Seaman was nominated by Mrs. Kulesa, second Mr. Foote.

There being no further nominations:

MOTION TO CLOSE NOMINATIONS: Motion Mrs. Kulesa, second Mr. Foote, motion passes unanimously.

Paper ballots were distributed and signed by the Board of Education Members and will be made public within 48 hours.

Nine (9) votes were cast for Mr. Seaman.

Mr. Seaman was unanimously elected Permanent Chair of the Plymouth Board of Education

Mr. Seaman, Chairperson, now resides over the meeting and opened up nominations for Vice-Chair.

(b) NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Mrs. Kulesa was nominated by Mr. Showers, second Mrs. Lucian

There being no further nominations.

MOTION TO CLOSE NOMINATIONS: Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, motion passes unanimously.

Paper ballots were distributed and signed by Board of Education Members and will be made public within 48 hours.

Nine (9) votes were cast for Mrs. Kulesa.

Mrs. Kulesa was unanimously elected Vice-Chair of the Plymouth Board of Education.

(c) NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF SECRETARY

Mrs. Lucian was nominated by Mr. Showers, second Mrs. Kulesa.

There being no further nominations.

MOTION TO CLOSE NOMINATIONS: Motion Mrs. Kulesa, second Mr. Showers, motion passes unanimously.

Paper ballots were distributed and signed by the Board of Education Members and will be made public within 48 hours.

Nine (9) votes were cast for Mrs. Lucian.

Mrs. Lucian was unanimously elected Secretary of the Plymouth Board of Education.

6. **Approval of Minutes**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 13, 2021. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mrs. Lucian, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, Mr. Perugino and Mrs. Fusco abstain, motion carries.

Mr. Seaman introduced and welcomed Dia Fusco, Lou Zbuska and Mr. Perugino to the Board.

7. **Superintendent's Update**

Mr. Falcone welcomed Pat Perugino and Dia Fusco to the team and is looking forward to working with them in the future on behalf of the children in our district. He also thanked Ellen Roth and Melissa Johnson for their service to the community as former Board of Education Members.

Brief Update as to the main concern of the Board and school community deals with: the Teacher and administrator currently on leave and the teacher who resigned from their position yesterday afternoon. The Board Chair will be commenting on these concerns this evening.

Mr. Falcone also took the opportunity to thank Phyllis Worhunsy who stepped in as the Interim Principal at Plymouth Center School. He indicated she was a familiar name within the community. Mrs. Worhunsy spent 30 years of her career working for the Plymouth Board of Education. Thirteen of those years were spent as the principal of Harry S. Fisher Elementary School. We hope her return to Plymouth will bring stability needed at Plymouth Center School as we work through these pending personnel issues.

Quick COVID Update – The Department of Public Health (DPH) has offered a new **Screen and Stay** policy that allows students and staff who are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated to remain in school after a close COVID-19 case. He explained there are a number of stipulations and requirements that go along with this policy. However, the Screen and Stay discussion will need to be tabled at this time due to the lack of time he has had to address the requirements with the nurses and administrative team based on the circumstances that have come about over the past week when the policy came out.

Mr. Seaman

Mr. Seaman addressed what has been on social media and the misinformation regarding the issue at Plymouth Center School. He did indicate he will not be reading the legal notice he was given as the community deserves a little more of an explanation. He understands individuals and parents are angry, as he is, because they feel they have not received information. But he also indicated he understands because by State Statute and the laws, that the Board cannot receive information that they themselves feel they are entitled to. Mr. Seaman went on to explain that unfortunately we do not get to choose which laws we follow. We do not have that option. These laws are in place for a reason. The reason information is not fully disclosed at this time or to the Board is because it cannot be, per state policy and procedure and the integrity of the process.

However, last June the Board had to choose a Superintendent going through a process. Mr. Falcone has been taking some heat on this matter. The teacher, who resigned yesterday, worked under Mr. Falcone for 13 days. Mr. Seaman attempted to gather information from Mr. Falcone and Mr. Seaman is very persistent, as some of you well know. He is an individual who gets what he wants. But, Mr. Seaman did not receive any information from Mr. Falcone. So, he knew at this point the Board hired an individual with integrity and values and will do what is right for the district. That being said, Mr. Seaman placed a lot of pressure on Mr. Falcone and still was not able to receive any information because he was not entitled to any. Mr. Seaman did explain that Mr. Falcone sat down and explained to him why he was not entitled to any information. He hopes people understand the correct decision was made.

Mr. Seaman shared the following information which has already been out there. James Eschert was placed on administrative leave on September 17, 2021. He was placed on suspension yesterday 11/09/2021. He resigned from his position yesterday with no reason given.

The district has an Administrator and Teacher on leave which is not connected. These are two separate incidences. Local and State agencies are conducting investigations. The District and Mr. Falcone are fully cooperating. Mr. Seaman realizes people are angry and they want more information, he understands, because he also wants more information. However, he also has a duty to believe in the process and not taint the integrity or compromise the process. Therefore, Mr. Seaman is asking people to trust the Board, to believe in the process, even though they may not like it. He assures the people a few things: The Board will be looking at its policies and procedures to see if they need updating. As soon as information is available and the appropriate information is available, it will be distributed in the proper manner to the public. The Board is fully transparent, as much as they can be by law.

Mr. Seaman indicated the other thing he can guarantee or assure the people is that if anything is found, or anyone is found to have betrayed the trust of this district, our children and this community, we will do everything that we can to make sure they are held fully accountable to the greatest extent we can hold them. That is the information he has right now. So, for the media in the room, he indicated there will be no further questions afterwards or answers from any part of the Board. For all of those individuals listening, the point of contact for information is the Superintendent, Brian Falcone, not the Board Members. They do not have the information. Mr. Falcone is working with our legal counsel and cooperating with the agencies involved and as the information is given it will be disseminated as appropriate. That is all he has for now.

8. **Public Comment** (limited to 2-minutes per speaker)

None

9. **New Business**

- MOTION: To entertain a motion to donate various binders dating from 1885 to 1975 i.e. Board of Education Minutes, Plymouth School Committee Minutes, etc. to the Plymouth Historical Society. Motion Mrs. Lucian, second Mr. Showers, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion carries.
- MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve the reappointment of Karen Zagurski to represent Terryville on the Agricultural Education Advisory Committee for a full three-year term. Motion Mr. Foote, second Mr. Perugino, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion carries.

10. Board Member/Committee Reports

A. Finance/Operations - Mr. Tencza, Business Manager

- Included in the packet are the following; Accounts by Facilities Report for October, 2021 and 3 different submissions; (1) Business Office Activity Report; (2) Board of Education Budget Summary through October 2021 Report; and (3) Cumulative Total Board of Education Budget % by Month.
- The Accounts by Facilities Reports will be forwarded to the Town of Plymouth Board of Finance.
- MOTION: To entertain a motion to authorize the Acting Superintendent and/or the Business Manager to approve a contract Between the Plymouth Board of Education and Advanced Physical Therapy for Athletic Trainer Services. Motion Mr. Foote, second Mrs. Lucian discussion:

Discussion

Mr. Tencza – Shipman & Goodwin prepared the contract. For the remainder of this year, Advanced Physical Therapy honored the previous commitment from the former company. There is no impact to this year's budget. Next year, there is an increase. Then, the 2 following years there is a flat line increase. Our expenses will increase which is expected. This amount is not out of line for what we expected.

Mr. Seaman – Is there any reason why we are going with a 3year contract?

Mr. Tencza – Only to keep them working for us for the 3 years. That is historically what we have done. Most contracted services are looking for a 2 – 3-year contract. At this point, in working with Advanced Physical Therapy, they were happy to go the 3 years.

Mr. Seaman – How does this compare to our last contract, as far as dollar wise?

Mr. Tencza – This year hold flat. Next year it increases by \$3,000. The following year it goes up by \$3,000 and remains the same for the 3rd year. One of the issues currently with most of the Athletic Training is now the State has changed the criteria to become an Athletic Trainer. One now needs additional credentials and this is driving their earning potential up significantly which is why Select Physical dropped out with us.

Mrs. Kulesa – It's probably good to have a 3-year contract. That way the child will have a chance to know the Trainer.

Mr. Tencza – The contact does hold an "out" clause for both parties at this time.

Mr. Seaman – So at any point, it can be terminated? Does it have to be agreed upon by both parties? Or 1 party or the other?

Mr. Tencza – 1 party or the other.

all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion carries.

B. Personnel Report – Mr. Falcone, Acting Superintendent

Mr. Falcone – All Board Members were provided with an updated Personnel Report in their packets. This report was updated as of last Friday and does not reflect the most recent resignation of a teacher at Plymouth Center School. He then asked if there were any questions on the report. There being none, the group moved on to Public Comment.

11. **Public Comment** (limited to 2-minutes per speaker)

None

12. **Board Liaison Reports**

Mr. Perugino -- Harry S. Fisher Elementary School

Report given by Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani

The group is finishing up on their fundraiser. They were a little shy of their goal by \$500. Charleston Wrap Fundraiser – still time, within the next day or two to place an on-line order and Monday was the first opening day of the school store. Students were excited. The store will be opened monthly. The next month being December where they will be shopping for Christmas.

Mr. Zbuska -- Plymouth Center School

No Report

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani -- Eli Terry Jr. Middle School

The Firehouse Sub Fundraiser – great turnout – ran out of food at around 7:15 p.m. Door prize was donated by Texas Roadhouse. The next fundraiser will be Texas Roadhouse – waiting for approval. Event to take place on November 15th. Great opportunity to purchase gift certificates. Proceeds go back to the middle school. The group is beginning to collect gift certificates and items for a Holiday Calendar in February.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani -- Booster Club

Currently selling their calendar raffle – done by the Athletes. Tickets are \$5.00 each. One can win items valued from \$25 - \$50 each (gift cards). This helps to support the athletes. Cross Country is doing well. However, sports participation is low. Encourages everyone to support sports and for students to try out even if they may not be athletic. Winter sports is underway, come and try out.

Mrs. Kulesa -- Terryville High School

The group met one and one-half weeks ago. This group supports the senior graduates with their after gradparty. They are looking for ways to raise money to provide the students with a safe place to gather together one last time after graduation. The group is also doing a Charleston Wrap Fundraiser. Please contact any parent of a senior or the high school to order directly on line. Other fundraiser ideas were discussed. Urged individuals to reach out and find a way to support our seniors this year. There have been a few difficult years and the group thinks it would be nice to send the seniors off in style.

VACANT -- CABE

VACANT -- EdAdvance

Mr. Showers --- District Safety Committee

There was a meeting on November 10th. All schools have fire drills once a month. Electronic reports sent to the Fire Marshall. Reunification Planning was a big item. Next meeting this will be discussed in more detail. Discussion of replacement cameras at the high school. Next meeting will take place in April.

13. **Board Comments**

Mr. Zbuska – He will take the open spot for the liaison at Plymouth Center School.

Mr. Perugino – Great to be back on the Board working with this team. Looking forward to it for the next 4 years. He welcomed Phyllis back. Mr. Perugino worked with Phyllis when he was a liaison to Harry S. Fisher Elementary School. She is a wonderful person. He also thanked the voters for bringing him back.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani – THS Drama Club – The Witches Princess. Opened to all students in Town. Amazing opportunity for all children to come to support the drama club. Tickets for students - \$10; Adults - \$14, Senior 65 and older – free. Bring a canned good to be donated to a local facility.

Mrs. Lucian – Welcomed and congratulated new Board Members. She indicated she would be willing to take either one of the vacant spots on CAFE or EdAdvance.

Mrs. Kulesa – Welcomed new Board Members and returning Board Members. Looking forward to the opportunity to work with them. Mrs. Kulesa publically thanked Phyllis Worhunsky for coming back to the district. Indicated Phyllis is exactly what this district needs. Exactly what Plymouth Center School needs at this moment and truly appreciates her service to the town.

Mr. Foote – Welcomed new Board members and also nice to see Pat back.

Mrs. Fusco – Thanked the voters for electing her to this position. She looks forward to doing a lot of great things.

Mr. Showers – Welcomed new Board Members, we are going to have a lot of fun and a lot of work ahead of us.

Mr. Seaman – Thanked Mrs. Worhunsky for putting her who life on hold to come help us out when we need it the most. Very thankful and grateful. To Mr. Falcone, thank you. To the community, you will get the answers that you are looking for when it is appropriate. He and the Board appreciate your support. The entire Board has one goal, and that is your children and to educate them.

14. **Next Board Meeting** –The next Regular Meeting of the Plymouth Board of Education is on Wednesday, December 8, 2021 at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria at Terryville High School.

15. **Executive Session**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to enter into executive session at 7:39 p.m. regarding the following items: (a) Agreement between the Plymouth Board of Education and the Technical Office and Professional Unit and The International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America – UAW, Local 376; and (b) Agreement Between the Plymouth Board of Education and the Plymouth Education Association, July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2025. Inviting Mr. Falcone, Acting Superintendent and Mr. Tencza, Business Manager into executive session. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mrs. Lucian any discussion, all in favor, any opposed any abstentions, motion carries.

MOTION: To add the following to the motion: Item (c) the Interim Principal of Plymouth Center School discussion concerning terms of appointment. Motion as Amended: Mr. Showers, second Mrs. Lucian, any discussion all in favor, motion passes.

16. **Resume Regular Session**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to resume regular session at 8:06 p.m. Motion Mr. Showers, second Foote, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion carries.

17. **Possible Action From Executive Session**

(a) MOTION: To authorize the Board of Education Chairperson to sign and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the UAW Union as negotiated with the Business Manager and the Superintendent. Motion Mr. Perugino, second Mr. Showers any discussion on the motion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion passes.

(c) MOTION: To entertain a motion to allow the Board of Education Chair to enter into an Agreement with Mrs. Phyllis Worhunsy as negotiated with the Superintendent and the Business Manager as discussed in executive session. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mrs. Lucian, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, motion carries.

(b) MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve the Agreement Between the Plymouth Board of Education and the Plymouth Education Association, July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2025 as discussed in executive session. Motion Mrs. Lucian, second Mr. Foote

ROLL VOTE: Mr. Showers - Y Mr. Perugino - Y Mr. Foote - Y

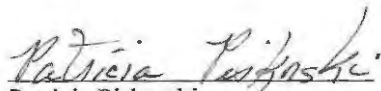
Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani - Y Ms. Fusco - Y Mr. Zbuska - Y

Mrs. Kulesa - Y Mrs. Lucian - Y Mr. Seaman - Y

Motion passes unanimously.

18. **Adjournment**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to adjourn at 8:09 p.m. Motion Mr. Showers, second, Mr. Foote, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, motion passes.



Patricia Piskorski
Recording Secretary
Plymouth Board of Education