

WATERBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION

MINUTES ~ REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, October 15, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via ZOOM

In an effort to adhere to social distancing guidelines, this meeting was held without normal in-person public access. However, the meeting was broadcasted live on the City of Waterbury's Government Access Channel (Comcast 96, Frontier 6096), streamed live at <https://youtu.be/jSasG8479Ng>, or listened to via teleconference by calling 1-701-802-5303 with access code 7755337.

PRESENT: Commissioners Brown, Harvey, Hernandez, Orso, Serrano-Adorno, Stango, Sweeney, J. Van Stone, and T. Van Stone.

ABSENT: President Pagano.

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent Verna D. Ruffin, Chief Financial Officer Doreen Biolo, Chief Operating Officer William Clark, Assistant Superintendent Janice Epperson, Interim Director of Personnel Juan Mendoza, Chief Academic Officer Darren Schwartz, Attorney Tara Shaw, and Director of Communications Sujata Wycoff.

1. SILENT PRAYER

Vice President Harvey called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with a moment of silence.

SUPERINTENDENT: In our moment of silence this evening let us remember Michael T. Lacaria, former substitute teacher in the Waterbury Public School System; he was 31 years old, passed away on October 10, 2020.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Vice President Harvey led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

3. ROLL CALL

CLERK: Commissioner Brown.

BROWN: Here.

CLERK: Vice President Harvey.

HARVEY: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Hernandez.

HERNANDEZ: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Orso.

ORSO: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Serrano-Adorno (arrived at 6:36 p.m.) Commissioner Stango.

STANGO: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Sweeney.

SWEENEY: Here.

CLERK: Commissioner Jason Van Stone.

J. VAN STONE: Still here.

CLERK: Commissioner Tom Van Stone (arrived at 6:34 p.m.). President Pagano (absent).

4. COMMUNICATIONS

Upon a motion by Commissioner Hernandez and duly seconded by Commissioner Sweeney, it was voted unanimously to receive and place on file the following communications:

- a) Copy of communication dated September 11, 2020 from Civil Service certifying Kevin DeGroate, Sr. for the position of Maintainer II.
- b) Email communication dated September 18, 2020 from CABB regarding Policy Highlights.
- c) Copy of communication dated September 23, 2020 from Commissioner Jason Van Stone to Mayor Neil O'Leary regarding resignation from Board of Education.
- d) Copy of communication dated October 1, 2020 from Civil Service certifying Camiecia Anthony for the position of Administrative Associate I.
- e) Email communication dated October 2, 2020 from Nicole Lahoud regarding October 1, 2020 Board of Education meeting.
- f) Email communication dated October 2, 2020 from CABB regarding Policy Highlights.

HARVEY: Discussion? All those in favor indicate by saying aye. Any opposition? Alright, the ayes have it, motion passes.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon a motion by Commissioner Brown and duly seconded by Commissioner Sweeney, it was voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2020 regular meeting.

HARVEY: Discussion? All those in favor indicate by saying aye. Any opposed? Motion passes.

6. PUBLIC ADDRESSES THE BOARD

(The public was permitted to address the Board by calling 1-701-802-5303 with access code 7755337 between 6:00 and 6:15 p.m. and providing their name, address, and phone number.)

There were no public speakers.

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUPERINTENDENT: I do not have a lot of announcements to make tonight, just an update on where we are in the district. We are moving along in our 20 plus something days of operation after the reopening of school on September 8. While we have had some notifications of COVID positive we have taken every step in every situation and worked through it with the assistance of the entire team that has worked tirelessly to gather the accurate information, share it with everyone, and make a decision that's going to be in the best interest of our students, our faculty, our staff, and for the health of all of our school system. While we have had two or three temporary all virtual situations we have not had a situation that would merit the school system to go into virtual as an entire school system. And I am very pleased with the work that we're doing. I ask everyone to remain vigilant in assuring that not only are they taking care of themselves and their families by wearing masks and keeping the social distancing but also be cognizant of the fact that activities that occur in the community and at home after hours also have an impact on what happens within our schools. Unfortunately as we navigate a pandemic which is most unusual for all of us we recognize that there are no quick fixes to any of this. What we recognize is we have to be vigilant, we have to be attentive to the fact that the actions of each individual affects the whole. And so I would ask that all of us continue to be very careful as we go out knowing that we've had a number of our COVID cases that were our virtual learners so it is not indicative of it only being a result of reopening a schools, it's consequential of everything that's happening with a virus that has yet to have a vaccine and the fact that we are still going through some reoccurrences and some spikes within the nation and specifically a very small spike in Connecticut. But I do believe that with continued vigilance and careful attention to wearing masks and PPE and social distancing, we can continue to navigate this so that our learning can occur both in the in-person learning environment for our children and our teachers and also for virtual for those that have opted for the virtual option. I want to also let everyone know that we are in receipt of one of the shipments of new computers that after they are going to be loaded by our IT Department who has done a phenomenal job, I want to thank our IT Department for all of the work that they do not only preparing the computers for being issued but also for troubleshooting and several issues that are ongoing when you are moving an entire district to virtual and one to one implementation of technology across the district. While we have received this shipment we anticipate that after they are ready for distribution, communication will be forthcoming for all of the schools so that students that have not received a computer will be able to get one and students that have had issues with the computer that is broken we will be able to replace it and then be able to repair the computer that is not functioning to a level that perhaps that computer becomes a backup computer for us as we move forward into our one to one implementation. I'm also very pleased with our academic teams, both at the district level and on the school level, as our teachers have been very intentional about how they're learning and how they continue to learn in a virtual environment and how they've prepared some outstanding lessons for their students. And I want to thank the parents for engaging and making certain that students are logged on. At this time it is very commendable that we have located our students, we can verify where our students are in the learning environment. We have over 11,000 students that are connected with us virtually in a total virtual environment but we are very pleased with the nearly 40% of our students that are in-person. And I

want to thank the teachers and the families for working so closely to keep us informed whenever there is indication that someone is not feeling well. We continue to stress if someone is not feeling well they are to remain home and we can make accommodations if they feel well enough to go virtual, they will go virtual, if they feel too ill to go virtual we will troubleshoot that and our principals have been excellent in navigating that. And so we want to continue to move forward because I do believe that an in-person learning has some advantages that if we went totally virtual we might lose but at the same time we are also preparing ourselves so we can continue to learn both in-person and virtual because it's critically important for the advancement of our students academically. We have a very strong focus on the social and emotional, we will continue to have that but we will not lose sight of the fact that academics are also important for all of us and we want to make certain the lessons are aligned to the standards and that the delivery of those lessons will also be able to assist our students in not only catching up but moving forward as we progress academically and we follow new guidance and directions for the entire State of Connecticut. As I shared earlier I think that next month in our work session we will move forward not only with the careful laying out of our strategic plan but I also believe that the Board members will be able to see portions of our audit that was conducted with Futures for our Special Education Department and as we move forward we will begin to share that with the Board as well as others and begin to see how that fits into our strategic plan as we move our district forward even in the pandemic. This is my only update for the Board this evening.

HARVEY: Thank you Dr. Ruffin. Are there any questions?

BROWN: Thank you Dr. Ruffin and my prayers to your Mom and everybody who's suffering from COVID. I just have a question, how are we doing with the teacher shortages, I know at the last Workshop you listed some teacher shortages. I was wondering where we are.

SUPERINTENDENT: Yes, we are still actively recruiting teachers. We still have some critical positions that have not been filled, we know that they are going to be increasingly challenging to fill and while I am optimistic about filling some of them I'm also realistically saying that we're not going to fill all of the vacancies that we currently have within the district. You did ask at one of the Board members whether the number of resignations and the number of retirees and the number of teachers that resigned after the opening of school, was that most unusual for this time of year, and I have obtained the responses from our Human Capital Department, it is not an unusual number. I will tell you that it's not acceptable that we lose so many teachers at the beginning of school but it is very typical for us to have a number of teachers either decide to resign or to retire and that we received notification at the end of the school year such as the long list that you saw in September. That is a big loss for us because at this time and definitely whenever someone resigns in August or September every time that happens so positions, especially if they are a critical shortage position, becomes increasingly impossible to fill during the school year. But what I will add is that we've had a number of our outstanding teachers who have stepped up and they've accepted classes and because of their commitment and devotion to the students in the district we have been able to capture some of the class loads by distributing them to teachers who have opted to accept an additional teaching period and we're very grateful for that. In the absence of that we would have many children without a teacher.

BROWN: Thank you.

8. PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

HARVEY: I'm just going to skip over this and again wish our President a speedy recovery and to get back here to our meetings.

9. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES' COMMENTS

There were no student representatives.

10. COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Item #10.1

STANGO: This agenda item was removed from our Special Meeting last week, was postponed, so here it is tonight again. With the approval of the Committee on School Personnel, the Superintendent of Schools recommends the approval of the appointment of Crosby High School Principal, **so moved.**

SWEENEY: **Second.**

HARVEY: Discussion?

SUPERINTENDENT: This evening I recommend Cathy Newmark as the Interim Principal of Crosby High School. Cathy has served as Assistant Principal at the school for at least five years, she has demonstrated very strong leadership. She currently serves and works alongside the interim principal at this time who has come out of retirement to assist Crosby in the absence of a principal. Cathy has demonstrated strong leadership and very strong commitment to continuing quality work at Crosby High School and it is my recommendation that she be appointed as the interim principal at this time.

HARVEY: Any further discussion? Questions? Commissioner Sweeney.

SWEENEY: Dr. Ruffin you're not going to appoint a principal at this time, you're going to appoint an interim, correct?

SUPERINTENDENT: That is correct.

SWEENEY: So given that, **I make a motion that we return this item to Dr. Ruffin.**

STANGO: **Second.**

HARVEY: Any discussion on that? All those in favor indicate by saying aye. Any opposition? Motion passes. This is returned to the Superintendent.

10.2 Upon a motion by Commissioner Stango and duly seconded by Commissioner Hernandez, it was voted, by roll call vote, to approve the appointment of Erika Lanza as Hopeville School Principal effective immediately.

ORSO: I was happy to be in level one interviews and I think these are very excellent choices.

HARVEY: Any further discussion? Roll call Carrie.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

YEAS: Commissioners Brown, Harvey, Hernandez, Orso, Serrano-Adorno, Stango, Sweeney, Jason Van Stone, and Tom Van Stone – 9

HARVEY: Does anyone wish to remove something from the Consent Calendar?

T. VAN STONE: I would like to remove 11.10 please.

HARVEY: Anything else.

Vice President Harvey proceeded to read the Consent Calendar, items 11.1 through 11.9

11. CONSENT CALENDAR

Upon a motion by Commissioner Brown and duly seconded by Commissioner Hernandez, it was voted unanimously to approve the Consent Calendar, items 11.1 through 11.9, as read and listed:

- 11.1 The Committee of the Whole recommends the Waterbury Board of Education approve a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), at no cost, with State Education Resource Center (SERC) for professional learning to support, promote, and develop racial equity in education.
- 11.2 The Committee of the Whole recommends the Waterbury Board of Education approve a Memorandum of Understanding, at no cost, with Community Health Affiliates, to provide evidence-based group treatment (Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) and Bounce Back (BB)) to children who are suffering from traumatic stress
- 11.3 The Committee of the Whole recommends the Waterbury Board of Education approve an Agreement with Children’s Community School, Inc., for a three-year period and at no cost, to provide a transition services program for students with disabilities.
- 11.4 The Committee of the Whole recommends the Waterbury Board of Education approve an Agreement with Belle Academy of Cosmetology, LLC, for a three-year period and at no cost, to provide a transition services program for students with disabilities.
- 11.5 The Committee on Finance recommends the Waterbury Board of Education approve an Agreement with Waterbury Youth Services, Inc. to provide truancy prevention services as required by the 2020-2021 Youth Service Bureau Grant.

- 11.6 The Committee on Finance recommends the Waterbury Board of Education approve the submittal of the 2020-2022 Consolidated Two-year Federal Grant applications.
- 11.7 With the approval of the Committee on Finance, the Superintendent of Schools recommends approval of the following transfers in the fiscal year 2020/2021 totaling \$2,550.00.00:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Account</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
Capital Improvement Fund-BOE Unallocated (Sinking Fund)	60180	547000	(\$1,750,000)	
Special Capital Project-Acquisition & Purchase For the purchase acquisition of 61 & 67 Southmayd Road and 116 Beecher Avenue	60180	547010		\$1,750,000
Capital Improvement Fund-BOE Unallocated (Sinking Fund)	60180	547000	(\$800,000)	
Special Capital Project-Building Improvement For the improvement of building at 61 & 67 Southmayd Road and 116 Beecher Avenue	60180	575501		\$800,000
TOTAL			(\$2,550,000)	\$2,550,000

- 11.8 The Committee on Finance recommends the Waterbury Board of Education approve an Agreement with Waterbury Symphony Orchestra, Incorporated to provide music mentoring services to Waterbury Arts Magnet School students.
- 11.9 The Committee on Finance recommends the Waterbury Board of Education approve a contract with ESS Northeast LLC for Substitute Teacher and Paraprofessional Staffing based on the terms and conditions as outlined in the attached memo/executive summary of August 31, 2020, and subject to final approval of the Corporation Counsel.

HARVEY: Any discussion? All those in favor indicate by saying aye. Any opposition? Motion passes.

12. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT

Item #11.10 – Committee on Building & School Facilities

Upon a motion by Commissioner Jason Van Stone and duly seconded by Commissioner Sweeney, it was voted, by roll call vote, to approve a Real Estate Contract for property known as 119 Southmayd Road and 116 Beecher Avenue, Waterbury, Connecticut (a/k/a 61 & 67 Southmayd Road).

HARVEY: Discussion? Commissioner Tom Van Stone.

T. VAN STONE: I will defer to Commissioner Jason Van Stone and then I will take my time.

HARVEY: Commissioner Jason Van Stone.

J. VAN STONE: That means he's going to go on a rant so I'll get out of the way. Thank you Madam Vice President, thank you Commissioner Van Stone. In my opinion while this is not necessarily the perfect building for us it's the perfect building right now in the East End. I believe for the price tag, which is significant, and for the work we will have to put into it which is probably also significant, it is worthwhile. If you've seen the amount of money we've spent on new schools to make sure that we have enough space for our kids, we're regularly talking 40 million, 50 million, 68 million dollars, and Duggan might still be going, to make sure that we have somewhere for our children. And from day one on this Board, and I know everyone who was on the Board with me at that time, we knew the East End was a problem. Wendell Cross certainly is going to help that a little bit but I think that this purchase of this school facility with the proper upgrades will go a long way to help some of that overcrowding in the East End. My personal hope is that it would be a neighborhood school. I know there are some other programs that also need homes but we've been telling the residents of the East End now for at least 10 years that we hear their calls, we hear what they need, and I think this is an opportunity for us to put another school there to allow those neighborhood kids to stay close to home, to have an education level second to none. So I'm in favor of this tonight and as I said I hope it becomes a neighborhood school for those folks. Thank you Madam Vice President.

HARVEY: Thank you Commissioner Jason Van Stone. Commissioner Tom Van Stone.

T. VAN STONE: Thank you Madam Vice President, through you. I agree in principle with everything Commissioner Jason Van Stone stated. I've been a major, major person in favor of doing something for the east side of Waterbury. We thought we had a plot of land way up on a hill tucked away, it would have been actually even a challenge to get a roadway to the location. There was a small contingency of City folks that were against that and I was so in favor of actually doing a brand new school to help with this situation, mainly at Chase and Generali, and at that time, I don't know I guess it's almost five years ago now, maybe more, we did not pull it through. There were a lot of threats of putting it on a City ballot, all kinds of things, and basically we backed off. And in hindsight I wish we hadn't because it would have been so great for the east side students. So in that theory, I am so happy we're finally doing something to help with the situation we're in. However, and of course no one is surprised when I say however, I do have some questions that I've asked and actually Mr. Clark has been tremendous at getting me information I needed to answer some of my questions but still some are either not answered or maybe not to my satisfaction. I'm really not trying to be critical, it's the right move, I do agree with that. However, there are some issues I still have that I think, for me anyway, it's the right time to ask these questions. So as I go through them, again Will, I really appreciate everything you fed me along the way on my questions because it has taken a lot away from what I was questioning but I'm still concerned in a few areas and I'll go one by one, questions/statements, and the first one that's been a major concern of mine and Mr. Clark knows it is with the soil samples. The answer I received is we are not proceeding with any request for soil samples. It does not appear anything in the bill of sale includes soil samples, and I'm gonna tell you why I'm concerned. I did look at all the public records and different than a private ownership of a public record where if you look up and I'll use my property as an example, any request to the City for a building permit to do changes to my property are listed publically on the website. Kind of cutoff at 2006, I know I had building permits prior to that but they just don't appear on the website. In the case of this piece of

property the tab on the public website where you talk about building permits or changes to the property, this property that tab is non-existent so there's no way to look back on what they applied for and/or granted for changes to the property. And the reason I bring up soil samples is what I do know about the property, just in my history of being in Waterbury, this is probably, Will can correct me, but probably 50% of this property is a parking lot. The only thing on the public website said something was done to the parking lot/pavement in 1978 and nothing after. I do know this property has held carnivals with rides which certainly brings in potential issues with the ground. The convent which has been admitted to having probably our biggest challenge to upgrade and then do something with the convent also shows on the plot that has a garage. So I don't know what's going on in that garage over the years and those are my reasons for asking about the soil samples. I'll bring some of the folks back to the beautiful park we now have in Bunker Hill on Bunker Hill Avenue that is beautiful. It has a handicap playground, it has basketball courts which I've always said that our folks that use that basketball court have been very good when I drive to work, when I drove to work before COVID, they never left anything around the playground, garbage pails were used, they were full, but they used them. It also has two baseball fields for t-ball'sh type baseball and certainly in the middle of that they play soccer. But when we redid that as a City that park was closed for a very, very, very long time because of what we found in the soil. So it worries me that we are not looking at soil samples. So my questions would be why are we not asking for soil samples already on record and why are we not doing our own as part of taking on this piece of property? And let me go through them Mr. Clark, if you may, just to go through them and then I'll step aside because I am not being argumentative for this property I just still have open questions. And then expected upgrades. We've also as part of this project set aside \$800,000 on top of the 1.5 million sale price to do expected upgrades. Now I made a personal decision this week to not go on the tour and that personal decision because it started out with three or four Commissioners going on a tour to it being opened up to three different boards of the City. It still sounds like the attendance wasn't that great and maybe I still should have gone but I made a personal decision during COVID not to go into a big group. You can fault me for that fine but that was my personal decision. So some of what I read about the tour is that we're talking about outside of the boilers, which we need too, and Mr. Clark has shown me they outlived their useful life, so we obviously have to go after those and other than that some paint to make it pretty but the areas of my concern are the boilers and also I read that we'll have to pull up carpeting that has been down for, we don't know how long, which if you go back enough years the underling of carpet had some properties that we really shouldn't be interested in for our students. And with the high level of asthmatic students we have the ripping up of carpet concerns me. So that's that category for upgrades and I find it hard to believe it just needs a paint job because I think we can do better than the \$800,000 to apply a paint job. I mentioned the boilers, I mentioned the paint, and I mentioned to some degree the upgrades so if I could just get some answers, and I don't think all the answers can come tonight which gives me difficulty in voting in favor of. Being in favor of dealing with our situation with Generali and Chase and over population we can only be thankful that during COVID only about 30/35% of those students went back to that school because if we had to do social distancing at those two schools even it was a 50% return to school population it would have been an amazing challenge and I don't know how we would have dealt with it. My caution, it is not anything to do with needing this facility because we do. We really haven't been given a plan of what the expectation is similar to some of the things that Commissioner Jason Van Stone brought up. Is it a specialty school, an academy

type school? Is it something to move population to help with Generali and Chase, okay. That'd be my preference. I still have the concerns I brought forward so I'm struggling, and I'm not looking to stop this, I'm really not, but for me personally as a Commissioner answering to the people who put us in these chairs, I still have a number of questions which makes it difficult for me to be in favor of. Again, I want to really state that I am not saying drop this and run away, by any means. We need to do something. We need to address the situation on the east side of Waterbury. So Will please take my comments as my concerns and not criticism but there are still a lot of unanswered responses that I would still need and of course we're voting on it tonight so it's gonna affect my vote. So thank you Madam Vice President, I just needed to put that out there that these are my concerns and certainly by no means an objection to moving something like this forward. Thank you.

HARVEY: Thank you Commissioner. Will, did you want to address anything before we move on?

CLARK: No. If there's a specific question I'd be happy answer it. I would just note simply I would put the track record of our Facilities' Department up against anyone and the recent experience with St. Joe's and those of you who went on the tour of that building and those of you who went on the tour of Saint Pete's and maybe even those of you who went to school at Saint Pete's, it was better than St. Joe's was when we got in there and in a couple of months with every one of the concerns that Commissioner Van Stone can raise and about 20 others, we got it done. So I am completely competent that we can get this thing turned around pretty quickly in a cost effective manner to provide a safe and healthy environment for students and programs and I think we will follow a similar pattern frankly carpeting for the asthmatic and allergies and so forth really should be out anyway and you'll see us do that across the district. It's easier to clean, it's easier to maintain, particularly in this COVID environment you want to reduce that amount of felt and carpet and furniture that can't be cleaned as easily as a surface as best you can in the schools and that would certainly be our plan absolutely subject to the desires to the Board and the Superintendent for the ultimate purpose of the building. But really other than the boilers as the big deal which we all knew going in and frankly to make them more energy efficient is a much better deal for us anyway. This is pretty close to a turnkey and doing the cosmetics and the upgrades and the technology and the boilers are the big things and then really fitting it up to suit the needs of what the Board desires.

HARVEY: Okay, thank you Will. Commissioner Sweeney.

SWEENEY: So I graduated from Saint Peter and Paul's, I think that's what Will was alluding to and the school essentially in layout and in remarkably in condition is pretty much what I remember when I started there back in the 60s. So I'll tell you that I never played on anything but asphalt because that's what that school was surrounded with back in the 60s, it was asphalt on both sides. The only garage I recall is still there but it is at the Rectory Building and it was a parking garage for the priests. So the rooms are in the same general layout as they were. They're quite large. I would hope that in the face of COVID and not knowing how long this is going to last and the expectation that we are hoping this school actually open next year, we wouldn't go putting up partitions and sectioning those off, but rather give the students some good elbow room. The school started out when I went there grade one through eight and there were two

classrooms of each grade. And most of our graduating classes were 60 students, so anywhere from 30 to 35 students in a room. So they're pretty big rooms. Again, I had been in the school maybe about five years ago for a reunion and took a tour then. There's been some minor things, they've put in a library, they put in a science lab, but they took over classroom space to do that. So, again, very little has changed in the building but they seem to have kept the upkeep. I would agree with Will that it looks worn so it needs paint, needs polish, but I think it's a win/win for our East Enders. Again, I had mentioned that I would like us to draw down Chase and hopefully put that on tap for a Pre-k through eight through a renovation because the space is there. I would hope that it would help with Generali as well and I would hope that eventually we would look at Wallace for two pre-k through eights and sew up at least one section of our city with pre-k through eights. So I am fully in favor of this. I think the time is now, it's here and we should take advantage of the opportunity. So thank you.

HARVEY: Thank you. Any further discussion? Commissioner Charles Stango.

STANGO: Just to comment on the purchase of the school. I think probably the worst kept secret in the City of Waterbury that eventually at some point in time when all things are said and done that we would be the owners of that school. We have our eyes on this building every time a building becomes empty for whatever reason that we have no control of from the other party. So I think that eventually when the time came to get it I think it's our job to take it and to purchase it of course. And I think that, I'm surprised at the asking price, you can go to some places and buy a house that costs that much money in some parts of New England. So I think it's a good purchase and I'm totally in favor of it. We mention a lot of things and possibilities to do with the building but one thing that was always mentioned in the past was to use it as much needed swing space when we're forced to redo other buildings someplace in the East End which may in time happen. So at the very least it will work for swing space. I recall when Wendell Cross, the students had to go somewhere, some of the parents said why can't we go to Saint Peter and Paul? Well we couldn't because we did not own the building and now we're going to own the building and that will be a possibility for swing space along with all the other things that were mentioned to use it for. Certainly it will be a building that will be used. Thank you.

HARVEY: All right, thank you. Any further discussion? Let's do a roll call Carrie.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

YEAS: Commissioners Brown, Harvey, Hernandez, Orso, Serrano-Adorno,
Stango, Sweeney, and Jason Van Stone – 8
NAYS: Commissioner Tom Van Stone – 1

CLERK: Eight/one – motion carries.

13. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

13.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Sweeney and duly seconded by Commissioner Brown, it was voted unanimously to approve of the Year Two Performance Bonus in accordance with the current Employment Agreement with Dr. Verna D. Ruffin.

HARVEY: Discussion? Commissioner Brown.

BROWN: I'm so excited to have Dr. Ruffin with us and I believe this is well earned given what we've been through for the past couple of years so I'm very happy that we're doing this tonight.

HARVEY: Any further discussion? All those in favor indicate by saying aye. Any opposition? Motion passes.

13.2 Upon a motion by Commissioner Sweeney and duly seconded by Commissioner Hernandez, it was voted unanimously to approve a new Employment Agreement with Dr. Vera D. Ruffin, Superintendent of Schools, as attached.

HARVEY: Discussion? Commissioner Stango.

STANGO: I think certainly that it's a right thing to do at this time for a superintendent to extend their contract. We know that we're fortunate to have her and the work that she does is unbelievable and the time she puts in. And in superintendent world this is the time to extend the contract. No superintendent goes year to year, she has to look at and we're providing that window of time where we hope she remains with us. Thank you.

HARVEY: Thank you. Any further discussion? All those in favor indicate by saying aye. Any opposition? Motion passes.

SUPERINTENDENT: I want to thank all of the Commissioners for the new contract agreement and for the performance bonus. I want to tell you that I'm very excited about working with all of you and I'm so very excited that you approved for continuing employment here in Waterbury. I can't think of a better place to be working with the best people and staff and the best Board and I do appreciate all of you. Thank you very much.

14. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

14.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Jason Van Stone and duly seconded by Commissioner Hernandez, it was voted unanimously to approve the use of school facilities, at no charge, by the following school organizations and/or City departments:

GROUP	FACILITIES AND DATES/TIMES
Registrar of Voters	Tues., Nov. 3, 5:00 am – 9:00 pm, Presidential Election. Schools to be used: Kennedy, Gilmartin, Kingsbury, Sprague, West Side M/S, Regan, Carrington, Maloney, Wilson, Crosby, Tinker, Reed, Chase
Dr. Ruffin & Ann Marie Brites	Kennedy: Tuesday, October 20, 6:30 - 8:30 pm and Thurs. October 22, 3:30 - 5:30 pm, Family & Consume Science Room. Wtby. Public School students and family volunteers in conjunction with the United Way to make masks. Starting on Oct. 20 and end date to be determined.

HARVEY: Discussion? All those in favor indicate by saying aye. Any opposition?
Motion passes.

- 14.2 Upon a motion by Commissioner Jason Van Stone and duly seconded by Commissioner Hernandez, it was voted unanimously to approve the use of school facilities by outside organizations/groups and/or waiver requests:**

GROUP	FACILITIES AND DATES/TIMES
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GROUPS NOT SUBJECT TO FEES OR WAIVER DUE TO TIME OF USE OR PREVIOUS WAIVER:

Waterbury Bridge To Success Akia Callum	Reed parking lot: Mon., Oct. 19, 2:00 pm - 7:00 pm (Farm to Family Fresh Produce Drive Through)
YMCA M. Lennon	Crosby track: 10/14, 10/28, 11/11 6:00 - 7:00 pm (YMCA running club requests that lights be on for these dates)

HARVEY: Discussion? All those in favor indicate by saying aye. Any opposition?
Motion passes.

15. COMMITTEE ON POLICY AND LEGISLATION

- 15.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Sweeney and duly seconded by Commissioner Hernandez, it was voted unanimously to approve the revised Individualized Education Program/Special Education Program Policy/#6159, as distributed and attached.**

HARVEY: Discussion? All those in favor indicate by saying aye. Any opposition?
Motion passes.

- 15.2 Upon a motion by Commissioner Sweeney and duly seconded by Commissioner Serrano-Adorno, it was voted unanimously to approve the revised Reporting of Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Assault Policy #5141.4, as distributed and attached.**

HARVEY: Discussion? All those in favor indicate by saying aye. Any opposition?
Motion passes.

16. COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

- 16.1 Upon a motion by Commissioner Orso and duly seconded by Commissioner Hernandez, it was voted unanimously to approve a Professional Services Agreement with Cormier Consulting, LLC for Teacher & Administrator Professional Development for Turnaround Schools.**

HARVEY: Discussion? All those in favor indicate by saying aye. Any opposition?
Motion passes.

16.2 Upon a motion by Commissioner Orso and duly seconded by Commissioner Hernandez, it was voted unanimously to approve the Connecticut Department of Administrative Services “Alliance Districts’ School Buildings Grant Program” application.

HARVEY: Discussion? All those in favor indicate by saying aye. Any opposition? Motion passes.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Orso and duly seconded by Commissioner Brown, it was voted unanimously to add to the Agenda item #16.3, Amendment to Professional Services Agreement with CREC.

HARVEY: Discussion?

SWEENEY: Point of order. It should have been added at the beginning of the agenda. I won't stop it but it should have been added at the head of the agenda.

HARVEY: Alright. Is Tara on?

SHAW: Yes I am.

HARVEY: Can we proceed with this?

SHAW: I believe you can proceed but technically it should have been voted onto the agenda at the beginning and the vote would have proceeded now.

HARVEY: Got it, okay. We'll make a note of that. Alright, any further discussion? If not, all those in favor indicate by saying aye. Any opposition? Motion passes.

16.3 Upon a motion by Commissioner Orso and duly seconded by Commissioner Brown, it was voted unanimously to approve Amendment 1 to the Professional Services Agreement with Capitol Regional Education Council (CREC) for school psychology services.

HARVEY: Discussion? All those in favor indicate by saying aye. Any opposition? Motion passes.

17. SUPERINTENDENT’S NOTIFICATION TO THE BOARD

Upon a motion by Commissioner Jason Van Stone and duly seconded by Commissioner Sweeney, it was voted unanimously to receive and place on file items 17.1 through 17.3, Superintendent’s Notification to the Board, as listed:

17.1 Athletic appointments:

Arisian, Michael – KHS Assistant Girls Swimming, effective 10/08/2020.

Blizzard, Taji – CHS Assistant Football, effective 09/21/2020.

Devine, Michael – WAMS Lead Unified Sports, effective 09/08/2020.

Weaver, Trai – WCA Assistant Football, effective 09/15/2020.

17.2 Resignations:

Brown, Jennifer – Wilson Library Media, effective 10/09/2020.
DeRienzo, Laura – Regan grade 1, effective 10/28/2020.
Diaz, Natalie – Walsh/Washington School Psychologist, effective 10/09/2020.
Higgins, Lisa – CHS Special Ed, effective 10/02/2020.
Knecht, Joel – KHS Music, effective 10/20/2020.
Perkins, Ryan – NEMS ELA, effective 10/02/2020.

17.3 Retirements:

Bello-Davila, Delia – Bucks Hill Principal, effective 11/30/2020.
Matulis-Sarasin, Pamela – Generali Kindergarten, effective 09/15/2020.

HARVEY: Any discussion? All those in favor indicate by saying aye. Any opposition? Motion passes. Item 18 – Unfinished Business of Preceding Meeting Only. Any business of that nature? Alright. Move onto Item 19 – Other Unfinished, New and Miscellaneous Business. Commissioner Tom Van Stone.

T. VAN STONE: Thank you Madam Vice President, through you. If I shut down my video it's because this is a little difficult for me with personal reasons and I can't sway anyone with my persona of maybe getting choked up so if you lose my video it was on purpose. I would like to start this unfinished business by saying I really appreciate what Commissioner Jason Van Stone, all his contributions to not just the education of our students, the attention to detail for our teachers, our parents, and all extended family responsible for our students. Jason also really for a lot of years has contributed outside of education to the City of Waterbury. I'm gonna turn my video off. Jason is special and he's been special to the City of Waterbury. He knows how I love him and I will miss him more than anyone. I've kind of known Jason a long time but I guess everyone knew that. It's really difficult for me to say goodbye to him as a Commissioner and a person that has led a positive life for the City of Waterbury. He went to grammar school in our public school system, he played sports for the public school system, and he's always been there for all of us. He's a dedicated public servant from day one and on the Board especially for his attention to detail. He's held positions of committee leadership, a leader to this Board in general. I will get to see Jason forever; this Board I hope realizes how much we will miss him. I hope the city of Waterbury realizes how much we will miss him. Jason is actually, and this is big for an Irish family, is the oldest that we thought would carry on the Van Stone name. Well over the last 40 years we've brought on a lot of Van Stones to carry on that name and that may not be politically correct to state in these days to say the male carries on but that's where Jason is to our family. Jason, I love you and I'm gonna miss you in political life, in public life, but I know you're with me forever. Thank you.

HARVEY: Anyone else that would like to make comments at this time? Commissioner Orso.

ORSO: Jason, I want to personally thank you. When I got into this political arena you were the first one that backed me up and helped me, helped me through the election cycle and you were the person I relied on, you were the person I relied on when I got on the Board, if I had any questions you were there for me and I know we've only worked together on this for a year but we've known each other for years but we've only worked

together for a year and it's been my honor and my pleasure to work with you. Thank you.

HARVEY: Commissioner Hernandez.

HERNANDEZ: Well Jason, I don't know what I'm gonna do because you know you always used to text me when I forgot to say something or couldn't remember what went next but I wish you the best, I will miss you a lot. You have taught me a lot as well but I wish you nothing but the best and you will be missed. Love ya.

HARVEY: Commissioner Brown.

BROWN: Jason, I have to say we've got into politics at the same time, we both served the same amount of time on the Board and you know your professionalism, I love your sense of humor, I'm gonna really miss that, that dry humor that really shows your kind personality. You've always been professional and it's been really a pleasure to work with you. Best of luck.

HARVEY: Commissioner Stango.

STANGO: I think Ann's hand was up, I think I'm going to let her go first if that's okay with you.

HARVEY: Go ahead Ann, you're next Commissioner Stango.

SWEENEY: So this guy over my shoulder here, Jason, this is my favorite picture without a doubt. So I know Charles is going to follow and he's going to have just some great words of wisdom put together and I could never top that so I wrote words. I wrote common sense, reason, level headed, respectful of ideas and people, collaborative, always a conversation never a confrontation. Regardless of how a vote would go Jason was always behind what the majority decides and then he worked like crazy to make sure all decisions benefited students. I have been honored to serve beside you and I will miss you on this Board and I will miss seeing you on a regular basis. Please don't stay away too long. Thank you.

HARVEY: Commissioner Stango.

STANGO: I'm gonna poke him a little bit, is that okay with everybody? Jason, just a couple of memories here, you can believe them or choose not to but it's true. Before you were sworn in the first time over 10 years ago I remember some people were concerned that you were way too young and a little bit rough around the edges to serve on this Board and I tried to put their minds at ease, I told them that I would keep an eye on you and I would mentor you. Now I finally got you to the point where you're making some sense and you're showing some promise and now you're turning around and you're leaving. It always seems to happen that way but we have to move on. Then I remember just after you took your seat on the Board again over 10 years ago these same people commented to me again that you know that new kid, well he looks like Clark Kent they said to me and I guess by . . . looks like Superman. Again, it's true. I think it was the glasses and the haircut that did it, I'm not sure. Clark Kent, maybe, I can see that – mild mannered, he's a Commissioner for the Board of Education, a

courageous fighter of hate, fights for kids, truth, justice, and the American way. Yea, I can see all that but Superman, not so much. So if not Superman then who is this Jason Van Stone that we talk about that made so many people sad tonight. Well he's a model of how to perform in public service. We should make a poster of it – any new Board member that comes in should be able to study that and follow suite. He is a model of decorum and comportsment. Everyone should treat people the way he treats them and says and speaks to the Board the way he speaks to the Board. He is always appropriate and he is always professional. Again, let's study this. And most importantly he always puts the children of this district first, never fails to do that. So I want to say good luck, I want to say wishing you only the best, I want to say stay in touch, and I want to say I will personally miss you on the Board also. So that's all I got. One more thing, one more thing, did anyone here ever see Jason Van Stone and Superman in the same room at the same time? I know I didn't so maybe, maybe there's something to that, it's a possibility, I'm not sure but we'll have to take a vote on that and I'll bet you the vote will be yes his is kind of like a Superman. So with that I make a motion to adjourn, no I take it back.

HARVEY: Anyone else? Jason, before I give you the floor, Dr. Ruffin.

SUPERINTENDENT: I definitely want to take this opportunity to personally thank you for your service and I will remember forever the first time that I met you and had an opportunity to talk with you and Tom as you came to visit in Tennessee and then to continue developing the relationship as a member of this Board. So I want to thank you. I could always count on when I called you, you always responded. We had very candid conversations and I feel that you always guided me in the right direction and I want to thank you for that, as Superintendent that means everything. I feel that I have a great relationship with my Board members and I can talk with all of you, I feel that I am losing one person, I don't know who else is gonna be here, but certainly I knew that I could always count on you to give me sound advice and I appreciate that. I will miss you dearly. I know that you're going to be outstanding wherever you go and whatever you do and I want to wish you the very best in your continued success as you move on. Thank you very much.

HARVEY: Thank you Dr. Ruffin. Commissioner Adorno.

SERRANO-ADORNO: Thank you. I want to like just say ditto to what everybody else has stated to Jason, I will text you, I don't want to get emotional. I just want to wish you the best of luck. Thank you for everything, for replying to text messages when I have a lot of questions or didn't understand something on the agenda or a particular item. You've done a lot to the community, I don't want to repeat some of the stuff because Charles, who can go after you, that was amazing. You should have just signed all our names on that speech. You will be missed Jason and I'm sure I'll still be texting you and bothering you. Best of luck to you.

HARVEY: Anyone else? Jason, before I give you the floor, I just want to thank you. It's been really good knowing you. What I really appreciate is that the support that I needed at certain times that I didn't think I would get from you and you surprised me and supported things particularly with parents, parent engagement, different things, the student representation, et cetera and I was really impressed by that. So I want to thank you, I want to wish you luck and not to say that you, I think you were in the marketing for

the location I go to get my eyeglasses so I was pleased to know that. Just best of luck to you, don't be a stranger, and I wish you the best of luck with whatever you do and again, don't be a stranger. So with that I turn the floor over to you.

JASON VAN STONE: Thank you Madam Vice President. If I knew it was going to be like this I would have retired years ago. This outpouring of support is touching. For all the tears I'm moving like eight minutes away so I'll be around if anyone, unlike Commissioner Awwad who said lose my number, feel free to hold onto my number, I'm not going anywhere, I'd be more than happy to give you advice as bad as it may be but feel free to ring me up at any time. This Board I've had the pleasure of serving on now for the better part of the decade I think in some ways is an aberration, too much in politics now a days is adversarial, it's angry, we were never them, we were collegial, we had the ability to disagree without being disagreeable and I wish there was more of that out there. I wanted to thank each of you. We are a Board of 10 plus all of Central Office, plus all the teachers, all the administrators, you know we're a giant team and it's been a privilege to be part of it. And I'm gonna miss someone, I apologize ahead of time, Doc Ruffin – you are an amazing leader in good times and an inspirational one in bad times. I remember that visit down there and I remember the ribs I had in Memphis so thank you very much for that, those were incredible. It was great getting to meet you, it was great learning about you talking to all your colleagues and all the amazing things that were said. Continue to do a good job.

Mr. Clark – a few years ago when Paul Guidone retired I said man I feel bad for the son of gun that's going to replace that guy but you have done more than an admiral job in that position, one's that, to keep all the trains running on time in this district is not easy. So well done, it's been a pleasure to have an opportunity to work with you.

Darren – I want to thank you, anytime an email came through or I read something online or something in the agenda that a whole bunch of big words and educational jargon I would immediately call you and you would break it down into small bite sized chunks for me so even I could understand it and I can't tell you how much I appreciated that. Many meetings you set me up with the information I needed to make me look good so I thank you for that sir.

Doreen – man, I remember especially in the beginning, as soon as I got on the Board I became Finance Chairman which was probably a huge mistake but, whatever. So poor Paul and Doreen had to sit down with me over and over again, walk me through how budgets in the public sector work because coming from the private sector none of it made sense to me. I didn't understand where money was coming or going or how it was there. Doreen had the amount of patience to sit and work with me and I'll never forget that.

Doc Epperson and Noreen Buckley – the two of you are incredible parts of the Central Office that I know Doc relies on. Please keep working to make sure everything you guys do to back her up, to back up all these kids in Waterbury. You two are tremendous.

Kathy Gabrielson – your department ain't an easy one and the work you need to do every day to make sure that it's running on time, making sure that all those very special students are taken care of. You do an amazing job.

Sujata – I fought for this position for a long time. I thought too many times the only time you read about the district in the paper was when we did something wrong. And albeit we do enough wrong to get in the paper a lot, I thought there was a lot of positive stories that just weren't getting out there. So keep fighting the fight, make sure that all the people out there know just what a great job we do.

Will Zhuta who has the best glamour shot anyone in Waterbury Public Schools could ever ask for, thank you, especially during this last year or so where sometimes we take the IT guys for granted but you really stepped up, you and your whole department, to make sure not only can we see each other in these meetings but, oh no, the picture was better, go back to the picture, but to make sure that the kids in this district, the teachers in this district had the opportunity to still learn. So thank you very much for that.

Juan – I thought you were a great principal and I see you growing into this new position and you're growing leaps and bounds every day and I think it was an inspired choice by the Superintendent to put you there and I wanted to wish you the best going forward.

Tara – I got to know you before you were an employee. I generally don't like lawyers but you were one of the exceptions to that rule. You're a tremendous negotiator, you can see through the BS before anybody to make sure that your clients, in this case now us, come out on the prevailing side. So thank you very much for that.

I don't know if Mike is still on the phone or not, but Mike LeBlanc, even though you're not really an Education Department employee, the amount of work you do for our side of the street with professionalism and . . . should be thanked over and over again.

And I don't think these two are around but Chris Harmon who I've gotten to know pretty well in the past couple of years now, he and his maintenance staff from the big jobs like St. Joe's to the little ones, beyond compare, and our Corp. Counsel Linda Wihbey who makes sure the documents and such come out right by the time we get to them.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention a couple of formers. I've had the opportunity to work with three Superintendents, all of them were tremendous, so in addition to Dr. Ruffin I'd like to thank Dr. Snead and Dr. Ouellette. Paul Guidone who I mentioned earlier, he probably . . . the day I was first put on this Board and then reelected the amount of time I sat in his office learning things. Anne Marie Cullinan, Dr. Sequeira, Ron Frost, Bob Brenker, Melissa Baldwin, John Cross, George D'Agostino, Judge Mosley, Mike Yamin, the late John Herman – all tremendous people.

And I would really be in trouble if I didn't mention the most important person in the school district, Carrie Swain. Thank you for making sure that at least personally on many nights I knew where I was going. It wasn't an uncommon thing where I'd leave work, get in the car and start driving and really had no idea where I was going and I'd shoot her a text at 5:30 and say where's the workshop again tonight, where are we going and without fail she would answer. So thank you Carrie.

I want to thank, this sounds like an Oscar speech now, some of the former folks that many of us served with – Felix Rodriguez, Brian McEntee, Joan D'Amelio, Paul D'Angelo, Coleen Flaherty Merritt, Greg Harkins, Cathy Awwad – three, four, five times, John Theriault, current Mayor O'Leary who was a former Commissioner for many of us, he sat at the same table as us, I want to thank all of those people, I learned something

from each of them. Pat Hayes who was my first President and I've had the opportunity to work under four Presidents – Pat, Liz, Charles, and now Chuck. All tremendous, different leadership styles but really all tremendous people. I'd be remissive if I didn't thank Mayor Jarjura, he's the one who appointed me to this crazy Board in the first place, I wanted to be an Alderman and he said naw, I'd rather you be a Board of Education Commissioner and despite my protest he did it anyway and I fell in love with this Board. Anywhere, anytime I had the opportunity to tell people about government and what important jobs are and unimportant jobs are, I tell them the most important job in any government is the Board of Education in your local town and I believe that. It's the hardest working board, it's generally the least glorious board, but every decision we make affects people in real life.

I want to thank all the administrators, the teachers, any of the staff who work for the Waterbury Public Schools, the maintainers, food service, crossing guards, paraprofessionals, everybody, back when I said it's a giant team effort it truly is. I want to thank the students and their parents who have put faith in me and all of us to do what's best for their kids.

Now for my current members of this Board – Karen, I heard what you said and I agree. There were a number of policy things where we weren't eye to eye but on a number of things and I think the really important ones, we were. And I will never, I'll never take away from you how hard you work for minority people in this city. You're a leader, not just of the minority community, but of people, and I appreciate that. And I appreciate that even when sometimes you don't have the most popular opinion on the Board, you fight for it, and that's what the people deserve.

Who next in this Brady Bunch of screens here, Ann Sweeney. And by the way that should be your background until the end of time, that should never change, always know I'm looking over . . . If I recall that is a suit you did spill a glass of wine on at one point, that suit has been retired forever. You're one of my favorite people on this Board and I'll incredibly miss you.

Who do we got now – Melissa. Melissa, when you first came on the energy you brought to this Board kind of rejuvenated me. You know halfway through the term you know sometimes you get that lull but the energy you brought to this Board especially fighting for some of our special needs kids reenergized me, reinvigorated me. So thank you very much for that. You're going to continue to do great on this Board.

Charles Stango. When I got here 10 years ago you were the old guy on the Board and while you correctly remember I was the young kid. You're still the old guy on the Board somehow. I'm not too sure how that has not changed but you, your level of preparedness for every meeting has not missed a beat. I remember in one of our incarnations in the seating arrangement I had the opportunity to sit next to you and I would look at these legal pads of notes for every agenda item. You never lacked for preparedness, you were a mentor of mine, you are a mentor of mine. So keep fighting the fight. Your voice is important on this Board and never forget that.

Rocco – when I heard a couple of years ago that you were interested in the Board of Education I generally asked two questions – one, why? Cause it's not something that we used to hear a lot, everyone wanted to be something fancy like an Alderman so when anyone every starts off wanting the Board of Education I'm inquisitive, intrigued,

and want to make sure that they're in their right mind and you sir are that. I will rest easier knowing someone who has a fluency with numbers is on this Board to make sure that all the pennies are counted, to make sure that the people's money is spent wisely and I can certainly trust you to do that.

Juanita – first couple of years were tough kid, I was worried about you, you didn't always look like you were having a good time. But I can't tell you how happy I . . . because you have a voice that deserves to be heard here.

Lizzy – you were a great President. I used to make fun of people who would kind of deflect all the questions we ever got on the Board of Ed with the answer that it's for the children. You know it, sometimes it wiped away hard decisions, it would allow for spending of money that maybe I didn't agree with but at the end of the day I knew you really did everything for the children.

I wish President Pagano could be here today. I wish him the speediest of recoveries and my heart is with him and his family. Another tremendous guy, an asset to this Board and his leadership this past term has been outstanding and you guys are all in good hands.

Is that everybody? Oh yea, Tom Van Stone. And he's right, he won't have to be Commissioner Tom Van Stone anymore, he can now be just Commissioner Van Stone and no one will argue. Keep fighting. This Board needs dissenting voices sometimes if nothing else to keep policy heading in the right direction. And you and I have been on a number of eight/two votes that didn't go in our favor but what sometimes people miss is that it's a long process from that first committee meeting to the final vote and those descending voices, those probing questions, those pain in the rear ability makes sometimes bad policy better policy so I can't tell you how many times the first draft coming out in my opinion stinks and even if I end up by the time it gets all the way to the Board, even if I vote against it, I know that it's better than it started. And that is something I think that you sir will continue to do here with all the passion that you regularly show and it's a passion that this Board and this City deserves. Thank you everybody.

HARVEY: All right Commissioner Van Stone. Did anyone else want to make any comments?

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Jason Van Stone and duly seconded by Commissioner Stango, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:59 p.m.

ATTEST:



Carrie A. Swain, Clerk
Board of Education