



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.

**SPECIAL
PLYMOUTH BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
TERRYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA
33 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE
TERRYVILLE, CT 06786**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2023

7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

PLYMOUTH, CT
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
RECEIVED FOR RECORD
2023 OCT 18 AM 9:40
TOWN CLERK

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

Also Present: Mr. Falcone, Superintendent, Mrs. Melillo, Assistant Superintendent, Mrs. Mozak-Pezza,
Director of Curriculum & Instruction and Mr. Tencza, Business Manager

1. **Call to Order & Pledge to the Flag**

Mr. Seaman called the regular meeting of the Board of Education 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. Foote, second Mr. Showers, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion carries.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Plymouth Board of Education and the Regular Meeting of the Plymouth Board of Education on September 13, 2023. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion carries.

4. **Presentation**

Plymouth Volunteer Ambulance Corps – Jim Dubowsky, Chief of Service

On behalf of the Plymouth Public Schools and the Plymouth Community, the following individuals were recognized for their service and their actions made through their actions on September 27, 2023.

Beth Landrette, Taylor LaRese, Angie Suffridge and Dennis Fowler

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Plymouth Board of Education is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider.

5. **Recess**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to recess at 7:13 p.m. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, motion carries.

6 **Return to Regular Session**

Mr. Seaman resumed regular session at 7:28 p.m.

7. **Student Representatives**

Jacob Darrell

- * Due to the rainy weather, most of the band events were cancelled. These were: Mum Festival Parade, Big E Parade (students still went on the trip) and UMass Band Day.
- * Mr. Keane is looking to have another event to provide the experience that students missed.
- * Spirit Week and Pep Rally the week of October 16th.
- * Students seem to have adopted well of the Cell Phone Policy.
- * Trying to devise collection methods to gain input from all students, i.e. monitored Google Forms and Town Hall style meetings for students to address concerns or problems.

Kristian Kwoczala

- * Senior Class Car Wash raised \$1,000.
- * There seems to be excitement as seniors apply to colleges. However, due to the offset of the CEC Class, some seniors feel unprepared and anxious.

Mark Lussier

- * Homecoming is scheduled for November 3rd. The theme for this year is Starry Night.
- * Girls' Soccer Team is 7 – 2. They are qualified for States.
- * Possible CPR training program for upperclassmen who missed out due to COVID.
- * Club Fair to represent particular clubs at lunch or during homeroom. They are hoping to increase school unity and to help students develop a connection to the school.

8. **Public Comment** (limited to 3-minutes per speaker)

None

9. **Superintendent's Update**

* On September 29th, the Fire Alarm unexpectedly went off at Terryville High School due to a faulty smoke detector which needed to be replaced. The high school staff and faculty were soaked due to the pouring rain which caused for an emergency early dismissal. Therefore, based on the timing of the dismissal the middle school needed to be dismissed early in order for the buses to pick up our elementary school students.

Many thanks to the Fire Department for their assistance; the Bus Company for being on call and arriving to the high school on record time for early dismissal; and to our faculty, parents and students for their understanding.

- * On Wednesday, October 25th, the PSATs will be offered at the high school during the school day. They are offered to the entire junior class and any interested sophomores.
- * Last time this year, the State Department of Education approved 6 reading programs that could be utilized for students in grades Kindergarten through Grade 3. The number of reading programs has been increased to 7. Now we need to look at these programs to see which ones the district needs to

adopt. The program now is uses a little bit of everything, phonics from here, something else from there. Therefore, investing in a new program is a very good idea. A waiver was put in for the first year. We wanted other districts to try these out first because of the cost, training and stress and everything else that is connected with adopting a program. By doing this, we are able to call various vendors in and visit schools who are currently utilizing these approved reading programs. All will be kept up to date at future board meetings.

Mr. Seaman, Board Chair – An Ad Hoc Committee was formed as Mr. Seaman feels it is only appropriate with all that is going on with the reading programs.

Therefore, the following individuals will form the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee:

Ms. Tilton, Ms. Kulesa; and Ms. Lucian and the
Curriculum Coordinator.

Mr. Falcone and Mrs. Mozak-Pezza will get together and reach out to committee members and have conversation, i.e. what things look like, when we could meet, etc. They will also speak about the process and some of the districts coaches at the meetings.

- * The district is currently working with EdAdvance to add new Dual Enrollment Courses at the High School. At this time, Mrs. Mozak-Pezza shared some information with regard to our partnership.
- * Van Update – The district purchased a van last year through a Special Education Grant for our Transition Program and School Career Center. Mrs. Melillo reported the van has finally been cleared to transport students. There are 2 licensed drivers and 1 individual who is in the process of obtaining a license. All drivers are required to attend a driving lesson with a trainer, etc. All Star Transportation generously offered to include Plymouth in their safety meeting. She is hoping to transport students within the next few weeks. Many thanks to All Star, Jim Mazon and Robin Gudczauskas for all of their hard work in getting the van up and running.

Mr. Falcone – Clarification – We were told the van was cleared, however, our drivers were not cleared. So, the field trips that were submitted and approved for van use was incorrect. Therefore, alternate transportation was needed. Attorneys were contacted to make certain the district was following the correct protocols due to conflicting information. The Board was told the van was being used because Mr. Falcone was signing off on the field trips, however, that was incorrect since it was not driver ready and he apologizes for the misinformation.

- * Harlem Wizards v. Eli Terry and Plymouth Public School Staff – October 16, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. at Eli Terry Jr. Middle School.

As part of the Harlem Wizard event, the 2 elementary schools participated in the Wiz Fit Challenge. These were physical fitness and character building challenges which helped raise money for each of the school's PTA's and also rewarded students when they hit certain fundraising benchmarks.

The Fisher Wiz Fit Challenge raised over \$2,000 for their PTA and students were rewarded with extra recess. The PCS Wiz Fit Challenge raised over \$4,000 for their PTA and students were rewarded with a sports day, a school wide dance party, and a pie eating contest involving various faculty members including Principal Loveland.

Events such as this, help improve the climate and cultures in our schools and give students something to get involved in with their parents and our school community. Thank you to the faculty and staff members who were involved in the Harlem Wizard and Wiz Fit event.

10. **Unfinished Business**

A. **Board of Education Policy 5031**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve the modifications to Policy 5031 Students – Use of Private Technology Devices by Students as submitted. Motion Mr. Showers, second Ms. Lucian, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed any abstentions, motion carries.

11. **Board Member/Committee Reports**

A. **Finance/Operations**

- Included in the packet are the following; Accounts by Facilities Report for September 2023 and 4 different submissions; (1) Business Office Activity Report; (2) Board of Education Budget Summary through September, 2023 Report; (3) Cumulative Total Board of Education Budget % by Month; and (4) Monthly Budget Report for September 2023.

Mr. Tencza reviewed the Business Office Activity Report for September, 2023. Some of the items he discussed were:

- a) Budget 2022 – 2023 which continues to move along as expected. No concerns at this time.
- b) Facilities – Meeting with an irrigation company for specifications. Once design plans have been received RFP for the project will be released. Notification from DEEP that a permit can be applied for but not until irrigation specifications are seen.
- c) Food Service – No report due to the situation beyond our control, however, preliminary numbers have been completed. August and September program lost \$60,000.00 as follows: \$30,000 behind in revenue from last year, \$23,000 piece of equipment purchase; extra payroll and payroll cycle. These total up to approximately \$60,000. He assured the Board there is a very healthy fund balance so we are able to afford this start with a loss. However, the concern is revenue. Participation is not there. It is going to be a struggle all year. However, this is not just a problem for Plymouth but this problem is state-wide.
- d) 2022 – 2023 Encumbrances Status - \$32,000 has not cleared. \$6,000 for the Shot Clock requirement per the CIAC. These have been on order since March. The balance is for technology equipment ordered last year.
- e) The district was awarded a grant from the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. The application was submitted back in April for a security grant to upgrade all of the camera systems. Total amount \$250,350. State reimbursement 71.43% = \$178,825. District balance \$71,000.

Question: Mr. Perugino – 50% reduction? Are the kids eating, bringing lunch or we don't know?

Response: Mr. Tencza – The 50% reduction is from last year. The kids are bringing lunch. 50% when it went from free meals to where everyone is not free.

Mr. Perugino – DEEP Question: When the land was acquired, it was a hassle. Mayor Covello, Senator Colapietro and himself, it was a wetlands and we had to make some concessions. Are there any concessions that we know of for using that reservoir? Maybe the town attorney can look this up? Mayor Covello suggested concessions so the kids would be able to fish all the time, etc.

Mr. Tencza – Response: No, not that I know of. But we can certainly look into it. But no, as far as I know.

Mr. Perugino – Let the Town Attorney look into it. I know it was wetlands.

Mr. Seaman – It's wetlands because it's a pond. We'll look into it.

Mr. Perugino – Just want to make certain it's free and clear.

- The Accounts by Facilities Reports will be forwarded to the Town of Plymouth Board of Finance

B. Personnel Report

No Questions

12. Public Comment (limited to 3-minutes per speaker)

None

13. Board Liaison Reports

Mr. Perugino -- Harry S. Fisher Elementary School

No Report

Mr. Zbuska -- Plymouth Center School

Truck or Treat at Terryville Fair Grounds on October 21 from 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Haunted House – Free Baked Goods, etc.

Meadow Farms Fundraiser – Begins at the end of October through mid-December.

Fall Book Fair – October 16, October 20. Students may purchase books. Also teachers have submitted a Wish List for books they would like.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani -- Eli Terry Jr. Middle School/Booster Club

PTA is excited about the Wizards Game at Eli Terry Jr. Middle School scheduled for October 16th.

Staff Members will be participating and have their own shirts. Tickets may be purchased at the door or on line. Approximately 300 individuals have prepaid.

Next PTA Meeting: October 25th – in person or virtual beginning at 7 p.m. in the library at Eli Terry Middle School.

Mrs. Kulesa -- Terryville High School

No Report

Mrs. Kelsea -- EdAdvance

Annual Meeting with Directors, etc. to go over the Mission Statement, what they do, how they help districts, etc. She distributed handouts to Board Members which included the Budget. The budget for EdAdvance is different than our district in that they have a revenue side. Any money they spend they need to make. They need to have income in order to spend money.

14. Board Comments

As a whole, Board Members addressed the incident on the soccer field which saved the life of a referee. It was nice to see both the towns of Thomaston and Plymouth working together. Volunteers are good people. The Eli Terry Jr. Middle School PTA has always supported Dr. Bonnie Doughty-Jenkins CPR classes. Going forward, hopefully, these classes will continue. The Board Chair was asked if it would be possible for Board Members to take CPR classes. Board Members were happy to see that the district was receiving grants.

Mr. Seaman – Board Chair: Indicated we would look into the request for CPR classes for Board Members. There are amazing people in our town. The hours of personal time individuals put in volunteering, i.e. the volunteer fire department and the ambulance corps. These individuals put in an enormous amount of time into training. New volunteers spend approximately 4 months schooling, 2 nights a week and every other weekend. So, if anyone is interested, volunteers are always welcome and needed.

15. **Next Board Meeting** –The next regular meeting of the Plymouth Board of Education will be on Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria at Terryville High School.

16. **Executive Session** – (Item will be discussed in executive session)

(a) Facilities Matter

MOTION: To entertain a motion to enter into executive session at 8:04 p.m. to discuss Facilities Matter inviting Mr. Falcone, Superintendent, Mrs. Melillo, Assistant Superintendent and Mr. Tencza, Business Manager. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed any abstentions, motion passes.

17. **Resume Regular Session**

Mr. Seaman, Board Chair resumed regular session at 10:03 p.m.

18. **Possible Action From Executive Session**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to close Fisher Elementary School at the end of the 2023 – 2024 school year and to turn the building back to the Town of Plymouth at a future date to be determined by the Plymouth Board of Education. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote

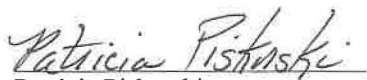
ROLL VOTE: Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani; Mrs. Lucian; Mrs. Kulesa; Mr. Perugino; Mr. Zbuska; Ms. Tilton, Mr. Showers and Mr. Foote all voted in favor of the motion.
Motion passes unanimously.

MOTION: To entertain a motion to reconfigure and reclassify the school according to Option 1 as presented in executive session. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Zbuska.

ROLL VOTE: Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani; Mrs. Lucian; Mrs. Kulesa; Mr. Perugino; Mr. Zbuska; Ms. Tilton; Mr. Showers and Mr. Foote all voted in favor of the motion.
Motion passes unanimously.

19. **Adjournment**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to adjourn 10:05 p.m. Motion Mr. Showers, second, Mr. Foote, all in favor, motion carries.


Patricia Piskorski
Recording Secretary
Plymouth Board of Education