

Regular Meeting
KILLINGLY BOARD OF EDUCATION
Wednesday, January 24, 2024
7:00 PM
Killingly Town Hall, 172 Main St.
2nd Floor, Community Meeting Room

Revised Minutes

Present: Ms. Laura Dombkowski, Ms. Laura Lawrence, Ms. Misty Murdock, Ms. Meredith Giambattista, Mr. Kevin Marcoux, Ms. Kelly Martin, Mr. Kyle Napierata, Mr. Danny Rovero, & Ms. Susan Lannon.
Student Board members Ms. Anya Oliverson, and Mr. Phillip Purcell.

Others Present: Dr. Sue Nash-Ditzel – Superintendent, Mr. Jeffrey Guiot – Assistant Superintendent, Attorney Richard Mills - Shipman & Goodwin, and Zita Macinanti – Recording Secretary.

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Chair, Ms. Susan Lannon called to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL – Please see above.

3. BOARD SHOUT-OUTS

Vice Chair, Mr. Danny Rovero gave a shout out to KMS and KCS Teachers who volunteered to pilot a reading program and for going above and beyond and going the extra mile for the students.

4. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Board Chair, Ms. Susan Lannon read the notice of recognition for Ms. Ashley Nolet, January 2024 Employee of the Month. Ashley is a paraprofessional at KCS and was nominated by KCS Principal Ms. Emily Caviggia.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Elizabeth LaFlamme stated that her son has been experiencing bloody noses, headaches, and rashes due to the unregulated temperatures at KMS. She would like answers and a solution. She is pulling her son out of school until she can do an inspection of the building. She felt there was a lack of transparency in letting her know there were issues with the temperature in the building.

Mr. Ed Grandelski, 877 Upper Maple Street. Mr. Grandelski stated he would like the amount of time for public participation increased so people are not cut-off when speaking.

Mr. Jason Anderson, Town Council Chair, commented that he had hoped there was going to be a change for the better with the new Board and Board Chair. He questioned Ms. Lannon’s knowledge of the bylaws.

Mr. Norm Ferron echoed Mr. Anderson's comments. He felt it was intentional to not put a controversial item on the agenda and he has filed a complaint with the Freedom of Information Commission to see what they determine as corrective action. He hopes the Board will fix the heating issues at KMS.

6. REPORT BY STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Phillip Purcell shared that GECC students took advantage of World Snow Day and used it as a teaching tool. KCS students are creating 'how-to' books. KMS is piloting two reading programs based on the science of reading.

Ms. Anya Oliverson talked about the success of the Robotics Team and communicated that mid-term exams are taking place.

7. BOARD CHAIR AND COMMITTEE & LIAISON UPDATES

- A. Curriculum Committee
- B. Facilities Committee
- C. Fiscal Committee
- D. Personnel Committee
- E. Policy Committee

Board Chair, Ms. Susan Lannon said committees are still working on initial meeting dates, but the Personnel Committee is scheduled to meet next Tuesday.

8. DISCUSSION OF STRATEGY REGARDING PENDING CLAIMS AND LITIGATION: STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION HEARING CONCERNING 10-4b COMPLAINT

Board Chair, Ms. Susan Lannon stated that items #8 and #9 were added to agenda. She addressed the statement regarding the 1/10/24 meeting and that all 8 board members voted unanimously to add the agenda item. It was added properly.

She said the State Board of Education Hearing Panel has made it clear they want the parties to attempt to resolve the 10-4b complaint.

As Board Chair, she is cautioning to not discuss and to stop sharing information as it is damaging to the Board and to the Killingly Public Schools. Information should be kept confidential. She is cautioning against public discussion. If Board members choose to speak, they are speaking for themselves, not the feelings of the whole Board.

Ms. Martin asked a question on #8 - who is involved with the negotiations of the 10-4b settlement/settlement discussion? Board Chair Ms. Susan Lannon had no comment because she said she cannot comment on an active litigation in open session. Ms. Martin thanked her for saying that out loud.

9. DISCUSSION REGARDING RETENTION OF LEGAL COUNSEL FOR DEFENSE OF STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION HEARING CONCERNING 10-4b COMPLAINT

Ms. Martin asked about the 1/17/2024 Board meeting and the vote taken to not enter Executive

Session. She said it then went straight to vote and they never got to ask questions or discuss. She is asking why it went straight to vote without being able to ask questions. Board Chair Ms. Lannon said she had no comment on the litigation strategy.

Ms. Martin again asked why they can't speak with an attorney or know more before asking to vote. Board Chair Ms. Lannon again said she can't comment on litigation strategy.

Mr. Napierata also asked why they can't discuss hiring a new attorney or know the reasons for picking a new firm.

Ms. Martin stated Board Chair Ms. Lannon asked to waive a bylaw, but a bylaw needed to be waived by 2/3 vote and she did not have that. She said there was a discussion with Attorney Mills surrounding some members of the BOE who were concerned that the Letter of Engagement from Shipman & Goodwin was not attached to the agenda and that they didn't have time to review it before the vote. Ms. Martin shared that it is common practice to see a Letter of Engagement or a contract of any kind prior to voting on it, the majority voted to engage the services without seeing the contract. Board Chair Ms. Lannon said that if she made a mistake, she would look into it.

10. RATIFICATION OF THE BOARD'S JANUARY 10, 2024 EXPANSION OF THE SCOPE OF REPRESENTATION BY SHIPMAN & GOODWIN LLP FOR MATTERS OTHER THAN THE 10-4b COMPLAINT

Board Chair Ms. Lannon said a mistake was made at the 1/10/2024 Board Meeting and needs to be corrected.

Atty. Richard Mills, Shipman & Goodwin, discussed a contract/engagement letter from 2005 and subsequent actions working with the Killingly BOE. There will be a new engagement letter between the Killingly BOE and Shipman & Goodwin.

MOTION: by Ms. Giambattista, seconded by Mr. Marcoux that the Board ratify the Board's 1/10/2024 action expanding the contract with Shipman & Goodwin LLP to all areas lessen the defense of the 10-4b complaint retroactive to 1/10/2024 with the understanding that with this expansion Board Leadership, the Superintendent, and Board Designees may contact the firm for legal advice, representation, or other legal matters.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Yes (5) Ms. Giambattista, Mr. Marcoux, Ms. Murdock, Mr. Rovero, Ms. Lannon.

No (4) Ms. Dombkowski, Ms. Lawrence, Ms. Martin, Mr. Napierata.

Motion Carries

11. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING TRANSFER INTO THE UNEXPENDED EDUCATION FUNDS ACCOUNT (Non-Lapsing Account)

Superintendent Dr. Sue Nash gave an overview of the unexpended funds account's purpose how the money can be used. She shared what the current balance is and what the cap is for the account.

MOTION: by Mr. Marcoux, seconded by Mr. Napierata to transfer \$411,462.33

into the Unexpended Education Funds Account.

Yes, (9) Unanimous

Motion Carries

12. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION OF THE 2024-25 DISTRICT CALENDAR

Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Jeffrey Guiot stated this calendar aligns with Eastconn's calendar. Mr. Marcoux asked to move the Feb. 14, 2025 ERD to Feb. 21st due to an anticipated event that draws a large crowd on that Friday.

MOTION: by Mr. Marcoux, seconded by Vice-Chair, Mr. Rovero approve 2024 to 2025 District calendar with change of the ERD from Feb. 14 to Feb. 21.

Yes, (9) Unanimous

Motion Carries

13. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

A. Scheduled Fiscal Meetings of the Whole Board for 2024-25FY Budget. Board members were given a schedule in their packets. Superintendent Sue Nash shared that administrators will be present at budget meetings to help explain their proposed budgets and it will be an opportunity to ask them questions.

Dr. Nash also shared information about the KMS/KCS pilot programs.

The Facilities Committee will need to finalize the Capital Improvement Plan.

There is one new policy for the Policy Committee to review related to student/school climate.

Chronic absenteeism is 21% lower than last December.

Board Chair Susan Lannon asked for data from the nurses at KMS reflecting needs of KMS students, surrounding the temperatures in the building. Dr. Nash explained that temperatures are being monitored at KMS and adjustments are made, manually.

Ms. Martin asked about the IEP for Ms. LaFlamme's son and if the child should be moved. Dr. Nash shared that there have been ongoing professional inspections of the building.

14. CONSENT AGENDA

- A.** January 10, 2024 BoE Meeting Minutes
- B.** January 17, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes
- C.** KHS Music Field Trip Request to Univ. of Rhode Island, Saturday 3-2-24

Ms. Martin asked to pull A. and B. from the Consent Agenda.

MOTION: Mr. Marcoux, seconded by Ms. Murdock to approve 14.C, KHS Music Field Trip Request to Univ. of Rhode Island, on Saturday 3-2-24 by

Yes, (9) Unanimous

Motion Carries

CONSENT AGENDA Item A, January 10, 2024 BoE Meeting Minutes

Board Chair Ms. Susan Lannon asked for conversation around Consent Agenda, Item A.

Board Chair Ms. Lannon asked Atty. Mills about proper order and voting procedures on this.

MOTION: by Ms. Martin, seconded by Mr. Marcoux to approve Consent Agenda Item 14. A. January 10, 2024 BoE Meeting Minutes.

Yes (8) Ms. Dombkowski, Ms. Giambattista, Ms. Lawrence
Mr. Marcoux, Ms. Murdock, Mr. Napierata, Mr. Rovero &
Ms. Lannon.

Abstained (1) -Ms. Martin

Motion Carries

CONSENT AGENDA Item B. January 17, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes

Board Chair Ms. Susan Lannon asked for conversation around Consent Agenda Item B.

Ms. Martin and Attorney Mills had a dialogue about the Board not waiving but acting in accordance with policy. Ms. Martin stated a new attorney will cost more money to get up to speed. There was conversation about bidding on the new Attorney. Vice-Chair, Mr. Rovero asked if there was a contract or bid for Attorney Stevenson. Ms. Martin stated there was not.

MOTION: by Mr. Marcoux, seconded by Ms. Murdock to approve Consent Agenda Item 14. B January 17, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes.

Yes (8) Ms. Dombkowski, Ms. Giambattista, Ms. Lawrence,
Mr. Marcoux, Ms. Murdock, Mr. Napierata, Mr. Rovero
& Ms. Lannon.

Abstained (1) -Ms. Martin

Motion Carries

15. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: by Ms. Giambattista, seconded by Ms. Murdock to adjourn at 8:07 p.m.

Yes, (9) Unanimous

Motion Carries

Respectfully submitted by,
Zita Macinanti
Recording Secretary