

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, October 25, 2021

The meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held in-person, on Monday, October 25, 2021,. Chairperson Marjorie McBride, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:01 p.m.

Present: Marjorie McBride, Chairperson; Tara Thibaudeau, Vice-Chair; Sheila Ellsworth, Treasurer; Victor Cabral, Secretary; Nicky Piper. Carly Reich, Sarah Bullard, Erin Schofield, and Karen Cabral; Edward Mara, Ed.D., Superintendent; Diane Sanna, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent; Thomas Wood, Director of Facilities; Rose Muller, Director of Technology; Mary Ann Carroll, Esq., District Solicitor; Lee Ann Beaupre, Human Resources Manager; Diana Campbell, Recording Secretary. **Guests:** Dr. Deb DiBiase, Principal of Mt. Hope High School, Dennis Morrell, Principal of Kickemuit Middle School, Deborah Kearns, Principal of Colt Andrews Elementary School, Christine Hughes, Principal of Guiteras Elementary School, Miranda Carpenter, Principal of Hugh Cole Elementary School, Tara McAuliffe, Principal of Rockwell Elementary School

I. **Open Session**

Chairperson McBride called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05 p.m.

II. **Opening Business**

Chairperson McBride invited all present to join in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

III. **Accolades**

KMS RISING STAR: The School Committee and Interim Superintendent Ed Mara, congratulated **Angela “Ela” Pirri** for her leadership and spirit. Ela was recently featured in a story on Channel 12 News for her work collaborating with Saucony to design her own sneaker line to raise funds for the Boston Children’s Hospital! We are very proud of her! Congratulations!

TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF OF THE YEAR: Following up on their presentation in May, the School Committee recognized the outstanding Teachers and Support Staff of the Year in person, congratulating the following employees for their continued support of the students of Bristol Warren Regional School District.

BUILDING TEACHERS OF THE YEAR: Rockwell Elementary School - Sarah Jacobs, Guiteras Elementary School - Nancy Patalano, Colt Andrews Elementary School - Lianne Logan, Hugh Cole Elementary School - Kelly Gregory, Kickemuit Middle School - Erin Welchman, Mt. Hope High School - Ellen Estrella

DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR: Ellen Estrella

Building Support Staff of the Year and District Support Staff of the Year: Rockwell Elementary School - Kathryn West, Guiteras Elementary School - Jillian Amato, Colt Andrews Elementary School - Peggy Rodrigues, Hugh Cole Elementary School - Sherri Mallon, Kickemuit Middle School - Denise Goodman, Mt. Hope

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High School - Edmundo “Eddie” Figueiredo, Oliver Administration Building - Sandy Borges

NATIONAL PRINCIPALS MONTH: The School Committee and Interim Superintendent Ed Mara, expressed their appreciation for the hard work and dedication of our School Principals and Assistant Principals, as part of our celebration of National Principals Month. They congratulated and thanked:

PRINCIPALS: Rockwell Elementary School - Tara McAuliffe, Guiteras Elementary School - Christine Hughes, Colt Andrews Elementary School - Deborah Kearns, Hugh Cole Elementary School - Miranda Carpenter, Kickemuit Middle School - Dennis Morrell, Mt. Hope High School - Dr. Deborah DiBiase

ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS: Hugh Cole Elementary School - Dr. Andre Audette, Kickemuit Middle School - Michelle Clifford, Kickemuit Middle School - David Patota, Mt. Hope High School - Michelle King, Mt. Hope High School - Robert Campion

IV. Public Comment

Chairperson McBride recognized Nurse Ellen Estrella to provide a public comment. Ms. Estrella urged the School Committee to increase the pay for substitute nurses. She stated that the District desperately needs them and without an increase the District cannot compete with other Districts.

Ms. Carly Reich, parent and School Committee member, spoke to congratulate the KMS Cross-Country team for their success at the State meet, especially Jessica Deal, who came in 2nd place overall.

Mr. Roger Mark, parent, spoke in favor of accepting the grant funding for Project-based Learning, stating that he thought it reflected poorly on the District to apply for, to receive, and then to reject grant funding.

Mr. Peter Hewett, Bristol resident, spoke about the Action Item for Project-based learning. He believes the funds to provide professional development training is related to Critical Race Theory, which he does not agree with. Ms. Schofield voiced her concern that Mr. Hewett was talking about something that she didn't think was on the Agenda as Mr. Hewett stated.

Chairperson McBride, seeing no further requests, closed the Public Comment.

V. Consent Agenda

All items under the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine by the School Committee and are enacted by one motion.

MOTION: Ms. Thibaudeau made a motion to approve the items listed under the Consent Agenda; 2nd by Erin Schofield. All approved the motion to approve:

- A. Minutes of the September 27, 2021 meeting
- B. Minutes of the October 13, 2021 meeting

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- C. Eleven (11) Homeschool Requests
- D. Property Disposal List
- E. School Crisis/Safety Plan
- F. Personnel Updates
- G. Non-certified Administrative Employment Contracts
 - a) Accounting Manager Contract
 - b) Administrative Assistant to the CFO Contract

VI. Discussion/Possible Action

A. Approve the FY23 Budget Process/Schedule

MOTION: Ms. Thibaudeau made a motion to approve the proposed FY23 Budget Process/Schedule; 2nd by Mr. Cabral.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Ellsworth explained the timeline, stating that the budget process is on-going. The Schedule provides the dates for the steps in the process.

Mr. Ferrucci explained that, due to the transition after he started with the District, he prepared the dates to get to a March 1 delivery of the FY23 Budget to the Joint Finance Committee. He had to modify the School Committee's Policy to adjust the front-end dates to catch up with the required timeline. He expects that next year's budget will be on time, according to policy.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously.

B. Approval of Requisitions over \$5000

MOTION: Ms. Ellsworth made a motion to approve the Requisitions over \$5000; 2nd by Ms. Piper.

Ms. Ellsworth amended the motion to remove Item #634, for separate approval ; 2nd by Ms. Thibaudeau.

VOTE: The amended Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ms. Piper made a motion to approve Item #634; 2nd by Ms. Bullard.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Ellsworth stated that she does not support any technology budget requests that don't include a plan to fund the replacement of the items once they reach the end of their life cycle.

Assistant Superintendent Sanna explained that the items will be used for the KMS Broadcasting program, noting that they are not very expensive and refresh costs would be absorbed into the budget after 5 years.

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Ms. Reich noted that the items are being purchased with a grant. She asked if the School Committee was considering refusing a gift?

Ms. Thibaudeau asked for a list of all equipment that was purchased through grants. Assistant Superintendent Sanna responded that she will follow-up, stating that the majority of the equipment purchased with grants is at the high school.

Ms. Bullard felt that not accepting the grant for the purchase of the technology was short sighted, noting that it is difficult to offer state of the art programs without technology.

Chairperson McBride agreed that the grant pays for the items, but does not always cover repairs and maintenance. Ms. Schofield responded that rather than deny the purchase, the School Committee should come up with a way to pay for the refresh.

Ms. Ellsworth stated that she is looking at it from a financial perspective. The District cannot keep adding on purchases and expect to get the District's financial situation settled.

Ms. Schofield asked Mr. Ferrucci how he has handled this type of situation in his past experiences. Mr. Ferrucci responded that the District has 5 years to come up with a 5-year plan for the items. The replenishment will be built into the 5-year plan.

VOTE: The motion was approved with a 5-4 vote, with Chairperson McBride, Mr. Cabral, Ms. Ellsworth, and Ms. Cabral voting in dissent.

C. Requisition to spend over \$5000 at the Mt Hope High School for a Project Based Learning Program

MOTION: Ms. Thibaudeau made a motion to approve the requisition over \$5000 for the Mt Hope High School Project Based Learning Program; 2nd by Ms Bullard.

DISCUSSION: Chairperson McBride started the discussion by stating that she feels that Project Based Learning is great; that it is done every day. She is just concerned about the Budget for this project. The majority of the funds for the program came in through an anonymous donor through the Bristol Warren Education Foundation (BWEF). The requisition is for an additional \$7000 for a consultant to deliver professional development training on the program. She noted that the District never voted to accept the original \$20,000 donation.

Ms. Piper asked how much of the \$20,000 had already been spent. Principal DiBiase stated that all of it has been spent. Mr. Ferrucci gave the current balance of \$11,000 in the account. It's possible that the invoices have not yet been processed. The first \$20,000 came in through a 2019 XQ Momentum Grant. An additional \$20,000 is provided by BWEF. The \$7000 is to supplement the program, providing teacher training and keeping the momentum of the program going forward.

Ms. Thibaudeau is concerned that policy was not followed and would like to see how the XQ Grand funds have been spent. She is not comfortable with the proposed professional development vendor. She asked if the acquisition of the vendor was a result of a bid

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process. Mr. Ferrucci noted that professional services are not usually subject to the bid process.

Ms. Schofield asked about which policy Ms. Thibaudeau was referring to.. Chairperson McBride stated that it is policy that grants come before the School Committee for acceptance. In this case, there was no acceptance, since the funds came from an anonymous donor.

Mr. Ferrucci noted that the grant letter came through in July before the Requisitions over \$5000 policy was put into place. He noted that you cannot ask a donor for the source of their funds.

Ms. Schofield asked for clarification that no money was appropriated incorrectly. Mr. Ferrucci answered that no money was appropriated incorrectly as far as he was aware.

Ms. Ellsworth asked if contracts needed to come before the School Committee. Attorney Carroll responded that they do, and asked if the District had entered into an agreement with the vendor. Principal DiBiase does not have an agreement at this time and that no payments have been made.

Chairperson McBride invited Darcy DaCosta, the current Chair of the BWEF, to speak. Ms. DaCosta stated that the \$20,000 is from 2018 and was entrusted to the BWEF until the Foundation could find an opportunity for something that will have an impact going forward, not a one-off program. When the XQ funding came through, the Foundation thought that matching the \$20,000 would be a good use of the fund. She noted that once the funds are given out, they do not tell the recipients how to spend the money.

Chairperson McBride stated that it is the responsibility of the Committee to oversee the curriculum and to make sure that grants fit in with the curriculum.

Ms Ellsworth noted that the request came before the Budget Facilities Subcommittee and was denied. She stated that she is not objecting to the Project-based Learning, but to the vendor. She is concerned that every child needs to be treated the same. She asked if the District will be helping every child with this money.

At this point, because there were many vocal interactions between the school committee members and with the audience. Chairperson McBride called for order and recessed the meeting for 10 minutes at 8:29 pm.

At 8:40 pm, Chairperson McBride called for a vote on the motion.

VOTE: The motion did not pass with a vote of 4-5, with Chairperson McBride, Mr. Cabral, Ms. Thibaudeau, Ms. Ellsworth, and Ms. Cabral voting in dissent.

D. Approve the Contractor for Reynolds Interior Walls

Mr. Wood explained that this is an extension of a contract with the Town's building contractor to build the interior walls in the Reynolds building, at a cost of \$48,650.

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MOTION: Ms. Ellsworth made a motion to approve the contract; 2nd by Mr. Cabral. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Approve Esser II Amendments

MOTION: Ms. Thibaudeau made a motion to approve the proposed ESSER II Amendments; 2nd by Ms. Piper.

Chairperson McBride asked why there were funds for a community volunteer coordinator. Assistant Superintendent Sanna explained that the District is looking to expand its volunteer program and is seeking a coordinator to manage that expansion and to recruit volunteers for the District.

Ms. Ellsworth asked about the long-term substitutes/fellows. Assistant Superintendent Sanna responded that the District already has 4 fellows and is looking to hire 3 more.

Chairperson McBride asked if it was possible to use ESSER II funds to fund the requested additional staffing for the Student Support Services department.

Assistant Superintendent Sanna explained that the Interventionists and Coaches are for all students, not just those with special needs. She noted that \$200,000 is coming from IDEA and can be used to cover the additional staffing.

Mr. Cabral asked about the definition of "Fellows" Assistant Superintendent Sanna explained that the fellows will provide support for teachers in the form of coaching, professional development, and long-term substitutes. They will become part of the school community, which will make them more effective than a regular substitute.

Assistant Superintendent Sanna added that the funds for the Special Education teachers could also be included in the ESSER III application. She noted that adding a line item to the ESSER II budget would trigger another review/approval cycle and would take about the same amount of time as the ESSER III application, except that funding for items in the ESSER II grant would be put on hold until the new line items were approved. By keeping the ESSER II grant as amended, the District could begin spending now.

Ms. Thibaudeau asked when the IDEA funds would be coming. Assistant Superintendent Sanna has been assured that the funds, more than \$200,000 + \$13,000 for preschool, are allocated and are expected soon. She added that the ARA and ESSER III funds have already been allocated to the State. The State is working on how the funds will be distributed to the Towns. She also noted that IDEA funds can be used to pay for past expenditures. She does not recommend spending the funds, though, until they have been distributed to the District - which could be several weeks.

Mr. Ferrucci recommended that the Committee approve the posting of the Special Needs positions, pending funding, so that once the funds arrive, the positions can be filled immediately.

VOTE: The motion was approved with 8 votes, Chairperson McBride abstained.

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- G. Approve plan for additional Special Support Services, with immediate implementation of staff reorganization, .5 Special Education Coordinator and 1.0 Early Childhood Coordinator.**

MOTION: Mr. Cabral made a motion to approve the request for additional positions in Special Services, immediately funding the .5 Special Education Teacher and the 1.0 Outreach Coordinator, and then to use the IDEA and/or ESSER III funds to fund the remaining portions of the request, with the understanding that the positions can be posted in anticipation of receiving the funds. Motion was seconded by Ms. Bullard.

VOTE: The motion was approved unanimously.

- F. Approve FCC Emergency Connectivity Fund grant application**

MOTION: Ms. Thibaudeau made a motion to approve the FCC Emergency Connectivity Fund grant application; 2nd by Ms. Piper. The motion passed unanimously.

- H. Approve Substitute Rate Increase**

MOTION: Mr. Cabral made a motion to approve the requested increase in Substitute Rate; 2nd by Ms. Thibaudeau. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Thibaudeau made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:31; 2nd by Ms Cabral. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairperson McBride adjourned the meeting at 9:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

**Victor Cabral, Secretary
/dbc**