

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

**DRAFT**

**Wednesday, April 28, 2021**

The meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held virtually on Monday, April 12, 2021, via Zoom Conferencing. Chairperson Marjorie McBride, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:02 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; Jonathan Brice, 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;; Diana Campbell, Recording Secretary. **Guests:** Dr. Deb DiBiase, Principal of Mt. Hope High School; Mr. Dennis Morrell, Principal of Kickemuit Middle School

I. **Executive Session**

The Committee recessed to an Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(a) for discussion of pending legal matters - Trust cases (42-46-5 (a) (2)).

II. **Open Session**

\_\_\_\_\_Chairperson McBride called the meeting to order at approximately 7:02 p.m.

III. **Opening Business**

\_\_\_\_\_Chairperson McBride invited all present to join in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Motion was made by Mr. Cabral to seal the minutes of the Executive Session; Ms. Piper seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

IV. **Accolades**

**DR. DEBORAH DiBIASE**

The 2021 BWRSD School Committee congratulated Dr. Deborah DiBiase, the 2021 RI Secondary Principal of the Year. She received the news on 4/15/21 and is truly deserving of this recognition and the opportunity to be nominated for the National Principal of the Year. Thank you Dr D, for your passion and energy and for inspiring us all each and every day!

V. **Public Comment**

A KMS parent asked about the school calendar, which she stated was not the same calendar as every other school calendar in the state.

VI. **Consent Agenda**

All items under the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine by the School Committee and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Committee member requests, in which event the items will be withdrawn from the general order

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

of business and considered in the normal sequence on the agenda. Consent Agenda items are received and filed with no discussion or further action taken.

- A. Approval of March 29, 2021 School Committee Virtual Meeting Minutes
- B. Equipment Disposal List
- C. Accept monthly financials provided by the Budget/Facilities Subcommittee

Ms. Ellsworth requested that the acceptance of the monthly financials be tabled from the Consent Agenda, pending a “clean up” of the reports.

MOTION: Ms. Thibaudeau made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, without the Monthly Financials; seconded by Mr. Cabral. The Motion passed unanimously.

**VII. Discussion and/or Possible Actions**

**A. Services Contract for Student Assistance Counselor at KMS**

Superintendent Brice explained that Rhode Island Student Assistance Services (RISAS) will be providing additional mental health support for schools in the next school year. For the remainder of this school year, he is requesting approval for a Student Assistance Counselor at KMS for those students who are having issues with social emotional and substance abuse issues. There are students, he stated, that are having extra anxiety and need these services as they make important choices in their lives, especially in regards to substance abuse. He noted that the position that will cost \$13,000, would be paid out of funds in a cash account that were left over from Substance Abuse grants that have been accumulating since 2014.

Motion was made by Ms. Piper to accept the recommendation for the Services Contract, seconded by Ms. Thibaudeau.

Discussion:

- Chair McBride asked how much will be the cost for next year? Superintendent Brice answered that there will be no cost next year. The services will be fully funded by RISAS.
- Ms. Ellsworth asked why the grant funds were not included in the Grant Report that was submitted to the Budget Facilities Subcommittee. Superintendent Brice explained that the funds are from a cash account, sitting in the account since 2014, and they are not listed under Grant funds.
- Ms. Bullard commented that this seems like a good use of the funds that are just sitting there. She noted that there is a lot of information on what the students are facing, especially at the Middle School. She feels we should be supporting them. She asked if the RISAS funding is contingent on this year’s agreement. Superintendent Brice responded, “No”. The district can make use of the free support next year regardless of what the district does now. Ms. Reich agreed that she believes that this is a good use of the funds at this time.
- Ms. Reich asked for KMS Principal Morrell input. Mr. Morrell stated that this support is invaluable, especially for those students who may be considering substance abuse to help themselves as they face their anxieties.
- Ms. Bullard noted that there are almost always Federal funds available for substance abuse counseling. She agrees it’s good to expand this to the younger students.

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

Vote: The motion passed, 8-1, with Ms. Ellsworth voting in dissent.

**B. BWRSD School Calendar for 2021-2022**

Ms. Thibaudeau voted to approve the 2021-2022 School Calendar for purposes of discussion; seconded by Mr. Cabral.

Ms. Thibaudeau made a motion to amend the School Calendar to start the school year on September 7, 2021 (after Labor Day) and end by June, 17, 2022.

There were numerous suggestions on ways to achieve the amended motion to begin the school year after Labor Day and to end earlier in June 2022. Superintendent Brice stated that he will investigate the option to combine State PD days with Distance Learning days. Should the option not be approved by RIDE, he will need to look into additional days to make up for the loss of days by shortening the year.

The vote on the Amendment to the Motion passed 5-4.

The vote on the Amended Motion passed 5-4.

**C. Consultants' Report and District Improvement Plan**

Motion was made to accept the BWRSD Departmental High-Level Operational Review and Project Action Items that align with the Operational Review prepared by Ms. Mary King by Ms. Ellsworth; seconded by Mr. Cabral.

Ms. Ellsworth explained the origin of the report and what it entails. She noted that the Budget and Facilities Subcommittee recommended that the report be moved forward to the full School Committee for acceptance.

After some discussion on the purpose of the report (to provide a guided blueprint on financial processes and protocols), the motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Piper acknowledged Ms. Ellsworth's efforts in working with the District Financial Department, the Superintendent, and the consultants, Diane Brennan and Mary King, in completing this report. Chair McBride thanked Ms. Ellsworth, as well as, Ms. King and Ms. Brennan.

**D. Extend Consultant Hours**

Ms. Ellsworth stated that the Budget Facilities Subcommittee recommends that the District extend Ms. King's consulting hours, to include time to help with creating a procurement process, updating financial policies, and to help with FY22 budget reductions and alignment.

Mr. Cabral made a motion to extend the hours in Ms. King's consulting contract. to include an additional 80 hours; seconded by Ms. Ellsworth.

Attorney Carroll stated that has used about 120-160 hours and that 80 hours is equivalent to approximately \$16,000. Additionally, Superintendent Brice stated that Ms. Brennan has agreed to do 10-15 hours per week on the day-to-day, working with Mr. Harrington.

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

The original motion was withdrawn.

Ms. Ellsworth made a motion to extend the hours of Ms. King's consulting contract to 80 hours to support policy in the FY22 Budget; second by Mr. Cabral. All approved the Motion.

**E. School Committee Leadership grant, sponsored by the Trust**

Ms. Thibaudeau proposed a retreat for the School Committee to enhance the leadership skills of the members of the committee. She would like to apply for a grant available through the Trust.

Motion made to approved the application for a Leadership Grant from the Trust by Mr. Cabral; seconded by Ms. Cabral.

In response to several questions, Ms. Thibaudeau elaborated to state that this would be \$5300 for the whole committee to attend a workshop retreat to sit down and set goals, etc. The School Committee would design the retreat to match their own needs, going forward.

Motion was approved unanimously.

**F. Resolution from North Smithfield regarding Transportation**

Chair McBride explained that the Resolution from North Smithfield asks RIDE to pay for transportation contracts. The School Committee can vote to support the North Smithfield resolution and send it to the State Legislature, with any suggestions made by the committee. Attorney Carroll noted that there are no disadvantages to supporting this Resolution but that they don't always work.

After a brief discussion, a Motion was made by Ms. Thibaudeau to show support for the North Smithfield Resolution on Transportation with the suggested change.; seconded by Ms. Ellsworth. All approved the Motion.

**G. Budget Facilities Subcommittee recommendation for Oliver Building**

Ms. Ellsworth explained that the Budget Facilities Subcommittee recommends the return of the Oliver Building to the Town of Bristol, noting that the District cannot support buildings that do not house students.

Mr. Cabral made a motion to return the Oliver Building to the Town of Bristol; seconded by Ms. Cabral. Chair McBride requested to have a date by when this would take place added to the motion. Ms. Thibaudeau amended the motion to state that the Building be returned by September 1, 2021; seconded by Mr. Cabral.

The Amendment to the Motion was approved by all.

The Amended Motion was approved by all.

**H. Reynolds School Building**

Chair McBride suggested that the Superintendent explore the options and requirements (square footage needs, etc.) for moving to the Reynolds Building or Mt Hope High School.

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

Superintendent Brice will provide a report at the end of May or in early June. A discussion will be put on the June Workshop agenda.

Ms. Thibaudeau made a motion to direct Attorney Carroll to negotiate with the Town's attorney on a mutual agreement on the potential use of the Reynolds School building; seconded by Ms. Ellsworth

All approved the Motion.

**I. School Committee Policy GCAA - Employee Recruitment & Retention,  
1st Reading**

Motion was made to approve the School Committee Policy GCAA - Employee Recruitment & Retention for a 1st Reading by Ms. Reich; seconded by Ms. Cabral.

There was some discussion on the make up of the Screening and Interview committees. Attorney does not recommend that any changes be made to the committees because the Policy is necessary as written to be in compliance with the law, Education Improvement Act.

Ms. Reich recommends that this 1st Reading be approved as a 1st Reading and that anyone who has ideas or suggestions for changes, to go to the next Policy Subcommittee meeting to participate in their discussion on the Policy.

Attorney Carroll stated that it is ok to go bring the Policy as a 1st Reading, back to the Policy Subcommittee for further discussion.

Ms. Thibaudeau also stated that she would like to have qualified residents of Bristol Warren be provided interview opportunities when positions are available. Ms. Schofield requested that Ms. Thibaudeau provide her suggestions in writing to the Subcommittee for their review.

The next Policy Subcommittee meeting is planned for May 12, 2021.

All approved the Motion.

**VIII. Adjournment - 9:06 p.m.**

Chair McBride stated that the next full School Committee meeting will not be in-person as originally planned.

MOTION: There being no more business to discuss, a motion was made by Ms. Thibaudeau to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 p.m.; seconded by Ms. Piper. The motion passed unanimously.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Victor Cabral, Secretary  
/dbc**