

The Business Meeting of the New London Board of Education was held on June 24, 2024 in the New London Public Schools' Welcome Center.

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1. Call to Order

President Elaine Maynard-Adams called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Present for the Board of Education: President – Elaine Maynard-Adams
Vice President – Bianca Alexis (*Left @ 8:07 p.m.*)
Secretary – Bryan Doughty

Board Members Present: Alisha Blake
Nathan Caron
Danni Cruz

Board Members Absent: Susan Hambey

Present for the administration: Dr. Cynthia Ritchie, Superintendent of Schools

2. Public Comment

Amy Tortoriello, New London – Ms. Tortoriello stated that she is the parent of an upcoming 3rd and 5th grader, and her family currently navigates ASD, Sensory Processing Disorder and ADHD. She has also been involved with the Winthrop PTO for three years. She shared that she volunteered to work at the book fair this past fall. There was a kindergarten class that was getting antsy and a paraeducator yelled at the class. Ms. Tortoriello stated that she spoke with the principal afterwards to share what she had seen. For teacher appreciation week, PTO volunteers helped to cover recess for one day for the teachers. She stated she saw an employee yelling at the students again, during the recess. She stated she again shared this information with the principal along with other parents following recess. She said she that while she had not witnessed other employees acting this way, she has seen criticism and shame used with kids when they are not behaving up to expectations. She stated that she read and researched parent guidelines and that a negative discipline is not in concurrence with the CT State guidelines training and support for paraprofessionals working with students. It encourages social praise. It states it is the responsibility of educators both ethically and professionally to treat learners with dignity and respect. She stated after speaking with para educators she has learned there is little training, though they are hired to work with students with extra challenges who require extra patience. The students deserve the patience from these employees. She has begun to look into several training programs but is not well versed in the multiple programs or funding sources available. She expressed her willingness to work with Board members to do whatever is needed to obtain training for the paraprofessionals. Her hope is to go from no to some effective training.

3. Reports and Communications

- Board Chairperson's Report

Ms. Maynard-Adams stated that it has been a month of graduations and recognitions, and it has been joyful to have many Board members present at these events. It is important to let students and families know that the Board supports them. Last week, the Superintendent and her Cabinet team were invited to speak at the Neighborhood Academy. She stated that she also was in attendance. The Superintendent spoke for approximately 45 minutes, and the presentation was very well received, with multiple attendees stating that they had no idea that there was so much going on within the district. Ms. Maynard-Adams stated she also met with Hearing Youth Voices, and shared that they are looking to continue the dialogue and partnership into the next school year, including assisting the high school principal with student representation to the Board.

Ms. Maynard-Adams moved up agenda items AIX and AX.

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mr. Caron, to accept the resignation of Board Member and Secretary, Bryan Doughty.

Mr. Doughty thanked his wife for her support throughout his tenure. He thanked Ms. Kristea Francolino for being the Board's secretary, and her assistance completing the minutes. He thanked Mr. Miguel Gautier for spending so many minutes and days together, and putting up with his ideas. He also thanked Mr. Gautier for his work creating and rolling out the Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Doughty noted that his first email was to be on the Superintendent Search Committee which was for Dr. Ritchie's hire. He stated that he was one of the one to interview, and when she left he told the committee that they needed to hire her. He thanked Ms. Maynard-Adams for the time spent together on the Board. He thanked the rest of the Board members as well, and stated that it is a great responsibility to keep doing what they are doing.

Motion carried, 6-0

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mr. Doughty, to nominate Karen Bergin to replace Bryan Doughty as Board Member for the remainder of the term.

Motion carried, 6-0

Ms. Maynard-Adams welcomed Ms. Bergin. Ms. Bergin expressed that she is excited to be a part of the team.

4. Information and Reports

- i. Superintendent's Report

- NLPS2024: End of Year District Improvement Plan Review

- Dr. Ritchie and her Cabinet team, Mr. Miguel Gautier, Mr. Rob Funk, Dr. Hills-Papetti, Ms. Carrie Rivera, Ms. Christine Pemberton and Ms. Francolino came forward to present and review the NLPS2024: End of Year District Improvement Plan

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Ms. Alexis left the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

ii. Board Committee and Representative Updates

- Curriculum Committee

Mr. Cruz shared that the committee met on June 18 and reviewed the ongoing curriculum audit, summer curriculum planning, and recommended the Children's Literature Curriculum to the full Board for a vote this evening.

- Finance & Audit Committee

Ms. Maynard-Adams stated that the committee met prior to this meeting, and reviewed the monthly financial report and line item transfers.

5. Approval of the Minutes

- June 10, 2024 – Business Meeting

Motion by Mr. Cruz, seconded by Mr. Caron, to approve the June 10, 2024 Business Meeting Minutes.

Motion carried, 5-0

6. Approval of the Consent Agenda

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Mr. Doughty, that the following items, as set forth on the Consent Agenda for the Business Meeting of June 24, 2024 be approved unless removed by a Board member or the Superintendent of Schools:

A. Action Items

- I. Approve Line Item Transfers as Recommended by the Finance & Audit Committee
- II. Approve Policy 4112.112 – Sexual Harassment and Title IX (staff) for its First Reading as Recommended by the Policy Committee
- III. Approve Policy 5145.5 – Sexual Harassment and Title IX (students) for its First Reading as Recommended by the Policy Committee
- IV. Adopt Policy 4113.6 – Remote Work for its First Reading as Recommended by the Policy Committee

- V. Approve Policy 5134 – Pregnant/Parenting Students for its First Reading as Recommended by the Policy Committee
- VI. Approve the Children’s Literature Curriculum, Units 1&2 as Recommended by the Curriculum Committee
- VII. Approve a One-Year Extension of the Superintendent’s Existing Contract

Motion carried, 5-0

7. Items Pulled from Consent Agenda

- A. Approve the Evaluation Plans from the Professional Development Evaluation Committee (PDEC)

Motion by Mr. Doughty, seconded by, Ms. Blake, to approve the evaluation plans from the Professional Development Evaluation Committee.

Dr. Hills-Papetti provided an overview of the plans to the Board.

Motion carried, 5-0

8. Board Comments, Questions

Mr. Caron expressed his gratitude for Mr. Doughty’s service as a Board Member. He shared that when he was first elected, Mr. Doughty was right there with his phone number and offering support. He thanked him for his guidance, mentorship, leadership and dedication.

Mr. Cruz echoed Mr. Caron’s words. He thanked Mr. Doughty for his mentorship.

Ms. Blake thanked the parent who came forward to speak during public comment. She also expressed that especially as a first time Board member, she would be blessed to have the competency that Mr. Doughty has shown here.

Ms. Maynard-Adams asked if the district had received a response from The Williams School yet regarding the nurses. Dr. Ritchie responded that she had not.

10. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Cruz, seconded by Mr. Doughty, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried, 5-0

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan Doughty
Secretary