

ANSONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS SPECIAL BOARD OF EDUCATION

MEETING MINUTES

PLACE: Remote, via Zoom **DATE:** 14 August 2020 **TIME:** 10:00 A.M.
SPECIAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY: Chris Phipps, president

I. OPENING

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call – Mr. Phipps called a quorum

Mr. Phipps addressed all attendees in the Zoom meeting that the Board is aware there is anxiety and stress for all. He said the surveys have been reviewed and information has been gathered. Mr. Phipps said there have been changes made daily and this is the reason for such a delay in communication. He said he understands the changes cause confusion, but this is everywhere. Mr. Phipps told all attendees that today there will be a video released for all to get a better understanding of what will be happening in Ansonia. Mr. Phipps said the state required three re-opening options and they will be shared. He also told the attendees Ansonia will be going with the hybrid model and this will be explained in the video presentation as well. He said there will be something prior to the re-opening for the community to send in questions and have them answered in a forum. Mr. Phipps said the administration team is well aware of the concerns and are doing their best to deliver the best education in the safest manor possible.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	PRESENT	ABSENT	LATE
MR. RICH BSHARA	X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO	X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI	X		
MS. BETH LEBERGE		X	
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS, president	X		
MR. VINNY SCARLATA		X	
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	X		
TOTAL	5	2	0

II. Discussion and possible action on the following items:

A. Revised 2020-2021 School Calendar Attachment #1

47483647. Superintendent DiBacco said the district was given information through the governor and the commissioner to allow seven days of professional development. He said this will leave a school start date of September 2nd. He said more planning time for teachers will benefit greatly. Superintendent DiBacco said Election Day will now be a day off for both students and staff.

Assistant Superintendent Bergin added that the days the state offered, needed to be used within the beginning of the school year to prepare before students before they come into the building. He said there are currently seven professional days for staff for various training and time to prepare their classrooms.

Mr. Phipps asked if there were any questions from the Board. Mr. Bshara asked to confirm, the staff date remains the same and the student's date will be pushed back. Mr. Phipps said this was correct.

MOTION: To approve the revised 2020-2021

School Calendar.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA		X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO	2	X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI	1	X		
MS. BETH LEBERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS, president		X		
MR. VINNY SCARLATA				
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTALS		5	0	0

B. Face Mask Policy. Attachment #2

Discussion: Mr. Phipps introduced Ms. Rebecca Adams, HR Director. He said the district is fortunate to have her. Ms. Adams thanked Mr. Phipps and said there are a lot of positive things going and she is happy to be a part as we move forward. She said the face mask policy is so important to put in place. She said she is recommending this policy be separate from the dress code policy. She said when the mandated masks are no longer needed; it will be simple to remove the policy since it will be on its own.

Ms. Voroschak asked to clarify the section regarding teachers wearing masks during instruction. Ms. Adams explained that if a teacher is giving instruction and remains six feet from all others, they have the option to remove the mask. She said this was put out by our governor and CDC to facilitate instruction. Ms. Voroschak said she is not fond of this, but she understands.

Mr. Bshara said he is in agreement with the policy, but is asking who will be the monitor for the policy. He said it is not the same as a uniform or cell phone policy; it is a serious health concern. Ms. Adams said there will be a lot of time spent explaining to the students on how it will work. She said as in any policy, if there is repeated offenders it will be handled the same. Assistant Superintendent Bergin added that the beginning of the year will be focusing on safety. He said the discussion will be on proper wearing of the required mask and all other safety measures. He said building up tolerance of wearing the masks will be one thing. He also said there may come a time to address non-compliance, but right now the focus will be teaching the safety rules and build relationships. He said there will be many mask breaks at locations throughout the buildings.

Ms. DiGiorgi asked if the district will be supplying the students with masks if they don't bring them or lose them. Superintendent DiBacco said they will provide one cloth Ansonia charger mask to all students and staff. He said there will be a light blue medical mask provided as replacements for anyone who does not come in with their own. Superintendent DiBacco said bus drivers will also have a supply of masks to hand out. He said it is the districts obligation to provide masks.

Mr. Phipps said it will be the most challenging year ever and there will be without doubt many obstacles. He said the process will be ongoing and improvements will be made along the way.

Ms. DiGiorgi asked how many staff members have resigned. Ms. Adams said she is not sure of the exact number of how many teachers left the district due to the pandemic or other reasons, but it is not a large number. Ms. Adams said she will get the exact number to Ms. DiGiorgi.

Ms. DeLiebro asked about the wording in the policy regarding children having a note from a doctor that excuses them from wearing the mask. She asked what type of guidelines are in place for the notes. Ms. Adams assured Ms. DeLiebro that they have a hired medical advisor and there are weekly calls with the Department of Health. She said it has been made very clear that very few medical conditions will be cleared. She said the health professionals have informed them that any staff member or any student who can breathe well enough to walk in the school, are able to wear a loose fitting mask and the excuses will be very limited. Ms. DeLiebro asked if there is an instance, how will the situation be handled. Ms. Adams said other means will be looked into for the student, whether it is a shield, or some type of barrier. She said it will be worked with on a case by case situation, but there shouldn't be many at all.

Ms. Voroschak asked if there is a supply of N95 masks for staff or students who have health issues. Ms. Adams says they are not supplying N95 masks. She said there are cloth masks as well as face shields if they like. Ms. Adams said all guidelines are used and followed directly from our health care professionals.

**MOTION: To adopt the face mask policy
P4118.237 (a), 4218.237, P5141.8.**

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA	1	X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		
MS. BETH LEBERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS, president		X		
MR. VINNY SCARLATA				
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	2	X		
TOTALS		5	0	0

C. Title IX Policy. Attachment #3

Discussion: Ms. Adams said this policy is sexual harassment prevention. She said the new Title IX has a whole new setup. She said it is very important to prevent these types of measures, as well as address them as soon as an incident may occur. She said it is required to be adopted by today. There were no questions.

MOTION: To adopt the new

Title IX Policy.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA	1	X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI	2	X		
MS. BETH LEBERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS, president		X		
MR. VINNY SCARLATA				
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTALS		5	0	0

D. Alliance Grant Application

Discussion: Superintendent DiBacco told the Board this year, the Alliance Grant total will be \$2,906,760. He said this is a \$600 thousand increase from last year. He said the district is keeping all staff in their positions. Superintendent DiBacco said the grant was finished and he can share it. He said the grant was mainly spent on keeping all programs to help our students once again. Mr. Phipps thanked Superintendent DiBacco.

MOTION: To adopt the Alliance Grant.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA	1	X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO	2	X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		
MS. BETH LEBERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS, president		X		
MR. VINNY SCARLATA				
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTALS		5	0	0

E. CARES Act Application

Discussion: Superintendent DiBacco told the Board the district was allotted \$784,632 in CARES funds. He said the funds are being spent on services to ensure the safety of students and staff. He said some of the services include bus monitors, cleaning supplies, custodial services, outdoor tents, sanitizing stations, and Clorox vapor machines. Superintendent DiBacco said masks, Plexiglas, technology for students, online applications for tracking purposes, and numerous other like items have been purchased. He said all of these supplies have been purchased at no cost to our district. He said there is also more technology on back order. He said the district is stocked with masks for approximately one and half months. He said the cost for masks are approximately \$30,000. Ms. Voroschak asked if we will be receiving any masks from the state. Superintendent DiBacco said he has heard many politicians say masks will be available but he has not heard how to access them. He said because of this, he is making sure the district has them at our own expense. Ms. DiGiorgi said she heard the water fountains will be shut down. She asked if the district will be supplying water bottles for the students. Superintendent DiBacco said it will be asked that students bring their own water and the cafeteria may have something available but it will be asked that students bring their own. There was discussion regarding the use of the cafeterias and administration confirmed, the students will be distanced and use the cafeteria for lunch. With additional lunch waves, there will be plenty of room for students to remain the required distance from their peers. It was also discussed that the option for breakfast might be to pass out at the closing of the school day for students to eat prior to the next school day. They said this will alleviate the need to supply breakfast in the morning.

Mr. Bshara asked if the cleaning and sterilization is being out sourced or by our custodial department. Superintendent DiBacco said our staff will continue to clean and sanitize the buildings.

MOTION: To approve the CARES

Application as requested by
Superintendent DiBacco.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA		X		

MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO	2	X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI	1	X		
MS. BETH LEBERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS, president		X		
MR. VINNY SCARLATA				
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTALS		5	0	0

Mr. Phipps asked if the Board will agree to move item V. Board member questions and comments to item III. Mr. Phipps said he believes a lot of attendees from the public might like to hear the questions and answers before dismissing for the Executive Session. Mr. Phipps said Executive Session will now be IV.

MOTION: To deviate from the agenda

moving item V. Board member questions and comments to item III.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA	2	X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI	1	X		
MS. BETH LEBERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS, president		X		
MR. VINNY SCARLATA				
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTALS		5	0	0

III. Board member questions and comments.

Mr. Phipps said one thing he wanted to say is the governor removed the 100% distant learning option that was discussed. He said the governor is currently allowing the hybrid and full return to school options.

Mr. Phipps said he has heard parents asking if the polo shirt with logo is going to be a requirement. He said parents are asking one less obstacle with all that is going on. He asked what the Board members' thoughts are.

Mr. Phipps said another item to discuss is the fact that parents have the option to have their student's remain home for learning and he would like to know how the Board feels about school attendance and eligibility for sports participation and extracurricular activities.

Ms. DiGiorgi said she would like to comment on the removal of the shirt logo requirement. She said she is against this because the logo has been a part of the dress code since the beginning. She said she knows there is a pandemic, but if the policy is removed then she believes there will be students wearing inappropriate shirts. She said she thinks it is a big mistake and the logo is what makes the dress code. Ms. DeLiebro says she agrees with Ms. DiGiorgi. Ms. DeLiebro said the parents have had plenty of time to get the logo shirts. Ms. Voroschak asked what the reason for removing the logo is. Mr. Phipps says this is not recommended, it is just that the question has been brought up several times. He said there may be many reasons for parents; he was looking for the Board's feeling on this subject. He said he sees the Board does have strong feelings at this time, but the key is to make this difficult time easier for families. Ms. DiGiorgi said the logo shirts are relatively cheap. Mr. Phipps said he was just saying the district will have a supply of shirts for families in need and OnTime is not accepting outside shirts at this time. Ms. DiGiorgi said we have always offered help to parents in need, if they reach out. Ms. Voroschak said we have also had a program to adopt families in need to purchase shirts. Superintendent DiBacco said he wanted to mention that each year the district helps families in need with the dress code. He said there will be extra uniforms if families are in need. He said if the logo is not on the shirt at the beginning of the year, it should not be a worry for parents or school staff. Superintendent DiBacco said he does not want this to be something that a family would struggle with. He said if students return to school and the logo isn't on, they will not be sent home. He said the district is going to be flexible and they are here to help. Superintendent DiBacco said the logo shows pride, and he loves to see the logo when he comes into the buildings and loves having it. He said but at this time, it should not be a stress factor for our students and families.

IV. Executive Session

MOTION: To go into Executive Session

At 11:24 A.M. for the purpose of 1-200(6) (B) Negotiation/Strategy pending legal matters:

A. Bogardus v. Ansonia Board of Education
B. Food Service Contract

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA	1	X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI	2	X		
MS. BETH LEBERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS, president		X		
MR. VINNY SCARLATA				
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTALS		5	0	0

The Board returned to the regular meeting.

V. A. Action as needed. As a result of Executive Session

MOTION: To accept Superintendent DiBacco's recommendations regarding 1-200(6) (B) Negotiation/Strategy pending legal matters:

A. Bogardus v. Ansonia Board of Education

B. Food Service Contract.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA	1	X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI	2	X		
MS. BETH LEBERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS, president		X		
MR. VINNY SCARLATA				
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK		X		
TOTAL		5	0	

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 11:48 A.M.

	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. RICH BSHARA	1	X		
MRS. TRACEY DELIBERO		X		
MS. FRAN DIGIORGI		X		
MS. BETH LEBERGE				
MR. CHRIS PHIPPS, president		X		
MR. VINNY SCARLATA				
MS. SHARON VOROSCHAK	2	X		
TOTAL		5	0	

Respectfully submitted,

Cassie Venson

Venson, Recording Secretary

8/17/2020

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Date