

A Regular Meeting of the Ellington Board of Education was held on Wednesday, April 26, 2023, in the Ellington High School Library Media Center, 37 Maple Street, Ellington, CT 06029.

**The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Chair Jennifer Dzen.**

**PRESENT** Chair Jennifer Dzen, Vice-Chair Mike Young (virtual), Secretary Jennifer Mullin, Treasurer Liz Nord, Gary Blanchette, Marcia Kupferschmid, Angela Moser, Miriam Underwood, Steve Viens

**ABSENT** Kerry Socha, Board Member

**ALSO PRESENT** Dr. Scott V. Nicol, Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Oliver Barton, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction  
Mr. Brian Greenleaf, Director of Finance and Operations  
Dr. Kristy LaPorte, Director of Special Services  
Mr. Aaron Fliss, Director of Technology  
Ms. Jennifer Brown, Coordinator of Human Resources  
Mr. Fred Dorsey, Attorney for the Board  
Mr. Rik Roy, Board of Education Student Representative

**NATIONAL ANTHEM**

Windermere School Chorus (Pre-recorded)

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**MOTION:** To move Agenda Item X., Anticipated Executive Session, out of order to commence after Item VI. Consent Agenda.  
First: L. Nord  
Second: S. Viens  
Motion passed unanimously.

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

**Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Ellington High School**

**Ms. Kim LaDuke and Mr. Tim Bifolck, Business Teachers and FBLA Advisors**

Future Business Leaders of America is a national organization with a mission to connect students to the business world. The Spring 2023 State Leadership Conference was the first in-person conference this group of EHS students could attend. Eleven/fifteen students were placed in their respective events such as business law, leadership, public speaking, and cyber security. Three EHS students shared their experiences at the conference. Chair Dzen shared her congratulations to the students on behalf of the Board.

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**BOARD CHAIR REPORT**

Chair Dzen addressed the community and viewers. Chair Dzen briefly took a moment to thank Liz Nord, treasurer of the Board, for her work this budget season representing the Board.

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**CITIZEN & STAFF FORUM - None**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting, March 29, 2023, 6:00 p.m.
2. Approval of Minutes: Special Meeting, April 20, 2023, 4:00 p.m.
3. Human Resources Monthly Report

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Ms. Dzen asked if anyone wished to remove any item(s) from the Consent Agenda. Ms. Dzen announced that with hearing none, the Consent Agenda is accepted as written.

**ANTICIPATED EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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**Paraeducator, Custodial, and Unaffiliated Contracts**

**MOTION:**

Move that the Board of Education move into Executive Session to discuss Paraprofessional, Custodial, and Unaffiliated Contracts and invite the following into Executive Session: Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Brian Greenleaf, Director of Finance and Operations, Mr. Fred Dorsey, Attorney for the Board, Ms. Jennifer Brown, Coordinator of Human Resources, Mr. Greg Kliman, Director of Facilities, and Ms. Tracey Deptula, Assistant to the Superintendent

First: J. Mullin

Second: M. Kupferschmid

Motion passes unanimously.

The Board entered into Executive Session at 6:14 p.m.

The Board exited Executive Session at 6:53 p.m.

**REPORT AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**SPECIAL REPORTS**

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**Ellington High School Curriculum Refresh**

Mr. John Guidry, EHS Principal and Ms. Linda Robinson, Technology Integration Specialist

Mr. Oliver Barten gave a brief introduction. He worked with the high school with regard to the refresh of the curriculum and enhancement of how teachers use their built-in collaborative time: Professional Learning Group (PLG).

Mr. Guidry shared that the high school will run a Curriculum Refresh Process on a 5-year basis. Every year, a select curriculum will be refreshed during PLG time with a team of teachers. The teachers who work on the team to look at the curriculum will identify areas of the vision of the graduate that the curriculum explicitly works with.

Ms. Robinson shared that the approach will be aligned with Rigorous Curriculum Design (RCD) by Larry Ainsworth. The high school selected this because it used a lens of rigor aligned with the rigorous work already at EHS. Rigor and the standards (state and common core) drive this model. The goal is to have a systematic approach that teachers can use for cohesive, tied-together units. This model was tweaked for Ellington by embedding the Vision of the Graduate into the refresh planning.

**REGULAR BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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**Finance**

Liz Nord shared that the Board had to bring down the budget by \$26,000. It was decided that it will come from the Medical Insurance line in the budget. Greenleaf added it was a hit to grow the reserve balance however over time, it was one we could stand to take as opposed to pulling from another operation account. Also, food service meal prices will increase by \$.35 per meal across all grades. This is in line with increases among surrounding districts.

**Curriculum**

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Dr. Young shared that the committee reviewed a Math Teaching and Learning Update from Ms. Browne, Math Specialist, presented several examples of math problems and instructional strategies and discussed how some of the Bridges problems that request a specific strategy that has been modified to allow students to use their

preferred way to solve problems. Ms. Dzen shared that she liked to hear that students have options as to how they can solve a problem and can utilize a solution that works best for them. Ms. Nord shared that she liked how teachers can work together within the math program. Cross-building and vertical integration processes allow the teachers to work together.

Additionally, in response to a requested update on enrichment opportunities at a previous meeting, the committee discussed enrichment activities that are offered building by building. Dr. Young shared that, if qualified, 8th-grade math students can simultaneously take Geometry at EMS or EHS. He also briefly highlighted that changes in staffing will enable Library Media Specialists to support enrichment opportunities differently and more frequently in each building.

**Policy** - No meeting

**Communications** - No meeting

### **ADMINISTRATION REPORTS**

#### **Superintendent's Report**

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Dr. Nicol shared that it is Administrative Professionals' Day. He acknowledged the work of all administrative assistants for the work they do including his Executive Assistant, Tracey, for her work within the Superintendent's office.

Dr. Nicol gave a "Search to Hire" timeline for the Crystal Lake School Principal. The application closes on May 1, and at this time there are 51 applicants. The committee search is underway. The committee will include Administrators, teachers, and parents. Dr. Nicol will initially review the applications or conduct an interview screen via phone or Google Meet. A preparation meeting is planned for May with an additional interview day. The goal is to appoint the new principal at the June BOE meeting, to start July 1.

#### **Directors' Reports**

##### **Monthly Financial Report**

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##### **Mr. Brian Greenleaf, Director of Finance and Operations**

Mr. Greenleaf shared that currently there is a negative balance in the budget however, that will not be the way the district ends the year. Part of that is that the district is waiting for \$300,000 from the State of CT in excess cost money to be received and logged in May which will bring the balance up.

### **BOARD LIAISON REPORTS**

#### **Student Liaison Report**

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Student Liaison Rik Roy gave his report to the Board.

- Uknighthed Week was fun and ended with a Pep Rally and the Best Buddies Dance.
- Paint Night was held at EHS in recognition of Neurodiversity and was a huge success.
- Juniors had NGSS testing followed by a successful Career Fair with local businesses.
- Jazz Band went to Philadelphia to compete in the National Jazz Festival.
- Music Department is preparing for the Disney trip. This trip occurs every four years.
- Student Council - sponsoring a Dodge Ball Tournament; always a fun event.
- AP Exams in May.

#### **Permanent Building Committee**

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Liaison Gary Blanchette shared that May 23, 2023, is the referendum for the town budget that will include a question for the Windermere Project. The project will continue to have savings of approximately 4 million dollars even though the project costs are increasing.

#### **Center School**

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Liaison Marcia Kupferschmid shared that the Fun Run will be held on April 27<sup>th</sup>. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade is completing SBAC testing, the PTO-sponsored Adult Gala fundraiser is on May 5<sup>th</sup> and students will be singing the National Anthem at the Yard Goats game on May 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Board of Selectmen**

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Liaison Jenn Mullin shared that the budget referendum was the topic of discussion for the Windermere project and May 23<sup>rd</sup> is the referendum date. Ms. Dzen added that the Windermere forum was held where community members had an opportunity to see the inside and outside designs. It was interesting to see that perspective from the architect.

**Board of Finance**

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Liaison Liz Nord shared about the recent finance meetings, the topic of budget cuts were discussed. Ms. Nord added she thought the meeting brought the budget to a place that the town can afford and hopes it will pass on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Windermere**

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Liaison Steve Viens visited with Principal Jennifer Hill and observed a couple of classrooms. Mr. Viens shared it was neat to see the classroom activities with the Hartford Stage Group about the Civil War and the visual activities they provided. The running club is back and the ESL dinner on May 25<sup>th</sup> is always a great event to attend.

Mr. Viens inquired about the design discussion and concerns with the proposed entry points. The architect will provide new visuals. Mr. Greenleaf added that they are working on new renderings to potentially view at the next Permanent Building Committee meeting. A discussion continues about the exterior finishes. The Permanent Building Committee meeting is on May 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Crystal Lake School**

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Liaison Miriam Underwood shared running club is starting and from a Wellness Committee perspective, she is so glad to see it is happening at the various schools.

**CREC**

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Liaison Miriam Underwood reported an update on Legislature HB5003. Ms. Underwood called on Scott to explain that the 5003 has not been fully funded coming out of appropriations. A press conference has been put together for April 27, 2023, to raise awareness and put more pressure on the legislators and the governor to adjust funding. Ms. Underwood shared that Ellington, Canton, and Windsor were recognized for their legislative efforts. She inquired if we would receive any additional funding from the state and/or for the Teacher Minority Recruitment Program. Dr. Nicol added that if we can get funds to support programs, we will try. Ms. Underwood asked that the District report on our teachers and where they are within the Teacher Minority Recruitment Program.

**Ellington High School**

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Liaison Angie Moser reported that the high school held a Career Fair for the Juniors on the NGSS exam day. There were workshops, local businesses, trade schools, and community colleges there to provide employment options and alternative ways to pursue additional education after high school. It was a huge success and the high school plans to add more for next year. Also, Ms. Moser shared that there was a group that met to discuss climate and culture. The topic was "What does it mean to be a Knight?". It was a great meeting and there is more to come from Mr. Hubrins.

**ACTION ITEMS**

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**Custodial Contract Notifications**

**MOTION:** First: L. Nord

Second: M. Underwood

Move that the Board approve the AFSCME Local 1303-242 (Custodial/Maintenance/Food Service) tentative agreement as presented and authorize the administration to finalize the contract for signature.

Motion unanimously carried.

**Adoption of the 2023-2024 Budget**

**MOTION**

First: L. Nord

Second: J. Mullin

To approve the adjustments 2023-2024 budget as presented.

Motion unanimously carried.

**Approval of the Food Service Rates**

**MOTION**

First: L. Nord

Second: M. Underwood

To approve the 2023-2024 food service rates as presented.

Motion unanimously carried.

**OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS/CORRESPONDENCE/ROUNDTABLE**

Chair Dzen shared that three emails were received from parents regarding the budget urging the board to move forward with the budget as is.

Correspondence was received from a parent urging the Board to support the paraeducators. A paraeducator offered to have the Board Shadow them.

Correspondence was received from parents regarding Crystal Lake School concerns.

Chair Dzen stated that all correspondence has been responded to.

Point of order called by Dr. Scott Nicol to do a motion to table remaining action items not addressed.

**TABLE the approval of the Pre-Kindergarten Rates and Pay-to-Participate rates until the next meeting**

**MOTION**

First: A. Moser

Second: J. Mullin

To table the approval of the Pre-Kindergarten Rates and Pay-to-Participate rates until the next meeting.

Motion unanimously carried.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION**

First: J. Mullin

Second: M. Young

To adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board (8:04 p.m.)

Motion unanimously carried.