

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the Clinton Central School District, Oneida County, New York, held on January 26, 2021, online via Zoom.

Present:

(Board)

(Administration)

Ms. Mary Lou Lauchert, President
Ms. Melinda Leising, Vice-president
Ms. Megan Burdick
Mr. Sam Catterson
Mr. Kevin Magdon
Ms. Erica Shaw

Dr. Stephen L. Grimm, Superintendent
Mr. Joseph Barretta, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Mrs. Debora Van Slyke, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Ms. Kathleen Fonda, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Dr. Matthew Lee, High School Principal
Dr. Shaun Carney, Middle School Principal
Mrs. Ellen Leuthauser, Elementary Principal

Ms. Julia A Scranton, District Clerk

Absent: Dr, Luke Perry Board Member

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Lauchert called the meeting to order at 5:32pm

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. READING OF THE MISSION STATEMENT

Ms. Lauchert read the mission statement.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

No one wished to speak.

5. INFORMATION-REPORTS-PROPOSAL/SUPERINTENDENT & STAFF

A. Bright Spots

Dr. Grimm began by recognizing the important work accomplished by our school guidance counselors Jackie Snizek, Danielle Tesak and Kelly Zegarelli, who continually support teachers, staff and students with advice and intervention, especially during these difficult times. School counselor week occurs February 1 through 5.

He also noted that a Blue Light Lock-down system has been installed and tested. Blue warning lights have been placed throughout buildings and at various outdoor locations to alert anyone on or near the campus when a lock-down is in progress.

He reported that students Finley Davignon and Gianna Trunfio were recipients of the Mohawk Valley Sports Award for field hockey.

Administrators Reports

Mrs. Ellen Leuthauser, Elementary principal, reported that District resident Richard Stricker had constructed and donated 30 wood birdhouses for art club and OVA members. The painted birdhouses will be displayed at the Artisan Corner and then outside the windows of nursing home residents to cheer them during this time of isolation. Students have been making cards of appreciation for various community organizations where they are on display.

String teacher Janelle Conklin has invited former student Judith “Koki” Chepkuri to join a fifth grade orchestra rehearsal. The students are learning a Swahili folk song and look forward to exploring Kenyan culture. Ms. Conklin taught in Kenya prior to her arrival at CCS.

Book exchange continues in the elementary library with over 500 books loaned out since December 14th, thanks to the creative efforts of Library Media Specialist Katie Parker. Mrs. Culver’s class read and analyzed Amanda Gorman’s Inaugural poem “The Hill We Climb”. They found it to be both inspiring and comforting.

Students will be participating in the Great Kindness Challenge 2021, a global virtual event. Results will be shared as it evolves. Students are collecting mittens hats and socks in collaboration with a local church. Donations can be dropped off at the Elementary School. Gaps in student learning are being addressed with the help of evening tutors, which is especially helpful to parents who work during school hours.

Middle school principal Dr. Shaun Carney offered well wishes to Cortlynn Jepsen who had been working in the middle school office prior to her hire as a PE teacher at Notre Dame. She will be missed. Dr. Carney is now seeking a replacement.

A virtual “Battle of the Books” friendly competition was held with student attending New York Mills and Holland Patent schools. Students appreciated the interaction with other book lovers. The team is advised by library media specialist Karen Zaleski and teacher assistant Melissa Roy. Seventh grades ELA teacher Mrs. Sarah Gaetano reported that Project LIT, which she advises, met virtually with author Andrew Aydin who encouraged students to be curious, not judgmental. They also enjoyed an art lesson with illustrator Danica Novgorodoff, who allowed them to tour her studio. Students were surprised by a visit from author Jason Reynolds. He advised students who had “too much dip on their chip” to keep that attitude and to not be discouraged as they pursue their careers.

Middle school students participated in a unit on miniature golf in PE classes. Teachers Mike Tesak and Tenneil Mihm initiated this as a way to actively engage students safely. Dr. Carney displayed a photo received from the St. Luke’s Crisis Management team in appreciation of snack donations and cards received from middle school students. This was collaborative effort involving ELA teachers, Student Council and LEO Club.

Dr. Matthew Lee, high school principal, reported that high school PE teachers have also invented some creative challenges for student encouraging fitness and safe interaction. Ten students attended a virtual Yale Model UN XLVII with other students globally, an opportunity that would not have been possible if in-person attendance was required. Topics such as World Bank, NATO and humanitarian need in the Middle East were among those discussed. Participating students were Karina Davis, Eva Gaetano, Mallory Wickline, Izzy Marcus, Isla McCullough, Lily Collins, Nicholas Heselton, Ollie Walters, James Klein, and Landon Stilz. Model UN is advised by high school teachers Mrs. Nicole Goodelle and Mr. Roger Wratten.

A video of the latest edition of the Warrior News was made available for viewing. Students Clare Barone, Brooke Wollin, Juliet Weinberg, Sienna Huther, and Hanna Slawson have been steadily polishing their skills, addressing timely topics, and including community organizations. The program is a part of art teacher Mindy Pavone's Digital Media Class.

Dr. Lee demonstrated how progress reports are generated using Google Docs, facilitating more frequent communication with parents regarding grades, coursework and concerns. The goal is to improve engagement and reduce failure rate.

B. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Grimm displayed a draft calendar for the 2021-2022 school year. Finalization will depend on whether or not standardized testing and Regents exams occur, and on Juneteenth observance. The calendar will be agreed upon regionally.

Budget Update

Dr. Grimm was pleased to report that information was released regarding the state budget and that, for this year at least, the crisis is not as severe as anticipated. As per the tax cap calculation, a decrease in taxes will occur, which is appropriate at this time for our community. Some restoration occurred due to Federal Aid.

Mr. Joseph Barretta, Superintendent for Business, reviewed factors potentially influencing budget planning including the State Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplementary Appropriations Act (CRRSA Act) of \$1,206,372 for Clinton which was subsequently deducted, the assumption of the state receiving \$6 billion in Federal Aid, and the proposed consolidation and capping of expense based aids as "Service Aid". Transportation aid will be allowed, but a proposal to discontinue prior year claims is on the table. It is crucial that spending remains level, but it is likely that state funding reductions will continue into the future. He reviewed seven years of state and federal aid reductions revealing sporadic offsets.

Projected state aid is anticipated to increase from 2020-2021 by \$7,021. Projected revenues are estimated to decrease by \$136,900 or 0.47%, while projected expenses are estimated to increase by \$365,919 or 1.26% resulting in a budget gap of \$502,819. Numbers will be adjusted as additional information is received.

Update on School Closure/reopening

Dr. Grimm reported that the decision to operate remotely until February 12 was based on a number of factors. He reviewed data from the Oneida County Department of Health dashboard indicating that the number of cases are decreasing, but not enough to justify reopening. Wastewater testing shows evidence of continued infection. Nearly half of CCS employees have received at least their first vaccination, and the District is working with Oneida County to procure vaccines for school employees. Until a high percentage of staff members have completed this process, it is wise to remain closed. CCS has gone through the process to enable COVID testing on school property prior to opening, but has not yet decided to pursue. The possibility of purchasing desk-top Plexiglas units for students is being explored.

Mr. Catterson asked if these purchases might be funded by the CCSD Foundation. Dr. Grimm replied that he had spoken to the Foundation Chair last week and had submitted a list that included this and other items for consideration.

Athletics

Dr. Grimm reported that, effective February 1, 2021, for high risk sports, individual or distanced group training and organized no/low-contact group training including competitions and tournaments are permitted, but only as permitted by the respective local health authorities such as county health departments. Several factors need to be considered including whether there has been a more-transmissible variant of COVID-19 identified in the area, local rates of COVID-19 transmission or rate of positivity, and local ability to monitor and enforce compliance. Travel for practice or play is prohibited outside of the region or contiguous counties/regions. It is a possibility that some type of program could be offered after the February break.

Board members, although supportive of sports in general, could not justify risking beginning sports prior to allowing students back for instruction.

Football is scheduled to start as a spring sport, rescheduled from the fall season, on March 1. Dr. Grimm stated that we still need to see a continued decrease in cases.

6. STANDING RESOLUTIONS (CONSENT AGENDA)

A motion was made by Ms. Leising, seconded by Ms. Shaw, and carried (6, 0) to combine items 6A through 6J.

A motion was made by Ms. Shaw, seconded by Ms. Leising, and carried (6, 0) to approve items 6A through 6J.

- A. Agenda and Any Additions to the Agenda for January 26, 2021
- B. Minutes from the Regular Meeting held on December 15, 2020
- C. Minutes from the Special Meeting held on January 12, 2021
- D. Internal Claims Auditor Report
- E. Summary Treasurer’s Report for December 2020
- F. Treasurer’s Report for December 2020
- G. Executive Summary for December 2020
- H. Revenues/expenditures by Month
- I. Committee on Preschool Special Education and Committee on Special Education (CSE) Report:

Initial Review	2
Program Review	7
Annual Review	0
Reevaluation (Triennial)	0
Administrative Transfer	1

Preschool	5
504 Review	2
504 Initial	4
Amendment w/o Meeting Held	1

J. Updated List of Substitute and Supervisory Personnel

7. COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS

A. Committees

1. Policy Committee

In Dr. Perry’s absence, Ms. Lauchert reported that one policy requiring non-consequential changes is on the agenda for a first reading. Others under review require stakeholder input. The committee continues to work through NYSSBA recommendations.

2. Facilities Committee

Ms. Shaw reported that the committee met that afternoon and reviewed the five year plan as recommended by architects at MARCH Associates. The list of potential items will be prioritized, and financing, which can include funds left over from the recently completed Capital Project, will be discussed with financial advisor Dr. Rick Timbs.

B. Liaisons

1. School Board Institute

Ms. Burdick reported that virtual Legislative Forums will occur on Wednesday and Thursday of this week. A list of submitted questions to be addressed has been shared ahead of time with those attending and with representatives.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Policy

1. BE IT RESOLVED that draft policy #5420, Student Health Services, be adopted.

NOTE: This is a first reading. No action necessary.

A motion was made by Mr. Catterson, seconded by Ms. Leising, and carried (6, 0) to approve the following resolution:

- B. BE IT RESOLVED that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, in accordance with Board Policy #6150, the attached 2020-2021 line item budget transfers, be approve.

Description	Account Code	Increase	Decrease	
Tuition - Other	A2110.472.00	\$13,000		To pay for tuition student attending Utica Academy of Science Charter School
School Construction Interest	A9711.700.00		\$13,000	

A motion was made by Ms. Leising, seconded by Mr. Catterson, and carried (6, 0) to approve the following resolution:

- C. BE IT RESOLVED that the three year agreement between the Clinton Central School District and Tyler Technologies for transportation routing software be approved with payments terms as follows:

2020-2021	\$3,307.50
2021-2022	\$3,472.88
2022-2023	\$3,646.52

- 7. A motion was made by Ms. Leising, seconded by Mr. Catterson, and carried (6, 0) to approve the following resolution:

- B. BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts a donation of \$812.59 from various employees and organizations (list attached) to be deposited in the Bryan Hill Memorial Fund.

\$812.59 TA085 HILL

9. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

District resident Sara Ziesenitz stated that she was opposed to beginning athletics prior to students returning to classes. She suggested a community survey might be helpful. Dr. Grimm responded that he would be getting feedback before proceeding.

Resident Rebecca King added that, from the perspective of student athletes involved in JV and Varsity level sports, any sort of winter season would be appreciated, especially considering that participation would be voluntary.

10. PERSONNEL

A motion was made by Ms. Leising, seconded by Mr. Catterson, and carried (6, 0) to approve the following resolution:

- A. BE IT RESOLVED that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the unpaid leave of absence for Melissa Drejza, aide, on December 21, 2020 and December 22, 2020, in accordance with the CSEA contract, be approved.

11. QUESTIONS BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Ms. Leising praised those responsible for executing meal delivery which her family found to be very helpful. Building mechanic Jim Scoones has played an integral part in the organization of this effort. Thank you to our cafeteria staff and bus drivers for completing the task.

Ms. Burdick verified that a question regarding “Consolidation of Services” that has been proposed by the Governor does not appear on the list of questions for the upcoming Legislative Meeting discussion. However, it could likely occur via the chat room.

Mr. Catterson thanked community members for sharing their opinions.

12. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Ms. Burdick, seconded by Ms. Leising, and carried (6, 0) to adjourn the meeting. The time was 7:42pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Julia A. Scranton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "S".

Julia A Scranton
District Clerk