

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the Clinton Central School District, Oneida County, New York, held on April 20, 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  
Dr. Luke Perry  
Ms. Erica Shaw

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

Ms. Julia A Scranton, District Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Lauchert called the meeting to order at 5:33pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. READING OF THE MISSION STATEMENT

Ms. Lauchert read the Mission Statement.

4. PUBLIC HEARING

Communicable Disease Public Health Emergency Continuation of Operations Plan

Dr. Grimm explained that the plan had been posted on the website for the required 30 days for public viewing. No questions were raised or comments made.

5. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

District resident Sara Ziesenitz, on behalf of the Kirkland Town Library, stated that, in light of financial burdens caused by the pandemic, the library decided not to request funding through taxes again this year. They are grateful for continued community support and partnerships, including with CCS. Recently, students in third grade teacher Heather Cirelli’s class participated in a “Whacky Word” activity by creating nonsense words, with middle school students inventing definitions. Supported by Kirkland Town Library Friends, student Alicyn Calcara’s poem “Memories”, included in the middle school publication *Words of a Warrior*, is now part of the Poetry Path at site 11 outside the theater entrance.

6. INFORMATION-REPORTS-PROPOSAL/SUPERINTENDENT & STAFF

A. Bright Spots

#### NAMM Foundation Music Award

Superintendent Dr. Grimm reported that CCS was again named one of the “Best Communities for Musical Education” by the National Association of Musical Merchants Foundation for the third consecutive year. Congratulations to our teachers and students.

#### Appreciation Days

Dr. Grimm reminded attendees that upcoming appreciation days include Teacher Appreciation Day on May 4, Nurse Appreciation Day on May 6, and Administrative Assistant Appreciation day on April 21.

#### Communications

Dr. Grimm called attention to the April communications that are available on the CCS website and Facebook page thanks largely to PR Assistant Alyssa Sacco. The CCS PTA Facebook page is also a good source of information.

#### Board Member Recognition

Dr. Grimm congratulated Ms. Lauchert for receiving New York State School Board Association’s Board Mastery Award, and Ms. Leising for receiving the Board Achievement Award. This program recognizes board members who continually strive to expand their governance knowledge and skills. Ms. Lauchert pointed out that Ms. Leising also takes advantage of local School Board Institute learning opportunities.

#### Administrators’ Reports

Elementary Principal Ellen Leuthauser reiterated the value of the school’s partnership with the Kirkland Town Library and the activities shared. She displayed pictures of classrooms with and without barriers, and cafeteria seating. Thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Lillibridge for creating a safe and efficient color and number coding system for student dismissal. All hands are on deck to assure student safety. Thank you to volunteer police and the Clinton Arena for their assistance, and to Jim Scoones for his help in organizing this effort.

Middle school Principal Dr. Shaun Carney introduced seventh grade ELA teacher Sarah Gaetano who reported about the development of the student initiated “Wishtree Project”. Inspired by the books “A Long Walk to Water” and “Wishtree”, students wrote a proposal and created a website to raise awareness about clean water deficiencies in South Sudan. To raise relief funds, people are invited to purchase a wish card for \$1 that will then be hung from a tree outside the theater, and subsequently used for an art project. The class of 2026 would like to continue this project into future years.

Principal Carney also reported that Rachel’s Warriors assembled snack baskets for health care workers at Oneida Hospital. Students Aaron Febus, Michael Cannistra, Jason Leonard, Willow Terrell, and Breona Deyo spearheaded the effort. Rachel’s Warriors is advised by teacher Aften Ford.

Honors course information will soon be shared with parents of eligible students via email and Parent Square.

Students Elizabeth Bashant and Eli Davis competed in the Utica College Regional Science Fair. Miss Bashant was awarded 4<sup>th</sup> place for her project “Does Caffeine Affect Purple Bean Plant Growth?” and Mr. Davis was awarded 1<sup>st</sup> place for “The Breaking Point – How Strong is Thermoplastic Polyurethane? Congratulations!

Student Alicyn Calcara's poem "Memories", included in the middle school publication *Words of a Warrior*, has been installed as part of the Poetry Path at site 11 outside the theater entrance.

Dr. Matthew Lee, high school principal, was happy to report that students Nicolas Fostini and Madeline Walters were named Mohawk Valley Teen All Stars. The award is sponsored by the Utica Observer Dispatch. The high school musical production of *Godspell* will run May 20 through the 22 at 7:30pm, livestreamed and with limited in-person seating. The challenge was to launch a high quality production that required a smaller cast and crew in order to maintain safety guidelines. Kudos to involved students who rose to the occasion while taking AP exams and playing on fall II and spring sports teams.

A successful talent show was livestreamed on multiple platforms featuring a variety of performances by students K-12. The event was hosted by students Sydney Labayewski and Claire Barone and organized by teachers Kathleen Washburn and Mindy Pavone as part of the CCS Positivity Project.

Two high school students were also prize winners in the Utica College Regional Science Fair. Students Isla McCullough (Insulation Installation) and Jason Rivera (Do We Grow Out of Bias?: Age Related Differences in Out Group Punishment), won multiple prizes including Grand Champion Senior Division Runner Up and 1<sup>st</sup> Place Senior Division respectively. Congratulations!

Dr. Lee also reported that the high school will be moving forward with a dual credit course with MVCC called Personal Finance, replacing/renaming the course formerly called Money Skills. Tenth graders will be offered the opportunity to earn three college credits.

#### Athletic Update

Dr. Grimm summarized winter sport outcomes. Girls and Boys Bowling Teams earned the designation of Scholar Athletes, with 75% of the team maintaining a cumulative GPA of 90 or above. Zachary Flint, Mariah Doris and Alexianna Narbone were named to the CSC All-star team. Statistics for Volleyball, Girls and Boys Ice Hockey, and for Girls and Boys Basketball were displayed culminating an abbreviated but important season. Indoor track ended the season undefeated with Finlay Davignon, Jenna Deep and Victoria Lewis breaking records in the pentathlon, 20 pound weight and 55 meter dash.

#### B. Superintendent's Report

##### Reopening

Dr. Grimm reviewed plans for re-opening that had been executed, and more recent guidelines with which the District is compliant, proactively maximizing safety. He presented documents listing new requirements and the data analysis used to determine the course of action, which was discussed by regional Superintendents and counsel. The study of obstacles presented by barriers continues.

##### Math K-5

Dr. Grimm reminded the Board that the middle school had adopted the EnVision Math program last year after a thorough evaluation. This year, grade 5 classes and virtual teachers have been piloting that program, although more in-person evaluation is needed. The pilot includes training and assessment tools. Evaluation continues, with possible Board adoption occurring in June in accordance with Policy #4511.

#### Wellness and Professional Learning Plan Committees

Dr. Grimm informed the Board that, since policy has changed over the last several years, a Wellness Committee is in formation to develop/revise and recommend changes to ensure compliancy. Additionally, in accordance with New York State regulations, the formation of a committee to develop a Professional Learning Plan is in process. Dr. Grimm displayed a copy of the draft committee charter which included a chart listing current and potential membership. The Board will be asked to approve both committees at the May meeting.

#### Large Ceremony Guidelines

Dr. Grimm reported that state guidelines regarding large ceremonies were received on April 12 posing some difficult restrictions. He has met with the theater manager to discuss possibilities. The hope is to have a single graduation. Outside venues may be considered.

#### Communication Survey 2021

In order to improve efficiency, a survey that gives the community an opportunity to inform the District about communication preferences will be sent out on April 21, with a deadline for return of June 1.

#### Budget Update

Dr. Grimm displayed a slide that encapsulated the budget reporting over the last four months. Maximizing the tax levy limit seems the best tactic for avoiding spikes in the tax burden and for long-range planning.

The Board will be asked tonight to approve an expenditure budget that reflects an increase of .87% and a tax levy reduction of .39%. The District is waiting for guidelines on how stimulus money may be spent. Thank you to Assistant Superintendent Mr. Joe Barretta whose sound financial planning always considers long range projections, and who plays a crucial role in educational planning as well.

#### STANDING RESOLUTIONS (CONSENT AGENDA)

A motion was made by Dr. Perry, seconded by Ms. Leising, and carried (7, 0) to combine items 7A through I.

A motion was made by Ms. Shaw, seconded by Mr. Magdon, and carried (7, 0) to approve items 7A through I.

- A. Agenda and Any Additions to the Agenda for April 20, 2021
- B. Minutes from the Special Meeting held on April 13, 2021
- C. Summary Treasurer's Report for February 2021
- D. Treasurer's Report for February 2021
- E. Executive Summary for February 2021
- F. Revenue/expenditures by Month
- G. Extra-classroom Treasurer's Report for February 2021

H. Committee on Preschool Special Education and Committee on Special Education (CSE) Report:

Initial Review	1
Program Review	1
Annual Review	6
Reevaluation (Triennial)	3
Administrative Transfer	1
Preschool	1
504 Review	8
504 Initial	0
Amendment w/o Meeting Held	0

I. Updated List of Substitute and Supervisory Personnel

7. COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS

A. Committee Reports

1. Facilities Committee

Ms. Shaw reported that the Facilities Committee discussed that \$900,000 left over from the 2018 Capital Project would be used to replace doors, lights, chain link fencing, reinforce a retaining wall, and to hard wire carbon monoxide detectors. The next project would occur in 2024-2025. Dr. Rick Timbs, financial advisor, drafted a timeline that avoids tax impact.

2. Finance Committee

Ms. Lauchert reported that the committee discussed the updating of the five year plan and facility upkeep scheduling designed to keep debt even. Ms. Lauchert called attention to the vast improvements made in the financial state of the District over the last several years, thanks to Mr. Barretta, and Dr. Grimm, with the assistance of Dr. Rick Timbs. Thank you to former Board member Jim Korfonta for his role in setting the District on this path.

B. Liaison Reports

1. PTA

Ms. Leising reported that the PTA met at the end of March where members were updated on the budget process and re-opening plan. Members are re-thinking annual end of year activities and staff appreciation events and new leadership will be voted in at the June meeting. Thank you to the PTA for their role hosting well-produced Town Hall meetings.

6. NEW BUSINESS

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

- A. BE IT RESOLVED that the expenditure budget for the 2021-2022 school year in the amount of \$29,147,253 to be voted upon as per the Governor’s directive, be adopted.

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

- B. WHERE AS, Education law section 1608(7) requires that each year the Board of Education prepare and approve a property tax report card;

BE IT RESOLVED; that the Board of Education adopts the following property tax report card.

A motion was made by Ms. Leising, seconded by Dr. Perry, and carried (7, 0) to approve the following resolution:

- C. BE IT RESOLVED that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the District Reserve Plan for the 2021-2022 school year be approved.

A motion was made by Dr. Perry, seconded by Ms. Burdick, and carried (7, 0) to approve the following resolution:

- D. BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts a donation from Suzanne Keene and authorizes the increase in the appropriation of the 2020-2021 budget by \$250.

\$250 A.2705 Gifts and Donations

Budgetary Distribution

\$100 A.1620.450.00COVID (COVID-19 Expenses)

A motion was made by Ms. Leising, seconded by Ms. Shaw, and carried (7, 0) to approve the following resolution.

- E. BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education appoints Melinda B. Bowe, Esq. as special counsel for the Clinton Central School District as needed for the 2020-2021 school year.

8. OTHER

A motion was made by Dr. Perry, seconded by Mr. Magdon, and carried (7, 0) to approve the following resolution:

**A. ADOPT AMENDMENT TO DISTRICT SAFETY PLAN**

RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approves the amendment to the District Safety Plan, which amendment incorporates the district’s plan for continuation of operations in the event the governor declares a public health emergency involving communicable disease required under subdivision 2 of section 2801-a of New York Education Law and includes protocols to respond to a declared public health emergency involving a communicable disease that are substantially consistent with the provisions of section 27-c of the Labor Law.

A motion was made by Ms. Burdick, seconded by Mr. Magdon, and carried (7, 0) to approve the following resolution:

- B. BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the emergency closing “give back” day(s) listed below, be approved:

If, by May 27, 2021 we have not been forced to use the two remaining emergency days, then school will be closed on Friday, May 28, 2021 and June 18, 2021. Should an additional emergency day be used before May 27, 2021, then May 28, 2021 will be a day of instruction.

9. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

No one wished to speak.

10. PERSONNEL

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

- A. BE IT RESOLVED that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following musical accompanist for the 2020-2021 school year to be compensated in a total amount not to exceed \$2000, be approved.

Jason Davis, John Krause, Stephen Grimm

A motion was made by Ms. Burdick, seconded by Dr. Perry and carried (7, 0) to approve the following resolution:

- B. BE IT RESOLVED that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the appointment of Christopher Evans to the 1.0 FTE position of bus driver, to be compensated at Step 1, in accordance with the current CSEA agreement, with a probationary period of 8 to 26 weeks, effective April 21, 2021, be approved.

11. QUESTIONS BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Nothing discussed.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Ms. Shaw, seconded by Ms. Leising, and carried (7, 0) to go into executive session to discuss discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation; collective negotiations pursuant to Article 14 of the Civil Service Law(the Taylor Law); and the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation. The time was 7:18pm.

A motion was made by Ms. Leising, seconded by Ms. Shaw, and carried (7, 0) to return to regular session.

A motion was made by Ms. Burdick, seconded by Dr. Perry, and carried (7, 0) to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia A. Scranton  
District Clerk

Approved