

# EASTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Eastford Elementary School  
12 Westford Road  
Eastford, CT 06242  
September 14, 2023

Present: Lauren Barlow, Stephen Bowen, Terry Cote (virtual), Robert Ellsworth (virtual), Adam Minor, Jessica Perry (virtual)  
Absent: Michael Bilica  
Also Present: Dr. Donna Leake, Superintendent; Carole McCombe, Principal; Charles Kernan, Director of Pupil Services

## **I. Call to Order**

Chair Bowen called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

## **II. Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Bowen led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **III. Citizen Participation**

Grade 7 student Ella Barlow and Grade 5 student Georgia Barlow presented a compelling argument for having recess for the middle school grades, as well as outside lunches when the weather permits.

ELA teacher James Salsich, as a representative of the Eastford Teacher's Association, read a letter to the Board regarding protocols when the outside temperature is excessive.

## **IV. Approval of Minutes**

MOTION: (Ellsworth/Perry) That the Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes of August 17, 2023 be approved. Motion passed unanimously.

## **V. Correspondence, Communications**

- Town Roof Committee Minutes from August 17, 2023
- Letter from Emily Heyse, Selectmen's Secretary, requesting the Board of Education's Annual Report for 2022-2023
- Letter from the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) recognizing Charles Kernan's acceptance into the Special Education Executive Coaching program
- Letter from Principal Carole McCombe on behalf of the School Safety and security Committee to those who contributed to purchasing and installing safety bollards
- Letter from Christopher Sandford, The Woodstock Academy Head of School, regarding sending town representatives
- Textbook Request Form from James Salsich, ELA teacher

## **VI. Committee Reports**

- A. Executive/Personnel— None.
- B. Fiscal— None.
- C. Policy— None.
- D. Woodstock Academy – Mr. Ellsworth reported that The Academy is trying to come to a decision as to whether to save the Dining Hall building on South Campus or not.
- E. EastConn— None.

- F. Long Range Facilities— The Grade 4 classroom ceiling was replaced.
- G. Transportation – None.
- H. Curriculum– None.
- I. Scholarship Steering Committee – None.
- J. School Safety Committee – The Board received the minutes of the August 17, 2023 meeting.

## **VII. Superintendent Report**

Provided the BOE with updates including:

- Highlight of the Month – Staff that is second to none
- Educational Leadership – Staff professional development, start of the new school year, before and after school programming, SBAC results and strategic plan
- Facilities – PV project nearing completion, Grade 4 ceiling replaced, EMCOR summer projects completed, security projects completed
- Collaboration and Communication – Continued collaboration with First Selectperson Deb Richards
- Finance – HVAC reimbursement grant monies forthcoming, Title I, II and IV grants, awaiting response on security grant application
- Comments on selected agenda items

## **VIII. Principal Report**

Received the Principal's report which discussed and/or provided the following information:

- Field Trips/ Virtual Field Trips
- Readiness Program/ Council Update
- 2023-2024 School Year Updates
- Data on Student Progress
- Professional Development
- Community and Other Events

## **IX. Director of Pupil Services Report**

The Board received the September report, which shows changes from the June report.

## **X. Unfinished Business**

None.

## **XI. New Business**

A. Approval of Title I, Title II, and Title IV Grant submissions

MOTION: (Barlow/Minor) To approve submission of the Title I, Title II, and Title IV grants. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Overnight trip to Mystic Seaport

MOTION: (Barlow/Minor) To approve the Overnight field trip to Mystic Seaport for grade 7 on September 28, in accordance with the BOE field trip policy. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Discuss unplanned school closings

Mr. Bowen asked the Board for their feelings as to what should be done when the building temperatures are excessive, as the State has no temperature guidelines for heat. His wish is to give the Administration guidelines to follow for when the school should be closed, not to write a policy.

It was mentioned that humidity plays a factor in these decisions, not just high outdoor temperatures. The Board agreed that there is no 'blanket answer'. A work/rest cycle suggestion was noted, as were room changes as space permitted.

Mr. Bowen asked the Board to review this issue and make notes with any thoughts/suggestions they have. He is placing this item on the October BOE agenda for further discussion and possible action.

Ms. Cote left the meeting at 6:51 PM.

**XII. Additional Agenda Items**

Mr. Bowen made mention of the students' request for recess in the middle school grades which was presented during Citizen Participation.

The current recess schedule goes through Grade 5. Mrs. McCombe noted that the State requires a specific number of teaching hours per school year, and currently the middle school classes are only a few minutes over that number. A suggestion was made to possibly combine any break time into a recess, applying an activity so it is not just a time for the students to hang out.

The Board does not make decisions on recess, but they are supportive of whatever decision Administration makes, so long as it is considered productive.

**XIII. Financial Reports**

- A. August 2023 Disbursements—sent to BOE via email
- B. Monthly Financial Summary, August 2023  
The Board received and reviewed the monthly report.
- C. Budget Transfers  
None.

**XIV. Citizen Participation**

Media Specialist Michelle Bibeault wanted the Board to know that the letter which the ETA presented during the first Citizen's Participation was not teachers complaining, it was that the most recent situation was due to a heat wave along with severe humidity which caused uncomfortable teaching/learning conditions.

**XV. Adjournment**

MOTION: (Minor/Barlow) Motion to adjourn the Board of Education meeting at 7:08 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kymberli A. Gaylor, Clerk