

LEBANON BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Education
Regular Business MINUTES
December 6, 2023 6:45 pm
Lebanon Borough School Library

CALL TO ORDER: D. Elwell *Called the meeting to order at 6:45 pm*

PUBLICATION

OF NOTICE:

In accordance with the provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, Laws of 1975, adequate notice of this meeting was provided through a public notice on November 29, 2023:

- a. **Faxing to 2 Newspapers** designated by the Board – The Hunterdon County Democrat and the Express Times*
- b. **Posting to the District Website**, posting on the main bulletin board in the main office,*
- c. **Faxing to the Clerk of Lebanon Borough.***

ROLL CALL: *Board Members:*

Dan Elwell, President

Jacklyn Carruthers, Vice President

David Abeles

Danielle Nugent

Benedict Valliere

District Administrators:

Dr. Bruce Arcurio, Chief School Administrator

Mrs. Patricia Duell, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

PLEDGE OF

ALLEGIANCE:

D. Elwell led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Procedural Motion by B. Valliere, Seconded by D. Nugent.

Board Member request to remove Policy Review and Action Item 24-FFP-47 for first reading of the abolishment of Policy 5756 fails on a roll call vote as follows: 2 Aye, 3 No, 0 Abstain.

President's Comments:

Mr. Elwell read an excerpt of the long standing Lebanon Borough Mission Statement as well as the Chief School Administrator slogan "Better Together" as the guided principals for our school. He welcomes discussion among the Board and Public Comment on policy issues as they arise so that the needs of the students and community at large can be fulfilled.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

QSAC Presentation

Action Item 24-CSA-05:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education hereby accepts the School Safety and HIB report for the month of November, 2023.

Motion by: D. Abeles Second by: J. Carruthers. The resolution is adopted by the Board on a roll call vote as follows: 5 ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain.

CSA Discussion:

Discussion on the QSAC review process.

Discussion on PTA events and approvals for facility use.

Discussion on the delayed Memorandum of Agreement with Law Enforcement

Discussion on safety drills.

Policy Review:

Policy # 5756 Transgender Students – First Reading for Abolishment

This history of the original adoption of this policy was discussed and presented to the board for further discussion.

Policy Discussion:

Board members discussed the language and need for this policy in our elementary school. There was not a consensus on abolishing the policy, or on the procedure for which this review came about. Board comments included:

- Financial/Legal implications if a controversial policy is challenged;
- Grey areas in the policy, specifically related to legal documents such as a student's IEP
- The purpose and use of this policy
- Implications due to a lack of policy on this issue.
- The age range of students in this building and likelihood of needing the policy at all.
- Parental roles/responsibilities inside and outside of the classroom.
- Consistency in the online policy manual so the public can be aware of which policies are mandated.

Report of the School Business Administrator:

Informational: The next meeting is Tuesday January 9, 2024 at 6:45 pm, this will be our Reorganization meeting and regular business meeting.

Certified Election Results: Benedict Valliere was elected for a 3 year term

Sending District Representative: We received notice from the county office that we are entitled to a representative on the Clinton-Glen Gardner Board. We will need to appoint someone at the reorganization meeting to fill this role.

Association Conference: There is a travel request on the agenda for me to go to the annual ASBO leadership conference in February. I am the county president for Hunterdon and as such, the association pays for the conference. There is no cost to the board other than me being out of the office for 3 days.

Audit Report and acceptance: The auditors have delivered our annual audit report which is in the shared drive. They will come to the January meeting to present their findings, there are not any recommendations. We need to formally accept the audit, as the due date to the state is December 5th. I have 45 days to send in the resolution accepting the report.

ACTION ITEMS 24-BA-21 THROUGH 24-BA-24:**Action 24-BA-21:**

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education hereby approves the following Board Meeting Minutes for:

Minutes: Regular Session
November 2, 2023

Minutes Executive Session:
November 2, 2023

Action 24-BA-22:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education hereby approves the Board Secretary Reports for the period ending:

October 31, 2023

Action 24-BA-23:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education hereby approves the Treasurer's Reports for the period ending:

October 31, 2023

Action 24-BA-24:

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education does hereby certify that as of the date of these reports, no line item account has encumbrances and/or expenditures which in total exceed the line item appropriation in violation of NJAC 6A:23A-16.10 (c) 3 & 4:

AND BE IT RESOLVED, that the Chief School Administrator recommends that the Lebanon Borough Board of Education **accept the monthly financial reports of the Secretary and Treasurer of School Monies for the following periods:**

October 31, 2023

AND FURTHER RECOMMENDS, that the Board of Education certify that no major account has been over-expended in violation of NJAC 6A:23A-16.10 and that as of this report date, sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the school year.

Motion for Action Items 24-BA-21

Motion by: D. Abeles Second by: J. Carruthers. The resolution is adopted by the Board on a roll call vote as follows: 4 ayes, 0 No, 1 Abstain.

Motion for Action Items 24-BA-22 through 24-BA-24:

Motion by: D. Abeles Second by: J. Carruthers. The resolution is adopted by the Board on a roll call vote as follows: 5 ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain.

BA Discussion:

Discussion on the annual school audit and findings.

OLD BUSINESS:

Discussion on policy, first and second readings, length of time in between readings. Questions on progression of policy at the final board meeting of the year.

FACILITY/FINANCE/POLICY:

Action Items 24-FFP-41 through 24-FFP-48:

Action item 24-FFP-41:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education hereby approves the payment of bills for the period ending December 6, 2023 in the amount of \$269,683.36.

Action item 24-FFP-42:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education hereby approves the submission of the School Safety and Security Plan Statement of Assurance for the 2023-2024 school year.

Action item 24-FFP-43:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education hereby **approves the following travel requests for the 2023/2024 school year:**

Employee	Meeting Description	Dates	Reimbursement
T. Duell	National Association of Business Administrators Leadership Conference	2/7/2024-2/9/2024 San Diego CA	N/A

Action item 24-FFP-44:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education hereby **approves the following bus evacuation drill reports for the 2023/2024 school year:**

Clinton Public School 10/14/2023

Winston Prep 11/2/2023

Action item 24-FFP-45:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education hereby **accepts the June 30, 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR)** as prepared by Bedard, Kurwicky & Co. CPAs. With the following findings:

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Administrative Practices & Procedures | No recommendation |
| 2. Financial Planning, Accounting & Reporting | No Recommendation |
| 3. School Purchasing Programs | No recommendation |
| 4. Application for State School Aid | No recommendation |
| 5. Pupil Transportation | No recommendation |
| 6. Facilities and capital assets | No recommendation |
| 7. Student Body Activities | No recommendation |
| 8. Milk Program | No Recommendation |
| 9. Miscellaneous | No recommendation |
| 10. Follow-up on prior year findings | No recommendation |

Action item 24-FFP-46:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education hereby approves the submission of the District Performance Review for QSAC monitoring on or before December 15, 2023 to the Executive County Superintendent.

Action item 24-FFP-48:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education hereby approves the Lebanon Borough School PTA for monthly PTA Meetings and events with CSA approval for the 2023/2024 school year.

Motion for Action Items 24-FFP-41 through 24-FFP-46:

Motion by: B. Valliere Second by: D. Abeles. The resolution is adopted by the Board on a roll call vote as follows: 5 ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain.

Motion for Action Items 24-FFP-48:

Motion by: B. Valliere Second by: D. Abeles. The resolution is adopted by the Board on a roll call vote as follows: 5 ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain.

PERSONNEL/NEGOTIATIONS/CURRICULUM/COMMUNICATIONS:**Action Items 24-PNCC-07 Through 24-PNCC-09:****Action Item 24-PNCC-07:**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education hereby approves SMID # 52816543 to advise an extended year Knitting club for the 2023/2024 school year.

Action Item 24-PNCC-08:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education hereby approves Armando Gonzalez as Substitute Teacher at the rate of \$150.00 per diem for the 2023/2024 school year.

Action Item 24-PNCC-09:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education hereby approves SMID # 88504618 to advise a seasonal basketball club beginning January 9, 2024.

Motion for Action Items 24-PNCC-07 through 24-PNCC-09:

Motion by: B. Valliere Second by: D. Nugent. The resolution is adopted by the Board on a roll call vote as follows: 5 ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstain.

RECOGNITION OF PUBLIC:

Please note that as a practice the Board limits public comments to three minutes.

District's Policy 0167 - Public Participation in Board Meetings. *The Board of Education recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express themselves on school matters of community interest. In order to permit the fair and orderly expression of such comment, the Board shall provide for a period of public comments at every regularly scheduled meeting of the Board. Public participation shall be governed by the following rules:*

- 1. A participant must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface comments by an announcement of his or her name, place of residence, and group affiliation, if appropriate.*
- 2. Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to a reasonable time as determined by the presiding officer.*
- 3. No participant may speak more than once on the same topic until all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard.*
- 4. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually.*
- 5. The presiding officer may*
 - (a) Interrupt, warn, or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant to the district;*
 - (b) Request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum;*
 - (c) Request the assistance of law enforcement officers in the removal of a disorderly person when that person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting;*
 - (d) Call for a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action; and waive these rules when necessary for the protection of privacy or the efficient administration of the Board's business.*

Public Comment:

Joyce Petty, 6th grade teacher at Lebanon Borough School, on behalf of the Lebanon Borough Education Association, made a statement requesting the Board to retain Policy 5756. Mrs. Petty commented on addressing the needs of all students as well as the importance of guidance provided through Board Policy.

Martha Hickson, Staff member at North Hunterdon High School provided the Board with personal accounts when teaching transgender students during her career. Ms. Hickson stressed the negative implications of removing a standing policy and the message it sends to the community.

Amy Barrett, a resident of High Bridge and retired teacher expressed concern for the possibility of putting vulnerable students at risk if this policy is abolished. Ms. Barrett cautioned that Board about financial implications as well as emotional ones.

Wendy Halstrom, Clinton Township resident and a Lebanon Borough church attendee informed the board that she has a transgendered child. Ms. Halstrom commented that she did not hear the Board discuss the actual children or families that may be affected by this Policy. Ms. Halstrom offered to provide first hand guidance to the Board and provide them with accurate resources from which they can make educated decisions.

Alexa Offenhower, resident in the Town of Clinton, and currently a staff member at RVCC commented to the board that she didn't hear any discussion about someone specifically requesting a change to this Policy. Ms. Offenhower questions if this is a problem that needs fixing.

Zan Strubing, resident of Clinton Township and Psychologist that works with the LBGTQ community. Ms. Strubing commented that this is an issue which is gaining widespread attention and by abolishing the policy, it is sending a negative message to that community, which can lead to undesirable consequences.

Sandra Marzo, resident of Franklin Township provided the Board with a personal account of her own family in which she felt she was raised in an "unsafe" environment in her own home. Ms. Marzo cautioned that not every home is a safe one and policy is necessary to protect children.

Marshall Landsberger, Lebanon Borough resident and former student addressed the Board with good memories of the time spent in this school. Mr. Landsberger asked the Board to consider the person behind the label and requested that they reconsider the idea of abolishing this policy.

Patricia Dirocco, Branchburg resident with daughter attending LBS expressed concern over abolishing this policy. Ms. Dirocco expressed the importance of caring for and protecting all children inclusively.

Stef Yager, Board member in another Hunterdon County district gave a personal account of transgendered friends. Ms. Yager stressed that vulnerable students are paying attention to what is happening in the whole county and social media plays a role in keeping them informed of decisions that could easily snowball throughout the county schools. Ms. Yager stressed that the

issues are often over for those making decisions, but for the students affected by those decisions, the issue and consequences don't end.

Mark Bosovick, Lebanon Borough resident commented with appreciation on discussing the policy. Mr. Bosovick feels there is a need to protect parental rights and presented his own opinion on gender identity.

NEW BUSINESS:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

Action Item 24-AD-05:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education adjourns this meeting.

Motion by: B. Valliere; Second by D. Abeles. The resolution is adopted by the full membership of the Board at 8:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Duell
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Minutes prepared 12/7/2023
Minutes remain unofficial until formally approved by the Board.

Daniel Elwell
Board President

Date

