

Chariho School Committee Virtual Meeting
Regular Session Minutes – May 11, 2021

Committee Members Virtual Attendance: Vice Chair Catherine Giusti, Ryan Callahan, Donna Chambers, William Day, Gary Liguori (joined at 6:35 PM), Craig Louzon, Lisa Macaruso, Linda McAllister and David Stall. Absent: George Abbott, Sheila Grover and Chair Linda Lyall.

Administrators and Others Virtual Attendance: Superintendent Gina Picard, Assistant Superintendent Jane Daly, Director of Administration and Finance Ned Draper, High School Assistant Principal Andrea Spas, NEA Certified Staff President Vin Levcowich, NEA ESP President Thomas Pirnie, NEA ESP Vice President Chris Caldarone, Attorney for the School Committee Jon Anderson and School Committee Clerk Donna Sieczkiewicz.

I. Meeting Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Silent Meditation

Vice Chair Catherine Giusti called the virtual meeting of the Chariho School Committee to order at 6:31 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was followed by a moment of silent meditation.

II. Motion/Vote to go into Executive Session

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Donna Chambers and it was VOTED: That the School Committee go into executive session and close the meeting to the public under the authority of R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5 (a)(1) for the purpose of discussions and/or action pertaining to the job performance, character, or physical or mental health of a person or persons (Approval of Executive Session minutes of April 13, 2021 - Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Evaluations/Goals); under the authority of R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(2) for the purpose of discussion and/or action pertaining to collective bargaining (1. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of April 13, 2021 – NEA ESP Negotiation Update and 2) NEA ESP Contract Ratification); and under the authority of R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(8) for the purpose of reviewing and/or approving matters which relate to the privacy of students and their records (1. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of April 13, 2021 - Approval of Home Instruction Requests and 2) Approval of Home Instruction Request(s)); any persons to be discussed have been so notified. In favor: Unanimous (Liguori was not in attendance for the vote).

The Committee returned to open session at 6:41 PM and Vice Chair Giusti reconvened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

III. Closing/Sealing of Executive Session Minutes

1. Superintendent Picard recommended that minutes pertaining to collective bargaining (NEA ESP Contract Ratification) remain sealed until such time as an agreement has been made.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was VOTED: That minutes pertaining to collective bargaining (NEA ESP Contract Ratification) remain sealed until such time as an agreement has been made. In favor: Unanimous.

2. Superintendent Picard recommended that minutes pertaining to the privacy of students and their records (Approval of Home Instruction Requests) remain sealed.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was VOTED: That minutes pertaining to the privacy of students and their records (Approval of Home Instruction Requests) remain sealed. In favor: Unanimous.

IV. Disclosure of Executive Session Votes

Ryan Callahan reported there were five votes taken in executive session. The first vote, approval of executive session minutes of April 13, 2021 related to the Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent

Evaluation/Goals, was unanimous with Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Macaruso, McAllister and Stall voting in favor.

The second vote, approval of executive session minutes of April 13, 2021, NEA ESP Negotiation Update, was unanimous with Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Macaruso, McAllister and Stall voting in favor.

The third vote, approval of executive session minutes of April 13, 2021, pertaining to approval of Home Instruction Requests, was unanimous with Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Macaruso, McAllister and Stall voting in favor.

The fourth vote, approval of Home Instruction Requests, was unanimous with Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Macaruso, McAllister and Stall voting in favor.

The fifth vote, to close executive session and return to open session, was unanimous with Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Macaruso, McAllister and Stall voting in favor.

V. Recognition - The following were congratulated:

1. High School Senior Jasmine Babbitt for being named the MaxPreps American Volleyball Coaches Association Player of the Week for Rhode Island (April 13, 2021).
2. 2021 SkillsUSA State Competition Winners: Gold Medal Winners - Madison Chalifoux (Health Knowledge Bowl), Jilian Geer (Health Knowledge Bowl), Lynsie O'Leary (Health Knowledge Bowl), Madeline St. Peter (Health Knowledge Bowl), Mitchell Daniell (Industrial Motor Controls), Emma Dion (Nurse Assistant), Lyddia Drake (Job Interview), Colby Elwell (Marine Technology), Grace Gagner (Job Skills "A"), Mason Paine (Automotive), Lincoln Chagnon (Welding), Alexis Paul (Job Skills Demo Open). Silver Medal Winners: Adriana Abby (Architectural Drafting), Kiley Cook (Job Skills "A"), Paul Erdos (Welding Sculpture), Stephanie Hewins (Job Interview), Christa Holland (Esthetics), Finn Weeden (Marine Technology). Bronze Medal Winners: Madison Kahler (Cosmetology), Nicolas Keegan (Marine Technology), Trey Lazauskas (Welding), Zachary Martinez (Welding Sculpture), Joshua Pater (Automotive), Connor Saila (Technical Drafting). Gold Medal Winners are eligible to compete in the National Competition in June. (FYI – Some programs did not compete this year).
3. Special thanks to Craig MacKenzie for his nine years of service to Chariho. Best wishes to him in his new position at Cashmere High School and to Andrea Spas who will provide our district with the dynamic leadership she has exhibited in her 16 years at Chariho. Andrea thanked all and noted how grateful she was for the support.

VI. Public Forum

Vice Chair Giusti explained the format to follow for anyone interested in speaking; raise your hand and she will admit you. She requested that those choosing to speak please state your name and town and limit your comments to two minutes. Seeing no hands, Vice Chair Giusti moved to Policy.

VII. Policy

A. Academic Requirements for Graduation (Revision) – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the revisions to this policy. Andrea is here to answer any questions. The policy aligns with State regulations. Lisa noted that she saw a hand raised for Public Forum to which Vice Chair Giusti responded that she did not notice any hands raised. She will see if there is an opportunity at the end if this individual wishes to speak as they have moved to Policy. Craig made a motion, which was seconded by Ryan, to approve the revisions to this policy. Ryan stated that he looked over the Diploma Endorsement/Seals section. Are they all independent or do you need all three? Andrea replied that all three are eligible to any student so long as the student meets the criteria of all. Ryan suggested that the wording be changed from "and" to "and/or" to which Andrea noted she will look into this.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was VOTED: To approve the revisions to the Academic Requirements for Graduation Policy. In favor: Unanimous.

VIII. Business

A. Revised 2020-2021 School Committee Meeting Schedule – Superintendent Picard requested the elimination of the School Committee meeting on June 8, 2021 as this date conflicts with the rain date set for Senior Awards Night. We are working to try to accommodate all activities (now allowed by the State) in a short amount of time. She did not want School Committee members and the community to have to choose between a meeting and attendance at an event. There is another School Committee meeting scheduled for June 22, 2021 and as bills are paid prior to their due date and personnel issues are handled on a weekly basis, she does not feel this would create a problem meeting just once in June. She recommended approval of the revised 2020-2021 School Committee Meeting Schedule; removal of the June 8, 2021 meeting.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was VOTED: To approve the revised 2020-2021 School Committee Meeting Schedule (removal of the June 8, 2021 meeting). In favor: Unanimous.

B. NEA ESP Contract Ratification – Superintendent Picard recommended ratification of the 2020-2021 NEA ESP Contract.

Ryan Callahan made a motion, seconded by Craig Louzon and it was VOTED: To ratify the 2020-2021 NEA ESP Contract. In favor: Unanimous.

C. Review of Yoga and Mindfulness and Their Connection to the 2021 PE Curriculum – Superintendent Picard noted that this item is on the agenda at the request of Donna Chambers. She stated that she did add a letter from Assistant Superintendent Daly along with definitions. Donna noted her purpose in revisiting this is because she feels it is important for our children's social/emotional learning. We all received an Effective Schools Solutions newsletter from the Society of Mindfulness. In it, Thích Nhất Hạnh, a very well-known Buddhist Monk, defined mindfulness as being aware of what is happening inside and around you in the present moment. Paying attention – on purpose – non-judgmental. She wants all of our children to be very aware of what is happening around them. This is a secular point of view; non-religious and very adaptable. We do not have to approach it from a religious point of view. She would like this addressed and put back in the curriculum. Ryan stated that when the Committee voted on this, we did not remove yoga or mindfulness, they removed a superfluous word; they did not remove the practice. We can't make a motion to put something back in that we did not remove. Jane agreed. The word "yoga" was removed based on the topic. Physical moves and practice are still part of the curriculum but teachers will not use the terminology. Ryan added that it was his understanding that the Committee only removed the descriptive word; no way did it change anyone from using it or teaching it. Craig agreed with Ryan 100%. They only eliminated a word; not the act. Donna stated that she feels the confusion for teachers is whether or not we use the word. Are we prohibiting our teachers from using the words "yoga" or "mindfulness"? These are very current terms and she does not want teachers feeling uncomfortable or that they are over-stepping boundaries. Lisa thanked Donna as this is timely and needs to be done. If a motion is made to include these words, she supports it. The more we have shared language and definitions, the more productive we can be. She agrees with adding a Glossary page of descriptions. She has received many emails from teachers on this subject and she cannot see a reason not to add a Glossary. She apologized for her action at the last meeting. She abstained from this but should have fought it and she is sorry for that. She supports adding a Glossary of Terms to clarify the curriculum. David asked if they are just talking PE Curriculum or elsewhere as he feels they are mixing the two. Putting the term "fitness yoga" is what he wanted to accomplish but he does have an issue with mindfulness in practice. These terms in the PE Curriculum are not a significant issue but he does not feel they need the terms. It is too muddy for him (mindfulness in

the curriculum). He will continue to oppose this. He would rather not have the terminology of yoga as they have to be really careful. He would like to know why mindfulness was included. Vice Chair Giusti reminded all to stay focused on the agenda item (relationship of the terms to the PE curriculum). Linda McAllister noted that she voted to take the word out but keep the strategy in. A Glossary is a great way to communicate. Donna made a motion to take Jane Daly's definitions and apply them to the PE Curriculum (both mindfulness and yoga). Lisa seconded the motion. Bill Day noted a point of order. If Donna did not vote in the affirmative, she cannot bring this back up as it is a violation of Robert's Rules of Order. Vice Chair Giusti, who was trying to note a point of clarification, offered her apology for interrupting Bill as she did not mean to offend him. She disagreed with Bill's interpretation of Robert's Rules of Order to which Ryan agreed. Ryan stated that he does not think that Donna is prohibited from bringing this forward at a different meeting if it is not the same agenda item. Craig noted his agreement as well. Ryan noted that if Donna wishes to withdraw her motion, he would be happy to make a new motion. Donna withdrew her motion and Lisa withdrew her second. Lisa then made a motion, which was seconded by Gary Liguori, to adopt the Glossary of Terms as presented by Ms. Daly in today's packet. David questioned if they were adopting a Glossary of Terms or adding the word "yoga" to the PE Curriculum to which Lisa clarified that her motion is to add the Glossary of Terms, which includes "fitness yoga". David noted a problem with this and mindfulness being added. He is Ok with the term "fitness yoga" but not with it being part of the PE curriculum. Brittany Swain, a fitness instructor from Richmond, teaches yoga to both adults and children with the majority being children. She provided clarification and light to some of the issues. She worked in a public school as a teacher assistant and saw the need to address mental health so she got certified; left her job in Coventry to do this full-time. She explained that mindfulness is paying attention on purpose. Meditation is a hyper-focused mindfulness practice with the focus being on breathing. These skills can be used with driving, listening and full body awareness – paying attention to what we and others are doing. It has nothing to do with religion; it simply gives kids the tools to focus with. Creative movement allows children to be focused and aware; a safe place for them to talk about important topics. She does not want our children to be afraid to live out loud. They need to love themselves fully. These are tools to cope with emotions and deal with challenges. She wanted to clarify what it feels like to teach kids yoga. It gives kids a sense of security. She hopes this provides a better definition and that people change their minds and open up. Kim Daigle, a PE teacher at Richmond School, spoke at the last meeting about the removal of yoga from the curriculum. She thanked the Committee for revisiting this. Mindfulness in the curriculum is an underlying component; it is how children listen; a processing piece that teaches them to be respectful of another's abilities. This comes into play in the PE curriculum more so in respect and how they perform a skill. It truly does affect every aspect of what they do. Yoga hits almost every component – strength, flexibility, and balance. Not everyone is athletic; this is an opportunity for everyone to be successful. Polly Hopkins from Hopkinton wanted to balance everything out a little bit. She backs David Stall. We should be respectful of parents in these kinds of things. The religious community would have a hard time getting over guided imagery. Her concern is this does not foster team work and she feels kids need a little more team work. Ryan reminded all that they never removed yoga from the curriculum; they just removed the word. We are not adding anything else in, just a Glossary of Terms. He will vote in favor of the motion. Vice Chair Giusti, not seeing any other hands, stated she will move the question.

Lisa Macaruso made a motion, seconded by Gary Liguori and it was

VOTED: To adopt the Glossary of Terms as presented by Ms. Daly in today's packet. In favor: Callahan, Chambers, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Macaruso and McAllister. Opposed: Stall. Abstained: Day. The motion carried by a vote of 7 in favor with 1 opposed and 1 abstention.

IX. Consent Agenda Items

Vice Chair Giusti asked if there were any items to be pulled; Craig pulled A-1 and A-2. Craig then recognized the donation and thanked the donor.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was
VOTED: To move the remainder of the Consent Agenda Items. In favor: Unanimous.

- B. Transfers – Approved.
- C. Bill Review – Accepted.
- D. Budget Summary – As per enclosed.
- E. Balance Sheet – As per enclosed.
- F. Personnel Actions – Staff Updates provided in FYI.
- G. Permission to Issue Bids/Request Quotes – None at this time.
- H. Permission to Award Contracts – Approved extension of the following:
 - 1. Clinical Services (Initiative #1) and Consulting Services (Initiative #3) Bid to CSSS (Community and School Support Services) to provide services to the Chariho Regional School District including the Chariho Alternative Learning Academy for the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 as outlined in the attached proposal.
 - 2. Clinical and Consultative Services to Developmentally Disabled (DD) and Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Programs (Initiative #2) to Patricia Meinhold, Ph.D. to provide services to the Chariho Regional School District for the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 as outlined in the attached proposal.Award of the following:
 - 3. KeyNet Financial System Upgrade – Approved funding the KeyNet Financials investment upgrade now with COVID designated funds up to \$20,830 for implementation this summer per the memo from Ned Draper (enclosed).
- I. Home Instruction – None at this time.
- J. Grants – None at this time.
- K. Donations – Accepted the following:
 - 1. Donation of \$1,000 from Gail Anderson (San Diego, CA) for the establishment of the Horatio S. and Gloria L. Stanton Memorial Scholarship to a deserving Chariho student.

A-1. Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was
VOTED: To approve the Executive Session Minutes of April 13, 2021 – Approval of Executive Session Minutes of March 23, 2021 and ESP MOA – Minutes not sealed. In favor: Unanimous.

A-2. Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was
VOTED: To approve the Regular session minutes of April 13, 2021. In favor: Unanimous.

X. Reports

A. Subcommittee Reports

- 1. Health and Wellness Subcommittee will hold a virtual meeting on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 4:00 PM. The Agenda and virtual meeting link will be on the District's website.
- 2. Special Education Advisory Committee will hold a virtual meeting on Thursday, May 13, 2021 at 6:00 PM. The Agenda and virtual meeting link are on the District's website.
- 3. Anti-Racism Task Force met on May 5, 2021. Included in the packet and on the website is a copy of their approved minutes of April 7, 2021.

B. Superintendent's Report

- 1. Spring Events – Gina noted her appreciation to parents and staff for their understanding as we bring back in-person events. We will be using some of the equipment to bring back in-person School Committee meetings as the Governor's Executive Order for virtual meetings ends in May. We will do a trial run with the equipment before meeting. If anyone has any concerns about spring events, please reach out to the schools' principals. At the next meeting, she will be bringing forth the Face Mask Policy to make sure we have the ability and flexibility to not put people at risk. All events have to be approved prior to them being held and there will still be limits on attendance. We have to follow protocol. We are where we thought we would be with Kindergarten registrations and we have most of our students back in-person. Students remaining on DL per school are: Ashaway – 17, Charlestown – 12, Hope Valley – 11, Richmond – 19, Middle School – 125 and High School – 245.

C. Coming Events were highlighted.

XI. School Committee Requests for Future Agenda Items or Legal Opinions

David requested that we add to an agenda consistency in our discussions and prioritization of items. The consistency of timing and format he feels is needed as we had a person speak for seven minutes this evening. He would like agenda items brought forth in the order in which they are requested.

Bill asked, at the May 25th meeting, for discussion on the following: 1) Richmond School safety check. Window sills are rotted out and he was told these would be addressed when the cupola was addressed. This is not satisfactory to him or to any taxpayers. This hasn't been addressed from a year ago. There are numerous windows in this shape. He wants to know on the 25th what the District is doing to maintain them. We should fix problems when we see them, and 2) What are the plans and how quickly can we shift to in-person learning when the State mandates it? Will we be ready to implement this or reject it? Chair Giusti requested clarification. Are you talking about in-person School Committee meetings to which Bill replied "yes". We have been in-person with student learning all year. Maybe the Superintendent can report on this as we have been out front all along – we need to toot our own horn. Dave added that he asked for School Committee in-person meetings to be discussed two meetings ago and he hasn't seen it yet.

XII. Adjournment

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and Gary Liguori it was VOTED: To adjourn at 8:05 PM. In favor: Unanimous.

Donna J. Sieczkiewicz, Clerk