

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Media Center

Tuesday, January 22, 2019
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, January 22, 2019, at the Colchester High School Media Center. Those in attendance were Board Chair Mike Rogers; Directors: Craig Kieny, Curt Taylor, and Lindsey Cox; Student Representative Sophia Brigante; Superintendent Amy Minor; Business and Operations Manager George Trieb; Director of Special Education Carrie Lutz; Director of Curriculum and Instruction Gwen Carmolli; and Principal Michele Cote

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Board Chair Mike Rogers called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Citizen Participation

None.

III. Approval of FY'20 Budget and Warnings

Action

Superintendent Minor presented two scenarios that the board had requested at the previous meeting. The first scenario includes 2 FTEs for grade 7/8 teachers at CMS; .5 FTE towards an English language teacher; a Howard Center contracted social worker (which is paid for by Medicaid funds); and \$50K for the Food Service Program. That scenario has an overall budget of \$42,589,168 and would result in a 4.98% budget increase, an estimated tax increase of 1.63% and an increase in per pupil spending of 4.45%. The second scenario includes all of the above plus another .5 FTE English language teacher and 1 FTE instructional coach for grades 6-12. This scenario has an overall budget of \$42,706,627 and would result in a 5.27% budget increase, an estimated tax increase of 1.98% and an increase in per pupil spending of 4.81%. Director Kieny pointed out that the numbers for each scenario were lower than he anticipated. Superintendent Minor stated when preparing the final scenarios, they focused on current positions and scrutinized all line items in the budget to make sure everything was accurate.

Director Taylor asked if the administration predicted last year that they would need two 7/8 grade teachers for FY20. Superintendent Minor said yes and that they shared a bit of a preview when discussing the FY19 budget which included the addition of two 6th grade teachers due to class size. Next year, the current 6th grade class will be 7th graders. Because of licensing regulations, the 6th grade teachers cannot move up to teach 7th grade. Furthermore, the incoming class of 6th graders is just as large as the current. Without adding any FTEs, the middle school is only right-sized for approximately 150 students per grade when in actuality there are 170 students per grade. The two largest classes in the district are entering the middle school in the next two years. Superintendent Minor also reminded the board that years ago there used to be four additional teachers at the middle school but those positions were cut in a previous budget cycle when overall enrollment had declined. Now, the district is seeing increased enrollment and declining student performance data. Adding back two of the four of the positions is in response to that. Director Taylor asked if the

administration will be looking to add any more FTEs in future budget cycles. Superintendent Minor stated they have analyzed enrollment numbers from kindergarten to grade 6 and compared the district's core class sizes with the VT Education Quality Standards (EQS) and they do not anticipate needing to add any more core FTEs. She also noted that having the two additional 7/8 grade teachers will allow the district to have the capacity to accept tuition students in grade 7.

Board Chair Rogers referenced an email the board received that was critical of money spent on renovating spaces such as the CHS science lab. He noted with the increase in class size there will most likely be some more renovating in the future. CMS Principal Michele Cote agreed and stated all of the physical space in the building will be reviewed. Board Chair Rogers said it is the board's responsibility to make sure the resources and accommodations are adequate for Colchester's students.

Director Kieny made an initial motion to adopt the first budget scenario and Director Cox seconded. Prior to the board vote, Director Taylor questioned if that scenario provided enough. He noted that for a taxpayer with a 300K home they would only have to pay \$16 more a year to get the benefits of the second scenario. Director Kieny voiced concern that the outside factors of the education funding formula are benefiting the tax rate in Colchester for this year, but it may not be as kind in future years which is why he favored a more conservative budget.

Director Kieny moved to adopt a budget of \$42,589,168 for the support and operation of the Colchester School District for the year beginning July 1, 2019, seconded by Director Cox. The motion passed 3-1 with Board Chair Rogers voting against.

Director Cox moved to warn the year 2019 Annual Town School District Meeting by signing the warning for said meeting, seconded by Director Taylor. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Superintendent Minor laid out the communication plan to advise taxpayers of the proposed budget including in-person meetings, the mailed annual report, and several educational videos to be posted online. The board discussed their upcoming roundtable discussion at LCATV which will be broadcast live on Monday, February 4th at 6:30 p.m.

IV. Approval of Minutes: January 15, 2019


Action

Director Cox moved to approve the minutes of January 15, 2019, seconded by Director Kieny. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

V. Adjournment

Director Cox made a motion to adjourn at 7:41 p.m., seconded by Director Kieny. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Recorder:


Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Board Clerk:


Craig Kieny
Board Clerk