



Board of Education Regular Meeting

March 1, 2021 7:00 PM
via Zoom Teleconference

Attendance Taken at: 7:00 PM

Present Board Members:

Erica Gelven, Chairperson
Michael Hornyak, Secretary
Jason Adler
Peter Nye
Christopher Passante
Kimberly Russo
Catherine Staunton

1. Opening Exercises

1.A. Roll call

Discussion: Also in attendance were Superintendent Maryann O'Donnell, Assistant Superintendent Marco Famiglietti, Business Manager Carolyn Dickey, and student representatives Emma Lindsay, Jessica Flanagan, and Aiden Maurais.

1.B. Pledge of Allegiance

Discussion: All recited the pledge.

2. Public participation/recognition

Parent Michael Corgan requested the Board's support for in-person graduation. Parent Heather Moore expressed her appreciation for the way the Superintendent presented the Board of Education budget to the Clinton Town Council on February 23, 2021 and disappointment in some of the questions that were asked and in the recusal of Town Council members in commenting on the BOE budget.

3. Minutes – Approval – Special Meeting of February 3, 2021

Motion Passed: To approve the minutes of the special meeting of February 3, 2021, passed with a motion by Michael Hornyak and a second by Christopher Passante.

7 Yeas – 0 Nays

Erica Gelven	Yes
Michael Hornyak	Yes
Jason Adler	Yes
Peter Nye	Yes
Christopher Passante	Yes
Kimberly Russo	Yes
Catherine Staunton	Yes

4. Communications

Discussion: None

5. Report of Student Representatives

Discussion: The three student representatives shared events, successes, and plans for the future with the Board. The “Random Acts of Kindness” campaign at Morgan was a success. Caps and gowns for seniors are being ordered. The Social Justice Club will be attending the PTA’s Implicit Bias workshop at the Henry Carter Hull Library on March 11. Seniors are working with the principal to create prom experiences this spring and AP exams and Junior SAT prep is ongoing. Congratulations to Morgan’s Caitlyn Donadio for her 1,000th career point in girls basketball! Students are very happy to be back fully in-person.

At Eliot, 8th grade students have been able to explore courses, staff, opportunities, and the environment at Morgan before entering next year. Joel students found ways to celebrate the 100th day of school with a cereal drive. Kindergarten registration starts this month and Friends of Joel is sponsoring a read-a-thon.

The Board thanked the representatives for welcoming the next generation of Morgan students with confidence and commitment.

6. Administrative Reports

6.A. Administrators, Program Directors and Teachers

6.A.1. Freshman Experience

The Board heard a presentation by principal Keri Hagness and teacher Heather O’Brien on the Freshman Experience course at Morgan. Despite social distancing and other mitigation strategies, Morgan students and staff found a way to support incoming freshmen this year and assist with their transition to high school.

6.A.2. Junior Portfolio

The junior portfolio experience has been modified this year but it is still designed to have students provide a digital portfolio linked to skills and indicators that will allow students to articulate their work to a panel of Morgan teachers this spring. The portfolio is meant to be a celebration of a student’s achievements and growth and a portrait of his/her attributes and abilities.

6.A.3. General Update

Discussion: No report

6.B. Assistant Superintendent’s Report

6.B.1. General Update

Discussion:

On February 23, the district and the Clinton PTA hosted a forum on advanced manufacturing career opportunities. Next steps are developing a dedicated website and outreach to parents. Many teachers, administrators, and team leaders will be participating in a four-part series on accelerated learning with a goal of providing optimal programming post-pandemic.

Approximately 360 Chromebooks have been delivered and the tech department is working on preparing them for distribution to grades 3 and 4. NWEA MAP assessments begin the week of March 15, and a civil rights compliance review will take place sometime near the end of April. J. Adler urged administration to continue to focus on students' social-emotional needs as well as their learning needs.

6.C. Business Manager's Report

6.C.1. Bills Payable

Discussion: There were no questions regarding bills payable.

6.C.2. Quarterly Reports

Discussion: C. Dickey's early projection for unexpended end-of-year funds is 2% or approximately \$700K. The savings is being realized through non-expenditures due to the pandemic (gas, athletics, student activities) and staff vacancies.

6.C.3. General Update

Discussion: On March 3, materials to install solar panels on the Joel roof are scheduled to be delivered. The installation should take one to two weeks. The acquisition of People's Bank by M&T Bank Corp. should not substantially impact the administration of the non-certified staff pension fund. There should be no additional associated costs but we will have a new group issuing pension checks for People's Bank. A motion to make the change to the new vendor for check issuance will be presented at the next Board meeting.

7. Superintendent's Report

7.A. School Staff Vaccination Update

Discussion: School-based staff will begin receiving Covid-19 vaccinations starting March 1. The vaccines are being administered by CRAHD and encompass the school districts of Westbrook, Killingworth, Old Saybrook, Chester, Deep River, and Essex. M. O'Donnell thanked CRAHD staff and the Old Saybrook Police and Emergency Management departments for making this happen so quickly and for all of their efforts. P. Nye complimented administration on being organized and prepared so vaccinations could begin quickly and smoothly.

7.B. In-Person Learning Transition and Enrollment Update

Discussion: The transition to in-person learning at all schools has been successful. Clinton's in-person student participation rate remains high, averaging 86% for the district. Discussion followed regarding state guidelines for next year, student retention, and remote learning by student athletes.

7.C. Notification of Grant Award: CT Water Bottle Filling Stations

The district is a recipient of the Connecticut Water School Water Bottle Filling Station grant award. We will receive two water bottle filling stations, one each for Joel and Eliot schools. These safe and environmentally friendly stations are similar to those at Morgan and will be installed outside of the Joel and Eliot gymnasiums.

7.D. 2021-22 Budget Process & Update

The 2021-22 Board of Education Operating Budget was presented to the Clinton Town Council on February 23. A video of the meeting is available on the Town website. The Board discussed capital, end-of-year funds, responsibilities, partnering with the Town Council, and disappointment in the tone of the Town Council meeting. The Board thanked M. O'Donnell for her professionalism, diligence, and composure.

7.E. General Update

Discussion: Administration is working to provide as many in-person experiences (proms, rites, awards, etc.) given the dangers of the pandemic. The district is intent on holding the Morgan graduation in person as well as celebrating the 8th grade and 4th grade promotions as responsibly as possible.

The ESSR II grant of \$738,712 will be used to target curricular or social-emotional supports, including potential summer programming and extended day programming to support student needs.

P. Nye raised the question of a Board vote to indicate support for an in-person graduation for The Morgan School seniors. It was noted by the Superintendent that graduation ceremonies are operational decisions and the administration is responsible for the decisions. Superintendent O'Donnell restated the intent of the high school and district administration to hold a traditional in-person graduation that meets all public health guidelines in place at that time. P. Nye reiterated his stance on the record that he supports a traditional graduation ceremony.

8. Reports of Board of Education Subcommittees and Special Committees

8.A. General Updates

Discussion: Meetings to address work in each of the subcommittee areas will be scheduled.

9. Personnel Information

Discussion: The Board welcomed new hires and thanked those employees leaving the district.

10. Adjournment

Motion Passed: To adjourn at 9:19 p.m. passed with a motion by Peter Nye and a second by Catherine Staunton.

7 Yeas – 0 Nays

Erica Gelven	Yes
Michael Hornyak	Yes
Jason Adler	Yes
Peter Nye	Yes
Christopher Passante	Yes
Kimberly Russo	Yes
Catherine Staunton	Yes

Michael Hornyak, Secretary of the Board

Allison Friday, Clerk of the Board