

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hicks Municipal Center
Council Chambers
Tolland, CT 06084

REGULAR MEETING

7:30 PM

VISION STATEMENT

To represent education at its best, preparing each student for an ever-changing society, and becoming a full community of learning where excellence is achieved through each individual's success.

2018-2019 GOALS

- *Support and encourage specialized programs that can serve as alternatives to outplacement*
- *Support and encourage the development of tuition programs*
- *Support the implementation of Mastery Learning and Responsive Education initiatives*
- *Support and encourage Curriculum Development, and Teaching & Learning best practice*
- *Engage in the Strategic Prevention Framework*
- *Engage the Superintendent to explore and research shared service opportunities*
- *Engage Town, State, and Federal officials to discuss and advocate for education*
- *Foster the continued development of instructional technology*

AGENDA

November 13, 2019

- A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- B. TOWN CLERK, SHEILA BAILEY- will swear new board members in. Determination of officers and committee membership.
- C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - November 6, 2019
- D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2 minute limit)

The members of the Tolland Board of Education welcome members of the public to share their thoughts and ideas at this time. When appropriate to do so, members of the Board and the administration may respond to comments during "Points of Information". However, in consideration of those in attendance and in an effort to proceed in a timely manner, follow-up discussion may need to take place outside of the meeting setting.

E. CORRESPONDENCE

F. POINTS OF INFORMATION

G. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT – Fisher Thompson and Alexandra Costa

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

H.1 2020 Board of Education Meeting Dates

H.2 Transportation

H.3 District Vision/Mission (session 2 April 25th) and Portrait of a Graduate work (ongoing) – no enclosure

I. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

J. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

K. BOARD ACTION

K.1 Establishment of a curriculum committee on the Tolland Board of Education's Standing Committees

Proposed Language on purpose, functions, and duties:

The Curriculum committee shall work with the administrators responsible for curriculum in reviewing existing curriculum, researching trends in education, and designing and implementing curricular changes to enhance educational programs.

L. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2-minute limit)

Comments must be limited to items on this agenda.

M. POINTS OF INFORMATION

N. FUTURE

O. NEW BUSINESS

P. ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Q. ADJOURNMENT

TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

Hicks Municipal Center
Council Chambers
Tolland, CT 06084

SPECIAL MEETING – November 6, 2019

Members Present: Ms. Colleen Yudichak, Chair; Ms. Karen Moran, Vice Chair; Mr. Sam Adlerstein, Ms. Kate Howard-Bender, Ms. Christina Plourd, and Mr. Jeff Schroeder
Members Absent: Ms. Michelle Harrold, Ms. Jane Pasini, Mr. Bob Pagoni
Administrators Present: Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent of Schools, Mark McLaughlin, Business Director

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Yudichak called the meeting to order at 7:30p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- October 23, 2019
Ms. Howard-Bender motioned to adopt the minutes of the October 23rd meeting. Mr. Adlerstein seconded the motion. Changes: none. All were in favor. Motion carried.

C. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Jacob Marie, 32 Stewart Drive, inquired about agenda item G3. He explained that he was reviewing this item along with BOE policy regulations, specifically Policy 3020 that states that any contract over \$7,500 needs to go out to competitive bid. The suggested Board action speaks to approving the contract without going to competitive bid and he is curious why this is an option.

Deb Goetz, 176 Kate Lane, inquired as to why a meeting is being held this evening. At the last regularly scheduled meeting on October 23rd tonight's special meeting was added with the explanation that they may have to address the teachers' and administrators' contracts, which may not have been approved at that meeting, and time sensitive items related to Birch Grove. Ms. Goetz commented that neither of these items is on the agenda. She sees items G1-G5 and believes they would be better addressed by those who were elected last night. In regard to the meeting schedule, she sent correspondence to the Board addressing this. She added that the people spoke and know who they want on the Board representing them. Ms. Goetz asked that the Board go over G1-G5 and explain why each of these items needs to be addressed this evening. She added that a special meeting means that something needs to be addressed which is time sensitive and she does not see where any of these items are.

Kate Vallo, 80 Tolland Green, commented that it was a big day yesterday. She offered congratulations to those elected and publically acknowledged and thanked Ms. Harrold for her service. Ms. Vallo had the pleasure of sitting with Ms. Harrold when attending meetings before she stepped up to run for a position on the Board. Ms. Vallo looks forward to Ms. Harrold's continued engagement as a resident and feels it is a loss for the community. Ms. Harrold was a great resource for the community from a historical perspective and her service on multiple committees. It will be a loss and Ms. Vallo wished to take a moment to thank her.

Liz Costa, 54 Josiah Lane, thanked Mr. Schroeder publicly for his service as well as Ms. Yudichak, Mr. Adlerstein, Ms. Pasini, and Ms. Harrold. She believes not having Ms. Harrold on the Board will be a huge loss for Tolland although she believes Ms. Harrold will stay active in the community.

D. CORRESPONDENCE

- correspondence was received from Ms. Goetz regarding the meeting

E. POINTS OF INFORMATION

Dr. Willett explained that item G.3 will be addressed in greater detail this evening but would like to get the conversation on transportation started as soon as possible. There are not a lot of meetings between now and January so it is possible it could be pushed back and the district would be in a less favorable position when it would have to go out to bid. He added that Policy 5040 has requirements in regard to transportation. Policy 3020 is usually focused on property. Transportation does not always have to go out to bid in Tolland. Dr. Willett explained that he would like to present and begin to have a conversation on the proposal this evening.

Ms. Yudichak noted that the sitting Board is still made up of the currently elected leaders. Ms. Moran added that this is based on the Town's charter.

Ms. Moran spoke in regard to this evening's meeting. She noted that item G.3 is timely and that there was the possibility that the Birch Grove project would need to be discussed. Dr. Willett added that it makes sense to have two meetings in November. It just happened to line up with the election. The Board may do what it wants with the items on this evening's agenda.

Ms. Plourd commented in response to Ms. Goetz. Ms. Plourd noted that she sent the Board leadership an e-mail and read it into the minutes:

"Again I am confused by your agenda tonight, the November 6th meeting was scheduled for one of two reasons: teachers' contract approval or Birch Grove building project needing approval for things prior to Thanksgiving holiday. Neither of these are on the agenda for tonight. I don't see anything on here that is so pressing that it can't wait until November 13th. Transportation would be the agenda item that I would question the transparency around a vote tonight before a new board comes in. I think this agenda should be moved until next week. Thank you for your consideration."

Ms. Plourd added that based on the responses she received, she believes the meeting should have been moved. This was a special meeting that was not filed in accordance with Policy 9130 and thus it should not be held. Further, she reviewed the transportation policies and there is nothing in there regarding bidding. Policy 3020 is in regard to purchases of services and goods and in regard to what is discussed this evening, they should go according to policy and go out to bid.

Dr. Willett responded that the easiest thing for him to do in this situation is to go out to bid and understands the scrutiny but explained that he is presenting the proposal because he "is not going to be the reason that you get a worse deal". He wants to present the information so there is time for the situation to be reviewed. If the Board chooses to go out to bid, which it has the right to do and Dr. Willett does not object to, he wants the Board to have all of the information and this option before it does so. The timeline for the process of going out to bid is

six months so it would need to go to bid very soon. He added that if at the end there is a worse deal, he wants to ensure that this deal was on the table, was an option prior, and was presented as soon as it was available. Further, he will provide a more detailed response in regard to the policy at the next meeting. The district has had approximately a 20 year relationship with First Student and Dr. Willett will present more information on this situation.

Mr. Adlerstein commented that at the last meeting the Board was told that Dr. Willett wished to have this evening's meeting because he was unsure about the Birch Grove project and the teachers' contract may or may not have been decided at the last meeting. Further, he wanted to ensure the Board had two meetings in November. Given the Thanksgiving holiday, the November 6th meeting was scheduled. He added that the agenda does not contain any decision items. Mr. Adlerstein noted that all of the newly elected Board members are present and encouraged them to listen and ask questions. He added that it has been very difficult to be on the Board. They have been challenged and defending items for a long time. He spoke to the newly elected members and hopes they have the opportunity to focus on students, teaching, and learning. Mr. Adlerstein added that most districts do not go out to bid for bus contracts each time because they have found that they end up with better results by not doing so. This is a constant throughout of the districts in CT. Dr. Willett added that he does not believe there is any violation of Policy 9130.

F. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT – Fisher Thompson & Alexandra Costa

- Coffee House Auditions (TYSCT) were held on October 28th; the event will be held in the THS cafeteria on November 8th
- Quarter I Music Concert at THS was held on October 30th; featured the Women's Choir, the Jazz Band, and the Chamber Choir
- NHS Chapter – raked leaves of three homes on November 3rd
- NHS Chapter – attended Tolland Fest on November 3rd; event featured clubs and teams
- DECA month - multiple meetings are being held this week
- Homecoming – October 26th, greater attendance than ever before; leading up to Homecoming was Spirit Week including the Pep Rally on the Friday prior

Fisher Thompson offered his perspective on the change of meeting date. It was an item on the last agenda and voted upon. People could have voiced their concern regarding this item at that time.

Ms. Yudichak attended the Music Concert and commented that it was very well done.

G. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Ms. Yudichak noted that this evening's meeting may be treated as a transition meeting and congratulated the newly elected members. In turn, those members may take the opportunity to ask questions during the meeting if they choose to do so. The sitting Board may add information as well.

G.1. Monthly Financial Report

Dr. Willett reviewed attachment G.1.

The October 2019 financial report shows an available balance of \$1,364,991 or 3.41% of the BOE's current budget.

The following was addressed:

- Tuition Educ Agency – the excess cost payment has not yet been received
- Dr. Willett confirmed that the UISF payment is a one-time annual payment
- The line items are from the standard chart of accounts. All districts report in these same categories. It is Budgetary Basis accounting, not GAAP accounting.
- Stipends – related to Pay to Participate; the funds are not fully collected until the end of year
- Student Transp Srvs – over due to some special education needs; an encumbrance
- In the rules of decorum for the Board, questions are funneled through Dr. Willett.
- Dr. Willett, during budget season, will create a matrix to address questions regarding what is included in specific line items.

G.2. Science Curriculum Presentation – (no attachment)

Dr. Willett introduced Mark Ruede, Curriculum Supervisor of Science.

Dr. Willett noted that the presentation will be posted online.

Highlights of the presentation (available online) include:

- The NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards)
- Curriculum (elementary through high school)
 - also available on the website
- Upcoming items (workshops, coaching, partnerships across STEM, further development of STEM mentoring opportunities for all students)
- Exploring an engineering pathway (an extension of the Lighthouse Projects)

G.3. Transportation

Dr. Willett reviewed attachment G.3.

- Dr. Willett explained that this is not an easy process as there is a lack of quality comparative data due to multiple differing variables so an "apples to apples" comparison is challenging.
- The proposal process has been discussed with a consulting firm and another consortium. In the process of getting the best information possible and working with both the consulting firm and consortium yielded information that the deal and its terms are very favorable with respect to the current market and what is going on in transportation.
- Dr. Willett reached out to eight districts but noted that Tolland's parameters are particularly unique in that the town has state roads, extremities, incomplete roads, undulating hills, and dirt roads along with other factors.
- Many contracts reviewed are coming in the range of first year at 10-12.5% and 4-5% in subsequent years. The contract issue currently driving the transportation market is employee benefits. Driver retention is very difficult and in turn better wages need to be provided.
- The district worked hard with First Student for this to be a favorable proposal for the town.
- Dr. Willett noted that they researched the possibility of the district having its own bus force but it has a large upfront cost with little recognizable benefit due to the town's size.
- There are only a couple of companies which would have an interest in Tolland.

- They researched towns which had a consortium arrangement but these ended unfavorably for them where they were backed into a contract corner with significantly greater 3 and 4 year contract costs. Further, observed multi-town bids have not worked particularly well.
- Town contracts
 - 5 towns: approximately 3% annually (approximately equates to the proposal)
 - 1 town: 6% in year 1; 4.75% in the subsequent 2 years
 - 1 town: 4.45% in year 1; 3.95% in the subsequent 3 years
 - 1 town: 7% in year 1, and then a 5% and a 5%
 - all were at or higher than the current proposal from First Student
- Responses from multiple entities were that this is a favorable proposal for Tolland.
- If the district wishes to go out to bid, it needs to do so soon. Waiting until after December greatly compromises the bidding process as it takes approximately six months for all to play out. Due to this timeline, Dr. Willett presented this proposal as soon as it became available.
- Mr. McLaughlin emphasized that when looking at other communities, there are circumstances that are different by virtue of size, student population, terrain, distribution of schools, bell hours, etc.
- Dr. Willett explained that transportation companies need to show an interest in working with a district.
- Dr. Willett believes the proposal is favorable and could be better than what the district may get if it goes out to bid. This is in line with the feedback received from multiple entities. Mr. McLaughlin concurred.
- Dr. Willett noted that if the Board wishes to go out to bid the district will execute this to the greatest of its abilities with every available resource.

The following was posed by incoming/newly elected board members in attendance:

- If the issues with bus breakdowns have been in regard to vehicles that are 10-11 years old.
 - Dr. Willett responded in the affirmative. This was something in the contract which he inherited from the last superintendent. The proposal would cut the age of the buses in half which should lead to a much better experience with transportation. The average age of the buses in the first year would be 5.7 years (2014 model year).
- When did the district go out to bid?
 - Dr. Willett will research this.
- From one year to the next, do the percentages take into consideration that you are losing a bus?
 - Dr. Willett responded, "yes".
- A commenter believes it seems to be a fair proposal given the navigational issues in the town, the comfort of knowing the drivers who have been in neighborhoods for years, and the consideration of the timeline.
- Given the size of the contract, a commenter would like time to review it.
- A commenter believes that solace needs to be found in many areas including that the Superintendent is providing the most thorough and updated information.

- At their request, Dr. Willett will provide as much background information as possible and have it available at the November 13th meeting.
- Dr. Willett will inquire about the possibility of a 5-year contract and the availability of GPS.

Mr. Schroeder noted that the proposal was discussed at a number of Finance and Facilities committee meetings. Multiple options were reviewed and the committee believes that if they do not accept the proposal, most likely the company will come back with a bid that is greater than the one being presented this evening. Further, given the timeline and the nature of the business, if they switch companies they would incur additional expenses. Lastly, the committee agreed that the proposal was the best option.

Ms. Howard-Bender added that given the roads in town, the institutional memory of the current drivers is a benefit. She believes that the proposal is a prudent way to address the transportation needs.

Ms. Moran noted that the newly elected Board members will need to establish committees and set monthly meetings. This will not be ideal timewise.

A straw poll was taken in regard to if the Board was voting this evening if they would want to approve the contract. The straw poll result was 5:1.

G.4. Indigenous People Day (discussion – no attachment)

Mr. Schroeder recommended that this item be addressed by the Town rather than the Board.

G.5. 2020 Board of Education Meeting Dates – deferred to the next meeting

H. COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS - none

I. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Ms. Yudichak congratulated the newly elected/re-elected board members. While she may not agree with everyone in the room, she hopes the community can come back together. She wished everyone the best of luck and thanked the clerk.

J. BOARD ACTION - none

K. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - none

L. POINTS OF INFORMATION

- Town Council Meeting Minutes – October 22, 2019

M. FUTURE

- Dr. Willett will create programs for the Board members annually (this includes school tours)
- Pathways
- 21st Century Learning
- Strategic Prevention Framework

- Mental Health Services
- Budget
- Regionalization
- Birch Grove Update
- Organization of a Vision Mission
- Setting of graduation date
- Community Budget Workshops

N. NEW BUSINESS – none

O. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Schroeder motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:38 P.M. Mr. Adlerstein seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Pascuzzi
Clerk

SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND

ITEM: Board of Education 2020 Meeting Dates

ITEM SUBMITTED BY: Walter Willett, Ph.D., Superintendent

FOR BOE MEETING: November 13, 2019

ITEM SUMMARY:

January 8
January 22
February 12
February 26
March 11
March 25
April 8
April 22
May 13
May 27
June 10
June 24
July 8 *
July 22
August 12 *
August 26
September 9
September 23
October 14
October 28
November 11- Veteran's day
November 18 – Moved from November 25 due to Thanksgiving break
December 9
December 16 - Moved From December 23 due to winter break

*Meetings followed by an asterisk have previously been cancelled
Meetings are held at Hicks Municipal Center, Council Chambers.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

N/A

BOARD ATTORNEY REVIEW:

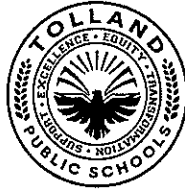
BOE ACTION DESIRED:

Review dates. Potential Motions:

1. Motion to move item H1 to K1 for action. Second. Discussion. Vote
2. Motion to approve the Board of Education 2020 Meeting dates. Second. Discussion. Vote

SUPPORTING MATERIALS ATTACHED:

2020 - BOE Proposed Meeting dates



TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION 2020 MEETING DATES

Meetings will be held at Hicks Municipal Center, Council Chambers.
7:30 pm

January 8
January 22
February 12
February 26
March 11
March 25
April 8
April 22
May 13
May 27
June 10
June 24
July 8 *
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August 12 *
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November 11- Veteran's day
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December 16 - Moved From December 23 due to winter break

*Meetings followed by an asterisk have previously been cancelled

SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND

ITEM: Transportation
ITEM SUBMITTED BY: Walter Willett, Ph.D., Superintendent
FOR BOE MEETING: November 13, 2019

ITEM SUMMARY:

Point of clarification regarding Policy 3020:

In certain situations, the bidding, quotation, and proposal processes may be waived by the Superintendent. Among these are when a formal process would result in substantially higher costs to the school district, or inefficient use of personnel, or cause disruption to school district operations (3020 IV 5). This can also occur when the item being waived comes from a special source including but not limited to a sale, purchasing plan, government discount or trade-in allowance that will supply a lower cost than that which would result from the bid process (3020 IV 4).

The duration of the review process regarding Transportation for the Tolland Public Schools extends back beyond a year and a half and included consideration of the BGP project last year which resulted in the need for a one-year extension. There was some uncertainty with regard to the exact specifications of what would be needed for BGP as many scenarios were discussed (out of Town arrangements, combining buildings, using a partial building, etc.).

In working with a transportation advisory service, and in consulting with professionals within a school business consortium a profile of the market was generated. As of December 2018 we were informed we could expect something in the range of a 9.5% increase in the first and possibly second year, and 3.5% thereafter. Updating our aging bus fleet played a factor as did increasing driver wages and benefits. We were informed that contracts from other districts that appeared low (e.g. 2.75%) had issues with other escalating costs.

We were provided information that suggested Tolland may, if it went out to bid, get three to four companies bidding but that due to the dynamics of bidding and the market the rates offered had a reasonable chance of not being more favorable or substantially different than what is currently offered by First Student. When considering this offer, changing carriers would come with a significant disruption to school district operations and inefficient use of personnel in dealing with the situation for what might be a very small difference in expenditure in either direction (again, a potential reason a Superintendent can waive a bid – 3020 IV 5).

Some comparative information

- 5 towns: approximately 3% annually (generally 3 year proposals)
- 1 town: 6% in year 1; 4.75% in the subsequent 2 years
- 1 town: 4.45% in year 1; 3.95% in the subsequent 3 years
- 1 town: 7% in year 1, and then a 5% and a 5%

The First Student proposal includes the following:

- An effective increase of 6.4% Year 1 (with the reduction of one vehicle)
- An effective increase of 0% Year 2 (with the reduction of an additional vehicle)
- A reduction in the average age of fleet vehicles from 11 years (current) to 5.7 year one, 6.6 year two, and 5.9 year three as buses are replaced in the fleet.
- A new management office/trailer with removal of old trailer and set up of new.
- A combined route reduction savings of \$138,164 over the first two years
- Extending the contract for five years would add a Year 4 and 5 @ 4.5% per year.

Options:

- Superintendent exercises a waiver (3020 IV 4 and 5), accepts the First Student proposal, and works to finalize an updated contract
- Superintendent exercises a waiver (3020 IV 4 and 5) with a straw poll or motion of support by the Board of Education accepting the First Student proposal and works to finalize an updated contract
- The proposal is referred to the new Finance and Facilities Committee (this may require going out to bid as it is important to go out to bid soon to have the best chance of obtaining the most competitive offers)
- The proposal is rejected, and the transportation contract is put out to bid

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

Tolland Public Schools		Year 1				Year 2				Year 3							
		Increase				Increase				Increase							
		9.50%				3.00%				3.00%							
		Current				Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
Big Bus	# of Routes	25				24				23				23			
	# of Days (periods)	181				182				182				182			
	Daily Rate	343.49				376.12				387.40				399.02			
	Annual cost	1,554,292				1,633,865				1,612,746				1,661,120			
Route Reduction Savings included in annual cost						(68,078)				(70,119)							
Type A Vehicles	Annual cost	62,172				68,078				70,119				72,223			
Wheel Chairs Type A	Annual cost	248,687				272,311				280,478				288,890			
Vans	Annual cost	222,731				243,894				251,214				258,750			
Summer school	Annual cost	14,427				15,797				16,271				16,759			
Late Runs	Annual cost	31,612				34,614				35,650				36,719			
Pre K	Annual cost	30,075				32,935				33,919				34,940			
Total Annual cost		2,163,996				2,301,494				2,300,397				2,369,401			
Daily Rate Increase						9.50%				3.00%				3.00%			
Effective Increase						6.4%				0.0%				3.0%			

BOARD ATTORNEY REVIEW:

The current contract was updated and reviewed by the Board attorney during the period of the one year extension. A new contract would be generated with the new proposed figures from this (H2) agenda item.

BOE ACTION DESIRED (as a straw poll or motion):

✓ **Motion to move item H2 to K2 for action. Second. Discussion. Vote.**

Possible Motions:

1. Motion to endorse the Superintendent to seek a three year transportation agreement with First Student under the conditions and prices identified in item H2
2. Motion to refer to the FFC committee
3. Motion to go out to bid

SUPPORTING MATERIALS ATTACHED:

No attachment.