



TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

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.*

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**AGENDA**

May 27, 2020

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- May 6, 2020
- May 11, 2020
- May 13, 2020

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 Budget
- H.2 BOE Goals Update
- H.3 Superintendent Evaluation Update
- H.4 Discussion of creation of Ad-Hoc Committee for Re-Opening (no attachment)
- H.5 Locker Item Recovery and Accountability Returns (no attachment)
- H.6 Instructional Rounds Opportunity – June 11<sup>th</sup> @ 2PM (no attachment)

I. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

J. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

K. BOARD ACTION

- K.1 Policy 5010 – Student Attendance and Truancy (second reading)

L. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2-minute limit)

*Comments must be limited to items on this agenda.*

M. POINTS OF INFORMATION

Town Council & Historic District Commission Joint Meeting – May 12, 2020  
Town Council Meeting Minutes – May 12, 2020

N. FUTURE

Dr. Willett will set up:

- School rounds / tours / starting with TIS (briefings/tours/debriefings)
- Mental Health Services Initiatives (presentation and discussion)
- School Bus Stop Safety (presentation)
- Portrait of a Graduation / Visioning (presentation and discussion of initiatives)
- Pathways and Lighthouse Programs
- Understanding By Design (presentation and discussion)
- Regionalization (presentation and discussion)
- Board of Education Goal Setting (working session and establishment of goals)

O. NEW BUSINESS

P. ADJOURNMENT

## TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

### ZOOM Meeting

SPECIAL MEETING – May 6, 2020

Members Present: Ashley Lundgren, Chair; Christina Plourd, Vice Chair; Anthony Holt, Secretary; Renie Besaw, Christine Griffin, Kate Howard-Bender, Jacob Marie, Karen Moran, Dana Philbin

Members Absent: none

Administrators Present: Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent of Schools

Others Present: none

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Lundgren called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA - N/A

C. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

C.1 Budget Considerations (no enclosure)

Dr. Willett explained that as they move through Phases II and III further information will become available and more informed discussions and decisions can take place.

He reviewed the document presented on April 29, 2020:

- End of Year Recommendations for Expenditures (FY20)
- Educational Reserve Fund Transfer Recommendation (FY20)
- Projection/Recommended Transfer to the Town (FY20 roll-over funds)

Dr. Willett presented an update (May 6, 2020)

- Budget delays: mitigated via Executive Order 7HH
  - The order includes a mandatory suspension of annual town meeting or referendum to adopt a budget. Towns pursuant to Section 7-405 must adopt a budget by June 30<sup>th</sup> for the July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 fiscal year.
- Town Budget Threshold/Minimum Unassigned Fund Balance
  - Using information from the FY19 CAFR the minimum requirement is approximately \$6M. The unassigned fund balance for FY19 (CAFR) is \$8,150,176. There is approximately a \$2M differential between the 10% minimum threshold and the FY19 figure.
  - A responsible use of the fund balance, even as high as \$600K, will not cause a catastrophic impact. Combined with the mitigation efforts of the Board, it could be a solution that would be helpful for all.
- Educational Reserve Fund Transfer Recommendation
  - Scenario consideration: \$8M set aside of a \$70M budget (example) is approximately 11%; if the Board has 10% of its budget saved for “rainy day” impacts that would be approximately \$4M; adding money to the fund protects the town and the Board (i.e. mitigation of special education costs and consideration of additional students needing services due to the COVID-19 impact)

- Projection/Recommended Transfer to the Town
  - FY20 roll-over funds; rolling over remaining funds to the town to help mitigate budget impacts
  - Uncertainties include: Birch Grove Primary Project and COVID-19 impacts

Dr. Willett provided EOY expenditures for consideration:

- Mitigation of FY 20/21 costs
- Would reduce what is needed in the 1.54% Board budget

Prepurchases	
UBD	\$10,000
BGP RAZ	\$5,000
Rekenreks	\$3,000
Newsela	\$12,325
Literacy How	\$60,000
Total	\$90,325

- Additional items to consider:

Phone System Software Upgrade	\$38,815	phones will be needed for Birch Grove and to address other issues
K-8 Chromebooks	\$123,500	184 are no longer updateable
HS 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Laptops	\$90,000	

- Would offset future expenses
- Total: \$342,640

Dr. Willett presented Potential Capital Fund Adjustments (reduces capital request FY21)

THS VCT Tile replacements (multi-areas)	\$10,000
TIS Sidewalk Connection to front of School	\$35,000

A discussion took place which included the following:

- Chromebooks – a new need (due to COVID-19) that was not included in the Board's 1.54% adopted budget
  - unexpected extensive use
  - 800 Chromebooks were deployed to families
  - could be addressed via the ERF
  - current Chromebooks are 4-6 years old
  - purchase would allow replacement of 184 units and sufficient units for one-to-one in K-8 for many years to come; the 184 these would replace were not designed for the heavy use they are now receiving

- costs include protective cases, insurance, security
- Phone System Upgrade
  - traditionally a capital expense but the district is in the position where Birch Grove will need phones and it needs to be addressed
  - a commitment is needed by June 5, 2020 or the cost will increase
  - the town and district both use the system
- Potential Capital Fund Adjustments
  - originally capital expenses in FY21
- Funding: in terms of what the town takes out to fund the budget, if the Board acquires items to mitigate the cost of the FY21 budget, it would need to request the funds the following budget cycle for some of the items.
- Interest in learning what the schools need in September 2020 to respond to the needs of the students from academic, social/emotional, and technological standpoints.
- Member expressed interest in putting as many non-recurring items through capital as possible.
- Fund balance policy: more information is available in the April 19<sup>th</sup> document
- Surveys on students' social/emotional/mental health issues will be done but it is unlikely that will happen this year. Good tools that assist in targeting populations where there is need.
- A member expressed that the Superintendent has, over the past few months, commented that the budget is no longer an accurate representation of the district's needs. The items listed under "EOY expenditures for consideration, Additional items" were not included in any of the Board's submissions. Concern was expressed that in addition to addressing impacts of the pandemic that these items are being advanced. A request for how these numbers came to be and why they are here when they did not exist in February. Further, it seems that expenses are increasing rather than showing opportunities for efficiencies and the more they peel away layers the less the budget will look like the 1.54% adopted budget.
  - Dr. Willett responded that the discussion is part of the EOY process and additional EOY information will be available on May 13<sup>th</sup>.
- A discussion regarding the phone system, that it is shared by the district and the town and that it is being listed as a district expense took place. Dr. Willett noted that he did not expect to incur this expense in this manner but it is presented here because other options appeared to not be working out.
- A member commented that a large portion of the proposal is how the district can use some of the existing opportunities from the town side to affect the Board's budget. He would like to see more of what can be done from the district's side to affect it.
  - Dr. Willett noted the potential transfer to the town, and stated additionally that ideally some of the mitigation elements referenced will be identified and more information and additional items will be available and presented in upcoming weeks. Town and school staffs are effectively working together.
- One-to-One Technology

- The trend is that materials, including textbooks, are going online and most are becoming subscription oriented.
- Students need to be able to use software that allows them to collaborate and do assignments. The COVID-19 situation caused the district to have to quickly transition to an online environment that is more effective with these devices. The district has also learned, outside of the crisis, how effective and important the use of these technologies are to student learning and instruction is when available.
- A member commented that the information in the April 29<sup>th</sup> document proposed the district rolling \$600K over to the town to assist with the community's budget. It does not appear that the Board is taking from town funds.
  - Dr. Willett noted that the April 29<sup>th</sup> document has preliminary estimates to provide a framework. More information will be available at the end of the month. Dr. Willett highlighted the unique situation due to COVID-19.
- A member commented that much of the discussion has been about the town's funds yet the Board does not have jurisdiction over them.
- Dr. Willett confirmed that almost all of the district's Chromebooks have been deployed. Of those 184 may not be of use in the future.
- A member commented that it seems that a change in curriculum is taking place with the discussion of having one to one technology for K-8. The curriculum needs to be in place to do this and she did not believe this had been discussed during budget season. An educational plan has not been discussed. It is an unknown as to whether or not distance learning will be necessary in the fall. Curriculum is traditionally based around a tool.
  - Dr. Willett explained that overall budget information was included because questions have been raised and ultimately this is what the Board will be asked. Teachers have gone through a "trial by fire" of sorts and have been engaging in technologies and the district is in a position where it could make a great leap at this time.
- A member inquired about the timeline of the phone system and if the district and the town are working together to find the best solution.
  - Dr. Willett noted that both entities have been discussing this and utilize the same phone system. His fear is that it will become an emergency and end up costing more.
- Ms. Griffin presented a proposal:
 

\$500,000	Prepay item FY20/21 items
\$399,576	Transfer to 1% fund
\$94,030	Transfer to the town to pay Birch Grove one-time expenses
\$306,214	Transfer to town but preserve some for potential unexpected costs
- A member would like to discuss the phone system with the Council in regard to the capital account. In regard to the Chromebooks, the Board did not really discuss one-to-one for K-8 and she would like them to review this shift as well the change in curriculum and if this is what the teachers would like particularly

in the early grade levels. Lastly, are there more pressing items in September that will need to be addressed?

- Dr. Willett explained that one-to-one is a powerful learning tool and spoke to the use of this tool overall, but also in K-2.
- BOE/Town Council Joint Meeting: tentatively scheduled for May 21, 2020
- In regard to Ms. Griffin's proposal, a member inquired if what is prepurchased would lead to a reduction in the budget ask.
  - Ms. Griffin replied that it would be a possibility.
- A member commented that she is not a fan of screens in K-5 and believes the Curriculum Committee should be involved in evaluating such a curriculum change for those grades.
- A member inquired of the FFC what savings have been negotiated with transportation and the special education schools. Further, in regard to Policy 3010 she would like to be aware of major line item shifts in the current budget and how it affects next year's budget.
- A member commented that they need to figure out how to support the students and the educational system. They need to find the money. While students are home, the Chromebooks are the gateways to education and interaction with their teachers. It is incumbent upon the Board to do what is right for all and advocate for the schools.
- A member asked how much the Board would transfer to the town to mitigate costs and how much is the Board asking for back?
  - Dr. Willett explained that more updated numbers will not be available until the end of May.
- A member asked if Dr. Willett anticipates needing additional staff to assist students with reacclimating to normal school session.
  - Dr. Willett anticipates that to manage the effects of the situation they will utilize staff in a more extensive way over the next 12-18 months. This can impact compensation.
- A member liked Ms. Griffin's amendments to the April 29<sup>th</sup> proposal. He is concerned that the economy may have a prolonged recovery and that next year there could be more budgets that need to be austere. The less they rely on taking from the fund balance for recurring expenses the better. He likes the recommendation of putting 1% into the ERF and transferring left over funds to the town for unanticipated COVID-19 related costs including those associated with mental health. He recommended the Board consider freezing some end of year expenditures that are unrelated to operating costs. It may provide more stability to rely on the preliminary \$1.3M figure.
  - Dr. Willett noted consistencies in the proposal and that at this time there are few expenditures that are not operational and the district is currently doing things similar to as if a freeze was in place in many ways.
- A member inquired about the April 29<sup>th</sup> plan which included prepurchasing items unrelated to next year. He would like the end of year funds spent toward the goal of clearing non-recurring costs and items such as the phone system put in as capital. Further he would like the Board to tighten up the authorization a bit to ensure everything spent is toward the goal of clearing non-recurring costs.

- Dr. Willett explained that typically at this time it would be part of the process. If funds were recovered they would present options, with recommended rankings by staff, to the Board. Given the current situation, prepurchasing may be able to mitigate future expenses depending on the item(s). Dr. Willett added that if the phone system goes into capital the town would need to find the funds. To do so they may need to take from funds that could otherwise help them avoid asking for as much from the Board in terms of a reduction.
- A member inquired how long Birch Grove has been without a computer teacher. Further, she sees the Chromebooks delivering what the teachers need and want. Birch Grove has not had computer instruction and it is important if distance learning in the future needs to be done. Also, in regard to the Chromebooks, equity is an issue. More families may request a device if distance learning continues in the fall. She asked if Dr. Willett anticipates this.
  - Dr. Willett responded that Birch Grove has been without a computer teacher for a couple of years. He does not anticipate many more immediate requests for devices but does believe many units currently in service (184) will soon not be functional and will need to be replaced.
- A member inquired about Ms. Griffin's proposal. In regard to Birch Grove, what else does the \$94,030 cover?
  - Ms. Griffin responded that it includes packing materials, van rentals, and the security guard.
- A member commented that the focus needs to be on the educational needs of the district while remaining cognizant of the environment/community. The pandemic has shown that both sides of that equation have changed. The pandemic has brought the need for an increase in the district's scope for one-to-one technology. He asked if the Board's responsibility, rather than showing the town where it can find funds so that it does not ask the Board for as much of a decrease, should be focused on reviewed the budget request the Board submitted and ensuring that it is an accurate representation of what it wants the town to pay. He is unsure how they can ask for a number if the Board is not confident in that number. In the past two hours they have discussed four needs that have changed. He believes they need to declare what the needs are and what it means in terms of a number.
  - Dr. Willett responded that the Board went through a lot and was very thorough to get to 1.54% and the reality at that time was much different than it is now. The needs of that time have not diminished, more have been added. The school staff and town staff are talking and it is a cooperative effort.
- A member commented on one-to-one technology. It was discussed during the budget conversations and by the previous board. The educational needs of the students have increased due to the pandemic. If this situation cycles again there is concern as to if the district will be prepared to support continuing education and at-home learning. She added that she is not a fan of freezing funds. She wants to see resources utilized appropriately and that the Board work as a team to determine what numbers make sense for all entities.



- A member likes Ms. Griffin’s proposal. It addresses much of what has been communicated to the Board and keeps the 1.54% intact. Further, it preserves adding funds to the ERF and provides flexibility to adapt to what may happen.
- Ms. Griffin commented that in regard to her proposal and that of Dr. Willett as well, there was no intent to cut anything from the 1.54% in terms of staff or programs. This evening’s conversation seems to have been about increasing the budget and she inquired if this is what they are looking to do. If they are considering adding one-to-one or other support due to COVID-19 then they need to look at the proposed budget and reallocate funds.
- The Chair agreed that they need to look again at the budget to ensure that students have what is needed – needs have shifted. The Town Council has not provided an official direction. She recommended reviewing the budget binders and looking for efficiencies etc.
  - Dr. Willett commented that the district’s needs when the 1.54% was voted on have increased. In reviewing the budget binders they are not likely to find items that are no longer needed. More options will be presented this month for the Board to discuss.
- A member asked if leadership has a game plan of what it wants to accomplish at the next meeting. If there is a plan to have something to present at the joint meeting.
  - The Chair responded that Dr. Willett will have more numbers available at the next meeting. At the joint meeting the Board will be able to ask questions and better know where it stands in regard to funds.
- A member addressed that the needs in the 1.54% have been exacerbated. The Board needs to review this. Analyzing and looking for alternatives does not detract from the needs that have been discussed but augments them. There is benefit to being able to articulate the needs.
  - Dr. Willett noted that the town staff and the Board have been scrutinizing this and working to find what the Board is looking for.
- A member asked that the FFC look further at Ms. Griffin’s proposal in regard to the flexibility noted. She added that the 1.54% is needed. It is an emergency, they have resources, and need to discuss supporting all facets of the community.
- A member commented that time is of the essence and this is the hiring season. The longer they wait the more difficult it will be to prepare for what will come.

#### D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Kate Vallo, 80 Tolland Green, thanked all for sharing their perspectives. It was a disconnect to hear a Board member question the need for one-to-one technology during a time that students depend on it. She sees this as a given that the Board would try to secure this for all students to ensure equitable learning regardless of the environment in the future. She sent a letter regarding eye health and cares about limiting screen time but technology is the gateway to students’ education now and potentially in the future. Students need the devices for multiple tasks. Providing equal access to education means providing the tools that make this possible. She hopes the Board takes this responsibility seriously and does everything possible to ensure long term equitable education of students. Respectfully, funding one-to-one technology in

response to the pandemic should not be a question or funded at the expense of other necessary items in the existing spending plan.

Fisher Thompson, 533 Buff Cap Road, spoke as a student representative to the Board and public servant. He started his public commitment to mental health a long time ago. He has a small social media presence and keeps his devices on night mode to limit the detrimental effects of screens proven by science but if one has a problem with students using screens during a global pandemic their students will not learn. One-to-one technology is not a new thing to other districts in the DRG excluding Tolland nor a new topic of Board discussion. As a student he knows how much he uses technology when there is not a pandemic. It is teacher appreciation week and he would like to acknowledge the hard work the teachers have done in this “trial by fire”. The Board voted on the budget before the pandemic. He thanked all.

Michelle Harrold, 256 Mountain Spring Road, commented that since the pandemic started the educational needs have changed. Supporting one-to-one technology makes education equitable and allows students to have the same technology so they can be helped in the same way. It is also a great opportunity for educators to continue to move in the direction vs. going back to textbooks and then start again if distance learning becomes necessary. She hopes this is part of the conversation. It is something that is needed and if distance learning is necessary next year her family will request Chromebooks. Educational needs of the original budget have changed and it is not a bad opportunity to continue in the direction of one-to-one technology.

Liz Costa, 54 Josiah Lane, commented that she appreciates the response to her latest letter and to those who responded and wished to continue to support the negotiated budget. They have spoken about one-to-one education throughout the budget process. It should not be new. She requested one-to-one technology for K3-12 and at the very least K6-12 at the budget workshops because of the need for one-to-one technology. She asked that the Board take Dr. Willett’s recommendations. Some members are asking him to throw a dart at a 20/21 budget dart board blindfolded while moving the board. He cannot know if they are going to go back to distance learning. There could be many impacts including transportation, the time teachers teach, and how students go to school. To Ms. Griffin, she would like to understand what the \$500K would be spent on and if the members all support the continuing education of students equitably. Chromebooks ensures this. Also, other parents who did not request a Chromebook will do so next year. Ms. Costa encouraged the Board to save every dime after prespending dollars from 2020 and ask the Council to support and allow for the changes.

E. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Howard-Bender motioned to adjourn the meeting 9:32 p.m.

Ms. Plourd seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Pascuzzi  
Clerk

## TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

### ZOOM Remote Meeting

SPECIAL MEETING – May 11, 2020

Members Present: Ashley Lundgren, Chair; Christina Plourd, Vice Chair; Anthony Holt, Secretary; Renie Besaw, Christine Griffin, Kate Howard-Bender, Jacob Marie, Karen Moran, Dana Philbin

Members Absent: none

Administrators Present: Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent of Schools, Dominique Fox, Principal, Tolland High School

Others Present: none

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Lundgren called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA - N/A

C. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

C.1 Graduation (no enclosure)

Ms. Fox reviewed the results of the Graduation Survey (THS Senior Survey Results).

Dr. Willett noted that he has spoken with members of the Eastern Highlands Health District (EHHD) and counsel at Shipman & Goodwin LLP. He also participated in the Governor's workshops.

Dr. Willett reviewed the Graduation Options Report, Superintendent of Schools, as of 5/11/20.

- Included information on the following: legal (gatherings), medical/health, schools, summer camps
- Priorities
  - Public Safety
  - Student Experience
  - Parent/Guardian Experience
- Options
  - Review of the option, description, cost and other considerations, EHHD considerations, legal considerations, and a checklist for each option
  - Options presented
    - Virtual Ceremony, June 18, 2020, no rain date
    - Outdoor Graduation in person, June 18, 2020; (June 19, 2020 rain)
    - Split Group In-Person Graduation, June 18, 2020
    - Vehicle Graduation, June 18, 2020 (June 19, 2020 rain)

Discussion:

Ms. Griffin, a parent of a senior, commented that she has discussed this with her student and the in-person outdoor ceremony would be his choice as far as something that resembles a traditional graduation. She spoke in regard to the One Class, One Graduation, One Playbook and while they do not have any specifics regarding it, when comparing what Dr. Willett presented versus the Playbook, the Playbook has items that take safety into consideration that the EHHD may consider less of a liability. The Playbook addresses having an outdoor venue and there is a field, other than the turf field, that may be an option. The Playbook addresses 6' distancing as well as the wearing of masks, the use of hand sanitizer, and taking temperatures. The latter is along the same lines as administering the breathalyzer at the prom. She would like to consider these items. While the Governor has not yet approved the Playbook, he is looking at it and Ms. Griffin would like this left on the table as an option. She noted that she is speaking with emotion but believes the Playbook is the best option. If they follow the rules she hopes they can make it happen for the seniors.

Ms. Moran, a parent of a senior, commented that Options 1 and 4 seem reasonable. She asked about the vehicle option and if students would turn their tassels in their cars. *Dr. Willett responded that it would be in vehicle and then they could throw their caps in the air. People in PPE would gather the hats as needed.* Ms. Moran explained that she likes the virtual option because it would provide students and families with a memento. She asked if a later modified version of graduation may be possible. *Dr. Willett responded that everyone would like to see a traditional graduation. Part of the problem is that they still have the virus in the community and it could potentially cause great harm. One may not have a temperature or symptoms but still carry the virus. The in-person options are very high risk. After a lot of inquiries his feeling is that doing anything other than options 1 or 4 would mean having to accept that people will get sick and hurt. Are we willing to accept that people could get sick, hurt, or die because a high risk option was chosen? This increased probability comes with the choice of a high risk option, accepting we are potentially contributing to a family being harmed.* Ms. Moran commented that the virtual option would still be available if something in July had to be cancelled. Further, she wants to consider every student. Having something around the typical graduation date allows those who may have to leave for the military the opportunity to be with their class and have the experience. *Dr. Willett noted that the survey showed that a number of students would not be able to participate in an August event.* In regard to the greatest safety and health, Ms. Moran prefers option 1 or 4.

Ms. Besaw inquired about option 4 and if each car would be in a parking spot. *Dr. Willett explained that each student would have a designated parking spot and there would be a defined parking pattern in regard to how the car would approach the stage, how the student would get out of the car, receive the diploma, have a photo taken, and return to the car.* Ms. Besaw asked how it would work given that in June it may be hot, students would be parked less than 6' apart, and students would have their windows down (or all cars would be running with a/c on). Now the students are less than 6' apart. *Dr. Willett explained that there would be an arrangement based on the recommendations of the EHHD.* Ms. Besaw asked if students are 6' apart and wear masks in the in-person option if this would not mitigate, or at least reduce, risks. *Dr. Willett explained that based on feedback he was given it would not. Only n-95 masks*

*are reliable prevention. Other masks have different levels of effectiveness. The issue is the concentration of people and it would be well beyond the recommendation. Further, this population may carry the virus asymptotically more so than any other. It would be highly probable that some percentage of the students would be infected and infect others in their families. The virus is highly contagious. Dr. Willett wanted to hear different answers to his inquiries but after consulting with legal resources and the health district, the question is what is our willingness to have this event when these medical and legal advisors are telling the district that there will be a cost in human health – illness and potentially death, and related liability. While he wants students to have the graduation they desire, does he want it badly enough to say he is ok with a death coming from it, or grave illness, or parents/guardians/grandparents going into the hospital? Dr. Willett said he cannot say that he wants it badly enough to risk that harm. Options 1 and 4 have the least risk albeit option 1 is the farthest from traditional.*

Ms. Philbin explained that her graduation was a pivotal rite of passage, a stepping stone. In looking at the options, she does not know how comfortable she feels in any capacity exposing people to allow seniors to have the experience. This is a pandemic and although it breaks her heart for the seniors, it would break her heart more if their safety or that of their family, faculty or staff is put in jeopardy. She believes they need to go with what is recommended and looks forward to hearing public input.

Ms. Plourd commented that she would be less afraid to go to graduation right now than the grocery store. There has been a lot advocacy for option 2. As far as those who are concerned about options 2, 3, or 4, there could also be a virtual ceremony but she would like to see the seniors have a more traditional graduation and believes it could be done safely. She asked how option 2 gets from a high liability to a low liability. How do you make waivers enforceable? Could the date be moved forward to July? Taking temperatures at the door would not be unreasonable; nor would be wearing masks. Perhaps they could speak with EHHD and counsel to get to a lower liability.

Ms. Howard-Bender commented that she believes in safety first. She would like to spend the time hearing from the public this evening.

Mr. Marie asked Dr. Willett when a decision is needed. *Dr. Willett responded that for planning purposes they need to make the decision as soon as they are able to do so. He recommended within the next week or two.* Mr. Marie understands the concern of liability and feels for the seniors, many of whom want a traditional graduation. He too would like to look at option 2 but on July 13<sup>th</sup>. Perhaps for those who cannot attend there could be some prerecorded items.

Mr. Holt commented that no one wants to put friends and family in danger. Options 1 and 4 take away the opportunity of graduating with their friends. He would be interested in looking at the timetable as well. Perhaps further communication from the state would make option 2 or 3 more palatable and this is where he would lean.

Ms. Lundgren commented that after seeing the results the seniors want something traditional. She has questions regarding how option 4 would work if all the students are sitting in their cars with the a/c running. Also, with option 2 could they wait longer and

perhaps social distancing may be lifted a bit so they can be split into smaller groups?  
That said, at the end of the day they need to keep everyone safe.

#### D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Eric Person, 28 Shores Drive, commented that his daughter is a senior at THS. They have been going through trials and tribulations with things having been taken away during their senior year. Mr. Person is participating in the organization of the CT High School One Graduation, One CT with members across the state. Mr. Person is in favor of option 2. The seniors want a somewhat traditional graduation experience. The group he is involved with met with the Dept. of Education and there will be a meeting with Commissioner Cardona within the week. The proposal his organization has presented cannot happen unless the Governor waives the restrictions on large group gatherings. If lifted, they are in favor of some semblance of an in-person graduation for the high school students. Summer camps return on June 29<sup>th</sup>. The lower field at THS is a viable option and would not damage the turf field. They hope if the Governor lifts the restriction that the Board will take it into consideration and allow for an in-person graduation ceremony with all of the protections.

Amy Raccagni, 21 Woodfields Drive, is the parent of a senior. They are advocating for option 2. Ms. Raccagni is in an at-risk group and does not take her advocacy lightly but with masks and social distancing guidelines it could happen. If they are concerned with liability issues she cannot see how schools could reopen in August. Further, other fields could be considered and suggested that a task force including students, parents, and staff members be formed. They could wait for the Governor to clarify his guidelines. Further, they could have four similar options ready – not decide on an option this evening. She asked that they wait to see what happens after May 20<sup>th</sup>. Seniors deserve their patience, guidance, and a chance to participate.

Jonathan Dos Santos, 25 Merlot Way, is an alumni of THS and in his second year at UCONN. He explained his family's experience and how UConn is addressing graduation. The seniors had their commencement but may not be able to walk this year. Mr. Dos Santos advised having an online graduation so all can attend at least one graduation and perhaps have another later, even possibly one next year. In regard to the virus, n95 masks are the only way to protect oneself from the virus. Where his mother works the n-95 mask supply is limited and they are placing COVID-19 patients in negative pressure rooms with full suits – a much greater level of protection than simply a mask.

Tamara Paolangeli, 35 Doe Run, is with her son who is a senior. She would like them to look at the One Graduation option and perhaps have it held in July. She would like there to be a plan A, plan B, and plan C where plan A is what the students want and then go from there if necessary. She would also like to see a task force that includes students. Her son Nathan is the Valedictorian and would like nothing more than to give his speech in person. She supports option 2 and holding it in July. Nathan explained that the seniors want to be together. In regard to fields, there is a nice field at Cross Farms that could be used.

Fisher Thompson, 533 Buff Cap Road, commented as a student representative to the Board he spoke with many students and in regard to the survey they wanted to know why the choice of dates was so limited. Also will NHS members receive cowls and/or cords? Will student leaders still have speeches? It is his civic and ethical duty to ask these student questions. Once the school year is over, social/emotional learning does not end. Graduation is the most dignified,

decorous, wholly positive event in most students' lives so far, and for many, ever. This community has made it clear that they would rather have a delayed, safe, in-person ceremony than no in-person ceremony at all. As the Student Council Secretary Mr. Thompson knows what postponed indefinitely means. They need to follow the lead of the state and not jeopardize anyone's safety or make hasty decisions. UConn has honorably altered and succeeded so far in a virtual ceremony and postponed the in-person ceremony to maintain the dignity and decorum of the event. Students and families have made it clear on the survey that they want an indefinitely postponed, socially distant, safe in-person graduation.

Christine Zonghetti, 11 Settlers Way, is the parent of a senior. This is not an easy project but they are in favor of option 2. It is not about the parents – they have already graduated. It is about the students. She does not mind having her student attend the graduation while she watches it virtually with her family so the numbers can be reduced and it can be done in a safer fashion. She agrees with having temperature checks. The youth are at the least risk so if dressed appropriately and with the proper PPE for an outdoor graduation they would have the most viable option. The seniors would be outside which would help. She noted that they would have social distancing and would respect it. This means a lot to them. They want to have something. In regard to the costs discussed, it sounds like the \$165 is a swag bag. She is sure some students would not mind foregoing this and putting the money toward what is needed to have the in-person graduation. Her senior student added that in regard to the turf field, he would not mind standing and wearing sneakers. He wants the in-person graduation – not with cars or splitting up students. Ms. Zonghetti added that the students have worked hard and deserve the graduation. She believes they will be willing to behave and make good decisions. They are going on to the next part of their lives and are ready to have this event.

Donna Lumia, 93 Williams Way, is the parent of a senior. She concurs with parents of seniors who support option 2 and 3. She advocates for making a plan A, B, and C and if it comes to plan C, she heard it said that the most important thing about graduation is friends. The car graduation does bring the class together however items such as if it was too hot etc. are of concern. She recommended the iteration of doing a virtual graduation, recording it, and then bringing the students together in their cars in a ceremony where they are all watching it together on a large screen. Then the students could turn their tassels together at one time and celebrate that way. Also, a parade is an idea and would be fun to have teachers from Birch Grove and TIS participate. This might be a fun way to combine some of the ideas.

Kody Gagnon, 69 Angela Drive, supports option 2 – an outdoor graduation. He wants one last memory of their high school experience. He understands options 1 and 4 are safer but if they do not have their outdoor graduation people will be "bummed out" about it and they want to stay positive. If they cannot do it on the turf, they could do it on the field. It gets hot on the turf in the summer.

Mason Jolly, 662 Merrow Road, was with his mother. Mr. Jolly advocates the One Graduation plan. They want to graduate as a class – it is 12 years in the making and is something that is very important to them. They have the space on the field. He feels it is a trivial problem with the damage to the turf field – there are easy regulations they could put in place. They could stand and those who wished to sit could do so in the bleachers. Sneakers would not be an issue. If not enough space on the turf field, they could use one of the other fields. He does not support the in car graduation – it is a bit over the top. It might be a necessity given that the Governor

has not allowed for gatherings of more than 5 but it should be a last resort. He added that he would like to see them graduate as a class and turn their tassels together in person.

Wendy Bond, 11 Elizabeth Lane, is the mother of a senior. They are in support of option 2. Ms. Bond is in a high risk category and understands, respects, and appreciates the thoughtfulness in regard to people's health but they are for One Graduation. This is a one shot deal for the seniors. This is the only opportunity many have to be with their friends for graduation. It is a milestone and they worked hard for this. She added that a task force would be helpful to come up with game plans A, B, and C and there could be appropriate precautions taken. The students want this and supporters of the Class of 2020 need to support the students as best they can. Graduation is the most memorable time people have. Again, she is in support of option 2 even if they have to wait until July but noted that many seniors, once they go to college, have already turned the page.

Carla Bliss, is the mother of a senior. She is in favor of option 2. She realizes these are times of sadness and risk for all. They face it in the workplace and when they go to grocery stores and other retailers. All of these places have occupancy close to that of the graduation yet they are not allowing graduates to commence with social distancing? The Air Force was allowed a commencement at the height of the pandemic. It is a positive sign the hair salons are going to reopen even though they service their customers at close proximity. She does not understand the inconsistencies that are being applied. They are asking seniors not to have their graduation because of the risks. Seniors are facing uncertainties as their first semester of college is online. Virtual college orientations are happening. They have lost prom, senior activities, pressure due to parents losing jobs and businesses. This is not a time they want to take more away from the seniors. It is a mental health concern just as the risk of losing people is a concern.

Sonika Kohli, 66 Sugar Hill Road, commented that she is a senior and a task force that involves students, teachers, and administrators is a necessary idea. It is her duty to contribute her opinion. The global situation has taught them that as human beings we are capable of amazing things and are adaptable. She understands that safety comes first but ruling out options is an injustice to all of their hard work. Parents, seniors, educators, Board members, and citizens of Tolland are capable of so much and if they work together they can come to a solution that is fair to everyone.

Cheryl Lyon, 14 Yearling Lane, is the mother of a senior. She agrees that parents do not need to be in attendance at graduation so the numbers can be reduced and there should be a task force. Further she agrees with the concerns regarding the emotional impact of the abrupt changes that have happened to the students. She would like to know why they are limiting themselves to the four options presented as written. Can they go back to the EHHD and see what conditions would need to be in place for option 2 to be possible to reduce the liability. As written it may be considered high liability but if the students were separated on the field and parents didn't attend and if it was stipulated how students would process perhaps it would lower the liability since option 2 is clearly the option most students want.

Olivia Person, 28 Shores Drive, is a senior who has been working with her dad and others to do the One Class, One Graduation, One Playbook. It has a great premise for a good graduation. It has guidelines that would fulfill what most seniors want with the most traditional graduation possible. She prefers option 2. While there are concerns, she believes it could happen in a safe



way. It would be a great way to commence their final year in Tolland if all could say their final goodbyes in one last way.

Emily Bliss, 46 Austin Drive, extended her support for a taskforce involving the Board, administration, parents, and seniors. Those experiencing the most pain during this time should be stakeholders in the final decision. The class would like to be alongside their peers when they receive their diplomas and thus option 2 is her choice. Everyone in this meeting besides the seniors has been able to experience receiving crucial closure of thirteen years of hard work and dedication. In June her class will have lost out on three months of goodbyes to classmates and staff and it takes an emotional toll on the well-being and mental health of the Class of 2020 - cancelled musicals, games, and college orientations and seniors whose parents are losing their jobs; seniors who are losing family. This will take an emotional toll on anyone and the seniors are feeling the impact of it. The priority is the safety of the community, class, and family. Since safety is of utmost concern, the mental health of students should also be taken into consideration. Seniors are grasping on the last bit of hope to get then through this last month. Having an in-person graduation ceremony is the last bit of hope. She asked what the restrictions are that are holding them back from having similar plans to those of other towns which are planning postponed, socially distant, in-person graduations. Also she asked for clarity on the limitations influenced by the teachers union on having a postponed graduation during July and August. She looks forward to more student involvement in the final decision.

Doreen Sauter, 27 Mountain Laurel Drive, commented that there is a lot of emotion. Everyone is going through a difficult time. Administrators and parents are worried; students are upset. They should all take a step back and not rush. A decision does not have to be made in the next week. Two months ago things looked much different than now. Things in some cases are looking better and things around the state are starting to open. A month from now things could look a lot better. Thus two months from now they might be in different situations. They would have more time and perspective. All students would like an option 2 ceremony if it could be done safely. Seniors have lost a lot – let's take the time to make the right decision, put together the task force, and consider all options.

Kody Gagnon, 69 Angela Drive, hopes they will find a way to bring the graduation into July in a safe and positive manner.

Kathie Cormier, 104 Doyle Road, commented that she missed the presentation due to the limit on participants and believes there would have been more participants had there not been a limit. She is the mother of a senior who would like option 2 if it is possible.

Taylor Lee, 76 Pilgrim Drive, commented that many parents and Board members spoke about the fears of graduation and of going to the grocery store. She sees this as you need to go to the grocery store and believes students throughout the twelve year process of trying to get degrees deserve an in-person graduation such as option 2. The other options are reasonable but there are ways to work around the high liability of option 2. She supports the opportunity to change some items so it reduces the liability and not making the decision within one or two weeks.

Eric Person asked that the Board take time to allow for the state to make a determination on if it will lift the restrictions on group gatherings so they can hold an in-person graduation.

Jenn Sargent, 65 Paula Joy Lane, is in favor of the task force. Her first choice is option 2 with the Playbook model. She believes it can be done. A decision should not be made tonight. She recommended having a plan A, B, and C and waiting longer to see where things are. Even waiting another week can make a big difference.

E. POINTS OF INFORMATION

Ms. Lundgren agrees with the suggestion of forming a task force consisting of students, parents, administrators, and board members. She commented that a decision does not need to be made this evening and perhaps if they wait some restrictions may be waived. She added that she would be interested in a virtual graduation in June and perhaps something more traditional in July.

Ms. Plourd likes the idea of having a task force and discussing how to reduce the liability to moderate or low. She apologized to anyone who was unable to join the meeting due to the restrictions.

Mr. Marie supports the idea of having a task force. He believes they can likely get to a place where they can reduce the liability and have somewhat of a traditional graduation.

Ms. Besaw likes the task force idea and believes waiting is fine. It seems that every day it is a new ball game and she is happy to put it off for a bit to see where they can land that is safest for students and fulfills what they have worked so hard for.

Mr. Holt has heard that option 2 is very important. There is wisdom in waiting until a decision has to be made. The environment and scenarios are changing daily. There is also wisdom in going back to the legal and health experts, presenting the goal, and asking what they need to do to make option 2 a viable option.

Ms. Howard-Bender promotes doing something virtual in June and then something when it is safe to do so. The community will rally but above all she wants to ensure all of the students and their families are safe. She likes the idea of a task force and wants there to be definitive plans that are subject to change based on what the Governor says.

Ms. Griffin commented that she is a proud parent of the Class of 2020. She agrees with the idea of having a task force. The most important thing they can do now is focus on what they can do for the students.

Ms. Moran explained that as the mom of a senior there has been a lot of grieving at home along with emotion and anger. She is leaning toward option 1 because if even one student is unable to participate then that is one too many. Even if that is one student going into the military, that student should have the opportunity to participate. A back up plan with something more traditional would be great and is what students want. Further, something virtual with a video that parents and students could have as a memento would be great as well. There is still time and thoughtfulness that needs to go into this important decision.

Ms. Philbin commented that she appreciates that they are not making a decision this evening. She is in favor of the task force and of doing something with the community and a video – something students can have. She believes there is an opportunity down the road to do the

right thing and have a graduation for the students in whatever capacity that may be but it needs to be an educated decision.

Dr. Willett commented. He prefaced that this is a difficult position to be in when there is an up swell of people who badly want something. It is completely understandable. He explained that the situation is not juxtaposition between those that care and those that do not care about what the students want, presenting information contrary to what some people want does not mean a lack of caring about the students. Everyone cares deeply about the students and their families. Ms. Fox and her team put a lot of work into the options and anything that is not portrayed well is on him, not on them. Dr. Willett explained that he asked many questions of EHHD and hoped they could do an in-person event. The communication he received back from the authority on health is that the in person event options posed a risk to public health. He asked the authorities about many scenarios, and reported the responses. It makes sense to wait a week or two - Commissioner Cardona may present some guidelines. Without the Governor reducing restrictions there are not many options and perhaps August will become an option. Dr. Willett explained that it is not that they do not want to do what the students want but they are in the unfortunate position of presenting information that does not mesh with what people want. It does not mean that they do not care or that they do not want students to have what they desire. It would be morally and ethically wrong not to present the information. Possibly in a week or two there will be different information but currently this is the information they have and they have tried to explore possibilities.

A discussion took place regarding putting together a task force. Dr. Willett will research any relevant legal considerations, get information, and begin to organize it. It will be an item on a future agenda.

It was noted that the options presented this evening will be posted online.

F. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Plourd motioned to adjourn the meeting 9:06 p.m.

Mr. Marie seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Pascuzzi  
Clerk

## TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

### Zoom Remote Meeting

REGULAR MEETING – May 13, 2020

Members Present: Ashley Lundgren, Chair; Christina Plourd, Vice Chair; Anthony Holt, Secretary; Renie Besaw, Christine Griffin, Jacob Marie, Karen Moran, Dana Philbin

Members Absent: Kate Howard-Bender

Administrators Present: Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent of Schools

Others Present: none

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Marie motioned to add Graduation Task Force as item H7. Mr. Holt seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- April 22, 2020
- April 29, 2020

Ms. Plourd motioned to approve the minutes of the April 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

Ms. Besaw seconded the motion. Changes: none.

A roll call vote was taken.

	Yay	Nay	Abstain
Renie Besaw	X		
Christine Griffin	X		
Tony Holt			X
Ashley Lundgren	X		
Jacob Marie	X		
Karen Moran	X		
Dana Philbin	X		
Christina Plourd	X		

Motion passed.

Ms. Plourd motioned to approve the minutes of the April 29<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Mr. Marie seconded the motion. Changes: none.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - none

E. CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Holt reviewed the correspondence:

- e-mail complimenting the TPS parade and efforts of distance learning on the academic requirements; concern that talk of a 0% budget is harmful to the schools

- e-mail requesting the signing of a petition in support of the 1.54% BOE budget proposal
- e-mail requesting brainstorming to identify proactive possibilities to allow a relatively seamless transition back to standard school
- e-mail requesting that all alternatives are considered before raising the mill rate; author requests that the BOE further reduce the proposed budget request wherever possible
- e-mail articulating the stress the virus has had on the youth of today; stresses the need for support of the "bare bones" budget
- e-mail articulating that kids will need more support than ever when they return to school; writer urges the Town Council and BOE to show a commitment to the children of Tolland
- e-mail supporting the use of the unassigned fund to keep the BOE and Town Manager's budgets in full
- e-mail articulating the need for proper funding to make it less stressful for teachers trying to do more with less
- e-mail providing information on the One Class, One Graduation, One Playbook program
- e-mail requesting that the BOE and Town Council support the future of the children of Tolland by maintaining the 1.54% budget submission
- e-mail discussing the need for adequate funding for the school district; compliments Dr. Willett and his staff and asks for communication concerning any disagreements
- e-mail asking the BOE to do everything in its power to support the budget that was proposed
- e-mail concerned about the existing budget issues; articulates that teachers are going above and beyond and deserve their raises; stresses the need for a budget that will allow schools to compete and raise children who will succeed in the complex and changing world
- e-mail offering ideas to fund the 1.54% while still achieving a 0% total
- e-mail supporting the Mansfield Drive In graduation idea
- e-mail urging unification under the budget proposal described by Dr. Willett
- e-mail supporting the budget proposal in reaching an early budget agreement
- e-mail asking the BOE and Town to work toward a 0% increase; writer's child is doing well under remote learning and is growing in independence
- e-mail describing the physical effects of the pandemic and requesting a 0% mill rate increase
- e-mail offering an article on the effect of school districts on real estate
- e-mail asking how the district will be ready if a second wave hits; author recommends considering this point while determining the budget
- e-mail as a parent and educator supporting the 0% by utilizing alternate funding sources
- e-mail requesting that the BOE support a 0%
- e-mail stressing that distance learning is not sustainable in the long term
- e-mail articulating that distance learning is going great
- e-mail supporting moving forward with the one-to-one technology increase as recommended
- e-mail recommending alternate software packages for distance learning
- e-mail recommending more face to face time for the teachers and students
- e-mail thanking the teachers for their efforts during distance learning

F. POINTS OF INFORMATION - none

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

- Seniors are concerned about graduation but are grateful to all for taking action.
- Student Council elections are taking place; voting May 7<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>
- Clubs are active and holding meetings
- Fourth quarter started; students are adjusting to online learning
- NHS is doing virtual inductions; virtual tutoring is available
- Tolland United classes are in session
- AP Testing started on Monday and will continue through next Friday

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

H.1 Monthly Financial Report

Dr. Willett reviewed attachment H.1.

The April 2020 financial report shows an available balance of \$1,030,366 or 2.58% of the BOE's current budget. Since the date of the report the second excess cost payment was received.

A discussion took place.

Ms. Plourd inquired about long term subs and if there is a hiring freeze in place to evaluate what the needs will be in the fall. *Dr. Willett explained that longer term subs (LTS) are usually incurred in the substitute line and there are positions they are looking to fill but based on the timeline may not happen by the end of the year.* In regard to travel and conference, since no one is going anywhere can they receive any reimbursement or will they be held online? *Dr. Willett responded that many of the companies are offering virtual replacements but they are evaluating the situation.* What was the excess cost reimbursement vs. what was expected? *Dr. Willett will need to review the numbers but thinks they will be able to make up the funds in the money they are recovering from tuition they have renegotiated for in regard to outplacements.* In regard to student transportation, if they are not paying for fuel and the drivers, why is this line over budget by \$100K? *Dr. Willett explained that they are in negotiations. They have had to pay payroll due to a state order. He expects it to be resolved within the next thirty days.*

Mr. Marie inquired about general supplies and textbooks. A decent amount has been spent in both accounts over the past month and he asked if this is end of year spending. *Dr. Willett is working with staff to learn if there anything being purchased now could be considered an offset for next year. He believes some of the items may be but a number of items needed to be purchased this year as well.*

H.2 Budget Update (no enclosure)

Dr. Willett reviewed the Phase II Update (05/13/2020)

- I. Impact of reductions on BOE budget
- II. End of Year Expenditure Options to mitigate budget impact of reductions
- IIb. Items needed for next year to contend with COVID and/or operations
- III. Projections for a.) Educational Reserve Fund Transfer b.) Remaining funds for transfer/roll-over to the Town
- IV. Other considerations
- V. Summary

#### Discussion

Ms. Griffin commented that she is not thrilled with the idea of concessions and would like it to be a last resort. She is also not in favor of any personnel reductions. She believes there are other options. She would like the \$212K to be found in end of year savings. Could any maintenance and repair be taken out of the end of year budget? She would also like to see the \$94K for Birch Grove be removed from the budget and if there is money turned over to the town that it be put toward the Birch Grove expenses.

Ms. Lundgren agreed that she does not want to go down the path of staff reductions.

Ms. Besaw commented that staff reductions should be the last resort. She believes there could be other items considered to bring the \$260K to a larger number and reduce the personnel reduction number hopefully to zero. She likes the Clorox cleaning system regardless of the pandemic. Ms. Besaw clarified her position on the Chromebook issue. As a district they did a great job putting together a program for the students but going into next year the focus should be on plans going forward. The Chromebooks represent a piece of equipment and they do not know the landscape where they would be used and the money may be needed for extra help for the students when they return in the fall. She would like there to be a big picture plan and then identify what is needed to support that plan and the associated costs. She is not against the Chromebooks but would like to know the plan.

Dr. Willett clarified that he does not want to conflate the one-to-one initiative with the online continuity of learning program. It just so happens that the 184 units would be replacing devices. He was going to have the Board do the instructional rounds with TMS to learn more about the one-to-one initiative and still hopes to do so. Traditional classes with Chromebooks are enhanced with the devices.

Ms. Besaw commented that in regard to replacing the 184 Chromebooks she is not against this but wonders why it was not in the budget in February. The last time this was discussed it showed the Chromebooks were being purchased for K-8. Sixth grade and up may be the way to go but she is unsure about grades K-5. She understands that \$123K is for more than the 184 units. Dr. Willett explained that the 184 were not in the 1.54% budget because they were not being utilized the way they are now. Currently they are getting a lot of use.

Mr. Marie commented that negotiations should be the last resort. He would like to emphasize prepurchasing and have the FFC look into it further as well as ask questions of the Town Council. He is in favor of replacing the obsolete Chromebooks and looking at all of the technological devices to see how they can be better utilized and have a larger discussion about their role in education going forward.

Mr. Holt confirmed that the 184 Chromebooks were not in the 1.54% budget. As they are discussing the 1.54% they are discussing the issues related to COVID-19 and the Chromebooks they want to replace but they do not have one concerted picture of what the environment needs to look like. In February the picture was described in the budget proposal but what he is hearing is that that budget proposal is no longer accurate. He

added that Dr. Willett explained that they could see a staff reduction. Mr. Holt commented that before they do this they need to go back to the proposal, ensure it defines the vision and understand what the number is. Are there other options? He understands there are three phases and asked the Chair when will the Board provide direction to the Superintendent on where it wants to see the reductions come from or when can the Board direct the Superintendent to look back into that budget proposal? Ms. Lundgren responded that at this point she believes everyone should be looking through the budget book to see what they could ask about. Also, she believes there are questions to ask of the Town Council such as if the phone system could be put through the capital budget.

Dr. Willett explained that he believes that a lot of the work will happen in the FFC meeting. As the numbers evolve they will have more detailed questions.

Mr. Holt explained that his concern is with the timing. He asked if at this point they could direct the Superintendent to look at some of the considerations and present them to the FFC so they could look at those options rather than having a brainstorming session. Dr. Willett responded that they are in the process of looking for those options and information is changing frequently. He expects a lot to surface between now and May 27<sup>th</sup>. He added that the Board will need to react to what the Council does and adjust to the number provided. Ms. Lundgren asked Dr. Willett if he could come up with options for the \$200K. Dr. Willett responded that he is doing that now and noted possible examples including energy and commodities.

Mr. Holt would like to see the option where they look within the budget and where they could remove numbers. He appreciates what Dr. Willett is saying but fears that there are a lot of "ifs" and is concerned about some items not coming to fruition and if this happens, how do they reach the number? Where are the efficiencies? Ms. Lundgren recommended sending questions to the FFC. Mr. Holt agreed but noted that Dr. Willett is in the unique position to be able to pool the information together so that it can be reviewed at the FFC meeting. Ms. Lundgren clarified that Mr. Holt is requesting that Dr. Willett have the information available for the FFC meeting. Dr. Willett responded his plan was to identify options and that he will provide information, and address whatever is asked.

Ms. Moran asked how they can assess the school system in a way that they are focusing on the experiences of students. They need to let the town and school staffs work on the options and have the flexibility to deal with uncertainties. There are many possibilities that could occur. Ms. Moran asked if there are any potential insurance savings. Dr. Willett responded that there are not. The trend is not helping in this regard. Ms. Moran asked if the Board could hear from the sixth grade teachers and their experience with Chromebooks in the classroom. Dr. Willett responded that he had hoped to do so prior to the pandemic and it may be possible to set up virtual instructional rounds now. In regard to the 184 replacements, Ms. Moran believes the number could increase since they are not yet at the end of the school year and there may be damage or other reasons.



Ms. Philbin commented that she understands the district needs to plan for 3 different possible scenarios for the fall and asked if Dr. Willett was taking this into consideration when working on the budget. Dr. Willett explained that he expects there will be requirements in regard to the number of students who can be in one place at one time. In order to comply there may need to be modified schedules. This will mean adjustments in considerations such as scheduling, busing, and cleaning. School staff are thinking about this and want to ensure they are in compliance. Dr. Willett expects to receive guidance from the state soon. Ms. Philbin asked what the increased transportation costs may be. Dr. Willett responded that while increases are possible, it may be that transportation is different rather than more. Ms. Philbin commented that regardless of the scenario Chromebooks would be needed in multiple capacities and advocates for the 184 Chromebooks. How can teachers use Chromebooks in the classroom to enhance education? Further, she believes they can look deeper into the numbers in the FFC and ask how items impact students. Dr. Willett responded that the Board needs to see the one-to-one technology via instructional rounds to have a better understanding.

Ms. Plourd commented that it is frustrating to be discussing a budget when they do not know if it has what is needed for the students since they do not know the mandates that will be handed down from the state. Originally she asked for concessions from the unions but the raises have been earned and perhaps there has been a pay cut in their families. At this time, she is not ready to ask for concessions but if they did perhaps they could receive half of the raise but this would be a last resort. Ms. Plourd added that she has a difficult time paying for busses that are not running and drivers who are not hired. This is \$3M. She would rather advocate for the teachers' raises than the busses. In regard to prepurchasing, she believes they can find the additional \$200K. They need to get to zero to keep the tax increase low for the citizens of Tolland. In regard to distance learning and one-to-one technology, two different items, the \$123.5K was K-8 but it now appears to only be for the 184 Chromebooks. Dr. Willett responded that it would allow them to cover K-8 and replace the 184. Ms. Plourd commented that she would like to know what the cost would be if it was only for grades 6-8. She does not feel her younger child needs a Chromebook from the taxpayers of Tolland but perhaps if she understood more her thought may change. Also, she inquired about the laptops that were included in the previous document for the ninth graders. Dr. Willett explained that it was included but the item did not receive a favorable response and was removed. It could be returned. Ms. Plourd commented that while she is not saying to add them back, she believes the older kids would be better equipped for distance learning than a kindergarten student. Lastly, because of the uncertainty, she believes there should be an ad-hoc committee for the reopening of schools in the fall to understand what the students will need and the costs. It could work with the Curriculum Committee and the FFC. This way the Board would have enough information to allocate funds to the students' needs in the fall.

Ms. Lundgren inquired if they went out to bid for the Chromebooks. Dr. Willett explained that they benefit from a state bid process. There is a standing bid that is considered to be a good price. In terms of the use of technology, he recommended the website, Center for Humane Technology, which talks about technologies that enhance

the human experience vs. others that "are part of the race to the bottom of the brain stem".

Ms. Griffin commented that they need to consider covering the high school students. They have discussed one-to-one for grades 6-8 and she likes the idea of the instructional rounds but in regard to one-to-one she is more curious what teachers would say about it for K-5. She asked if Dr. Willett could put together a list for the \$212K for the FFC meeting. Also, is there anything in the budget that could be removed – possibly look at prepurchasing or items that could go to capital or be covered by the ERF. Dr. Willett responded that he will do this.

Fisher Thompson commented on his positive experiences and those of his peers with teachers. Asking for concessions should be a last resort. He read a statement by Alexandra Costa expressing that she is not in support of asking for concessions and spoke of her positive experiences with her teachers.

Mr. Marie and Ms. Besaw commented that they are both in favor for having a reopening committee. Dr. Willett noted that such a committee may not be needed if the FFC and the Curriculum Committee are working on this item, and could have some joint meetings, but he will look into this.

Ms. Philbin noted that she would not want to entertain asking for concessions.

H.3 Policy 5010- Student Attendance and Truancy (First Reading)  
Dr. Willett reviewed the attachment for item H.3.

H.4 BOE Goal Setting Update  
Dr. Willett reviewed the attachment for item H.4.  
A discussion took place regarding possible dates.  
Dr. Willett will prepare a Google poll to identify the availability of members.

H.5. Last Day of School  
Dr. Willett reviewed the attachment for H.5.  
Tolland Public Schools last day for students is Thursday, June 18, 2020.  
Tolland Public Schools last day for teachers is Friday, June 19, 2020.  
A discussion took place regarding if the students' last day should be earlier to allow time for teachers to prepare for fall as well as the importance of having instructional days.

*Ms. Plourd motioned to extend the meeting past 10:00 P.M.*

*Mr. Holt seconded the motion.*

*A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.*

H.6. Superintendent Evaluation Update  
Dr. Willett reviewed attachment H.6.  
He reviewed the Superintendent Timeline Draft.  
A brief discussion of the timeline took place.

Ms. Plourd motioned to move item H.6 to item K.1 for action.

Mr. Holt seconded the motion.  
A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

#### H.7. Graduation Task Force

Dr. Willett recommended allowing the staff to go forward with planning the virtual graduation. While that is happening the Board should review the materials received from Shipman & Goodman and decide how to do the recruitment/appointments vs. the staff who will be involved in the task force. The task force will be a committee of the Board and subject to FOIA. It will be on the Board's May 27<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda. It was noted that the task force can plan an in-person event based on information provided by the state.

Mr. Holt expressed concern about proceeding forward with option 1. At the last meeting it was clear option 1 was not preferred. Proceeding with any of the options while they think about the other options seems like an end around the decision process. If Dr. Willett and his staff need direction now, Mr. Holt recommended that the Board vote and provide direction but he understood at the last meeting that there was still time for the Board to make a decision. He would like to know more about the timeline related to the various options. Dr. Willett responded that they have not yet received crucial information from the state and by having the virtual option they can ensure that everyone would be able to participate and have a ceremony. An in-person option may still be available. It will take time to create the virtual ceremony.

Dr. Willett reviewed the working document, Graduation Task Force, draft, dated May 13, 2020. This included a timeline and task force composition.

A discussion took place regarding how many people should be on the task force and that it should be set up quickly. Dr. Willett expects more information will be available by May 27<sup>th</sup> and noted that the Governor released some information today.

Ms. Moran commented that she would like to get things started. She supports making a compilation video as a memento and noted that some students are leaving for the military. It would not be fair for them to push things off but two events would be great. There is a risk that an in-person event may not be feasible. She does not want to risk not having anything for the students and their families.

Ms. Plourd commented that the document from Shipman & Goodwin has the date of June 18<sup>th</sup> on two pages and inquired about this. Also, what is the definition of "creative"? Dr. Willett explained that "creative" would be a virtual or drive-in option. Ms. Plourd would like to have the virtual option but she does not want it to be the backup plan for what the task force could create. She heard that students want an in-person graduation. If there is a virtual graduation, she would like the Shipman & Goodwin document to have a date of July 16<sup>th</sup>. Further, the task force should consist of those who want the in-person traditional graduation if the virtual graduation is done. Dr. Willett believes the date in the document is in regard to being within the timeline of the executive orders and what is and is not permissible.

Ms. Philbin is in favor of what the students have worked so hard for and that is a traditional ceremony. She appreciates the task force and would like to nominate Fisher Thompson to be on it. Right now they need to consider students who would not be able to attend an in-person graduation. Doing a virtual one now and a task force organizing an in-person graduation is the best of both worlds during this time. The virtual graduation would not be in lieu of but in addition to.

Ms. Besaw supports having the task force but a virtual component will be needed for those unable to attend an in-person event. The task force should be made up more of those who want the in-person ceremony since it was the driving voice at the meeting and on the survey.

Ms. Lundgren recommends having dual graduations so the students can have something in case an in-person is not allowed. She would still like the task force to be created and consist of people who are interested in working with what is needed for an in-person graduation. A further discussion of the number of people who should be on the task force took place.

Dr. Willett explained that if the Board is going to go with the virtual graduation option, then the task force would actually be a planning committee for a possible in-person ceremony should the state allow it later. Otherwise, if it is going to be an either/or decision, it would be a determination committee, and the voices should be balanced, it should include multiple perspectives. Ms. Lundgren clarified that the group would be dedicated to doing an in-person graduation.

A discussion regarding recruitment/appointment took place. Dr. Willett noted that the school staff would be assigned as needed.

Ms. Moran is in favor of having a virtual ceremony and a planning committee for a possible in-person ceremony. Dr. Willett clarified that assuming it becomes allowed by the state they will hold an in-person graduation celebration subsequent to the virtual ceremony, and it isn't an either/or situation, then a task force may not be needed and it could be a planning committee.

Ms. Griffin believes it should be a task force and it should look at the virtual ceremony as well. Dr. Willett explained that the virtual graduation will be a full graduation where students will receive their diplomas in a timely manner via appointment and have their photos taken within what the social distancing constraints allow. The virtual ceremony would combine all of the elements including speeches and be video streamed. Ms. Griffin would like see something else done as well such as the drive in. She would like the task force to look at all of the options. Dr. Willett clarified that the virtual graduation would not preclude the later additional event option.

Dr. Willett recommended holding the virtual graduation and allowing the staff to work on this and execute it in its fullest form and have the task force or committee be tasked with creating the in-person version of this when the state allows it. When the information is available they will know the parameters. The virtual version would be executed on June 18<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Philbin recommended that the two Board members who have seniors should be on the task force or committee. The focus needs to be on all students. The virtual ceremony is for all students and the task force or committee can focus on an in-person event.

Mr. Marie would like the committee to be included in planning the virtual ceremony as well as planning an in-person event. He recommended the Board move on this or table it.

Dr. Willett asked that they not conflate the task force that would set up the in-person event with the virtual ceremony only because of the timeline. They need to start working on the virtual ceremony and he has some concerns in regard to the logistics of getting people equitably and fairly involved soon enough in the same way they will be involved in planning the in-person event and noted the consideration of the timeline.

A discussion took place regarding tabling this item.

Ms. Plourd motioned to move item H.7 to item K.2 for action.

Mr. Marie seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion unanimously passed.

I. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS - tabled

J. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Ms. Lundgren thanked everyone for working hard during these times. She knows that tensions and emotions are high but they do need to remember that Board members are volunteers willing to help the community. She believes that sometimes it is easy for emotions to go into overdrive so please take a moment to think of how actions may impact someone else. They can only get through this with the support of everyone involved.

K. BOARD ACTION

K.1 Superintendent Evaluation Update

Ms. Plourd motioned to waive the Superintendent Evaluation timeline if mutually agreed by the Superintendent of Schools to the timeline identified in this agenda item (H6) of the May 13, 2020 meeting of the Board of Education.

Mr. Holt seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

K.2 Graduation Task force

Mr. Marie motioned to execute a virtual graduation and set up a task force for the purpose of executing an in-person graduation should the state requirements allow the in-person event and to instruct the Superintendent to recruit the students and parents/guardians as indicated on the 2020-May-11 task force document to be reported out in its final form in the May 27, 2020 Board of Education meeting.

Ms. Moran seconded the motion.

Discussion: Ms. Lundgren appointed Ms. Griffin as the Chair. Ms. Moran commented that as a senior parent she would always want an in-person graduation for the students.

Every parent/guardian would want an in-person event for the students. She asked why it has to be a task force. Dr. Willett responded that he is going with what the Board is most comfortable with and it seems to be a task force rather than another option. A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

L. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - none

M. POINTS OF INFORMATION  
Town Council Meeting Minutes – May 4, 2020

N. FUTURE

- Dr. Willett will set up:
- School rounds/tours (briefings/tours/debriefings)
  - Mental Health Services Initiatives (presentation and discussion)
  - School Bus Stop Safety (presentation)
  - Portrait of a Graduation / Visioning (presentation and discussion of initiatives)
  - Pathways and Lighthouse Programs
  - Understanding by Design (presentation and discussion)
  - Regionalization (presentation and discussion)
  - Board of Education Goal Setting (working session and establishment of goals)

O. NEW BUSINESS - none

P. ADJOURNMENT  
Mr. Marie motioned to adjourn the meeting 11:24 p.m. Ms. Plourd seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Pascuzzi  
Clerk

**SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND**

**ITEM:** Phase III Budget Recommendations  
**ITEM SUBMITTED BY:** Walter Willett, Ph.D., Superintendent  
**FOR BOE MEETING:** 5/27/2020

**ITEM SUMMARY:**

Following the Town Council meeting on April 28, 2020 the Board of Education was provided a document on April 29, 2020 during the special meeting that outlined a three phase approach culminating in a recommendation that is attached tonight. Throughout the month the following documents were provided to the Board of Education for review, and have been posted on web-site on or close to the time of their release:

<http://www.tolland.k12.ct.us/cms/One.aspx?portalId=891651&pageId=38382179>

2020-4-29 Phase I document

2020-5-6 Mid-Phase Update (I to II)

2020-5-13 Phase II Update

2020-5-21 Joint TC – BOE meeting Phase III 5/20 update

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY:**

The documents illustrate the impact of the potential Town Council reductions on the BOE budget, and update numbers through four basic end of year budget considerations: 1) Expenditures from FY20 remaining funds that can help mitigate FY21 budget impacts ( as well as advantages and disadvantages of such actions), 2) Educational Reserve Fund requests, 3) End of Year expenditures to address needs and challenges but that do not mitigate the FY21 budget , and 4) Roll over of funds to the town. The Phase III document attached tonight provides recommendations based on this information, and the review of the FFC committee on 5/20/2020.

**BOARD ATTORNEY REVIEW:**

N/A

**BOE ACTION DESIRED:**

Review and if possible commitment to the approach illustrated in the attached. General approval of curriculum and office allocations so that timely action may be taken on these items.

**SUPPORTING MATERIALS ATTACHED:**

2020-5-27 Phase III Recommendations

TO: BOE/TC  
 FROM: W.Willett  
 DATE: 5/27/2020 (with information available 5/21)  
 RE: Phase III Recommendations\*

**SECTION I: Impact of reductions on BOE budget**

**TABLE 1: Impact of TC potential budget reduction to BOE budget**

CONSIDERATION	Budget Figure	Description/Information
Estimated budget target for reduction from TC in meeting 5/12/2020 (and prior) for the FY21 budget	\$539,000	This represents 77% of the total reduction estimated at \$1,000,000.
Budget target for reduction from TC adjusted (5.13.2020)	\$518,118	Adjusted based on information from TM on 5/13/2020. Actual Town budget figure is \$972,881 minus \$300,000 of fund balance use is \$672,881 target – 77 % (BOE share) is \$518,118.
BOEB Adopted Budget 2.12.2020	\$614,803	Represents 1.54% budget adopted by the BOE.
BOEB Budget after TC reduction	\$96,685	Represents 0.24% BOE budget to reach TC budget objective
BOEB Budget after TC reduction <b>If capital budget reductions are applied*</b>  1. THS VCT tile replacements -\$10,000 2. TIS Sidewalk connection -\$35,000  <b>T.M. states this would then lower the amount BOE must incur for reductions</b>	\$141,685  (\$518,118 - \$45,000)	Represents 0.35% budget to reach TC budget objective with capital budget reductions applied.
Total BOE Reduction needed	\$518,118 - \$45,000 (capital reductions) = <b>\$473,118</b>	This represents the amount he BOE would need to reduce to meet the <b>0.35% budget</b> .



## **SECTION II: RECOMMENDATIONS**

**BASE: 5/20/2020 Budget Remaining: \$1,109,100.00 (5/20/2020)\***

\*Figures subject to change

Understanding that this figure can fluctuate as we approach the end of the fiscal year, the following recommendations are made in priority order to be adjusted based on funds available. These recommendations take into account the sentiments of BOE and FFC membership to this point in time.

### **Recommendation #1**

**Make the following End of Year acquisitions to mitigate FY21 impacts.**

<b>EOY EXPENDITURE RECOMMENDATION ITEM</b>	<b>Amount</b>
UBD	\$10,000.00
BGP RAZ	\$5,000.00
Rekenreks	\$3,000.00
Newsela	\$12,325.00
Literacy How	\$60,000.00
Literacy How Special Education	\$144,000.00
DBI With Dr. David Kearns	\$45,000.00
Wit and Wisdom	\$5,302.81
Custodials Supplies	\$15,000.00
Airex Filters	\$12,000.00
TMS Gym Floor refinish	\$5,500.00
THS Gym Floor Refinish(4,500 main, 2,000 mini gym)	\$6,500.00
TMS Fire Tank Inspection	\$5,500.00
Dyna Math	\$6,132.00
Promethian Interactive Displays	\$30,000.00
SSD & RAM	\$12,317.00
APC Batteries	\$2,000.00
Special Education Audiological Supplies 735	\$7,770.00

**A TOTAL: \$387,346.81**

### **Recommendation #2**

**Deposit \$85,771.19 into district medical account as a May/June deposit.**

**B TOTAL: \$85,771.19**

**A + B TOTALS PART 1: \$473,118.00**

**Advantages:**

- 1) Reaches the figure needed without staff reductions
- 2) Reaches the figure needed without union concessions

**Disadvantages:**

Budget next year (FY22) will need to put back:

What budget would need to restore next year	
Litearcy How	\$75,000.00
BGP RAZ	\$5,000.00
Rekenreks	\$3,000.00
Newsela	\$12,325.00
Wit and Wisdom	\$5,302.81
Custodials Supplies	\$15,000.00
Airex Filters	\$12,000.00
TMS Fire Tank Inspection	\$5,500.00
Dyna Math	\$6,132.00
Special Education Audiological Supplies 735	\$7,770.00
TOTAL	\$147,029.81

Impact on FY22 budget of these mitigations for FY21: **\$147,029.81**

**Recommendation #3**

**Request transfer of funds in accordance with Ordinance 86 Chapter 8 into the Educational Reserve Fund (for use in mitigating future Special Education, Technology, Capital needs): \$399,756.00**

These funds are important to help manage potential impacts of COVID-19 on special education, technology, and capital considerations.

**Recommendation #4:**

**Acquire the following resources out of EOY savings (not these *do not* mitigate FY21 impacts but serve a purpose).**

- A) Curriculum Writing: **\$17,400.00**
  - a. Important curriculum adjustments that include adjustments for COVID impacts.
- B) Central Office Conference Room to avoid code violations and to allow for social distancing: **\$7,000.00**
  - a. Important to avoid occupancy/code issues for big meetings and to effectively manage operations and adhere to social distancing requirements.
- C) Clorox 360 Cleaning systems (2): **\$13,000.00**

- a. Important to provide the district the capacity to clean rooms effectively and with expedience, which may be required by the state each twenty-four-hour period or more.

D) Carousel or Teleserv Phone Upgrade: **\$38,000.00**

- a. Important for operations as cannot add new lines (including approx. 20 at BGP) without the upgrade. Also important for safety and security.

E) Chromebooks for 1T1 and support of COVID related impacts

- a. This done through the CARES ACT funds (upon confirmation of funds)

TOTAL: **\$75,400.00**

**Recommendation #5:**

Recommendations 1 – 4 TOTAL: **\$948,274**

Roll over of remaining budget to the Town\*: **\$160,826**

\*As noted above, figure can change as final FY20 figures are ascertained.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND**

**ITEM:** BOE Goal Setting Update

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

**FOR BOE MEETING:** May 27, 2020

**ITEM SUMMARY:**

CABE has been contacted and confirmed to work with the Board of Education on goal setting.

Goal setting will have three main components:

- Step 1: Priming Session (Virtual meeting) – Superintendent Presentation: history of goals, work on Portrait of a Graduate, and current vision mission (about 1 hour). Nick Caruso in attendance.
  - **Suggested date: June 24, 2020 (during BOE meeting 7:30 – 9:00 PM)**
    - **CONFIRM**
- Step 2: Goal building session one with Nick Caruso - working within the parameters of whatever social distancing guidelines are in place at this time for BOE and public participation (in person meeting if possible, virtual meeting if not).
- Step 3: Resolution of BOE goals with Nick Caruso - working within the parameters of whatever social distancing guidelines are in place at this time for BOE and public participation (in person meeting if possible, virtual meeting if not).

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY:**

Included in CABE membership cost.

**BOARD ATTORNEY REVIEW:**

N/A

**BOE ACTION DESIRED:**

Determine dates for Step 2 and Step 3 based on information collected and shared.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND**

**ITEM:** Superintendent Evaluation

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

**FOR BOE MEETING:** May 27, 2020

**ITEM SUMMARY:**

In April the BOE was provided with the following information.

*I respectfully provide this reminder of the Superintendent of Schools annual evaluation process. The evaluation must occur no later than May 31<sup>st</sup> of each year with a written copy provided to the Superintendent no later than June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year of the agreement. The Superintendent may then provide a written reaction or response to the evaluation, which shall become a permanent attachment to the Superintendent's personal file. No later than July 31<sup>st</sup> of each year of the agreement, the Board in executive session shall meet with the Superintendent to discuss the evaluation.*

**In the May 13, 2020 meeting the BOE approved the following in a motion to waive the Superintendent Evaluation timeline if mutually agreed by the Superintendent of Schools to the timeline identified in the agenda item (H6) of the May 13, 2020 meeting of the Board of Education:**

*Waiver of timeline (mutual agreement for the 2019-2020 year only):*

*The evaluation must occur no later than July 31<sup>st</sup> of the 2019-2020 year with a written copy provided to the Superintendent no later than August 14<sup>th</sup> of the 2019-2020 year of the agreement. The Superintendent may then provide a written reaction or response to the evaluation, which shall become a permanent attachment to the Superintendent's personal file. No later than August 26<sup>th</sup> of the 2019-2020 year of the agreement, the Board in executive session shall meet with the Superintendent to discuss the evaluation.*

**In accordance with this waived timeline, the attached document illustrates the adjusted timeline and process. The BOE was provided initial evaluation templates and timeline on May 3, 2020. These documents were updated May 22, 2020 for this meeting.**

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY:**

As per contract.

**BOARD ATTORNEY REVIEW:**

N/A

**BOE ACTION DESIRED:** Review

**SUPPORTING MATERIALS ATTACHED:**

Superintendent Evaluation Timeline Draft (Updated for 5/27/2020)

Date	Venue (Potentially Zoom)	Action
June 10, 2020	Board of Education meeting Executive session "For the Purpose of Superintendent Evaluation"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent is invited into the Executive Session</li> <li>• Superintendent presents a document that will highlight actions/achievements for the 2019-2020 year</li> <li>• BOE Q &amp; A follows</li> <li>• BOE members are provided information for a Google Site that will allow them to submit their thoughts over the next week</li> </ul>
June 11, to June 15, 2020	In the comfort of their homes and offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOE members will review the material and submit their thoughts through the Google Form for the Chair and Vice Chair to review</li> </ul>
June 16 – June 23	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meeting between BOE Chair and Vice Chair (and/or other parties mutually agreed upon by the Superintendent and BOE Chair)</li> <li>2. Meeting between BOE Chair, Vice Chair, and the Superintendent (and/or other parties mutually agreed upon by the Superintendent and BOE Chair) to provide any needed Q &amp; A</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair and Vice Chair (and/or other parties mutually agreed upon by the Superintendent and BOE Chair) meet to review feedback and discuss Superintendent Rating</li> <li>• Chair, Vice Chair, and Superintendent (and/or other parties mutually agreed upon by the Superintendent and BOE Chair) meet so Superintendent can answer any questions that arise</li> <li>• Chair and Vice Chair (and/or other parties mutually agreed upon by the Superintendent and BOE Chair) complete the Superintendent Rating document for BOE review</li> </ul>
June 24, 2020	BOE Meeting Executive session "for the Purpose of Superintendent Evaluation"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair and Vice Chair present the Superintendent Evaluation document to the Board of Education members to review</li> <li>• Superintendent is invited into Executive session to provide any remaining Q &amp; A</li> <li>• Chair and Vice Chair make any necessary remaining tweaks and submit the final rating document to the Superintendent of Schools</li> </ul>
June 25, 2020 – July 7, 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meeting between the BOE Chair and Vice Chair (and/or other parties mutually agreed upon by the Superintendent and BOE Chair)</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOE Chair and Vice Chair (and/or other parties mutually agreed upon by the Superintendent and BOE Chair) enter into negotiations with respect to the Superintendent base salary for the following contract year</li> <li>• Details are determined</li> </ul>
July 8, 2020	Board of Education meeting (or special session prior to this date)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent increase/base salary is discussed/reported to the Board of Education</li> </ul>

**SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND**

**ITEM:** Policy 5010-Student Attendance and Truancy (First Reading)

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

**FOR BOE MEETING:** May 27, 2020

**ITEM SUMMARY:**

Policy 5010 updated to match legal advisement.

*Italics* in the attached document constitute *added* language.

~~Strikeout~~ in the attached document constitutes removed language.

Updates relevant research and addition of chronic absenteeism.

Once approved, the new regulation will be finalized and shared.

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY:**

NA

**BOARD ATTORNEY REVIEW:**

Updated as legally advised.

**BOE ACTION DESIRED:**

When ready:

Motion to move to action item \_\_\_\_.

First, Second, Discussion, Vote.

Motion to approve changes to policy 5010 as presented in the Board of Education meeting of (date).

**SUPPORTING MATERIALS ATTACHED:**

Policy 5010 – Student Attendance and Truancy Draft

**TOLLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Tolland, Connecticut**

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BOARD POLICY

REGARDING: Student Attendance and Truancy

Number: 5010  
Students

~~Approved: 2/28/01~~  
~~Revised: 4/28/10~~  
~~Revised: 12/14/11~~  
~~Revised: 6/26/13~~  
*Revised: 5/13/2020*

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Regular and punctual student attendance in school is essential to the educational process. Connecticut state law places responsibility for assuring that students attend school with the parent or other person having control of the child. To assist parents and other persons in meeting this responsibility, the Board of Education (*the "Board"*), through its Superintendent, will adopt and maintain procedures to implement this policy.

*In addition, the Board takes seriously the issue of chronic absenteeism. To address this issue, the Board, through its Superintendent, will adopt and maintain procedures regarding chronic absenteeism in accordance with state law.*

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes §10-220  
Connecticut General Statutes §10-184  
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-186  
Connecticut General Statutes §10-198a  
*Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198b*  
*Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198c*  
*Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198d*  
*Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198e*

Guidelines for Reporting Student Attendance in the Public School Information System (Connecticut State Department of Education, January 2008)

~~Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-2, Utilizing Local Support Resources Prior to Referral of Students for Family With Service Needs (August 4, 2009)~~



Connecticut State Board of Education Memorandum, Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences (June 27, 2012)

*Connecticut State Department of Education, Guidelines for Implementation of the Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences and Best Practices for Absence Prevention and Intervention (April 2013)*

*Connecticut State Department of Education, Reducing Chronic Absence in Connecticut's Schools: A Prevention and Intervention Guide for Schools and Districts (April 2017)*

*Connecticut State Department of Education Memorandum, Youth Service Bureau Referral for Truancy and Defiance of School Rules (February 22, 2018)*

*Connecticut State Department of Education, Youth Service Bureau Referral Guide (February 2018)*

**TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL**  
**ZOOM REMOTE MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 12, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tammy Nuccio, Chair; Steven Jones, Vice Chair; Brenda Falusi, Lou Luba, John Reagan, Kurt Schenher, Cassandra York

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** none

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Michael Rosen, Town Manager; John Littell, Fire Chief/Director of Public Safety; Lisa Hancock, Director, Finance & Records; Jason Lawrence, Town Assessor; Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent, Rob Miller, Eastern Highlands Health District

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Nuccio called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** recited
3. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** none
4. **PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS:** none
5. **PUBLIC PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** (*on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council*) (2 minute limit)

Colleen Yudichak, 12 Blueberry Hill, commented that the number of COVID-19 cases is thirty nine and she hopes the number is lower. Does this number represent residents who are still infected? She is also interested in any updates in regard to the referendum and is looking forward to a good conversation about the budget this evening.

6. **PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS** - none

7a. **REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES RESPONSIBLE TO THE COUNCIL**

- Birch Grove Building Committee: Chair Katie Murray provided a status update. A meeting is scheduled for May 19<sup>th</sup> where the project's GMP will be discussed. She noted that indicators suggest that they will come in over budget. The cost of steel is running over due to the accelerated time frame and they were notified that the unsuitable soil on site has exceeded the allowance and they do not know the extent or the cost of this yet. The project is on schedule for the town to receive the keys on August 23, 2021. A discussion took place that included value engineering, reimbursement rates, and the unanticipated costs.
- Sustainable CT: met today; Ms. Falusi provided an update
- Census Complete Count Committee: Ms. Falusi provided an update

7b. **REPORTS OF TOWN COUNCIL LIAISONS**

- Blight – next meeting May 21<sup>st</sup>
- PZC – met last night; Ms. Falusi provided an update
- Permanent Celebration Committee – met on May 7<sup>th</sup>; Ms. York provided an update
- Conservation Commission – next meeting on Thursday; Mr. Jones provided an update
- Water Commission – will meet on May 18<sup>th</sup>
- WPCA – did not meet
- Agriculture Commission – met on Monday; Mr. Schenher provided an update

- BOE – Ms. Nuccio provided an update; a joint Town Council/BOE meeting is scheduled for May 21<sup>st</sup>
- Historic District Commission – Ms. Nuccio provided an update on this evening's joint Town Council/HDC meeting

8. **NEW BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS):**

- 8.1 Consideration of a resolution authorizing the Town Manager to enter into a contract with Attorney, Lloyd L. Langhammer, to assist in the defense of assessed values. Mr. Rosen introduced this item. The Town Assessor has requested using a special legal attorney who specializes in litigations in superior court specifically for municipalities. The town just went through the revaluation process and they expect it to yield a couple of cases. This special attorney has agreed on the same pay rate as the town attorney.

Mr. Lawrence explained the process to appeal an assessment and the business of tax reps. He noted that they see most appeals the first year after the revaluation and tax reps tend to solicit the larger commercial taxpayers. He would like to have someone on the town's side that is more versed with assessment and the laws and explained the rationale behind his request to enter into a contract with the Special Attorney.

A discussion took place. Mr. Luba explained that this is a specialized area of law and one good ruling will pay for itself. He recommended that this be considered given the revaluation. Mr. Rosen added that he spoke with the town's attorney and he agreed that it would be more favorable for the town to work with a specialist.

Mr. Jones motioned to authorize the following resolution:

***BE IT RESOLVED*** that the Town Council authorize the Town Manager to enter into a contract with Special Counsel, Lloyd L. Langhammer, to assist the Town Assessor in the defense of assessed values.

Mr. Luba seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

8.2 COVID-19 Update

Mr. Rosen noted that the number of cases is the total count, not people who are ill.

Rob Miller, EHHD, provided an update.

- the 39 case data point is a cumulative number; it does not reflect the number of resolved cases; the systems currently in place are not tracking resolved cases; the enhanced program for contact tracing may have this functionality
- statewide number of hospitalizations is net and provided by the CT Hospital Association
- district wide: 152 cases (cumulative), 29 hospitalizations (cumulative), 9 fatalities
- Tolland: 39 cases (cumulative), 10 hospitalizations (cumulative), 4 fatalities
- the state is on an 18 day trend of declining hospitalizations (phase I recovery)
- expanded testing capacity is needed for phase I recovery
- expanded contact tracing capacity is needed for phase I recovery
- EHHD will be a beta test site for the new contact tracing system
- 150 case contact investigations have been completed; 33 case contact investigations are still active

- EHHD Executive Committee met and authorized Mr. Miller to waive all fees associated with any temporary changes to restaurants (temporary outside seating arrangements) to support local businesses
- Mr. Miller's staff is working with local officials to support local businesses and restaurants to take advantage of the Governor's Phase I Reopen CT initiatives
- Medical Reserve Corp Volunteers is up to 87
- EHHD has been receiving PPE on a weekly basis as part of the statewide distribution; this PPE is earmarked for private healthcare providers
- Mr. Miller has been working with Tolland officials in regard to the Office of Early Childhood guidelines for opening summer camps and in regard to how to reopen town buildings while protecting town employees and the public

Chief Littell provided an update.

- the Chief has had frequent communications with Mr. Miller
- the town is receiving PPE from the Department of Health deployment sites
- staff had a difficult week last week with the death of a staff family member; it is difficult to receive calls from hospitals notifying them that staff may have been exposed to the virus; the paperwork and other items are starting to take a mental toll
- they are doing their best to protect staff
- the Chief is the County Coordinator for 19 towns in Tolland County; they were able to adopt a formal plan to share staff if it becomes overwhelming for an agency or department
- active communications are taking place with religious groups and the town has asked them to come up with a plan that will provide safeguards; the plan will be reviewed by Mr. Miller and his staff for recommendations and guidance; the religious groups have been an asset to the community
- the Tolland Food Drive is ongoing at the Tolland Training Center; town staff has done an excellent job keeping up the food pantry; anyone in need should sign up for services
- while the situation is sad and taxing Tolland is a strong community; everyone enjoys seeing the signs around town and the video from the kids thanking the 1<sup>st</sup> responders brought tears to the Chief's eyes; the Chief is grateful for all for their support – including a rock that was left that said, "Hope"
- discussions regarding hosting the annual low cost rabies clinic in June are taking place
- the Chief encouraged people to check on their neighbors to ensure they have food and other items
- Chief Littell thanked everyone for their support. He has a great department in a great town. They are all trying to get through this the best they can.

Dr. Willett provided an update.

- the lunch program is going strong
- they are looking at modified schedules for next year and hope to have guidance from the state in the coming weeks
- a graduation taskforce was discussed the other night and they are in the process of putting this together
- they are working on the school pandemic plan
- Project Uplift is still underway

### 8.3 Discussion and Presentation on FY 20-21 Revised Budget Overview

Mr. Rosen presented the Town of Tolland, Revised Budget Overview dated May 12, 2020.

- **Balanced Budget: revenues and expenditures**
  - If revenues do not offset expenditures properly, there is the need to use fund balance to cover costs. The Town of Tolland annually plans to use some portion of the fund balance in this manner, but generally just what is needed to cover expected cost-gaps, to ease burden to the taxpayers.
- **Trends in General Fund Revenue Sources**
  - Property taxes make up 81% of overall revenue stream.
  - State aid makes up 16.66% of the revenue; main component is ECS funding
- **Factors that Drive Mill Rate Growth**
- **Original Proposed Pre-COVID-19 Model**
  - Revenue: \$10,577,917 (estimate)
  - Expenditure Summary: 1.88% (overall)
  - Town Expenditure Drivers & Revisions
  - Mill Rate Impact of the Financial Plan: increase of .67 mills (1.86%)
- **New Plan for FY 20/21**
  - Reduce 1.86% to 0%; no mill rate increase
  - Determine what revenues will be impacted by COVID-19
  - The gap is the number needed to have a 0% mill rate increase
  - Use more fund balance than normal to close the gap
  - Cooperating with the Superintendent to reduce operating budgets by the relative expenditure percentages; 77% from BOE, 23% from the Town
  - Town Side – strategies include reducing line item expenditures, consideration of project postponement, consideration of purchasing some non-recurring goods and materials
- **Why the Use of Fund Balance has to be kept minimal**
  - Cash flow issues
  - Uncertainty with COVID-19's impact on future state aid
  - Starting next year (FY21/22) in a hole that has to be made up either by persistent use of fund balance or a tax raise
  - Maintain Triple-A Bond Rating to secure low interest cost for debt issues
- **Summary**
- **Annual Referendum**
  - Executive Order 7HH requires that the Town adopt a budget for FY20/21 by June 30, 2020 and suspend any referendums.
  - Advised to follow normal procedures
- **Remaining Budget Calendar**
  - May 26 – Town Manager submits recommended budget to Town Council
  - June 2 – Public Hearing on Town Manager's recommended budget
  - June 8 – Town Council votes to finalize the budget for presentation
  - June 17 – Annual Budget Presentation
  - June 25 – Town Council adopts the budget and sets the mill rate for FY 20-21

Ms. Nuccio provided a recap:

- In regard to fund usage, the annual usage of the fund is an estimate. If the town can save money throughout the year then the use of fund, if all revenues are the same, is not as much as anticipated. Thus, savings can change the expected fund usage. If more revenues are received, that can also change the anticipated fund usage.
- In regard to the trend sheet, they have seen an increase in property taxes and the other category which includes the usage of the fund while they have seen state grants

going down significantly. Thus the tax burden is falling to either increases in the mill rate or increases in the usage of the fund. Mr. Rosen explained that as state aid is allocated out of Tolland they need the residents and businesses to make up that gap in theory.

- Investment Income – Ms. Hancock addressed what drives this income and how current events may have an impact on the investment assumptions in the original budget. This included reduced cash flow and thus fewer funds that can be invested.
- Importance of not using the fund to entirely address the gap and a discussion utilizing the example took place.

Mr. Jones inquired if the town has received any applications for the tax deferral program. Mr. Rosen responded that they have.

Ms. Falusi asked about COVID-19 related expenses and what is expected from FEMA in terms of reimbursement. Mr. Rosen explained that expenses are being paid out of the Emergency Declaration Fund. They have submitted a balance sheet to the state of expenses they have accounted for up to this point and projected out to the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Hancock noted that they are unsure what the reimbursement will be but traditionally it is a 75/25 split for eligible expenses. A brief discussion about in what areas they may be able to find savings took place. Mr. Rosen will address possible fuel savings at the next meeting.

Mr. Schenher inquired if there is an estimate of the operational savings. Mr. Rosen estimated that operational savings (recurring items that will not occur due to COVID-19) to be \$50-55K. Those one-time cuts will need to be built back into future budgets if they wish to continue having those items. Mr. Rosen reviewed 3 items in the capital plan that could be removed from next year's budget. The projects can be completed with savings from this year. Ms. Hancock is still working with department heads.

Mr. Luba inquired about the Birch Grove Project and the possible budget overrun. Mr. Rosen explained that if it is an amount that would have to be bonded then there would not be an immediate impact to the general fund except for debt service.

Mr. Luba asked about possible savings via wages or personnel costs as part of the offset. Mr. Rosen noted that in the presentation he stated that wages are one of the budget drivers. They have reached out to the unions on the town side to ask about concessions and received a response that they were hesitant to do this. Mr. Luba asked if something similar has been down by the BOE. Dr. Willett responded that the Board has discussed this but a formal request has not been made.

Mr. Reagan spoke in regard to savings that would be able to cover some expenses in next year's budget. Is this in regard to projects that have been postponed or would there be additional projects postponed. Mr. Rosen responded that he does not believe additional projects would need to be postponed but he is still reviewing items.

Mr. Jones asked what percentage of the fund balance would remain from the usage. Mr. Rosen explained that the discussion would be about the unassigned fund balance. It is currently approximately \$8.1M and they will project where it will be at the end of the year. Mr. Jones inquired about debt service and if there are any projects that will be coming off the books. Ms. Hancock explained the debt management structure and referenced the debt management plan in the budget book.

Mr. Reagan inquired about Executive Order 7HH. Mr. Rosen explained this Order came out after the last Town Council meeting and reviewed the language.

Ms. York asked if the unassigned fund balance is what is used to build investment income. Ms. Hancock responded that it is part of it as well as other idle cash until needed. Ms. York asked how many months of operating expenses need to be on-hand. Ms. Hancock explained that best practices are to have 2 – 2.5 months (\$9-10M).

Ms. Nuccio asked if by using the fund and doing the proposed reductions, what the built in increase is in recurring expense that will start the year. Mr. Rosen will have the numbers available at the next meeting.

**9. OLD BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS):**

9.1 Discussion on feedback for the creation of a Remote Participation Policy

Mr. Rosen provided an overview of this item. He explained that he does not expect the Council to make any decisions on this item this evening. They will need to wait until the executive orders are lifted and FOIA returns to normal before they can employ a policy. The draft policy was presented to the town's chair people and staff liaisons to get their feedback.

A discussion took place regarding the feedback that was received and how the draft policy could be revised to best fit Tolland. Topics included if remote software could continue to be used if allowed by FOIA. Mr. Rosen requested that the Council members submit their feedback to him so he can edit the document for their next discussion.

9.2 Consideration of a resolution to adopt an ordinance establishing a Commission on People with Disabilities and the setting of a Public Hearing thereon for May 26, 2020.

Ms. Nuccio provided an overview of this item.

Mr. Jones motioned:

**MOTION** that the following resolution be introduced and set down for a Public Hearing on May 26, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom Remote Meeting:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby establishes a Commission on People with Disabilities and hereby approves the following:

*The goal of the Commission on People with Disabilities (“The Commission”) is to provide information, education, and advocacy for the entire community by embracing the contribution of its citizens with disabilities, and to create a more inclusive Tolland. The Commission will research and advise Town Council on issues relevant to our citizens with disabilities.*

*The Commission will be a seven (7) member commission. Such members shall be electors of the Town, and not more than five (5) members shall belong to the same political party. To the fullest extent possible, the Commission shall be made up of a majority of members who are persons with disabilities, or who regularly work with or provide services to persons with disabilities. Members shall be appointed by the Town Council for terms of up to three years; two members with a one-year term; two members with a two-year term; three members with a three-year term. After the initial appointments, all future appointments shall be for three-year terms, or until their successor shall be appointed by the Town Council.*

Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

**10. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER (A WRITTEN REPORT SHALL BE PROVIDED THE 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF THE MONTH ONLY)**

- Status updates were included in the report.

**11. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

- 11.1 April 28, 2020 Remote Special Meeting Minutes
- 11.2 April 28, 2020 Remote Regular Meeting Minutes
- 11.3 May 4, 2020 Remote Special Meeting Minutes

Mr. Jones motioned to adopt the minutes in items 11.1, 11.2, and 11.3.

Mr. Luba seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

**12. CORRESPONDENCE TO COUNCIL**

- 31 e-mails were received over the past 2 weeks; this list is updated as of 4 P.M. today
- format: number of emails, topic
  - 1, forgiveness of the July payment of taxes for those who can prove significant impacts due to COVID-19
  - 7, supporting use of the fund balance
  - 11, zero dollar or zero percent increase
  - 13, supporting the BOE
  - 4, did not support using the fund balance
  - 3, discussed using the tax stabilization fund
  - 6, support of using the ERF
  - 2, raising the ERF to 2%
  - 5, no pay freezes or concessions
  - 1, support of union concessions
  - 1, support of Dr. Willett's plan
  - 1, delay of pay increases but have back pay
  - 1, find federal or state aid to assist the town
  - 1, playgrounds, tennis courts, little league
  - 1, sidewalk codes in regard to the Tolland Green
  - 4, outlined difficulties being faced by schools, teachers, and students
  - 1, outlining fiscal challenges residents face
  - 1, restaurants and use of outdoors
  - 2, mental health issues facing the town
  - 1, thank you to Tolland Public Schools in their entirety

**13. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

- May 13<sup>th</sup>, BOE meeting
- May 19<sup>th</sup>, Birch Grove Building Committee Meeting
- May 21<sup>st</sup>, Town Council/BOE Joint Meeting
- May 26<sup>th</sup>, Town Manager submits recommended budget to Town Council
- June 2<sup>nd</sup>, Public Hearing on Town Manager's recommended budget
- June 8<sup>th</sup>, Town Council votes to finalize the budget
- June 17<sup>th</sup>, Annual Budget Presentation
- June 25<sup>th</sup>, Town Council adopts the budget and sets the mill rate



14. **COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILPERSONS**

- Mr. Jones would like an update on the absentee ballot process and efforts to register people to vote.
- Mr. Jones received an e-mail from someone interested in serving on a board/commission.
- Mr. Jones would like to know how the library is handling getting new individuals registered for library cards so they can access digital services and information on library renewals so people do not lose access if their card becomes inactive.

15. **PUBLIC LISTED PARTICIPATION** *(on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council)*  
*(3 minute limit)*

Liz Costa encouraged the Council to support the BOE budget and use of the fund balance. Last year they used \$300K, the year before they used \$690K, and the year before just under \$300K so it has become kind of an operating expense if one looks at it that way. The ordinance allows them to get down to 10% without having to repay it. There is \$8.1M so that is \$5.8M that they would have to get down to. She encouraged the Council to use the fund balance to fully support education and the town side. She does not believe anyone in the town should have to take a pay cut during these terrible times. If there was ever a reason to utilize the fund balance now would be the emergent situation she thinks they would use it in. Lastly, Dr. Willett and the Town Manager had an inordinate amount of planning to do without a lot information. She does not support asking teachers for a concession.

16. **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Jones motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:28 p.m.

Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

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Tammy Nuccio, Council Chair

Lisa A. Pascuzzi  
Clerk