

Regular Meeting

KILLINGLY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Wednesday, February 26, 2020

7:00 PM

Town Hall, 172 Main Street

MINUTES

Present: Greg Biggs, Doug Farrow, Norm Ferron, Hoween Flexer, Craig Hanford, Jason Muscara, Lydia Rivera Abrams, Chris Viens.
Student Board Members: Jordan Dreibholz and Alexandra Purcell.

Others Present: Superintendent Steve Rioux, Assistant Superintendent, Paul Brenton and Keely Doyle, Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

Killingly Board of Education Chairman, Mr. Craig Hanford called the February 26, 2020 meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL-see above

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

3.A Ms. Bethany Knowlton, KHS vocational agricultural teacher and KHS FFA officers, Sydney Rosen and Erin DeRouin shared some information regarding FFA. FFA is an intra-curricular student organization for those interested in agriculture and leadership. It is one of the three components of agricultural education. FFA has over 700,000 members. There are 143 Killingly student members. Sydney and Erin shared information regarding FFA sponsored activities and community events. KHS agricultural classes include, mechanics, engineering, aquaculture, animal sciences, companion animal care, horticulture, floral design, environmental sciences, forestry, biotechnology. The Killingly FFA program is very successful and nationally recognized. Students are very successful in the FFA competitions and go on to National competitions. The students thanked the Board members for their continued support of the program.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

MOTION: by Mr. Muscara, seconded by Mr. Farrow to allow 3 minutes per speaker during public comments.

Yes-8

No-1

Motion carries

Mr. Greg Biggs read studies supporting the importance and impact of early childhood education.

The remaining public comments were those in support of a turf field at Killingly High School.

Mr. Greg Biggs- Killingly resident and Board of Education member.

Alan Carpenter- Brooklyn resident.

Justin Baker- KHS sophomore student. Turf field would be an investment.

Emma Carpenter- KHS sophomore student.

Sage Lamparelli-KHS student.

Makala Dube- KHS student.

Aila Gutierrez- KHS student.

Sophia Moore- KHS student.

Chris Jax-KHS student.

Nathan Keefe-KHS student.

Ryan Miller- KHS student.

Shane LeDuc- KHS student.

Chad Neal- KHS football coach.

Misty Crowley- KHS alum, KIS teacher, and parent.

Beth Knowlton- KHS horticulture teacher.

Lance LeDuc-Head coach of the KHS baseball program.

Patricia LeDuc- Resident. Improved bathroom facilities are needed at the playing fields.

Steven Rief-Griswold resident. His son was accepted to attend KHS Vo-Ag program next year. KHS athletic program also impacted his decision.

5. INTERVIEW FOR BOARD VACANCY

Mr. Craig Hanford shared that Ms. Fremuth is moving to another state and resigned. Ms. Janice Barbara Joly is the candidate to fill the Board's vacancy.

Ms. Joly is a long-time resident of Killingly. Ms. Joly has been an educator since 2000. She has a vested interest in the community. Being a Board member, would be an honor and rewarding experience. Her passions are reading, language arts, and literacy.

She would like to bring some positivity to the Board and have Board members work together. Ms. Joly has been a member of a curriculum subcommittee in the district where she is currently working. She was a member of a NEASC committee and is very compassionate about her career as a teacher and working with children.

6. APPOINTMENT OF NEW BOARD MEMBER

MOTION: by Ms. Rivera-Abrams, seconded by Mr. Farrow to appoint Ms. Janice Barbara Joly to the Killingly Board of Education.

Yes- 8

Motion carries

Ms. Joly was sworn in as a new Killingly Board of Education member by the Assistant Town Clerk.

MOTION: by Mr. Biggs, seconded by Ms. Flexer to take a 5-minute recess.

Yes- 8

Motion carries

The Board of Education meeting resumed at 8:17 p.m.

7. COMMUNICATION AND REPORTS

7.A. Board Chairman's Report

MOTION: by Mr. Biggs, seconded by Mr. Hanford to move agenda item 9.b after agenda item #7.c.

Yes-9

Motion carries

7.B. Committee Report

7.B.1. Curriculum Subcommittee

7.B.1.1. Units of Study in Phonics for Grades K-1-Forwarded by Curriculum Subcommittee for Approval.

MOTION: by Mr. Biggs, seconded by Ms. Flexer to approve Units of Study in Phonics for Grades K-1 as presented.

Yes-9

Motion carries

7.B.2. Facilities Subcommittee- Mr. Rioux shared subcommittee members will continue to review a 5-year capital improvement plan.

7.C. Natural Grass Field Presentation

Ms. Amy Langlois is a past graduate KHS's Vocational Agricultural program and a Killingly resident. She also is a Killingly business owner. Ms. Langlois shared a report on disadvantages of turf versus natural grass. Her presentation included topics on, carcinogens, replacement cost, contaminants, weather, heat, humidity, safety. Ms. Langlois referenced internet sites for additional information. She does not support the installation of turf.

Ms. Lydia Rivera-Abrams shared that she is more concerned about the installation of turf as a result of Ms. Langlois's presentation.

Mr. Biggs shared that based on his own research, turf products have changed significantly and improved over the years.

Ms. Flexer shared that there are many contradictory studies regarding turf fields and it is imperative to use correct and up to date resources.

Mr. Farrow asked Mr. Rioux to look into the use of flat shoes or sneakers on turf, and asked for clarification if this would impact the warranty. Mr. Rioux shared that flat shoes or sneakers does not impact the warranty.

Mr. Ferron asked if there are waste companies that dispose abandoned turf field material.

Mr. Viens asked about sod replacement costs and the distance contaminants could travel to nearby wells.

Mr. Hanford asked if there were any findings of illness, or deaths, directly related to turf carcinogens.

9.B. Moved to earlier in the agenda.

Turf Field Project (Discussion and Possible Action)

More discussion ensued amongst Board members.

Ms. Flexer shared that the fields have been in terrible condition for over a decade and encouraged the Board to ask the Town to address the issues and hold the Town accountable.

Ms. Rivera-Abrams reiterated that it is important to consider, that The Town's contribution towards the turf field would be the same \$300,000 that the Board returned to them. That money could address other budgetary items. The non-lapsing account should be used for educational services, experiences and programs only.

Mr. Muscara said, that no matter what, it is all taxpayer money.
Mr. Biggs shared that he's received dozens of emails from taxpayers, supporting a turf field. This would encourage more students from sending districts. There is a need to procure more useable field time
Many surrounding districts already have turf fields.
Mr. Biggs read letters by Sean Beauregard and Erica Ponciano supporting a new turf field.
Mr. Farrow agrees not using funds from the non-lapsing account to help support a turf field.
Mr. Ferron shared concerns about turf field carcinogens and the safety of students.
Student Board representative, Jordan shared that current fields are very unpredictable when students are playing on them. It's not good practice to continue transporting students to other fields.
Mr. Viens questioned the usability of the lower KHS fields.
Mr. Rioux shared estimated costs, anticipated procedures involved to repair and re-sod the current field.
Mr. Hanford thanked all the students for sharing their opinions and comments. He is not in favor of using non-lapsing funds for a turf field.
Ms. Flexer shared that girl athletic teams do not have access to quality playing fields and not in favor of using non-lapsing account funds.
Mr. Muscara inquired about the future use of the playing fields at the Westfield Ave. and shared that beyond the price tag presented for the turf field, there will be additional costs related to repairs for the fields at Westfield Ave. How would the turf field be shared amongst all the teams.

Mr. Hanford gave audience members another opportunity to speak.

Jason Anderson shared that his past injuries have occurred on grass fields.
Beth Knowlton shared that Ms. Langlois is a licensed arborist. Curriculum has changed considerably over the years. Much of Ms. Langlois research is not valid, or factual.
Steven Rief did not find any studies confirming health risks related to playing on turf. Carcinogens are everywhere.
Misty Crowley asked the Board about Ms. Langlois's credentials and her authority on the subject.
Outdated data was presented.
Mr. Rioux shared that the use of flat shoes or sneakers does not void the warranty.
Chad Neal shared that there will be no parking allowed on a turf field, grub killer and many insecticides cannot be used on grass fields. Coaches follow laws, measuring heat and humidity on the fields.
Practices and games are scheduled around those type of adverse conditions. Mr. Neal explained how the teams would share the field. He has no reservations about student's health being at risk by playing on a turf field.

MOTION: by, Mr. Biggs, seconded by Ms. Flexer to approve a KHS Turf Field Project, using \$200,000 from the FY2019-20, no use of non-lapsing funds.
Roll Call Vote
Yes-6 (Mr. Biggs, Mr. Farrow, Ms. Flexer, Ms. Joly, Mr. Muscara, and Mr. Hanford)
No-2- (Ms. Rivera-Abrams, Mr. Viens)
Abstain-1 (Mr. Ferron)
Motion carries

Option III-Project Cost = \$906,438
Potential Town Council Contribution= \$300,000
Non-Lapsing = \$0
BOE Contribution from FY19-20 = \$200,000
Potential Annual Lease = \$71,550
Beagary Annual Contribution (7 yrs.) = \$52,000
BOE Budget Obligation (7 yrs.) = \$19,550

The project will go to Town Council for review and possible approval.

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

8.A. Charter Oak Memorandum of Understanding (Discussion and Possible Action)

Mr. Hanford asked for clarification of why Board action is needed for an automatic renewal. Mr. Rioux explained that the proposed MOU is for one additional 5-year period. Mr. Hanford and Ms. Rivera-Abrams shared concerns of why the opportunity is not opened to other banks and if there is a bid process for this type of service. Mr. Rioux shared information regarding opportunities provided to KHS students by Charter Oak and their past and present commitment to the community.

MOTION: by Mr. Biggs, seconded by Ms. Flexer to authorize the superintendent to renew the Board's contract with Charter Oak Federal Credit Union branch at Killingly High School for five (5) additional year.

Yes-8

No-1

Motion carries

Mr. Hanford excused himself from the meeting. Board of Education Vice-chair, Mr. Farrow assumed control of the meeting.

8.B. I.T Security Grant (Discussion and Possible Action)

MOTION: by Ms. Flexer, seconded by Ms. Joly to approve the Public Educational and Governmental Programming and Education Technology Investment Account Grant Program Application as presented.

Yes-8

Motion carries

8.C. January Monthly Financial Report

Mr. Steve Rioux shared education out-of-district placements are showing a \$344,000 deficit. Teacher's salaries line account is showing approximately \$182,000 surplus, mostly due to vacancies. Balances and excess cost reimbursement rates for net local placements and net agency placements were shared.

There were no transfers over \$10,000. An expected surplus estimate of \$350,000.

All 2018-19 purchased orders are closed. A donation from Walmart was received in the amount of \$4,000.

Ms. Clark reiterated that the net deficit of \$344,000 special education outplacements is consistent with last month's report.

MOTION: by Mr. Biggs seconded by Ms. Flexer to extend the Board meeting for 1 hour past 11:00

Yes-7

No-1

Motion carries

MOTION: by Mr. Biggs seconded by Ms. Flexer to enter into executive session to discuss an employee sick bank request.

Yes-8

Motion carries

The Board entered executive session at 10:51p.m. The Board came out of executive session at 10:57 p.m. and resumed the Board meeting.

8.D. Sick Bank Request (Possible Executive Session)

MOTION: by, Ms. Flexer, seconded by Ms. Rivera-Abrams to approve a sick bank for said employee, up to 60 days.

Yes-8

Motion carries

8.E. 2020-21FY Budget Review

Mr. Steve Rioux presented and reviewed decision packages, reductions, added positions. New adjusted totals were shared with percent of increases.

Ms. Flexer asked how many students are in the Alternative Education Center and questioned if parents would enroll their children in a half-day program.

Mr. Rioux shared information on an option of restructuring the District Truancy Officer to a School Resource Officer.

Ms. Joly shared that she would feel safer with an armed school resource officer.

Mr. Viens asked what the district's liability would be if a gun was taken from a resource officer.

Mr. Biggs and Mr. Viens, Ms. Flexer and Mr. Ferron shared that it would not be wise to propose only a 1.18 % increase. Not in favor of cutting preschool.

Mr. Farrow would like to see no more than 1.7% increase.

Ms. Rivera-Abrams agrees with a 1.96% or 1.99% increase.

Ms. Flexer asked that increases be presented in how they affect mill rates.

Mr. Rioux will talk with Ms. Calorio to see if they can come up with estimates for mill rates based on a proposed increase.

The Board tabled this item and will hold another special meeting on Wednesday, March 4 to finalize a proposed FY2020-21 budget.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

9.A. Central Office and Killingly Parks and Recreation Merger (Discussion and Possible Action)

Tabled to next Wednesday.

10. NEW BUSINESS- No new Business

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: by, Ms. Flexer, seconded by Mr. Biggs to adjourn.

Yes-8

Motion carries

The February 26, 2020 Killingly Board of Education meeting adjourned at 11:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Keely Doyle

Recording Secretary