

Special Meeting

KILLINGLY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Wednesday, March 19, 2020

7:00 PM

Town Hall, 172 Main Street

MINUTES

Present: Craig Hanford (7:29) Greg Biggs, Norm Ferron, Janice Joly, Jason Muscara,
Participation via phone: Craig Hanford, Doug Farrow, Hoween Flexer,
Lydia Rivera-Abrams, and Chris Viens.

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Killingly Board of Education meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL-see above

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS-

Due to the restrictions on group size at public forums, tonight's meeting was streamed on Channel 22 and on the Town's Facebook page. Public comments were submitted via email.

Jessica Cusson-resident and parent. When will students return to school? How will students successfully, transition to the next grade level? How do we implement lesson plans or homework? She also asked for the superintendent's contact information.

Carol Kania, resident.

Issues with Channel 22. There is no ability to access archived meetings and a KPS FB page is needed to keep parents and the community up to date.

Katie Roumbakis, resident.

Can the Board consider the time while schools are closed to be "summer vacation in the spring?" Children don't potentially fall behind and are able to finish the school year in their current grade level, and resume this school year by early summer.

Mr. Biggs read a letter from Kaitlyn Mielniczuk, KIS teacher and parent.

Ms. Mielniczuk shared that salary and hourly paid members are working together towards a common goal, and asked the Board to consider providing the hourly rate individuals their pay over the course of our school closure. Hourly rate staff deserve to be financially safe during this time of crisis.

4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING EXTENDED SCHOOL CLOSURE

Mr. Rioux shared the latest developments that are significantly impacting schools, statewide and nationwide due to the Corona virus pandemic. All superintendents have been receiving Executive Orders from the Governor and guidelines from the Commissioner of the State Department of Education. Currently, all schools are closed through March 31. The last day of school for Killingly will be June 18 regardless of when school reopens. Mr. Rioux anticipates updates from the State for extended closures.

Mr. Rioux asked that the Board address and take possible action to support the needs of students, teachers by purchasing necessary equipment and services to support remote learning plans. There is also a need to address the option of continuing a normal payroll process, which will not require most employees to seek unemployment, with the exception of non-contracted employees and substitutes. MOAs for each bargaining unit impacted by the school closure is needed, as job descriptions will change. During school closure, 12-month employees continue to work a normal work day and many 10-month, non-certified employees will participate in professional development or instructional support.

Purchasing hardware and services to support increased access for more families is a priority. A survey went out to all parents asking parents to provide feedback on to help identify families that do not have on-line resources or access to the internet.

Grab and Go lunches and breakfasts were made available as of March 16 for all children under the age of 18 at KMS location. Delivery service is also available.

Lesson packets have been mailed home to families at the elementary level and staff continue to work on lesson plans. Districts received a link today from CSDE for special education resources.

A modified high school schedule has been created.

Administration has created remote learning plans to provide staff, students and families on what the next few weeks may look like.

Ms. Flexer asked if the KMS Grab and Go distribution location could also be available for parents to pick-up hardcopies of lesson plans.

Mr. Rioux shared that most districts are following normal pay schedule periods, which makes more financial sense and will protect employees from leaving the district. Only contractual hours will be paid to employees. Pay for over time and stipends is not anticipated.

Mr. Biggs asked that paraprofessionals be given the ability to stay connected with the students and pay them for their contractual hours.

Ms. Joly asked if special education students will be impacted and how are we meeting those needs.

Mr. Rioux shared that meeting IEPs and special education needs will be more difficult. Behavioral Specialist could offer online office hours. Occupational Therapists could provide home based activities, via phone and through online consultations. Speech and Language Pathologist assistants could be included in teaching sessions.

T-Mobile and Verizon companies have been contacted. We are seeking information about securing devices for remote student learning including fee per device, monthly fees, contractual agreements, on-line hotspots, future use of the same devices and licenses.

Funds to support remote student learning and devices will come from Title I, Title IV and the Alliance grant.

Ms. Rivera-Abrams asked about expenses and revenue. In light of recent events, could the Board rescind their motion, approving \$450,000 towards the cost of a turf field? Allow a two-week pay period for employees and wait to see what transpires over the next several weeks.

Mr. Rioux clarified that the only revenue changing is from GECC. Employee salaries are already budgeted. At the end of the year, Mr. Rioux anticipates a larger positive balance and in addition, the State will probably shift grant funding. Title I, IV and Alliance funds can go towards costs related to remote learning devices and services and possibly the I.T hardware line account.

The superintendent's recommendations are consistent with strategies amongst other districts. KPS will stay closed during April vacation and school would not be made up during the summer.

Ms. Flexer and Mr. Farrow reiterated that the district is not spending any additional money and employee's hourly wages have already been budgeted. We need to continue to pay our employees, work with each bargaining unit, enter MOAs and support resources for remote learning.

Mr. Biggs shared that he has been receiving a lot of information and updates from the District. Due to constant changing conditions and the importance of continuing education for our students by remote learning he supports the superintendent's recommendations.

MOTION: By Mr. Biggs, seconded by Mr. Muscara to authorize the superintendent to continue to pay employees as discussed, enter into a MOA with each impacted bargaining group as needed, and purchase resources as needed to support remote learning plans.

Mr. Hanford and Ms. Joly shared that they would like see the motion amended into two different motions. One motion regarding salaries/MOAs and one motion for Purchasing of Resources. This would allow the Board time to receive estimates related to remote learning resources and devices.

Mr. Muscara shared that it was important for the Board, in these circumstances to authorize the superintendent to pursue and support the needs of the district and students.

Mr. Viens would like to keep the motion as it was first presented.

Mr. Biggs shared that the superintendent has proven over the years that he does not waste the district's money and if the Board wanted, the superintendent could provide a follow-up expense report.

MOTION: by Ms. Rivera Abrams, seconded by Mr. Hanford that the motion be amended into two separate motions. One for Salaries/MOAs and one for Purchasing Resources to Support Remote Learning.

Roll Call Vote

No- Greg Biggs, Norm Ferron, Hoween Flexer, Jason Muscara, Chris Viens.

Yes- Doug Farrow, Janice Joly, Lydia Rivera-Abrams, Craig Hanford.

Motion Fails.

Mr. Biggs asked if the superintendent's financial update could reference expenses related to school closure, separately, under its own title. Ms. Rivera Abrams asked for clarification about hourly paid employees being compensated until June 18th.

Ms. Joly asked for clarification regarding the last day of school. Mr. Rioux shared that the Governor granted the CT State Commissioner of Education authority in allowing districts to determine their last day of school. For Killingly Public Schools, the last day of school was calculated to include the addition of three snow days when schools were cancelled. The last day of school went from June 15 to June 18.

MOTION: By Mr. Hanford, seconded by Mr. Farrow to amend the motion to include that the superintendent provides Board members financial updates related to Salaries/MOAs and Purchasing Resources to Support Remote Learning.

Roll Call Vote

Yes-Greg Biggs, Norm Ferron, Jason Muscara, Chris Viens,
Doug Farrow, Janice Joly, Lydia Rivera-Abrams, Craig Hanford.

No- Hoween Flexer

Motion Carries

MOTION: by Mr. Biggs, seconded by Mr. Muscara to authorize the superintendent to continue to pay employees as discussed, enter into a MOA with each impacted bargaining group as needed, and purchase resources as needed to support remote learning plans and provide Board members financial updates related to Salaries/MOAs and one for Purchasing Resources to Support Remote Learning.

Roll Call Vote

Yes-Greg Biggs, Norm Ferron, Hoween Flexer, Jason Muscara,
Doug Farrow, Janice Joly, Lydia Rivera-Abrams, Chris Viens and
Craig Hanford.

Motion Carries

5. ADJOURN

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

Unanimous

Motion Carries

The March 19, 2020 Special Killingly Board of Education meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Keely Doyle

Recording Secretary