

KNOWLTON TOWNSHIP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

MEETING MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING – March 22, 2021

Notice of Meeting

The New Jersey Public Meetings Law was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of, and to attend the meetings of, public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Knowlton Township Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time and place thereof posted with The Express-Times and The Star Ledger and distributed to the Knowlton Township Elementary School, the Delaware Post Office, and the Knowlton Township Municipal Building. This meeting will commence at 7:00 P.M. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting will be held remotely. The public will be able to access the agenda, as well as electronically view and participate in the public portion of the meeting via a link posted on the District's website at www.knowltonschool.com or by dialing in using the following phone numbers: 929-205-6099 Webinar ID: 832 8125 4039 Passcode: 870320943. Any members of the public wishing to submit written comments prior to the start of the meeting must email such comment to the attention of the Board Secretary at brennanm@knowltonschool.com. Any such comments that are received by Monday, March 22, 2021 at 12 noon will be read aloud at the meeting for three minutes.

Call to Order

Mrs. Smith called the meeting (Webinar) to order at 7:03 p.m.

Flag Salute

Mrs. Smith invited everyone to join her in the flag salute.

Roll Call

Present: Mr. Matthew Baley, Mrs. Dawn Bates, Mr. Don Biery, Mrs. Rhonda Moritz, Mrs. Tammy Smith, Mrs. Alison Stiehl, & Mrs. Ronni Wittreich.

Absent: None.

Others: Mrs. Jeannine DeFalco, Superintendent, Mr. Michael Brennan, Business Administrator, Mrs. Dana Carroll, Vice Principal, Mrs. Reber (virtual), Teachers (virtual), Parents (virtual), & Public (virtual).

Mission Statement

We are committed to provide an engaging, comprehensive education aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in a healthy, safe and nurturing environment in which all students are encouraged to be critical thinkers and self advocates. Instilling a passion for learning will inspire and guide students to become responsible and compassionate citizens in a constantly changing world. Students have the opportunity to achieve their maximum

academic potential both here and in their future education while developing confidence, competence, and character.

Public Participation

None.

Correspondence

Mr. Brennan read a note for our KTEA thanking the BOE for sponsoring our 10th caller game that was enjoyed by both staff and students. Mr. Brennan read another note from the KTEA thanking the Administration and our main office staff for sponsoring another week of the KTEA 10th caller game. Mr. Brennan read retirement letters' from Mrs. Terri Kwasnik and Mrs. Cynthia Hendershot Casanova effective July 1, 2021. Mr. Brennan and Mrs. Smith thanked both ladies for their numerous contributions to the district.

Superintendent's Report

Mrs. DeFalco gave the following report:

- * Our second round of observations of staff is underway. Those that require three observations will have all three completed by May.

- * Our current count of virtual students is 12 as of today, March 22, 2021.

- * The CDC released new guidance last week regarding social distancing (6 feet vs. 3 feet) This is good news for school communities that have not been able to be in person as we have for four or five days a week. For us, it gives us more flexibility in our classrooms and with our end of year activities and planning for next school year. However, we are still unable to run lunches as this change specifies without masks still requires 6 feet between students. We also have a multipurpose room versus a separate lunch room and gymnasium which affects staffing, spacing, and scheduling.

- * Maschio's is sponsoring an Earth Day contest. Information will be shared with students and parents prior to Spring Break. The prizes are all Amazon gift cards.

- * The NJDOE will be releasing New Jersey School Performance Reports on April 7, 2021.

- * The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the way the NJDOE was able to measure school performance and achievement in the 2019-2020 School Performance Reports. Some data is not available at all and other data, while available, may not look the same as it did in prior years. The NJDOE also recognizes that the existing data can't begin to measure the hard work and perseverance of the students, families, educators, and community members during this difficult year. This year notes are included throughout the School Performance Reports to explain where data is missing or impacted by COVID-19 and a new impact of COVID-19 on Data Availability resource is available to summarize this information.

- * Mrs. DeFalco has been in contact with Mayor Starrs regarding the local and county level discussions around the proposed weight limit on Routes 519/521 through Hope, which would route trucks onto Route 46 through Knowlton. A letter was sent regarding concerns on behalf

of the school district on March 22, 2021 to Anthony Sytko, Regional Manager for the Office of Community and Constituent Relations.

Vice Principal's Report

Mrs. Carroll gave the following report:

* Fourth and Fifth grade students participated in the Annual American Legion Post #418 Coloring Contest. The following students placed in our school: in 3rd place Gabby Rabinowitz, 2nd place Raymandeep Kaur, and in 1st place was Ethan Molnar. Ethan's picture was then placed into the county wide contest and he ended up placing 3rd place overall for Warren County. Congratulations, Ethan, Raymandeep and Gabby!

* For the past few weeks, we have been holding a daily contest for the teachers. We have been holding a "Caller 10 gets 10". How it works is we make an announcement that we will take caller 10 to an office extension and the 10th caller receives a \$10 gift card. The first week was sponsored by the office staff, last week was sponsored by board members and this week by the PTA. We have enough donations to take this contest past spring break. I want to thank the board members and the PTA for helping add some fun to the school day. The staff and students are really into it and classes are trying to strategize how to win.

* We have been given notice by the state that we are to prepare for state testing. They have moved the testing window to May3rd to June 11th for the NJSLA testing for our grades 3-6 in ELA and Math and grade 5 science. The state has applied for a waiver but the timing of the return on the waiver could 120 days from submission. Schools are being told to prepare our systems for testing.

* In addition to state testing, each school has to submit a spreadsheet for The Road Forward: Spring Assessment Data Collection. This compilation of data is broken down by grade level to log how many students are performing above, at or below grade level in ELA, math and Science and what assessments do we use to determine this.

* All-Star Band:
Emily Nicolaou
Sara Pearson
John Wurtemberg
Kevin Sempruch
Matthew Brando
Jesse Oliveira

Board Secretary's Report

Mr. Brennan gave the following report:

* For SY 2021-22 budget, our preliminary budget is \$4,343,458 (PY: \$4,362,893). We are at the 2.0% cap on the projected local tax levy increase. The local tax levy is \$3,088,052 resulting in a Y-o-Y increase of \$181,980.

* Projected tuition revenue increased \$18,000 from anticipated parent paid PS revenue. Projected Miscellaneous Revenue (\$1,306) & Capital Reserve Interest (\$0) remain essentially the same year as prior year.

* State Aid revenue is \$715,660 resulting in a Y-o-Y decrease of \$-287,355 (-28.6%).

* Fund 20 revenue (Grants: \$57,458) is expected to decrease by \$-3,435 (-5.6%).

* 7 Charter School Students are budgeted at \$145,395. Y-o-Y budgeted increase of \$59,395. 1 Special Education Student is budgeted at \$49,511 (tuition) and \$15,000 for transportation.

* Capital expenditures of \$100,300 are comprised of three items: \$50,000 Repaving Project, \$30,300 (Building Improvement: HVAC Project), & \$20,000 equipment purchase of Promethean boards for student instruction.

* General Fund expense of \$4,286,000 is comprised of Salaries of \$2,484,586 (58%) and Supplies & Expense of \$1,801,414 (42%).

Facilities:

* None

Committee Reports

Mr. Brennan gave the following Facilities Committee report:

* With spring approaching and the winter season drawing to a close; I'd like to thank both Tom Bartha & our KTEA staff for their work in plowing, salting, and snow removal for the district. Frank, Geoff, & Bob did a fantastic job with cleanup allowing us to successfully open on a number of occasions.

* During the offseason, John Deere will be repairing a weld on the plow that broke during the season.

* Our maintenance staff cleaned and sanitized the flooring after a roof leak occurred in one of the storage rooms in the modulars'.

Mrs. DeFalco gave the following Community Outreach Committee report:

* Mayor Starrs and I discussed the current grant that Planet Network has submitted for free internet for the Knowlton Community, which includes the school. Grant recipients are expected to be notified soon. Robert Boyle has been in contact with us to advise next steps should the grant be awarded to him. Beyond the grant he is currently waiting on, there is an additional Broadband grant that could prove helpful to us as well.

* Tammy Smith, BOE president who serves on the Board of Trustees for St Luke's University Health Network provided some information and handouts related to how community members can sign up and receive the vaccine through St. Luke's. These will be shared via the Knowlton News.

* Our community of administrators, along with the NW cluster and Belvidere cluster are working together with the Warren County Health Department to organize vaccinations for educators who wish to receive as per the Governor's plan come March 15.

* I was contacted by a former student who belongs to Boy Scout Troop 140 in Blairstown, NJ who is interested in doing his Eagle Scout Project for the school. He presented many options and has a wonderful outdoor classroom idea that he will work on drafting.

* Our first Eagle Scout project that began last summer by another former student will resume once the snow has melted and he is able to complete the work necessary for our Learning/Reading Platform.

Mr. Biery gave the following Finance Committee report:

* Provided an overview of Finance meeting discussing summer instruction, state regionalization, and local feasibility studies.

Mr. Biery gave the following Instructional Committee report:

* Provided an overview of Instructional meeting discussing the school's reopening plan to five days a week and state testing

Mrs. DeFalco gave the following Policy Committee report:

* Provided an update regarding the policies on tonight's agenda

Virtual Art Show, Mrs. Tate

Mrs. Tate and her students did an excellent job presenting their artwork with the theme "let's get creative" running through the entirety of their work.

Knowlton Knight Awards, Mrs. Carroll

Mrs. Carroll presented a citizenship award (virtual) to Giada Brando and Weston Vaughn. Congratulations to Giada & Weston. Great job!

Staff Spotlight, Mrs. Carroll

Mrs. Carroll presented a certificate (virtual) to our staff spotlight recipient, Mr. Geoff Littlehale. Congratulations to Mr. Littlehale!

MOTIONS

1. Accept Retirement

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Bates and carried unanimously to accept the retirement of Terri Kwasnik, third grade teacher, with regret, effective June 30, 2020.

2. Accept Retirement

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mr. Baley and carried unanimously to accept the retirement of Cindy Cassanova, personal aide, with regret, effective June 30, 2020.

3. Approve Substitute Nurse

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Bates and carried unanimously by roll call vote to approve Brianne Wheatley as a substitute nurse for the 2020-2021 school year, pending completion of required paperwork.

4. Mileage Reimbursement

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mr. Baley and carried unanimously by roll call vote to approve the mileage reimbursement at a rate equal to the current OMB circular rate for all contracts pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3 (maximum travel expenditure amount of \$1,500 per employee).

5. ACES participation

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Bates and carried unanimously by roll call vote to approve Cooperative Pricing System Agreement #E8801 in order to continue participation in ACES (NJSBA) Cooperative Pricing System.

6. Approve Practicum student

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mr. Baley and carried unanimously to approve Stephanie Garcia, a student at Emerson College, to complete required practicum/observation hours alongside Stephenie Neufeld, PROMPT therapist as recommended by the Superintendent.

7. Approve Resolution

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Bates and carried unanimously to urge relief from increased costs to school districts resulting from the implementation of “Chapter 44,” the 2020 School Employee Health Benefits Reform Law:

WHEREAS, P.L.2020, c.44 (“Chapter 44”) requires the School Employees’ Health Benefits Program (SEHBP) to offer plans, beginning on January 1, 2021, for medical and prescription benefits coverage including the New Jersey Educators Health Plan (NJEHP); as adopted and implemented by the School Employees’ Health Benefits Commission; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 44 established reduced premium contributions for any employee who selects, or is placed into, the NJEHP as his or her health care coverage option; and

WHEREAS, The SEHBP applies to the following employers who elect to participate in the SEHBP: local school district, regional school district, county vocational school district, county special services school district, jointure commission, educational services commission, state-operated school district, charter school; and

WHEREAS, The provisions of Chapter 44 also apply to these same employers even if they do not elect to participate in the SEHBP; and

WHEREAS, Many school districts had previously negotiated health benefit agreements with lower net costs compared to the plan design and cost-sharing requirements under “Chapter 44,” and/or have staff that previously declined coverage but now are choosing to enroll in the NJEHP due to its low employee cost-sharing provisions; and

WHEREAS, A significant number of school districts will experience a net increase in their health care costs because the NJEHP premiums are higher than the premiums for the collectively bargained plans previously offered by the district, which is further exacerbated by reduced employee contributions under Chapter 44; and

WHEREAS, Other school districts will experience a net increase in their overall health care costs even if the NJEHP premiums are lower than that of the previous plan offerings because the reduction in employee contributions will offset any overall premium savings, resulting in

increased net costs to the district; and

WHEREAS, The low employee contribution requirements under NJEHP encourage employees who had previously waived or declined coverage to enroll thereby increasing the districts' health benefit costs for the balance of fiscal year 2021, continuing into fiscal year 2022 and likely beyond; and

WHEREAS, These costs may exceed districts' ability to address within their budgets owing to the limitations of the 2% property tax levy cap; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 44 was a well-intentioned proposal that aimed to generate hundreds of millions of dollars in savings for school districts, school employees and taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, While some school districts may indeed be realizing savings due to the provisions of Chapter 44, many are experiencing the opposite effect and witnessing an increase in their health care costs, which may result in cuts to critical programs, services and staff in order to balance their budgets; and

WHEREAS, Since Chapter 44 essentially froze the level of health benefits and employee contributions for the seven-year period following the law's effective date, districts are unable to control cost increases through the traditional collective bargaining process; and

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon the Legislature and Governor to address and correct the unintended financial consequences districts are experiencing due to Chapter 44 and ensure that all districts share in the anticipated savings.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Knowlton Board of Education requests that the State Legislature and Governor provide relief from the increased health care costs experienced by school districts due to the implementation of Chapter 44; and be it further

RESOLVED, that relief from Chapter 44 should include direct, short-term assistance from the state to ensure that all school districts are held financially harmless in both the current and subsequent fiscal years; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Legislature and Governor should expeditiously begin to explore long-term structural reforms that reverse the unintended consequences of Chapter 44 and generate lasting savings for school districts, employees and taxpayers; and be it further

RESOLVED, that any proposals to amend or revise Chapter 44 include input from all affected stakeholders before moving forward, including feedback from representatives of local boards of education, school business administrators, superintendents, building-level supervisors and school employees; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution be delivered to Governor Phil Murphy, State Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney, Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin; and the 24th Legislative District's representatives in the state Senate and General Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent to the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials and the New Jersey School Boards Association.

8. Approve Policy 2000

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mr. Baley and carried unanimously to approve updates to Policy 2000, Concepts and Roles in Administration: Goals and Objectives.

9. Approve Policy 2121

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Bates and carried unanimously to approve updates to Policy 2121, Line of Responsibility.

10. Approve Policy 2255

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Bates and carried unanimously to approve updates to Policy 2255, Action Planning for State Monitoring NJQSAC.

11. 2021-2022 Preliminary Budget Adoption

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mr. Baley and carried unanimously by roll call vote to submit the 2021-22 proposed budget to the Warren County Department of Education for review and approval. The proposed budget includes sufficient funds to provide curriculum compliance with N.J.S.A. and N.J.A.C. Title 6 and 6A. The preliminary budget for the 2021/22 school year includes the use of banked cap in the amount of \$123,859. The need for banked cap will be completed by the end of the budget year and will not be deferred or incrementally completed over a longer period of time. The proposed budget includes the following revenues and expenditures:

Revenues:

General Fund

Local Tax Levy	\$3,088,052
Tuition	18,000
Miscellaneous Revenue	2,428
Cap Reserve Interest	300
State Aid	715,660
Budgeted Fund Balance	361,560
Withdrawal from Capital Reserve	100,000
Federal Revenue-Special Projects	57,458
 Total Revenues	 \$4,343,458

Expenditures:

Fund 10 Transfer to Charter School	145,395
Fund 11 Current Expense	4,040,305
Fund 12 Capital Outlay	100,300
General Fund Total	\$4,286,000
Fund 20 Special Revenue	57,458
Total Expenditures	\$4,343,458

12. Approve Bills

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Bates and carried unanimously by roll call vote to approve the bills for payment as follows: Monthly bill list \$359,434.98 and Cafeteria bill list \$2,384.19.

Monthly Certification

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(c) 3, I certify that no budgetary line item account has been over expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(a) as of February 28, 2021 (Policy 6820).

Board Secretary

Date

13. Accept Report of the Secretary and Report of the Treasurer

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mr. Baley and carried unanimously to accept the monthly A-148 Secretary's Report for the month ended February 28, 2021 and the A-149 Treasurer's of School Monies Report for the month ended February 28, 2021 in compliance with the NJAC 6A:23A-16.10(c). The Board of Education, after review of the Secretary's monthly financial report (appropriations section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials, certifies that no major account or fund has been overexpended in violation of NJAC 6A:23A-16.10(c).

14. Approve Minutes

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mr. Baley and carried unanimously to approve the Regular Session minutes of February 22, 2021.

AYES: 7

NOES: 0

ABST: 0

Motion carried.

Old Business

Mrs. Wittreich explained that they are continuing to explore potential new mask vendors.

New Business

Mrs. Moritz informed our BOE that there will be a celebration of life for Mrs. Davalos on June 6, 2021 at Brook Hollow Winery.

Upcoming Meetings

April 12, 2021: Board Committee Meetings, 6pm

April 26, 2021: Board Meeting, 7pm

Adjournment

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mr. Baley and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brennan, MBA
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Approved: