

Portland Board of Education
Regular Meeting
Minutes of Tuesday, December 3, 2024 @ 7:00 pm
Portland High School Media Center

Board Members Present:

Laurel Steinhauser
Angela Hammond
Tim Lavoy
Dave Murphy
Kim Nagy-Maruschock
Meg Scata
Sarah Spear

Board Members Absent:

None

Administration Present:

Dr. Charles D. Britton, Superintendent of Schools
Stephanie Fragola, Assistant to the Superintendent for Business and Financial Affairs
Sara McLaughlin, Director of Student Services
Kathryn Lawson, Principal Portland High School

Student Representative:

Liam Rowe

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Laurel Steinhauser, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Agenda

**M. Scata moved to approve the agenda, seconded by T. Lavoy. Unanimously approved.
MOTION CARRIED.**

4. Approval of Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of November 12, 2024, Board of Education Special Joint Meeting Minutes
- B. Approval of November 12, 2024, Board of Education Meeting Minutes

**M. Scata moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by S. Spear. Unanimously approved.
MOTION CARRIED**

5. Audience of Citizens - none

6. Portland Public Schools Spotlight – none

7. Yale Child Study Research Proposal

Dr. Britton stated that tonight's meeting will focus on the presentation, there will be no Board vote until January.

Ms. Lawson emphasized that Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is a legislative requirement for all schools to develop students' social-emotional skills, which is also outlined in our school climate policy. She and Ms. Johnson provided an overview of the current curriculum.

Ms. Lawson then introduced Julie McGarry, who presented the RULER program for high schools. Key points of the presentation included student engagement, survey items, student anonymity, options to opt in or out, a focus on mental health prevention versus intervention, differences from the current curriculum, training requirements, and success data. Julie also highlighted that there is no cost to the district for implementing the program.

8. Student Representative Report

Liam's report highlighted several updates to include: the football team has concluded its season and will be competing in the state championship; the winter sports season has started; the hiking club visited Gillette Castle on Nov 17th; music students will be traveling to New York City on Dec 5th; the high school band and chorus will be performing at the Portland Tree Lighting this Saturday; and the student senate successfully organized a food drive.

9. Communications and Updates

A. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Britton reported he received a resignation from school social worker Sara Paoletta.

The enrollment report was submitted.

Dr. Britton provided an update to the Board on district happenings, including his recent NEASC visit to Bridgeport, and congratulated the Board on receiving the 2024 CABE Leadership Award. He also reviewed the recent high school and middle school lockdown, expressing gratitude to everyone involved in the response. He thanked the police, the administrative team, faculty and staff, clerical staff, administrative assistants, social workers, S. McLaughlin for coordinating the response team the following day, M&J transportation, and Central Office staff. Dr. Britton also extended his thanks to students and parents for their patience during this challenging and stressful time. The leadership team conducted a debrief with the police department after the event.

Additionally, Dr. Britton noted that the first meeting of the Strategic Capital Improvements Commission will take place on Dec 11th, followed by a special Board meeting on Dec 16th to discuss the budget.

Finally, Dr. Britton wished First Selectman Curley well in his new role.

B. Assistant to the Superintendent for Business and Financial Affairs – S. Fragola

The Board reviewed the authorized spending report.

C. Director of Student Services – S. McLaughlin

The Director of Student Services report was reviewed.

10. New Business (Discussion/Possible Action)

A. Class of 2025 Graduation Date

T. Lavoy moved to set the graduation date for the Class of 2025 for June 13, 2025, seconded by K. Nagy-Maruschock. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED

B. Approval of Diocese of Norwich Building Use Application

M. Scata moved to approve the building use application for the Diocese of Norwich, seconded by A. Hammond. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED

C. Board of Education Policy (1st reading)

1. Policy 5141.5 Suicide Prevention

The Policy committee has vetted this policy, which has also been reviewed by the Director of Student Services. Dr. Britton highlighted the key changes, including the addition of a new contact number and the implementation of a universal screening process, ensuring compliance with the necessary requirements. There was a discussion regarding a section of the regulation, which Dr. Britton will review with S. McLaughlin.

D. FY 2024 4th Quarter Transfers

S. Fragola presented the budget transfers.

M. Scata moved to approve the FY2024 fourth quarter budget transfers between the major objects as listed below;

Salaries are being decreased by \$75,007.58 (object 11011-12023)

Benefits are being decreased by \$96,602.00 (object 21001-29000)

Purchased services are being decreased by \$6,754.13 (object 30010-33030)

Other services is increased by \$182,833.93 (object 51010-56003)

Equipment is being decreased by \$4,470.22 (object 73011-73015)

Seconded by S. Spear. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

11. Old Business (Discussion/Possible Action) - none

12. Committee Reports

- A. Curriculum – K. Nagy-Maruschock– no report
- B. Policy – M. Scata – next meeting on 12/11/24
- C. Personnel – L. Steinhauser – next meeting on 12/4/24
- D. Buildings and Grounds – M. Scata – met on 11/25/24, discussed capital improvements
- E. Liaison
 - 1. CREC – M. Scata – no report
 - 2. Selectmen – D. Murphy – discussed the new committee for capital improvements
 - 3. Youth Services Advisory Board – M. Scata – tree lighting this Saturday
 - 4. Equity and Inclusion Coalition – S. Spear /T. Lavoy – met in Nov and discussed the definition and framework of civil discourse. The next meeting is in January 2025.

13. Audience of Citizens

Karen Renner, Penfield Hill Rd – expressed concerns about the RULER program. She asked the Board to be sensitive to how parents might feel about the district taking responsibility for their children's emotions and emphasized the need for better communication with parents.

14. Board of Education Member Comments

Angela Hammond – expressed that she thinks the New City trip sounds wonderful

Tim Lavoy – no report

Dave Murphy – no report

Kim Nagy-Maruschock – appreciative of the lockdown communication and efforts

Meg Scata – will share the CREC video of the diagnostic center, CABE legislative breakfast on 12/18/24

Sarah Spear – wished everyone a happy holiday season

Laurel Steinhauser – no report

Liam Rowe, student rep – mentioned that it was interesting to hear about the teaching program for SEL

15. Executive Session – none

16. Adjournment

T. Lavoy moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:39 pm, seconded by M. Scata. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tricia Dean
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Clerk