

Portland Board of Education

## **BOE Regular Meeting**

**Buck Forman Room**

**December 7, 2021**

The Portland Board of Education held a Regular Meeting in the Buck Forman Room at 265 Main Street, 2nd Floor, on Tuesday, December 7, 2021. Board members in attendance: Chairwoman S. Peters, M. Scata, L. Steinhauser, L. Christensen, D. Murphy, T. Lavoy, and S. Benham. Also in attendance were Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Charles Britton, Dawn Davis, Stephanie Fragola, student representatives Shawn Laverty and Leah Masal, and members of the public.

### **Call to Order**

Dr. Britton called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

### **Election of Officers**

Dr. Britton held nominations for Board Chairperson and Board Secretary.

#### **Board Chairperson**

Dr. Britton began by announcing that the Board would be entertaining motions for Chairperson. T. Lavoy moved to nominate Sharon Peters. M. Scata seconded the nomination. With no further nominations, the nominations closed. Board members voted by written ballots per Board Policy.

In favor of S. Peters: M. Scata, T. Lavoy, L. Steinhauser, L. Christensen, D. Murphy, S. Benham, S. Peters  
The nomination of Sharon Peters as Board Chairperson passed unanimously

Dr. Britton turned the meeting over to Chairperson Peters.

#### **Board Secretary.**

S. Peters opened nominations for Board Secretary.

T. Lavoy moved to nominate Laurel Steinhauser. D. Murphy seconded the nomination.

L. Steinhauser moved to nominate Meg Scata. S. Peters seconded the nomination.

With no further nominations, the nominations were closed. Board members voted by written ballots per Board Policy.

In favor of L. Steinhauser: T. Lavoy, S. Benham, D. Murphy, L. Christensen

In favor of M. Scata: S. Peters, M. Scata, L. Steinhauser

By majority vote, the nomination of Laurel Steinhauser as Board Secretary passed.

### **Approval of Agenda**

**Motion:** To approve the agenda for the December 7, 2021 Board meeting as presented.

Moved by T. Lavoy, seconded by D. Murphy. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Approval of Consent Agenda**

**Motion:** To approve the consent agenda inclusive of the November 9, 2021 Board of Education Meeting minutes.

Moved by L. Steinhauser, seconded by T. Lavoy. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Audience of Citizens**

R. Curley, First Selectman, wanted to thank the Board for all the work that they do.

## **Portland Public Schools Spotlight**

### Project Oceanology

A. Hine, Principal of Brownstone Intermediate School, shared Project Oceanology with the Board. She shared that Brownstone partnered with Project Oceanology in the Connecticut River Connections program in 2017. She also shared that the goal is to foster relationships between students of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and expose students to marine biology.

A. Hine shared a presentation made by several 6th grade students where they discussed their favorite parts of being a part of Project Oceanology. Discussion followed.

### **Student Representative Report**

L. Masal shared that the annual Snow Ball dance occurred this past week and there was a record amount of attendees. Football made it to the State championship coming up this weekend on Saturday. Winter sports started up and the students are excited for the season to begin.

### **Communications and Updates**

#### Superintendent's Report

Dr. Britton shared a letter of resignation from Julie Correira, a paraprofessional. He wished her luck in her future endeavors.

Dr. Britton shared that Mr. Prowda's enrollment study is underway, and shared the monthly enrollment data with the Board.

Dr. Britton shared the Chatham Health District report with the Board, and shared that there are 28.5 cases per 100,000, which puts us in a red alert classification. He also shared that Portland is doing well in the vaccinations by town, where the total population percentage for first dose is 79.3% and the percentage of fully vaccinated is 72%. Dr. Britton, additionally, shared the quarantine and screen & stay statistics with the Board.

Dr. Britton commended our fall sports teams, coaches, and the athletic coordinator. He shared the achievements of the fall sports teams; the boys and girls varsity soccer teams made it to both the Shoreline Conference and the State Tournament, the cross country had 3 seniors make the All-State team, the volleyball had such high enrollment that they are looking to expand next year, and the football team made it to the state championship. Dr. Britton also recognized Mike Searson, the boys' varsity soccer coach, who was awarded the Shoreline Conference Coach of the Year. Dr. Britton also recognized Chris Donahue, the girls' soccer assistant coach, who was recognized as the Shoreline Conference Assistant Coach of the Year.

Dr. Britton shared that up until December 23, 2021, all athletes are required to wear their masks during practices and competitions for winter sports. After that date the requirements change slightly for vaccinated athletes, who will be able to take their masks off during competition.

Dr. Britton shared that Heidi and Nancy Boyles have been conducting professional development at Gildersleeve School. Dr. Britton feels great about the work that has been going on at Brownstone, Gildersleeve, and Valley View.

#### Assistant to the Superintendent for Business and Financial Affairs

S. Fragola shared the Federal COVID Funding report with the Board that details the budget from last year for COVID funding as well as this year's funds. Discussion followed.

### Director of Student Services

D. Davis shared the monthly statistics for students receiving special education services. She shared that the numbers are stable and about where we were at this time last year. She shared that there are two grants that opened up, which we have applied for. Those funds need to be expended by June, 2023.

D. Davis spoke about the district's mental health and behavioral challenges. She shared that there has been a slight uptick in the numbers this year as well; the mental health team is very busy so far.

Formal testing for LAS Links starts on January 4th. M. Scata asked where the greatest need presents in mental health and if she sees a need for more personnel. D. Davis shared that it is a district-wide uptick, and we may see a rise in the need for paraprofessionals as the social-emotional dysregulation rises amongst students.

### **New Business**

#### FY 2021 4th Quarter Transfers

S. Fragola shared the end of year quarter transfers. She shared that this was cleaning up the accounts with negative balances.

**Motion:** To approve the FY 2021 4th Quarter transfers as presented tonight.

Moved by M. Scata, seconded by T. Lavoy. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Class of 2022 Graduation Date

Dr. Britton shared that the last day of school is June 13th. Dr. Britton recommended setting the graduation date for June 13th, 2022 with a rain date, if COVID prevents graduation from being held inside, of June 14th, 2022.

**Motion:** To set the Class of 2022 Graduation date for June 13th, 2022 with a rain date for June 14th, 2022.

Moved by L. Steinhauer, seconded by L. Christensen. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Board of Education Subcommittee Assignments

S. Peters shared that the subcommittee assignments were handed out already. S. Peters shared her thoughts on Board members changing their committee assignments to learn another area that the Board focuses on.

S. Peters appointed S. Benham to the Curriculum committee. S. Peters appointed L. Christensen to the Personnel committee. Discussion followed.

The Portland Youth Services is requesting a liaison from the Board for the Youth Services Advisory Board. This will be added to the agenda for the January meeting.

### **Old Business**

#### School Calendar for 2022-2023 School Year

Dr. Britton shared that the only changes made to the calendar were adding January 2, 2023, and adding Holiday dates on the calendar.

**Motion:** To approve the 2022-2023 School District Calendar as presented.

Moved by T. Lavoy, seconded by M. Scata. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Committee Reports**

#### Curriculum

Met last week and discussed the definition of rigor and how that is applied throughout the district. Started planning for professional development for January and February.

Policy No report.

Personnel Negotiations are underway and should be completed by January, 2022.

Buildings and Grounds Meeting was canceled; awaiting information on the solar panels at the high school.

Conservation and Renewable Task Force No report.

CREC Liaison No report.

Selectmen Liaison No report. Special meeting is tomorrow night.

Task Force on Solidarity Liaison The Youth Forums are going to be starting up again in the spring. The follow-up survey is going to be released in January and they are also going to be hosting some educational forums. Their next meeting is December 14th, 2021 at the Portland Library.

Equity and Inclusion Coalition Liaison There was a meeting tonight. The equity statement is almost completed; the coalition plans to bring that statement to the Board in January to discuss what the statement is and how they want to put the statement into practice in the District.

School Facilities Study Committee Meeting is next Monday, December 13, 2021. The RFQ that was sent out will open tomorrow and they will be choosing an architect shortly.

**Audience of Citizens** No report.

#### **BOE Comments**

M. Scata expressed concern about New Haven's false reports of activity around gun violence. She wants to ensure that we do our due diligence in reassuring our community so that they feel safe.

T. Lavoy congratulated the newly elected Board Chairperson and Secretary.

L. Steinhauser shared her gratitude for the Chatham Health Department for their amendments to the process for the second round of vaccines. She also shared that her thoughts and prayers are with the Oxford Public School District community, families, and students.

S. Benham shared her excitement for being on the Board of Education and thanked the team for allowing her to be at orientation.

S. Peters shared her gratitude for M. Scata as an outgoing Secretary.

#### **Executive Session**

No report.

#### **Executive Session Action Item**

No report.

#### **Adjourn**

**Motion:** To move to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 PM.

Moved by T. Lavoy, seconded by S. Benham. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elliot McBride, Board Recording Clerk

Draft minutes until approved at the next Board of Education Regular Meeting.