

Portland Board of Education

**BOE Regular Meeting
Buck Forman Room
July 14, 2021**

The Portland Board of Education held a Regular Meeting in the Buck Forman Room at 265 Main Street, 2nd Floor, on Tuesday, July 13, 2021. Board members in attendance: Chairwoman S. Peters, M. Scata, L. Steinhauser, T. Lavoy, L. Christensen, and D. Murphy. C. Darby was absent. Also in attendance were Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Charles Britton, Dawn Davis, Stephanie Fragola, student representative Shawn Laverty, and members of the public.

Call to Order

S. Peters called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Agenda

Motion: To approve the agenda for the July 13, 2021 Board meeting as presented.

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

Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion: To approve the consent agenda for the July 13, 2021 Board meeting as presented.

Moved by M. Scata, seconded by L. Steinhauser. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion: To approve the BOE minutes for the June 15, 2021 Board meeting as presented.

Moved by M. Scata, seconded by L. Steinhauser. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion: To approve the A+ Rewards donation of \$414.07 to Brownstone Intermediate School.

Moved by M. Scata, seconded by L. Steinhauser. The motion passed unanimously.

Audience of Citizens

Portland student Drew Shortell and his father Robert Shortell of 4 Breezy Corners Road presented their reasoning for keeping virtual learning options for Portland Public Schools into the 2021-2022 school year. The presentation outlined the benefits associated with virtual learning options for students that may have physical injuries, or medical issues disallowing their continuation of in school learning. Robert Shortell asked the Board members to add this topic to the next agenda.

Student Representative Report

No report

Communications and Updates

Superintendent's Report

Letters of Resignation were received by Dr. Britton for Alyssa Flynn, a Speech & Language Pathologist at Gildersleeve, Jenna Hebert, a paraprofessional at Valley View, and Robert (Rob) Raines, a Social Studies teacher at Portland Middle School. Dr. Britton expressed his gratitude for their work in Portland and wished all individuals well on their new endeavors.

Dr. Britton extended an invitation from the Middletown Stage theatre group to the Board members and administrators of Portland Public Schools to see Matilda Thursday night as a thank you for letting them rent our facilities.

Dr. Britton was happy to report that the summer learning programs are thriving in Portland. He reported that the summer enrichment activities he has witnessed this year are far more robust than past years. He discussed the enrollment numbers in the summer enrichment and ESY programs.

He reported that hiring for the 2021-2022 school year is going very well. So far, Dr. Britton has hired a Grade 2 teacher, Grade 1 teacher, part-time social studies teacher at the High School, a Clinician at Valley View, a math teacher at the Middle School, a Clinician for the Harbor Program, and administrative assistants for the Middle School and Brownstone. He reported that they still are looking to fill the following positions: a one-year reading interventionist, a science teacher for the Middle School, a Special Ed. teacher at Valley View, a Speech and Language Pathologist, and some paraprofessional positions.

Dr. Britton reported updates on 4 grants that Portland is looking into. He announced that we are applying for the Connectivity Grant, enabling us to reimburse some of the money allocated in our budget for the 525 Chromebooks we are leasing this year. The grant is for \$210,000 at \$400 per device. We are also applying for the School Improvement Grant which he hopes will be between \$90,000-\$100,000 for math interventionists and professional development at Gildersleeve School. We are waiting to hear about the School Security Grant, and the application for the ESSER Grant is due in August, which he is in the process of collecting the appropriate information for.

Dr. Britton shared that the planning of the re-opening committee is to return to full in-person learning in the fall. Portland will not run PVLA this coming year. He expects an update from CSDE and DPH that consider new CDC guidelines on July 20th. Dr. Britton, additionally, shared about the leadership retreat the administration took, where they discussed topics such as student performance data, school security system and training upgrades, mindfulness, and managing their calendars to prioritize availability for in-building activities.

Dr. Britton shared that, unfortunately, Portland will not be continuing the free breakfast and lunch program for community members in the month of August. There was not enough demand and it is not economically justifiable to run the program. It was announced that school lunches will be free throughout the 2021-2022 school year.

New Business

BOE Retreat

The Board of Education will have their retreat on August 12th and August 19th from 6:00 – 7:30 PM each night. Two individuals from the Center for School Change that have been leading the Equity Coalition will be presenting on equity to the Board. The general consensus of the Board was that it would be a great opportunity. L. Steinhauser asked if they had availability to move the dates further out since some members are not available for all days.

Out-of-State Field Trip for PHS Cross Country Team

Isha Murphy wants to take his team on an out-of-state field trip this August for camping. The original location and dates requested were Lake Shaftsbury, VT from August 20-23rd. After visiting the site, he wanted to change it due to mosquitos and wanting his team to have a pleasant experience. Requested location and date change to White Lake, NH from August 22-25th. Principal Lawson approves the change, and they will require students to provide proof of COVID test or vaccination before they depart. The trip will be cancelled if any changes in health conditions occur.

Motion: To allow the cross country team to travel to White Lake, NH from August 22-25th, 2021 for training and team building with Isha Murphy. Moved by M. Scata, seconded by L. Christensen. The motion passed unanimously.

Leave of Absence Request

Melissa McManus, an English teacher at the Middle School, has requested a one-year leave of absence. Dr. Britton approves.

Motion: To approve Melissa McManus' leave of absence request for the 2021-2022 school year.

Moved by L. Steinhauser, seconded by M. Scata. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Superintendent of Schools Evaluation and Contract

This item was discussed in executive session.

Board of Education Self-Evaluation

This item was discussed in executive session.

Committee Reports

Curriculum

No report.

Policy

No report.

Personnel

They are starting to negotiate contracts. They are going to be opening negotiations and wrapping up contracts by September.

Buildings and Grounds

No report. No meeting planned.

Conservation and Renewable Task Force

No report.

CREC Liaison

There is an upcoming meeting on June 16th, 2021 to discuss regular business.

Selectmen Liaison

No report.

Task Force on Solidarity Liaison

The meeting was tonight at the same time as the Board of Education meeting.

Equity and Inclusion Coalition Liaison

No report.

Audience of Citizens

No report.

BOE Comments

M. Scata mentioned that the CABE Resolution Committee met and reviewed the approved agenda on standardized pre-assessment for pre-Kindergarten students so that teachers have a better idea of what their needs and skills are. They discussed remote learning opportunities as well. She shared she thinks that allowing remote learning snow days is a good resolution to bring to CABE from the Board.

L Steinhauser shared her appreciation for both Portland's Juneteenth and Pride events over the month of June. She thanked Eric Martin, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology, for bringing his family to Portland's Juneteenth event. She shared that many families were excited to see an administrator at a Portland community event.

L. Christensen thanked Drew Shortell for presenting his thoughts on extending virtual learning to the Board for consideration. She recognized the courage it took to speak in front of them. She, additionally, thanked Rob Raines for his service to our schools and expressed how deeply he will be missed. She requested hard-copy documents for future meetings.

D. Murphy asked about the update on the track at the high school. Dr. Britton made a request to the legislature and will update the Board when he knows more. Portland is on the list.
S. Peters requested more details on the reopening of schools for the August agenda.

M. Scata requested more details on how the Board plans to spend the money from the ESEER grant for the August agenda.

Motion: To move into executive session at 8:04 PM and extend invitation to Dr. Britton.
Moved by M. Scata, seconded by T. Lavoy. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion made to return to Regular Meeting at 8:39 PM

Moved by M. Scata seconded by L. Steinhauser passed unanimously.

Executive Session Action Item

Motion: To extend Dr. Britton's employment contract from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2024.
Moved by M. Scata, seconded by L. Christensen. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the regular meeting at 8:41 PM.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Elliot McBride, Board Recording Clerk

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