

**Portland Board of Education  
Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, May 17, 2022 @ 7:00 pm**

**Note: Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, attendees participated via in person and Zoom**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Sharon Peters, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

BOE Members Present: Sharon Peters, Laurel Steinhauser, Meg Scata, Dave Murphy, and Stacey Benham

Absent: Lauren Christensen, Tim Lavoy

Administration Present: Superintendent Dr. Charles Britton, Stephanie Fragola, Assistant to Superintendent for Business and Financial Affairs, via zoom, Dawn Davis, Director of Student Services

Student Representative: Shawn Laverty, Leah Masal

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Approval of Agenda**

**L. Steinhauser moved to approve the agenda for the May 17, 2022 Board meeting as presented, seconded by S. Benham. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

**4. Approval of Consent Agenda**

A. Approval of Board of Education Meeting Minutes.

1. May 3, 2022 Regular Meeting

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

**5. Audience of Citizens - none**

**6. Portland Public Schools Spotlight – Community Health Care Center – School Based Health Care**

– Dr. Britton stated Portland schools have an amazing partnership with the Community Health Care Center. Alyson Cyr, program manager, presented a PowerPoint overviewing CHCC background, mission and enrollment numbers, along with user statistics. Mobil Dental program reviewed briefly. M. Scata inquired if Portland compares to other schools. A. Cyr stated that yes they are on par with the same needs. M. Scata also inquired about demographics and grade split data. A. Cyr reported that they break that data down for all schools they work with.

**7. Student Representative Report** – S. Laverty reported that the high school prom is 5/20/22 and the student senate is honoring local veterans. L. Masal reported that signing day is next Wednesday and the awards night for academic excellence is next Thursday.

## 8. Communications and Updates

- A. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Britton reported that Cynthia Rustek is retiring, and Melissa Rondinone is resigning. Covid has had a dramatic impact on schools. We are currently in the red zone. Leadership team is working overtime to keep the schools staffed. Budget has passed. Due to inflation, Dr. Britton is a bit concerned with the budget. Will need to prioritize for potential soft and hard freezes for upcoming year. M. Scata inquired if MJ plans to use electric buses. Dr. Britton is not aware of any plans for this. Hiring is underway for schools positions and three leadership positions. Brownstone acting principal hiring process is underway. Focus groups with community planning is ongoing. They will be asking for an extension on the June deadline from the Board of Selectmen. Discussion on focus group forming process. The personnel committee is hard at work. Technology grant is being finalized. Track RFQ for architecture firm is out, will open on 5/24/22, and will choose on 6/7/22. Watching the cost closely, may be in excess of \$500,000. Food services contract with Sodexo expiring. Have to follow the process of rebidding. Should have an update on this on 6/7/22. Events: Chorus concert 5/18 at 7pm, Prom 5/20, senior awards night next Thursday, senior cruise night next Friday, middle school awards 6/7 at 6pm, graduation 6/13 at 6pm, and last day of school 6/17, early dismissal.
- B. Director of Student Services Report – D Davis reported that the special education numbers have increased. The new system platform starts 7/1/22. Parent Advisory meeting is 5/25/22 at 6pm by invitation only. They have not been able to secure a substitute for the speech and language pathologist position. Currently working with a contractor to help cover the shortage.

## 9. New Business (Discussion/Possible Action)

### A. Gildersleeve Grants

1. Display Case for Portland Middle School – Szerejko requested an additional display case.  
**M. Scata moved to approve the Gildersleeve grant request for A. Szerejko to purchase a display cases for the art program and hardware to display art on the wall in the amount of \$6,925, seconded by L. Steinhauser. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED**
2. Student Information System – Power School – Dr. Britton stated they currently have been using Aspen since 2004. They are currently the only district in CT using this system. The premier system that is widely used is Power School. The first year data migration and training would be covered by the grant, if approved. The system would go live in Sept 2023. The yearly cost of Power School after migration is around \$26,000. Discussion on budget, process, training and options.

**M. Scata moved to approve the Gildersleeve grant request for Power School in the amount of \$84,585.25, seconded by L. Steinhauser. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

### B. Board of Education Policies

1. Policy 6115.3 – Flag (Display) Policy (new policy, 1<sup>st</sup> reading) - Dr. Britton stated a need for parameters regarding flag display requests. Decided to only display those flags that are in the United States code title 4. D. Murphy requested to add to 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, second sentence to identify the type of flag.

2. Policy 6142 – Basic Instructional Program (updated Legal References)  
**L. Steinhauser moved to approve policy 6142 Basic Instructional Program, seconded by S. Peters. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**
3. Policy 6163.33 – Therapy Dogs (new policy, 1<sup>st</sup> reading) - This is CABE's language. Caveat on the last page in the appendix to remove COVID reference. Discussion on vetting our insurance policy and verifying hold harmless language.

C. Leave of Absence Request

- L. Steinhauser moved to approve the leave of absence request for Kimberly Dietrichen, seconded by M. Scata. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED**

- D. Director of Building and Grounds Appointment (discussed under Executive Session)  
E. Superintendent of Schools Evaluation (discussed under Executive Session)  
F. Superintendent of Schools Contract 2024-2027 (discussed under Executive Session)  
G. Board of Education Self-Evaluation (discussed under Executive Session)

**10. Old Business (Discussion/Possible Action) - none**

**11. Committee Reports**

- A. Curriculum – S. Benham – finalized having a standing meeting date. Dr. Britton stated they are excited to have the new program for the writing center, a journalism course and the summer learning program.  
B. Policy – M. Scata – next meeting 5/31/22  
C. Personnel – L. Steinhauser – tentative agreement with the para's and close to finalizing secretaries contract.  
D. Buildings and Grounds – M. Scata – interviewed and will discuss in executive session

E. Liaison

1. CREC –M. Scata – next meeting 5/18/22 via zoom
2. Selectmen – D. Murphy – paving 5/9/22-6/18/22. Celebrating the library's 127 anniversary.
3. Committee on Solidarity – no report
4. Equity and Inclusion Coalition -- no report
5. School Facilities Study Committee – update given earlier in this meeting
6. Youth Services Advisory Board – S. Benham – next meeting 5/24/22

**12. Audience of Citizens - none**

**13. Board of Education Member Comments**

- L. Steinhauser stated the library 127 anniversary celebration will be 6/11/22 11am-2pm

**14. Executive Session - For the Purpose of Director of Building and Grounds Appointment, Superintendent of Schools Evaluation, Superintendent 2024-2027 Contract, Board of Education Self-Evaluation**

- L. Steinhauser moved to enter into executive session and invite Superintendent Charles Britton and the potential appointee, seconded by M. Scata. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

**Entered Executive Session: 8:14 p.m.**

**M. Scata moved to return to Regular Session at 9:39pm, seconded by S. Peters.  
Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

**15. Executive Session Action**

**L. Steinhauser moved to recommend to the full Board the appointment of Robert Shea as the new Director of Buildings and Grounds and to authorize Superintendent Charles Britton to enter into contract negotiations with Mr. Shea, seconded by M. Scata.  
Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

**16. Adjournment**

**M. Scata moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:42 p.m., seconded by D. Murphy.  
Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Tricia Dean, Clerk