

**Windsor Locks Board of Education
58 South Elm Street
Windsor Locks, CT 06096**

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
January 4, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.**

These minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting.

Members Present:	K. Christianson, D. Gragnolati, L. Cutler, and A. Osorio
Members Absent:	J. McGowan
Administrators:	S. Parkhurst, A. Pierce, R. Stacy, M. Briggs, J. Robinson, A. Goodwin, M. Parrette, G. Testani, and G. Weigert,
Student Representatives:	E. Norris
Students:	None
Staff:	D. Bole and P. Sibila
Others:	A few people and some participating via Zoom
Press:	None

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Ms. Kylee Christianson called the Special Meeting to Order at 6:04 p.m. held at the Windsor Locks High School Media Center and via Zoom.

A. Roll Call for Quorum

All Board Members were present other than Board Member Mr. McGowan, who was absent.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

All stood up and pledged allegiance to the flag.

Chairperson Ms. Christianson asked for a moment of silence for the families involved in the terrible event in Somers this past week.

Ms. Christianson announced that Board Member Mr. Jim McGowan has resigned as of December 31, 2023. She thanked him for his service on the Board and thanked him for mentoring her when she was new to the Board a few years ago. The Board is waiting a nomination from the Democratic Town Committee for a new member. The Committee has sixty days to nominate someone for the open seat.

II. Presentation of Superintendent's Proposed FY 24-25 Budget

Mr. Shawn Parkhurst, Superintendent of Schools introduced Ms. Alison Pierce, Director of Operations and Finance who assisted him in the presentation. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation entitled “FY 2025 Budget Presentation, Superintendent’s Recommended FY 25 Budget” was given to the Board Members along with anyone in the audience. The presentation is also available on the website. He noted the budget is due to the Town on February 1, 2023. The first two slides described what the responsibilities of the Board of Education according to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-220 duties of Boards of Education and what responsibilities are of the Superintendent of Schools. The Board responsibilities included providing adequate instruction, equitable allocation of resources, proper maintenance of facilities and safe setting. The Superintendent is to design a fiscally responsible budget, ensure equitable and developmentally appropriate educational experiences between schools, fulfil statutory obligations and to allow for advancement toward the district and school three-year vision.

He discussed the district goals which is all students meeting or exceeding grade level standards. He commented about last year resetting the vision in each building and the accomplishments that were made toward that mission, which included: North Street School 74% of students reading on or about grade level and 67% of students on or about grade level in math; South Elementary School 61% of students reading on or about grade level and 63% of students on or about grade level in math; middle school 59% of students reading on or above grade level in reading and 44% of students on or about grade level in math; and, high school 96% of students enrolled, enlisted or employed after graduation. Other increases in 2023 included ELA Performance for all students and for high needs students; math performance for all students; science performance for all students and for high needs students; and a six-year graduation rate for high needs students. He discussed Alliance District Performance for the district. There are 36 Alliance districts, including Windsor Locks. In 2019, Windsor Locks ranked 36 out of 36 in reading. In 2023, Windsor Locks was ranked 3rd out of 36 in reading. In 2019, Windsor Locks ranked 36 out of 36 in math. In 2013, Windsor Locks was ranked 4th out of 36 in math. He explained this is a great accomplishment; however, to maintain the current budget, some of the grants, in particular the COVID funds are no longer available and the financial cliff that he has discussed in the past is here. The next slides discussed was entitled “FY 25 Superintendent’s Proposed Budget Drivers”. This slide contractual obligations (fixed costs); ESSER grant funds, other grant funding, medical insurance costs, and magnet school tuition.

A discussion was held among Mr. Parkhurst, Ms. Pierce, and Board Members regarding magnet schools, tuition costs, and marketing of those schools.

The next slides discussed by Mr. Parkhurst and Ms. Pierce were a pie chart explaining the grant details and a chart of grant names, amounts of the grants and the uses of the grants. The total offsetting the general fund with the use of the grants is in the amount of \$2,687,921. Mr. Parkhurst announced that the Board of Education adopted budget FY 2023-2021 was \$33,025,838 and the Superintendent is recommending a budget for FY 2024-2025 of \$38,436,156 or a \$5,410,320 increase or 16.38% increase over last year’s adopted budget. He noted that the fixed costs and contractual obligations are \$37,696,593 or 98.08% of the budget.

The next slide shown was entitled “Comparison of Fiscal Year 2023-2024 and Fiscal Year 2024-2025”. This slide showed an Account Area Totals, approved FY 2023-2024 and proposed FY 2024-2025 and the increase or decrease in those areas. The categories were as follows: General Control, Instruction, Healthcare/Nursing Services, Transportation, Operation of Plant, Maintenance of Plant and Other. Both Mr. Parkhurst and Ms. Pierce gave lengthy descriptions and explanation of each category.

Mr. Parkhurst discussed new items he is proposing in the budget which included, volleyball freshman boys basketball, robotics funding, 1.0 technology specialist, 1.0 special education teacher, 1.0 special education behavior program teacher, 3.0 special education tutors, 1.0 special education pre-k paraeducators, 1.0 district nurse, 1.0 Assistant superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment and .5 clerical assistant. Also discussed were proposed reductions in the budget which included: 1.0 Director of Curriculum shift to 1.0 Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, 1.0 special education transition teacher shift to 1.0 special education behavior teacher, 1.0 Grade 4 teacher, and district courier.

A brief discussion was held.

Mr. Parkhurst then gave examples of three scenarios showing those scenarios all less the increase of contractual obligations of 6.9%. The first being the Superintendent Budget of 16.38% less the contractual obligations, a net increase of 9.48%; the second being the Superintendent Budget 8.81% with the Town funding the \$2.5 Million dollar insurance cost and less contractual obligations, a net increase of 1.91%; and the third being the Superintendent Budget 7.10% with the Town funding the \$3.065 Million dollar insurance cost and increase, less the contractual obligations, a net increase of .20%.

A lengthy discussion was held.

Mr. Parkhurst discussed the timeline for the next budget meetings in the month of January and noted the approval has to be done by January 25, 2024 so the budget can be delivered to the Town by February 1, 2024. The Board of Education Budget Presentation to the Board of Finance is scheduled for February 13, 2024.

A brief discussion was held.

III. Public Audience

Mr. Kevin Stone of South Elm Street addressed the Board. He had three questions about the budget process. He asked about State funding and commented that the district will not know what amount the State will be funding for the FY 2024-2025 at the time of the presentation to the Board of Finance. He just wanted confirmation of that fact, which Mr. Parkhurst did confirm. The second question he had was after the budget was approved, can any changes be made to specific salaries or lines. He was told that contractual obligations, such as salaries

would not be changed as those salaries are contractual obligations. Finally, he asked about the increase or decreases in the student enrollment numbers, he did not see that information in the budget packet. Mr. Parkhurst indicated those numbers are holding steady, other than an increase in the eighth grade slightly at 123 students in the class.

IV. Adjournment

It was **MOVED** (Gragnotati) and **SECONDED** (Osorio) and **PASSED** (U) that the Board of Education adjourn the Special Meeting of January 4, 2024, at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise M. Piotrowicz
Recording Secretary