

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

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
January 30, 2024 at 5:00 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:	None
Administrators:	S. Parkhurst, R. Bissonnette, M. Warner, M. Briggs, G. Testani, J. Robinson, and via Zoom A. Pierce, K Krupa, G. Weigert, and C. Domler
Student Representatives:	E. Norris
Students:	None
Staff:	L. Zamal, M. Ellis, M. Friend, and P. Sibila
Others:	G. Lopez and many others and about 23 participating via Zoom including G. Guyette
Press:	None

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Ms. Kylee Christianson called the Special Meeting to Order at 5:00 p.m. held at the Windsor Locks High School Media Center and via Zoom.

A. Roll Call for Quorum

All Board Members were present.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

All stood up and pledged allegiance to the flag.

II. Appointment of New Board Member

Chairperson Ms. Christianson announced an appointment of a new Board Member replacing Mr. Jim McGowan who resigned on December 31, 2023. She introduced Mr. Greg Guyette to the Board, who was participating remotely via Zoom. He was attending a high school track meeting his son and daughter were participating in. He addressed the Board. He has resided in the Town of Windsor Locks for twenty years. He works at Collins Aerospace product development of spacesuits. He is excited to be a part of the Board.

It was **MOVED** (Osorio) and **SECONDED** (Cutler) and **PASSED** (U) that the Board of Education accepts the appointment from the Democratic Town Committee of Mr. Greg Guyette as a Board Member of the Board of Education.

III. Student Board Representatives

None.

IV. Board of Education and Superintendent Communications

None.

V. Approval of Minutes

• **January 4, 2024 Special Meeting**

The following areas in the minutes were noted as follows:

The Heading changes:

Members Absent: None (eliminate J. McGown as resigned 12/31/2023)
Administrators: Add: Via Zoom: R. March, R. Bissonnette, M. Warner and
C. Domler

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section I. Roll Call as follows:

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

to

“All Board Members were present.”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section II, Paragraph 1, Line 2:

Delete sentence: A copy of the PowerPoint presentation entitled “FY 2025 Budget Presentation, Superintendent’s Recommended FY 25 Budget”.

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section II., Paragraph 1, Line 3, as follows:

“...to the Town on February 1, 2023.”

to

“...to the Town on February 1, 2024.”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section II., Paragraph 1, Line 8, as follows:

“...adequate instruction, equitable allocation of resources, proper maintenance of facilities and safe setting.”

to

“...adequate instructional books, supplies, materials, equipment staffing, facilities and technology, equitable allocation of resources, proper maintenance of facilities and a safe school setting.:

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section II., Paragraph 1, Line 10, as follows:

“...experiences between schools, fulfil statutory...”

to

“...experiences between schools, fulfills statutory...”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section II., Paragraph 2, Line 1, as follows:

“...the district goals which is...”

to

“...the district vision which is...”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section II., Paragraph 2, Lines 3-8, as follows:

“...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% ...”

to

“were made toward that vision, which included: North Street School 74% of students reading on or above grade level and 67% of students on or about grade level in math; South Elementary School 61% of students reading on or above grade level and 63% of students on or above grade level in math; Windsor Locks Middle School 59% of students reading on or above grade level and 44% of students on or above grade level in math; and, Windsor Locks High School 96% ...”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section II., Paragraph 2, Line 15, as follows:

“In 2013, Windsor Locks was...”

to

“In 2023, Windsor Locks was...”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section II., Paragraph 2, Line 19, as follows:

“...Superintendent’s Proposed Budget Drivers”. This slide contractual...”

to

“...Superintendent’s Proposed Budget Drivers.” This slide outlined contractual...”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section II., Paragraph 4, Lines 4-6, as follows:

“...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.”

to

“...budget FY 2023-2024 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 years adopted budget.”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section II., Paragraph 5, Line 2, as follows:

“...2024-2025”. This slide showed...”

to

“...2024-2025. This slide showed...”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section II., Paragraph 5, Line 5, as follows:

“...Maintenance of Plaintiff and Other.”

to

“...Maintenance of Plant and Other.”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section II., Paragraph 6, Lines 1-4, as follows:

“...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...”

to

“...budget which included, girls 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...”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section II., Paragraph 8, Line 4, as follows:

“...\$2.5 Million dollar insurance cost...”

to

“...\$2.5 Million dollar insurance cost as they did in FY24...”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section II., Paragraph 8, Line 6, as follows:

“...the \$3.065 Million dollar insurance cost and increase, less the contractual obligations, a net increase of .20%.”

to

“...\$2.5 Million dollar insurance cost as they did in FY24 plus the 5% increase; insurance in FY25.”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section II., Paragraph 10, Line 2, as follows:

“...so the budget will be delivered to ...”

to

“...so the budget can be delivered to...”

- **January 11, 2024 Special Meeting**

It was noted an error in the minutes in the heading as follows:

“...J. Robinson, R. Marsh, A. Goodwin...”

to

“... J. Robinson, R. March, A. Goodwin...”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section III., Paragraph 1, Lines 2 – 4 as follows:

“...in the mist of reviewing iReady data for reading and math from the fall. He also noted leadership review of the SROs in the district and meeting with the Police Chief as the SROs in the schools has been going very well and their presence. She discussed a peers advocacy group...”

to

“...in the midst of reviewing iReady data for reading and math after the mid-year assessment. He also noted leadership reviewed the progress of the SROs in the district with the Police Chief of the SROs. It has been going very well and their presence. She discussed a peers advocacy group...”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section III., Paragraph 1, Lines 8-11 as follows:

“...the anti-vape campaign will be underway with a free t-shirt give-a-way. He commented on North Street School professional development on reading instruction in schools, which is a new state requirement. A professional development program for the district will be held on Friday, which will include staff wellness.”

to

“... Youth Leadership will be kicking off the anti-vape campaign with a free t-shirt give-a-way. He commented on North Street School professional development on reading instruction in alignment with the state requirement related to the Science of Reading, which is a new state requirement. A professional development program for the district will be held on Friday, which will include staff wellness.”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section VI., Paragraph 1, Line 3 as follows:

“...for their review, it was also shown...”

to

“...for their review. It was also shown...”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section VI., Paragraph 1, Lines 6-10 as follows:

“...broken down in categories of: General Control, Instruction, Healthcare/Nursing Services, Transportation, Operation of Plant, Maintenance of Plant and Other. The summary gave a breakdown of the approved FY 2023-2024 and the proposed 2024-2025 budget. Chair Ms. Christianson asked Mr. Robinson to explain public services to the Board for their review, it was also shown...”

to

“...broken down into categories of: General Control, Instruction, Healthcare/Nursing Services, Transportation, Operation of Plant, Maintenance of Plant and Other. The summary gave a breakdown of the approved FY 2023-2024 and the proposed 2024-2025 budget. Chairperson Ms. Christianson asked Mr. Robinson to explain pupil services to the Board...”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section VI., Paragraph 1, Lines 18-23 as follows:

“...their roles in assisting in Pine Meadow and RISE. He was asked about the requirements for a PPT, procedures and timelines for same. He explained any parent can ask for a PPT for their student. There is a 45 day timeline. SRBI teams work in 8-week cycles to do assessments and identify any needs a student may have and if the student qualifies for any services.”

to

“...their roles in assisting at Pine Meadow and RISE. He was asked about the requirements for a PPT, procedures and timelines. He explained any parent can ask

for a PPT for their student. There is a 45 day timeline to complete the evaluation. SRBI teams work in 8-week cycles to do assessments and provide intervention services.”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section VI., Paragraph 2, Line 5 as follows:

“...the approved FY 23-24 and proposed FY 24-25 budgets.”

to

“...the approved FY 23-24 and proposed FY 24-25 budget.”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section VII., Paragraph 1, Line 1 as follows:

“...introduced Mrs. Rachel Marsh, Coordinator...”

to

“...introduced Mrs. Rachel March, Coordinator...”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section VII., Paragraph 1, Line 6 as follows:

“...Board Member, Ms. Osorio and Ms. Culer...”

to

“...Board Member, Ms. Osorio and Ms. Cutler...”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section VII., Paragraph 1, Line 6 as follows:

“...to have students gave the skills needed...”

to

“...to have students gain the skills needed...”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section VII., Paragraph 2, Lines 1-4 as follows:

“ Mrs. Marsh began discussing RISE which is a transitional program for students 18 to 22. Currently there are 7 Windsor Locks residents and 11 out-of-district students. This program saves the district as these students are not placed out-of-district and therefore, the district does not have to pay tuition fees. The proposed budget for FY 24-25 is decreased by 24.97%as ...”

to

“Mrs. March began discussing RISE which is a transitional program for students aged 18 to 22. Currently there are 7 Windsor Locks residents and 11 out-of-district

students. This program saves the district as these students are not placed out-of-district. The proposed budget for FY 24-25 is decreased by 24.97% as ...” began...”

It was noted an error in the minutes in Section VIII, Paragraph 1, Line 1 as follows:

“Mr. Parkhurst reminded everyone schools are closed on Monday.”

to

“Mr. Parkhurst reminded everyone schools are closed on Monday in honor of Martin Luther King Day.”

- **January 18, 2024 Special Meeting**

It was **MOVED** (Cutler) and **SECONDED** (Osorio) and **PASSED** (U) that the Board of Education accepts the Minutes of Special Meetings of January 4, 2024, January 11, 2024, and January 18, 2024, as corrected.

VI. Personnel Report

A. Retirements

Mr. Robert Stacy, Director of Human Resources, addressed the Board. He informed the Board of the following retirements:

- Ms. Joan Hijeck, an elementary teacher at North Street School, retired earlier than planned on January 19, 2024. Joan served the students of Windsor Locks for 25 years.
- Ms. Dianne Daniel, an elementary teacher at North Street School, will retire June 30, 2024. Dianne served the students of Windsor Locks for 24 years.
- Ms. Susan Dolan, a Math Instructional Specialist at Windsor Locks High School, will retire June 30, 2024. Susan served the students of Windsor Locks for 6 years.
- Ms. Carrie Kiesel, a School Psychologist at North Street School, will retire January 31, 2024. Carrie served the students of Windsor Locks for 9 years.
- Ms. Gloria Lynch, a Spanish teacher at Windsor Locks High School, will retire June 30, 2024. Gloria served the students of Windsor Locks for 21 years.
- Ms. Allison Macomber, a guidance counselor at Windsor Locks Middle School, will retire June 30, 2024. Allison served the students of Windsor Locks for 20 years.

- Ms. Patricia McKenna, a special education teacher at RISE Transition Academy, will retire June 30, 2024. Patricia served the students of Windsor Locks for 15 years.

Mr. Stacy noted a total of 125 years of service among the seven retirees.

It was **MOVED** (Gragnolati) and **SECONDED** (Osorio) and **PASSED** (U) that the Board of Education accepts retirements on the dates noted and offer our appreciation for their service to the Windsor Locks Public Schools.

VII. Policy

A. First Read

- **4111.4211 Recruitment and Selection – Revision**
- **4117.6 Exit Surveys - New**

Mr. Robert Stacy noted this was the first read of two policies, one a revision and the other a new policy. He gave a brief description of the policies.

A brief discussion was held.

VIII. FY25 CIAC Items

Chairperson Ms. Christainson indicated that she had asked Mr. Parkhurst for all the potential CIAC projects but would like to put this discussion on hold until the Board hears the comments from the surveys that were recently received. The Board can revisit and discuss this topic at a future meeting to discuss the overall operating budget and to prioritize projects. It was the consensus of the Board to table this topic for another meeting.

Mr. Parkhurst reminded everyone that capital items will be submitted to the Town with the operating budget. This is different to the way it was done last year.

IX. Kindergarten Entrance Plan

Mr. Parkhurst introduced Ms. Giovanna Testani, Principal of North Street School and Ms. Linda Zamal, PreK Coordinator at North Street School, to the Board to discuss the new entry age for kindergarten. Ms. Testani explained the State of Connecticut changed the age children entering kindergarten in 2024-2025 pursuant to Public Act 23-208, Section 1(a) in that to start kindergarten a child must turn five (5) on or before September 1, 2024. Children who turn five (5) on September 2, 2024 through September 1, 2025, will enter kindergarten in the 2025-2026 school year. She explained there are exemptions. Parents must submit a written request to the school to admit their child. An assessment completed by the school will determine if the admitting child would be developmentally appropriate. If the child receives special education services and does not meet the new cutoff date, the child's planning and placement team (PPT) will review/revise the child's IEP to meet the child's needs during the additional year of PreK. Parents can also submit a written request if they would like their child to enter kindergarten and the school will complete an assessment. Ms. Testani gave a timeline of process and procedures. On February 2, 2024, she will hold a coffee call to introduce guidelines and procedures to the community. February and March, the district will

accept written requests from parents; April assessments will be completed and in May families will be notified of the results.

Ms. Zamal explained the assessment the district will be using, Brigance Early Childhood Screens III. This assessment assesses physical development, language, academic/cognitive development, self-help, and social-emotional skills. It combines both a parent and teacher report. It standardizes the measure of emergency literacy skills. It provides cutoff scores for detecting potential giftedness or academic talent and potential development or academic delays.

A brief discussion was held.

X. FY24-25 Budget Forum & Input

Chairperson Ms. Christainson indicated that Mr. Parkhurst and his team will be presenting the survey results of families, staff, and students of the middle and high schools. Seventeen parents returned the surveys and the trends loved were sports, after school activities and clubs. They would like to see more of afterschool activities and clubs, more language options in lower grades and access to content above grade level such as enrichment and gifted and talented programs along with practical course offerings for life experiences. Twenty-four staff members responded to the survey and the trends loved were opportunities provided to students, sports activities, and to keep the dedicated staff members. It was also suggested to use technology access to attract freshmen to stay with the district, along with afterschool activities and alternative programs. The trending needs from staff members were updated instructional materials, funding afterschool activities, funding field trips, additional supports in the classroom for social/emotional and academics, offer more trade classes such as woodworking, electrical, mechanical and cosmetology. Also mentioned was increased and/or adequate training for staff. The staff mentioned upgrading/updating facilities including HVAC upgrades and/or additions.

A brief discussion was held. Chairperson Ms. Christianson asked if anyone would like to speak about the budget in-person or on Zoom.

Ms. Megan Ellis, a 4th Grade teacher, addressed the Board. She first wanted everyone to know that her frustration is not toward anyone in particular, but it is another year of data and the students are doing well, moving toward their goals due to the amazing teachers who are driven by their passion for their students and budget cuts are people. Those people give their all every day, just to know that in June they may not have a job to come back to in September, but they keep on giving their all for the students. Last year, there were line items cut from the budget, for example one of those line items were student headphones that are used while students work on iReady. The idea was parents would purchase the headphones for their students. She reminded the Board that some of the children do not come to school with a snack and if parents cannot provide a daily snack for their children, how are they going to afford headphones. Teachers have no issues in providing markers, paper, and other tangible items for the classroom. Each year teachers are told to be creative to save money and cut corners. She asked why the first thing is to cut people. These people are valuable and keeps the Windsor Locks Public Schools running. She asked the Board to be creative and not cut positions/people first.

Ms. Melissa Friend, a 4th Grade teacher, addressed the Board. She thanked the Board for all of their hard work, and she does not envy them for having to make hard decisions. She shared a day in the life of a teacher. She explained the morning begins with a crew meeting. After the crew meeting, lessons in ELA, math, science, and social studies including social/emotional learning are done, while being interrupted by phone calls to send students to speech class, music lessons and other various out of classroom interventions. At any given time, students are falling asleep or having behavioral issues that need to be addressed. Her lunch time is scheduled for 11:50 a.m., but most of the time it is closer to 12:15 p.m., or only about 15-20 minutes to eat, make phone calls, after interruptions from the lunchroom/recess aides or interventionalist asking questions or reporting in on a student. There are times she has had to eat lunch in her car just to have some of her own time and not to be interrupted. After lunch, she has intervention blocks with small groups discussing data with SRBI. During the day she also must deal with technology issues, planning for the next day's lessons, and dealing with behavioral issues. She encouraged the Board to spend a day in one of the classrooms with a teacher to see in real time what a classroom teacher does on a daily basis to understand the stressors of the day. She has been diagnosed with high blood pressure due to all of the stress she has been under, and her doctor has told her she must decrease her stress levels. Every year elementary teachers are cut from the budget and the excuse is the decrease in enrollment numbers. The classroom teachers cannot control an overcrowded classroom due to the needs of the children which have increased since she started teaching. The teachers need smaller class sizes to manage the everyday classroom. Cutting a fourth grade teacher is not the answer and will only make a small dent in the budget.

Mr. Matt Segal, President of the Windsor Locks Teachers Association, addressed the Board. He thanked the Board for listening to the input of the members of the WLTA as they want what is best for the students. He understands the sacrifices that have to be made due to funding the budget, but a budget should support the innovations to move the students forward. As stated by the administrative team, the proposed budget supports students. The proposed budget is necessary to support extracurricular activities, additional supports and programming to give students a well-rounded education and to provide opportunities for students. All teachers share the same goals to support students.

Dr. Rebecca Bissonnette, Principal of Windsor Locks High School and Mr. Matt Warner, Principal of Windsor Locks Middle School addressed the Board to discuss the results of the student surveys from the middle and high schools. They noted that 73% of the middle school students and 53% of the high school students participated in the survey. Students value the following in this order, sports, extracurricular activities, course offerings, free breakfast/lunch and the music department. Students would like to see more activities, such as a volleyball team for the middle and high school, field trips, career pathways and more world language classes. Concerning facilities, students would like to see more HVAC additions in the schools, updating the sport complex including the fields and track.

A lengthy discussion was held.

Chairperson Ms. Christianson indicated that the Board of Education will be asking the Board of Finance on February 6, 2024 for an extension to allow the Board of Education to submit their proposed budget as the Board has many new members. It was the consensus of the Board agreed.

XI. Board and Superintendent Comments

Mr. Parkhurst thanked the staff who came out and spoke during the meeting. He also thanked the leadership team for all their hard work in preparing the budget, starting at a zero and work through the process by listening to needs and wants of families, students and staff.

XII. Public Audience

Ms. Gail Lopez addressed the Board. She has a granddaughter who is enrolled at the Pine Meadow Academy since 2022 when she was in eleventh grade. She is now a senior and she is doing very well. She came to the district from a private school, where she worked independently. PMA has fallen in line with that way of teaching and has made her excel in her studies, including taking classes in cosmetology. She hopes that the Board will keep PMA funded as it is a great program for students.

XIII. Adjournment

It was **MOVED** (Gragnotati) and **SECONDED** (Cutler) and **PASSED** (U) that the Board of Education adjourn the Special Meeting of January 30, 2024 at 6:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise M. Piotrowicz
Recording Secretary