

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
JULY 7, 2020**

A special meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was virtually on Tuesday July 7, 2020.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Walter Kruzel.
2. **INVOCATION OR MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Walter Kruzel
3. **ROLL CALL:**

MEMBERS PRESENT REMOTELY: Jonathan LeBlanc, Bill Salazar, Chris Rutledge, Wendy Costa, Tina LeBlanc, Joyce Hall, Stacy Thurston, Scott Ryder and Walter Kruzel

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Christopher Drezek, Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Andrew B. Longey, Assistant Superintendent

4. **BOARD GUESTS**

Board members welcomed JFK Building Committee members Randy Daigle, JFK Building Chairman; Chris Cykley, JCJ and Emily Czarnecki, JCJ. Ms. Czarnecki provided the Board with a PowerPoint presentation regarding the JFK FF&E. She reviewed the furniture selections for classrooms, science rooms, art rooms, music/stage, CTE, teachers, hub, common areas, administration, office staff and cafeteria. She also reviewed the item data sheets, furniture drawing placements and cost estimate.

Mr. Salazar asked if social distancing options for the students have been considered. Mrs. Czarnecki stated the furniture will not be installed until next year. We can make modifications if needed. We are planning for long-term. There are options available to provide acrylic dividers if needed. Students can sit at the cafeteria every other seat if this continues.

Mr. Daigle stated we are required to adhere to the State guidelines and restrictions in order to receive full reimbursement. We are planning for 23-25 students in each classroom. We have guidelines we need to follow for the cafeteria. If the state changes their guidelines, we will address it.

Mr. Salazar added he is looking to see if options can be added like partitions. He hopes a vaccine will be developed but what if another pandemic occurs. The furniture might need to be retrofitted if social distancing continues.

Mr. Daigle stated we have designed the classrooms so they can be expanded if more space is needed. The furniture can be moved around. We are trying to keep the students together and classes together. JCJ has done a great job with the plans and we can add dividers if needed.

Mr. Salazar stated the furniture can be adjusted if needed. We cannot afford to not think this might not happen. We do not want to be shortsighted.

Mrs. Czarnecki added the furniture can be modified if needed.

Mr. LeBlanc asked about the auditorium seating, gym and locker rooms with social distancing.

Mr. Daigle stated the auditorium seating is required by code. You can seat students in every other seat or rows.

Mr. LeBlanc asked about the gymnasium seats and locker rooms. Mr. Daigle stated tonight we are discussing FF&E. What you are asking about would be presented at another time.

Mrs. Czarnecki added those items are part of the construction portion has been bid out.

Mr. Daigle those items will be similar to what we did at Enfield High School. We can give another presentation with that information as an update.

Mr. Daigle stated the State will only reimburse us for the per classroom totals.

Mrs. Costa understands some items will not be reimbursed or are ineligible. She asked about the classrooms.

Ms. Czarnecki stated the State will only reimburse us for the per class occupancy. Some classes will have 29 students and they will only reimburse us for a certain student number. Additional desks and chairs might be needed but will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Mr. Daigle added we will receive 50% reimbursement on certain items if they feel the items can be used by the town or public.

Mrs. Costa asked how does this compare from when we were looking at a referendum? Mr. Daigle stated we are currently under budget.

Mrs. Costa asked how much are we under budget?

Mr. Cykley added we were projecting \$2.8 million. We are at \$2.3 million and are approximately around \$500K under budget.

Mr. Ryder asked about our FF&E reimbursement rate and if it is the same. Mr. Daigle stated yes, our rate is 70.17.

Mr. Salazar asked about the administration seating. Ms. Czarnecki the administration section is not reimbursable due to the age of that part of the building. It was deemed ineligible like the media center. We are still purchasing new furniture.

Mr. Daigle stated the State will not reimburse anything under 20 years old. This area is 18 years old. We will use the media center as swing space and it is now considered as reimbursable space. Just the administration area is not reimbursable.

Mr. Salazar asked about seating. Ms. Czarnecki stated that is all the task chairs, guest chairs and conference room chairs.

Chairman Kruzel added the existing cafeteria space will end up being the new administrative area.

Mr. Daigle stated we would really like to give the Board a full-blown presentation on the floorplans at some point. He thanked the liaisons for sharing information with the Board and Town Council. We are ahead of schedule. All our bids were favorable, and we are currently under budget by around \$5 million on the project. We have been working hand-in-hand with the administration. He commends everyone for all the work that has been done.

Chairman Kruzel thanked Mr. Daigle for his chairmanship on the project and keeping us in order.

Suspend the Rules and move Item #7a.

Chairman Kruzel would like to suspend the rules and move Item #7a Approve Phase 2 Furniture Plans, Specifications and Cost Estimate and submit to OSCG for Review and approval and Signoff on Form SCG-042 up on the agenda for Board approval.

Mrs. Hall moved, seconded by Mrs. Costa that the Enfield Board of Education moves Item 7a up on the agenda for Board Approval.

A vote by **show-of-hands 9-0-0**, passed unanimously.

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mrs. Costa that the Enfield Board of Education approves Phase 2 Furniture Plans, Specifications and Cost Estimate and submit to OSCG for Review and approval and Signoff on Form SCG-042 as presented.

Discussion:

A vote by **roll-call 9-0-0**, passed unanimously.

Chairman Kruzel thanked them for their presentation and hard work. We can have another presentation in September or October.

5. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

a. EPS School Update

Mr. Drezek provided the Board with an update regarding opening schools in September. We received our guidelines from the State. We have until July 24th to submit 3 plans for reopening to the state (in-person, hybrid plan and all digital plan). We have posted the guidelines on our website. Altogether, the plan and the links are around 150 pages. He has discussed this with colleagues and legal counsel. At this point, we have more questions than answers. Parents have options regarding the next school year. They can send their kids back to school, they can opt-out, or they can continue with digital learning or homeschool their children in the traditional manner. There are no set directions for us regarding digital learning.

Mr. Drezek added there is a second set of instructions we will need to follow. Our legal counsel has cautioned us to not act too quickly. We will need to discuss this further with our counsel and town counterparts. We need to make sure the Board is not held liable.

Mr. Drezek stated we will start by sending a survey to all staff and employees about coming back. This survey needs to be approved by the EEOC to make sure we are not discriminating against anyone in any shape or form. This is step one. There are many other tentacles we will need to address.

Mr. Drezek added we will also send a survey home to parents that will ask several specific questions. Parents must submit a survey for every child attending school. If we can plan for in person classes, we are not sure how many students will be coming back. We were told to prepare for 30-35% of families opting out of attending school in person. He encouraged everyone to complete these surveys. There is a deadline for the surveys. We also need to ask about internet capabilities for families. We will promote this from every avenue we have.

Mr. Drezek addressed this as a parent. We are asking parents to make a decision about sending your child back to school without all of the information being available and not knowing what school is going to look like in September. He will need to complete 2 forms for his children, so he knows what you are facing as a parent. School will not look like anything we are used to or have experienced in our lives if we are permitted to return to in person classes in September.

Mr. Drezek stated he will not speculate and will only share the facts. All students and staff will be required to wear a mask when in school. All visitors are also required to wear a mask. We have purchased 10,000 masks. Every child and staff member will be provided a cloth mask.

Mr. Drezek added teachers will be permitted to move their mask down in order to deliver instruction, as long as they are socially distanced from the students. We will also purchase face shields for our teachers when they are delivering instruction. Our nursing supervisor has applied for a grant from the Ford Motor Company for the face shields to obtain 6,000 face shields.

Mr. Drezek stated social distancing of 6 feet is not feasible in classrooms. The State guidelines are 3 feet. He wants parents to understand this. Classrooms will consist of desks facing the same direction toward the teacher 3 feet apart. Students will not face each other they will look forward. Instruction will be very different if we want our students back in school in September.

Mr. Drezek stated transportation will operate on near capacity. We do not know what that means. Masks are required to be worn. Bus drivers will not monitor the students. The district will need to hire a monitor to watch students wearing masks. We have bus monitors at Stowe but we have had to use staff since we cannot find people to fill this positions. Parents will need to know that there will be someone on the bus monitoring their children wearing masks.

Mr. Drezek explained about cohorts. Students will be with their classmates and teacher all day long. If a case breaks out, contact tracing will be easier. If a child rides on the bus, that is another cohort with students in that school. We are also transporting students with the sister-schools that need to be considered.

Mr. Drezek added we need to know about internet capabilities. There will be an increase of digital learning at some point. We need to plan to continue operating with distance learning at some point. He wanted to share these points with parents.

Mr. Drezek stated a lot of work is going on in our buildings. We are measuring around the student classrooms and desks. We are moving forward with our digital training for staff, for parents and students before they come back to school. We will be distributing iPads. We need teach our students how to use them. We are conducting meetings on Teams. We have learned that we can do more on Teams than we were aware. Students can submit their work to the teachers.

Mr. Drezek added our curriculum instruction needs to be changed. Our play lab at Stowe will need to be changed. We will need to be concise with our instruction if we come back in September. We are developing flow charts because we will no longer be able to walk around the building like we used to. We will need to make changes to our parent drop-offs and pickups. Everything will be changed and plans are currently being developed.

Mr. Drezek stated he has been asked why can't we stream classes? There are many issues with this. We are trying to see if we can do this legally. Are there labor laws prohibiting this? There are many concerns. There are also confidentiality issues and FERPA concerns with doing this.

Mr. Drezek stated we all want our kids back in school. Our staff wants our kids back in school. We need everyone to be safe and follow the guidelines. We need to protect students and staff. We will not jeopardize the health and safety of our students and staff.

Mr. Drezek thanked those that have sent him ideas. We should be soliciting input from all stakeholders. He wished we could get everyone's ideas. Once we know what the rules are and are clear on them, we will know what we can do and when we can solicit input. At this point,

we can't have these kinds of discussions yet. Another district shared a hybrid plan that included an AM and PM session. They were told by the State this can't be done. The State says if we can open, we will be open all day. The definition for hybrid plan is grey. Until we know what the requirements are, we are limited. We need to know what we can do. All of this is contingent on the virus and the public health data. We are in a better position with our transmission rates than some of our neighboring States. If there are any changes with our numbers, this could all change again. We are keeping our fingers crossed that we can continue to move forward.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

a. Policy Revision #6145 – Extracurricular Activities – Gr. 6-12 Second Reading

Mr. Rutledge moved, seconded by Mrs. Costa that the Enfield Board of Education approves Policy Revision #6145 – Extracurricular Activities – Gr. 6-12 as a second and final reading.

Discussion:

A vote by **roll call 7-2-0** passed with Mrs. LeBlanc and Mrs. Thurston in dissent.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Approve Phase 2 Furniture Plans, Specifications and Cost Estimate and submit to OSG for Review and Approval and Signoff on For SCG-042

This item was previously addressed.

b. Cancel July 14, 2020 Regular Board of Education Meeting

Mrs. Hall moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Enfield Board of Education cancels their July 14, 2020 Regular meeting.

Discussion:

Mr. Rutledge asked if we are going to schedule another meeting to be held in its place? Chairman Kruzel stated we can schedule another meeting if needed.

A vote by **roll call 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

8. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Mr. Ryder thanked Mr. Drezek for taking the time to explain to our staff and families about reopening in person. He has spoken to many people about this. Everyone has ideas and suggestions. We need to wait until we know what the rules all. We received the State guideline document along with the many links to explore. Now we need to see what will work or won't work with input from all stakeholders. The survey is extremely important for staff and parents to complete. We need to know how many of our students and staff will come back in the fall. We need to start to plan for this. He will contact the PTO's to get the word out about completing the surveys. He looks forward to when we can all meet again in person. Stay safe.

Mrs. Thurston stated everyone is looking for answers. Everyone is doing the best they can. We need you to be patient and bear with us as we go through the information. We will let you know as soon as we can.

Mrs. Hall thanked Mr. Drezek for answering some of her questions with your Superintendent Report. What is the deadline for the parent surveys?

Mr. Drezek stated the staff member survey deadline is Friday, July 10th and the parent survey deadline is Friday, July 17th.

Mr. Drezek added that one of the questions we had for the parent that chooses to opt-out, they can change their minds at any time. There are no time-line restraints listed in the guidelines. When we plan for transportation, we need three (3) days to process the plan to transport a student. We will plan for a certain number of students to attend school. Our legal counsel does not feel that is reasonable and they are currently working on a time limit for the opt-out choice. What this would mean is, if you chose to have your child return to school for in person classes, you would need to wait a certain amount of time for us to prepare. It could be a week or more. We will need time to prepare for additional students that return.

Mrs. Hall stated the Head Start program has been conducting its self-assessment this week in order to plan for their future. There is nothing in the guidelines regarding afterschool programs like the one run by ERfC. This could be a critical part when it comes to reopening school.

Mr. Drezek stated he has had conversations with our afterschool and parochial school programs. We transport to these programs. We are in the beginning stages of discussing items with them. We have been communicating with all our partners with what ever we are going to do.

Mrs. LeBlanc asked when we submit our plan, when will you hear back from the State.

Mr. Drezek stated they will not approve our plan. They want everyone to submit their plans, so they have a record. They will not approve them they just want them to share for better practices. We have concerns with this also. What if there is something in our plan that they do not approve. The summer school guidelines stated no more than 10 students per classroom. The new guidelines do not mention how many students can be in a classroom. We just need to keep them 3 feet apart. He has submitted questions about this.

Mrs. LeBlanc asked about the masks. Would they be required to use them throughout the week and reuse them or can parents send their children to school with their own masks.

Mr. Drezek stated parents can provide their children with masks. We will also provide cloth masks and will have extras on hand if needed. We will need extra masks on the buses for children that forget them at home. The masks can be washed and reused.

Mrs. LeBlanc thanked Mr. Drezek for his detailed report. She will share this information with parents on social media and will stress the urgency for completing the survey.

Mr. LeBlanc asked if the questions on the surveys are being required by the State.

Mr. Drezek stated yes and no. We have revised the specific questions to meet our needs if they are coming back and for bussing. We are asking them about internet capabilities. This is information that is vital to us. We tailored the survey to meet our needs.

Mr. LeBlanc stated the School Reopen Committee also wanted to put out a survey. That is why he wanted to clarify where this survey was coming from.

Mr. Drezek stated he needs to send a survey back to the State by July 17th that asks how many of your students are coming back; how many will be riding the bus and how much will this cost.

Mr. LeBlanc stated the timeframe for getting this done is tight. We do not have a lot of time to get this done and figure everything out. School will start in around 7 weeks. This is directed

by the State. Everything is contingent on the virus. We have a lot of questions that need to be answered if we want to get back to school.

Mr. Salazar asked about parent input not being needed at this time. Mr. Drezek stated parent input is important. Legally he is not sure what we can do at this point.

Mr. Salazar stated the State is not clear with the guidelines. You and other administrators have many questions with the guidelines that were presented and are checking with legal counsel. This seems to be a trend with the State. When will input become relevant? School will start in several weeks. Ideas from the public could be helpful to us. He feels there is some hesitation to gather that information at this point.

Mr. Drezek stated putting together a plan with what we are permitted to do and gathering input and ideas may not be feasible in such a short amount of time. We need to find out what the rules are first. There is not a lot of clarity. We need to know what the parameters are to make this happen. He has received operational suggestions from parents and staff. We are limited with the time we have available. The State is giving us local control. It would be easier if the State told us what to do. Within the local control, our foundation needs to be set. We are soliciting input from staff and parents but we are not sure what we will be allowed to do. We have solicited information in the past on other topics. If this goes to virtual learning, we will have a totally different conversation. We know there were problems with this. It didn't work for every student, family and staff. We know we will need to make adjustments. We are being told to open schools up in September. The rules we are discussing are universal. We need to build on our foundation and tailor our opening plan. When we tailor this for the community, we will need input.

Mr. Salazar is hopeful the State will answer your questions in a timely manner. Do you have any expectations when you will hear from them?

Mr. Drezek stated he is having conversations with the State Department of Education more frequently. He understands the frustration and we are sharing this with them. The State created the plan and we need to respond to them by certain dates. Constraints are being placed on local Board of Education's. There is a need and a want to get them back into school safely. If we don't do this by the timeline they have given us, we could be held liable. We still need to discuss this with collective bargaining units. We made a decision to start meeting on Monday so if they throw us another curveball, we will deal with it. We need to stay focused on doing the right things for our staff, families and students.

Mr. Salazar stated the State is asking us to do things that are illegal or perceived to be by our attorneys

Mr. Drezek stated they are asking us to urge parents to drive their children to school. That is in direct violation of what we are supposed to do based on information in the guidelines. He spoke to our attorneys about this today. We need clarification on this. There are other things in the guideline similar to this. Parents can withdraw their child to home school them. In the traditional sense, we would not be responsible for educating them. Now we need to provide some education. There are several areas that need to be clarified.

Mr. Salazar stated cohorting for the children that interact with other children when they ride together on the bus could be less if parents drove them to school.

Mr. Drezek stated in theory yes. Where are we going to feed the children? If we are cohorting, you can feed them in the classroom. We might need to move kids around due to dietary restrictions and may need to utilize other areas. He doesn't want parents to think they will only be around a certain number of other children.

Mr. Salazar stated you will be measuring 36 sq. ft around the desks. You would be looking at 9 ft. total.

Mr. Salazar thanked Mr. Drezek for the information. He appreciates everything you are doing.

Mrs. Costa thanks Mr. Drezek for the update. She stated the Parkman PTO are selling Parkman masks for staff and children to purchase. They have adult and children sizes available.

Mrs. Costa stated she is hopeful when parents are making their decisions about school now without all the rules available, and if they choose distance learning for their child, they will treat it almost like a contract. The distance learning, we will be offering students will not be like what we offered in the fall. You will be making a commitment and will be required to do all the work, not just what you like.

Mrs. Costa clarified that when she spoke about an AM or PM classes, she was asking about the younger grades coming to school and getting used to wearing masks during the month of September. She understands why we can't do this.

Mrs. Costa stated our next Board meeting will be held on August 25th. We can call for a special meeting at anytime if one is needed.

Chairman Kruzel thanked Mr. Drezek, Mr. Longey, CO staff, principals, administrators, assistant principals, teachers, faculty and staff that have been working and canceling your vacations getting all this work done for the district. Our staff cares and they want the kids back in school. We will all get through this together. Thank you.

9. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Curriculum Committee – Mr. Salazar reported the Curriculum Committee met virtually on July 7th at 5:30 PM. We discussed our Curriculum plan for next year and reviewed the application model. Our next meeting will be held on July 30th.

Finance, Budget Committee – Nothing to report.

Policy Committee – Mr. Rutledge reported the Policy Committee will meet virtually on July 8th at 5:30 PM. The meeting can be viewed on YouTube. Originally there was an item to allow for public comments. The Chairman made the decision to remove that item. We recently approved Policy #9132 Bylaws of the Board – Standing Committees, he is hopeful we can assign alternates to our subcommittees. We will continue reviewing the 5000 series at our next meeting. We also received several policies from CABE that we will look at.

Mr. Rutledge thanked Mr. Longey for forwarding a policy to CABE to review that would allow for public comments at Board of Education meetings remotely. The policy he has been discussing regarding remote audience participation is not pushing any personal agendas. He has been suggesting this for months. He has been asking for this because it is the right thing to do. He feels the Board should be open for 21st century avenues for communication. Other Boards have adopted similar policies across the state. CABE has been given this policy to review and have offered suggestions. CABE would need to have a legal review the policy. We allow for special guests to present to the Board remotely so why not allow for public comments like many other Boards are doing.

Leadership Committee – None

Joint Facilities Committee – Chairman Kruzel reported the Joint Facilities committee will meet virtually on July 9th. We are also working on the 3rd phase for Barnard's Roof and the other school roofs.

JFK Building Committee – Chairman Kruzel reported we heard from the JFK Building Committee tonight. He thanked Gilbane and all the staff for everything they are doing. They are looking to hold a groundbreaking ceremony in August.

Joint Security Committee – Mr. Rutledge reported the Joint Security Committee will meet next on September 2nd.

School Reopen Committee – Mrs. Costa reported the School Reopen Committee met virtually on June 30th and we reviewed the guideline from the State. Our next virtual meeting will be held on July 14th.

Joint Insurance Committee – Chairman Kruzel reported they are currently looking in our property and casualty insurance and we may be switching insurance carriers. This will be discussed at a future date.

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mrs. Costa that the Special Meeting Minutes of June 23, 2020 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Chairman Kruzel added for the record, he requested at the June 23rd meeting to hold tonight's special virtual meeting.

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mrs. Hall that the Special Meeting Minutes of June 30, 2020 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

11. CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNITION: - None

12. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mrs. Costa to adjourn the Special Virtual Meeting of July 7, 2020.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously. Meeting stood adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Tina LeBlanc
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary