



Hampton Board of Education
380 Main Street
Hampton, CT 06247

June 28, 2023
7:00 pm

HES Library

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Rose Bisson called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. Present: Chair Rose Bisson, Juan Arriola, John Russell, Diane Gagnon, Dave Halbach, Dennis Timberman, Maryellen Donnelly, and Mark Becker. Staff and Others: Superintendent Dr. Samantha Sarli. Not present: Matthew Flegert

2. Correspondence to the Board

The Arriola family shared their appreciation towards members of the Hampton Elementary School Staff, Julia Cackowski, Diane Holmes and Beverly Danielson, for testifying in court for their grandson. The family expressed their gratitude towards the staff members mentioned. Julia Cackowski, “a wonderful Kindergarten teacher”, who kept their grandson happy and provided a safe haven in her classroom where the student was able to thrive and grow; Diane Holmes who was welcoming and respectful and expressed “words of support and encouragement” to the family; and School Nurse, Beverly Danielson, who was like a “second grandmother” to their grandson. He sought her gentleness when he was physically or emotionally uncomfortable and she embraced him with warmth and love. The Arriola family shared their eternal gratitude.

3. Presentation and Appointment of Principal

Dr. Samantha Sarli presented the new principal, Ms. Patrice Merendina, to the Board. Patrice Merendina introduced herself and shared her 18-year experience in education and her passion for teaching and coaching, as well as her excitement to be part of the community where she was raised and went to school herself. She answered questions about her experience in Math, Science and English Learning Arts (ELA), as well as her previous anti-racism work and her intent to learn about the community and implement a diverse curriculum accordingly, to respond to concerns raised by the Board about a lack of diversity in the community.

Maryellen Donnelly motioned to appoint Patrice Merendina as the new Hampton Elementary School principal with a salary of \$110,000, Mark Becker seconded. Voting Yes: Dennis Timberman, Dave Halbach, Mark Becker, Maryellen Donnelly. Voting No: Juan Arriola, Diane Gagnon, John Russell. The motion carried.

4. Presentation and Appointment of Acting Superintendent

Chair Rose Bisson presented Ms. Valerie Bruneau as the Acting Superintendent during Dr. Sarli’s leave of absence to the Board. Valerie Bruneau introduced herself and shared her excitement to be working with Hampton Elementary School as the Acting Superintendent. Her current districts of Scotland and Andover show a lot of similarities with the Hampton Elementary School District, such as shared services like tech and food service contracts, which makes her a great fit for the temporary position. Ms. Bruneau enjoys her



role as Superintendent a lot and likes to network to find and improve opportunities for small district students. Her extensive knowledge and skills in Special Education due to her role as Special Education Director in a previous position will be a great asset to Hampton Elementary School; she will, furthermore, be a helpful resource to the new principal. The Board welcomed her to the district.

Diane Gagnon motioned to hire Valerie Bruneau as Acting Superintendent for the duration of Dr. Sarli's leave of absence on a monthly basis with a salary of \$1,000 per week, Mark Becker seconded. Voting Yes: Dave Halbach, John Russell, Mark Becker, Dennis Timberman, Diane Gagnon, Maryellen Donnelly. Abstention: Juan Arriola. The motion carried.

5. Approval of the Minutes from 5/24/23, special meeting 5/31/23 & 6/21/23

Maryellen Donnelly motioned to approve the minutes of 05/24/2023 and special meeting minutes of 05/31/2023, Mark Becker seconded. Voting Yes: John Russell, Diane Gagnon, Dave Halbach, Dennis Timberman, Maryellen Donnelly, Mark Becker. Voting No: Juan Arriola. The motion carried.

The Board discussed adding a statement to the special meeting minutes from 06/21/2023 that states that Diane Gagnon motioned to set the new principal salary at \$101,000, but her motion was not seconded and died on the table.

Mark Becker motioned to add the amend motion of Diane Gagnon to set the new principal salary at \$101,000, that was not seconded. Mark Becker's motion was not seconded and died on the table.

An in-depth discussion occurred about the special meeting minutes from 06/21/2023. Maryellen Donnelly motioned to table the approval of the Special Meeting Minutes from 06/21/2023, Dennis Timberman seconded. Voting Yes: John Russell, Diane Gagnon, Dave Halbach, Dennis Timberman, Maryellen Donnelly, Mark Becker. Voting No: Juan Arriola. The motion carried.

6. Executive Session for the Purpose of Discussion of CHRO Complaint # A23979

Diane Gagnon motioned to enter Executive Session for the Purpose of discussing CHRO Complaint # A23979 at 7:45pm and to invite Robin Kallor and Superintendent Dr. Samantha Sarli, Mark Becker seconded. Voting Yes: John Russell, Diane Gagnon, Dave Halbach, Dennis Timberman, Maryellen Donnelly, Mark Becker. Voting No: Juan Arriola. The motion carried.

The Board returned to the Public at 8:05pm.

Juan Arriola motioned to accept the resolution to settle for CHRO complaint # A23979, Mark Becker seconded. Voting Yes: John Russell, Diane Gagnon, Dave Halbach, Dennis Timberman, Maryellen Donnelly, Mark Becker, Juan Arriola. The motion was carried unanimously.

7. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Dr. Samantha Sarli reported on the principal hiring process and how the committee faced and conquered the challenges of time consumption and scheduling. She is excited to have Patrice Merendina join the team as principal and excited to have Valerie Bruneau as the Acting Superintendent for the duration of her leave on board. Dr. Sarli thanked the Board for all of their support.



8. Principal's Report

The Board reviewed the June Principal's report and discussed some of the student numbers. Maryellen Donnelly requested that the report may be corrected, due to a couple of errors in totals and dates, and be resent to the community. Chair Rose Bisson suggested reaching out to Principal Sam Roberson with any further questions.

9. Business Coordinator's Report

The Board reviewed the Budget vs. Actual report that Business Coordinator Sally Lehoux provided. Looking at recent costs, Maryellen Donnelly suggested considering switching from the current electricity provider to a more price efficient carrier.

Chair Rose Bisson pointed out that due to Balloon payments for teachers that work during the summer, the end numbers on the report will be different. Dennis Timberman elaborated on how Balloon payments and the according interest work, to answer questions the Board had.

Chair Rose Bisson encouraged the Board to reach out to Business Coordinator Sally Lehoux with any further questions about the report.

10. Committee and Liaison reports

1. Finance and Operations - Mark Becker reported about their last meeting and the 5-year plan that shows the anticipated change to a heat pump system as one of their biggest projects. The committee connected with a new company, Action Air, and did a walkthrough of the school to show the representative around to get a modified proposal. He, furthermore, reported on a possible modification of the Library sunroom.
2. Ad-Hoc Superintendent Evaluation Committee - the committee shared that they came up with a timeline for Dr. Sarli's leave of absence at their last meeting.
3. EASTCONN - Maryellen Donnelly reported about the retreat EASTCONN had last Saturday where they discussed combatting initiative fatigue, how to support learners and how to enhance knowledge and skills for teachers. EASTCONN also came up with goals for the Board and discussed how to try and increase representation of the district by having more representatives, out of a total of 34, attend the meetings.

11. Additions to the Agenda

Maryellen motioned to add item 11a. setting up a date for a special meeting to discuss Personnel matter to the agenda, John Russell seconded the motion. Voting Yes: John Russell, Dave Halbach, Dennis Timberman, Maryellen Donnelly, Mark Becker, Rose Bisson Voting No: Diane Gagnon, Juan Arriola. The motion carried 6:2.

Chair Rose Bisson suggested setting the date for the special meeting for July 11, 2023 at 7pm. The Board agreed and the members will plan to attend.

12. Next Agenda Planning

- Approval of the Minutes from special meeting 6/21/23
- Discussion of Board Retreat and Training



13. Audience for Citizens and Staff

Juan Arriola suggested that the citizens of Hampton should have more transparency about discussions held during Executive Sessions. He also suggested Board training on FOI request procedures.

14. Adjournment

Mark Becker motioned to adjourn at 8:37pm, John Russell seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ramona Anderson

This is a draft until approved by the Board of Education.