

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
April 2, 2020**

A virtual meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held on April 2, 2020, via ZOOM Video Conferencing. Chairperson Schofield opened the meeting and called the Executive Session part of the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Present: Erin Schofield, Chairperson; Adam Ramos, Vice-Chairperson; Brian Bradshaw, Treasurer; John P. Saviano, Secretary; Sheila Ellsworth, John Bento, Victor Cabral, Marjorie McBride, and Carly Reich; Jonathan T. Brice, Ed.D., Superintendent; Diane Sanna, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent; Tina Fogell, Esq., Chief Operating Officer; Edward Clarke, Director of Student Support Services; and Mary Ann Carroll, Esq., District Solicitor

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Committee may seek to convene in execution session in accordance with R.I. Gen. Law § 42-46-5(a) for the following:

1. **42-46-5(a)(2)** Legal Advice

MOTION: Mr. Ramos made a motion to adjourn the executive session at 6:03 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Cabral.

The motion passed unanimously.

OPEN SESSION

Open session was called to order at 6:14 p.m. by Chairperson Schofield.

OPENING BUSINESS

All present were invited to join in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Chairperson Schofield stated that the Consent Agenda was being pulled from the agenda for tonight's meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Mr. Cabral made a motion to approve the March 9, 2020, School Committee Meeting/Workshop Minutes; seconded by Mrs. McBride.

The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION TO SEAL THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

MOTION: Mr. Cabral made a motion to seal the minutes of tonight's executive session, seconded by Mr. Bradshaw.

The motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chairperson Schofield stated at the beginning of the meeting that the Consent Agenda was being pulled from tonight's meeting.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

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Mr. Saviano introduced each discussion/action item and Chairperson Schofield invited Dr. Brice to share his recommendations to the School Committee for each item.

Coronavirus Emergency - Staffing Plan for Continued Closure: Dr. Brice recommended that the School Committee approve his recommendation to maintain all employees through April 30, 2020 with that caveat that we will revisit the decision at that time.

MOTION: Mrs. McBride made a motion to approve this recommendation, seconded by Mr. Cabral.

DISCUSSION: Brian Bradshaw asked to make certain that the motion is to continue to pay salary and medical for all employees.

Mrs. McBride stated that was correct.

Mr. Ramos stated that he supported the motion and added that he thought the plan and intention is to take care of the BWRSD team and to try to make sure everyone has the resources needed and the security they need to weather the difficult times. He stated that the School Committee is appreciative of the efforts of all employees and will continue to demonstrate that appreciation.

Mr. Cabral said that he agreed with the motion.

Chairperson Schofield stated that she agreed as well.

The motion passed unanimously.

Coronavirus Emergency - Bussing Contract: Dr. Brice recommended that the School Committee table the issue of the bussing contract pending the next item that would provide an opportunity to negotiate with the vendor to determine next steps.

MOTION: Mr. Ramos made a motion to approve this recommendation, seconded by Mrs. McBride for discussion.

Mr. Bradshaw mentioned that if this recommendation is tabled, it stops discussion on this item at this time.

Attorney Carroll stated that this recommendation should be tabled until after the discussion of the Emergency Powers of Superintendent Motion.

Dr. Brice amended his recommendation that the discussion on this recommendation is on hold until the committee's discussion on the Emergency Powers for the Superintendent.

Mr. Ramos withdrew his motion. Stated that he needed to recuse himself on all matters related to the bus contract.

Attorney Carroll stated that these action/discussion items are listed as emergencies, and the Chairperson should move the discussion under the next section.

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Chairperson Schofield stated that the bussing contract and discussion will be moved to after the discussion of emergency powers of the Superintendent.

Emergency Powers for Superintendent: Attorney Carroll read a draft of the motion that applies to giving emergency powers to the Superintendent during this State of Emergency during this time. She read the motion into the record.

MOTION: Mrs. McBride made a motion to approve these emergency powers to the Superintendent, seconded by Mr. Cabral.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Ramos stated he is in support of the motion. We, the School Committee, are recognizing the outstanding work that has been done this far to weather, to the most extent practicable, the storm that has come our way over the last several weeks. We are entrusting Dr. Brice with this responsibility as he has demonstrated that he deserves our trust in making decisions that are in the best interest of the district. I want to publicly state the gratitude and support for our Superintendent, his team and the leadership thus far.

Mr. Bradshaw stated that he seconded Mr. Ramos's point that the Superintendent and his team have done a fantastic job. He mentioned that he was concerned that the motion stated "this should include but it is not limited to" and moved to amend the motion on the floor to eliminate the power to terminate employees.

Mr. Cabral stated that this was not included in the motion.

Chairperson Schofield stated that when Attorney Carroll read the motion, termination was not included.

Attorney Carroll stated that she did not read "termination".

Mr. Bradshaw stated that he understood; however, the amendment he made was to remove the possibility. The amendment is the power to terminate employees based on contractual agreements is not authorized under the motion.

Mrs. McBride seconded the amendment made by Mr. Bradshaw.

The motion to amend passed unanimously.

Amendment to original motion passes unanimously.

Coronavirus Emergency - Bussing Contract and Food Service Agreement:

Attorney Carroll stated that the bussing contract was addressed in the emergency motion. Attorney Carroll stated discussion needed to be had on the Food Services Contract.

Dr. Brice recommended to the School Committee to allow the district to enter into discussions with the current food service company to provide all necessary breakfast and lunch services and to use the summer meals program to do that.

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MOTION: Mrs. McBride made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Bradshaw.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Bradshaw stated that in the past, the district entered into a food service contract with a number of other districts. Is the district moving away from this practice?

Dr. Brice stated that was not the case and that Chartwells is the district's current vendor. When there are issues, we deal directly with Chartwells. This is not a contract that is dependent on what other districts are doing. It is a state-approved vendor.

Mr. Bradshaw asked for clarity on what the motion is changing about the current contract,

Dr. Brice said if this recommendation is approved, the district will work with Chartwells to determine what we should pay them based on the summer meals program rate.

Mr. Bradshaw asked if this was for the remainder of the contract.

Dr. Brice clarified that this would be for the remainder of the current State of Emergency.

Mrs. McBride stated that under this recommendation, the district would not be paying Chartwells for their full service and would be paying them for their summer meals program rate.

Mr. Ramos asked if this is based on our interpretation of what needs to be fair or right, or what we think exists under the contract?

Dr. Brice stated that he and his team have received communication from the state and federal government regarding funding for meals during this State of Emergency and it has been associated with summer meals. It is based on state and federal government guidance.

Mr. Ramos asked if the district would be taking on any risk with this decision.

Dr. Brice stated that there would be no risk to the best of our understanding and we have back up for that information.

Mrs. McBride stated the food services program is tied to federal dollars. With this recommendation, we would continue to provide breakfast and lunches like we are doing now. What it sounds like you are saying is that there will be no loss of money from the federal government, and they will only reimburse for summer lunches.

Dr. Brice stated that the guidance he and his team have received from the federal government is that the reimbursement would change. Chartwells is currently able to provide meals. We believe, based on communication, that we will be able to be reimbursed for that expense and most importantly, all students that have applied for free and reduced meals have access to meals during the distance learning experience.

Mr. Bradshaw asked if the district had any discussions with Chartwells

Dr. Brice stated that he and his team have engaged in some discussions. They have been exemplary in setting up locations for meal sites during this time. We are seeing the numbers

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grow exponentially and have expanded our hours of distribution at all three locations. We have seen almost a doubling of students participating. Chartwells staff have been very responsive and supportive.

Mr. Bradshaw asked if at the end of day, would this reduce the amount they are getting?

Dr. Brice stated that this recommendation is something that the federal government's guidance has allowed us to do. The district recognizes that Chartwells will be compensated through the food lunch program.

Chairperson Schofield asked if there was any other discussion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Amending the 2019-2020 School Calendar: Recommendation by the Superintendent that the School Committee adopt the calendar outlined from Rhode Island Governor Raimondo that April 3 and April 17 be strategic pause days for staff, which will give all employees a chance to reflect, plan, and participate in activities that increase and build capacity, and to close distance learning for schools on April 9 and April 10. Chartwells would be providing meals for all those dates. The only caveat would be that they would distribute 2 days of meals on April 9 for April 9 and 10.

MOTION: Mr. Bradshaw made a motion to accept the calendar outlined by the Governor for the month of April, seconded by Mr. Ramos.

The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT - 6:41 p.m.

Before asking for a motion to adjourn, Chairperson Schofield thanked Dr. Brice and his administration on behalf of the School Committee. Schofield stated that, as a mother of 3 kids in 3 different schools in the district, she is appreciative of the impressive level of communication. Schofield also thanked our teachers, administrators, support staff, students, and families for their incredible efforts, understanding, and compassion for one another during this difficult time.

MOTION: There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Saviano made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:41 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Bradshaw.

The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

John P. Saviano, Secretary
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