BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 25, 2025

A regular meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held in Council Chambers on February 25, 2025.

1. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairwoman Riley.

2. INVOCATION OR MOMENT OF SILENCE: Dean Gousse

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Dean Gousse

4. FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT:

5. ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jean Acree (participated remotely), Dr. Gerald Calnen, Janet Cushman, Deane Gousse, Philip Kober, Tina LeBlanc, Amanda Pickett, Scott Ryder and Charlotte Riley

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Steven A. Moccio, Superintendent; Mr. Andrew B. Longey, Deputy Superintendent; Student Representatives Izzy Dinnald and Olivia Nuccio

6. BOARD GUEST(S)

a. EHS Program of Studies Update:

Enfield High School Principal Erin Clark and District Counseling Coordinator Dave White provided the Board with information about current programming, course offerings, restoring programming, current and past advance placement courses, Connecticut State Partnership Programs, impact from lost programs and a roadmap for the future. A digital version for the Program of Studies can be found on the school website.

Mrs. Pickett thanked them for the presentation. It is important for parents to understand the different pathways. She would like to know who is taking advantage of these pathways? Are we reaching our students with free-reduced lunches, and multi-language learners? This also includes the college connection courses we lost and those impacts. We need to look at how we are rebuilding and not just try to score higher on indicators. Giving students the option to take course after school is a nice idea. We have discussed the impacts from the budget cuts during Curriculum meetings. The reduction in courses and AP exams matters. Data is showing the cuts are hurting us. She appreciates the information you both have provided.

Mrs. LeBlanc thanked them for their honesty. The cuts that were made are devastating. We were complimented about our Career Center, and it is gone now. Our student representatives have both mentioned the student body wants the Career Center back. Students that go onto college need rigor in their schedules. This is now missing with the loss of programs. Taking AP courses in high school will help you in college if you need to retake them. The Career Center helps all our students with making decisions, not just students going to colleges.

Mr. Kober thanked them for the overview they provided. He asked about vetting math teachers and how they might teach a computer programming course. Do they require a certain certification? Ms. Clark stated computer programming introductory course, and the AP computer science principle courses need a math certification. Sometimes some additional training is needed to teach the course. We have a variety of teachers that have taught both courses.

Mr. Kober asked if we have lost enrollment with the loss of our intro to automotive classes. Mr. White stated our Auto I and Auto II classes are full year courses and the amount per section is capped. A lot of student are unable to take these courses now with the loss of the intro to automotive class.

Mrs. Pickett stated as a district we are proud of STEAM programs, and we are investing heavily in extracurricular programs with our PK programs. The loss of programs is frustrating.

Chairwoman Riley knows we lost a lot of programs with budget cuts. What is the number of courses we are offering at the high school? Mr. White will get back to Chairwoman Riley with the exact number of courses being offered.

Chairwoman Riley stated her son is in grade 8 and just completed a course selection sheet for grade 9. What will happen next? Ms. Clark stated we will look at the number for scheduling possibilities. The selections will provide us with data and where student interest is. We will then look at the budget, and the number of teachers with the appropriate certification to teach classes and that will help us determine courses. Mr. White added staffing plays a key part with this.

Chairwoman Riley asked if there was a grant we could apply for to bring back the Career Center? You did a great job this year with career day, but it isn't the Career Center. Ms. Clark stated the counselor that put this together had help from other colleagues. Losing the Career Center was a loss.

Mr. Gousse asked about the cuts besides the automotive program. Ms. Clark stated we would love to restore a lot of the programs that were cut. We lost a lot of programs.

Both student representatives added the Career Center helped students with applying for scholarships and other career paths if they weren't going to college. They would bring in guest speakers and they would talk to every student about their interests. They also helped students with their resumes.

Chairwoman Riley stated our guidance counselors are trying to pick up the slack from the loss of the Career Center. Mr. White stated our 6 counselors are meeting with around 250 students. They meet with the students and are also conducting planning and preparation for after high school. Having the Career Center counselors work with us collaboratively was nice. There has been an uptick over the past couple of years with mental health needs. Our counselors are doing a lot of triaging on a daily basis. We are currently in full swing looking at course scheduling process for next year. We are trying to pick up the slack, but it is hard to replace what we lost.

Mr. Ryder added the Career Center provided so much for our students besides school readiness. They provided clothing for students to use for job interviews. They also would hold mock interviews with the students. The staff in the Career Center were incredible. Losing the center is a huge detriment.

Mrs. Pickett stated we have 6 school counselors and 3 and a half social workers.

Chairwoman Riley thanked them for being here tonight.

7. <u>SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT</u>

a. **Student Representative Update –** as presented
b. **Open Choice –** as presented

Mrs. Pickett asked where this request for information came from. Chairwoman Riley asked for this information during the BOE Leadership meeting since there is a lot of misinformation about this program including funding.

Mr. Moccio stated any additional funding that is needed to educate these students, we will bill Hartford, and they will fully reimburse us.

Mrs. Pickett added our PK Steam early beginnings pre-school program is possible because of open choice students. This program benefits both Enfield and Hartford students. We will receive 100% reimbursement for special education services. They are not a cost burden to our district.

Chairwoman Riley added this information explains everything.

Mr. Kober thanked Mr. Moccio for the information. He asked how the process works for seats? Will there be fluctuation each year with the number of incoming students? Mr. Moccio explained when we are looking to open seats, the incoming students become ours until they graduate. Each year we will open up seats based on space at each school and enrollment projections.

Chairwoman Riley added we will receive a spreadsheet from Open Choice where we will decide what grade levels to accept incoming students at.

Mr. Moccio added this is based off of the October 1st enrollment numbers.

Mrs. Pickett added that Enfield has been heavily invested in Open Choice pre-k seats. Some of the other open seats are for siblings.

Mr. Kober asked if this information can be posted on-line. Mr. Moccio stated this is included in the budget presentation.

c. EPS Update

Mr. Moccio stated a lot of time has been spent on updating the budget. We have been monitoring executive orders and impacts for school districts. The State Department of Education has reported that there has been no lag with reimbursements for nutrition services, grants and title funding.

Mr. Moccio added that the assessment data at the elementary and intermediate levels has been completed. We have spent time with Ms. Middleton and those principals regarding the results. The results are positive. This is a testament to our teachers.

Mr. Moccio attended the student advisory meeting at the high school. It is wonderful to listen to the students candid honesty. We discussed Eagle Block, study hall impact and late buses at JFK .

Mr. Moccio stated NBC-30 did a story about Save our Sports. Both he, Principal Brown, a middle school coach along with some other people were also involved with this.

Mr. Moccio stated the members of the Pre-Referendum committee, along with Mr. Dague have been spending time dealing with our leaking roofs. The worst is at Stowe. We moved one of our PK classrooms into the other classrooms. We are now looking at other options to provide them with appropriate space. There are two other rooms at Stowe that also have leaks. Crandall has leaks that are affecting the gym floor. Parkman and Alcorn also has leaks. The roof referendum was done for a reason. You will continue to hear about classrooms being displaced.

8. AUDIENCES

Chairwoman Riley read a prepared statement for Audience member participation, and you will be allowed 4 minutes to address the Board.

Amy Guzie, Parkman Teacher – Ms. Guzie e-mailed Board members with some data. We need more teachers. Classrooms are overcrowded. Tutors are being used as subs. Coverage is being piecemealed together each day. Having 30 students in a classroom is too much and even 24 students is a heavy load to teach.

Kelsey McGuire-Bruce, Neelans Road – Ms. McGuire-Bruce thanked the Board for revisiting the budget. She hopes we will see a percentage increase that will reflect our needs. Having 11 new staff members is not enough. We need support staff for student success. Our students are our future. Please support our children.

Bob Cressotti, Enfield Street – Mr. Cressotti thanked our student representatives for the outstanding job they are doing on the Board. He thanked Principal Clark and Mr. White for their presentation about our courses and programs at the high school. He is here to advocate for additional staff. Our administrators requested 92 additional staff to continue offering quality programs to our students. The superintendent first recommended adding 11 and the last tier is for 33 new staff. We still need more staff. We are losing qualified long time staff to other towns. He is concerned with our students mental health. He urged the Board to present a budget that represents our needs for all students.

9. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. LeBlanc congratulated members from EHS Wrestling team for their athletic accomplishments during the CIAC LL Wrestling Meet. Enfield tied for second place. She congratulated EHS Girls Basketball players for making all conference. She also congratulated the Enfield grade 7 travel basketball team for their win against Ellington. She also thanked our EHS student representatives for their valuable contributions to the Board.

Mrs. LeBlanc added that she is disappointed with the Central Office and Cabinet's approach with the budget. We should ask for whatever the percentage for need is for our schools. Let the Town Council make their cuts if necessary. Asking for more is not being irresponsible.

Mrs. Pickett stated Ramadan begins. She urged people to learn about this month long holiday.

Mrs. Pickett added language used matters. Spreading misinformation and hateful speech also hurts. Being supportive of Black Lives Matters and hanging a flag does not mean you are against the police. Calling out school staff and employees names should not be tolerated. Rules apply to everyone. We all need to be role models.

Mr. Kober thanked Mrs. LeBlanc for recognizing our EHS student athletes and accomplishments. He also thanked audience members for attending and speaking tonight.

Mr. Kober added the superintendent sends Board members weekly updates. He spoke about the PowerSchool data breach and what the district is doing. Communication has been sent to those affected by this breach.

Mr. Moccio stated PowerSchool sent out a notification to those affected by the breach. Additional communication will be provided. We are continuing to work with our cyber security legal team.

Chairwoman Riley thanked Mount Carmel for hosting the First Readers Trivia night. We had a great time and raised some money for First Readers. We look forward to seeing everyone next year.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

a. Discussion & Action Regarding the FY2025-26 Budget

Mr. Moccio presented his updated FY2025-26 superintendent's proposed budget to the Board. Board member's also received some updated budget documents. From the special meeting Board members asked us to look at the budget and add some services back into the budget. We looked at 4 different tiers of additions. Class sizes remain a priority. He reviewed the changes that were made. Board members agreed to add the first 3 tiers of additions or 5.57% or $81,741,523.95. We are recommending hiring 33.9 new staff. We are also in the process of pre-paying for some services and have budgeted $650K for this that is included in the 5.57% budget increase. The Board will be pleased with the transportation contact that we will discuss later tonight. He is trying to avoid any future fiscal cliffs. As mentioned before, the budget is fluid, and he will continue to look for efficiencies. We are still looking at contract negotiations, insurances costs, and retirements. This is where we stand now.

Each Board member expressed their individual viewpoints regarding the FY2025-26 budget.

Chairwoman Riley stated she first was on the Board and them became a Town Council member and now she is a Board member again. The process is always the same. Each side blames each other. This is hard for people on the outside to understand. She is hoping for a plan that will move us ahead while keeping taxes in Enfield reasonable. We need a plan to have a successful school system that is sustainable. We dealt with the fiscal cliff and the Town Council help us out. We have revamped out budget process and have reorganized ourselves. We should not pit each other against the other. We need to move forward with a plan.

Extend Meeting Past 10 PM:

Mrs. LeBlanc moved, seconded by Mr. Gousse that the Enfield Board of Education extends the meeting past 10 PM.

A vote by **show-of-hands 8-1-0** passed with Mr. Kober in dissent.

Mrs. LeBlanc agreed with Chairwoman Riley. We used to have fruitful discussions about the budget with the Town Council prior to the budget preparation.

Mr. Kober asked about the 47 new certified staff members that were hired in August 2022. Mrs. Pickett added we welcomed new staff, not necessarily new positions. We were replacing staff that left at the end of the 2022 school year. Mr. Kober added we hired staff using grants. Mrs. Pickett stated that was not done.

Mr. Kober added part of the Board's oversight is to review the spending. Mrs. Pickett stated the Board receives a grant presentation and we do not vote on any grants or approve them.

Mr. Kober stated the Board had visibility for the grants. Mrs. Pickett agrees we had a lot of discussion about our grants and how they were being spent. Mr. Kober added the Board was not ignorant about how the grants were being spent.

Mr. Moccio stated the Board is now receiving a lot of information, so we do not need to relive this again. As a Board, we can now move forward.

Mrs. LeBlanc added we would also like to move forward without constantly needing to rehash items.

Mr. Kober thanked Mr. Moccio for his transparency.

Mr. Gousse stated he asked during the special meeting about changing the tiers to years. He likes planning for down the road and would like to grow the levels year after year.

Mrs. Pickett moved, seconded by Mrs. LeBlanc that the Enfield Board of Education approves the FY2025-26 Budget or 5.57% as presented.

Discussion:

Mr. Kober agrees that we have been presented with a transparent budget. The Board requested to add to the budget that was previously presented on January 28th. The Board meet on February 19th, and we are adding in wants with the 3 tiers. With the budget that was presented in January, we would meet the district needs and would bring back some staff. We cannot bring back all the staff that was previously let go. Class sizes are a priority. We do not know what our future needs will be. Improper use of funds left us with the fiscal cliff. We have course corrected. We need to seize the tension between the Town Council and Board.

Mrs. LeBlanc added the tension can be relieved when the mayor stops with his adversity. We need to remember that the administration asked for 90 staff members. Mr. Moccio reduced this number to 11 staff members. We need to listen to the needs of our students and district. Adding 11 staff members is not enough.

Mrs. Pickett stated she was very encouraged after our special meeting last week. The Board works very well together. The cause of the fiscal cliff was from Covid. These were grant positions and the Board did not have any say about these positions. The grants received dictated how they were to be used. Long term sustainable planning for these grants was a misstep. We are carefully looking at adding these items back. These are not wants, they are needs. We don't want to minimize the rationale for these positions and staff. Our data will speak about the needs of our students. We need to keep in mind what is our bare minimum to keep us operating. This is not a greedy budget. This budget ask is needed.

Mrs. LeBlanc added the MOU that was created made this a public spectacle. No other town handled their Board of Education budget shortages this way. The shortage was broken down to the exact amount. We discussed during a Town Council meeting that if we are investing in education, results are needed. We are seeing the results from the 40 additional staff members. When the results change with fewer staff members, the teachers will be blamed for it. We need to focus on a needs based budget. Dr. Calnen had a hard time accepting the 5.6% because of our student's needs.

A vote by **roll-call 7-2-0** passed with Mr. Gousse and Mr. Kober in dissent.

11. NEW BUSINESS

a. Policy Revisions – First Reading

Policy #5131.61 – Chemical Health for Student Athletes

Mrs. Cushman moved, seconded by Mrs. Pickett that the Enfield Board of Education approves Policy #5131.61 Chemical Health for Student Athletes for a first reading as presented.

Discussion:

Mr. Kober reviewed this policy from Shipman & Goodwin. This policy will eventually remove some current policies.

Dr. Calnen asked if this policy will remove students from participating in athletic activities if they violate it. Who will be responsible for removing the students, the Board, the coach or the administration?

Mrs. Cushman stated the coach, and the administration would be responsible for removing students that violate this policy. Mr. Longey added when they refer to the Board in the policy, they are really addressing the administration.

Mr. Kober also agreed. If there is an appeals process, it could potentially come before the Board.

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

Policy #5141.23 – Sunscreen Application in School

Mrs. Cushman moved, seconded by Dr. Calnen that the Enfield Board of Education approves Policy #5141.23 Sunscreen Application in School for a first reading as presented.

Discussion:

Mr. Kober stated this is another policy from Shipman & Goodwin. There is also a form for guardians to complete.

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

Policy #5200 – Use of Private Technology Devices by Students

Mrs. Cushman moved, seconded by Mr. Kober that the Enfield Board of Education approves Policy #5200 Use of Private Technology Devices by Students for a first reading as presented.

Discussion:

Mr. Kober stated this is another Shipman & Goodwin Policy. There is also administrative regulations that coincides with this policy. This policy will be placed in student handbooks.

A vote by **roll-call 7-0-2** passed with Mrs. Pickett and Mr. Ryder abstaining.

Policy #4118.5 – Employee Use of the District's Computer Systems and Electronic Communications

Mrs. Cushman moved, seconded by Mr. Kober that the Enfield Board of Education approves Policy #4118.5 Employee Use of the District's Computer Systems and Electronic Communications for a first reading as presented.

Discussion:

Mr. Kober stated this is another Shipman & Goodwin Policy that will replace current policy. There is also an administrative regulation that coincides with this policy.

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

Policy #5118.3 – Education Stability Procedures

Mrs. Cushman moved, seconded by Mr. Kober that the Enfield Board of Education approves Policy #5118.3 Education Stability Procedures for a first reading as presented.

Discussion:

Mr. Kober stated this is another Shipman & Goodwin Policy that follow state laws.

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

b. Discussion & Action Regarding Transportation Contract

This item will be addressed after Item #17.

12. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Curriculum Committee – Mrs. Acree reported the Curriculum Committee met on February 20th. Mr. Dube and Ms. Brown provided us with an overview for restructuring our music program. They will attend the March 25th as Board Guests and will discuss the K-12 Music Program. Our next Curriculum meeting is on March 13th.

Chairwoman Riley appreciated how they re-imagined our music program to effectively deliver music to our students at JFK. They also have future plans for grade 5 students and keeping our band traditions moving forward.

Finance Committee – Mr. Kober reported the Finance Committee will meet next on March 4th.

Policy Committee - Mrs. Cushman reported the Policy Committee will meet next on March 18th.

Leadership Committee – Chairwoman Riley reported the Leadership Committee met on February 5th. She provided an overview of what they discussed. They will meet next on March 5th.

13. LIAISON REPORTS

Henry Barnard - Mr. Kober gave a shout out to Henry Barnard staff and families. They will hold a book fair for Barnard and Crandall students. Spring conferences will be held on March 12th. Please refer to the Big Cat newsletter for additional school events.

Kite/Head Start - Dr. Calnen reported that the Head Start/Kite will bring back the CT Science Center play night for pre-k to grade 1 students. Registration is required. Please contact Adrienne Snow.

John F. Kennedy - Mr. Gousse thanked Principal Brown for giving him a tour of JFK. He reported that John F. Kennedy has many great opportunities for our students.

Enfield Street/Parkman – Mrs. Pickett reminded parents to sign up for ParentSquare to receive school newsletters. She reported as a Parkman parent, they held a Penney War to collect pennies. She thanked the PTO for providing pizza for the grade levels. She appreciates what our PTO's do at all our schools. Spring conferences are coming up.

Prudence Crandall - Mrs. Acree reported that Prudence Crandall will hold a scholastic book fair for students. The students successfully completed a lock down drill. Conferences will be held on March 12th. Read Across America week starts on March 3rd.

Hazardville Memorial – Chairwoman Riley reported that Hazardville Memorial will receive an award from Chick-Fil-A tomorrow. They will receive a $1,500 donation and other prizes along with food for students and staff. Read Across America week starts on March 3rd.

Buzz Robotics – Chairwoman Riley reported that it is competition time for Buzz Robotics. They will participate at a competition at Hartford Public Schools on March 29 & 30th. If they qualify, they will move on to the April 3-5th competition at the Big E. If you are interested contact

Caroline Marr.

Joint Facility – Chairwoman Riley reported the Joint Facilities Committee met on February 13th. She provided an update on roof projects for Alcorn, Town Library and Parkman including pre-referendum work, state statute and legislative update.

Mr. Kober asked about Stowe classrooms repairs. Chairwoman Riley added we may need to relocate some of the Stowe classrooms due to leaks.

Mr. Moccio added there is no time frame set. The leaks are between the membrane and the roof. B&G is actively involved with this.

Mr. Kober asked about the loss of custodians at EHS.

Chairwoman Riley stated we did not discuss this at Joint Facilities. They have moved staff around to address this. During Covid, additional staff was hired for extra cleaning. The Town Council will need to discuss this.

Joint Insurance Committee – Chairwoman Riley reported the Joint Insurance Committee will meet on March 4th.

Joint Security Committee – Chairwoman Riley reported the Joint Security Committee will meet on March 14th.

Enfield Mental Health Committee – Mrs. Acree reported the Enfield Mental Health Committee will meet on March 12th.

Pre-Referendum Committee – Mrs. LeBlanc reported the Pre-Referendum Committee met on February 12th. We chose leadership positions for the chair, vice chair and secretary. We will start tours at Hazardville Memorial and Eli Whitney on February 26th at Memorial.

14. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. LeBlanc moved, seconded by Dr. Calnen that the Regular Meeting Minutes of February 11, 2025 and Special Meeting Minutes of February 19, 2024, be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-1** passed with Mrs. Pickett abstaining.

15. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS AND PAYROLL - None

16. CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATION

Mr. Moccio stated the technology tour planned for this Thursday is going to be rescheduled.

17. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Kober moved, seconded by Mrs. Cushman that the Enfield Board of Education enters into Executive Session for Matter(s) Related to Prospective Supply contract – Transportation Contract.

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

Both Mr. Moccio and Mr. Longey joined the Board in Executive Session at 10:23 PM. No Board Action occurred while in Executive Session.

Return to Open Session:

The Board returned to Open Session at 10:30 PM.

11a. Discussion & Action Regarding Transportation Contract

Mr. Kober moved, seconded by Mr. Gousse that the Enfield Board of Education publicly waives going out to bid for transportation services and approves the new negotiated transportation contract with Smyth Bus that will start on July 1, 2025 and will end on June 30, 203, and further authorizes the Board Chair to endorse the contract on behalf of the Board.

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

18. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kober moved, seconded by Mrs. Pickett to adjourn the Regular Meeting of February 25, 2025. Motion passed unanimously by a **show-of-hands 9-0-0**. Meeting stood adjourned at 10:39 PM.

Scott Ryder
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary