

THOMPSON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Via Zoom Online Meeting Portal

Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 13, 2020
7:00pm

In attendance: Kathleen Herbert
Shawn Brissette
Thomas Angelo
Danielle Carlson
Donna Godzik
Jody Houghton
Valentine Iamartino (arrived at 7:13pm)
Linda Jarmolowicz
William Witkowski

Absent:

Also in attendance: Melinda Smith, William Birch, Steve Knowlton, Megan Parrette, Ian Polun, Larry Prentiss, TPS employees, members of the public.

I. Call to Order

Kathleen Herbert called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Larry Prentiss led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Chairman Update

Kathleen Herbert stated that she received an email from the First Selectman regarding the Ordinance Committee and a proposed change to the ordinance regarding the budget. If passed, the ordinance would freeze the budget that does get passed at referendum, only funds can be removed from the budget that does not pass. Ms. Herbert will be sending back a letter stating her concerns regarding this proposal. Discussion was held.

IV. Citizens' Comments

V. Student Spotlight/Report

Zaynep Acun, new TMHS student liaison, gave a report from the high school:

Upcoming Events:

Many clubs have resumed and their meetings have been conducted over zoom.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, many of the events that would normally happen have been cancelled or postponed.

Student Voice Forms:

Mask Breaks:

Many students have come forward requesting more mask breaks, these breaks are supposed to happen throughout the day but it, unfortunately, can be hard to monitor how many breaks students are getting throughout the day.

Distance Learning Snow Days:

Many students have been wondering if TMHS will be able to do distance learning on snow days. This may be something that needs to be approved by the state before it can be instated.

Student Council meetings will resume on October 20, following this meeting, there will be more student voice forms.

VI. Approval of Minutes

- a. September 14, 010

Motion by Jody Houghton, seconded by Linda Jarmolowicz, to approve the minutes of the regular Board of Education meeting on September 14, 2020.

Motion – Passes. Unanimous.

VII. Sub-Committee Update

Thomas Angelo stated that the Alumni is working on a couple of fund-raisers. The Cow Plop may be happening this year.

VIII. Superintendent Report

- a. Enrollment Update - The October 1st enrollment is at 958 students. Discussion was held.
- b. Substitute Daily Rate – Melinda Smith stated that surrounding schools have increased their rate of pay for their substitute teachers. Thompson may want to consider increasing their daily rates of pay as well, in order to stay competitive. It has been difficult to recruit subs. Discussion was held.

Motion by Jody Houghton, seconded by Thomas Angelo, to increase the rate of pay for substitute teachers to \$125 per day.

Motion – Passes. Unanimous.

- c. Additional Planning Time

Melinda Smith stated that a survey went out to parents and staff, asking if and when more half days should be added to the school calendar to allow teachers more prep time.

Motion by William Witkowski, seconded by Donna Godzik, to approve an amendment of the school calendar to add weekly half days on Fridays for calendar year 2020, and to revisit in January.

Motion – Passes. Unanimous.

- d. Alliance Construction Grant - William Birch stated that there is a new construction grant that the district is applying for which if approved, the grant would allow him to replace the current telephone system, replace the dust collector in the high school, replace the old flooring in the high school, and if possible, upgrade the high school locker rooms. Discussion was held.

Motion by Jody Houghton, seconded by Linda Jarmolowicz, to approve to prepare a request for the Alliance Construction Grant, for the funds to have a replacement of the telephone system, replace the dust collector system in the high school, replace the flooring in the high school, and if possible, the upgrading of the high school locker rooms, to add up to \$477,000.

Motion – Passes. Unanimous.

- e. Gymnastics Update - Deb Spinelli stated that there are two young ladies who are in the gymnastics program, and the Board needs to approve a team for them to participate.

Motion by Thomas Angelo, seconded by Shawn Brissette, to accept that Thompson participate in the Gymnastics Team of One.

Motion – Passes. Unanimous.

- f. Middle School Winter Sports Update - Deb Spinelli stated that member schools met via zoom and schools are still up in the air regarding winter sports. Athletic Directors are to meet with their Superintendents and create a schedule if possible beginning January 2021, with a modified program.
- g. Recreation Basketball – Leslie Munshower provided a proposal to Melinda Smith and Deb Spinelli regarding Recreation Basketball. The basketball will only be a clinic Monday – Thursday for grades 1-4 following COVID-19 guidelines. No action on the proposal is needed.

- h. Technology Partnership – Melinda Smith stated that she has been talking with the First Selectman about revisiting a partnership with the Town and the school regarding technology. School interns would assist the town employees with technology issues and would be compensated by the town.

IX. COVID Policy – Second Read

- a. Approval of COVID-19 Policy

Motion by Jody Houghton, seconded by Donna Godzik, to approve the Operations of Schools During COVID-19 Pandemic Policy as presented, with a few minor grammatical errors to be fixed.

Motion – Passes. Unanimous.

X. Administrator Reports

Administrators and Directors gave updates on events happening in their schools or departments.

XI. Old Business

XII. New Business

- a. Superintendent’s Goals – Melinda Smith provided her 2020-2021 goals. These goals will be approved at the next BOE meeting.
- b. 2021 Board of Education Meeting Dates Approval

Motion by William Witkowski, seconded by Linda Jarmolowicz, to approve the 2021 Board of Education Meeting dates as presented and to send them to the Town Clerk.

Motion – Passes. Unanimous.

XIII. Correspondence

None.

XIV. Citizens’ Comments

None.

XV. Adjournment

Motion by Shawn Brissette, seconded by Jody Houghton, to adjourn the meeting at 9:00pm.

Motion – Passes. Unanimous.

Motions submitted by: Danielle Pederson

Minutes Approved: November 9, 2020