

Thompson Board of Education
Meeting Minutes
October 13, 2021

In attendance: Absent:

Kathleen Herbert
Shawn Brissette
Thomas Angelo
Danielle Carlson
Donna Godzik
Jody Houghton
Valentine Iamartino
Linda Jarmolowicz
William Witkowski

Also in attendance: Melinda Smith, Bill Birch, Heather Burns (zoom), Robert Gentes, Michelle Giammarinaro, Kim Granato, Shannon Grauer, Nathaniel Mayo, Laurence Prentiss, members of the audience (live and in zoom).

I. Call to Order

Kathleen Herbert called the meeting to order at 7:09pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Jody Houghton led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance

III. Chairman Update

Kathleen Herbert thanked everyone in Town for a successful Community Day. The school Alumni Association, the chorus, and the band, including Fortezza, was great to see and hear. She also reminded the public that October 14th will be Candidates Night at the Thompson Speedway Restaurant.

IV. Citizens' Comments (limited to three minutes)

David Dalpe stated that he is concerned that the students need to wear masks at the Homecoming Dance, even though the dance is outside.

Lauryn Langlois expressed her frustration with the Governor's mandate and how discriminating it is. She is upset and has resigned as 7th grade science teacher due to the mandate but was grateful to have taught at the middle school for nine years.

V. Student Spotlight/TMHS Liaison Report

Zeynep Acun and Evan Antonson are the Board of Education Liaisons for the school year. Zeynep introduced Brayden Akana as Student Spotlight at TMHS for the month of October. Current Events at TMHS:

- Community Day - Oct. 2
- Homecoming - Oct. 15 (Rain Date: Oct. 16)
- Homelessness Awareness - Oct. 22
- First Tourtellotte Student Leadership Team In-Service - Oct. 13
- PSATS - Oct. 13
- TEEG Assembly About Local Homelessness and Poverty - Oct. 14
- TMHS Promotion Assembly to 8th Grade- Oct. 15

- Parent-Teacher Conferences/Expo Night-Oct. 21
- Homelessness Awareness Night-Oct. 22nd
- Spirit week - October 25th-29th

VI. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Linda Jarmolowicz, seconded by Donna Godzik, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on September 13, 2021 as presented.

Motion – Approved. Thomas Angelo abstained.

VII. Sub-Committee Update

A policy sub-committee meeting will be set up after the November election to discuss multiple issues.

VIII. Superintendent Report –

a. *Vision to Learn Presentation*

Sabrina Davis and Ralph Barbagallo from Vision to Learn gave a presentation on a new program that the students would benefit from regarding vision screening for all students K-12. Discussion was held regarding the program. The BOE directed Superintendent Smith to move forward with the program.

b. *Enrollment*

The October 1 enrollment is at 935 students.

c. *Curriculum Presentation*

Lucy Trudeau, Patty Chenail, and Laura Stefanski gave a Curriculum Leaders' presentation to the BOE. The Curriculum Leaders provide leadership and management of their academic area by overseeing and coordinating the curriculum, staff, and resources in their departments (Math, Science, ELA).

IX. Administrator Reports

The administrators and directors gave verbal reports on events happening in their schools or departments.

X. Old Business

Donna Godzik stated that in August, Juneteenth was discussed, and would like the topic to be on the next Board agenda for discussion and possible approval. Melinda Smith stated that the custodians and secretary unions have approached her to add the holiday. Additional federal holidays are included in both contracts. Many other districts are in the process of adding the paid holiday to 12-month employees.

Shawn Brissette asked about in-district COVID testing for staff. Melinda said the feedback from other schools in the region are they are not providing tests, however, Pomfret is. Thomas Angelo asked with the grant fund, is there any way to allocate funds for testing? Ms. Smith will find out more information. Valentine Iamartino recommended using Infinity for testing. Discussion was held.

XI. New Business

a. *2022 BOE Meeting Dates*

Motion by Thomas Angelo, second by Linda Jarmolowicz, to approve the 2022 Board of Education Meeting dates, with one minor change of January 10th to January 9th. **Motion – Passes. Donna Godzik and Jody Houghton abstained.**

b. *Approve Project Completions*

Motion by Thomas Angelo, seconded by Donna Godzik, to accept the Alliance project, Dust collector project, and the Phone/Intercom project as complete per recommendation by Bill Birch.

Motion – Passes. Unanimous.

c. Superintendent Contract Extension

Motion by William Witkowski, seconded by Jody Houghton, to extend the superintendent's contract by one year.

Motion – Passes. Unanimous.

XII. Correspondence

None.

XIII. Citizens' Comments

Kathleen Pellerin asked the Board why teachers and staff who have received the shot are not required to meet weekly testing when the vaccine is not 100%. If the goal is to protect the staff and students, why aren't staff tested weekly? She feels that this is discrimination.

Shawn Brissette stated that he read the feed from the chat session at the last Board meeting and he was disturbed by the comments. He understands that as a Board member, there will be disagreements, however, the Board members are volunteers who do care about the best interest of the students, parents, and the town. He asked that there be respect for everyone.

William Witkowski addressed his comment to Lauryn Langlois, wishing her the best with her future endeavors.

Danielle Carlson thanked Lauryn Langlois for her time spent in Thompson.

Thomas Angelo thanked every staff member during this time and hopes some peace can be brought back into the community. Mr. Angelo asked for clarification if the Board can vote to use funding to pay for vaccinated and unvaccinated staff testing? Discussion was held.

Donna Godzik and Jody Houghton were given plaques as thanks for their service on the Board of Education.

XIV. Adjournments

Motion by Thomas Angelo, seconded by Donna Godzik, to adjourn the meeting at 9:17pm.

Motion – Passes. Unanimous.

Minutes recorded by: Danielle M. Pederson, Recording Secretary

Minutes Approved: