



Monthly Meeting
Avon Board of Education
34 Simsbury Road, Avon, Connecticut

Mission Statement

Our mission is to inspire in each student a joy and passion for learning and a commitment to excellence, personal integrity, and social responsibility.

Tuesday, August 23, 2022, 7:00 pm

Avon High School, Community Room

Avon Board of Education
34 Simsbury, Avon, Connecticut 06001

Minutes

Attendance

Board Members Present: Jackie Blea; Debra Chute, Board Chair; Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary; Lynn Katz; Lisa Seminara; Thej Singh; Liz Sommerkorn; Jay Spivak, Board Vice Chair; Laura Young

Board Members Absent: none

Administration Present: Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla, Superintendent of Schools; Jess Giannini, Assistant Superintendent; Roberto Medic, Assistant Superintendent; Susan Russo, Business Manager

I. Call to Order

Deb Chute, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

A. Roll Call

Ms. Chute conducted a roll call of Board members and administrators.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Mission Statement

Ms. Chute stated the Board's mission statement and instructed the audience on instructions should anyone want to speak during public comment.

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes of June 21, 2022

Jackie Blea made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting of June 21, 2022, Lynn Katz seconded.

The motion passed 9-0-0

B. Board of Education Special Meeting Minutes of June 27, 2022

Thej Singh made a motion to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of June 27, 2022, Lynn Katz seconded.

The motion passed 9-0-0

V. Communication from Public

Board Chair, Deb Chute, reminded the public of the guidelines for speaking during the meeting.

Michael Farrell, Canton resident and Avon alumni, asked to speak. Although Board policy states you must be an Avon resident to speak during Public Comment, Dr. Carnemolla suggested the Board make a motion to allow Mr. Farrell to speak as Mr. Farrell had been in contact with the Board previously to speak on a particular matter.

Jeffrey S. Fleischman made a motion to suspend the rules to speak publicly and allow Mr. Farrell to speak to the Board, Lisa Seminara seconded.

The motion passed 9-0-0

Mr. Farrell shared his request to honor former Avon Music Director, Joe Donato. Mr. Farrell shared how he received over 119 supportive responses overnight on FaceBook when he suggested to memorialize Mr. Donato's service in Avon Public Schools. Mr. Farrell provided some history of Mr. Donato's music career and accomplishments but mostly how he touched the lives of many of the students.

Alex Chen, Avon resident and APS parent, expressed his concern with high school students' use of cell phones during school hours and asked why cell phones were not restricted in the high school as they are in the middle school. Mr. Chen shared his opinion that cell phones were not productive; prohibiting them in schools would be better for academic performance; curb discipline issues; and promote a better study environment.

VI. Items of Information and Proposals

A. Financial Report – Susan Russo, Business Manager

M. Russo informed the Board that she was still working on finalizing the 2021-2022 school year figures and would have a full report in September.

VII. Committees & Liaison Reports

A. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum & Professional Practices – Jackie Blea, Chair

Ms. Blea stated that the committee has not yet met but hopes to have a meeting in October.

2. Finance – Jay Spivak, Chair

Mr. Spivak reported that the Finance Committee also did not meet during the summer but has a meeting scheduled for Sept. 20th.

3. Negotiations – Deb Chute, Chair

Ms. Chute informed the Board that they worked with the Administrators union during the summer and will speak more about it during tonight's Executive Session as well as have conversations regarding the Safety and Security Specialists.

4. Policy – Laura Young, Chair

Ms. Young stated that the Policy Committee also did not meet during the summer but hopes to settle on a date for September later during tonight's meeting.

B. Liaison Report

1. Board Representative to Capital Region Education Council – Jackie Blea, Board Rep.

Ms. Blea stated that there was no update as the first meeting will be in September.

VIII. Chair's Report – Debra Chute, Board Chair

A. Board Chair Update

Ms. Chute appreciated being back in the Community Room. She also acknowledged all the staff who were in attendance tonight; welcomed the new staff members, Dr. Lockhart and Mr. Haynes, to the District; and congratulated Mr. Giannini and Mr. Medic in their new positions as Assistant Superintendents and Ms. Wallace as newly appointed Principal of AMS.

IX. Superintendent’s Report – Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla

A. Hiring Report

Hiring information will be shared later in the Superintendent’s Report.

B. Enrollment Report

Dr. Carnemolla reviewed the enrollment report for the Board stating that the numbers change hour to hour and day to day as families continue to register children with more students currently in the registration process. The Superintendent explained that while some families are moving out, more families are moving in with school-aged children. There were also some students returning from being homeschooled during the pandemic. Dr. Carnemolla expected numbers to increase as additional families have communicated with the District their intentions to enroll their children when housing was finalized. Dr. Carnemolla spoke of the majority of kindergarten students having attended preschool. The Superintendent informed the Board that there are still open seats unfilled for Open Choice in the District, which seems to be a common issue throughout the various districts. CREC will be meeting with Avon to discuss ways to attract more families to Avon as they actively recruit students in the state to participate in Open Choice.

C. Strategic Plan Update

To provide opportunity for the Board to hear from others on the administrative team, the Superintendent asked that Ms. Russo, Mr. Medic and Mr. Giannini each share about the work that was done during the summer.

Ms. Russo shared systems and operations updates which included work on the facilities as well as the IT Department. Ms. Russo reported that end of year funds were used to purchase instructional equipment supplies for the visual arts department, music, science, wellness, and world language at the high school, middle school and Thompson Brook School. Textbooks were purchased for business, social studies and math classes at the high school and middle school; English Language Arts instructional supplies were purchased for all schools. Other significant purchases included Chromebooks for grades 2 & 5; laptops for AHS & AMS teachers and upgrades for the high school’s Community Room. Some of the capital/maintenance projects that were completed included carpet replacement in the libraries of RBS, PGS & TBS; lock replacements throughout AHS; painting in various areas of all five schools; security enhancements throughout the District; refinishing the high school gym floor and repaving the parking lot at PGS. IT projects included installing additional wifi access points throughout the District; installation of a new MAC lab at the high school for music and digital photography; updating network management systems and upgrading camera servers. Ms. Russo also spoke about the possibility of the Free Meals program being extended past December 2nd and explained to the Board how the free and reduced funding is used. The Financial Outlook indicated that rising costs in every industry has led to a global increase in almost all goods and services. Additional resources may be needed for a 6th section of PreK if enrollment trends continued. Ms. Russo conclude by saying that the budget will be closely monitored and spending will be reduced or adjusted as needed. The Superintendent further explained the PreK and birth to three needs and issues.

Mr. Medic shared with the Board that the District is working to fill the remaining vacant positions in hopes of being as close to fully staffed as possible when school opens. Mr. Medic introduced via photos some of the staff, certified and non-certified, that were newly hired. He also stated that administrators were anticipating having all teaching positions filled by the end of the week and administrative positions filled by the end of September. Mr. Medic thanked all the building

administrators for taking the time to work on the interviewing process beginning last Spring, screening hundreds of candidates for multiple positions, and also thanked his staff at the Central Office for their enormous help in getting all the new staff processed. Mr. Medic expects an overall savings in the certified staffing lines and stated that the new staff are a very talented group of individuals from the newest administrators to the newest part-time employees. Dr. Carnemolla thanked Mr. Medic for the new format used to introduce the new staff which was to be used at the in-person convocation but due to the issues with the high school auditorium HVAC convocation will be presented through a digital version which will be pushed out to the entire District and Board members.

Mr. Giannini shared information regarding the new staff orientation program that took place from August 18th through 24th. It was an opportunity to acquaint the administrators with the new staff, consisting of 25 certified staff and 13 non-certified staff, as well as an opportunity for the new staff to better understand the District's mission. Mr. Giannini gave a detailed overview of what transpired during the days of orientation with the Superintendent starting the orientation reviewing the District's Mission Statement, the main goals, focus areas, and the importance of connectedness and personal relationships. The personal connectedness began within the orientation and moving forward the administrators hope to continue to maintain the connections of the groups and to mentor the new staff throughout the year.

The Superintendent shared with the Board details of the Leadership Retreat recently held at the Yard Goats Community Center on August 19th; it was the first in-person retreat since August 2019 due to the pandemic. Aside from those who for personal reasons could not attend, administrative leaders in the District got away for a day to focus on where the District has been and where it needs to go; refocus on community and connections; reenergize the Blueprint; and ensure the Blueprint represents the Avon community as a whole. The three big takeaways were to ensure high academic achievement for all; have innovative practices; and ensure input and partnership with all stakeholders. Later in the evening, as a way to get to know each other better, the administrators, along with their families, enjoyed a Yard Goats game together.

D. Updates

Aside from all that was reported, there was no further updates from the Superintendent.

X. Consent Calendar

- A. 22-23/01 Approval of AMS Field Trip to Boston Tea Party Museum on October 20, 2022
- B. 22-23/02 Approval of Contract for Assistant Superintendent
- C. 22-23/03 Approval of Contract for Assistant Superintendent
- D. 22-23/04 Approval of Contract for Student and Family Supports Coordinator
- E. 22-23/05 Approval of Contract for Asst. Coordinator of Internships and Transition Programs
- F. 22-23/06 Approval of Contract for School Nurse

Jay Spivak made a motion to approve the items on the Consent Calendar as presented, Liz Sommerkorn seconded.

The motion passed 9-0-0

XII. New Business

- A. 22-23/07 Board of Education Committee Meeting Dates for SY 2022-2023

Board members discussed the proposed committee meeting dates and a conflict with the proposed date for the September meeting of the Policy Committee.

***Jackie Blea made a motion to approve the Board of Education Committee Meeting Dates as presented, minus Policy Committee of September 13th, Thej Singh seconded.
The motion passed 9-0-0***

XIII. Communication from Public

There was no other communication from the public.

XIV. Communication from Avon Board of Education Members

Ms. Seminara thanked the administrators for their job with the hiring process given the climate of personnel shortage. She felt the administrators have done a very impressive job all summer and appreciates all their time and efforts put forth so that the school year could start correctly.

Mr. Fleischman wished the administrators and staff good luck in the new school year and acknowledged and appreciated all their hard work that they've put in.

Ms. Blea echoed the sentiments of Ms. Seminara and Mr. Fleischman and also thanked everyone for their hard work and looked forward to hearing about their continued work with all the new talent in the upcoming school year.

Ms. Katz welcomed back the staff as well as the new staff members and expressed her gratitude for being on the Board.

XV. Executive Session

A. Discussion Concerning Tentative Agreement with Safety and Security Specialists – United Public Services Union

B. Discussion Concerning Tentative Agreement with Avon Administrative and Supervisory Association

At 8:23 pm, Chair Chute asked to enter into Executive Session and invited Dr. Carnemolla, Mr. Giannini, Mr. Medic, and Ms. Russo to join the discussions concerning the Tentative Agreement with Safety and Security Specialists – United Public Services Union and the Tentative Agreement with Avon Administrative and Supervisory Association.

XVI. Return to Public Session

A. Possible Action Concerning Tentative Agreement with Safety and Security Specialists – United Public Services Union

B. Possible Action Concerning Tentative Agreement with Avon Administrative and Supervisory Association

At 8:46 pm the Board left Executive Session and returned to Public Session.

XVII. Return to Public Session

A. Possible Action Concerning Tentative Agreement with Safety and Security Specialists – United Public Services Union

B. Possible Action Concerning Tentative Agreement with Avon Administrative and Supervisory Association

Deb Chute moved to have the Board of Education approve the tentative agreement with the Safety and Security Specialists Union pending their meeting to ratify the contract, Laura Young seconded.

The motion passed 9-0-0

***Deb Chute moved to have the Board of Education approve the tentative Agreement with Avon Administrative and Supervisory Association and passed by unanimous consent.
The motion passed 9-0-0***

XVIII. Adjournment

At 8:47 pm, the Board adjourned by unanimous consent.

Minutes prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary

Jeffrey S. Fleischman, September 23, 2022