

Board of Education Regular Meeting
February 11, 2019 7:00 PM
PPMS Library

1. Call To Order

Sea Nugent; Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:04PM. Other members present: Deborah Burke-Grabarek, Ed Gauthier, Tom Turner and Charles Raymond. Cindy Luty and Dan Harris were absent. Also present: Dr. Seitinger; Superintendent, Gloria Homiski; Recording Secretary, and John Spang; Director of Finance.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Comment

None

4. Consent Agenda

Moved, to accept the items under the consent agenda as presented. Turner/Burke-Grabarek. Unanimous. Motion Carries.

5. Principals' Reports

Dr. Ivy Davis-Tomczuk; PPMS Principal and Director of Curriculum, addressed the Board. She stated that the last week in February will be "Say Something" week. This campaign was formed after the Sandy Hook school attack and promotes the prevention of youth and teen violence. A brochure will be sent home to parents. An assembly will be held at PPMS and students will be asked to take a pledge, stating that they will follow 3 important steps to end school violence: 1. Look for warning signs, 2. Act immediately, and 3. Say something to a trusted adult.

Mr. Ray Bernier followed. He reported that a 5th grade student, Ava Houghton, wrote a letter to the editor describing carbon footprints. She did so after a lesson from Hugh Birdsall from LEARN.

Ray also explained that the Kindness Critter from PTO delivered gifts to faculty and staff at PVMS. A Citizen of the Month luncheon will be held on Friday to celebrate model students. Friday night is a family fun night and a "Me and My Guy" dance will be held at PVMS. March 1st is Dr. Seus Day. Memers of the Unitd Way will come in to read to students. The "Choose Love" movement is in full swing at PVMS. Students are making conscious choices regarding friendships and behaviors.

Ray informed the Board that employees at PVMS are participating in a Book Club. The first book they are reading is "The 5 Second Rule."

6. Superintendent's Report

7. Dr. Seitsinger stated that Ava Houghton, Beau Beauvais and London Camp, all 5th graders, wrote letters to him about problems and solutions of carbon footprints related to climate change.

He also shared CAPSS Priority Recommendations for 2019. They are currently looking at state mandates, as well as high school credit requirements, and attendance flexibility for high school seniors.

Dr. Seitsinger was invited to present at LEARN in March. He will talk about Preston's performance and innovations.

Three policies were brought to the Board for a second read: Policy 6172.4 Title I, Policy 4112.52 Fingerprinting and Policy 5145.5 Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment.

Moved, to accept policy 6172.4 as presented. Burke-Grabarek/Turner Unanimous. Motion carries.

Moved, to accept policy 4112.52 as presented. Burke-Grabarek/Turner. Unanimous. Motion Carries.

Moved, to accept policy 5145.5 as presented. Burke-Grabarek/Raymond. Nugent and Turner also in favor. Gauthier abstained. Motion carries.

These are the final policies recognized by the CAGE policy review that need to be addressed. From this point forward, Tom Turner and Dr. Seitsinger will review policies on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that our manual is current.

Policy 3542.43 Food Service Charging Policy was revised to remove secondary school information.

Moved, to accept Policy 3542.43 as amended. Turner/Burke-Grabarek. Unanimous. Motion Carries.

Preston Paw Award: This award will be given out to one or two nominees at the start of each school year. Anyone working in the district can be nominated. Perhaps sponsors can be found to donate gift cards to recipients as well. Sean Nugent asked that this be posted to our website and that it be advertised in the next Pipeline as well. The Chair and other members recognized and appreciated the concept.

Dr. Seitsinger introduced Kelly Grant; Interim Director of Special Education, to the Board. Kelly comes to Preston with a great deal of experience in Special Education, as well as EL and school psychology. She will work 2 days a week from now until June 30, 2019.

Polling Place Committee: Ed Gauthier explained that this committee has met twice. The current polling location is not ADA compliant and therefore the committee is looking at other locations. They will make a recommendation to the Town by March 12th. They have 5 locations in mind: PPMS, PVMS, Preston City Fire House, Poquetanuck Fire House and the Preston Senior Center. Their next meeting is on February 21st and at that time they will narrow their selections to 2 locations. Dr. Seitsinger stated that PVMS could fill all of the needs of the community and would be open to a walk thru of the committee. The final location would be voted on at a Town Meeting.

NFA: One You: Dr. Seitsinger and Sean Nugent met with David Klein; NFA Headmaster, and Sarrette Williams Board of Trustees Chair last week. The document attached gives an overview of the commitment and success of Preston students at NFA. David Klein and Sarrette Williams talked about improving communication and participation in governance at NFA. NFA assured them that ALL students are safe at NFA.

8. District Overview/Update

Dr. Seitsinger re-enforced the need for all families to have foul weather plans. Plans are necessary for early dismissal days as well as snow days.

9. Expenditure/Projection Report

John Spang reviewed his expenditure report and capital project report. CCM recommended that school budgets be submitted later than they have been in the past. Therefore, the Preston BOE must submit their approved FY20 budget to the BOF on April 2nd rather than the beginning of March.

Dr. Seitsinger and Sean Nugent went to the State Department of Education in Hartford to meet with Kathy Demsey the CFO. They discussed MBR, ECS, and also the fact that Preston cannot waive their reimbursement due from the Town. They also talked about how these calculations are determined. The district is awaiting a letter from Kathy Demsey.

Dr. Seitsinger explained that the Town and the School will have to make a decision about their joint accounting software. Phoenix was bought out by Powerschool, and Powerschool will not support Phoenix after 2020. The Board and the Town will begin discussions on this topic soon.

Dr. Seitsinger stated that the Strategic Plan will be emphasized in the current budget process. Business Case proposals will be prepared for significant changes. The FY20 proposed budget will include a part time social worker, and small increases in the school psychologist's position and special education director's position. Preston will continue to look for partnerships with other districts. (See attached budget document).

10. Public Comment

None

11. Adjournment

Moved, to adjourn the meeting at 8:50PM. Burke-Grabarek/Raymond.
Unanimous. Motion Carries.

Dear Dr. Seitsinger,

I want you to put windmills outside our school so we don't use so much electricity and to help climate change.

I feel angry about climate change. Here's why. We are cutting trees down and throwing plastic into the ocean. The animals inside the ocean are eating the plastic and dying.

As for me, I am helping to solve the climate change problem by walking more at my house than I normally do, which uses less gas .

I am writing to you because I think you can do something about this problem too. For example, you can plant forests in the tropics and stop cutting trees down. You can ride a bike instead of a car or ride a bus to school.

To summarize I feel angry about climate change. I am doing my part by walking to my destination at my grandpa's. Won't you do your part by helping to stop climate change and stop throwing plastic into the ocean and getting animals hurt?

Sincerely,



Beau Beauvais

5th Grade

Dr. Seitsinger
Preston Public Schools
1 Route 164
Preston, CT 06365

January 16, 2019

Dear Dr. Seitsinger,

I want you to help fix climate change because the temperature of Earth is rising and the glaciers are melting. I feel scared about climate change. Here's why....

All the people could die from climate change, because several gases can go together and cause the natural greenhouse effect.

I am helping climate change by writing to a leader. You are the boss of the school and you could allow the fifth grade to make a club after school. I also think if we use the reusable plates and recycle more we could do so to help Earth.

To summarize, climate change is important to the earth. I am doing my part by writing to you and learning about how to help. Won't you do your part?

Sincerely,

London Camp

London Camp

5th Grade

Student at Preston Veterans Memorial School: Editorial

I want you to know that on Earth there is too much carbon dioxide. If there is too much carbon dioxide on Earth things could start changing, like the temperatures. They could start rising and glaciers could start melting really quickly and animals could start losing their homes. Even though all this is happening I feel hopeful that we could change it.

Some ways that I am helping are using less electricity. Also, in the spring I will plant flowers. Sometimes after school I need a break, so I go on my computer, but to use less electricity I will play outside or walk my dog. I will also research climate change to understand it more.

Some ways that you could help are by using solar panels. Also, deforestation is helping to cause climate change. Every time a tree is cut down you could replace it with two. We can fix climate change if we do our part. I am doing my part by using less electricity. Thank you for reading my letter. I hope we can fix the problem together.

Ava Houghton

The writer is a fifth-grade student at Preston Veterans Memorial School.

Introductory Budget Narrative

FY 20 District Budget

February 11, 2019

Board of Education

The new budget schedule works well and I believe that it is much more practical, for the following reasons; (1) we are deeper in to the current budget year and thus we can report more up-to-date numbers, (2) by this time each year we have a good idea where we stand on last year's audit numbers, and (3) we can at least hope that the state numbers are coming into clearer focus.

During the construction of our FY 19 budget the district introduced a new budget development process that was very well received. The process accomplished what it was designed to do: (1) A line by line review of the budget and (2) there was a unanimous vote of the Board of Education in support of the budget going forward to the town. However, when we presented our budget to voters our budget took three passes to be approved.

As we enter the FY 20 budget process it behooves us to learn from the former process, reinforce our successes, and make adjustments where we have noted challenges. This year the cornerstone of our budget and all budgets going forward will be our five-year strategic plan. Each recommendation we consider will be cross-referenced with the appropriate strategic plan citation.

Our Mission Priorities

- A. Safety and Wellbeing
- B. High-Quality Learning Environments
- C. Curriculum and Instruction
- D. Community Partnerships
- E. District Operations
- F. Technology

We agreed to build the FY 20 budget together with some adjustments to the process based on our original design. For example, this year we are adding a "Business Case" design to help us understand and defend substantial changes or additions to our budget requests.

Let's take a moment and recognize our context. First, nationally the discussion about how to support rural schools is expanding as it is with social-emotional learning and student behavior. Here are a few facts:

- Approximately 50.7 million students are enrolled in American Public Schools. Nearly 1 in 5 of those students are located in rural schools
- ½ of all school districts are rural. In many ways just like us.
- Technology is lacking in rural schools
- ELL learners by 2025 will grow most quickly in rural and suburban districts
- 15% of students in rural schools are high poverty.
- Twenty-two million students (out of 50.7) receive free and reduced-price lunch). We are between 24% and 33% depending on which method we use.
- Most rural schools do not have the resources necessary to combat the increasing social-emotional needs of students and families.

Data from THE LINE. Issue No. 4, October 2018. Ideas, Insight & Civil Discourse.

While these statistics are based on national data they also indicate areas that we must attend to as we plan. AASA has established a consortium of 30 plus superintendents for which I have been selected with the charge of framing a national, state, and local response to social-emotional issues facing our students.

At our Finance Committee meetings, we have begun to outline some of the staffing decisions that we believe we need to address as we move through our process. It is unlikely that all of the recommendations will survive; however, it is important that our needs are well understood and the reasons why personnel decisions are being set aside or moved forward. Crucial in these recommendations are the need for a part-time social worker and increased school psychologist time. The social-emotional issue is so acute that national education organizations such as AASA, ASCD, NSBA and others have initiated talks and planning processes to respond to this real emergency.

Under the title of - If Not Now, When? The Preston community is in a strong financial position and getting stronger every day! We have a AA+ Bond Rating, a very healthy fund balance, an increasing grand list value, and an average mill rate. Thus, we hope that our budget will move smoothly to a public vote and it will be supported by a greater majority of our community members.

The FY 19 budget final number is **\$11, 831,804** with the final ECS state aid coming in at **\$3,026, 176**. Our budget increase was essentially flat due to the state calculation that puts our final number at just under the MBR by \$8,311. At a future date, we will need to assure that the Board of Finance support the assign of \$8, 311 to our budget to avoid a doubling penalty.

For the FY 20 budget we assume that, from a programming perspective, we will maintain the current design as our student population has remained relative constant and the needs of our students are increasing. That does not mean that we should not look at efficiencies of design and implementation to lower costs. Additionally, we will need to consider distribution of staff and growing priorities in the district.

We will need to examine our technology and plant and ground infrastructure. Further, challenges in programming and staffing may lead to consideration of past strategies such as out-sourcing transportation or retirement incentives to reduce costs.

There is no question that, perhaps not in this budget process, but shortly we will have to address the needs of human resources, employees through Employee Assistant Programs, and other organizational issues, therefore we will remain open to new partnerships from all organizations, local and state. Our Goal, as we go through the budget development process, is to create a budget that is effective, efficient, addresses the needs of the student, and is committed to providing a quality educational experience and environment for our students, their families, and our community.

Our job is to be vigilant advocates for the needs of our students and families.

Thank you in advance for working through this important process with our team as a team. The Administrative Leadership Team stand ready to respond to any request for information and needed analysis of cost so that we can achieve our goal.