

Board of Education Special Meeting Minutes
July 27, 2020

1. School Community Session

1.1 Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance- President Doucette called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

1.2 Public Participation- Chris Dollar requested to speak to the Board of Education regarding the vision for the technology education department. He noted that several members of the faculty had approached him regarding the overall vision of technology education at Fishers Island School and that there were three areas of interest based on student need: agricultural technology, computer technology, and pre-engineering technology. Mr. Dollar decided to poll the faculty to get more information regarding this topic. He noted that 66% of the faculty responded to his survey. Of those responses, he stated that 100% of responses indicated that they felt as though computer technology/curriculum was important for the students and 50% of responses indicated that they observed a decrease in computer skills in students since the retiring of our last computer teacher. He also noted that 90% of the responses indicated that pre-engineering technology was of importance and 50% of responses indicated that agricultural technology was important. Mr. Dollar indicated that due to public participation time constraints he would not have time to discuss the entire summary of the poll he conducted but would provide a link to the Board for review. He urged the Board to review the 21st century curriculum regarding technology education and the overall success of Fishers Island School students. He suggested that the Board review the Technology Education future at Fishers Island School and the potential of hiring several individuals to meet the needs of the students.

Mr. Michael George requested to speak to the Board and began by noting that he was speaking as an individual and not as the FITA vice president. He indicated that during his educational pursuits and research, he has observed that schools are heading in the direction of adding more computer science and pre-engineering courses as they are important skills for students.

Mr. George also spoke to the reopening plan. He indicated that Mr. Arsenault and the reopening committee has put together a reopening plan that he agrees with, however, he also cautions the Board that reopening the school may have safety risks that are unavoidable, even with a comprehensive plan.

Mrs. Tawnya Eastman requested to speak to the Board in her role as a mother of a Fishers Island School student. She indicated that she believed having both a computer technology teacher and a “hands on” technology teacher served the students best. She indicated that the lack of computer skills is disheartening for her and is doing a disservice to the students. She indicated as both a teacher and a mother she strongly urges the Board to reconsider not hiring a computer teacher.

Mrs. Carol Giles requested to speak to the Board in her role as a science teacher at the Fishers Island School. She wanted to reiterate what Mr. George and Mrs. Eastman had noted regarding computer technology being important for 21st century skills.

2. Action Items

- 2.1 Motion to Approve Job Posting for Part-Time Custodial Position for 2020-2021 School Year-** This position is necessary to clean the school building in the evenings to ensure that all classrooms are cleaned and disinfected daily (approximately 8 hours per week). This position is contingent on the school being physically open and is in addition to the full-time custodian position. Motion made by Matthew Edwards, seconded by Thomas Shillo. All in favor/none opposed.

3. Administrative Update

- 3.1 Technology Education Department Vision-** Mr. Arsenault thanked the community members who spoke in public session and also thanked the hiring committee. He reminded the Board of the technology position hiring up to date. Mr. Arsenault indicated that two applicants applied for the technology position- one in field of agricultural technology and one in the field of computer technology. He indicated that the hiring committee agrees that both fields are important to the school and the success of the students. Mr. Arsenault asked the Board to have discussion and consider the direction that the members think is best for the success of the school.

The Board agreed that ideally, the school would be able to hire two candidates for the two separate positions of agricultural technology and computer technology. The Board does not know how it would fund the two separate positions and would like to head in the direction of computer science technology unless both positions are able to be funded.

- 4. Public Participation-** Carol Giles, Chris Dollar and Michael George thanked the Board for taking the time to listen to public opinion.

- 5. Adjournment-** Meeting was adjourned at 7:09pm by President Doucette.