



PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CENTRAL OFFICE

27 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE
TERRYVILLE, CONNECTICUT 06786

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Plymouth Public Schools is to challenge, inspire, and prepare all students for success in an ever-changing and complex world.

PLYMOUTH BOARD OF EDUCATION

REGULAR MEETING

BOARD OF EDUCATION
TERRYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA
33 NORTH HARWINTON AVENUE
TERRYVILLE, CT 06786

IN-PERSON MEETING WITH THE PUBLIC
PER ADVICE FROM THE TORRINGTON AREA HEALTH DEPARTMENT
THE FOLLOWING MUST BE IMPLEMENTED

1. Maintain Social Distance
2. Everyone must wear a mask
3. A list is to be collected of everyone in attendance (name, address and phone number) in the case of contact tracing.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2021

7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Present: Mr. Seaman, Mrs. Kulesa, Mrs. Lucian, Mr. Showers, Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Foote, and Mr. Elsaghir

Absent: Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani

Others Present: Mrs. Turner, Interim Superintendent, Mrs. Mozak-Pezza, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Ms. Aronheim, Director of Pupil Personnel & Special Education Services, Mr. Tencza, Business Manager and Mr. Trudeau, Director of Technology

1. **Call to Order & Pledge to the Flag**

Mr. Seaman called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The group joined in the Pledge to the Flag.

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Plymouth Board of Education is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider.

2. **Adoption of the Agenda**

4. For the purpose of the formation of a Committee for the Superintendent. This item to be Item #4 on the Agenda. Motion Mr. Foote, second Mrs. Lucian, any discussion, all in favor, motion passes.

MOTION: To entertain a motion to adopt the agenda as amended.

Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, motion passes.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 10, 2021.

Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, any discussion, all in favor, any abstentions, motion carries.

MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of March 30, 2021. Motion, Mr. Foote, second Mrs. Johnson, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion passes

4. **Superintendent Search Committee**

Mr. Seaman appointed the following individuals on the Committee for the search for a Superintendent of Schools for information and input: Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Showers and Mr. Foote, Board of Education Members; Mr. Tencza, Ms. Aronheim, Mrs. Mozek-Pezza, Mr. Trudeau from the Administrative Team and Mrs. Piskorski.

Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, motion carries. The purposes of the committee is to bring forth a recommendation to the Board for full approval.

5. **Presentations**

- Out of State Field Trip – Mr. Veleas

Discussion: Mrs. Kulesa – Is it limited to 5 – 10 students or is that normally what you have?

Mr. Veleas – The more we could get the better. You are with kids from various parts of the country. This may change. COVID protocols are being worked out. Hopefully, everything will be back to normal in November.

MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve the out-of-state field trip from November 7, 2021 to November 12, 2021 to Washington, D.C. for students in Grades 9 – 12 in the Social Studies Department with the stipulation that the Superintendent has the right, if anything happens, to cancel the trip, if needed. Motion Mrs. Kulesa, second Mrs. Johnson, any discussion,

Mrs. Johnson – If we allow it, can you bring back pictures and do a presentation again because that makes such a difference.

Mr. Veleas – Yes, we definitely want to share because we want more kids to go.

Any further discussion, hearing none all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion passes.

- Recognition of Paraeducator of the Year – Nicole Decker of Harry S. Fisher Elementary School by
Ms. Aronheim, Director of Pupil Personnel & Special Education Services

NOTE: Mrs. Turner to recognize semi-finalists:

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Christine Cordani | Plymouth Center School |
| June Danis | Eli Terry Jr. Middle School |
| Jennifer Blekis | Terryville High School |

RECESS: MOTION: To recess at 7:14 p.m. to congratulate the Paraeducator of the Year.
Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, all in favor, motion passes.

RESUME REGULAR SESSION: MOTION: To resume regular session at 7:27 p.m.
Motion Mr. Foote second Mr. Showers, any discussion, all in favor, motion carries.

6. Superintendent's Update

- o Second vaccination clinic for the second dose was held on April 1st.
- o Thank you to Mr. Seaman for coordinating the clinic with Waterbury Hospital, all of our volunteers, school nurses, Plymouth Volunteer Ambulance Corp, and Administrators.
- o April 19th students will return to school for 4 ½ days per week. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, all day and Wednesdays a.m. only.
- o The last day of school, barring any unforeseen circumstances is on Monday, June 14, 2021. Mr. Hults, Mr. Vigliotti and Mrs. Turner will meet after spring break to set a graduation date. Thoughts are to do something in the evening on June 14th. However, because graduation is going to be outside, with a site yet to be determined, to have a rain date of June 15th.
- o Budget Update – On April 5th there was a Board of Finance Meeting. The Board of Finance voted to add \$100,000 to the Budget which brings a total addition of \$136,665 which is an increase of .55% to the taxpayers. On April 19th there will be a Tri-Board Meeting (Board of Finance, Town Council and Board of Education).

Mr. Seaman – The Superintendent proposed a 2.53% increase. The Board decided to add the STEM Program which brought it to a 3.13% increase.

- o 2.53% - Total increase to the Budget of \$624,727.00.
- o Contractual obligations equated to 2.33% which is \$577,727.00.
- o 3.13%, adding the STEM program would have been an increase this year, with the exception of a teacher, was to purchase equipment, printers, computers and everything for the engineering program was \$774,727.00.

- Currently, we are fixing an accounting practice through the Town and the BOE of Excess Costs that will be coming over to the BOE side, where it should have been all along. Both sides are in agreement with this. BOF, the Town and BOE Agree that this needs to be done and should have been done a long time ago.
- The only increase we are going to get from the taxpayers this year as proposed is \$136,665. There is a huge short fall in the proposed budget. Even if we went with the 2.33%, which is staff, there is still a huge deficit.
- The BOE is working with the BOF.
One Option: A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – To possibly utilize the Sinking Fund. The State Statute was changed and modified in 2019. It now allows the BOE to add up to 2% of the Budget annually into the sinking fund. The statute also stated, the BOE may use the sinking fund for anything educational. The Agreement between the BOE and Town of Plymouth states for Capital Purposes. This is the reason for the MOU. The MOU would allow the Board to use those monies in the sinking fund plus if it has a surplus this year, deposit that money into the sinking fund and temporarily use it to offset the increase.

Other discussion, re: using the fund balance in the Town, etc. However, the MOU seems to be the best option as a temporary solution for this year. If the MOU fails and does not pass, it needs approval from the Board of Finance and Town Council in order for the Board to do the MOU, the BOE will have some difficult decisions to make with recommendations from the Superintendent. Cuts will need to be made and no one wants that. We are talking everything from high school and middle school sports, staff, teachers, class size increasing and really desecrating our school system as we know it. The BOE is hoping this does pass. Mr. Seaman, as BOE Chair, is in communication with the BOF chair on a daily basis. Some BOF members really want to help. No one wants a tax increase. How the public can help is to go onto the town's website and contact the BOF via email, contact the Mayor's office, whether you are for or against the increase. Let them know for they can only go by and make decisions on what they hear. There is a BOF meeting on April 8th. These meetings take place every Monday and Thursday night. We are facing many difficult decisions.

Just to clarify, the BOE is not receiving \$250,000 from the taxpayers. The BOE will be receiving \$136,665 if that passes. With this amount and the additional fund from the MOU the BOE will not need to make cuts.

7. **Student Representatives**

* **Tyler Mendela**

- SAT Day – Juniors recently took their SAT's and were confident in taking them with the SAT "Boot Camp" that was held weekly during homeroom.
- National Honor Society Make-A-Wish – the National Honor Society is currently holding a donation based fundraiser for Make-A-Wish. With the 100th birthday of NHS approaching, each member is striving to raise \$100. Some exciting news is we kicked this off on Monday and are already halfway to our club goal of \$3,000. If you would like to donate, please see any NHS member or check on Facebook for donation links.

* Lilyana Ricardo

- o Senior Formal Dinner – Due to ongoing COVID restrictions, the Senior Class is unable to hold a traditional prom, instead, they are hosting:
 - ❖ Murder Mystery Formal Dinner at the Grand Oak Villa on May 7th from 5:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
 - ❖ Seniors will still be able to dress up formally and eat dinner together while participating in an interactive murder-mystery investigation.
 - ❖ Seniors are also unable to attend the yearly trip to Holiday Hill, so the class officers have been working alongside the advisors to plan a Senior Field Day at the end of the year.

* Gena Buckley

- o Winter Sports have ended.
- o Boys' Basketball claimed the Berkshire League title – Score 54 -51.
- o Spring Sports are starting up again; very happy to be back since spring sports did not take place last year.

8. **Public Comment** (limited to 3-minutes per speaker)

None

9. **Communications**

Mr. Seaman read the following letter into the record from Mrs. Melissa Coan-Kremmel:

Dear Walt,

“Please accept this letter of resignation from my position as a member of the Plymouth Board of Education, effective immediately. I have appreciated the opportunity to serve our town in this capacity, and I wish the Board of Education success in the future”.

Sincerely,

Melissa Coan-Kremmel

MOTION: To entertain a motion to accept the resignation of Mrs. Coan-Kremmel.
Motion Mr. Foote, seconded, Mrs. Lucian, all in favor, motion passes.

10. **New Business**

(a) MOTION: To entertain a motion to accept the resignation of Sherri Turner as Interim Superintendent for the Plymouth Public School System effective June 30, 2021. Motion Mrs. Johnson, second Mrs. Lucian, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion passes.

At this time the Board would like to welcome Mrs. Turner as she returns to her original position as Principal of Plymouth Center School effective July 1, 2021.

(b) Healthy Food Certification 2021 – 2022

All public school districts participating in the NSLP must submit the *Healthy Food Certification Statement – Addendum to Agreement for Child Nutrition Program (ED-099)* by July 1, 2021 to certify whether or not all food items sold to students will or will not meet Connecticut Nutritional Standards.

- **Healthy Food Option:** Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the board of education or governing authority certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or by non-school organizations and groups.

MOTION: To entertain a motion to implement the healthy food option.

Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion passes.

If the board of education or governing authority votes “yes” for the healthy food option above, the board of education or governing authority **must also vote** on whether to allow food exemptions, as indicated below. *NOTE: If the board of education or governing authority votes “no” for the healthy food option above, a vote on whether to allow food exemptions is not required.*

- **Exemption for Food Items:** The board of education or governing authority will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held.

MOTION: To entertain a motion to allow the food exemptions. Motion Mrs. Johnson, second Mr. Foote, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion passes.

- **Beverage Exemptions:** The Board of Education or governing authority will allow the sale to students of beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An "event" is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. The "school day" is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. "Location" means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the beverage sales.

MOTION: To entertain a motion to allow for the beverage exemptions.

Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, any abstentions, motion passes.

- (c) Draft of Proposed calendar for the Plymouth Public Schools 2022 – 2023 School Year

Each Board Member received a draft of the proposed 2022 – 2023 School Year Calendar for their review. The same will be discussed and voted on at the May Board of Education Meeting.

- (d) Donation – This Item has been Removed and Tabled.

11. **Board Member/Committee Reports**

A. Finance/Operations - Matthew Tencza, School Business Manager

- Included in the packet are the following: Accounts by Facilities Report for March, 2021 and 3 different submissions: (1) Business Office Activity Report; (2) Board of Education Budget Summary through March 2021 Report; and (3) Cumulative Total Board of Education Budget % by Month.

Mr. Tencza, thanked the Board for approving the lighting project to move forward. Three of the 4 schools have already been approved. Waiting for approval on the high school because of the size of this particular project. This needs to go through an additional approval step. It is anticipated this will be done within days. The district received an additional \$15,000.00, so our cost will decrease more.

Mr. Tencza publically announced that Linda May, the district's payroll/benefits coordinator has submitted her retirement paperwork after being employed with the district for 22 years. He thanked her for all that she has done for the district and that she has been an irreplaceable resource for him for the last 4 – 5 months. She is an amazing individual, processing the payroll every 2 weeks no matter what is going on in her life. He and the district wish her well when she departs on June 30th. She will be off to a well-deserved retirement.

Just as a point of information, he has begun the process for a replacement and hopes to have an individual train with Linda prior to her departure.

Mrs. Johnson – I like the numbers, you make me happy.

Linda May – The one thing she feels she has learned from Linda, when the BOE was at the old building, even though Linda lived nearly, even in a snow storm or when the building was closed, she went to work. Her dedication is amazing to our district. Mrs. Johnson wished her luck in her retirement and Linda will be missed.

- The Accounts by Facilities Report will be forwarded to the Town of Plymouth Board of Finance

B. Personnel Report – Mrs. Turner, Interim Superintendent

No Questions

12. **Public Comment** (limited to 3-minutes per speaker)

None

13. **Board Liaison Reports**

Mr. Seaman -- Harry S. Fisher Elementary School

- PTA Calendar Raffle was a huge success. Over \$3,400 was raised. Over 600 tickets were sold. Winners will be chosen daily and posted live on Facebook.
- April 9 PJ Day
Cost \$1.00, Proceeds, 5th grade picnic
- PTA is seeking new Board Members for the 2021 – 2022 school year. If you are interested, please join their next meeting via Google Meets on April 20th. Get Involved

Mr. Elsaghir -- Plymouth Center School
No Report – Meeting is next week.

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani -- Eli Terry Jr. Middle School
Absent – No Report

Mrs. Candrea-Florenciani -- Booster Club
Absent – No Report

Mrs. Kulesa -- Terryville High School
No Report – But urged Juniors and the parents of Juniors to get involved in the Terryville PTSA. This is the time to learn everything there is to know, how you can help out and help to fundraise, etc.

Mr. Foote -- SEPTA

- SEPTA has spoken to the Terryville High School Guidance Department and they will be offering a scholarship this year. Any student interested needs to contact the guidance department.
- This may be the last year for the scholarship and for SEPTA. No new members have come forward which leads the group to close our chapter.

Vacant

-- CABE

Mrs. Johnson

-- EdAdvance

Mrs. Johnson reported:

- The approval of their Healthy Food Certification (like all Districts) Healthy Food Option Food Beverage Exemption Certification for both.
- New Slate of Officers for 2021 – 2022:
 - President- John Kissko
 - Vice President – Linda Stone
 - Secretary – Deb Bell
 - Treasurer – Janell Wilk
 - Member at Large – Melissa Johnson
- Meeting dates for 2021 – 2022 were approved. There are 10 scheduled meetings a year, but because of more participation throughout COVID using Zoom, they will continue to use them, except for 2 -3 meetings, i.e. budget meetings will be in person.
- The Governor announced that the 6 RESC Allegiance will receive \$10,000,000 to add Summer Enhancement Programs over 2 years.
- Our RESC and the CES (Cooperative Education Services) RESCS have joined together to purchase a building that was formerly a Home School Facility in Bethel, that is no longer being used. It houses many Enrichment Labs, i.e. 3D printing Lab, Theater Arts, Think Tanks and Technology Education, Summer Programs, a large Culinary area. There is space for Alternative Education, Transition programs and for 22plus programming. There is plenty of space to offer STEM Programs to all schools. There is also space for School Administrator Retreat, and some have already been scheduled. This building is giving our two RESC's many opportunities to provide services and programs throughout our two regions.

Mr. Showers

-- District Safety Committee

No Report

14. **Board Comments**

None

15. **Next Board Meeting** –The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Wednesday May 12, 2021 at 7 p.m. Terryville High School Cafeteria.

16. **Executive Session**

- (1) Expiring Work Agreements
- (2) Contract for the Business Manager

MOTION: To entertain a motion to enter into executive session at 8:02 p.m. for the purpose of: (1) discussing expiring work agreements for the Custodian and Maintenance Workers; School-to-Career Coordinator and the Food Service Director and (2) the Contract for the Business Manager inviting Mrs. Turner, Interim Superintendent and Mr. Tencza, Business Manager into Executive Session. Motion Mr. Foote, second Mr. Showers, any discussion, all in favor, any abstentions, motion passes.

17. **Resume Regular Session**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to resume regular session at 9:08 p.m. Motion Mr. Foote, second Mrs. Johnson, any discussion, all in favor, any opposed, motion passes.

18. **Possible Action From Executive Session Matters**

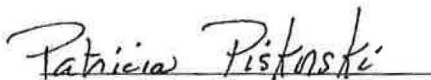
(a) No Action Taken

(b) MOTION: To entertain a motion to approve the contract for the Business Manager as discussed in executive session. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, all in favor, any opposed, (Mr. Elsaghir, opposes) motion passes.

19. **Adjournment**

MOTION: To entertain a motion to adjourn at 9:09 p.m. Motion Mr. Showers, second Mr. Foote, all in favor, motion passes.

Respectfully Submitted


Patricia Piskorski
Recording Secretary
Plymouth Board of Education