

(UNAPPROVED)

**VOLUNTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**195 Main Street, Voluntown, CT 06384**  
**Phone: (860) 376-9167 [www.voluntownct.org](http://www.voluntownct.org)**  
**Superintendent of Schools: Adam S. Burrows**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**\*\*\*\*\*PUBLIC HEARING FOLLOWED BY REGULAR BOE MEETING\*\*\*\*\***

April 18, 2024 in the Central Office Conference Room at 7:00 p.m.

This public meeting is viewable on the Voluntown School YouTube channel:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3I7dQmnXMxoTINHzaSZ1zw>  
 Citizens were welcome to attend in person to share their comments.

**I. CALL TO ORDER** - Chairperson Kate Beauparlant called the Public Hearing to order at 7:04 p.m.

Mr. Burrows distributed the most recent budget proposal of \$7,337,023 representing an increase of \$281,689 or 3.99% above the 2023-24 approved budget of \$ 7,055,334. Also distributed were the following reports:

- Health Benefits Report
- Transportation Costs History
- Capital Improvement Plan Update
- Van Quote from Advanced Wheels
- Special Education Tuition Costs

Mr. Burrows noted there were changes since the March 14, 2024, proposal. There was a recent announcement of a retirement by a teacher at the highest salary. A reorganization was made to the Speech and Language schedule to meet the needs of identified students by increasing a part-time Speech and Language Clinician to a full-time teacher status. These savings were used to allocate funds in the Special Education Transportation account for the Board to consider the purchase of a 2024 Van with a motorized lift to safely transport handicapped students.

The Building Committee has made excellent progress in the process of scheduling projects in the Capital Improvement Plan:

- The next phase of the Asbestos Abatement project by scheduling rooms 31, 32, 33, and 34 in the 1970 section of VES and using \$47,954 from the \$112,742.19 oil tank reimbursement funds set aside by the town for this multi-year abatement project. This leaves a remaining balance of \$25,069 for phase three to be completed in the summer of 2025.
- Completing a multi-year series of projects by combining ESSER funds and set aside town funds to complete the \$191,800 HVAC upgrade in the VES gym scheduled for completion this summer by use of town set aside funds to complete HVAC upgrades in the Kindergarten Rooms, Special Education Offices, the Central Office, and some improvements in the VES Library. Mr. Burrows noted that he reviewed and signed the contract for the gym HVAC after approval by the Building Committee.
- Reallocation of funds from the March 14, 2024 proposal came from a 2% rather than 7% increase in the cost of health insurance. We are now exploring the use of 23-24 and 24-25 Board of Education funds for replacement of the fire alarm panel as recommended by the Fire Marshall.

**CITIZENS / COMMENTS** – Jack Wesa, and Julie Zelinski attended. Questions were answered regarding the budget proposal.

**II. GUESTS** – Tracey Hanson, First Selectman

Tracey Hanson announced that the Town Public Hearing is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. to review the proposed Town and School Budgets. A referendum is planned to vote on the budgets on Tuesday, May 28, 2024. She announced the next Regular Board of Selectman's meeting will be held on May 7<sup>th</sup> and also a Special BOS meeting on May 13, 2024.

Chairperson Beauparlant adjourned the Public Hearing and called the Regular BOE meeting to order at 8:07 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and the mission statement was read.

**ATTENDANCE**    **Present:**    Kate Beauparlant (Chairperson)  
 Meagan Wicks (Vice Chair)  
 Cathy Grant (Secretary)  
 Valerie Muschiano  
 Christopher Wilson

**Absent:**            Arikka Kalwara  
                                 Sarah Thompson

**Also Present:**    Adam S. Burrows (Superintendent)  
                                 Amy L. Suffoletto (Principal)  
                                 Lloyd Johnson PhD (Director of Student Services)  
                                 Dee Dee Jackman (BOE Clerk)  
                                 Tracey Hanson (First Selectwoman)

**MOTION # 1 (4/18/24) was made (Grant/Muschiano) to move the Old Business Agenda Item VIII-4 “Safety on Route 138” to the beginning of the meeting. All in favor; motion passes.**

**Safety on Route 138 (Agenda item VIII-4)** Tracey Hanson gave an update regarding the Safety on Route 138 and informed the Board that the Department of Transportation has approved our school signs and is waiting upon receipt of a map approval. The old signs will be removed. Easement permits will be also be completed. Tracey has also submitted several requests:

- a lowered speed limit from Rhode Island to the blinking light in town;
- a red light at the three-way intersection of Rockville Road and Route 138; and
- sidewalks installed across the street from the school all the way to Town Grill.

New emergency use safety radios have been approved and ordered, which will provide communications throughout eastern Connecticut for the bus drivers, fire department, and public works.

### III. **CONSENT AGENDA**

**MOTION # 2 (4/18/24) was made (Wilson/Muschiano) for the Board to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; all in favor; motion passes.**

### IV. **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

#### 1. **PRINCIPAL’S REPORT** (Submitted by Amy L. Suffoletto)

Mrs. Suffoletto and Kate Beauparlant thanked Mrs. Loranger and Ms. Barber for their efforts in making the drama presentation of “Wonka” such a huge success.

#### **April Highlights:**

April 4 Wonka Performance  
 April 8-12 Spring Vacation  
 April 16 UConn Trip Art Club/Band Students  
 April 19 Grade 5/6 Trip to Stadium Theater to see Percy Jackson  
 April 22-26 SBAC Testing Grades 3-8

#### **Students as a Focal Point**

- “WONKA” Performance was a huge hit for students and families on 4/4/24. Our Drama program features students in grades 2-5 and was led by Kayla Barber and Darlena Loranger. This program has been underway for the past few months and was a wonderful production.

- **SERAC Vaping Presentations:** Parents and Students in grades 6-8 both attended a presentation on Vaping and its effect on youth. This ongoing conversation will continue with students and parents to ensure we support students in making healthy choices for themselves.
- **Grade 8 Model UN with Griswold:** Students in grade 8 participated twice with Griswold High School to learn and understand the principles of the UN and its purpose.
- **Kindergarten Waiver 24-25:** Information regarding kindergarten enrollment for students born Sept. 1 through Dec. 31, 2019 has been issued and updated on our website. Waiver requests will be handled after April vacation for families.
- **Mid-Season Volleyball:** Co-Ed Volleyball has ended and was led by Emilee Nelson and Andrea Kelly. There were 18 students who participated in grades 7-8.
- **Track Season:** Track season will begin after April vacation. Emilee Nelson and Kayla Berard will be co-coaching track.
- **Connecticut State Assessment Individual Student Reports (SBAC, CTAA, CAPT, CMT, Skills Checklist):** The 2024 testing season is upon us and SBAC testing will take place April 22-26th.

#### Curriculum, Learning, and Instruction

- **Curriculum/Committee Work:** Teachers continue with professional learning that promotes new initiatives, learning strategies, while working with their grade level teams on curriculum and implementation of programs. This year, teachers will focus on Into Reading and Into Literature, aligning writing instruction/practices and expectations, additionally aligning Science, and Social Studies items into the ELA documents, as well as other curriculum areas to ensure we are meeting the needs of all students. Revamping of pacing guides, benchmark assessments, and report cards will also be throughout this year.
- **Meetings:** Include regular meeting of the following committees as needed: English/Language Arts, Mathematics, TEAM, Wellness, Student Services Department, Safe School Climate, Crisis Intervention Team, Transportation, School Readiness Council, Indoor Air Quality/Tools for Schools/Safety, School Security and Safety, JHS/HS Transition, and a Faculty Meeting monthly as determined logistically.
- **Teacher Evaluation Plan / TEAM** Any plan updates will be reviewed with the PDEC committee and according to State guidelines. The TEAM program is being monitored by assigned mentors and supporting our new teachers.
- **Grants/Reports/Applications**
  - **Connecticut Office of Early Childhood** - the Monthly School Readiness Reports for the Voluntown Elementary School Pre School and School Readiness Program have been updated for submission by the monthly due date each month. June is the final month for the program.
  - **FY 23 School Readiness and Quality Enhancement Grants** have been awarded and received.
  - **NAEYC Accreditation** - Accreditation is through 2027 and SR staff continue to work in the portfolio to ensure all action items are met and completed regularly.

#### Building, Grounds, and Transportation & Safety

- Mike Creaturo, Technology Coordinator, continues to support IT needs within the building.
- Brian Kallio, Director of Maintenance, continues to review, implement and address needs.
- Anne Michaud, Director of Transportation, continues to review and address needs within our transportation department and has made adjustments, as needed.

#### Community and Public Relations

- **PTO** - Suggestions are always welcome for the school year. Contact Hailie Davis [hdavis@voluntownct.org](mailto:hdavis@voluntownct.org). Voluntown PTO is looking for parent members. Without parent members, we will not be able to host events. Consider supporting an upcoming event!
- **Youth Service Bureau/Local Prevention Council** – The YSB-LPC Advisory Board meets virtually on the third Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. YSB programs have been running successfully all year and students enjoy the offerings. Contact Melinda Bryan [mbryan@voluntownct.org](mailto:mbryan@voluntownct.org).

**2. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES** (by Lloyd A. Johnson, Ph.D)

- Dr. Johnson acknowledged and thanked Darlena Loranger for taking immediate action and initiative to acquire necessary medical equipment for a student during the April vacation.
- A letter to Mr. Burrows from Bryan Klimkiewicz, Special Education Division Director, State Department of Education dated 2/1/2024 indicated that Voluntown's 2023 District Annual Report and Determination rated Voluntown as "Meets Requirements". We are pleased with this recognition of the efforts of the members of our department to meet the standards set by the Department for students with disabilities.
- With the eighth graders' high school choices determined, we are scheduling Transition PPTs and 504 Accommodations Plan meetings with representatives of the receiving schools.
- The department members and Mrs. Suffoletto have begun discussions of schedules and program planning for 2024-25 based on our students' needs as articulated in their IEPs.
- By April 18, 2024, this Director will have chaired 129 PPT/504/Parent Meetings held with the following schools: VES, The Learning Clinic in Brooklyn, EastConn's Northeast School in Killingly, EastConn's Autism Program in Columbia, Norwich Free Academy, Wheeler High School, Griswold High School, Griswold Alternative School, The Marine Science Magnet High School in Groton, and the Norwich Transition Academy.

The census of students in Pre-K to 12+ receiving special services is as follows:

	<b>10/01/2021</b>		<b>10/1/2022</b>		<b>4/18/24</b>	
	IEP	504	IEP	504	IEP	504
PreK -8	34	31	34	36	35	41
9-12+	20	15	18	18	19	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>55</b>

**3. SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS** (Submitted by Adam S. Burrows)

- Calendar of Events for April, May, and June 2024
- The District Enrollment Report noted 238 students in Pre-K to 8<sup>th</sup> grade and 127 high school students.
- There have been 17,117 meals served as of 3-31-24. There were 30,146 meals served in 22-23 and 42,599 served in 21-22 when all students were eligible to receive free breakfast and lunch.
- We have expended 77.7% of the 23-24 budget and have a remaining balance of \$1,617,609.11
- \$90,921.50 has been returned to the Town of Voluntown Undesignated Fund from grants, rebates, and other unanticipated savings received.
- Increasing Educator Diversity Plan Submission Acknowledgement
- Situation Report from the Connecticut Intelligence Center regarding Implied E-Mail Bomb Threats
- CABE Policy Highlights – March 14, 2024 (AI Technology Update); and April 1, 2024 (Information to Support Increasing Educator Diversity Plans; Guidance on Civil Rights Protections and Supports for Transgender or Gender-Diverse Students; Tabletop Exercises to Support Safety Plans; Policy-Related CSDE Updates)
- There is a need to schedule a Transportation Committee Meeting to review immediate needs as well as update a long-term plan-of action. Suggested date and time is Tuesday, April 23, 2024 at 7:00 pm in the Board of Education meeting room.
- The YSB/LPC has had an excellent year with a significant increase in student involvement in programs. The YSB/LPC Board requested additional funding, if needed, from the Board of Education. Is it possible to add up \$2,000 to account #3300? The Superintendent will then make the recommendation for a transfer at the end of the year.

**Capital Improvement Update as of 4-18-24**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Projected Cost</b>	<b>Funding Sources</b>
HVAC for Gymnasium (Bid Approved by Building Committee)	2024/25	\$191,800	ESSER III \$95,272 (by 9-30-24) And HVAC Funds of \$96,529
Central Office HVAC Replacement (RFP)	2024/25	\$26,800	Town set-aside HVAC funds
HVAC in Kindergarten Rooms (RFP)	2024/25	\$15,725	Town set-aside HVAC funds
HVAC in Special Education Offices (RFP)	2024/25	\$12,725	Town set-aside HVAC funds
Library HVAC Upgrades (RFP)	2024/25	\$18,221	Town set-aside HVAC funds
Fire Alarm Panel Replacement	2024/25	\$60,000	Request for a Special Allocation
Replace a 32-year-old Generator	2024/25	\$85,000	Request for a Special Allocation
Central Office Repairs and Upgrades	2024/25	\$21,700	Request for a Special Allocation
Security– All Entrances	2024/25	\$24,000	Operating Budget or other
Electrical Panel Upgrade	2024/25	\$28,000	Operating Budget
Gymnasium Stage Curtain	2025/26	\$25,000	Operating Budget
Gym Sliding Door	2025/26	\$140,000	Request to Town

*Subtotal: \$638,971*

ESSER and HVAC Funds           -\$265,271

**Total ..... \$373,700**

**VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

**MOTION # 3 (4/18/24) was made (Grant/Muschiano) for the Board move Agenda items Old Business VIII-5 (Approval of Math Program), New Business IX-3 (Personnel), and New Business IX-4 (8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation) to this section; all in favor; motion passes.**

**Approval of Math Program (Agenda item VIII-5) –** Mrs. Suffoletto reviewed the new math program and answered questions from the Board. Mr. Burrows noted that we would be using funds from this year’s budget for this upgrade.

**MOTION # 4 (4/18/24) was made (Wilson/Muschiano) for the Board to approve the new math program; all in favor; motion passes.**

**Personnel (Agenda item IX-3)**

**MOTION # 5 (4/18/24) was made (Grant/Wilson) to approve Rebekah Ricciutti as the Spanish Language/Middle School Teacher for 24/25; motion passes.**

Chris Wilson expressed his excitement for this world language program and that the Board has sought out such a program for a long time in order to enhance our youth’s future abilities and opportunities.

**MOTION # 6 (4/18/24) was made (Grant/Muschiano) to accept the resignation from Cynthia Cook as a Custodian; all in favor; motion passes.**

**MOTION # 7 (4/18/24) was made with regrets and appreciation for her years of service to VES (Grant/Wicks) to accept the retirement from Lynne McCullough as a Speech Pathologist as of June 30, 2024; all in favor; motion passes.**

**8th Grade Graduation Date (Agenda item IX-4)**

**MOTION # 8 (4/18/24) was made (Wicks/Muschiano) to approve the 8th Grade Graduation date of Tuesday, June 11, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.; all in favor; motion passes.**

## 1. Budget Proposal for 2024-25

Based on the information reviewed during the Budget Hearing earlier in this Agenda, the Board of Education reviewed additional information and took time to clarify any remaining concerns.

**MOTION # 9 (4/18/24) was made (Grant/Beauparlant) to approve the 4/18/24 budget proposal for 2024-2025 of \$7,337,023 that has an increase of \$281,689 or 3.99% over the 2023-2024 town approved total of \$7,055,334 and forward it to the Town Hall for public dissemination; 3 in favor, 2 opposed (Wilson, Wicks), motion passes.**

Thursday	04-28-24	Public Hearing at 7:00 p.m. and BOE 24-25 budget approval
Thursday	04-22-24	Budget proposal for 24-25 delivered to Town Clerk for dissemination
Tuesday	05-21-24	Possible Annual Town Budget Meeting on the Town and School budgets at the Voluntown Elementary School gymnasium at 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday	05-28-24	Possible Town Referendum to vote on Town and School Budgets at 7:00 p.m. in the VES gym

## 2. Federal and State Grants

The following is a summary of short-term grants:

### 2021 through 2023 Equals Receipt of \$923,372

- COVID Relief Fund (\$176,639 – Expended)
- Elementary/Secondary Emergency Relief Funds or ESSER I (\$32,674 – Expended)
- Elementary/Secondary Emergency Relief Funds or ESSER II (\$136,204 being expended)
- American Rescue Plan or ARP-ESSER III (\$306,105 being expended)
- Special Education Stipend Grant (\$20,000 Expended)
- ESSER II Special Education Recovery Grant (\$30,000 – Expended)
- ESSER II Bonus Special Populations Recovery Grant (\$25,000 – Expended)
- ESSER II Bonus Dyslexia Recovery Grant (\$3,250 - Approved)
- USDA School Lunch Program Equipment Grant (\$25,000 Expended)
- Comcast local grant to school systems (\$3,500 Expended)
- Sp. Ed. Grants (\$10,000 for Certified and \$5,000 for Non-certified – Expended)
- HVAC Grant request of \$170,000 to State of Connecticut (denied) and the town allowed the Building Committee to use these funds for completing the final sections in the school needing HVAC upgrades.

### 2023 -2024 Equals Receipt of \$161,368

- A Mental Health 3-year federal-state grant has been approved for our school system and we will receive allocation of \$25,150 in 23-24, \$25,150 in 24-25, and \$17,605 in 25-26 for a total amount that equals \$67,905. These funds secure part-time Social Worker services from Preston. There were necessary edits to the Mental Health grant which have been addressed by the Central Office.
- Received a Title IV grant for \$10,000 to purchase technology instructional supplies
- Received Title I (\$42,320) and Title II (\$5,878) grant funds totaling \$48,198 to partially support our SRBI (Scientifically Researched-Based Interventions) program that offer reading and math support for identified students.
- Right to Read grant (\$33,000 – recently approved)
- SERAC Vaping grant (\$2,265 – approved)

The above grants are additional allocations for priorities especially related to improving air quality in schools throughout the nation, addressing learning loss, supporting technology connectivity, additional PPE of Personal Protective Equipment, etc. These funds were not used to replace the day-to-day and year-to-year school expenditures from our local school budget.

**MOTION # 10 (4/18/24) was made (Wilson/Grant) to authorize the Superintendent to sign and submit the 24/25 Federal REAP Grant; all in favor; motion passes.**

**MOTION # 11 (4/18/24) was made (Muschiano/Wicks) to authorize the Superintendent to sign and submit the 24/25 IDEA Grant; all in favor; motion passes.**

**MOTION # 12 (4/18/24) was made (Grant/Wicks) to authorize the Superintendent to sign and submit the 24/25 School Readiness/Quality Enhancement Grant; all in favor; motion passes.**

**3. NFA 25-30 Contract Update**

Mr. Burrows has an area superintendent's meeting coming up. An updated contract will be distributed to the Board once completed.

**4. Safety on Route 138** (item reviewed on page 2)

**5. Approval of Math Program Update** (item reviewed on page 5)

**6. Policy # 4112.52 Criminal History Record Information (CHRI)** (2<sup>nd</sup> reading)

**MOTION # 13 (4/18/24) was made (Wilson/Muschiano) for the Board to approve Policy #4112.52 on Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) as presented; all in favor; motion passes.**

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

**2. Policy # 5131.911 School Climate** (1<sup>st</sup> reading – Tabled to the next meeting)

**3. CIRMA Update**

Follow-up from the 3-14-24 Board of Education meeting:

We are currently down two bus drivers because of recent resignations. We have implemented a temporary solution by having the Preston Bus Coordinator help us with emergency situations. We were also required to take emergency steps with arranging parent drivers. Our school attorney has verified a process to document proper insurance coverage for any transportation needs beyond our regular buses. We have fully implemented, through directives from our attorney and CIRMA, the proper procedures, requirements, and legal documentation for Parent Drivers. The Transportation Committee will meet to review the need for a handicapped van, review maintenance issues, and develop a plan to review replacement of buses and drivers, as needed.

**4. Personnel** (item reviewed on page 5)

**5. 8th Grade Graduation Date** (item reviewed on page 5)

**6. Grant Approvals** (item reviewed on pages 6-7)

**7. Field Trip**

**MOTION # 14 (4/18/24) was made (Wilson/Muschiano) to approve a field trip to the Alley Katz Bowling Center in Westerly, RI; all in favor; motion passes.**

**8. BOE Goals for 24/25** (1<sup>st</sup> reading – Tabled to the next meeting)

**9. Administrative Goals for 24/25** (1<sup>st</sup> reading – Tabled to the next meeting)

**X. UPCOMING MEETING(S)/AGENDA ITEMS:**

- BOE Meeting – Thursday, May 9, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the Central Office (CABE & CAS Awards Recipients and GHS Presentation)
- Presentation by Griswold High School Principal (TBD)
- Town Budget Meeting – Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the VES gymnasium

- Town Referendum – Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the VES gymnasium
- 24/25 Budget
- Policy # 5131.911 – School Climate (2<sup>nd</sup> reading)
- Personnel
- BOE Goals for 24/25 (2<sup>nd</sup> reading)
- Administrative Goals for 24/25 (2<sup>nd</sup> reading)
- Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools 23/24

**XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION** - None

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION # 15 (4/18/24) was made (Wicks/Muschiano) to adjourn at 9:45 p.m.; all in favor; motion passes.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Attest

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Respectfully drafted and edited by:  
*Dee Dee Jackman, Board of Education Clerk*  
*Kate Beauparlant, BOE Chair*  
*Adam S. Burrows, Superintendent of Schools*

