

Chariho School Committee Virtual Meeting  
Regular Session Minutes – March 9, 2021

Committee Members Virtual Attendance: Chair Linda Lyall, Vice Chair Catherine Giusti, Ryan Callahan, Donna Chambers, William Day, Gary Liguori (joined at 6:04 PM), Craig Louzon, Lisa Macaruso, Linda McAllister and David Stall (joined at 6:04 PM). Absent: George Abbott and Sheila Grover.

Administrators and Others Virtual Attendance: Superintendent Gina Picard, Assistant Superintendent Jane Daly, Director of Administration and Finance Ned Draper, Retired Director of Administration and Finance Susan Rogers, Systems Administrator Eric O'Brien, Charlestown School Principal Jennifer Poore, Development Officer Katie Kirakosian, NEA President Vin Levcowich, NEA ESP President Tom Pirnie, Charlestown Town Council President Deb Carney, Hopkinton Town Council President Steve Moffitt, Richmond Town Council Vice President Jim Palmisciano and Councilor Lauren Cacciola, Anti-Racism Task Force Members, Friends of Chariho, Westerly Sun Reporter Cynthia Drummond, Attorney for the School Committee Jon Anderson (joined at 6:04 PM), School Committee Clerk Donna Sieczkiewicz and other community members.

I. Meeting Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Silent Meditation

Chair Linda Lyall called the virtual meeting of the Chariho School Committee to order at 6:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was followed by a moment of silent meditation.

II. Motion/Vote to go into Executive Session

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was

VOTED: That the School Committee go into executive session and close the meeting to the public under the authority of R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(1) for the purpose of discussion and/or action pertaining to an individual's job performance or character (Approval of Executive Session Minutes of February 9, 2021 - Pre-deprivation Hearings/Non-Renewal of Teacher Contracts); under the authority of R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(2) for the purpose of discussion and/or action pertaining to collective bargaining (1. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of February 9, 2021 – NEA ESP Negotiation Update and 2. NEA ESP Negotiation Update); under the authority of R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5 (a)(2) for the purpose of discussion and/or action pertaining to pending litigation/legal strategy (Zell v. Ricci, et al.) and under the authority of R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(8) for the purpose of reviewing and/or approving matters which relate to the privacy of students and their records (1. Approval of Home Instruction Requests and 2. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of February 9, 2021 – Approval of Home Instruction Requests); any persons to be discussed have been so notified. In favor: Unanimous (Liguori and Stall were not in attendance for the vote).

The Committee returned to open session at 6:22 PM and Chair Lyall reconvened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

III. Closing/Sealing of Executive Session Minutes

1. Superintendent Picard recommended that minutes pertaining to collective bargaining (NEA ESP Negotiation Update) remain sealed until such time as an agreement has been made.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Linda McAllister and it was

VOTED: That minutes pertaining to collective bargaining (NEA ESP Negotiation Update) remain sealed until such time as an agreement has been made. In favor: Unanimous (Stall was not in attendance for the vote).

2. Superintendent Picard recommended that minutes pertaining to pending litigation/legal strategy remain sealed.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was

VOTED: That minutes pertaining to pending litigation/legal strategy remain sealed. In favor: Unanimous (Stall was not in attendance for the vote).

3. Superintendent Picard recommended that minutes relating to the privacy of students and their records (Approval of Home Instruction Requests) remain sealed.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was

VOTED: That minutes relating to the privacy of students and their records (Approval of Home Instruction Requests) remain sealed. In favor: Unanimous.

#### IV. Disclosure of Executive Session Votes

Vice Chair Giusti reported there were 5 votes taken in executive session. The first, approval of executive session minutes of February 9, 2021 – Pre-deprivation Hearings/Non-Renewal of Teacher Contracts), was approved by members Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Macaruso, McAllister and Stall with Chair Lyall abstaining due to absence.

The next vote, approval of executive session minutes of February 9, 2021 – NEA ESP Negotiation Update, was approved by members Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Macaruso, McAllister and Stall with Chair Lyall abstaining due to absence.

The next vote, approval of executive session minutes of February 9, 2021 – Home Instruction Requests, was approved by members Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Macaruso, McAllister and Stall with Chair Lyall abstaining due to absence.

The fourth vote, approval of Home Instruction Requests, was unanimous with Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Lyall, Macaruso, McAllister and Stall voting in favor.

The final vote, to return to open session, was unanimous with Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Lyall, Macaruso, McAllister and Stall voting in favor.

#### V. Recognition - The following were congratulated:

1. Grade 10 student Virginia Keister, winner of the Poetry Out Loud Competition.
2. Post-Season Recognition: Ice Hockey – Caden Wilson (2<sup>nd</sup> Team All-Division D-2 South (defense), All-Star Game selection, Hobey Baker Award Nominee); Jay Derosiers (1<sup>st</sup> Team All-Division D-2 South (forward), All-Star Game selection); Shaun Quirk – Narragansett (2<sup>nd</sup> Team All-Division D-2 South (forward)).

Chair Lyall wanted to publicly thank Westerly Sun Reporter Cynthia Drummond who is retiring. She only spoke with Cynthia on a few occasions but commented that Cynthia was fair in her reporting and offered her congratulations to Cynthia on her retirement. Donna Chambers thanked Cynthia for her accurate, truthful reporting and wished her well. Bill echoed the sentiments shared and reminded Cynthia to stay safe.

#### VI. Public Forum

Georgia Ure from Hopkinton commented that she was at the last meeting and wasn't allowed to speak. She doesn't know what is on the agenda so she isn't sure when she can speak. Chair Lyall asked what Georgia wanted to speak on to which Georgia responded it was the consolidation of the three schools. Chair Lyall noted that this is agenda item VII-E. Georgia replied that the Chair will have to tell her when they get to that item to which Linda noted that once Georgia raises her hand, she will acknowledge her. She always reads the Item # and topic.

## VII. Business

A. Anti-Racism Task Force Policy Subcommittee Update – Chair Lyall thanked all the members for their work up to date and noted that policies are ultimately the decision of the School Committee. She wanted to dispel any misinformation. Anti-Racism Task Force School Committee liaison Lisa Macaruso welcomed the community and stated that the Task Force will examine policies, practices and curriculum only for the Chariho Regional School District. This subcommittee has worked hard to bring recommendations to the School Committee who has the ultimate authority. Some recommendations may be approved while others may be sent back. Members Dan Fitzgerald, Joe Reddish, endawnis Spears and Darthula Matthews were introduced and each one provided background information on themselves, their families and involvement in the community. A power point presentation was shared which provided information on the charge of the Anti-Racism Task Force, the three groups that comprise the ARTF, a Workgroup Overview including work the Policy Subcommittee has done along with their next steps. At the next two meetings of the School Committee, the other two groups will present. Joe noted that the group began by changing the name from Anti-Racist to Anti-Racism for inclusion. He asked the School Committee to hear their direction and goal and make sure they represent requests and needs of the School Committee. Joe finished the presentation by stating the group's goal so they can work forward down the right path. They encouraged the public to join their meetings as this is a process for our community and children. He closed with Chariho is made up of many facets like a diamond. Unless all facets are shining through, the diamond loses clarity. Chariho shines brightly amongst the State. Chair Lyall and Donna both congratulated the group on a great presentation. Donna noted that she has quietly attended the meetings and is extremely impressed as to how quickly they organized themselves. Chariho is lucky to have such talent in the community. At the last meeting they talked about developing a website which she feels is extremely important to establish terminologies; they should put a glossary out there on the site. Catherine noted her appreciation as well. She commented on how transparent the meetings are. She asked if the next step would be to work on policy and bring to the Committee or are they looking for guidance. Dan replied that their next steps are to take the three really broad tiers and write out a formal recommendation. If the Committee has feedback, they would welcome it. Joe added that it is extremely important that they be proactive in providing the School Committee information. They want to be as open and up front that they can be so that everyone is on the same path. Gary thanked the group and commented that Tier 1 references a Discrimination Policy; would it be more thoughtful to have an Anti-Discrimination Policy? Linda McAllister applauded their work while community member Polly Hopkins noted her confusion as it seems like an open-ended task force. She volunteered, as did about 129 other people, and she feels left out. We all have a lot more in common than not. She feels that some of the questions she had to answer to volunteer were ethnic related. She has heard there are political objections coming into the schools and feels there is a better way to handle this. She questioned why the Task Force would want to change curriculum when Chariho is maybe third in the State and very successful. Why change curriculum if we are successful? There are other ways to do it without political agendas. She feels the meetings have a lot of OMA violations; agendas are not followed properly. Dan replied that on the April 13<sup>th</sup> SC Meeting, the Curriculum Working Group will provide an overview that should address concerns. Vice Chair Lyall thanked Dan for bringing the conversation back to the topic which is policy discussion. Lisa explained the process that was used for selection of Task Force members. She is taking notes so any questions can be addressed at a meeting of the Task Force as some of this discussion does not deal with the item being discussed. David Stall noted that he will have more to say under Agenda items for upcoming meetings but he feels one thing the School Committee did not do well was to set direction. He did not vote for the members of this Task Force as he does not feel they had a diverse representation. He feels it is important to have clergy and Asians represented and they didn't get that. Some feel it wasn't formed well. He has concerns as to where the Task Force is going; they should look at Chariho. Look for where there is exclusion, inequity and injustice in Chariho. He noted that their March meeting video was not posted. He does not like to create problems where there aren't problems, but if there are problems, correct them. Assess the needs at Chariho. Vice Chair Giusti commented on the words she has heard being used in the community and the fact that Confederate flags are flown. These are issues at Chariho. There are lots of prevalent issues around

race and equality in our District. She suggested the Task Force have an open-ended agenda item, like Public Forum, that allows for people to talk. Bill supported Dave. There has been talk about defunding police; this is not what Chariho envisioned when they approved the Task Force. He feels they are getting off the rail. Mr. Stall is correct in calling them out on potential OMAs. Craig acknowledged a quote from Amanda Gorman and stated that they should not pretend that it is not a political discussion because the Committee is engaged in one right now. Hopkinton resident Martha Vida felt the purpose of the ARTF is to look through the lens of our learners. Cliff Heil from Hopkinton stated that racism (anti, non) are not political issues; they are human issues and how we treat others. We should influence our students to treat others good. It is frustrating to hear people making excuses. He loves the idea of the Task Force and it should be a permanent committee on a School Improvement Team. He wants it to be a safe inclusive environment and to ensure that Chariho is comfortable and welcoming. Our kids are not really exposed to different cultures. What kind of students are we hoping to send out into the world; they need to be representative of diverse cultures. Polly Hopkins stated that she emailed Ryan Callahan last August/September to ask him what the substance of the Task Force was. She asked if it was about Black Lives Matter to which he responded, "Absolutely not." This Task Force wants to discuss the murder of George Floyd and insurrection at the Capitol; these are political. It is very disheartening to hear this at a meeting. It just keeps coming back to politics. We have to work together. Chair Lyall asked that those speaking please stay focused on the agenda item which is Policy Subcommittee update. Donna disagreed with the comments made by Ms. Hopkins. She attends the meetings and those items may have been brought up quickly as topics but discussion did not continue. She does not see this as a political conversation. The group have invited the public to attend meetings. Lisa also advised all to stay focused on the agenda item. She is glad for the broad feedback. It is better to present this at an Anti-Racism Task Force meeting but she cannot let misstatements go uncorrected. There were two topics brought forth by Mr. Stall. The Anti-Racism Task Force invited the Criminal Justice program as part of research to dispel Black Lives Matter and defunding police. Saying terms does not mean you are endorsing them. endawnis advocated that everyone view the two meetings. We have talked more about these two topics tonight than we have at our meetings. Bill commented that the agenda item stated this was to provide an update; this has turned into a debate. We have a long agenda and he does not want to debate this any longer. Sara Clark requested to speak on two points stated by Ms. Hopkins that all sides need to be acknowledged. What is the other side of anti-racism? Ms. Hopkins also spoke on behalf of all parents. Please don't speak on behalf of all parents; speak for yourself. She (Ms. Clark) feels the Anti-Racism Task Force is representing all. They have her full support. If it is not germane to Chariho, it should not be discussed. That sounds white; teachers should present current event facts. Joe ended with a quote from Martin Luther King, Jr. "An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity." That is what the Anti-Racism Task Force is attempting to do. Meetings are open to the public and are posted. All are invited.

B. Rhode Island State Assessment Program Presentation – Jane Daly shared a power point on the Rhode Island State Assessment Program. She began by reviewing all of the assessments required this year. RIDE is mandating that all students participate in person. There will be no remote testing. They have extended deadlines for administration of the tests. She then explained scheduling changes where needed. There were no changes needed at the elementary level. The Middle School and High School calendars were reviewed with changes noted. As most of CALA's students are in-person, there will be no change to their calendar to accommodate testing. Bill noted his confusion as to what they are trying to accomplish. The State won't be penalizing any schools with unsatisfactory results and we can't even compare our own student results from year to year. Jane explained that the testing is required by the State and noted how the District will use this information to assist those who show learning loss or gaps in learning. We feel these tests are very valuable. We do a good job teaching our students because we use data; we can catch students if they have gaps. Bill noted his displeasure with the testing as we can't compare our scores to the rest of the states. We are one of the few districts that have been going full-time in-person. The Superintendent noted that the unfortunate thing about the state testing is the accountability assessment. We are

rolling out a new curriculum source next year so we need to know where our students need help; we want to know how well did we do so we can put in instructional help where needed. We have advocated for remote access. The accountability system has left a bad taste in our mouths; no one likes the way this is happening. Catherine questioned if there were any provisions for a child to opt out and how is the District going to respond to those parents who say they have options to opt out. Gina noted there are waivers to opt out but principals will be having one-on-one talks with those families who have concerns so they can explain our need. We are asking parents to reach out to principals before opting out. Gary noted the response makes him nervous as opting out could be highly subjective. He generally agreed with Mr. Day. Say the results show we did just as well as in the past, can we continue with this learning. If it shows students have done worse, will we be able to make adjustments come fall. Why would we change for results from a pandemic if we are a good school. Mr. Waterman thanked Bill and Gary for their comments. There have been other assessments going on and he, too, questioned the need for additional testing by the state. To date his children have missed seven instructional days for DL and his son at the Middle School will miss six more asynchronous days. Unless the School Committee waives Early Release Days on Wednesdays, he will miss 2.5 more days so, in total for the year, his son will miss 19.5 days of teacher instruction. Please revisit the half days for at least the two months of testing. The Superintendent noted that she is going to review Early Release Days at the meeting on March 23. David noted that these points are valid. Quantity of education is one part but quality is also important. Teachers are more effective if prep time is quality time. Bill wondered what students opting out will do to our test scores. He knows the state is telling us to do this but they don't know how to run any programs. We step above what the state requires. He is opposed to this as the state is wrong. Jane was thanked for her presentation.

C. 2021 School Committee Meeting Schedule (Revised) – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the revised schedule; removal of the second meeting in November per requests from Committee and community members as this is a very busy week for most.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Linda McAllister and it was

VOTED: To approve the revised 2021 School Committee Meeting Schedule. In favor: Unanimous.

D. 2022 School Committee Meeting Schedule – The Superintendent noted that as vacation schedules are required to be submitted by April 1<sup>st</sup>, it is imperative that we have a meeting schedule in place so vacations do not conflict with meeting dates. She recommended approval of the 2022 School Committee Meeting Schedule.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Linda McAllister and it was

VOTED: To approve the 2022 School Committee Meeting Schedule. In favor: Unanimous.

E. Necessity for School Construction Update – Chair Linda Lyall noted that Ned and Ryan will provide an update. She stated that it is now 8:55 PM and she would like everyone's input and for everyone to be heard so she is requesting that the public please keep comments as short as possible. Dr. Callahan stated he would try to be succinct and thanked all for sticking around and for their support. This has been a complex, evolving process with information that is not always readily available. He understands the frustration and thanked all for their patience. He reviewed highlights of the Committee's work and the process that has been followed providing an explanation for each. The Committee's focus and goal was to look at the biggest financial benefit for Chariho. The four elementary schools are old with many are close to capacity. The Committee narrowed their focus to three options; Option A is a consolidation of all four elementary schools into one school; Option B is the elimination of one elementary school and expansion of the other three and Option C would be to maintain existing buildings under the Capital Plan. The School Committee voted to explore Option A. This will involve a lot of effort to scope out and engagement of the community. He then explained the next steps in the process; work with Colliers and RGB to come up with a milestone schedule; look at what needs to be in place financially to explore more (i.e. architect phase, establish scope

and budget, etc.). It is their hope to have a full scope to present to the community in August. After that, the plan is to have a schematic design by the end of the calendar year so they have a better idea going into the next budget cycle. Legislation needs to be approved and then back to RIDE for approval. At this time a Building Committee would be formed. All this would take place in the 2022 school year. Ned added that while they have a timeline and process in place, they don't have the financial answers (i.e. sites, design, educational plan). This year's capital budget allows the School Committee to allocate funds for either newer/fewer or maintenance of the current facilities. We won't have financial information to share until we get into the design process. The Superintendent noted that there is no vote tonight on any project. State legislation requires posting for twenty days for a variance so this will be on the next agenda. A variance will give the School Committee and community time to work together. There have been numerous conversations about land. RIDE has to assess the land; it must be at fair market value or RIDE will not approve the purchase. Option A is a starting point to get community input; it may not be the ending point. Bill commented on a remark made by Ned about campus land. He hopes this is not mentioned again as he does not want to take away from the High School or Middle School. Craig requested clarification; if we go with Option A, we will have to change language in the Chariho Act about where students start school to which Jon responded that there is a provision in the Chariho Act about a student staying in the school in which he/she begins in but he is not sure how this worked with the closing of the old Ashaway School. This would not require opening up any other part of the Act. Craig then asked, if they do not get positive feedback from the community for Option A, when can they change course? Ryan replied that they can pivot at any point in time but the objective is the investment in our community. Financially it is most advantageous over time to go with Option A. If we get to a point where we feel one large school won't work, we pivot to another option that makes sense considering the age of our schools. Craig wanted to know how much will they need to spend to get to the point they want to be at by the end of August to which Ryan responded \$250,000. Craig then asked how much is refundable. Ryan explained that if they drop the project all together, he does not know but if the decision is to move forward with another option, they may be able to capture some in the reimbursement process. Craig noted that he had not heard any community members speak positive of Option A. Derek from Colliers was invited to speak. He noted he is glad to be working with Chariho and stated that Ryan is absolutely correct – an investment will be required to take us on this journey. So long as you move forward with a Stage II application to RIDE. If you forego everything, you will lose it. Donna commented that the School Committee knows that they can't do nothing as we have to do capital improvements. If we have to abandon Option A and go with Option B, we won't lose the money if we follow the milestone journey. Lisa stated that this group is very well organized and the job was well done. She talked to a sample of students (no more than a dozen) and asked their feelings about consolidation and how they felt as elementary students going to different schools. Most stated that they were overwhelmed when entering the Middle School because they did not know a lot of the students. This is an awkward time to make new friends. They also did not integrate with special needs students until they went to Middle School. The one concern they did have was they did not want longer bus rides. Lisa stated she liked their feedback and the need to know one another sooner rather than later. Craig noted that Charlestown attempted to pull out of Chariho and the one thing that scares them is changing the Chariho Act; tax equalization and Charlestown wants nothing to do with that. Bill stated that he and Craig have been involved in a number of building projects. He advised the Committee to research what worked and what didn't. Get into the history. This is the only way in hell they have a chance to sell this. There were more that didn't pass than did. Catherine commented that this presentation answered questions about cost; this is the beginning of the process. She has heard support for one bigger school. She reminded all that just because it hasn't been done before doesn't mean it can't be done. Transparency is important. They are looking for many voices to weigh in on how they want our schools to look. Georgia Ure again provided all the reasons why she does not support one large school. We are putting all our eggs in one basket. She feels there will be many unintended consequences with a factory in the field including a risk of losing all our kids at once. She doesn't want to see money spent on Option A. Lauren Cacciola noted that her job requires her to travel to different schools and she visited a large school in Connecticut. She thought the building was confusing. She also noted her concern about principals losing their jobs.

Barbara Capalbo understood what the School Committee is facing and the need for fewer schools. There wouldn't be problems with septic as noted by Ms. Ure. What she doesn't understand is why it needs to be one school. She suggested they consider two elementary schools; one on the border of Charlestown and Richmond and the other on the border of Richmond and Hopkinton. Amanda Blau was interested in a financial comparison. She would like to see the cost projected out over 5-10 years if they do not go with Option A or B and keep all four schools. She won't look backwards at what has been spent on these schools but is interested in what will the capital improvement plan look like; ultimately, what will the cost be to taxpayers. Ryan replied that they have not pulled that kind of look at projected costs besides what the engineering reports have told us. We need to ask Ned if there was maintenance of effort for the aged buildings. Ned explained that they can depreciate components which would give you an idea of cost over lifetime; kind of what the Jacobs report was about. He thinks they could come up with the cost to maintain the old compared to the cost of a new building. Derek added that he would want to do research before commenting. He could generate a report but not on the spot. Amanda noted that they have from May to August; she didn't need it immediately.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was VOTED: To extend the meeting past 10:00 PM. In favor: Callahan, Chambers, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Lyall, Macaruso, McAllister and Stall. Opposed: Day. The motion carried by a vote of 9 in favor with 1 opposed.

Virginia Stracuzzi thanked Barbara Capalbo for the recommendation of two schools and she wondered if this had ever been on the table as an option and if so, why was it not put forth. She noted a concern with safety/security with Option A and the amount of people that would be coming and going from this large building. Ryan responded that two buildings was not part of the original options. Ms. Capalbo's recommendation is excellent. Option A is a starting point but we can evolve from there. The School Committee is also concerned with the safety of our children; access is at the front of their design plan. Sylvia Thompson thanked everyone for their patience. Administration was very helpful in getting everyone on the meeting tonight. Her concerns are with the documents being used in the presentations and the process. Her first concern is with the enrollment estimates over the next five years (increase of 85 students). Clerks verify enrollment every fall. This year we lost 71 in-district students. She feels that the increase in enrollment are not students living in district but those coming from out of district. She asked the School Committee to separate out in-district students from out-of-district students. She then proceeded to discuss the process. It states in the Chariho Act that the Building Committee prepares plans, selects sites, etc. It is the Chariho Building Committee, established by voters at a regional district meeting, who does these things. The Act protects neighborhood schools; this was the 1986 bargain if they went with full regionalization. There is language in the Act that needs to be changed. She doesn't believe the School Committee has the authority to do preliminary work. She thought the voters would vote at the last public meeting. Why didn't the District establish a Building Committee or is it because you have to change the Chariho Act? You should propose this and see if voters want it. Jon Anderson stated that unfortunately Ms. Thompson does not have her facts straight. The process being used is the same process used for Campus 2010 and CALA. RIDE has promulgated regulations that have the effect of state law and are authorized by the General Assembly which exercises power over education in establishing a building committee. The building committee has to have certain members and the Chariho School Committee does have a Building Committee. The School District has to submit requests for variances and Stage I and Stage II applications. If Ms. Thompson is dissatisfied with this and wants to change it, she can file a petition with the Board of Regents. The Committee is acting in a proper manner.

#### F. FY22 Budget

1. Potential Adjustments to FY22 Budget – Superintendent Picard noted that this is an opportunity for adjustments to be made prior to adoption. Fund balance (to 2.25%) it is at \$1,216,690.67 remaining. If adjustments are made, she requested that the Committee take a short recess so Ned can recalculate figures. If there are no adjustments, she will recommend adoption of the budget.

Craig made a motion to adopt the budget. Craig was asked to rescind his motion as discussion will need to take place prior to making a motion. Craig pulled his motion. There were no motions made for adjustments to the budget.

2. Adoption of FY22 Budget – Ned reported that the total amount of reductions (including additional revenue) to date is \$707,745 which leaves the budget at \$54,704,347; an increase of 2.23%. Impact to each town is as follows: Charlestown - an increase of 1.41%, Richmond – an increase of 2.66%; and Hopkinton – an increase of 2.33%. The Superintendent recommended that the Committee adopt the FY22 budget in the amount of \$54,704,347; an overall increase of 2.23%. Craig made a motion, which was seconded by Donna, to adopt the budget. Craig noted there are all kinds of emails flying around with misinformation. Gina noted that there was one sent late this afternoon but she was in meetings and has not had a chance to review it. Barbara Capalbo questioned if there was any way now to reduce the fund balance from 2.25% to 2%. You always end up with more than that. This would be a small way to thank the people for supporting the schools. She asked if any member would make the motion to which Bill replied that he is not in favor of the reduction but he won't be supporting the budget either because of the facts and figures presented by RGB. Craig apologized to Barbara. Any other normal year he would be with her at reducing the fund balance to 2% but he can't do it this year because of the unknowns. Joe Moreau from Hopkinton noted that he is familiar with how to access Zoom and he wanted to speak on Item E but could not raise his hand. Chair Lyall asked if his comments were pertinent to the budget to which Mr. Moreau replied that he has been on the meeting since the beginning and was never recognized when he hit \*6. The Chair suggested he email his concerns to Superintendent Picard. We will be discussing this at another meeting. Mr. Moreau noted his frustration as Ms. Ure tried to present her information at the last meeting and was told she had to wait until this meeting. There is something wrong on your end as he spent over four hours and can't comment for two minutes. Jon Anderson advised the Committee that they could go back to this item after budget discussion is done if they wish to do so. Chair Lyall explained to Mr. Moreau that after the budget discussion, if the Committee approves returning to Item E, he will have an opportunity to speak.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Donna Chambers and it was VOTED: To adopt the FY22 budget in the amount of \$54,704,347; an overall increase of 2.23%. In favor: Callahan, Chambers, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Lyall, Macaruso, McAllister and Stall. Opposed: Day. The motion passed with a vote of 9 in favor with 1 opposed.

Ryan Callahan made a motion, seconded by Catherine Giusti and it was VOTED: To return to Business Item E. In favor: Callahan, Chambers, Giusti, Louzon, Lyall, Macaruso, McAllister and Stall. Opposed: Day and Liguori. The motion carried by a vote of 8 in favor with 2 opposed.

E. Necessity for School Construction Update – Mr. Moreau stated that it is his opinion that relationships will not happen in larger schools. He reflected on the close relationships his daughter and wife had while his daughter was in smaller school in Coventry. Smaller is better. He and others are against this proposal. Do what is right, not what is easy. Keep the current schools as they are. He thanked the Committee for their time and for what they do.

#### VIII. Consent Agenda Items

Chair Lyall requested items to be pulled. Craig pulled A-1 and A-2. He then acknowledged the donations and thanked the donors.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Catherine Giusti, to move the remainder of the Consent Agenda items. David noted that he had a question on one of the items. Ryan called for a point of order. There is no more discussion once a motion to move is made. The item would have to be pulled to be able to be discussed.



Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Catherine Giusti and it was VOTED: To move the remainder of the Consent Agenda Items. In favor: Unanimous.

- B. Transfers – Approved.
- C. Bill Review – Accepted.
- D. Budget Summary – None at this time.
- E. Balance Sheet – None at this time.
- F. Personnel Actions – Staff Updates provided in FYI.
- G. Permission to Issue Bids/Request Quote – None at this time.
- H. Permission to Award Contracts – Awarded the following:
  - 1. Ashaway Elementary School – Natural Gas and Utility Services – An agreement with Best Practice Energy (BPE) for a period of one (1) year, for a pilot program at Ashaway Elementary School per the memo from Ned Draper dated February 3, 2021. Legal counsel has reviewed the agreement.
- I. Home Instruction – Action taken in executive session.
- J. Grants – None at this time.
- K. Donations – Accepted the following:
  - 1. Book Club Members Maureen O’Neil, Cindy Bailey, Jane Donnelly, Jane Glander, Shirley Griffin, Bill & Flo Griffin, Larae Graham, Patty & Bill Higgins, MaryAnn Libera, Penny Damiata, Donald & Janet Smith Scholarship Donation of \$1,225.00 (collected to honor Larae Graham’s 90<sup>th</sup> birthday) to a deserving High School Student.
  - 2. Donation from the Chariho Youth Task Force of a \$450 Grant to the Diversity Book Club for the purchase of anti-racism books.
  - 3. Donation from the XQ+RI Grant (Principal Craig MacKenzie to the Diversity Book Club of funding to cover the cost of a guest author.
  - 4. Donation from S. Hagberg of two books: Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America and Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents to the Chariho High School Library.

A-1. Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Catherine Giusti and it was VOTED: To approve the Executive Session Minutes of February 9, 2021 – Approval of Executive Session Minutes of January 12, 2021. In favor: Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Macaruso, McAllister and Stall. Abstained (due to absence): Lyall. The motion carried by a vote of 9 in favor with 1 abstention.

A-2. Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was VOTED: To approve the Regular Session Minutes of February 9, 2021. In favor: Callahan, Chambers, Day, Giusti, Liguori, Louzon, Macaruso, McAllister and Stall. Abstained (due to absence): Lyall. The motion carried by a vote of 9 in favor with 1 abstention.

## IX. Reports

### A. Subcommittee Reports

- 1. Anti-Racism Task Force met on March 3, 2021. Enclosed are the approved minutes of their meeting on February 3, 2021.
- 2. Health & Wellness Subcommittee met today at 4:00 PM. Enclosed are the minutes from their meeting on December 8, 2020.

### B. Superintendent’s Report

- 1. Update on Trimester 3/Quarter 4 Registration for Learning Scenarios – The Superintendent stated that she received 25 new requests for elementary in-person learning. We should be able to accommodate all requests. There were no requests to switch to DL. There are 77 requests to return to in-person learning at the Middle School with 2 requests for DL and the High School had 75 requests for in-person learning with 8 wanting to switch to DL. The next step is to review transportation. We have heard guidance may be shifting around bus and school spacing but nothing confirmed. The number one goal is to make no changes to the schedule.

C. Coming Events – There will be a vaccination clinic for all Chariho, Ocean State and Chartwells employees at the Middle School. Joe Arsenault has done an amazing job coordinating this event. The second dose is scheduled to be administered on April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

X. School Committee Requests for Future Agenda Items or Legal Opinions

Craig requested a legal opinion in reference to language in the Chariho Act as it relates to newer/fewer. Will we have to delete or change language for Option A?

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Ryan Callahan and it was

VOTED: To request a legal opinion in reference to language in the Chariho Act as it relates to the newer/fewer initiative. Will we have to delete or change language for Option A? In favor: Unanimous.

David requested two agenda items: 1) Anti-Racism Task Force – appointing an additional School Committee liaison and discussing guidelines and instruction for this Task Force; 2) dissolve the Anti-Racism Task Force at the end of this school year (2021) and replace it with a standing subcommittee. He noted that he asked for a legal opinion on Buddhism and meditation to which Jon Anderson responded that he spoke with the Chair prior to this meeting and he will respond to both items at the convenience of the Chair. Chair Lyall noted that his second request is scheduled for discussion at the March 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

Donna, in deference to Mr. Waterman, would like a report on Early Release Days and what teachers are doing (the effectiveness and benefit of Early Release Days). Ryan clarified that this topic will be on the agenda to which Gina added that she will discuss this and ask for a recommendation if this is OK with both Donna and Ryan.

Bill noted a concern he had with the fact that the President is signing a package and money will be allocated to the reopening of schools. We have been operating full time; how many other school districts in Rhode Island have operated at the same level and quality that we have and will we be left out of this money because we have been operating full time. He does not want the District to be penalized. He has no faith in the State of Rhode Island.

XI. Adjournment

Ryan Callahan made a motion, seconded by Craig Louzon and it was

VOTED: To adjourn at 10:33 PM. In favor: Unanimous.

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Donna J. Sieczkiewicz, Clerk