BOE Regular Meeting
March 09, 2020 7:00 PM
PPMS Library

1. Call to Order
Sean Nugent; Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05PM. Other BOE members present: Charles Raymond, Dan Harris, George Carver, Ed Gauthier, and Deborah Burke-Grabarek. Cindy Luty was excused. Also present: Dr. Seitsinger; Superintendent, John Spang; Director of Finance, and Gloria Homiski; Recording Secretary.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Comment
Melissa Lennon: 1. Melissa requested an update on MERS whenever possible and appropriate. Sean Nugent responded accordingly. Parties resolved the issue. 2. As a parent, tax payer and educator, she is concerned about spending too much money on a watered down science lab just because it is what we can afford. 3. Do high school enrollment numbers affect MBR? She would like to know the impact of adding another high school choice. Kids are all unique and should be able to choose the school that meets their individual needs.

   Moved, to take the agenda out of order to discuss item 8b Student Member Recommendation. Burke-Grabarek/Gauthier. Unanimous. Motion Carries.

Dr. Seitsinger introduced Norah Gallagher to the Board. Norah is an 11th grade Preston student at NFA. She is a student athlete and community volunteer with a 4.2 grade point average. Dr. Seitsinger and Deborah Burke-Grabarek met with both Norah and Zach Ruta; another 11th grade Preston student at NFA. Zach is also a student/athlete in high standing at the academy. If the Board is in agreement, both students will serve as student liaisons to the Board of Education.

   Moved, to recommend that both Norah Gallagher and Zach Ruta be invited to serve as student liaisons to the BOE. Burke-Grabarek/Raymond. Unanimous. Motion Carries.

The students will prepare a short report to be reviewed with Dr. Seitsinger prior to each meeting.

   Moved, to take the agenda out of order to discuss item 5 Recognition. Burke-Grabarek/Gauthier. Unanimous. Motion Carries.

On February 20th one of our school bus drivers had a medical emergency while driving along his route. Five middle school students and nine elementary school students were on the bus. The older students did a great job assisting the younger students and one middle school student; Ava Boenig, called 911. The driver is feeling much better now and asked Dr. Seitsinger to read a prepared statement before handing out flowers to the middle school students present.

   Moved, to take the agenda out of order to discuss item 6 Presentation. Burke-Grabarek/Raymond. Unanimous. Motion Carries.
Dr. Seitsinger introduced Sean McKenna; Superintendent of Griswold Public Schools. Mr. McKenna then introduced his high school Principal; Erin Palonen, his Board Chair, and a Board member. Preston is considering Griswold as a high school option for our students. Mrs. Palonen stated that if our students did decide to attend Griswold, they would be warmly welcomed and would feel completely included.

Mrs. Palonen is a lifelong Griswold resident and attended Griswold schools from grade K through 12. After college she returned to Griswold to teach, coach and later become an administrator. She presented a powerpoint to the BOE. Griswold High School has a “Vision of the Graduate.” Their goal is for all students to become effective communicators, resilient problem solvers, critical thinkers, and engaged citizens. Griswold is a campus, with the elementary, middle and high school all on one property. Staff and students have a mutual respect for one another. AP classes as well as a hands on manufacturing pipeline initiative are offered. All students are required to put in 40 hours of community service prior to graduation. Various athletics and numerous clubs and activities are promoted on campus.

Mr. McKenna stated that Griswold High School could comfortably take in 10-15 Preston students a year. Griswold has a District Partnership Advisory Council where sending towns can provide management input to Griswold. Griswold has their own speech pathologists and para-educators.

Discussion followed. The Board thanked Griswold for their presentation and stated that they would like to further investigate the possibility of incorporating Griswold and North Stonington as high school choices for Preston students.

4. Consent Agenda
   The consent agenda was accepted as submitted.

5. Recognition
   See above.

6. Presentation
   See above.

7. Principals' Reports
   Dr. Davis-Tomczuk stated that parent/teacher conferences were held last week. Approximately 40% of parents from each grade level were in attendance.

   A vaping assembly will be held at PPMS on 3-10-2020 at 1PM. Students will be informed of the dangers of vaping.

   A Learn, Laugh and Let Go Assembly will be held on March 26th. This assembly will focus on engaging students in coping skills.

   March 13th will be a full PD day where the entire District will participate in Social Emotional Learning (SEL).

   The Staff/Parent/Student Basketball Game raised $1800.00 to be used for the 8th grade trip.

   A teacher resigned from PPMS. All faculty and staff have stepped up and are working together to do what is needed until a long term substitute is hired.
Mr. Bernier stated that last week’s 3rd grade Author’s Chair was a huge success. The 3rd graders talked about whether or not it was better to be a parent or a student.

About 70% of all parents attended parent/teacher conferences last week at PVMS.

The DARE program is wrapping up for the year and Trooper Bettini will be enjoying pizza and a movie with grade 5 students at Lisbon Landing.

The 4th grade is in the midst of Violence is Preventable (VIP).

With the help of PTO, PVMS is decorated for Dr. Seuss day.

Ellie Hornsby, a first grader at PVMS who is deeply interested in space travel, hopes to go on a future moon expedition. Her u-tube post was viewed thousands of times. Mr. Bernier shared it with the Board.

8. Superintendent’s Report/Update

Dr. Seitsinger acknowledged Dr. William Haffner-Jones for his donation of a 1916 victrola to PPMS. Dr. Jones plans to refurbish another victrola this Spring which will then be donated to PVMS.

The Eastern Regional Band is well represented by Preston students this year.

The PPMS Girls’ Basketball Team won their conference game after an undefeated season.

Dr. Seitsinger participated in an all call with the Governor’s office today at 5pm. The topic of discussion was COVID-19. There are currently 2 confirmed cases in CT. Fifty-six tests have been given. There are a total of 1200 test kits in CT at this time. A unified command protocol is in effect. Communication is the #1 priority. It is recommended that no large group meetings be held (more than 100 people). Preston will hold a safety meeting tomorrow at 4pm in order to discuss and plan for a disruption in our daily schedules, etc.

Dr. Seitsinger created a facebook page. The page currently has over 200 members. He hopes to post necessary information for the public and use it as a communication tool as needed.

Science Lab Update: The Board intended to spend $225,000 to $250,000 on this project. The bids all came in well over that amount. The architect is re-working the drawings and hopes to create a $110,000 reduction. Preston will then assess the quality of what they will get for that amount of money.

We are waiting for Dylan McGuire, Eagle Scout, to send examples of the plaque to be installed by the track, as well as the wording that will be engraved on the plaque.

Dr. Seitsinger has a draft letter, as well as a red lined contract, ready to send out to NFA for their consideration.

The 4th grade state fair will be held at PVMS on 3-27-2020 at 1:30PM. The teachers wanted to invite the BOE to attend.
The Board must vote annually to ensure that we are following the rules and regulations of the state’s healthy food certification statements.

1. Moved, 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, 2019, through June 30, 2020. 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, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or by non-school organizations and groups. Raymond/Harris. Unanimous. Motion Carries.

2. Moved, that 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 the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. "Location" means where the event is being held. Raymond/Harris. Unanimous. Motion Carries.

3. Moved, that the board of education 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 the 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. Raymond/Harris. Unanimous. Motion Carries.

FY21 Budget: The proposed budget currently has a 4.9% increase over the FY20 Budget. This increase is driven by health insurance costs and secondary education tuition costs. This year the Board used a modified Zero Based Budgeting system. Dr. Nugent asked that the Board review the documents and come back to the Special BOE Meeting on 3-16-2020 with questions or suggestions. A second Special BOE Meeting is scheduled for 3-23-2020. The Board will be expected to vote on the budget at that meeting.

Dr. Seitsinger stated that there are no new initiatives in the FY21 Budget. If cuts are made, people and programs will need to be cut.
9. Public Comment
None.

10. Adjournment

Moved, to adjourn the meeting at 9:30PM. Nugent/Gauthier. Unanimous.
Motion Carries.