



## TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

### VISION STATEMENT

*To represent education at its best, preparing each student for an ever-changing society, and becoming a full community of learning where excellence is achieved through each individual's success.*

### AGENDA

August 26, 2020

7:30 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83627848717?pwd=NVlvNXAzTU4YTJEOW55Y2ZrVGJGdz09>

Meeting ID: 836 2784 8717

Passcode: 5Ssgf6

One tap mobile

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Meeting ID: 836 2784 8717

Passcode: 771364

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83627848717?pwd=NVlvNXAzTU4YTJEOW55Y2ZrVGJGdz09>

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Minutes of August 5, 2020

D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2 minute limit)

*The members of the Tolland Board of Education welcome members of the public to share their thoughts and ideas at this time. When appropriate to do so, members of the Board and the administration may respond to comments during "Points of Information". However, in consideration of those in attendance and in an effort to proceed in a timely manner, follow-up discussion may need to take place outside of the meeting setting.*

E. CORRESPONDENCE

F. POINTS OF INFORMATION

G. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT – Alexandra Costa and Simar Grewal

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

H.1 Reopening Report (no attachment)

I. COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

J. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

K. BOARD ACTION

K.1 Policy 1030 -Non-Discrimination

K.2 Civility Policy

L. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2-minute limit)

*Comments must be limited to items on this agenda.*

M. POINTS OF INFORMATION

N. FUTURE

Dr. Willett will set up:

- School rounds / tours / starting with TIS (briefings/tours/debriefings)
- Mental Health Services Initiatives (presentation and discussion)
- School Bus Stop Safety (presentation)
- Portrait of a Graduation / Visioning (presentation and discussion of initiatives)
- Pathways and Lighthouse Programs
- Understanding By Design (presentation and discussion)
- Regionalization (presentation and discussion)
- Board of Education Goal Setting (working session and establishment of goals)

O. NEW BUSINESS

P. ADJOURNMENT

## TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

### ZOOM Meeting

SPECIAL MEETING – August 5, 2020

Members Present: Ashley Lundgren, Chair; Christina Plourd, Vice Chair; Tony Holt, Secretary; Renie Besaw, Christine Griffin, Kate Howard-Bender, Jacob Marie, Dana Philbin

Members Absent: Karen Moran

Administrators Present: Dr. Walter Willett, Superintendent of Schools

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Lundgren called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

B. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

B.1 Tolland Public Schools Reopening (no enclosure)

Dr. Willett explained that messaging was posted on the Superintendent's Blog and in the last couple of information blasts asking people to review the Tolland Pandemic Continuity Learning Plan (TPCLP). The latest version was the one presented to the Board on July 22<sup>nd</sup> and submitted to the state on July 24<sup>th</sup>. Subsequent to this the state changed its requirements via Addendum 4. It provided an option for districts to begin the school year as partial in-person. Three other addenda were released that provide information on pre-school class, special education, and parent/guardian options for temporary online learning. The latter emphasized that online learning was to be temporary and it could be revoked by the state at any time during the academic year.

Dr. Willett addressed and reviewed Addendum 4 [Addendum to Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together]: Interim Guidance for Decision-Making in Connecticut Schools During COVID-19. which includes new thresholds (July 27<sup>th</sup>). In summary for the state thresholds for a county, a situation with less than 10 new cases/100K population (7 day average) is a "low condition" and favors in-person learning (all-in). A situation with 10-25 new cases/100k population (7 day average) is a "moderate condition" and favors a hybrid model (partial in –person). If there are 25+ new cases/100K population (7 day average), the state considers this a "high condition" and recommends a remote learning model.

Dr. Willett will update the TPCLP to match with the state thresholds as well as the new CIAC guidelines and it should be available at the next Board meeting.

Tolland has two options: in-person or partial in-person. The state will not allow districts to do remote learning as a starting point without the authorizations/approvals of three state entities. If a district starts as partial in-person and transitions to in-person within a specified period of time, the state will consider the district to have started in-person.

Dr. Willett recommended that discussions take place this evening about in what condition to open Tolland schools: in-person or partial in-person. Additionally, if any calendar modifications should be made to help the district adjust and prepare to start in

either of the noted conditions. Ms. Lundgren commented that she would like to have an in-person start with half days to allow time for staff and students to adjust.

Mr. Holt commented that the data presented seems to suggest that with the current conditions in Tolland County that it is leaning toward the all-in start but there are discussions about the hybrid model. He asked Dr. Willett what is leading him away from the all-in start. Dr. Willett explained that many of the surrounding districts are considering a hybrid model and following a state guideline that districts within regions/counties be consistent. Ultimately, it is the operational decision of each district's superintendent but it is important to get feedback from the Board and the community. Dr. Willett noted that a survey went out this afternoon to learn people's preferences for the school opening model. Thus far, 207 parent/guardian responses provided regarding their children have been received within the past 2 hours. The results are as follows: 42.5% start in-person, 42% start partial in-person (hybrid), 15.5% start remotely. Given the authorizations necessary for Tolland to start remotely the latter is not a viable option at this time. Dr. Willett noted that he expects many more responses to the survey will be received.

Mr. Holt commented in regard to the neighboring communities and the state's recommendation that they act as a group as much as possible. He asked Dr. Willett if he is hearing from other superintendents if they are making the decision based on neighboring districts or if they see something different. He would like to know what the metric was that leaned toward a hybrid model despite the thresholds. Dr. Willett explained that it began with the recommendation for regions to move together and then the data that started to emerge from health districts. Dr. Willett cited some concerns and a belief that a latent wave is possible from summer activities. Test results take time to get back and then tracing needs to take place. In turn, there is a sense that districts do not know where they really are in terms of the numbers. A wave of statistics may come through at the time school is scheduled to begin in the fall. Thus, districts are considering a more protective starting position. A partial in-person plan allows districts to maintain a certain level of cleanliness and cohort separation which cannot be done in the all-in model. Mr. Holt commented that he can understand where this has merit but if the data is not trusted now to make decisions given the metrics and thresholds, what will change the confidence in the data in 4-5 weeks? He expressed concern about stepping away from the thresholds. With CT now in a good place, would this not be the best time to try to get students all-in? Dr. Willett explained that he believes there is an expectation that health districts will have greater coordination over the next few weeks and they will build capacity.

Ms. Howard-Bender commented that in regard to reopening parents, staff, teachers, and administrators are in a close to impossible position in regard to the decision of what to do next. Parents need to return to work and have their students get back to learning but parents are afraid for their students. Ms. Howard-Bender would like school to start partial in-person. As she sees more cases coming out she is becoming more afraid. She is worried about looking at only data and added that they need to look at the region. It is a complex situation. The biggest question is, "is this safe?" at the most basic level.

Ms. Lundgren commented that she knows at some point they will be attending school partial in-person or remotely but she wonders if they can get some day in before that happens.

Mr. Marie commented that it is a difficult issue. Good conditions exist right now and this was confirmed by Dr. Fauci. Mr. Marie believes current data supports some type of in-person attendance and there is a good chance there will be a second wave during the winter months. Online remote learning is not ideal and partial in-person is likely better. Ideally, he would like to students to get in as much in-person learning as possible. Mr. Marie is in favor of students having half days during the first week to allow for a period of adjustment.

Ms. Griffin commented that it is a tough decision and interesting to see the rather even survey responses (in –person and partial in-person). The data supports the in-person model right now albeit that could change. She would like to see school start in-person so they can get students started and caught up from last year. They could move to the partial in-person model when needed. It is important to get students in school. Everyone is concerned with health and safety, as they should be, but she believes with all of the protocols Dr. Willett has put in place at the schools that students should be able to attend in-person until the numbers say they cannot do so. At that time, they can switch to partial in-person. Ms. Griffin agrees that the first week back should be half days.

Ms. Plourd clarified that the decision on the reopening model is that of the superintendent. Dr. Willett confirmed this. He added that it is important to know the thoughts of the staff, Board, and community. The decision should not be made in isolation but in support of those who live here, work here, and are in public roles but whatever decision is made, a proportion of people will understandably feel it should go the other way. Ms. Plourd commented that she has always advocated for students to go back to school in-person and it is why she asked Dr. Willett to form the reopening committee. She believes everyone should have the option for remote learning – it would create a balance. Essential workers depend on schools to be open so they can go to work and their students can be educated. In her mind the partial in-person or remote options would be the "death of the working mother". She believes they will see a drastic drop in enrollment when parents seek out other options for their students. Ms. Plourd advocates for in-person with a right to choose out of school online. In regard to the partial in-person, the students on the off days will be in another circle when parents go to work. This will make the circle bigger. If they are going to keep the numbers low, masks need to be worn and the circle kept small.

Ms. Besaw commented that when thinking about health one leans in one direction and when thinking about education one leans in another. At the end of the day, she is in support of students returning to school. It is their best opportunity for education. Remote learning, while everyone tried hard and put together the best program they could, time was lost just due to the nature of the situation. Currently students have the opportunity to return to school and Ms. Besaw believes they should take advantage of that. They do need to prepare to go partial in-person or remote but there is a window

now for students to return to school. If there is a problem she is in support of shifting gears to keep in mind the safety of students and staff.

Ms. Lundgren asked Dr. Willett if parents opt in to remote learning rather than a full day what the procedure will be. Dr. Willett explained that the conditions the pandemic has necessitated require the district needs to be flexible. With the terminology of "remote" and "temporary" in the language used in Addendum 4 the state has made it clear that the intention is not to have students stay home permanently. The in-person model needs to have options to support students in a temporarily remote situation. This will be done via items such as the classroom cameras and other equipment. It will be about being able to respond and provide a quality education under these conditions. There will always be some remote learners even with the all in-person model. Dr. Willett explained that if they are in the partial in-person model the technologies that support remote learners will support the partial in-person model as well. When students are home they are still participating in class, just remotely. In regard to buses, there will be "A day" and "B day" runs.

Ms. Howard-Bender commented that the new survey thus far has a response rate of less than 10%. She knows Dr. Willett will look at the responses when deciding what is best for the district. She sees how to open schools as a massive choice including the choice of utilizing resources. Resources include stuff as well as time, energy, and cognitive instances. How should the district spend its energy, time, and resources in the last couple of weeks before school starts? Should it be spent making virtual, extended, and remote learning the best it can be and in the meantime working on efforts on at-home learning? She added that she knows many fathers who work at home with their students. Ms. Howard-Bender commented that the other way to spend the time is by ordering stuff, coming up with protocols, and worrying about ppe and social distancing. Then how long will this last? They do not know. She wants them to be cognizant that the data looks good today but how will they get past the idea that virtual learning was not great so it never will be? Education professionals should be trusted to do what they can do to make it as good as possible. She has a lot of faith in them and the community coming together to support working families.

Ms. Griffin inquired how students in K-5 will be supported in the hybrid plan Wednesday – Friday. If their parents are home and working, they are holding the students' hands to ensure they are where they are supposed to be. This is in regard to the middle and high school students as well. How will the district ensure students are where they should be? Will this fall on parents and what kind of support will be provided to them if they cannot be there during the school day 3 days a week? Dr. Willett explained that the responsibility will fall on the parents/guardians when students are remote learning. In the plan they are trying to set up Community Education Support Groups (CESGs) and recruit point people who are willing to volunteer in the community to coordinate. The district will help support these groups which will help parents/guardians work with each other to provide a co-op for support. It works best if the students are in the same grade or on the same teams. Dr. Willett explained that given how people congregate outside of school cohorts they function for contact tracing as much as for mitigation. That said, ultimately, particularly for the younger students it falls back on the parents/guardians. He is looking at options for kindergarten students and special education students with at

least 75% of their IEPs dictating that they work with special services. Some groups, regardless of model, would be in-person every day because they are the most vulnerable.

Mr. Holt commented that he likes that the plan articulates and fleshes out all 3 options. It assumes and prepares districts for the reality that over the next few months to a year that a shift will likely need to happen. When talking about this decision, which is the superintendent's, the data, information, and the opinion of the Board provides cover fire. It is the decision of how school will start. Mr. Holt added that even with the all in-person model the role of the parent is critical. Parents will be responsible to ensure students are healthy before going to school and parents will need to adjust their schedules when students need to be kept home. While the district can do all it can to make it easier, the community needs to come together to make this work.

Ms. Lundgren commented in regard to using time to ensure that the partial in-person programs are set up and ready for success. If students return all in-person she wants to ensure that they are prepared to switch to partial in-person if it becomes necessary. Something needs to be done to ensure the students are in class and the model works.

Ms. Besaw commented on accountability. It will be important for the partial in-person model. One of her greatest concerns is the younger students unless a parent is a teacher and even then the parent/guardian may need to teach a class. There are 3 plans but it seems that there is reluctance to use the model where the district currently fits. If so, why have the plan if it is not going to be used? While no one is saying it will not be used, she wants the best to be done to support student learning and to the degree possible support catching up from lost time last year. Ms. Besaw believes the all in-person model would tremendously benefit the students and believes they should give this a try. She understands however that it is not an easy decision.

Ms. Lundgren commented on the mental health of students. Some need to have their peers around. At least the partial in-person model allows for these relationships.

Ms. Philbin commented that the goal is to get students back to school in whatever capacity possible. It is important to be cognizant that some of the schools do not afford the opportunity to follow social distancing guidelines due to class sizes, hallways sizes, and similar items. Partial in-person is a good way to attempt to have a balance. Being cognizant of students' mental health is important but overall the goal is safety. Today's meeting has 9 Board members and if they cannot get 9 people into a room safely and/or effectively then how can they expect parents to feel confident about sending their students to a classroom with 10, 15, or 25 students. This is something they need to be cognizant of. If they do the all in-person or the partial in-person model they need to ensure teachers have ample time to prepare as well as the resources and tools to succeed. One needs to consider student and staff safety. It is a tough decision. Ms. Philbin appreciates this discussion. It allows families to be informed so they can make their decisions.

Dr. Willett noted that they are working on a childcare program and staff will be surveyed about their need for childcare and if they would avail themselves of district childcare.

Dr. Willett explained that there is reason to feel good about how things are going in CT. It is understandable, however, that teachers and staff are hearing news, health information, items about youth sports, and a variety of other items and are likely feeling a bit of trepidation about being in a classroom of 22-27 students in the all in-person model. Six feet of separation will not be possible and is why they will rely on ppe and logistical changes such as the lunch waves. Some may feel more comfortable starting partial –in person, seeing how it goes, and then if there isn't a surge going to all in-person. Dr. Willett will have some survey data on this in the next few days.

Dr. Willett explained that regardless of model a parent/guardian has the right to have their student do temporary remote learning. The district's ability to provide this remote learning is one of the considerations that will make parents comfortable with choosing this option. Also, parents/guardians, knowing that a district has the ability to have students remote in, may feel more free to be upfront that they need to quarantine, or keep a child home that isn't feeling well. The district's ability to do this will help mitigate the numbers and keep everyone up front about situations. People's understanding will be appreciated as the district starts remote learning. The district will provide a quality remote education program.

Mr. Marie asked Dr. Willett to speak to when the Board may again meet in-person. Dr. Willett explained that ultimately this may be a Board decision but sees some wisdom in waiting until school is underway before meeting in-person because so much will need to be considered. He added that they would not have access to the municipal buildings.

Ms. Griffin asked for clarification. If school is all in-person, do parents have the option to enroll students in the hybrid option? Dr. Willett responded that currently they could not do so. The parent/guardian would opt into the remote learning model. Ultimately, the parent/guardian makes the decision within the options the school provides and that are allowed by the state. The state position appears to be that if there is concern a parent/guardian may choose to have a student learn remotely for a time period and then send them back in-person later provided that option is available. The state's expectation is that students are not in the remote model the entire time.

Ms. Plourd asked Dr. Willett when he expects to make the final decision. Dr. Willett responded that it will be made by the end of the Board meeting on August 12<sup>th</sup>. He wants to ensure he has feedback from all of the stakeholders. That said, Dr. Willett noted the caveat that the state sent an e-mail this week asking for the information by Friday. The state then communicated that it wanted the information by the prior Wednesday. In turn, a temporary communication was sent but the state knows the districts will resubmit.

Mr. Holt commented that in the interest of ensuring they are providing clear information to Dr. Willett does the Board need to vote or take a poll either tonight or on August 12<sup>th</sup>? A discussion took place regarding taking a straw poll.



A straw poll was taken to provide guidance to Dr. Willett:

	In-person	Not in-person	No response /technical issue
Ms. Besaw	x		
Ms. Griffin	x		
Mr. Holt	x		
Ms. Howard-Bender		x	
Ms. Lundgren	x		
Mr. Marie	x		
Ms. Philbin			x
Ms. Plourd	x		

- B.2 Tolland Public Schools 2020-2021 School Calendar (no enclosure)  
Dr. Willett reviewed the calendar options (prototypes)

Prototypes/Calendar Options (239 responses)

	Start date	End date	Response	notes
P1	9/8	6/15	15.1%	Early release days as specified in original calendar
P2	9/8	6/15	44.4%	Early release every Wednesday
P3	9/1	9/9	20.5%	Early release every Wednesday
P3a	9/1	9/9	14.6%	Early release days as specified in the original calendar
Original calendar (2020/21)			5.4%	Approved by the Board in the spring

Ms. Lundgren asked where the staff is on this item. Dr. Willett explained that data will be collected this week and he will have a quantitative response from staff. Qualitatively he understands many are in favor of option P2.

Ms. Griffin asked if they start on September 8<sup>th</sup> if this will give staff 10 prep days rather than 6. Also, if they have the hybrid model, will half days be needed on Wednesdays? Dr. Willett explained that the state went from 180 required days to 177. This provided an option to have additional days for teacher prep. He is still working on this. Right now the teachers would have the 24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup> for preparation. The rest of

the days teachers would have an opportunity to digest all of the information. In regard to if the half days would be necessary in the partial in-person model, Dr. Willett believes they are whether the model is all in-person, partial in-person, or online/remote. Ms. Griffin explained her only concern about starting on September 8<sup>th</sup> is that students have been out since March and they do not know what will happen in a month or two. The quicker they can get students back to school the better they may be in keeping them in school longer but she understands it makes sense for teachers to have an extra 4 days to prepare.

Mr. Marie commented that the September 8<sup>th</sup> start date allows more time to distribute ppe. He asked when ppe will be distributed to staff and students. Dr. Willett responded that the ppe is supposed to arrive to the district in about 4 days. The district is reviewing distribution paradigms and the parent/guardian survey asks how they would like the district to approach this as well. Mr. Marie commented that he sees the merit with having a September 1<sup>st</sup> start date. Conditions are favorable now and no one knows when the vaccine will be available. That said, he wants to take into consideration what teachers and parents want.

Ms. Plourd noted that the data being presented this evening is not an adequate reflection of what the public is feeling. It is a very small snapshot. She is leaning toward September 1<sup>st</sup>. The earlier students return to school the better. If she were to decide now she would lean toward the original calendar and is slightly disappointed that they are not voting on this this evening. She believes parents are looking for the start date.

Ms. Lundgren asked if they started earlier on perhaps September 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>, if they could be half days for that week so everyone can adjust. If they start September 8<sup>th</sup> and do half days then they would already be a week behind. Dr. Willett responded that he believes staff would appreciate any half days. The Wednesdays throughout the year are crucial and he thinks there would be support for half days during the first week.

Mr. Holt commented that Policy 1360 requires the Board to review this item over two Board meetings before voting. He asked if they could do the half days being discussed and/or the September 8<sup>th</sup> start and still meet the educational requirements in terms of time given by the state. Dr. Willett responded that they can do the half days on Wednesdays and during the first week. The typical school day is approximately 6.5 hours. With 143 days at 6.5 hours the district would have 929 hours. The requirement is 900 hours within 177 days. Mr. Holt confirmed that Dr. Willett's preference is P2. Dr. Willett confirmed at this time, without any additional information from the state or about the condition of COVID, P2 would be most well received and have viability.

Ms. Howard-Bender asked Mr. Holt what people have communicated via e-mail. Mr. Holt responded that he did not collate the responses given that Correspondence is not on this evening's agenda. It will be available for next week's meeting.

Ms. Howard-Bender recommended having September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> as half days. September 4<sup>th</sup> would be a day for staff to review the week. A full start would take place the following week. Dr. Willett commented that they would not likely have any negative feedback on this from staff.

Ms. Besaw commented that she likes the half days to start and a September 1<sup>st</sup> start date. The latter may provide flexibility in the calendar later if it is determined that they need to have additional days off during the year similar to what happened for the Memorial Day holiday. Perhaps students will need to be quarantined before the holidays so they can spend time with their families. In regard to early release every Wednesday, going from 180 days to 177 they are losing 3 days and there are now 29 proposed half days which equals another 13 days of school. Ms. Besaw explained they may be in a hybrid or remote model where they may lose a little as well. She would like to discuss a compromise of perhaps having early release every other Wednesday. Dr. Willett explained that the prototypes were in the original TPS PCLP (Tolland Public School Pandemic Continuity of Learning Plan) which is where he started with these options but elements being discussed can be incorporated. In some studies a 7% response rate is considered workable and so far the surveys have a significantly higher response rate of parents, which will represent multiple children, in the short time it has been posted. By the next meeting a lot of data from the survey will be available and he will provide further information.

Ms. Philbin commented that having students return and consideration of mental health are aspects of this but they need to do it appropriately and arm the educators with the tools and resources needed since they are tasked with educating the students. Classrooms will look different and educators need time to see what it will look like. They need to be armed with what is needed to run the classroom, adjust, and adapt to help the overall success. The September 8<sup>th</sup> start date will give them time to review protocols and other items. They owe it to the staff to provide ample time to prepare and educate themselves so they can execute in whatever capacity is needed during the school year.

Ms. Griffin commented that a teacher friend explained that the first week of school will be a learning curve for all teachers. It will be a week to reflect, respond, and restructure. Having half days on the first 3 days and giving teachers the opportunity to reflect, respond, and restructure would be a good compromise. What better way to learn what is going to work than by doing it for a couple of hours a day? She believes Ms. Howard-Bender's idea is a good one to consider as a compromise.

Mr. Marie commented that he likes starting with half days.

Ms. Lundgren commented that she likes the idea of having half days on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> with September 4<sup>th</sup> as a day for teachers to reflect, respond, and restructure. She would like this option as she believes it will benefit the community.

Dr. Willett clarified that he will need to negotiate with the teachers' bargaining unit with respect to contract in regard to the number of days and the state is allowing 177 days which provides a leeway of additional days. Right now, August 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> is the typical convocation. He understands the request is for a couple of instructional days followed by a professional development day. Thus August 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> would be the typical convocation; August 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> may be additional prep and training followed by school days (half days) and then a teacher day on September 4 if the start date were

September 1. Dr. Willett asked if they would take 1 of the 3 days the state has granted and he would speak to the staff about the idea of September 4<sup>th</sup> as a reflection and restructuring day with no students. Ms. Lundgren confirmed this to be true. It would be an extra day for the Labor Day holiday weekend.

#### C. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Sarah Vale Da Serra, 41 Nedwied Road, commented that she is a mother and staff member. They are still only weeks away but this meeting is being held via Zoom but they expect students and staff to go in full time. She thanked Dr. Willett for acknowledging the staff and their concerns; however, she commented, "and I apologize ahead of time but I am about to throw you under the bus". Ms. Vale Da Serra explained that part of her job is as an ADA para she takes data all day long amongst a million other things. She addressed Dr. Willett, "As an adult, as a superintendent you are aware of the reasons why you wear ppe. You are aware of the ramifications of contracting COVID and spreading it. That being said, in a 10 minute span while on this meeting you touched your face mask 16 times and removed your face mask from your face twice in order to touch your face directly. We are asking that children in 6.5 hours of learning have hands off, no touching, no sharing of materials but as adults we cannot adhere to that ourselves." Ms. Vale Da Serra commented that staff has always needed parents. There has not been any change with the pandemic. Parents need to step up. While they have ridden the health bubble for a while they are slowly watching the numbers get worse and the safety net is shrinking. She is in favor of a partial September 8<sup>th</sup> opening with half days to start in order to reflect, respond, and restructure. They are being careful with student and staff health and are preparing for a most likely virtual situation in the future. They are training staff and when a staff member or parent becomes positive there will be a mass pull out of students. As a parent, once she hears there is 1 COVID case in school her "kids are out" and she is sure many other parents agree.

Amy Raccagni, 21 Woodfields Drive, commented that she is a paraeducator at TIS going into her 14<sup>th</sup> year. She is in favor of a start date of September 8<sup>th</sup> but likes Ms. Howard-Bender's suggestion. Ms. Raccagni feels they need to have half days to acclimate. She will need to practice wearing a face mask for 6 hours a day and will also need to wear a face shield. Staff needs time to reevaluate and reassess at the end of the day. Half days provide this opportunity. If Dr. Willett thinks they will not be 100% ready with all of the ppe and safety measures until September 8<sup>th</sup>, she implored that the Board listen to him. She works with students in math and reading groups at a table and is concerned if she will have protective plastic dividers and if more time is needed for this in the classroom. Additionally, she works in crowded classrooms of 25 people in a building that was originally a middle school. It was never built to furnish or house 25 students in a classroom plus her and 2 other adults. They will not be able to space out 6' apart. Ms. Raccagni appreciates everything said today and knows how much work this took. She added that she appreciates half days.

Maureen Thurz, 36 Summerwood Ridge, commented that she is a paraeducator at TMS. She thinks September 8<sup>th</sup> is a better bet for everyone to be prepared. She also asked the Board to consider the staff's feelings and opinions on this since they will be in the front line. From a personal perspective, she would like the partial in-person model. She

has two children with health issues. If she brings COVID home to them she would feel so guilty. If they start slowly and see what is coming they will have a better way to trace if needed. If every child is there, there is almost no way to do tracing at that point especially since testing is taking so long.

Liz Costa, 54 Josiah Lane, thanked everyone and appreciated the input. She believes they need to listen to the 3 paraeducators who just spoke and take into consideration all of the stakeholders (students, staff, parents). As just noted, the classrooms are very small and they cannot socially distance 6' apart or even 3-4' apart. She encouraged the Board to look at this and go into a classroom that is set up for 25 students, put on their masks, and spend some time in the room. She encouraged them to bring different devices as well since that is what is going to end up happening when they go home. Ms. Costa commented that the question of testing is a concern for her. Her son took a test and it took 15 days to get the results back. He went to Maine and got the results back in 3 days. CT is pretty slow which will add to difficulties with contact tracing. Add to that, the students at UCONN who will be tested as well and this will back things up even further. She questions then if a student has a cold or a slight fever that has nothing to do with COVID but the parent wants to get them tested and they are now out of school 10-12 days waiting for a test. They will end up being in a situation where they are not learning anyway. Ms. Costa encouraged the Board to go with either September 1<sup>st</sup> or September 8<sup>th</sup>, she does not care about the date, but definitely the half day situation Ms. Howard-Bender suggested and partial in-person.

Kate Vallo, 80 Tolland Green, thanked the Board for their time and the work that has been put in. As many members stated this is somewhat of an impossible situation to be in. It is a very difficult decision. Ms. Vallo encouraged the Board to take their roles as representatives seriously. It concerns her a bit that they chose to take a straw poll prior to hearing all of the data from the staff and the community. She recognizes that everyone is working to understand all of the elements but this data is fresh and in the moment takes the temperature of where people are right now is valuable and important. As has been seen during the pandemic things change rapidly. Ms. Vallo asked that the Board listen to the staff and the community and empower Dr. Willett to do the same and feel he has the full support of the Board moving forward.

Darlene Eichacker, 86 Fox Ridge Lane, commented that she is an ADA paraeducator. She is really concerned about the special needs students returning to school and has no idea how the mask situation is going to work. Connecticut is doing well right now but the numbers are ramping up everywhere and she does not understand why when the numbers were lower in March they were all out and now they are all in. She would like the September 8<sup>th</sup> opening date (or later) with some type of hybrid situation because going in slowly with half days to try and see how this is working would be better than nothing. She is really concerned about her own safety and health. She added there are so many concerns.

Ashley Oldham, 35 Stuart Drive, thanked the Board for its work and spoke in support of the partial in-person model. As a former teacher, as a teacher educator, and as someone who does educational research she thinks the most prudent way forward is to be confident in where CT is right now but to lead with caution and a more proactive

preventative model. Let students and teachers get comfortable. Let students begin to learn where more social distancing is possible. Use this data to inform. Otherwise they are doing database decision making but in the wrong order. Ms. Oldham would prefer 4 weeks in to say, "Let's kick it back into full than after 4 weeks say wow we have been a part of creating more infection in our part of the state". She understands the challenges but if there is not a partial in-person model, despite her being a public educator, she will keep her children home. She noted that she does not want them to miss out on the options. Kids being in classrooms that have less density is wise and the data is needed. The data will not be available until students return. She wants to lead with caution and walk it back to full if needed.

#### D . ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Besaw motioned to adjourn the meeting 9:42 p.m.

Ms. Howard-Bender seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Pascuzzi  
Clerk

**SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND**

**ITEM:** Policy 1030 – Non-Discrimination – Second Read

**ITEM SUBMITTED BY:** Walter Willett, Ph.D., Superintendent

**FOR BOE MEETING:** August 26, 2020

**ITEM SUMMARY:**

Shipman and Goodwin recommends an index policy for non-discrimination policies in the Tolland Public Schools. This community engagement series policy is designed to provide the public with a general non-discrimination statement followed by where specific non-discrimination and non-harassment policies can be found. This policy also helps to ensure all such required policies exist. Policy 1030 is a *new* policy so there is no redline component. A 504 section for *adults* is being created and will have the number #4171.

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY:**

N/A

**BOARD ATTORNEY REVIEW:**

S&G recommended.

**BOE ACTION DESIRED:**

Second read, when ready motion to move to action item.

When in action, motion to approve policy 1030 followed by a second, discussion, and a vote.

**SUPPORTING MATERIALS ATTACHED:**

Draft Policy 1030 Non-Discrimination

**TOLLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT**

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**BOARD POLICY                      REGARDING: Non-Discrimination**

**NUMBER: 1030**  
**Community Engagement**

**APPROVED (Pending)**

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**NON-DISCRIMINATION**

It is the policy of the Board of Education that any form of discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, alienage, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability (including pregnancy), gender identity or expression, veteran status, or any other basis prohibited by state or federal law is prohibited, whether by students, Board employees or third parties subject to the control of the Board. The Board's prohibition of discrimination or harassment in its educational programs or activities expressly extends to academic, nonacademic and extracurricular activities, including athletics, as well as the district website. It is also the policy of the Board of Education to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics such as race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, disability (including pregnancy), gender identity or expression, or veteran status.

For the purposes of this policy, "gender identity or expression" means a person's gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person's physiology or assigned sex at birth, which gender-related identity can be shown by providing evidence including, but not limited to, medical history, care or treatment of the gender-related identity, consistent and uniform assertion of the gender-related identity or any other evidence that the gender-related identity is sincerely held, part of a person's core identity or not being asserted for an improper purpose.

For the purposes of this policy, "veteran" means any person honorably discharged from, or released under honorable conditions from active service in, the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Air Force and any reserve component thereof, including the Connecticut National Guard.

Any individual wishing to file a complaint regarding discrimination may obtain a copy of the Board's complaint procedures and complaint form which are included in the Board's



Administrative Regulations Regarding Non-Discrimination. These regulations accompany Board Policy #1030 and are available online at **<http://www.tolland.k12.ct.us>** or upon request from the main office of any district school.

If a complaint involves allegations of discrimination or harassment based on reasons such as gender/sex or disability, such complaints will be handled in accordance with other appropriate policies (e.g., Policy #4060, Sex Discrimination/Harassment in the Workplace ; Policy #5070, Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment (Students); Policy #4030 Non-Discrimination and/or #4171 Section 504/ADA (Personnel), and Policy #5171, Section 504/ADA (Students)).

Individuals also may file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education (“OCR”):

Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
8th Floor  
5 Post Office Square  
Boston, MA 02109- 3921  
(617) 289-0111  
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/howto.html>

Employees may also file a complaint regarding employment discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission:

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Boston Area Office  
John F. Kennedy Federal Building  
475 Government Center  
Boston, MA 02203  
(800-669-4000)

Individuals may also file a complaint with the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities:

Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities  
450 Columbus Blvd.  
Hartford, CT 06103-1835  
(800-477-5737)

Anyone who has questions or concerns about this policy, or would like a copy of the Board’s complaint procedures or complaint forms related to claims of discrimination, may contact:

Suzanne Waterhouse, Director of Human Resources, 51 Tolland Green, Tolland, CT 06084, 860-870-6850 Extension 3.

Anyone who has questions or concerns about the Board's policies regarding discrimination on the basis of gender/sex may contact the Board's Title IX Coordinator:

Suzanne Waterhouse, Director of Human Resources, 51 Tolland Green, Tolland, CT 06084, 860-870-6850 Extension 3.

Anyone who has questions or concerns about the Board's policies regarding discrimination on the basis of disability may contact the Board's Section 504/ADA Coordinator:

Suzanne Waterhouse, Director of Human Resources, 51 Tolland Green, Tolland, CT 06084, 860-870-6850 Extension 3.

#### Legal References:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.  
Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq.  
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq.  
Age Discrimination in Employment Act, 29 U.S.C. § 621  
Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12101  
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794  
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-153. Discrimination on basis of marital status  
Connecticut General Statutes § 1-1n, "Gender Identity or Expression" defined  
Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-58. Deprivation of Rights  
Connecticut Fair Employment Practices Act, Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-60  
Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-81a Discrimination on basis of sexual orientation: Definitions  
Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-81c Sexual orientation discrimination: Employment.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND**

**ITEM:** Civility Policy

**ITEM SUBMITTED BY:** Walter Willett, Ph.D., Superintendent

**FOR BOE MEETING:** August 21, 2020

**ITEM SUMMARY:**

The Policy committee has been working on the attached policy. Such policies are intended to promote mutual respect, civility and orderly conduct among members of an organizational group. Policies such as these are meant to encourage productive and respectful interactions, behaviors, and proceedings. The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education has a model policy that served as the basis for the attached document.

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY:** N/A

**BOARD ATTORNEY REVIEW:** N/A

**BOE ACTION DESIRED:**

*First read*

After second read from action, when ready:

*Motion to create and approve the Civility Policy 9200, as presented in the \_\_\_\_\_ meeting, and place the policy within the Bylaws section of Board of Education Policies.*

Second

Discussion

Vote

**SUPPORTING MATERIALS ATTACHED:**

**Civility Policy 9200 SGF Draft**

**TOLLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT**

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**BOARD POLICY**

**REGARDING: Civility Code**

**NUMBER: 9200**  
**Bylaws**

**APPROVED [XX/XX/XXXX]**

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As a member of the Tolland Board of Education, I will strive to improve student achievement in public education, and to that end I will:

1. Attend all Board meetings insofar as possible, review relevant information and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings;
2. Recognize my responsibility as an agent of the State to seek the improvement of education throughout the State;
3. Focus my attention on fulfilling the Board's responsibilities of goal setting, policymaking, and evaluation;
4. Ensure that all sides have a fair opportunity to present their respective positions;
5. Recognize that a board member has no authority as an individual;
6. Ensure that criticism of opposing viewpoints is expressed as criticism of a position, not a person when advocating for a belief or position;
7. Arrive at conclusions only after discussing all aspects of the issue at hand with my fellow Board members in a public meeting;
8. Listen respectfully to those who communicate with the board, seeking to understand their views, while recognizing my responsibility to represent the interests of the entire community;
9. Strive for a positive working relationship with the superintendent, respecting the superintendent's authority to advise the board, implement board policy, and administer the district;

10. Recognize the importance of an effective governance team;
11. Respect the rights of the minority while working toward the will of the majority, and recognize the importance of achieving consensus as an important tool in community- building;
12. Respect the diverse opinions of the community, while working toward the will of the majority of the community via elected officials;
13. Recognize the importance of achieving consensus as a tool of community- building
14. Work with other Board members to establish effective Board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the superintendent;
15. Respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law and refrain from unauthorized disclosure of matters discussed in executive session;
16. Model civility to students, employees, and all elements of the community by encouraging the free expression of opinion by all board members and engaging in respectful dialogue with fellow board members on matters being considered by the board.
17. Present personal criticism of district operations or of any employee directly to the Superintendent;
18. Understand the chain of command and refer problems or complaints to the proper administrative office while refraining from actions that could compromise my ability to act if the issue rises to the board level;
19. Take no private action that will compromise the Board and administration;
20. Refrain from using the board position for personal or partisan gain and avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of impropriety;
21. Be informed about the duties of school board members and current educational issues through professional development, such as programs sponsored by the State and national school boards associations;
22. Remember always that the first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the Tolland Public Schools.

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Sources:

CABE Model Policy Guide

Virginia School Boards Association Code of Conduct for School Board Members

Texas Association of School Boards Ethics for Board Members

North Carolina School Boards Association Code of Ethics

Illinois Association of School Boards Code of Conduct

Hamden and Norwalk Board of Education Code of Ethics

**TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL  
ZOOM REMOTE MEETING  
August 11, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tammy Nuccio, Chair; Steven Jones, Vice Chair; Brenda Falusi, John Reagan, Kurt Schenher, Cassandra York

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Lou Luba

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Michael Rosen, Town Manager; Lisa Hancock, Director, Finance & Records; Michael Wilkinson, Director of Administrative Services; Bev Bellody, Director, Human Services; Heidi Samokar, Director of Planning & Development

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Nuccio called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Recited
3. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Observed
4. **PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS:** None
5. **PUBLIC PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** *(on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council) (2 minute limit):* None.
6. **PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:** None.
- 7a. **REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES RESPONSIBLE TO THE COUNCIL**  
Tourism: no meeting  
Sustainable CT: met today; Ms. Falusi noted that she shared some equity training dates via e-mail with the Town Council
- 7b. **REPORTS OF TOWN COUNCIL LIAISONS**
  - Blight – no meeting
  - Land Acquisition: no meeting
  - Planning & Zoning Commission: meeting cancelled
  - Board of Education: A special meeting was held and Mr. Jones deferred to the minutes. Ms. Nuccio reviewed information from the TRAC meeting.
  - Conservation Commission: meeting cancelled; Mr. Jones noted that 5 people were interviewed to fill 3 spots on the Commission; the Commission is requesting that anyone on the trails report any downed trees or damage to the town
  - WPCA: no meeting
  - Agriculture Commission: no meeting
  - Parks & Recreation: Mr. Schenher provided an update.
  - EDC: meeting cancelled; Ms. Nuccio noted that she attended an AdvanceCT meeting and provided an update
8. **NEW BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS):**
  - 8.1 Consideration of a resolution authorizing the issue of \$3,000,000 bonds to refund certain prior bonds of the Town and to finance such additional amounts as are needed to pay all fees, costs, expenses and premium in connection with the refunding of the prior bonds and appropriating the proceeds of such

bonds for the foregoing purpose and the setting of a Public Hearing thereon for August 25, 2020.

Mr. Rosen introduced the Town's Financial Advisor Mr. Barry Bernabe, Managing Director, Phoenix Advisors.

Mr. Rosen reviewed this item and noted that a public hearing would be required. He explained that this item proposes the authorization to issue up to \$3,000,000 in General Obligation Bonds to refund certain future maturities of prior bond issues and would result in savings.

Ms. Hancock explained that she and Mr. Bernabe had an analysis done to determine where they may be able to find savings. There are some older bonds that will generate close to \$200K in savings for the town over their remaining life. They are proposing refunding the bonds and issue at a lower interest rate to pay them off. Mr. Bernabe explained that interest rates are very low right now. The town will be issuing new money bonds (\$10,570,000) for various capital projects. The town will be in the market and by doing these refinancing bonds at the same time, the town will mitigate its issuance costs and maximize savings. This is not new debt for the town. It is refinancing bonds that were issued in 2010 and 2011. The term will be kept the same. They are not extending maturities or restructuring bonds. They are only lowering the interest cost. Ms. Hancock added that the sewer fund will realize some of the savings and this will ease some of the burden on General Fund expenses going forward.

Ms. Nuccio clarified that they are refinancing the bonds at a lower interest rate without extending the timeline. She asked about the payback period. Mr. Bernabe responded that 11 years remain. He noted that the town will be issuing new money bonds, refinancing bonds, and a short term bond in anticipation note for the Birch Grove school project. Ms. Hancock explained that the next bond issue will include a little over \$5M worth of bonding for the town's share for Birch Grove. They are also issuing bonds for \$4.5M for the 11% which is held back that needs to be prepaid. Ms. Nuccio inquired if anything else could be optimized given the low interest rates. Mr. Bernabe responded that they reviewed all of the town's outstanding debt and the new tax law of 2017 limits what can be refinanced. There are no other bond issues that are available to be refinanced.

*Mr. Jones:*

***MOTION*** that the following resolution be introduced and set down for a Public Hearing on August 25, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom Remote Meeting:

**DRAFT RESOLUTION**

***BE IT RESOLVED***, by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby appropriates as follows:

*A resolution authorizing the issue of \$3,000,000 bonds to refund certain prior bonds of the Town and to finance such additional amounts as are needed to pay all fees, costs, expenses and premium in connection with the refunding of the prior bonds and appropriating the proceeds of such bonds for the foregoing purpose and the setting of a Public Hearing thereon for August 25, 2020. A copy of the full text of the resolution is recorded following these meeting minutes.*

*Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.*

*A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.*

- 8.2 Town Council Review of A Homegrown Approach to Strengthening the Region – Action Plan for Economic Vitality (Tolland, Bolton, Coventry and Mansfield).



Mr. Rosen reviewed this item and provided background information.

Just over a year ago, the towns of Tolland, Bolton, Coventry and Mansfield hired AdvanceCT (formerly CERC) to prepare a regional economic development plan. A draft plan has been presented and AdvanceCT is seeking public comment (due by August 21st). AdvanceCT will hold a remote public meeting on September 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Schenher inquired about the GIS mapping system and if this is something the town is doing, and if not, if it is doable. Ms. Samokar explained that they have a small budget for in-house mapping. The Conservation Commission has upgraded the trail maps over the past few years. Right now paper maps are still being printed but the hope is to modernize and have digital information available. Ms. Samokar noted that they would likely need outside expertise to help the 4 towns compile information and turn it into a robust and user-friendly product. Ms. Samokar explained that the intent is to have a single website for all of the initiatives in the plan.

Ms. Falusi noted that on page 20 of the report, under Trail-based economic vitality, one of the links is "members-only". She commented that she likes the idea about the trails. The 4 towns noted are in 2 different tourism regions so there is the potential that the work done can be highlighted in both regions. One item in regard to tourism is that they have plans to invite college admissions' counselors, and anyone who has contact with parents/families when visiting colleges, on a tour of different locations in the region. She asked if they could enhance the descriptions for Tolland and look to see if any of the Town Council's goals could be aligned with anything in the project. She also asked that the liaisons bring this to their respective commissions.

Ms. Nuccio explained that her focus was what could be done in town to help facilitate some of the items in the report. She asked Ms. Samokar how she sees this moving forward and information about the "implementer". Ms. Samokar explained that she believes the "implementer" is an evolution. It may initially be that each town appoints people to address some of the priorities. Perhaps in a couple of years there would be a staff person or more defined group which focuses on this. Mr. Rosen added that in the first phase there would be a steering committee which may evolve into a board of directors. Ms. Nuccio proposed doing something with the 4 towns such as some sort of passport event or similar program. Overall, she likes the report and is interested in what the next couple of stages will look like.

Mr. Jones commented that he likes the report and its thoroughness. His key takeaways included that much of it feels like establishing priorities or goals within the Council, this Council or a future one, to consider investment into a 501(c)(3) – a coordinated effort of the 4 towns. Additionally, in his review an area of need is in the establishment of zoning opportunities to create more density which creates a captive audience that creates more co-joining industries. Lastly, more investment in the visibility of the resources residents of town know about but others may not.

- 8.3 Consideration of a resolution for a supplemental appropriation of \$18,198 from the equity distribution from CIRMA for use by the Town and Board of Education. The Town's share would appropriate the funds in the amount of \$8,490 to the STEAP Grant match or the Capital Improvement Fund for Environmental and Other Testing Project Account 20500072-722460-2155. The Board of Education's share in the amount of \$9,708 would be appropriated to the Capital Improvement Fund for Birch Grove Primary School Non-Grant Account 2010072-777400-2156.

Mr. Rosen reviewed this item.

The town's insurance company Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency (CIRMA) Board of Directors declared a member distribution to be shared among eligible members. The Town's share is \$8,490 and the Board of Education's share is \$9,708. Approval of the resolution will allow the town to

accept the money and where to place it in the town's line items. The Board of Education will allocate its share in the amount of \$9,708 to partially fund the Capital Improvements Birch Grove Primary School Non-Grant account to cover costs that have been deemed ineligible for the Birch Grove Primary School project. The Town could appropriate its portion to the Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) Grant match. This would be Mr. Rosen's preference but if the STEAP grant is not received he would like the funds to default to the Environmental and Other Testing Project Account. This account would be used for items such as foundation testing in municipal buildings and Mr. Rosen believes the money has previously defaulted to this account. Mr. Wilkinson added that the account is often used for insurance-related items. The current balance in the account is \$17,380.

*Mr. Jones motioned:*

***BE IT RESOLVED*** by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby appropriates \$18,198 from the equity distribution from CIRMA for use by the Town in the amount of \$8,490 to the STEAP Grant match or the Capital Improvement fund for Environmental and Other Testing Project Account 20500072-722460-2155 and to the Board of Education in the amount of \$9,708 would be appropriated to the Capital Improvement fund for Birch Grove Primary School Non-Grant Account 2010072-777400-2156.

*Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.*

*A roll call vote was taken.*

	Yay	Nay	Abstain	No response
Ms. Nuccio	x			
Mr. Jones	x			
Ms. Falusi	x			
Mr. Reagan	x			
Mr. Schenher				x
Ms. York	x			

*Motion passed.*

- 8.4 Consideration of a resolution to authorize the Town Manager to submit a 2020 STEAP application to the Office of Policy and Management.

Mr. Rosen reviewed this item including the background.

The STEAP grant is offered by the State of CT Office of Policy and Management every couple of years. The town has applied many times in the past and has a good track record of being awarded the STEAP grant. He highlighted some of the projects that have been funded by the grants. The application is due on August 28<sup>th</sup> and the municipalities are eligible to receive up to \$128,205. The amount is about a quarter of the grants offered in the past. Mr. Rosen and staff have been putting together a plan with a COVID-19 component. Specifically, the plan is in regard to Recreation Center improvements and COVID-19 ppe storage space needs. The Recreation Center is an asset to the town and can use many facelifts including addressing the gym floor, getting ADA accessible openers (2) for the front entrance, bringing the restrooms up to ADA compliance, and doing improvements to the storage room to prepare it for ppe storage due to COVID-19. This would allow ppe to be stored in a temperature-controlled environment and be well cared for. Specifically, the ppe includes: masks, gloves, blankets, cots, sleeping bags, face shields, gowns, and other items. Further, this could be a first step in having the Recreation Center function as a secondary shelter at some point.

Ms. Bellody explained that after speaking with Chief Littell and Mr. Watt that they would be looking at the Recreation Center as housing a special needs shelter. This would be for those with special needs and/or older adults and be located in the gym area. Additionally, they are looking at a long term plan of having a generator installed. Air conditioning was added in the past few years thanks to grant funding. With the storms and other items they have learned that they need space to store items and have an additional shelter.

Mr. Jones noted that comments were made by election staff and residents at the Recreation Center that front doors are difficult to open and close. He added that there were some issues with the window insulation as well.

Mr. Rosen commented that when the STEAP grant was offering more funding the plan was to do a bigger project. They have amended it appropriately and he believes they have a good application. He thanked the staff for helping him put this together. They still need to formally apply if the Council authorizes him to do so this evening.

A brief discussion followed regarding possible options for obtaining a generator for the Recreation Center.

Mr. Rosen noted that a correction to the resolution would be needed. In the third paragraph, they need to strike, "replacement of the Bone Mill Brook Culvert Crossing on Plains Road," and replace it with, "Recreation Center improvements and COVID-19 ppe storage space needs,"

Mr. Jones motioned:

*WHEREAS; the Office of Policy and Management is accepting applications for funding under the 2020 Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) and the Town of Tolland is an eligible community; and,*

*WHEREAS; the Town of Tolland project is consistent with the State Plan of Conservation and Development and the Tolland Plan of Conservation and Development,*

*AND FURTHERMORE; STEAP funds can only be used for Municipal capital projects; the Town of Tolland will submit an application for Recreation Center improvements and COVID-19 ppe storage space needs,*

*BE IT RESOLVED that Michael Rosen the Town Manager is duly authorized to enter into and sign said application on behalf of the Town of Tolland. Michael Rosen currently holds the Town Manager position and has held that office since September 9, 2019.*

*The Town Manager is further authorized to provide such additional information and execute such other documents as may be required by the state or federal government in connection with said contracts and to execute any amendments, rescissions and revisions thereto to obtain said 2020 STEAP Grant of \$128,205 with the State of Connecticut for Recreation Center Improvements and COVID-19 PPE Storage Space Needs.*

*Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.  
A roll call vote was taken.*

	Yay	Nay	Abstain	No response
Ms. Nuccio	x			
Mr. Jones	x			
Ms. Falusi	x			
Mr. Reagan	x			
Mr. Schenher	x			
Ms. York				x

*Motion passed.*

Mr. Rosen noted that they will keep the Council updated on the STEAP grant process. The turnaround time is expected to about 1 month.

Mr. Rosen noted that Ms. Samokar will leave her position on September 2, 2020. He thanked her for working with him over the past year. She has been an amazing planning director. Ms. Nuccio added that Ms. Samokar will be missed. The Planning & Zoning Commission has run well with her there and she thanked her for all of the work she has done with the POCD. Ms. Nuccio hopes whatever Ms. Samokar does will bring joy and happiness and that she will think of Tolland fondly every now and then. Ms. Samokar thanked her and noted that she enjoyed all of the different projects in which she was able to be involved. Mr. Jones thanked Ms. Samokar for her professionalism and expertise for so many boards as well as her work in planning. Ms. Nuccio thanked Ms. Samokar for moving Tolland forward.

- 8.5 Consideration of a resolution authorizing the Town Manager, Michael Rosen, to apply for and accept, on behalf of the Town of Tolland, a grant from the Neglected Cemetery Account, and that the Town Manager, Michael Rosen is authorized to enter into and execute any and all agreements, contracts and documents necessary to obtain said grant should the Town be selected for a grant award.

Mr. Rosen reviewed this item. Tolland would like to apply for a grant in the amount of \$2,000 to be used for the repairing of the fencing that borders the Town-owned cemeteries as well as for the repair of broken headstones. Although this grant will not be adequate to make all of the needed repairs, it is a good starting point. Tolland has applied for, and generally received, this grant every year.

Mr. Jones inquired if there was any substantial damage to the cemeteries as a result of Tropical Storm Isaias. Mr. Rosen had not heard about any damage but will speak with Mr. Lappen.

*Mr. Jones motioned*

***BE IT RESOLVED*** by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby authorizes the Town Manager, Michael Rosen, to apply for and accept, on behalf of the Town of Tolland, a grant from the Neglected Cemetery Account, and that the Town Manager, Michael Rosen, is authorized to enter into and execute any and all agreements, contracts and documents necessary to obtain said grant should the town be selected for a grant award.

*Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.*

*A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.*

- 8.6 Appointments to vacancies on various municipal boards/commissions.

Mr. Rosen noted that the following appointments were made to the Conservation Commission: Peggy Webbe, Regular Member; Adam Grossman, Alternate; Diana Schultz, Alternate. These were Town Manager appointments.

**9. OLD BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS):**

**9.1 Discussion and review of §A176-15 of the Town Code, Town Green and Fire Training Center Sign Policy.**

Mr. Rosen explained that this is a continuation of the discussion from the July 28<sup>th</sup> meeting when they reviewed the sign policy, §A176-15 of the Town Code. Mr. Rosen red-lined the document based on the consensus of the Council at the July 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Mr. Rosen noted one significant change. The existing driveway at the Fire Training Center does not allow for any room for signs. In turn, any reference to the Fire Training Center has been removed from the Policy and will no longer be covered under the Policy. He noted that the signs regarding the MREs and water distribution are municipal signs and would still be there. They are not located at the corner of the property. Thus, public signage would no longer be at the Fire Training Center. Signage would only be on the Green.

Mr. Rosen noted that he heard two different versions for A.1 and A.4 (alternate wording) and has included both for the Council's review.

A discussion took place.

The following incorporates the discussed recommended edits:

**POLICY NO. 15:  
TOWN GREEN SIGN POLICY**

**A. Policy Purpose**

The purpose of the Town Green Sign Policy is to:

1. Provide a place for announcements for any town, civic, non-profit/not-for-profit organizations, or other non-commercial events in the Town of Tolland.
2. Protect public safety by ensuring that no sign placements have an adverse impact on site distances for oncoming traffic;
3. Protect the integrity of the lawn of the Town Green by prohibiting posting of signs that can cause turf damage;
4. Restrict sign posting privileges to town, civic, or non-profit/not-for-profit organizations. No commercial signs or political signs are allowed.

**B. Procedures**

Qualified organizations desiring to place a sign on the Town Green must follow the procedures.

1. Signs must be free standing and cannot puncture the turf of the Town Green.
2. Signs may not exceed 16 square feet and must otherwise conform to any town signage regulations that may be enacted by any town commission or board.
3. Organizations are restricted to placing their signs at the designated areas located at the south end of the Town Green. Only one sign per organization will be allowed.
4. Organizations placing signs in the designated areas must register the sign with the Town Manager's Office or another office designated by the Town Manager, if placed at the Green before placing the sign. Each sign must have a waterproof label on the back side, stating the name and phone number of a person within the organization who is responsible for the sign, the date of placement and the date of the event. Signs may be removed immediately if this information is not attached to the sign.
5. Signs may be placed no more than 14 days prior to an event, and must be removed within 2 days following an event.
6. Requests for a day, week, or month recognition sign must be scheduled with the Town Manager's office and preference will be given to events over recognition if there are more than 5 signs on the Green. A recognition can be up the day before and be taken down within 2 days after the recognized day, week, or month.

7. The Town will remove signs placed before and/or remaining in the designated areas outside these time limits, and hold for the sponsoring organization for 30 days. After 30 days the signs will become the property of the town and may be destroyed.

**C. Town Notices**

Town notices of elections and signs announcing other municipally-sponsored events of interest to all residents may be placed by the Town at appropriate locations on the Green without regard to the above restrictions.

**D. Enforcement**

(1) The Town Manager or their designee shall be responsible for enforcing this Policy.

(2) The Town has the right to limit the number of signs at either designated site to no more than 5 signs on any day.

**E. Effective Date**

(1) This Policy shall become effective TBD.

Ms. Nuccio surveyed the Council members regarding seeking a national list and if the members were in agreement with the recommended wording:

- Mr. Schenher would prefer to see how it goes before looking to a list. He is in agreement with the wording.
- Ms. York is in support of a national list and in agreement with the wording.
- Mr. Jones would prefer to see how it goes and reassess in the future. He is in agreement with the wording.
- Ms. Falusi commented that there are special weeks recognized by presidential proclamations. She would like to let it play out and see how it goes. She is in agreement with the wording. She added that residents could be reminded that they could request a proclamation.
- Mr. Reagan would like to do more research on a national list to see if there is something the Council would like to adopt. He is in agreement with the wording.
- Ms. Nuccio would like to see a list and is in agreement with the wording.

Mr. Rosen noted that this item will be on a future agenda under Old Business and that this will require a public hearing.

**10. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER (A WRITTEN REPORT SHALL BE PROVIDED THE 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF THE MONTH ONLY)**

- Aug 6<sup>th</sup> Topping Off Ceremony; everyone did a great job
- Today Mr. Rosen with Public Safety and the DPW Director toured Stations 140, 340, and 440 as part of the space needs study approved in the Capital Plan. They are actively engaging this and the consultants toured the 3 firehouses looking at ADA and code compliance, the crumbling foundation at Station 140, and space needs.
- August 13<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m. first meeting (special meeting) of the Commission for People with Disabilities;
- Tropical Storm – Mr. Rosen noted that it was a challenging event with power outages over multiple days. He thanked the DPW, Public Safety, and the Fire Department. He also thanked the Building Inspector who checked on homes as well as the volunteers who gave out water and MREs. Mr. Rosen thanked the residents for being patient and he heard many stories about benevolence. He extended thanks to the Eversource crews and contractors for expediting restoration as quickly as possible. The Chief and Mr. Rosen spoke with Eversource constantly over the past week and communicated to stay on top of the situation. The storm was a statewide problem. Even if they had a slow start they came through for the town. In 2011, the town was out for close to 2 weeks. As of today they are 99.9% restored. The storm landed harder than expected and affected the area/region more than was anticipated. The town communicated regularly with the public, opened

up a cooling center, and kept an eye on the power percentage as it was dropping. The Eversource people the town worked with did a good job and stayed in communication.

Ms. Nuccio commented that she will miss Fran Weigand greatly. She is a warm and wonderful soul and Ms. Nuccio wishes her the best on her next adventure.

Ms. Nuccio asked Mr. Rosen to extend a welcome from the Council to the two new hires: James Fontaine and Christopher Handel.

Ms. Nuccio noted that there has been a lot of talk about the reopening of the schools and the regulations around the temperature and air processing in the school buildings. She inquired if they know how this may affect the energy fund and contract. Mr. Rosen responded that they anticipate there will be an impact. Ms. Hancock explained that they do not know what the impact will be because other energy saving initiatives are being put into place to create savings. This year there were some savings that helped the fund. In regard to the contract, the changes will need to be communicated to Honeywell to keep them advised. Ms. Hancock explained that they are near the breakeven point and likely will not be reimbursed much from Honeywell.

Ms. Nuccio commented that the new police accountability bill has some requirements for animal control officers. She asked if Mr. Rosen knew what would be applicable to the town's animal control officer. Mr. Rosen responded that he will need to speak to Chief Littell.

Ms. Nuccio commented that she noticed that they will be working with the contractor to update the 5-year road project plan and inquired about the timeline. Mr. Rosen responded that he will need to check on this.

## **11. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

- 11.1 July 28, 2020 Joint Town Council & Land Acquisition Advisory Committee Remote Special Meeting Minutes
- 11.2 July 28, 2020 Remote Regular Meeting Minutes

*Mr. Jones motioned to adopt the minutes as presented in items 11.1 and 11.2.*

*Mr. Schenher seconded the motion.*

*A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.*

## **12. CORRESPONDENCE TO COUNCIL**

- formal request for signs and markers at a crosswalk on the Green
- e-mail about the condition of Crandall Pond; the writer did not feel the condition was favorable
- e-mail with a number of questions about signage on the Green

## **13. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

- Ms. Nuccio thanked Chief Littell and his staff for all they did during the storm, especially Betsy Tanner and Kelly Euliano who worked on the weekend to ensure everything was taken care of.
- Ms. Nuccio thanked Paul Russell and the DPW for all they did to get the roads cleared as quickly as possible. They were ahead of Eversource and everything that could be done was completed before the first Eversource truck rolled into town.
- Ms. Nuccio thanked Mr. Rosen and his staff for keeping everyone informed and getting information out as quickly as possible to keep residents updated.
- Storm debris can be brought to the Baxter Street location through Saturday at 4 p.m.

- MREs and water sent by the National Guard were distributed to families in need. Potable and non-potable water was provided on a 24 hour basis.
- They spoke with Eversource multiple times a day to ensure the town understood when crews would be in town and which crews. The list of closures and affected roads were relayed to Eversource.
- They worked with the Red Cross in regard to homes that were impacted and damaged to ensure families had somewhere safe to stay and that they were set with food and water.
- They reached out to cell phone providers to ensure towers were back up and running as soon as possible.
- Communications were sent multiple times per day to residents.
- In terms of providing showers to residents, they worked with the EHHD but with the COVID restrictions it was not possible.
- Reporting of downed trees and damage was done in a number of ways but Ms. Nuccio believes the e-mail address provided was likely the best way to get information to Public Safety and the DPW.
- Chair Hours: Ms. Nuccio thanked those who participated. She is always available to listen and appreciated hearing what was needed and how they could better help residents.
- August 12<sup>th</sup> – Board of Education meeting
- August 13<sup>th</sup> – Commission on People with Disabilities meeting

**14. COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILPERSONS**

Mr. Schenher commented that he was not pleased with the response from Eversource particularly with multiple days of road closures. He read a prepared statement:

I would like to see a discussion between the Town staff and Council, where ideas and proposals are presented to help mitigate future power outages in the Town of Tolland. It's painfully clear that CT's Public Utility Regulatory Authority and Eversource have dropped the ball and left Tolland and many other towns at the mercy of severe weather. I do not want Tolland to be a victim waiting for line crews from Iowa to arrive and restore power or clear roads. I am asking Mr. Rosen to gather proposals from department heads about how Tolland can take a preemptive approach to tree maintenance. I am asking Chairwomen Nuccio to add a discussion with department heads so we can be better head off issues and not be left at the mercy of Eversource.

I don't have the answers to what can be done. Is it more money for tree cutting, more or better equipment, outside contractors, or simply holding Eversource accountable for their tree maintenance program? I'm not sure what is to be done; all I know is something must be done. I know for myself and the other Councilors who distributed food and water last Friday at the Fire Training Center, we owe it to the residents to mitigate power outages in future storms so we can prevent more residents from being victims. I think a robust discussion with staff and the Council is needed and will help the town in the long run.

Mr. Jones echoed some of Mr. Schenher's comments about the issues with communication and coordination with Eversource. Mr. Jones noted that an item discussed in the goal-setting session potentially for budgetary consideration was the application of See Click Fix. It provides real-time opportunities to report downed wires, potholes, and similar issues. This could be an effective tool for the town to provide an official avenue for residents to communicate issues. Many problems came up in social media and this is not the best official avenue for effective information dissemination.

Mr. Jones gave kudos to all of the volunteers at the Senior Center and the Recreation Center at today's election. Everything seemed to work well. The level of cleaning and care was excellent.

Mr. Jones noted that any residents utilizing the trails who come across downed trees should report them to Planning and Development and/or the Conservation Commission so the Corp can clean them to ensure the trails are safe for resident use.

Ms. Falusi commented that there was a 32.39% turn out for voting. Almost 70% of the votes cast in Tolland were absentee ballots.



15. **PUBLIC LISTED PARTICIPATION** *(on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council)*  
*(3 minute limit)* - none

16. **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Jones motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Ms. Falusi seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

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Tammy Nuccio, Council Chair

Lisa A. Pascuzzi  
Clerk

**TOWN OF TOLLAND**

**TOWN COUNCIL**

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$3,000,000 BONDS TO REFUND CERTAIN PRIOR BONDS OF THE TOWN AND TO FINANCE SUCH ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS AS ARE NEEDED TO PAY ALL FEES, COSTS, EXPENSES AND PREMIUM IN CONNECTION WITH THE REFUNDING OF THE PRIOR BONDS AND APPROPRIATING THE PROCEEDS OF SUCH BONDS FOR THE FOREGOING PURPOSE AND SETTING OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON AUGUST 25, 2020.**

**MOTION** that the following resolution be introduced and set down for a Public Hearing on August 25, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at the Tolland Town Council Meeting to be held as a Zoom remote meeting to be provided with the Town Council Agenda:

WHEREAS, Section 7-370c of the Connecticut General Statutes provides authority for any municipality to issue refunding bonds for the payment, funding or refunding of bonds, notes or other obligations previously issued; and

WHEREAS, Section 7-370c provides that such refunding bonds shall be authorized and issued by resolution of the legislative body of the municipality; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Tolland, Connecticut (the "Town") desires to refund all or any portion of any one or more series of the Town's outstanding general obligation bonds (the "Prior Bonds").

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,

(1) That the Town issue its general obligation bonds in the aggregate principal amount of up to \$3,000,000 (the "Bonds") to refund certain of the Prior Bonds and to finance such additional amounts as are needed to pay all fees, costs, expenses and premium in connection with the refunding of the Prior Bonds and the authorization, issuance and sale of the Bonds, including, but not limited to, legal, advisory, printing and administrative expenses, underwriter's discount, net interest on borrowings and other financing costs, and expenses in connection with credit enhancement, if necessary, and the proceeds of the Bonds be appropriated for the foregoing purposes; provided, however, that the refunding of the Prior Bonds provides net present value savings to the Town and that the amount of the Bonds issued does not exceed the amount needed to refund the Prior Bonds and to pay the costs authorized herein.

(2) That the Town Manager and the Treasurer of the Town (the "Officials") are hereby authorized to determine the date, amounts, rates of interest, maturities, dates of principal and interest payments on such Bonds, the form of such Bonds, the provisions for protecting and enforcing the rights and remedies of the holders of such Bonds and all other terms, conditions and particular matters regarding the Bonds and the issuance and securing thereof, all in accordance with the Connecticut General Statutes and the Charter of the Town, and to take such actions and execute such documents including, but not limited to, a contract of purchase and to provide all supporting documentation as may be necessary or desirable to accomplish such purposes and to comply with the requirements of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission Rule 15c2-12 ("Rule 15c2-12"), and any

other applicable provision of law thereto enabling. The Bonds authorized hereby shall be general obligations of the Town secured by the full faith and credit of the Town.

(3) That the Bonds shall be signed by the Officials either by their manual signatures or by facsimiles of such signatures printed on the Bonds and that the law firm of Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, P.C., Hartford, Connecticut, is designated as bond counsel to render an opinion approving the legality of the issuance of the Bonds.

(4) That the Officials are hereby authorized to designate a bank or trust company to be the certifying bank, registrar, escrow agent, transfer agent and paying agent for such Bonds; to provide for the keeping of a record of the Bonds; to designate a municipal advisor to the Town in connection with the sale and issuance of the Bonds; and to designate an underwriter in connection with any negotiated sale and purchase of the Bonds.

(5) That the Officials are hereby authorized to sell the Bonds at a public or negotiated sale; to deliver the Bonds and to perform all other acts which are necessary or appropriate to issue the Bonds; to make representations and covenants on behalf of the Town for the benefit of the holders of the Bonds to provide secondary market disclosure information in accordance with Rule 15c2-12, as it may be amended from time to time, including, but not limited to, executing and delivering a continuing disclosure agreement; their respective approvals to be conclusively evidenced by their signature on any such agreements relating thereto.

(6) That the Officials are hereby authorized to refund the Prior Bonds from the proceeds of the Bonds and other moneys as they may determine to make available for this purpose, and to defease the Prior Bonds by executing and delivering an escrow agreement in such form and upon such terms as they shall approve, such approval to be conclusively evidenced by their execution thereof.

(7) That the Officials are hereby authorized on behalf of the Town to make such representations and covenants for the benefit of the holders of the Bonds which are necessary or appropriate to ensure the exemption of interest on the Bonds from taxation under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, including, but not limited to, covenants to pay rebates of investment earnings to the United States in future years; their respective approvals to be conclusively evidenced by their signature on any such agreements relating thereto.

(8) That the Officials are hereby authorized to designate other officials or employees of the Town to take such actions and execute such documents, as are determined to be necessary or advisable and in the best interests of the Town in order to refund the Prior Bonds and to issue, sell and deliver the Bonds, and that the execution and delivery of such documents shall be conclusive evidence of such determination.

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL**  
**ZOOM REMOTE MEETING**  
**AUGUST 11, 2020 – 6:30 PM**

**Council Members Present:** Tammy Nuccio, Steven Jones, Kurt Schenher, Cassandra York, John Reagan, Brenda Falusi

**Council Members Absent:** Lou Luba

**Others Present:** Michael Rosen, Town Manager, Mike Wilkinson, Director of Administrative Services, Rick Conti, Town Attorney

- 1) **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:33 PM.
- 2) **New Business:**
  - a. S. Jones motioned, seconded by B. Falusi, to go into Executive Session to discuss pending litigation. The Executive Session concluded at 6:58 PM.
- 3) **Adjournment:** S. Jones motioned, seconded by B. Falusi, to adjourn at 6:59 PM.

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Tammy Nuccio, Chairman