

The Board of Education

Town of Brooklyn
119 Gorman Road
Brooklyn, CT 06234

Mae Lyons, Board Chair
Justin Phaiah, Secretary
Ailla Wasstrom-Evans

Melissa Perkins-Banas, Vice-Chair
Kayla Burgess
Deb Metzger

Mission: The Brooklyn Schools will foster a drive for learning within each student to reach his/her greatest potential. To achieve this mission, the school will continually improve its educational programs and services to meet this community's expectations for a quality education for all.

The Brooklyn Board of Education held a meeting in the Central Office Community Room and virtually on November 21, 2023 via Zoom. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Phaiah, Mrs. Burgess, Mrs. Metzger and Mrs. Wasstrom-Evans. Mrs. Buell, Superintendent was also present.

To support public participation the documents will be posted on the Town of Brooklyn Website as well as the Brooklyn Public Schools Website. You are encouraged to send questions or comments to buell@brooklynschools.org prior to the meeting.

1. Attendance, Establishment of a Quorum, Call to Order

Mrs. Buell stated that a Quorum has been established. Board members that were present: Melissa Perkins-Banas, Justin Phaiah, Kayla Burgess, Ailla Wasstrom-Evans, Deb Metzger, and Mae Lyons.

Mrs. Buell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Comment

None

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to add an agenda item under Old Business 10d. Board Attorney Discussion.

(Perkins-Banas/Burgess)

No Discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

4. Election of Officers

Mrs. Buell stated that each Board member has ballots attached to the front of their folder. We will begin with nominations and once all nominations are made, we will close nominations and have a paper vote. You may nominate someone else or yourself. A second is NOT required, but if you nominate someone else they can accept the nomination or decline. Once the Chairperson has been elected, they will finish the election of officers.

a. Board Chairperson

Dr. Melissa Perkins-Banas nominated Mae Lyons for Chairperson. Mae Lyons accepted the nomination. There were no other nominations. A paper vote was taken, six votes were cast:

Ailla Wasstrom-Evans voted for Mae Lyons
Kayla Burgess voted for Mae Lyons
Justin Phaiah voted for Mae Lyons
Deb Metzger voted for Mae Lyons
Melissa Perkins-Banas voted for Mae Lyons
Mae Lyons voted for Mae Lyons

Chairperson: Mae Lyons

b. Board Vice Chairperson

Mr. Justin Phaiah nominated Melissa Perkins-Banas for Board Vice-Chair. Melissa Perkins-Banas accepted the nomination. There were no other nominations. A paper vote was taken, six votes were cast:

Ailla Wasstrom-Evans voted for Melissa Perkins-Banas
Kayla Burgess voted for Melissa Perkins-Banas
Justin Phaiah voted for Melissa Perkins-Banas
Deb Metzger voted for Melissa Perkins-Banas
Melissa Perkins-Banas voted for Melissa Perkins-Banas
Mae Lyons voted for Melissa Perkins-Banas

Vice Chairperson: Melissa Perkins-Banas

c. Board Secretary

Ms. Kayla Burgess nominated Justin Phaiah for Board Secretary. Justin Phaiah accepted the nomination. There were no other nominations. A paper vote was taken, five votes were cast:

Ailla Wasstrom-Evans voted for Justin Phaiah
Kayla Burgess voted for Justin Phaiahs

Justin Phaiah voted for Justin Phaiah
Deb Metzger voted for Justin Phaiah
Melissa Perkins-Banas voted for Justin Phaiah
Mae Lyons voted for Justin Phaiah

Secretary: Justin Phaiah

5. Approval of Minutes

October 25, 2023 BOE Regular Meeting Minutes

Mrs. Burgess made the motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for October 25, 2023.

(Burgess/Phaiah)

Dr. Perkins-Banas stated that Ms. Metzger and Mrs. Wasstrom-Evans were not present for the October Board meeting.

No further discussion

Vote Count: 4 in favor, 2 abstentions

Mrs. Lyons: Yes

Dr. Perkins-Banas: Yes

Mr. Phaiah: Yes

Mrs. Burgess: Yes

Ms. Metzger: Abstention

Mrs. Wasstrom-Evans: Abstention

6. Correspondence and Communication

a. Barbara-Jean Toth, Special Education Budget Update

Mrs. Toth stated that her original projection of 230 students will be exceeded this year. She stated that there are 228 IEP students currently with 23 referrals and if all the referrals were approved, then there would be a total of 251 students. Mrs. Toth stated that 51 students are able to stay in the district with all the programs Brooklyn offers along with the programs that are offered by Killingly High School and Woodstock Academy. This allows all 51 students to remain in the district and not be outplaced. There are 9 students that are currently outplaced due to the programming required. Mrs. Toth stated that there will need to have budget transfers done and Mrs. DiBenedetto will be talking more about them later.

Mrs. Toth stated that Brooklyn is still searching for a speech pathologist. There is a shortage in the state. She stated that she has contracted with a virtual speech pathologist program, which is the same program that was used during the pandemic.

b. Woodstock Correspondence - Head of School Award, Apollo Ruoppo

Mrs. Buell would like to congratulate Apollo Ruoppo for receiving the October Head of School award from Woodstock Academy. This award is given to a student who demonstrates commitment to The Woodstock Academy and the community, respect for staff and peers, trustworthiness, dedication and leadership. The student does have to be in good academic standing as well as good disciplinary standing.

c. Thank you letter - Walmart

Mrs. Buell stated that she sent a letter thanking Brooklyn Walmart for their generous donation of school supplies and allowing Brooklyn Schools to share the donation with Moosup Elementary School.

d. Thank you to Richard Ives and Isaias Sostre, past members of the Board of Education.

Mrs. Buell stated that she wanted to thank Richard Ives and Isaias Sostre for being Board of Education members. The Brooklyn Schools appreciate their service.

7. Administrative Reports

a. FY23 Financial Reports

Mrs. DiBenedetto introduced herself to the new Board members. Mrs. DiBenedetto stated that 95% of the budget is encumbered and she is watching the negative lines closely.

Mrs. Buell explained the expense reports to the new Board members and stated that Mrs. DiBenedetto will be going over the report at each meeting.

b. Budget Transfers

Mrs. DiBenedetto discussed the budget transfer request for the amount of \$69,168.02 from four special education account lines to three special education account lines to offset the negative balances..

Mrs. Burgess made a motion to transfer funds as proposed by Mrs. DiBenedetto. (Burgess/Phaiah)

No Discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

c. Enrollment Report

Mrs. Buell stated that there have been 3 new enrollments since last month. Total enrollment is 1,254 students.

d. Brooklyn's Best

Brooklyn Elementary School:

- Parent-Teacher Conferences were very well-attended and teachers report positive and supportive conversations
- 50's Day - a celebration of the 50th day of school - many staff dressed up in 1950s style clothing, and several students did as well, with 50s tunes being played throughout the day. Thank you to Ms. Stallone for organizing the event!
- Veterans Day was observed with the arrival of a military vehicle at BMS, and several students' family members who have served our country in attendance. Students spent the day learning about the significance of Veterans Day
- Red Ribbon Spirit Week saw high participation from both staff and students. We focused on living drug free.

Brooklyn Middle School:

- Good Cookie September 2023:
 - 5th - Jayce Phelps & Maxine Goetz
 - 6th - Mariah Perez & Austin Rosinski
 - 7th - Analisia Morales & Anthony Santos
 - 8th - Christopher Bowen & Janae Gushlaw
- Congratulations to all of our fall athletes and coaches for an amazing season!
- We had a fun whole-school pep rally to celebrate fall athletics and hard work!
- We had more than 75 kids participate in after school activities for quarter 1
- We had over 230 students attend the 5th and 6th grade movie night and 7th and 8th grade dance. It was fun for everyone involved.
- We celebrated Veteran's Day with cards created by students and information read on announcements every day of the week leading up to Veteran's Day

8. Board of Education Committee Reports

None to report

9. Board Representatives to Other Committees

None to report

10. Old Business

a. Proposed Brooklyn Board of Education 2024 Meeting Dates:

- January 24, 2024 at 6:30 PM
- February 28, 2024 at 6:30 PM
- March 27, 2024 at 6:30 PM
- April 24, 2024 at 6:30 PM
- May 22, 2024 at 6:30 PM
- June 26, 2024 at 6:30 PM
- July 24, 2024 at 6:30 PM
- August 28, 2024 at 6:30 PM
- September 25, 2024 at 6:30 PM
- October 23, 2024 at 6:30 PM
- November 20, 2024 at 6:30 PM (3rd Wednesday due to Thanksgiving)
- December 18, 2024 at 6:30 PM (3rd Wednesday due to Christmas)

All meetings will be held in the Brooklyn Public Schools Community Room

Mr. Phaiah made a motion to adopt the above Board of Education meeting dates.
(Phaiah/Perkins-Banas)

No Discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

b. Proposed 2024 Budget Workshop Meeting Dates and Times

- January 3, 2024 at 5:30-7:30 PM
- January 24, 2024 at 5:30-6:30 PM (prior to BOE Meeting)
- February 28, 2024 at 5:30-6:30 PM (prior to BOE Meeting)
- March 27, 2024 at 5:30-6:30 PM (prior to BOE Meeting)
- April 24, 2024 at 5:30-6:30 PM (prior to BOE Meeting)

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to adopt the above budget workshop dates.
(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No Discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

c. Proposed 2024-2025 School Calendar

The Board discussed the proposed 2024-2025 school calendar. The calendar is very similar to this school year's calendar.

Mr. Phaiah made a motion to adopt the 2024-2025 school calendar.
(Phaiah/Perkins-Banas)

No Discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

d. Board Attorney Discussion

The Board discussed the two attorney's they narrowed down from the last Board meeting and has agreed to remain with Shipman & Goodwin as the Brooklyn Schools attorney.

11. New Business

a. Vote on Committees

Mrs. Lyons stated that she would email the new members a list of available committees and they can let her know which committees they would like to be a part of. A list of committees was provided in their folder to review.

b. Ratification of the Brooklyn Administrators Contract

Ms. Burgess discussed the ratification of the Brooklyn Administrators Contract:

- A three year contract was developed
- The contract allows for time for the BAA to meet with new administrators when hired
- Outdated language about cadillac tax was removed
- There was a correction to the contract outlining the vacation days, this was a typo
- Language was added to reflect the 10 month special education supervisor, previously outlined in a MOU
- Slight change to reflect FMLA to include spouse and dependent children

Wages included: a one time market adjustment and 2.5%, 2.75% and 2.75% increase over the next three years.

Mrs. Burgess made a motion to ratify the contract between the Brooklyn Administrators and the Brooklyn Board of Education.
(Burgess/Perkins-Banas)

No Discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

c. First Read Policies

The Board will review the policies and will discuss changes on the policies next month.

12. Public Comment

Michael Covington would like to know if there was an update on the homeschool students and sports. Mrs. Buell stated that The Board took no action to change the policy.

Brooklyn Schools will continue to not allow homeschooled students to participate in school sports.

13. Adjournment

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to adjourn at 7:44 p.m.
(Perkins-Banas/Burgess)

No Discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura R. Cota

Laura R. Cota
Board Clerk

Justin Phaiah, Board of Education Secretary

Date