

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 14, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held in Council Chambers on September 14, 2021.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by Walter Kruzel.
2. **INVOCATION OR MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Jonathan LeBlanc
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Jonathan LeBlanc
4. **FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT:**
5. **ROLL CALL:**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jonathan LeBlanc, Jean Acree, Janet Cushman, John Unghire, Tina LeBlanc, Amanda Pickett, Stacy Thurston, Scott Ryder, and Walter Kruzel

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mr. Christopher J. Drezek, Superintendent & Mr. Andrew B. Longey, Assistant Superintendent

Chairman Kruzel welcomed new Board member Amanda Pickett to the Board.

**6. BOARD GUEST(S)**

**a. JFK Building Committee**

Chairman Kruzel welcomed members from the JFK Building Committee - Randy Daigle, Chairman of the JFK Building Committee; Chris Cykley, Vice President, CSG & Owners Representative; Samantha D'Agostino, Assistant Project Manager CSG, CSG; Marcus Brennan, Gilbane Building Company & Project Executive for Gilbane; Jill Lekse, JCJ Architecture & Construction Executive.

Committee members provided the Board with a power point presentation that showed the progress made to date at John F. Kennedy Middle School.

Mr. Daigle added we are currently ahead of schedule and under budget. The current media center is under 20 years and was not eligible to be updated. CSG convinced the State to allow this addition to be revamped because this space is listed as swing space. Swing space is part of the project and will be reimbursable. We will update the facade of the building and roof areas. This a tremendous team effort and he is always bragging about them.

Mr. Ryder thanked them for the presentation and for the tour of the building. The area for the new outside classrooms, is this where the "That's My Bricks" will be placed. Ms. Lekse stated those bricks will be placed around the flagpole in the public entrance area.

Mr. Ryder asked how we were doing with purchasing the bricks. Ms. Lekse stated we are all set. Mr. Ryder stated you can still purchase bricks by going to [enfielpto.com/JFK](http://enfielpto.com/JFK). He would like to receive a copy of the power point presentation. Thank you everyone for what you are doing. He is also grateful that the media center will also receive some attention.

Mrs. LeBlanc also thanked them for the presentation. She toured JFK and it looks amazing. She cannot wait to see how the hub will look. She was a former JFK student. The Art Wing is now in the Black Wing, and it will give us extra classrooms in the three other wings. The lockers look great. The auditorium looks great. This is so positive for our students to look forward to. Thank you for all your hard work.

Mr. Daigle stated the auditorium will seat 600 people. Mrs. LeBlanc also loves the music room. There is so much space and the brightness makes a huge difference.

Mr. Unghire asked about the parking lot and snow removal.

Mr. Brennan added we have added overflow parking and a portion of that will be used for snow. Mr. Daigle added we also have curbed areas that will allow B&G to easily drop off the snow without damaging the parking area.

Mrs. Pickett asked about the ADA assisted listening in the classrooms. Ms. D'Agostino stated there is a way for the students with hearing impairments to connect, and it is ADA compliant.

Mrs. Pickett asked about the timeline and if we are on track. Mr. Daigle stated we are under budget and ahead of schedule.

Chairman Kruzel added this is how projects should be done. If anyone from the State is watching this meeting, this is how projects are done in Enfield, ahead of schedule and under budget.

Chairman Kruzel asked about the boilers. Mr. Brennan stated we are almost there. Chairman Kruzel added we will not need a trailer this year. This is something he promised the mayor.

Board members gave the JFK Building Committee members a round of applause and thanked them for the job they are doing for our students and community.

Chairman Kruzel stated the JFK Building Committee meets every other Tuesday. He recognized committee members that were in the audience.

Mr. Daigle stated we have had a lot of help with this project starting with the pre-ref committee. This is a town/team effort. Everyone involved in this project understands what was needed. We are very fortunate to reap the benefits of their experience. Thank you.

## **7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

### **a. EPS Update**

Mr. Drezek thanked the members of the JFK Building Committee for everything they are doing.

Mr. Drezek stated we are open 5 days a week fulltime. It has been challenging to say the least. He thanked all our staff for making this happen. The first day of school was a special day for all our students because of everything our staff has done. He was able to visit our schools during the first week. Everyone was happy to be back.

Mr. Drezek added we have started contact tracing again. We are not out of the woods. Nurse Jess and our nurses have been working tirelessly. We are fortunate that our staff have been vaccinated and the number of students that need to quarantine have not been high. We are doing everything we can to keep our buildings open. We might need to close for other reasons.

Mr. Drezek stated transportation has been hard for us and surrounding towns. Everyone is looking for drivers. Smyth Bus has gone above and beyond ensuring our kids are getting to school. They are all hands on deck – driving buses. He urged parents not to call them and for their continued patience.

Mr. Drezek stated that he is annoyed that we are still talking about this. We need to keep our kids in school. Our number one priority is keeping our buildings open. It has been a struggle. We will do what we can. This has become a day-to-day operation.

Mr. Drezek stated he needs to leave the meeting to take an important call. He will be back shortly. He left Council Chambers at 7:45 PM.

## **8. AUDIENCES:**

Chairman Kruzel reminded audience members to refrain from personal or individual attacks. We will allow Enfield residents 3 minutes to speak.

Matt Schmitt, North Main Street – Mr. Schmitt stated he attended the last Board meeting and spoke about masks and courage. He asked the Board where their line in the sand is. When will you act on these mandates? Is the word from a doctor enough. What number of children need to suffer by wearing masks? There must be a safe way to fight these mandates. Your hands may be tied, but your voice hasn't been silenced. He urged Board members to be the voice of the children and our voice. Thank you.

Amanda Marquez, Hoover Lane – Mrs. Marquez also spoke about masks and the harm they pose at the last meeting. She understands the mandates that have been placed on us. Just giving up is not the answer. She has written to her legislators about this. She has done her own research. Masks fail to protect. There are many studies about the harms from wearing masks. Have any of you taken the time to conduct your own research? Liberty is the power of choice. The government does not know what is best for our children. Parents make the best decisions for our children. Please make the right choice when the decision about wearing masks is dropped in your lap.

## **ADD AN ITEM TO THE AGENDA:**

Mr. Ryder moved, seconded by Mrs. LeBlanc to suspend the rules, and add Item #16 Executive Session for matters related to a Prospective Public Supply Contract to the Agenda.

A vote by **Roll-Call 9-0-0** passed unanimously

## **BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS:**

Mr. LeBlanc would like the Superintendent to give the Board a presentation on how the Federal funds from the Government will be spent.

Mr. LeBlanc also asked about students not eating in the lunchroom and why hasn't this started yet?

Mr. LeBlanc presented a poster from Brianna Beckstrand, Kite Coordinator – We Spy – a learning opportunity. These posters will be placed at area local businesses. The QR Codes are interactive and games for the children will pop up. The games will change monthly. This is just another way to get families engaged.

Mr. LeBlanc also spoke about the Parent Leadership Academy. They are accepting applications. You can find this information at the [Enfieldkite.org](http://Enfieldkite.org) website and on the [enfieldpublicschools.org](http://enfieldpublicschools.org) website or you can e-mail Malissa Roy [mallisaroy@cox.net](mailto:mallisaroy@cox.net).

Chairman Kruzel stated when Mr. Drezek returns, we can ask him about your questions.

Mrs. Acree thanked the parents that welcomed her at our last Board meeting. She is looking forward to working with her fellow Board members. We all need to work together resolving your concerns. We need to do our homework and conduct research regarding your concerns. These resolutions are for all residents, parents, and children.

Mrs. Cushman stated the United States has always been a melting pot. Millions of individuals from around the world have immigrated here to make America their home. She spoke about our Constitution and when this document was created and signed. This document has laid the foundation for us. Educators should teach about the importance of our Constitution, Independence Day, and President's Day. This is part of our heritage. This Friday is Constitution Day. It is her hope that students will have an opportunity to learn about this. She provided sites - [archives.gov](http://archives.gov) and [constitutionday.com](http://constitutionday.com). These sites have great activities for students. She wanted to share this information with our community.

Mr. Unghire welcomed Mrs. Pickett to the Board. He is looking forward to serving with you. He announced that his new grand daughter was just born moments ago. He is very happy to share this with you. Welcome Birdie Unghire.

Mr. Unghire attended a prayer service that was held on the Enfield Town Green Gazebo. Many people attended this event on Saturday morning. There were many people in attendance. He was proud to be part of this remembrance spiritual healing service.

Mr. Unghire also attended the ribbon cutting event for the Splash Pad at Parkman on Saturday. It was great to see all the joy on the children's faces. They had a great time. He spoke to a young couple, and they could not believe there was a splash pad just down the road from their home.

Mr. Unghire is very appreciative of the leadership in our town improving the quality of the education for our students. We are building a beautiful building at JFK that will benefit all our children and community. These kinds of changes will make us a more attractive town and community.

Mr. Unghire addressed some of the comments that were made at our last meeting that caused him some concern. Many said the masks do not do anything and they are ineffective to the virus. He looked at a number of different brands of masks that people are wearing, and he could not find one that is effective against the virus. There is a warning label. Some people are wearing more than one mask for extra protection. We are requiring our kids to wear masks that do not protect them from viruses. This does not make sense to him. He will continue to try to learn more about this.

Mr. Drezek returned at 8:05 PM.

Mr. Ryder welcomed Mrs. Pickett to the Board. You are here because we lost one of our close friends. A memorial service and book drive will be held in her honor on Saturday, September 18<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 PM at Leete Stevens. If you would like to donate a book or money, please feel free to bring it on Saturday. Any money received will go to the First Readers Association. Mrs. Hall will be deeply missed. She was a true champion for all our students.

Mr. Ryder stated we will be appointing new Board Committee Assignments later.

Mr. Ryder stated the Memorial PTO meeting is happening now virtually. It started at 7:00 PM. Memorial will hold an open house on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, and it will be done alphabetically. For more information you can go to the [enfieldpto.com/HMS](https://enfieldpto.com/HMS) or go to Facebook. We will also hold a spirit week on September 20-25<sup>th</sup> along with crazy hat day and sock day.

Mr. Ryder stated Eli Whitney will hold their spirit week on the week of September 20-25<sup>th</sup>. Each day they will hold a different event. They will hold their open house on September 20<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 – 7:30 PM and they will also hold a PTO meeting before the open house in person outside at Eli Whitney from 5-6:00 PM.

Mr. Ryder received a question about graduation. We set the calendar in February for the next school year. Graduation will be held on June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Mr. Ryder is glad to hear that our students first days of school have gone well, and that we are in-person 5 days a week. He is proud to be wearing masks and his kids also do not mind wearing masks. He urged everyone to stay healthy.

Mrs. Thurston welcomed both Mrs. Acree and Mrs. Pickett to the Board. You ladies are in for the ride of your lives. She congratulated our newest grandpa on the birth of his granddaughter. Congratulations.

Mrs. Pickett is honored and humbled to sit here and be part of the Board of Education. Mrs. Hall was a kind person, and she will try her best to follow her lead. She was one of a kind and she will do her best. She thanked everyone for the start of the new school year. Her little one started at Stowe and loves it. She was so worried, and she just loves it. The staff at Stowe is great. Her other child is at Enfield Street in Grade 1, and she thanked the Enfield Street Staff for everything they are doing.

Mrs. Pickett attended the 9/11 memorial at the Weymouth Road Fire Station with her family. The service was phenomenal. She also attended the Parkman Splash Pad and her children enjoyed it. She thanked the community for all the work you are doing and for making Enfield a place for families. Thank you.

Mrs. Pickett stated she took some quick notes to honor Mrs. Hall. The Stowe Integrated Pre-K Program opened last week along with some of their other programs. Head Start and STEAM started yesterday.

Mrs. Pickett thanked Mr. LeBlanc for the KITE update. She also congratulated Brianna Beckstrand for her new position appointment. She couldn't be a better advocate for our families and students. Congratulations Brianna.

Mrs. Pickett stated ERfC will hold their Fall for Enfield Community Program on Saturday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> from 10-4 PM on the Town Green. They will also hold Dinner on the Green with a farm to table dinner from 6-10 PM. Tickets are available online.

Mrs. LeBlanc also welcomed both Mrs. Acree and Mrs. Pickett to the Board. We had our last first day for the LeBlanc family. It is bittersweet to be nearing the end of her children attending Enfield schools. It has been a journey. We are looking forward to the June 22<sup>nd</sup> graduation ceremony.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated the EHS football teams played against Newington and lost. We will have our first home game on Friday night against Windsor. Notices went out about spectator expectation for attending games. If you have any questions, you can find these notices on the website.

Mrs. LeBlanc attended the Town Council meeting, and she heard the comments from the audience members here tonight. She appreciates your opinions about masks. Your opinions are thought provoking. You can see where she stands on this issue just by walking into Council Chambers. People assume she bases her decisions by fear. She bases her opinion on her own personal experiences. She takes this topic very seriously. When the term of drawing a line in the sand is used, we are all in a position to agree to disagree. She appreciates you sharing your opinions with us. You know where she stands. You are advocating for your children and what you believe in. Your voices are being heard.

Chairman Kruzel welcomed Mrs. Pickett to the Board. We are not expecting you to fill Mrs. Halls shoes. At our last meeting we welcomed Mrs. Acree.

Chairman Kruzel updated the Board Committee assignments and a list of them will be included in your Friday update packet.

Mr. LeBlanc asked Mr. Drezek about the money coming from the Federal Government and if you could provide us with a presentation where the funds will be allocated. Mr. Drezek stated yes he will update the Board on this and he is meeting with the Town manager about this next week.

Mr. LeBlanc also asked Mr. Drezek about students eating in the cafeteria for lunch. Is there a reason besides COVID that they are not eating in the cafeteria? Mr. Drezek stated we are trying to keep them separate as much as possible in that environment. The topic of lunch is a space issue. We are hoping to back to the normal operation of students going to the cafeteria.

Chairman Kruzel stated that he attended the 9/11 memorial service at the Weymouth Road Fire station. He thanked all the fire department staff and surrounding towns that participated. It is important to remember this every year. He asked for everyone to keep this day in your hearts.

Chairman Kruzel also attend the prayer service that was held on the Gazebo on the Town Green and the splash pad grand opening. He is glad the splash pad is being used. He will attend any additional services that are held on the Town Green.

Chairman Kruzel urged Enfield residents to vote for the 4 R's Referendum in November.

Mr. Unghire stated he asked some middle school students about the masks. One student hated wearing them and was also vaccinated. The other student didn't really care. He asked about mask breaks and if we were still giving them. Mr. Drezek stated building principals are still giving students masks breaks. We are scheduling time for the students outside.

Chairman Kruzel stated he attended the Town Council meeting last week and Councilor Cressotti commented about the traffic on Enfield Street. He was promised a traffic light at the entrance to Enfield High School. He was lied to by the State of Connecticut. We still do not have a traffic light. He is reaching out to our legislators about this again. We were promised as members of the EHS Building Committee. Other towns have traffic lights by their schools. He will continue to fight for this.

9. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

10. **NEW BUSINESS:** None

11. **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Curriculum – Mr. LeBlanc reported they will meet on September 16<sup>th</sup>.

Finance – Mr. Unghire reported the Finance committee met on September 13<sup>th</sup>. We will review Financial Reports later.

Policy – Mr. Unghire reported the next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for September 21<sup>st</sup>.

Leadership – No meeting was held – Chairman Kruzel had nothing new to report.

Joint Facility – Chairman Kruzel reported the Joint Facilities Committee approved the bids that went out for Eli Whitney and Hazardville Memorial.

JFK Building – Chairman Kruzel reported the JFK Building Committee gave us a presentation tonight.

Joint Security – Mr. Ryder reported the Joint Security Committee has not met and we have not scheduled the next meeting date.

Joint Insurance – Chairman Kruzel reported the Joint Insurance Committee met online. We do not have a date for the next meeting.

Youth Mental Health – Chairman Kruzel reported no meeting was held and he has nothing new to report.

## **12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Ryder moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Special Meeting Minutes of August 31, 2021, be approved. Mrs. Thurston asked for a change on page 9 for Mrs. Hall's name be changed to hers.

A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-1** passed unanimously with the amendment with Mrs. Pickett abstaining.

## **ADD AN ITEM TO THE AGENDA:**

Mrs. LeBlanc moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder to suspend the rules, and add Item #13 Approval of Accounts and Payroll for July and August 2021 to the Agenda.

A vote by **Roll-Call 9-0-0** passed unanimously

## **13. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS AND PAYROLL**

Mr. Unghire moved seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Enfield Board of Education accepts the superintendent's certification for:

- The month of July 2021, total expenditures amount to \$1,474,118.72, broken down between payroll totaling \$815,127.63, and other accounts totaling \$658,991.09; and
- The month of August 2021 total expenditures amount to \$1,689,601.23, broken down between payroll totaling \$539,166.63 and other accounts totaling \$1,150,434.60; and
- All payments have been made in accordance with the approved budget and are properly accounted for within the books of accounts. Copies of approval for check invoices are properly documented.

A vote by **show-of-hands 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Mr. Unghire moved seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Enfield Board of Education accepts the superintendent's certification for:

- The month of July 2021, total Grant and Head Start expenditures amount to \$131,942.77, broken down between payroll totaling \$130,533.73 and other accounts totaling \$1,409.04; and
- The month of August 2021, total Grant and Head Start expenditures amount to \$199,919.34, broken down between payroll totaling \$114,598.48 and other accounts totaling \$85,320.86; and
- All payments have been made in accordance with the approved budget and are properly accounted for within the books of accounts. Copies of approval for check invoices are properly documented.

A vote by **show-of-hands 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

**Line Item Transfers:** None

#### **15. CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATION**

- Mrs. LeBlanc read a letter from the State Board of Education to the Board regarding challenges schools have faced during the pandemic.

Chairman Kruzel gave a shoutout to his family in Florida that are watching the meeting.

#### **16. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Unghire moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder that the Enfield Board of Education enter into Executive Session for Matter(s) Related to a Prospective Public Supply Contract.

A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-1** passed with Mrs. Thurston in dissent.

Both Mr. Drezek and Mr. Longey joined the Board in Executive Session. No Board action occurred while in Executive Session.

#### **RETURN TO OPEN SESSION:**

The Board returned to open session at 9:17 PM.

#### **17. ADJOURNMENT**

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mrs. LeBlanc to adjourn the Regular Meeting of September 14, 2021.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously. Meeting stood adjourned at 9:18 PM.

Tina LeBlanc  
Secretary  
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary