

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 16, 2021**

An organizational meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held at the Enfield Town Hall in Council Chambers, located at 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, CT on November 16, 2021.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mr. Unghire.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mr. Unghire
3. **NATIONAL ANTHEM & AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL – EMILY VANDAL**
4. **OATH OF OFFICE FOR THE NEWLY ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS:**

Town Clerk, Mrs. Sheila Bailey administered the Oath of Office for the 2021-23 Board of Education Members – Jean Acree, Dr. Gerald Calnen, Janet Cushman, Joshua Hamre, Jonathan LeBlanc, Tina LeBlanc, Scott Ryder, Amanda Pickett and John Unghire.

Mrs. Bailey congratulated Board members and wished them a successful term as Board of Education members.

5. **ROLL CALL:**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jean Acree, Dr. Gerald Calnen, Janet Cushman, Joshua Hamre, Jonathan LeBlanc, Tina LeBlanc, Scott Ryder, Amanda Pickett and John Unghire

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Christopher J. Drezek, Superintendent and Mr. Anthony B. Longey

6. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

Mr. Unghire opened the floor for nominations for Chairperson.

a. Chairperson of the Board of Education

Mr. Ryder nominated Tina LeBlanc as the Chairperson for the Enfield Board of Education, seconded by Mr. Unghire. Mr. Ryder read a prepared statement regarding his nomination for Mrs. LeBlanc.

Mr. Ryder moved, seconded by Mr. Unghire to close the nominations for Chairperson. All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Unghire called for a roll call vote for the Chairperson for the Enfield Board of Education.

A vote by **roll-call 9-0-0** passed unanimously in favor of Tina LeBlanc as the 2021-23 Chairperson for the Enfield Board of Education.

b. Vice Chairperson of the Board of Education

Madam Chair LeBlanc opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chairperson.

Madam Chair LeBlanc nominated Scott Ryder as the Vice Chairperson for the Enfield Board of Education, seconded by Mr. LeBlanc. Madam Chair LeBlanc read a prepared statement regarding her nomination for Mr. Ryder.

Madam Chair LeBlanc moved, seconded by Mr. LeBlanc to close the nominations for Vice Chairperson. All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

A vote by **roll-call 9-0-0** passed unanimously for Scott Ryder as the 2021-23 Vice Chairperson for the Enfield Board of Education.

c. Secretary of the Board of Education

Madam Chair LeBlanc opened the floor for nominations for Secretary.

Mr. Unghire nominated Jonathan LeBlanc as the Secretary for the Enfield Board of Education, seconded by Mr. Ryder. Mr. Unghire read a prepared statement regarding his nomination for Mr. LeBlanc.

Mr. Unghire moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder to close the nominations for Secretary. All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

A vote by **roll-call 9-0-0** passed unanimously for Jonathan LeBlanc as the 2021-23 Secretary for the Enfield Board of Education.

7. SERVICE RECOGNITION AWARDS TO OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS:

Madam Chair LeBlanc stated we will now present service recognition awards to the outgoing Board members.

Madam Chair LeBlanc recognized Stacy Thurston. She has received her award previously. She asked for Mrs. Thurston to stand to be recognized. We thank you for your service to the schools and community for the many years you have served on the Board of Education. Especially coming back this term to help us. We appreciate everything you have done for us. Thank you.

Madam Chair LeBlanc presented Mr. Kruzel with gifts of appreciation from the Board and Administration along with his gavel. She expressed her thanks to him at our last meeting. What you might not know about Walter is all the extra stuff he has done for our school district. Whether it was refinishing weights or little projects for the Stowe Early Learning Center, he was always ready to help in any way. We are going to miss you. We have worked together for 6 years. She congratulated him for his years of service. She believes people did not know how much extra you have done for the district. She knows you will be watching us and will still be involved. We have one extra gift for you.

Mr. Drezek thanked Mr. Kruzel's wife Debbie for loaning Walter to us for the last 6 years. The good thing is you won't be hearing from me in the middle of the night anymore or crazy hours in the early morning. There are a lot of things that go on before we are here in Council Chambers. Walter has spent an enormous amount of time and stress in his life especially about the stop light at Enfield High School. He presented him a stress reliever in the shape of a traffic light. Thank you for everything you have done for us. You have been an absolute friend and will continue to be one. Thank you for everything.

Mr. Kruzel received a standing ovation.

8. COMMENTS, IF ANY, FROM THE NEWLY ELECTED CHAIRMAN:

Madam Chair LeBlanc stated she is humbled and honored to be chosen as the Board Chair. She is overwhelmed by the support she has received. She would like to see Board start with unity, where every board member understands their role and where each of you feel valued and heard. There will be disagreements and tough conversations, but we will remind ourselves that we are here for the students of Enfield. She has established an emotional connection to our schools over the past 17 years while her children attended our schools. It is a balance when you make connections as a parent and a Board member. This has been extremely beneficial to her as a Board member. You have a deeper connection when you are involved in the community. We appreciate and celebrate the diverse community we live in, and for the students that attend our schools. What we have endeared over the past two years was unprecedented. Life is short and we do not know how long we will be here. We need to listen more and love harder. It has been an honor to come into my voice and represent and advocate for all our students in Enfield. It will be an honor to continue to represent all the wonderful students and amazing staff that makes up Enfield Public Schools. She looks forward to working with each Board member and doing wonderful things during the next two years. That is her promise to the Board that we all feel valued and heard. She read a quote from Angela Schwindt "While we try to teach our children all about life, our children teach us what life is all about." Thank you.

9. COMMENTS, IF ANY, FROM THE NEWLY ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS:

Mrs. Acree thanked God for placing her in this esteemed position. She thanked her family for their love and support. She thanked her campaign leadership team – Mary Ann, Jeff and Bill for their guidance and knowledge during this process. She thanked John, Lori and Marie for being mentors to her over the past several months. She thanked the Enfield voters for their confidence in me. It is an honor and privilege to serve on this Board and to be an education advocate for the students and families in Enfield. She looks forward to working with her fellow Board members and hopes we can work out resolutions for all the issues that concern our community. Thank you.

Mrs. Cushman expressed her gratitude and being able to continue serving our schools and community as a member of this Board. She is very appreciative for this opportunity. She expressed her gratitude to both Mrs. Thurston and Mr. Kruzel who have been a great support and source of encouragement from day one. She appreciated hearing from you frequently. She expressed her gratitude to Emily Vandal for sharing her beautiful voice. She wished all our meetings could start this way. Thank you for sharing your gift and talent with us. She also looks forward to this next term on the Board of Education and our opportunity to serve together. Chairman LeBlanc brings a lot of experience and knowledge to the Board. She looks forward to serving together and what we can do to support our schools, community and families. Thank you.

Mr. Unghire thanked his family and his wife for their support during this process. He has made many new friends while campaigning. He appreciates the opportunity to meet many new residents and friends he has made. He looks forward to serving on this Board and working with everyone to serve the students, the staff and administration. He blessed the students of Enfield, the staff and administration and especially the teachers. He is very thankful to being here. He pledged and promised to do his best to keep the best interest of our kids as his primary focus. Thank you.

Secretary LeBlanc thanked his family for their support. He thanked his grandparents that are watching from home. They have always supported him and given him encouragement. Your love means everything to him. When he enters this room, he tries to leave politics at the door.

One of his goals to be true to himself and his beliefs and do what is best for everyone in our town. This includes our students, staff and families and the residents that may not be involved in our schools. You all have a voice. He hopes he has done that over the past two years and will continue to do this during this next term. He is excited for this term. He just wants to see us to be able to see each other through the stories of each other. He believes this will be good for the entire Board if we can do this. He is excited to see what opportunities will come from this Board. He will miss sitting next to Mr. Drezek, but he likes the seat over here. Thank you everybody and the Town of Enfield. He looks forward to the next two years. Thank you.

Mr. Hamre stated getting here has been a process that didn't just happen overnight. He has spoken at many Board meetings about his concerns. Learning the process of how to get from point A to point B and learning how to communicate effectively with conversations. This wouldn't have happened without the support of his family. He is just like Tina, Amanda and Scott and also started out as a PTO president. He started off by getting involved in the schools. He has been involved ever since his children entered school. This has not lessened. He has been monitoring their education, progress and to see if their potentials are being met. He thanked his family and his parents that are also watching from home. He thanked community members for placing their faith in him. He has learned a lot during this process and looks forward to doing everything we can to support our students. He looks forward to working with the Board to make this possible. Thank you for making this possible.

Dr. Calnen stated it is an honor and privilege to have worked and lived in Enfield most of his life in Enfield. He is proud of this community and to be a member of it. He retired from his pediatric practice in 2013 and at that time, he thought he would just retire. That hasn't been the case. He saw the opportunity to be able to serve the families and children of Enfield in a different capacity as a Board of Education member. This makes sense because health and education are integrally connected. A rich education fosters good health and good health fosters a rich education. He will keep this principle in mind during the next two years. He thanked his wife for her support, counsel, good judgement, wisdom and patience. He loves her very much and thank you.

Mrs. Pickett stated she is ready for this term. She honored the land that we are on. It is the land of the Podunk's and is now known as Enfield. November is Native American History month. She is thankful for the ancestors that have come before us. She thanked her husband for everything he does and is her biggest fan. He pushes her to see the little things from a different perspective. She is truly blessed. She thanked her children that will change the world someday. Keep asking questions and listen to others and do your best. She loves them. She thanked her family and friends for being there sharing your love and encouragement. She thanked Enfield Public School staff for showing up for our students. She can't even imagine the fatigue you have endured. You are making a difference every day. She has heard stories and has seen firsthand that even with the changes, restrictions and challenges, you have made a difference and continue to do so. We have work to do, and she cannot wait to work alongside with you. She thanked the families and students for their perspective, feedback and engagement is what matters. Board members need to remember why we are here – to fulfill the mission of the board. If we work together, anything is possible. She never thought she would run for an elected position. She will be true to herself, and she believes in the entire slate that includes her fellow Board, Town Council members and Constables. We all have our own ideas and experiences to bring to the table wanting to do our best to represent the many perspectives our community holds. We need to understand the needs of our residents and prioritize, partner and support Enfield in being an inclusive, welcoming, safe place for all. Thank you for supporting me. She thanked the voters of Enfield for showing up and letting your voices be heard. She will do her best to represent and listen to you and center her decisions on the needs of our community. She looks forward to this term and believes that good things are happening in Enfield. Thank you.

Vice Chairman Ryder thanked his wife and kids. He also thanked his parents and siblings that were here during Election week. He thanked our Enfield teachers and staff, administrators and everyone who has hand in Enfield Public Schools including our bus drivers, paras, lunch aides, tutors. Everybody has a hand in how my kids and your kids experience their day. Every adult in our buildings has helped to shape each day our kids are there. He thanked the Stowe Eaglets, the Hazardville Huskies, the Whitney Wolves, the Parkman Panthers, the Barnard Big Cats, the Crandall Cougars, the JFK Patriots, the Enfield High Eagles and Eagle Academy. He also thanked the students from Youth Vote the went to the polls with their parents. He thanked all of our students. This is why he is here and continue to show up in one building or another since 2013. He looks forward to continuing doing this, both here and at our schools. Thank you.

Madam Chair LeBlanc stated she forgot to thank her family. Her nerves got the better of her. Her family has been amazing and has put up with so much over the past 10 years. But most of all the last two years. They believe in her, talking with her and encouraging her to get more involved. When she started, her kids were little and now they are young adults. You have taken an active role in what is going on in our community and she could not be prouder. As mentioned by Mr. LeBlanc, it is nice to get a phone call from Grammy and Grampy. They can make it all better. They are always watching us and are so proud of us.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hamre moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder to adjourn the Special Organizational Meeting of November 16, 2021.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

Meeting stood adjourned at 7:34 PM.

Jonathan LeBlanc
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary