

**New Milford Board of Education
Special Meeting Minutes
November 4, 2020
Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library Media Center**

Present:	Mrs. Angela C. Chastain Mr. Joseph Failla Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach Mr. Brian McCauley Mrs. Tammy McInerney Mrs. Eileen P. Monaghan Mrs. Cynthia Nabozny Mrs. Olga I. Rella	RECEIVED TOWN CLERK <i>THP</i> 2020 NOV -5 P 1:23
Absent:	Mr. Pete Helmus	

NEW MILFORD, CT

Also Present:	Ms. Alisha DiCorpo, Interim Superintendent Mr. Brandon Rush, Director of Technology
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1. A.	Call to Order Pledge of Allegiance The special meeting of the New Milford Board of Education was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mrs. Chastain. The Pledge of Allegiance immediately followed.	Call to Order A. Pledge of Allegiance
2.	Public Comment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roseann Petruso congratulated Ms. DiCorpo on being named Interim Superintendent and said it was well deserved. • Erin Haynes thanked district staff for all their hard work. She said her autistic child finds remote learning very challenging and she urged the district to consider the needs of students with disabilities for whom some in-person learning is critical. She asked that any changes to the schedule be shared with parents as soon as possible so that they can prepare. 	Public Comment
3. A.	Discussion and Possible Action Potential Learning Models for 11/25/20-1/3/21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. DiCorpo said New Milford Public Health Director Mike Crespan and district Medical Advisor Dr. Evan Hack are at the meeting via 	Discussion and Possible Action A. Potential Learning Models for 11/25/20-1/3/21

Zoom. She said there has been joint discussion over the past few weeks, specifically regarding travel over the upcoming holidays and how it might impact school schedules. This is in addition to the daily/weekly discussions that already happen.

- Ms. DiCorpo said both Mr. Crespan and Dr. Hack have been tremendous assets to the district. They participate in weekly meetings that include nurse coordinators, where cases are reviewed and general information shared. Contact tracing is a daily occurrence.
- With holiday travel anticipated, Ms. DiCorpo wanted to discuss four learning model proposals publicly with the Board in front of the community for transparency. The first proposal is to make no change to the hybrid model. Proposal #1 listed is for remote learning for all students from 11/30/20 – 1/1/21. Proposal #2 is for remote learning for all students from 11/30/20 – 12/4/20. Proposal #3 is for remote learning from 11/30/20 – 12/11/20.
- Ms. DiCorpo said that most COVID exposure is happening outside in the community, not within our schools, for which staff should be commended. She said there is definitely an uptick at this time in community spread.
- Mr. Crespan agreed. He talked about the different metrics used to monitor cases and communities. He said New Milford is doing well now, but as a small community, it doesn't take much to see changes. He said the school system is doing a great job with social distancing and contact tracing and it is working at least for now. He said the hybrid model certainly helps, with 50% reduced exposure.
- Ms. DiCorpo said the district has hired a part time contact tracer, but with the uptick, the person is working more than full time some days at the moment. She said the district is committed to transparency with the public, and they are working on a dedicated section of the website for sharing COVID data.
- Dr. Hack said the school district did a great job this summer of getting ready, and with

mitigation strategies, and the schools are not a big site for COVID transmission. He said while the district can work to control what goes on inside the schools, it cannot control outside events. He said the wish to travel over the holidays, as well as COVID fatigue, and the ability to keep up with contact tracing are all factors in the discussion. In contrast, remote learning creates more stress for families. He said he wished there was a simple answer.

- Ms. DiCorpo said the district is trying to be proactive and get in front of the factors in play. She said her recommendation would be to go with Proposal #2: one week remote following the Thanksgiving break. This will give staff and families time to test and get PCR test results before reopening schools. Making the decision now gives parents and staff time to prepare, based on current metrics.
- Mrs. Rella asked if the special education population that currently attends four days would be remote that week. Ms. DiCorpo said they would be.
- Mrs. McInerney said safety must be the number one priority but she is really concerned for the special needs population. This means no learning that week for some children. She said there needs to be clear conversations in advance with case managers and teachers.
- Mrs. Faulenbach asked if one week would provide enough time to work through all the paperwork. Ms. DiCorpo said she does think it will. She said they will prioritize Cohort A first since they are the first students due back.
- Mrs. Nabozny asked about the Christmas break. Ms. DiCorpo said she did not think a remote break was needed since students do not return until January 4, but she said if staff/families do not return from travel until close to that time then they should stay remote and follow the executive order for testing.
- Mrs. Faulenbach said she appreciates letting the community participate in the discussion. She asked if letters going out regarding the change will include information on the executive orders, as they are subject to change.

	<p>Ms. DiCorpo said letters will include direct links.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mrs. Faulenbach asked if the PCR saliva and nasal tests are both acceptable. Mr. Crespan said PCR is the test that is done in the lab and it doesn't matter how the sample is collected.• Mrs. Rella said she is comfortable with Ms. DiCorpo's recommendation. She appreciates that it gives parents time to plan.• Mrs. Faulenbach asked if a motion is requested. Mrs. Chastain said the Board could make a motion of support, but ultimately it is the Superintendent's decision. She said the goal of tonight's meeting was to have a transparent conversation in front of the community so they will know the thoughts behind the recommendations and that the Board supports the decision made. Mrs. Chastain said she understands not everyone in the community may agree with the choice but she reminded everyone that the Board members are volunteers making what they feel are the best decisions. She said the nasty, hateful emails sent by some community members are unnecessary and uncalled for. She asked for kindness when expressing disagreement.• Mr. McCauley said he agrees with all that has been said. He said he works with the special needs population and he wondered if some exceptions might be explored.• Mrs. Monaghan said the recommendation is the most logical in allowing people time to follow state guidelines.• Mrs. Faulenbach noted that it is great to be able to inform day care providers ahead of time too. Ms. DiCorpo said there is a call tomorrow with providers and she will fill them in. She expects letters to go out to staff and parents tomorrow as well. <p>B. COVID letters to Staff and Parents regarding Holiday Travel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. DiCorpo said she is in the process of drafting letters to parents and staff, in conjunction with legal, regarding the process to	<p>B. COVID letters to Staff and Parents regarding Holiday Travel</p>
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follow before returning to school/work after traveling. The letters will include live links to guidelines and executive orders and a form to access to state intentions to travel. That way the district can begin to plan for how to manage the data and test results that will be coming. She said the contact tracing is constant and it would be very helpful to have another position to help with that.

- Mrs. Faulenbach asked if the current part time position is paid out of the COVID account. Ms. DiCorpo said it is. Mrs. Faulenbach suggested the additional position be added for discussion at Operations next week.
- Ms. DiCorpo said the staff letter from legal includes language that states that if a staff member does not choose to get tested and instead quarantines for fourteen days, that time would count towards sick and/or personal totals. She said that has not been the practice now, but it has also not been a problem because staff compliance with testing is very high since they want to get back to work as soon as possible. She asked if the Board wanted to keep the language in the letter.
- Mrs. Chastain said she thought the language should be there since legal suggested it and for consistency.
- Mrs. Faulenbach said she agrees the Board should follow legal advice. The language provides clarity going forward.
- Ms. DiCorpo said they will work through testing results as they come in. She encouraged travelers to test as soon as they are able when returning to the state. She said she had reached out to Katy Francis of the United Way to explore getting a testing site for New Milford after the holiday but that requires a lab partner and there is a cost, which is not known at this time. Ms. DiCorpo was on a municipal call today where they mentioned a referral at the state level so she will explore that. Mr. Crespan said he would make some calls as well to see what he can find out. Mrs. Chastain said she has reached out to Mayor Bass.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Hack said the testing should be the PCR test, no matter where it is done, because that is the most reliable. • Mr. Failla said we may need to have patience with all since the availability of testing in New Milford is not good and centers will probably have increased demand around holiday travel. <p>C. Interim Superintendent Contract. Executive Session anticipated. The Board may take action when it returns to Public Session.</p> <p>Mrs. Nabozny made a motion that the Board enter into Executive Session to discuss the Interim Superintendent Contract, seconded by Mrs. Monaghan.</p> <p>The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>The Board entered executive session at 7:47 p.m.</p> <p>The Board returned to public session at 7:52 p.m.</p> <p>Mrs. Rella made a motion that the Board approve the Interim Superintendent Contract as discussed in executive session, seconded by Mrs. Nabozny.</p> <p>The motion passed unanimously.</p>	<p>C. Interim Superintendent Contract. Executive Session anticipated. The Board may take action when it returns to Public Session.</p> <p>Motion made and passed unanimously that the Board enter into Executive Session to discuss the Interim Superintendent Contract.</p> <p>Motion made and passed unanimously that the Board approve the Interim Superintendent Contract as discussed in executive session.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Adjourn</p> <p>Mrs. Monaghan moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 p.m., seconded by Mr. McCauley and passed unanimously.</p>	<p>Adjourn</p> <p>Motion made and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 p.m.</p>

Respectfully submitted:



Wendy Faulenbach
Secretary
New Milford Board of Education