

**Canaan School Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, January 23, 2023  
4:30 PM**

Members Present: Linda Harris, Katie Sawicki, Renee Marchesseault, Krista Rodrigue, Raelene Begin

Administration/Public Present: Jacob Wood, Nate Freeman, Frankie Sawicki, Denise Wood, Chuck Patterson, Laurent Giroux, Dan Bishop, Chris Masson

Remote: Todd Nichols, Eugene Reid, Melissa Ciranni, Sharon Ellingwood-White, Dencie Covill, Tim Gray, Lydia Donovan, Terri Herr, Rebecca Hodge

- I. The meeting was called to order at 4:31 PM.**
- II. On a motion made by Linda Harris seconded by Renee Marchesseault, the Board approved the minutes of January 9, 2023, motion passed, vote 5-0.**
- III. Nathan Freeman read and discussed policy changes to the Board and Public for Policy F2 on Non-discriminatory Mascots and School Branding.**
- IV. Chuck Patterson delivered the Principal's Report.**
  1. Renee Marchesseault asked about sponsoring students and donations.
  2. Linda Harris discussed the large increase into third grade and fourth grade.
  3. Chuck Patterson discussed community event from vision committee which will partner with Canaan Naturally Connected.
- V. Appointments and/or Resignations**
  1. The Board reviewed Dan Bishop's resignation letter.
  2. On a motion made by Linda Harris seconded by Katie Sawicki, the Board voted to approve Dan Bishop's letter of resignation, vote 5-0, motion passed.
  3. Dan Bishop read his resignation letter aloud.
- VI. Jacob Wood discussed the status for the Connector Project.**
- VII. Jacob Wood discussed changes to the budget from the previous meeting.**
  1. Krista Rodrigue and Renee Marchesseault expressed concern over CTE student enrollment.
  2. Nate Freeman discussed the memo for CTE information from the AOE and shared documents with the public.
  3. On a motion made by Renee Marchesseault seconded by Linda Harris, the Board approved the FY 24 Canaan School District Budget, vote 4-1, motion passed.
- VIII. Nate Freeman presented Warrants to the Board by reading potential options.**
  1. The Board narrowed down the Warrants and made adjustments.
  2. On a motion made by Linda Harris seconded by Krista Rodrigue, the Board motioned to approve the scholarship change, vote 5-0, motion passed.
  3. On a motion made by Linda Harris seconded by Katie Sawicki, the Board approved the Canaan School District Warning, vote 5-0, motion passed.

## **IX. Public Comments**

1. Todd Nichols asked if any programs were being removed from CTE.
  - i. The Board stated no decisions were made on this matter.
2. Eugene Reid discussed the licensures and the IRCs of the Building Trades Program along with the differences between the State and employers.
3. Rebecca Hodge thanked the Board members for volunteering their time to be on the Canaan School Board.
  - i. Discussed importance of salaries properly compensating teachers and how it would lead to having a full staff.
  - ii. Krista Rodrigue reiterated what Rebecca Hodge said.
4. Sharon Ellingwood-White discussed the importance of IRCs and how beneficial they are for the students.
  - i. Discussed adult education options.
  - ii. Krista Rodrigue mentioned this was discussed, but nothing has come of it.
5. Denise Wood reiterated Sharon Ellingwood-White's comments and how the certifications are used for students and questioned the AOE's report.
6. Dan Bishop reiterated investing time and funding into our programs.
7. Chris Masson reiterated accuracy issues with the CTE report.
8. Laurent Giroux discussed concerns with grading issues and putting in policies and procedures to fix this long term.
9. Chris Masson asked about planned collaboration.

## **X. Executive Sessions**

1. Student Issue
  - i. A motion was made by Linda Harris seconded by Krista Rodrigue for the Board to enter Executive Session regarding a student issue at 6:25 PM, vote 5-0, motion passed.
  - ii. A motion was made by Renee Marchesseault seconded by Linda Harris for the Board to come out of Executive Session with no action taken at 6:31 PM, vote 5-0, motion passed.

## **XI. Adjournment**

1. Meeting was adjourned at 6:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Chappell

January 5, 2023

Canaan Schools  
99 School Street  
Canaan, VT 05903

Dear Mr. Patterson, Mr. Freeman, and Canaan School Board,

I am writing this letter to inform you that I will be leaving Canaan Schools at the end of the Spring 2023 semester. I will be moving to Waterville, Maine to live with my fiancée and will be looking for work closer to that area. I wanted to make sure that the school received advance notice that I will not renew my contract so that there would be additional time to fill the Social Studies position for the following year.

I am immensely grateful for the opportunities Canaan Schools has provided me: the teaching and classroom experiences, the guidance and mentorship as a high school educator, and the friendships I have formed with faculty, staff, and students. Canaan is a fantastic school with much to offer its students and larger community. I hope that it continues to be the beacon for the community for many years to come.

As I leave, I feel I must acknowledge an issue that is spreading in our country, as staying silent only helps perpetuate it. Overall, I am concerned that education is becoming less valued and everyone (and by extension, our country) is suffering for it.

Our goal as educators is to help students become well-informed, productive citizens who use their critical thinking and social and emotional learning to evaluate the world around them and contribute to our society for our collective future. It should be apparent why this is necessary, but the alarming rise in socio-cultural dogmatism, xenophobia, and reactionary ideologies is hindering that goal. We should not be banning books, avoiding sensitive or uncomfortable topics, nor censoring history to alleviate our consciences. Speaking as a historian and anthropologist, this is a dangerous and path to walk. Instead, we should explore and celebrate the complexity of humanity, share in respectful discourse our similarities and differences, and examine our past (both light and dark); learn from it and move forward — together.

We also need to value our educators who work tirelessly on behalf of students and help build our communities. Their efforts need to be acknowledged and appropriately compensated. Our teachers at Canaan Schools are the lowest paid in the state of Vermont. We need to invest in them and thereby our students and community, for the sake of our future.

I am proud to have served as the Social Studies teacher at Canaan Schools for the past two years. Everyone here has welcomed me and made me feel like I have made a positive difference. I have learned so much and appreciate the support I have received from administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and especially the students — I will miss them most of all. We have an incredible group of kids and young adults in our community. Please listen to them, trust them, encourage them, and give them every opportunity to succeed.

Thank you all so very much.

Sincerely,

*Daniel E. Bishop*

Daniel E. Bishop, PhD

Social Studies Teacher, Canaan Schools