The minutes presented within this document summarize the discussion of the Regular Board of Education meeting. To view the meeting in its entirety and hear full reports please click the following link:5/20/26-Special Board of Education Meeting

Bristol Board of Education
Bristol, Connecticut
Wednesday, May 20, 2026 – 6:30 p.m.
Special Meeting Minutes

The Bristol Board of Education Special meeting was held on Wednesday, May 20, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. in the Bristol Board of Education Auditorium located at 129 Church Street and via Zoom Meeting Platform.

Present: Chair Shelby Pons, Commissioners: Jill Fitzsimons-Bula,Kristen Giantonio (6:38pm-virtual),Kara Ledger ,Lorianne Osenkowski(virtual), Robert Parenti(virtual), Maria Simmons(virtual), Barbara Tedesco, and Jennifer Van Gorder

Absent: Carly Fortin, Chief Academic Officer

Also, Present: Superintendent Iris White, Mary Hawk, Deputy Superintendent, Liaison Peter Kelley, Jodi Bond, Director of Finance, Dr. Amy Martino, Director of Pupil Services,Joseph Grabowski, Chief Talent Officer and Jeff Telke Supervisor of IT

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence:
Chair Pons called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. and asked the audience to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Discussion and Possible Action:
2.1 2026-2027 Budget Update
Before the commencement of official business, Chair Pons welcomed Mike Reynolds to the floor. Mr. Reynolds spoke regarding the ongoing partnership involving the city, the Board of Education, and district administration.

Chair Pons then provided the Board with a comprehensive update concerning the budget and commended the ongoing partnership between the city, the Board of Education and district administration. Chair Pons informed the board that 137 notices that were provided on the April 23, 2026 Budget Workshop #3 Meeting were now rescinded and no lay offs would occur. Following her report she introduced Superintendent White to provide the 2026-2027 budget updates. Superintendent White thanked all those in collaboration with her during this budget process and introduced Jodi Bond, Director of Finance to begin the presentation.

Jodi Bond, Director of Finance presented the FY 26-27 Superintendent's Recommended Budget. The Superintendent's original recommended budget of $154,649,443, a 12.83% increase, was presented at the budget workshops held on January 24, 2026, February 3, 2026 and April 23, 2026, for the Bristol Public Schools for the 2025-26 School Year. On May 18, 2026, the City and

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Board of Finance approved a budget of $148,825,885, a 8.58% increase, and a reduction of $5,823,558 (4.25% gap). The proposed budget reductions for the Board of Education to the Superintendent's Budget are the following:

Proposed Reductions	
Gen Ed (new) Salaries	-$2,126,522
Gen Ed (new) Benefits	-$811,043
Insurance Reserve Reduction	-$275,000 per City
Workers Comp Reduction	-$240,000 make reduction per City
Health Benefits for new SPEd positions	-$484,243 funded by City in Ellen's $990k
MS Sports (1 team/sport, no BAIMS, no Intramurals)	-$119,488 MS Sports
CIS Software	-$100,000
Facilities Equipment/Improvements	-$876,579 Leaving $68,454 in account (plus DRIP Funds)
Smart Notebook (Lumio)	-$21,700
ID Metrics Software (Swipe)	-$24,141
Yonder Pouches	-$90,000
Exit Giamatti Lease/Property Mgmt Fee/Utilities	-$350,000
Retirement Savings	-$304,843
Total Reduction Savings	**-$5,823,558**

Approval of this motion will result in the budget as presented becoming the Board of Education's FY 26-27 Superintendent Budget.

Questions and discussion followed regarding the presentation in regards to the reduction of Middle Schools Sports teams, as it was previously stated that Middle Schools sports was saved. Commissioners suggested that MiddleSchool sports have 2 teams/sport instead of out of town games. Discussion of consolidation of positions, central office positions, cost of breaking Giamatti lease and the timing of which information is provided to the board for consideration of voting on important matters.

Chair Pons asked for a motion to approve the 26-27 budget with proposed reductions.

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On a motion by Kara Ledger, seconded by Jill Fitzsimons- Bula for a motion to approve and adopt the 26-27 budget with proposed reductions as presented. Commissioner Simmons wanted clarification if we voted as presented, does that impact the Middle Schools sports or are we able to look at the other options to keep Middle School Sports to two teams/sport. Chair Pons provided feedback that adjustments can be made.

Chair Pons called for a Roll Call Vote, Following a Roll Call Vote, nine (9) commissioners (Pons, Simmons, Fitzsimmons-Bula, Ledger, Parenti, Tedesco Giantonio,Osenkowski and Van Gorder) were in favor of the motion and not opposed. The motion PASSED unanimously.

2.2 Bylaw 9132.8 - School Board Liaison to Local School

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula provided background information on the bylaw presented to the committee, noting that the Board of Education had been asked to review Bylaw - 9132.8-School Board Liaison to Local School. The Policy committee proposed amended language of III 1. b.Consideration shall be given to Board members' interests, geographic proximity, prior school relationships, to avoid conflicts of interest. and experience, to foster positive relationships and collaboration. Commissioner Fitzsimons-Bula asked for a motion to approve and adopt Bylaw - 9132.8-School Board Liaison to Local School with amended language.

Question and discussion followed about other liaisons such as CREC and CABE as well as the definition of experience.

A motion was made by Barbara Tedesco and seconded by Jennifer VanGorder to approve and adopt with the amended language of Bylaw - 9132.8-School Board Liaison to Local School. Motion passed unanimously.

2.3 Bylaw - 9133- Special Committee

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula provided background information on the bylaw presented to the Board of Education that if Bylaw - 9132.8-School Board Liaison to Local School was approved due to CABE sample and bylaw number, we were to rescind Bylaw 9133-Special Committee.

No questions or discussion.

A motion was made by Jill Fitzsimons-Bula and seconded by Jennifer VanGorder to rescind Bylaw - 9133- Special Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

2.4 Bylaw 9321 - Time, Place, and Notice of Meeting

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula provided background information regarding the recommended Bylaw 9321 - Time, Place, and Notice of Meeting, previously based on a CABE model, and there are current updates to the Bylaw from CABE that was sent out in May in their Quarterly Policy Highlights #3. Therefore, the proposed revisions are based on the current CABE model. She explained that, in the sample provided, blue text indicated proposed revisions, while red text identified language

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recommended for removal. Ms. Fitzsimons-Bula also noted that the policy was last reviewed on July 7, 2024.

A motion was made by Kara Ledger and seconded by Jennifer VanGorder to approve revision to Bylaw 9321 - Time, Place, and Notice of Meeting.

Question and discussion about the removal of current language of the regular Board of education meeting date and times and the language utilized under "Electronic Participation" in regards to "All votes at a meeting in which members are attending by teleconference shall be taken by roll call" was contradicting to other language in this section.

Commissioner Jennifer Van Gorder called for a motion to table Bylaw 9321- Time, Place, and Notice of Meeting.

A motion was made by Jennifer VanGorder and seconded by Kristen Giantonio to table Bylaw 9321- Time, Place, and Notice of Meeting, Following a Roll Call Vote, three (3) commissioners (Giantonio,Tedesco and Van Gorder) in favor of the motion and six (6) commissioners (Pons, Simmons, Fitzsimmons-Bula, Ledger, Osenkowski and Parenti) opposed. The motion FAILED.

Following discussion, commissioners voted to amend the original motion that was made by Kara Ledger and seconded by Jennifer VanGorder to approve revision to Bylaw 9321 - Time, Place, and Notice of Meeting with removal under the section "Electronic Participation" in regards to "All votes at a meeting in which members are attending by teleconference shall be taken by roll call"

Following a Roll Call Vote, six (6) commissioners (Pons, Simmons, Fitzsimmons-Bula, Ledger, Parenti and Tedesco) in favor of the motion and three (3) commissioners (Giantonio,Osenkowski and Van Gorder) opposed. The motion PASSED.

2.5 Revision of 2026 Regular Board of Education Meeting Date & Times

Chair Pons provided background information in which it was suggested that the change of the start times to the Regular Board of Education meetings be proposed and discussed due to lengthy meeting times. Chair Pons requested a motion to table Revision of 2026 Regular Board of Education Meeting Date & Times.

Question and discussion about the draft document not being received prior to the meeting and requesting a draft of dates and times proposed. Concerns of inconsistency of start times could be impactful to the attendance of public.

Motion made to table made by Kara Ledger and second by Jill Fitzsimons-Bula. The motion passed unanimously.

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2.6 Policy 0521 - Equal Opportunity - Nondiscrimination

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula provided background information regarding the mandated Policy 0521 - Equal Opportunity - Nondiscrimination, previously based on a CABE model, and Per audit we needed to add or update legal references. Therefore, the proposed revisions are based on the current CABE model. She explained that, in the sample provided, blue text indicated proposed revisions, while red text identified language recommended for removal. Ms. Fitzsimons-Bula also noted that the policy was last reviewed on December 17, 2016.

No questions or discussion

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula asked for a motion for Policy 0521 - Equal Opportunity - Nondiscrimination for approval with revisions as presented.

A motion was made by Jennifer VanGorder and seconded by Barbara Tedesco to approve revisions of Policy 0521 - Equal Opportunity - Nondiscrimination as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

2.7 Policy 6159 - Individualized Education Program (IEP's)

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula provided background information regarding the mandated Policy 6159 - Individualized Education Program (IEP's), per CABE mandated as of July 1, 2025. Dr. Amy Martino provided input on the proposed language as it is based on a CABE model policy.

No questions or discussion

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula asked for a motion for Policy 6159 - Individualized Education Program (IEP's) for approval and adoption as presented..

A motion was made by Jennifer VanGorder and seconded by Barbara Tedesco to approve and adopt Policy 6159 - Individualized Education Program (IEP's) as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

2.8 Policy 6171- Special Education Program and Evaluation

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula provided background information regarding the mandated Policy 6159 - Individualized Education Program (IEP's), per CABE mandated as of July 1, 2025. Dr. Amy Martino provided input on the proposed language specification; the most recent change was the use of specific learning disabilities. Jill Fitzsimons-Bula provided it is based on a CABE model policy.

Questions and discussion in regards to the yearly evaluation oversight.

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula asked for a motion for Policy 6171- Special Education Program and Evaluation for approval and adoption as presented.

A motion was made by Jennifer VanGorder and seconded by Barbara Tedesco to approve and adopt Policy 6171- Special Education Program and Evaluation as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

2.9 Policy 5112- Ages of Attendance/Admissions/Placement

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula provided background information regarding the mandated Policy 5112- Ages of Attendance/Admissions/Placement, previously based on CABE model, and per audit needs modification with a specific note to "Change entrance date from January to September." Therefore, the proposed revisions are based on the current CABE model. She explained that, in the sample provided, blue text indicated proposed revisions, while red text identified language recommended for removal. Ms. Fitzsimons-Bula also noted that the policy was last reviewed on October 5, 2011.

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula asked for a motion for Policy 5112- Ages of Attendance / Admissions / Placement for approval with revisions as presented.

Questions and discussion about waiver, change of age requirements, and language in regards to Board of Education responsibility for Physical/Immunizations.

Commissioner Kristen Giantonio called for a motion to amend the language and strike out the language under “Enrollment”, in regards to expense of students physical/immunization would be on the recommendation of the Board and paid by the Town.

A motion was made by Kristen Giantonio and seconded by Jennifer VanGorder to amend the language as proposed. Following a Roll Call Vote, two (2) commissioners (Giantonio and Van Gorder) in favor of the motion and six (7) commissioners (Pons, Simmons, Fitzsimmons-Bula, Ledger, Osenkowski, Parenti and Tedesco) opposed. The motion FAILED.

Following discussion, Jill Fitzsimons-Bula asked for a motion to keep language and revisions as presented. Motion was made by Jennifer Van Gorder and seconded by Jill Fitzsimons-Bula

Following a Roll Call Vote, nine (9) commissioners (Pons, Simmons, Fitzsimmons-Bula, Ledger, Parenti, Tedesco Giantonio,Osenkowski and Van Gorder) were in favor of the motion and not opposed. The motion PASSED unanimously.

2.10 Policy 5111- Admission

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula provided background information regarding the mandated Policy 5111 - Admission, as it is now encompassed in Policy 5112 therefore no longer needing Policy 5111 per CABE.

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula asked for a motion to rescind Policy 5111-Admission.

No questions or discussion.

A motion was made by Jennifer VanGorder and seconded by Kara Ledger to rescind Policy 5111- Admission. The motion passed unanimously

2.11 Policy 5113 Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula provided background information regarding the mandated Policy 5113 Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal, previously based on a CABE model, and per the audit we needed to add or update legal references and make modifications. Therefore, the proposed revisions are based on the current CABE model. She explained that, in the sample provided, blue text indicated proposed revisions, while red text identified language recommended for removal. Ms. Fitzsimons-Bula also noted that the policy was last reviewed on September 13, 2017.

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula asked for a motion to approve Policy 5113 Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal with revisions as presented.

Questions and discussion regarding mental health absence protocol and parental consent, and half day accountability.

Chair Pons asked to amend the motion to include revision to paragraph C removing the language "of not needing parental/guardian consent" for mental health wellness day and changing to: "A student shall not be required to provide supporting documentation to utilize a mental health wellness day. District attendance notification requirements remain in effect."

A motion was made by Kristen Giantonio and seconded by Jennifer VanGorder to approve revisions to Policy 5113 Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal with the additional revision to paragraph c, "A student shall not be required to provide supporting documentation to utilize a mental health wellness day. District attendance notification requirements remain in effect." The motion passed unanimously

2.12 Policy 5113.2 Truancy

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula provided background information regarding the mandated Policy 5113.2 Truancy, previously based on a CABE model, and per audit we needed to add or update legal references, Review regulation to ensure compliance with updated statutes. Therefore, the proposed revisions are based on the current CABE model. She explained that, in the sample provided, blue text indicated proposed revisions, while red text identified language recommended for removal. Ms. Fitzsimons-Bula also noted that the policy was last reviewed on September 13, 2017.

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula asked for a motion to approve Policy 5113.2 Truancy with revisions as presented.

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No questions and discussion.

A motion was made by Jennifer VanGorder and seconded by Barbara Tedesco to approve and Policy 5113.2 Truancy with revisions as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

2.13 Policy 5114 Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula provided background information regarding the mandated Policy 5114 Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process, previously based on a CABE model, and per audit we needed to add or update legal references, modify, and add or update regulation due to legislative changes. Therefore, the proposed revisions are based on the current CABE model. She explained that, in the sample provided, blue text indicated proposed revisions, while red text identified language recommended for removal. Ms. Fitzsimons-Bula also noted that the policy was last reviewed on June 5, 2019. Mary Hawk, Deputy Superintendent provided some context in regards to the updates that were made, specifically the need for Alternative Education programming, and current practices being non compliant with policy.

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula asked for a motion to approve Policy 5114 Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process with revisions as presented.

Questions and discussion around the term antique firearm.

A motion was made by Jennifer VanGorder and seconded by Kara Ledger to approve and Policy 5114 Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process with revisions as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

2.14 Policy 5141.4 - Child Abuse and Neglect

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula provided background information regarding the mandated Policy 5141.4 - Child Abuse and Neglect, previously based on a CABE model, and CABE audit stated it needed modification due to PA 22-87. Also included in the quarterly policy highlight #3 that was provided by CABE with the current policy sample. Therefore, the proposed revisions are based on the current CABE model. She explained that, in the sample provided, blue text indicated proposed revisions, while red text identified language recommended for removal. Ms. Fitzsimons-Bula also noted that the policy was last reviewed on December 7, 2016.

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula asked for a motion to approve Policy 5141.4 - Child Abuse and Neglect with revisions as presented.

No questions or discussion.

A motion was made by Jennifer VanGorder and seconded by Barbara Tedesco to approve and Policy 5141.4 - Child Abuse and Neglect with revisions as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

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2.15 Policy 5131.81 - Use of Private Technology Devices by Students

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula provided background information on the policy presented to the committee inviting Jeffrey Telke, Supervisor of IT to provide his expertise, noting that the Board of Education had been asked to review Policy 5090.9 Use of Private Technology Devices by Students with accompanying Regulation with our current Policy 5131.81 - Use of Private Technology Devices by Students and revising as needed.

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula asked for a motion to approve Policy 5131.81 - Use of Private Technology Devices by Students with revisions as presented.

Questions and discussion around language for search of students' devices. An amended motion was made to include language "All searches shall be supervised by an administrator and may be supported by an information technology employee."

A motion was made by Shelby Pons and seconded by Jennifer VanGorder to approve Policy 5131.81 - Use of Private Technology Devices by Students with revisions as presented and include the language "All searches shall be supervised by an administrator and may be supported by an information technology employee.". Motion passed unanimously.

2.16 Policy 6141.328 - Instruction, Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and Protocol for the Use of Personal Technology in the Schools

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula provided background information on the policy presented to the committee, noting that the Board of Education had been asked to review Policy 6141.328 - Instruction, Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and Protocol for the Use of Personal Technology in the Schools. Definition of device was changed to align with Policy 5131.81 definition.

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula asked for a motion to approve Policy 6141.328 - Instruction, Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and Protocol for the Use of Personal Technology in the Schools with revisions as presented.

No questions or discussion.

A motion was made by Jennifer VanGorder and seconded by Barbara Tedesco to approve Policy 6141.328 - Instruction, Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and Protocol for the Use of Personal Technology in the Schools with revisions as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

2.17 Policy 6141.329 - One-to-One Device Program

Jill Fitzsimons-Bula provided background information regarding the recommended Policy 6141.329, revisions were made noting that the previously uploaded document contained substantial grammatical inaccuracies resulting from a conversion error during the upload process. She explained that, in the sample provided, blue text indicated proposed revisions, while red text identified language recommended for removal.

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Jill Fitzsimons-Bula asked for a motion to approve Policy 6141.329 - One-to-One Device Program with revisions as presented.

No questions or discussion.

A motion was made by Jennifer VanGorder and seconded by Barbara Tedesco to approve Policy 6141.329 - One-to-One Device Program with revisions as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the Special Board of Education Meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Sydney Molina
Recording Secretary
Bristol Board of Education

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