

WILLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Special Meeting

Minutes

September 24, 2021

5:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

Members Present

Herb Arico - Chairman
Elena Testa - Vice Chairman
Michelle Doucette Cunningham - Secretary
Ann Grosjean
Tracey Anderson
Donna Cook
Laura Rodriguez
(members present remotely through Zoom)

Also Present

Superintendent of Schools, Phil Stevens
Board Attorney Christine Chinni

I. Call to order

Chairman Herb Arico called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. and read the agenda items.

**II. Discussion of documents protected by the attorney-client privilege
(proposed for an executive session)**

Michelle Doucette Cunningham made a motion to move into executive session to discuss documents protected by the attorney-client privilege and invite Superintendent Stevens and Christine Chinni to join the Board.

Ann Grosjean seconded the motion.

| Vote: | Yes | No | Abstain |
|---------------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| H. Arico | x | | |
| M. Cunningham | x | | |
| D. Cook | x | | |
| T. Anderson | x | | |
| A. Grosjean | x | | |
| E. Testa | x | | |
| L. Rodriguez | x | | |

Motion passes

Superintendent Stevens stated that he will pause the Zoom recording and all guests will be placed in the Zoom waiting room while the Board meets in executive session. Guests may return to the meeting at the end of the executive session.

The Board entered executive session at 5:09 p.m.

The Board exited executive session at 6:00 p.m.

III. Discussion and possible action on a proposed public statement

H. Arico moved that the Willington Board of Education, for immediate release on September 24, 2021, the following statement:

"The Willington Board of Education disavows completely the comments made by an individual board member, Elena Testa, at the Board meeting held on September 14, 2021 concerning the Gay Straight Alliance Club at Hall Memorial School. The Willington Board of Education recognizes the legal right of gay, lesbian, transgender and gender fluid students in its schools to all rights, responsibilities and privileges granted to all students, and to participate in the educational process, including afterschool activities, free of discrimination based upon their gender identities. These rights and privilege include the right to form school clubs to the same extent and subject to the same rules as all students. The views expressed by Ms. Testa at the September 14th meeting are hers alone, and in no way reflect the official position of the Willington Board of Education.

Additionally, the Willington Board of Education affirms that the religious views of one or more Board members do not and can not provide a basis for decisions regarding the practices, policies, goals or operations of the Willington Public Schools. While any board member is free to both hold and espouse his or her religious beliefs, such beliefs have no role to play in the Board's decisions about clubs or any other matter."

M. Doucette Cunningham seconded the motion.

A roll count vote was taken

| Vote: | Yes | No | Abstain |
|---------------|-----|----|---------|
| H. Arico | x | | |
| M. Cunningham | x | | |
| D.Cook | x | | |
| T. Anderson | x | | |
| A.Grosjean | x | | |
| E. Testa | | | x |
| L. Rodriguez | x | | |

Motion passes

IV. Adjournment

H. Arico moved to adjourn the meeting.

L. Rodriguez seconded

| Vote: | Yes | No | Abstain |
|---------------|-----|----|---------|
| H. Arico | x | | |
| M. Cunningham | x | | |
| D.Cook | x | | |
| T. Anderson | x | | |
| A.Grosjean | x | | |
| E. Testa | x | | |
| L. Rodriguez | x | | |

Motion passes

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Next regular meeting October 12, 2021

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