Chariho School Committee Meeting
Regular Session Minutes – February 15, 2024
(Meeting rescheduled from February 13, 2024 due to snowstorm)

Committee Members Attendance: Chair Catherine Giusti, Vice Chair Karen Reynolds, Donna Chambers, Tyler Champlin (arrived at 6:59 PM), Kathryn Colasante, Polly Hopkins, Craig Louzon, Linda Lyall, Andrew McQuaide, Larry Phelps, Patricia Pouliot and Jessica Purcell.

Administrators and Others Attendance: Superintendent Gina Picard, Assistant Superintendent Michael Comella, Director of Administration and Finance Ned Draper, Assistant Director of Administration and Finance Lynn Gouvin, High School Assistant Principal Jean Bradanini, Development Officer Katie Kirakosian, Systems Administrator Eric O'Brien, NEA Chariho President Vin Levcowich, Hopkinton Town Councilors Sharon Davis and Scott Bill Hirst, Senator Elaine Morgan and School Committee Clerk Donna Sieczkiewicz.

I. Meeting Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Silent Meditation

Chair Catherine Giusti called the meeting of the Chariho School Committee, held in the Chariho High School Library, to order at 6:30 PM. She asked all to please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

II. Motion/Vote to go into Executive Session

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was
VOTED: That the School Committee go into executive session and close the meeting to the public under the authority of R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(1) for the purpose of discussion and/or action pertaining to an individual's job performance or character (Pre-deprivation Hearings/Non-Renewal of Teacher Contracts); under the authority of R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(2) for the purpose of discussion and/or action pertaining to collective bargaining (Memorandum of Agreement Between the Chariho Regional School District and Chariho Education Support Professionals (ESP) Pertaining to Article 17.5.a of the Collective Bargaining Agreement); under the authority of R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(2) for the purpose of discussion/action pertaining to litigation/legal update (Approval of Executive Session Minutes of January 11, 2024 - The Robinson Green Beretta Corporation v. Chariho Regional School District, through its Chair, Linda Lyall – C.A. No. PC-2021-06474); and under the authority of R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(8) for the purpose of reviewing and/or approving matters which relate to the privacy of students and their records (1. Approval of Executive Session Minutes of January 9, 2024 - Home Instruction Requests and 2. Approval of Home Instruction Requests); any persons to be discussed have been so notified. In favor: Unanimous (Champlin was not in attendance for the vote).

III. Reconvene Open Session/Pledge of Allegiance/Silent Meditation

Chair Giusti reconvened the meeting at 7:00 PM and asked all to please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

IV. Closing/Sealing of Executive Session Minutes

1. Superintendent Picard recommended that minutes pertaining to an individual's job performance or character (Pre-deprivation Hearings/Non-Renewal of Teacher Contracts) remain sealed.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was
VOTED: That minutes pertaining to an individual's job performance or character (Pre-deprivation Hearings/Non-Renewal of Teacher Contracts) remain sealed. In favor: Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds. Abstained: Champlin. The motion carried by a vote of 11 in favor with 1 abstention.

2. Superintendent Picard recommended that minutes pertaining to collective bargaining (Memorandum of Agreement Between the Chariho Regional School District and Chariho Education Support Professionals (ESP) Pertaining to Article 17.5.a of the Collective Bargaining Agreement) remain sealed until such time as an agreement has been reached.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was
VOTED: That minutes pertaining to collective bargaining (Memorandum of Agreement Between the Chariho Regional School District and Chariho Education Support Professionals (ESP) Pertaining to Article 17.5.a of the Collective Bargaining Agreement) remain sealed until such time as an agreement has been reached. In favor: Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds. Abstained: Champlin. The motion carried by a vote of 11 in favor with 1 abstention.

3. Superintendent Picard recommended that minutes relating to the privacy of students and their records (Approval of Home Instruction Requests) remain sealed.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was
VOTED: That minutes relating to the privacy of students and their records (Approval of Home Instruction Requests) remain sealed. In favor: Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds. Abstained: Champlin. The motion carried by a vote of 11 in favor with 1 abstention.

V. Disclosure of Executive Session Votes
Vice Chair Reynolds reported there were six votes taken in executive session. The first vote, non-renewal of five teacher contracts, passed with Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds all voting in favor.

The second vote, non-renewal of one teacher contract, passed with Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds all voting in favor and Louzon recusing.

The third vote, approval of executive session minutes of January 11, 2024 – Litigation/Legal Update, passed with Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds voting in favor.

The fourth vote, approval of executive session minutes of January 9, 2024 – Home Instruction Requests, passed with Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds voting in favor.

The fifth vote, approval of home instruction requests, passed with Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds voting in favor.

The last vote, to return to open session, passed with Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds voting in favor.

VI. Recognition – The following were congratulated:
1. Chaia Elwell, who was in attendance with her parents, was congratulated for receiving a $10,000 scholarship from Raising Cane's Restaurant in Johnston for her heroic efforts in saving a customer who was choking. Superintendent Picard read a letter of thanks to Chaia and Senator Morgan presented her with a citation from the Rhode Island Senate. Senator Morgan noted that she would like to have Chaia at the State House in the near future.
2. High School Girls' Indoor Track: On January 13th, Erin vonHousen had another record-setting afternoon with two 1st place finishes at the Yale University High School Track Classic. She won the 1000 and broke her own mark set last year at the Last Chance Qualifier in Providence; her winning time in the 3000 lowered her record time that she broke two weeks ago. Both of her new record times in those events are the best so far this winter in Rhode Island.
On January 27th, Erin vonHousen broke the school record she set three weeks ago in the 600 with a 1st place time of 1:42:41; she also won the 3,000. Emily Brown set three personal bests winning the 55 hurdles, placing 2nd in the long jump and 3rd in the 600. Weeko Thompson won the shot put. At the Class Medium Indoor Track and Field Championships, held the first week in February, Emily Brown finished 2nd in the long jump breaking the previous program mark set in 2011. She also set

personal marks in the 55 hurdles for 3rd place and the 600 for 4th place. Erin vonHousen continued her assault on breaking her own records with a personal-best 1st place finish in the 1500; this time is also the best in the State this season. Weeko Thompson won the shot put with a season-best throw.
3. High School Boys' Indoor Track: On January 13th, Eli Sposato finished 5th in the 300 which broke the mark he set last week at the URI Indoor Track Classic; it is the third fastest time in RI this year. On January 27th, he won the 300 in a Southern Division Tri-Meet at the Providence Career and Technical Academy and he won this event again at the Class Medium Championships.
4. Senior Brooklyn Vacca qualified for the State Tournament on all four apparatuses and in the All-Around in a Division II Tri-Meet at Newport YMCA. She recorded a personal best on the beam (8.7) and recorded scores of 8.75 on floor, 8.6 on vault and 8.05 on bars. Sophomore Aila Carrillo's personal best on floor (8.1) qualified her for the Junior Varsity States while Taylor Browning will compete in the Junior Varsity States on Floor (7.8), vault (8.2) and bean (7.5).
5. High School Boys' Basketball player Owen Apice was named to the All-Tournament Team at the Westerly Community Credit Union Holiday Tournament.
6. High School Robotics Team advanced to the State Level Competition.
7. Middle School grade 8 student Iain LaMunyon placed 1st and grade 6 student Caylee Durning placed 2nd in the Middle School Spelling Bee.
8. High School Poetry Out Loud Finalists: Regan Clark (1st Place); Carter Stolt (2nd Place) and Penelope Nicolas (3rd Place). Regan will represent Chariho at the state level.
9. Students Charlotte Kona, Lola Hernandez, Shaelyn Musch and Eve Ogren took 1st place in the RI FFA Leadership Conference Agriculture Quiz Bowl.

VII. Public Forum
There was no one interested in speaking during Public Forum.

VIII. Business
A. Proposal to Build a Replacement Baseball Shed – Superintendent Picard recommended approval, per the memo from Ned Draper, dated February 6, 2024 and the email from Athletic Director Justin Cahoone dated, February 2, 2024, for Student Athlete Darren Clarke to build a replacement baseball shed, with the help of the Narragansett Council of Boy Scouts, as part of his Eagle Scout Project. The cost, approximately $6,000, will be donated through the Boy Scouts. She noted her appreciation that Darren thought Chariho. He was thanked.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was
VOTED: To approve the request for Student Athlete Darren Clarke to build a replacement baseball shed, with the help of the Narragansett Council of Boy Scouts, as part of his Eagle Scout Project. The cost, approximately $6,000, will be donated through the Boy Scouts. In favor: Unanimous.

B. Memorandum of Agreement Between the Chariho Regional School District and Chariho Education Support Professionals (ESP) Pertaining to Article 17.5.a of the Collective Bargaining Agreement – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of this MOA.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was
VOTED: To approve the Memorandum of Agreement Between the Chariho Regional School District and Chariho Education Support Professionals (ESP) Pertaining to Article 17.5.a of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. In favor: Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds. Abstained: Champlin. The motion carried by a vote of 11 in favor with 1 abstention.

C. 2024-2025 School Calendar – Superintendent Picard recommended this item be tabled.
Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was
VOTED: To table this item. In favor: Unanimous.

D. 2025 School Committee Schedule – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the 2025 School Committee Schedule.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was
VOTED: To approve the 2025 School Committee Schedule. In favor: Unanimous.

E. 2024-2025 High School/CTC Program of Studies – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the 2024-2025 High School/CTC Program of Studies. Jean is in attendance to answer questions or address concerns. There were no questions or concerns.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was
VOTED: To approve the 2024-2025 High School/CTC Program of Studies. In favor: Unanimous.

F. Approval of the Stage II Application for New Construction and Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan – Superintendent Picard reminded all that a Stage II Application is required to ensure we have an approved Capital Improvement Plan. As part of our application, we have proposed new construction for three elementary schools and approximately $20 million in health and safety needs on the main campus. The Necessity for School Construction Committee reviewed this prior to it going to the Committee. She welcomed SLAM representatives Cathy and Ted. Cathy thanked all who have come to the meetings. It was a lot of work but a good team effort with Colliers assisting. She began with a slideshow and noted that if the District was able to secure swing space, this would allow construction to move quicker with students off site. The existing buildings will come down and the plan is to use current sites for each of the three schools (Hopkinton School would be on the Ashaway School site). They plan to keep things like the Richmond Greenhouse and baseball field and will build around these. Outside renderings were reviewed with bus loops and parent drop-off/pick-up sites outlined. These will be kept separate at each site. She then reviewed the floor plan, noting the only difference in each of the buildings is that Richmond will house preschool classes so this area was outlined on the Richmond schematic. Each school will be a three-track school meaning three classes per grade but there will be additional rooms in the event that a class may be larger and need an additional classroom. Charlestown was reviewed and this building will house three special education classrooms. The buildings are designed with two zones; this is to keep public use separate from the rest of the school (i.e. gym and cafeteria space). The Hopkinton School building will be situated differently due to the contour of the land. This school will house the CALA Elementary School Program. Materials, colors, finish, etc. are all conversations that will occur later in the process. Gina explained that the purpose of Stage II is to show RIDE we have a plan that works. Nothing will begin until next year when the District will begin the phase-out of Hope Valley School. People in the community have felt that the timeline was too tight so we have reached out to another community that has vacant schools. If we can secure swing space, we can do two schools simultaneously. Cathy then reviewed project costs with the estimate to be around $40 million per school. Gina noted that if the District is able to do two buildings at the same time, this could possibly save at least a million dollars. Colliers and SLAM have done a yeoman's job in just a short time and they were thanked. Cathy stated that the package going to ride (application) is almost 4,000 pages. Gina added that everything that was discussed is in that packet. Chair Giusti stated she will open this up for questions beginning with the School Committee. She reminded all that they should limit their comments; two bites to the apple, as the agenda this evening is very long. Tyler questioned the Hopkinton building – if the playground is going to be located in the back, there is a big hill there. He does not see an area for it. Cathy replied that they are aware of the hill and the plan is to move it back. Tyler noted that when he adds up all five boxes, the total is $2.4 million over. Ned explained that this includes capital projects which are scaled up. The bond is only $145,000,000. Donna commented on how excited she is about this very creative design. The new buildings will be much safer than what they have now. She thanked them for a job well done. Jessica's concern was the same as Tyler's. Is cost escalation included in the figures? Cathy responded it is. RIDE makes you escalate to proposed construction times so this will be different for each project. Jessica asked the projects you have completed, how typical was it that you veered off from Stage II to Stage III? Cathy replied that during COVID it was wild, but they have not had too many changes between Stage II and Stage III. If you hire a new architect, it is up to you to tell them how to keep the project on budget but they will re-do all the schematics. Gina added that those districts who stay with the same

architect tend to have projects that move smoother. If you shift, there is back work to do. Both Cranston and Johnston Superintendents have offered to come to one of our School Committee meetings to speak about their projects. They are a little upset over the comments that have come from our community stating their projects have cost overruns and are not on time. Many Superintendents have offered to come. She spoke with Bill Brian from Gilbane over a comment that was made that the materials would be cheap. Bill stated that RIDE will not allow this. That is why you have a Project Manager so there is a great deal of oversight. Stage III is when you will decide but RIDE won't allow you to use cheap materials. Gina noted that she asked Bill about the work force. Bill stated that you will have that same conversation with all industries. It is unfair and unrealistic to say this is a problem. You put in a guarantee for fixed pricing. Karen thanked all for their work and their patience with the District. We submitted today; when are we notified if we will get the bonuses to which Gina replied between May and June. The 76% is almost a given. They are just waiting on the Richmond facility control index. Polly questioned what the $20 million would cover on the campus to which Ned replied the CTC roof, HVAC and skylight at the Middle School, security at the High School, emergency generator, bathrooms, etc. Gina added that the slide deck on the main website goes through all the projects. She can send this out again. Polly asked why they would need to do Stage I and Stage II again. Gina responded that if this does not pass, they have to go back out again. Tyler asked if Stage II had been submitted to which Gina explained that due to the snowstorm and cancellation of Tuesday Night's meeting, they called RIDE and were told that we need to provide a reason why the meeting was rescheduled and send them the agenda. Kathryn asked what type of material is proposed for the exterior of the new schools. Cathy noted that it is a material made of cement and fiber. It goes up in panels. Kathryn asked what the life expectancy was to which Cathy responded that RIDE guidelines are that all materials have to last at least 50 years but they expect that it will exceed this by a lot. Craig asked Cathy to review the footprint of Charlestown School as it appears the kids are entering into the gym from the bus loop. Cathy noted that if the bus loops stays in the back, they could enter into the gym. This would be re-evaluated in Stage III. Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the Stage II Application for New Construction and Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan. Andrew made a motion, which was seconded by Jessica, to approve the Superintendent's recommendation. Sharon Davis stated she had two questions: 1) what is the percentage on the escalation and 2) she recently went to an Open House at Habitat for Humanity and CHARIHOtech students participated in the building of this house. She thinks it would be great if they could be included in the project. Cathy commented that the percentage for escalation is 7.08% on the 1st two and something closer to 12% on the last one. Please don't quote her as she has been working with a lot of numbers but it is on the last document. Gina added that there are a lot of regulations we have to follow. Kim St. Clair from Hopkinton, looking at the renderings, didn't notice a place for Reading Specialists or any specialists to work with students. Gina explained that this will come out more in Stage III to which Cathy added that is what the bump-out rooms are for. Each school has these. She had noted them when she reviewed the floor plan. They can be used as teacher planning space, flex classrooms or for specialists. Gina commented that this is a schematic; they will go into more detail in Stage III. We just cannot say what we want, we have to be able to explain what the space is for to RIDE. They will tell us what we can do as far as space. Kim again stated her concern. There doesn't seem to be space for PT, OT, etc. Karen replied that there is no dedicated classroom space noted yet. There is flex space. There is a change in philosophy now and that is to keep kids in classrooms more. Diane Tefft noted her concern that Hopkinton's tax increase on a $400,000 home just for the bond is expected to be $269.57. This does not include the school or town budgets. Bob Burns from Hopkinton asked where does the District plan to house students? He also noted the same concern as Diane. At the Hopkinton Town Council Meeting, discussion centered on the fact that the amount that is being pushed right now is just for the bond. The dollar amount may change because the District also has a budget vote coming up. You will be asking for two separate numbers. Gina explained that they cannot really say what the increase will be to taxpayers as they do not know what the towns will ask for in their budgets so these numbers will change. Bob noted that community is concerned that they don't know what the numbers will be. He asked if the plan is to still phase-out Hope Valley School. Chair Giusti reminded him that discussion on this has to be limited to the agenda item to which Gina noted that it is part of it but nothing will happen to Hope Valley School if the budget isn't cut. Our

biggest conversation is around efficiency and transportation costs will be reduced if we look at bussing kids to their closest school. Bob asked that they bring the slide up for Hopkinton School. Is the District aware that the Town of Hopkinton will be taking down the 1904 building and they have voted and approved for a monument where your driveway is proposed to go? Gina replied that this was not told to them but they were at a team meeting today with Hopkinton officials and they will be meeting again to determine where this monument will go. Tyler commented that the fiscal statement is something he asked for. Bob is correct that the school district does still have a budget which includes capital projects. They are rolled into the budget. At the end of the day, there will be a cost savings with the new buildings that can go against the budget as there will be little to no capital projects for the elementary schools. If there is any confusion about the numbers, he is happy to talk with anyone. For an average home in Hopkinton, it is expected there will be a $269.00 increase for this project. Don't push back on administration – talk to him. Jeremy Palmer from Hopkinton stated the biggest concern is the majority of questions are left to the unknown. We all want a big beautiful school to come to but not all are fortunate to have a budget to cover it. His concern is when a question is asked to someone in the know, it should be a definitive answer, not maybe this or maybe that. What has it cost so far to get to this point? There should be a harder plan in progress before moving forward. It is not your money. If our schools are in disarray, where have our tax dollars gone? Gina stated she would be happy to share with him information he is requesting. We are required by law to spend a certain amount each year to maintain the buildings and we have done that. Sharon Davis asked what the cost of the swing space would be to which Gina noted there will be soft costs but most of it is reimbursable. Donna stated that this is an opportunity for us to maybe spend a little more. Taxpayers in the State of Rhode Island are paying for every other district to have new buildings. We will save on maintenance. Karen made a motion, which was seconded by Linda, to move the question. Senator Elaine Morgan went to the podium and ignored the Chair when she was informed they would be voting on the motion. At this point, the public and Senator Morgan began to talk over the Chair and would not adhere to the Chair's response to stop. Chair Giusti noted that the Senator should know better and called for a recess.

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Karen Reynolds and it was
VOTED: To recess the meeting at 8:21 PM. In favor: Chambers, Champlin, Colasante, Giusti, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Purcell and Reynolds. Opposed: Hopkins, Phelps and Pouliot. The motion carried by a vote of 9 in favor with 3 opposed.

The meeting was reconvened at 8:33 PM. Chair Giusti asked Karen and Linda to rescind their motion and second to move the question so answers could be provided for questions that some people have. Karen rescinded her motion and Linda rescinded her second. Chair Giusti then stated that the question posed by Mr. Palmer was how much had been spent so far to which it was noted that the School Committee appropriated funds in the previous budget of $440,000. Polly asked if she could elaborate as this is the second time they went out. It was explained that Polly is going back to 2020 to which Polly asked how much in total did we spend on this? Gina replied that $440.000 was approved for SLAM and Colliers for this process. If you are asking about RGB when they were the architect, that predates her so you would have to go back and research it. Craig noted that this has to be done every five years and will continued to be required by RIDE. It is mandated by the State. Kathryn noted she had a few comments related to Bond options A & B. Gina explained there is no Option B unless this doesn't pass. Kathryn said she will speak to Option A. Mario told them they would be tracking over $3.5 billion in projects. This may not be the industry to do the work at once. Our Superintendent is responsibly looking at swing spaces and this is a selling point and the cost could be the same to build three new schools as it is to renovate, but even if the payment is the same, there is a difference between a 25-year bond and a 6-year bond. Personally, she feels it is wise to get rid of debt fast; don't spread it over time. There are things that may be out of our control such as a supply shortage, labor shortage, environmental, etc. She was in favor but now feels there are too many things out of their control. RIGL adds 4% to Bond Option B which will bring it up to 65%. The new project could get up to 76% reimbursement but for the sake of 11%, should we expose ourselves to risk. She won't vote for this to go further. Chair Giusti stated that public will now be allowed to speak. Please state your name and town and please listen for the answer after

you ask a question. Senator Elaine Morgan from Hopkinton commented that Newport has a toxic waste dump and our area could have been toxic waste dumps as well. What if we uncover this? Kids can't play in their own yards. We have a lot of stuff dumped. Pam Carr from Hopkinton questioned the need to address Hope Valley this year to which Gina explained that the Stage II application does not have anything to do with the decommissioning of Hope Valley School. Based on financials and the budget, the School Committee will make a decision whether or not it is financially wise to keep Hope Valley open based on the budget. Jeremy Palmer from Hopkinton commented on the pitch behind the current Ashaway School. That area has a substantial pitch; is there a plan in place with costs to fill it in? Cathy from SLAM stated that he is correct; they do have to push the hill back and that is built into the project. They will modify the hill. Louise Dinsmore from Richmond felt a correction needed to be made concerning the costs so far as $10,000 should be added for bond counsel to which Gina explained that is not part of Stage II. She understands it is confusing. Louise asked for a show of hands of those Committee members who have spoken with other school committee members regarding their building projects. Several raised hands. Louise stated that she proactively spoke with a SC member in Newport. He informed her that it took seven years to get to the point of active construction and they are currently about $23.3 million over budget. They had to remove CTC automotive and cosmetology programs and for many of our low to moderate income students and as a pipeline for work, they go through automotive or cosmetology. She just wanted people to be aware of this. These were removed from the plan because of cost. He also stated they do not have enough space for their administrators which to her seems like a big red flag. He added that there will not be a track built either at Rogers High School. To Senator Morgan's point, a pile of debris that is going to cost another $4 million on top of the $23 million that they are over budget to either bury or remove the waste. Before moving with the proposal for Stage II, consider the impact this will have on taxpayers; many will be priced out of their homes. Chair Giusti stated that if we are building the schools where our existing schools' footprints are and if anyone has any knowledge of toxic waste in those footprints, she would love somebody to bring that to their attention because that's where our children are right now. So Senator, if you think there is toxic waste at our elementary schools now, that is something that we really need to be addressing so we can mitigate it before we start doing anything else. Senator Morgan replied that they won't know till they start digging. They covered it all up. Behind Ashaway School, that whole field is a possible, could be possibly waste under that so we won't know till we start digging. The records are really shoddy. We don't know what's under these schools, neither did Newport. Tyler asked if core samples were done; were they done all over the sites? Gina replied that borings were done but not all over the sites due to the cost. There was no sense in spending money if they don't need to. More will be done during Stage III to which Tyler responded that so by Stage III they will know, because this is a valid concern, before they truly break ground or take a school building down. Gina noted that Hopkinton right now is taking the 1904 building down and they have to follow all the same protocols. Kathryn just wanted to say that when she spoke to the Chair of the Newport School Committee, who is heavily involved in this project, she said she's spending at least twenty hours a week and has been for a very long time. She said they faced criticism in their community – like why didn't they know about the environmental issue. She said there was no way they could foresee this so she just wanted to share this. Chair Giusti stated while she knows this is off topic, she also spoke to the Newport Chair and that is not at all the conversation that they had. She feels they have had a robust conversation tonight and it is time to vote.

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Jessica Purcell and it was
VOTED: To approve the Stage II Application for New Construction and Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan. In favor: Chambers, Champlin, Giusti, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Purcell and Reynolds. Opposed: Phelps and Pouliot. Abstained: Colasante and Hopkins. The motion carried by a vote of 8 in favor with 2 opposed and 2 abstentions.

Kathryn asked for clarification, we have to have a Stage II application to which Gina replied that by law, Stage I and Stage II have to happen. Stage III will only happen if voters approve it.

G. Project SCALES (Supporting Community Agriculture and Local Education Systems) Grant – Superintendent Picard noted that Katie Kirakosian is present to provide an overview and answer any questions. The Goals of this Grant, inspired by Susie Scanapieco's CALA Entrepreneurship Students, are to increase locally grown foods in school meals, increase space efficiency in cafeterias, decrease student food waste and increase student nutrition security. She recommended approval to submit the Project SCALES Grant request, in the amount of $149,043 (over 27 months) to the United States Department of Agriculture. A special thanks to Katie, Susie and her students. Craig made a motion, which was seconded by Andrew, to approve submission of this grant request. Karen asked if this will help with our composting to which Gina replied that it will help us think about the waste. Katie added that she is working on another grant that she will be presenting soon that will address composting. Polly questioned the timeline of 27 months. Katie explained that Period 1 – the first three months from April 1, 2024 to June 30, 2024 – will be used for the purchase of equipment. They will dive into the work over the next two years – July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026. Gina commented that the District is fortunate to have Master Gardeners from URI assisting. Katie noted that they have started this process at the High School. We have a "share" cart that is being utilized. Students have to take all components of their hot lunch but some do not want everything so packaged items and fruit are placed on the cart. After school a lot of clubs meet and athletes gather in the caf while waiting for their bus. The share cart is available for them. There is now less food going to waste.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was
VOTED: To approve the submission of the Project SCALES Grant request, in the amount of $149,043 (over 27 months) to the United States Department of Agriculture. In favor: Unanimous.

H. Discussion of District Lines for School Enrollment and Transportation – Superintendent Picard reported that Lillian Benoit and Michelle Pelchat presented a first draft of potential redistricting lines that would make our transportation runs more efficient and ensure our students were on the shortest bus ride possible. The goal will be to have a plan before we begin Kindergarten Registration in mid-late March. The first draft was presented at the Necessity for School Construction meeting last Monday. Lillian and Michelle are in attendance to answer any questions. Lillian explained the rationale behind the new district lines. Tyler questioned the far reaches of Hopkinton – how is that not closer to Richmond than to Ashaway? Lillian responded that the distance is about the same but they also have to keep in mind enrollment numbers in each school. The bus will be going to Canonchet so Grassy Pond is easier for this bus to get those students. We can bend the lines in the future if we need to. These lines are not set in stone. The goal is to lower the time on the bus for students while also lowering transportation costs. Michelle added that they did use Google maps for distance. Tyler questioned what the bus time might be from that point in Hopkinton to Ashaway to which Lillian replied it will probably be about 45 minutes. Larry asked what happens if a kid opts out and wants to go to another school? Gina replied that Chariho is a District but we have an inter-district policy that allows parents to voluntarily switch their child's elementary school. When a student registers, they will be assigned to the closest school. Polly noted that if a parent wants to go outside of the district line, they will have to transport their child to which Gina added that is what has been done all along. Jessica added that she drives past Hope Valley School to get to Richmond School but she is a Richmond resident. We are regional. We transport over a large area. She realizes this is a big change for some folks. Andrew stated that he is generally supportive and asked how this could be communicated proactively so families are aware. Gina replied that they first want to make sure this works for the School Committee. Anyone newly-enrolled would be affected. When a student registers, the school they attend would be based on the lines. Tyler asked if they knew of any operational efficiencies to which Gina responded that just by doing this, they should see around $800,000 in savings. Ned explained, on the business side, next year FY25 we could remove 2 or 3 buses. This is part of the plan that we will discuss later. Gina noted that as far as communicating this, she will ask the principals to share this with their families. Tyler recommended they also reach out to private schools to which Gina replied they always do for kindergarten.

I. Discussion and Action for Possible Use of An Additional Swing Space to Enhance the Building Schedule for Three New Elementary Schools – Superintendent Picard noted they are happy to report that we have located a potential additional swing space that we could use to build 2 schools at once if the bond passes and if we so choose. This would provide members of the public with the confidence needed to see we have a potential path to accelerate the timeline. We were fortunate enough to locate a potential swing space next to Charlestown (13 miles). We visited the location and toured the facility with the Interim Superintendent, Bob Littlefield, and the director of buildings and grounds, Brian Mahoney. The space would allow us to build 2 schools simultaneously while alleviating the timeline concerns and potentially saving the district money. This resolution allows us to communicate with South Kingstown and determine a potential plan that would come back to the School Committee for final approval. Attached is a Memorandum of Agreement which will allow her to speak to the South Kingstown Interim Superintendent. No final decisions will be made without School Committee approval. Andrew made a motion, which was seconded by Jessica and Karen, to approve the MOA which will allow Chariho's Superintendent to speak to the South Kingstown Interim Superintendent about the possible use of swing space. Karen asked how long would it take from Charlestown to this school to which Gina replied 19 minutes. Larry asked what kids would go? Gina replied Charlestown School students and staff. Larry asked what about Ashaway? Gina noted they will go to Hope Valley School. Craig asked if they could name the school to which Gina replied they visited Wakefield Elementary School. South Kingstown has other options which they will show us as well. Craig asked if the 19 minutes was going Route 1 or back roads to which Ned responded both. He drove them both. Tyler asked if they looked at bussing to which Gina replied they have. Lil and Michelle work with South Kingstown as this is also owned by Ocean State Transit. We don't yet know the numbers for incoming K students or incoming K students for 2025 so this is only 50% accurate as two grades don't exist yet. No one will be going further than we go now. Diane Tefft asked when they pay the rent will there be tuition costs as well? Gina responded "no" as it will be our school and our students. We will lease the building from South Kingstown. She has spoken with RIDE and we would get about $100,000 but we have to have their permission. Craig questioned janitorial services to which Gina replied that we plan to provide that. All services will be the same as what is currently being offered at Charlestown School. Karen asked that under the Bond, is the cost for swing space reimbursable from the State to which Gina replied it is. She can share the law if anyone would like to see it. Ned commented that with inflation as it is, it is an advantage to the State and to us to offer this. Larry asked if they would be sharing the school with South Kingstown to which Gina again replied that it will not be shared. It will be Charlestown School only. Louise Dinsmore questioned the condition of the school to which Gina responded it is three times the size of Charlestown School, more secure and a very nice space. It was well kept. Louise asked if there was another swing space available. Gina replied that Curtis Corner Middle School is closed. South Kingstown currently has three schools they are no longer using due to the drop in enrollment. They are planning to demo Curtis Corner so she is not sure about use of this school. The other school is on South Road. Jeremy Palmer asked if they use the school on an ongoing basis, will South Kingstown have to regionalize with Chariho. Gina replied that would not be the case. We will lease the school from SK. We would not be joining Chariho and SK. Michaela Champlin questioned the decommissioning of Hope Valley School to which Gina explained that if the bond passes, all schools would stay together as they are right now. They would determine what schools would begin first. If the Hopkinton Elementary School was started first, Ashaway students and staff would move to Hope Valley once it is empty. The use of swing space will allow the District to do two schools at once and move the project along quicker. It has not yet been determined which two would be the first to be done.

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Jessica Purcell and Karen Reynolds and it was VOTED: To approve the Memorandum of Agreement which will allow Chariho's Superintendent to speak to the South Kingstown Interim Superintendent about the possible use of swing space to enhance the building schedule for three new elementary schools. In favor: Chambers, Champlin, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Purcell and Reynolds. Opposed: Pouliot. The motion carried by a vote of 11 in favor with 1 opposed.

J. Budget Transfers – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the transfers for February 13, 2024.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Andrew McQuaide and it was
VOTED: To approve the Transfers for February 13, 2024. In favor: Unanimous.

K. FY24 Budget Update – Andrew stated, given the late hour, to which Tyler interjected that he had a question. WB Healthcare, this sticks in his craw a bit, as they talked about a budget freeze six months ago; now we are formally requesting one. Ned noted that in fairness to the conversation they had with the Budget Subcommittee, we said we would watch healthcare but it has not gotten better. We held schools to their budget the last six months. Now we will try to find additional savings. Gina added that she asked Tyler in the fall about this and he stated he would wait.

L. Appointment of Two School Committee Members per Town to Building Committee – Superintendent Picard stated that if the School District moves to Stage III of the Building Plan, we will need to have two School Committee members per town appointed to the Building Committee. This will ensure that we are prepared to move efficiently to this stage pending approval of the Bond Legislation. The Necessity for School Construction Committee is done because we have submitted our application. Chair Giusti asked for volunteers. Craig and Linda both agreed to represent Charlestown.

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Donna Chambers and it was
VOTED: To appoint Craig Louzon and Linda Lyall to the Chariho Building Committee representing Charlestown. In favor: Chambers, Champlin, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds. Abstained: Louzon and Lyall. The motion carried by a vote of 10 in favor with 2 abstentions.

Tyler asked what would stop a town from appointing a School Committee member to the Building Committee to which Gina responded that the Chariho Act is very specific on the numbers each town can appoint but does not state they cannot appoint a School Committee member. They could if they want to do this. Chair Giusti noted that she would like to serve for Hopkinton. Tyler and Larry both volunteered to which Craig reminded them that this is very time consuming. Chair Giusti stated that if both are committed to serving, she is fine with them being appointed. Craig commented that this was very noble of her – what she just did.

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Patricia Pouliot and it was
VOTED: To appoint Tyler Champlin and Larry Phelps to the Chariho Building Committee representing Hopkinton. In favor: Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds. Abstained: Champlin and Phelps. The motion carried by a vote of 10 in favor with 2 abstentions.

Karen volunteered for Richmond as did Pat. Karen asked Jessica and Kathryn if they were fine with this to which both noted they were as both Karen and Pat served on the Necessity for School Construction Committee.

Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Tyler Champlin and Craig Louzon and it was
VOTED: To appoint Karen Reynolds and Patricia Pouliot to the Chariho Building Committee representing Richmond. In favor: Chambers, Champlin, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps and Purcell. Abstained: Pouliot and Reynolds. The motion carried by a vote of 10 in favor with 2 abstentions.

M. FY25 Budget
1. Adjustments to FY25 Budget – Superintendent Picard stated that this is an opportunity for adjustments to be made prior to approval at which time it then becomes the Committee's budget.

This is not the last time the Committee can lower the budget. If adjustments are made, she will request that the Committee take a short recess so Ned can recalculate figures. She reviewed a list containing requested School Committee potential budget adjustments with a few adjustments coming from the Curriculum Office. They were asked to try to get Hopkinton to no more than a 2% increase. She noted that new legislation is being proposed that will decrease our budget by $330,000 due to a decrease in enrollment. The Committee will need to provide direction as this is not yet included in the budget. How far do you want to go? Jessica stated that she would like to see percent increases like it shows in the other boxes to which Gina noted this is on the website. Tyler clarified that this proposed budget takes into account the $437,000 to decommission Hope Valley School but not the projected $338,000 to which Gina replied "yes". It is a reduction to the funding formula. That is why they need direction from the Committee as this was not in the budget. The State feels if they begin implementing it this year, it won't be so hard next year. Andrew requested that members contact their representatives of the General Assembly and get their insight. Gina stated that she did reach out and they have requested a meeting at the State House. Polly asked for clarification. If they are voting to approve this budget, are they voting to take these grades out of Hope Valley School; should they vote separately on this? Gina commented that if a motion is not made to add back in the $437,000, this would begin the process to decommission Hope Valley. Chair Giusti reiterated that they can accomplish that by putting in the motion but where else would they get this money? What we approve tonight then becomes the School Committee's budget. On March 5th we will give the community another opportunity to discuss it. Jessica asked if South Kingstown closed three elementary schools to which Gina clarified it was two elementary schools and a middle school. Jessica asked what the process was they went through. Gina replied that Bob was not there but she can ask him. It was not efficient to keep them all open because enrollment dropped. They saw a bigger hit than we did. Polly asked if they need to make a motion to put back the $437,000 to which Tyler added that this is a very touchy issue. When he ran for this position, he ran to keep this District running as efficiently as possible. If anyone listens in Hopkinton, there are some who want their cake and eat it too. He will support a motion to add back the $437,000. Polly made a motion, which was seconded by Tyler, to add $437,000 back to the budget for Hope Valley School. Tyler felt that May 7th will answer it and give them better direction. Craig stated that he respects what they want, you want to save what is yours. You want to keep two community schools but you won't get to 2% in Hopkinton. With every action there is a reaction. Somewhere down the line, Hope Valley School is going to close. There will be three schools for financial efficiency. It is inevitable that it will happen. Kathryn wanted to remind everyone that this will affect the bond reimbursement for newer/fewer to which Gina responded that if voters approve the bond on May 7th, newer/fewer will happen as there will be three schools and not four. Chair Giusti cautioned all that this is not keeping Hope Valley School open forever, maybe a year.

Tyler Champlin made a motion, seconded by Pat Pouliot and it was
VOTED: To extend the meeting beyond 10:00 PM. In favor: Chambers, Champlin, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds. Opposed: Louzon and McQuaide. The motion carried by a vote of 10 in favor with 2 opposed.

Chair Giusti explained that the motion is to put back in the budget $437,000 to keep Hope Valley School open which would result in enrolling kindergarten there next year. Jessica and Larry both asked if they could see the numbers now; what they are with this amount added back. Ned responded that Charlestown would see a 1.65% increase, Richmond would see a 1.84% increase and Hopkinton's increase would be 4.26% for a 2.7% overall increase before State Aid. After State Aid, it would be a 2.18% overall increase (Charlestown-1.01%, Richmond-1.11%, Hopkinton-4.26%). Gina reminded all that this does not take into consideration the proposed $330,000 reduction from the State. Chair Giusti questioned why Hopkinton did not change (before and after state aid). Ned noted it was the relationship with the State Aid change that went up after we did the budget. Larry asked what the total budget was with the $437,000 to which Ned replied $66,564,592; Gina noted this does not include the $330,000 that may be the reduction in State aid. Craig questioned what the fund balance was at; Ned responded 2.25%. Chair Giusti commented that there is no way she is touching that as they would be gambling twice. Jessica noted she is not in favor of adding the

$437,000 back in. Tyler stated that they still have an opportunity to cut it. They should give the voters an opportunity to decide. Chair Giusti noted her concern. If the budget does not pass, it may not be because people are not necessarily in favor of it. It may be because it does not make fiscal sense to keep Hope Valley open as this is only fair to the Hopkinton community; not the two other towns. Jessica felt a 4.26% increase to Hopkinton does not seem feasible. We have been having this conversation for years. We need to start the process. She is not opposed to letting folks decide on that number. Craig commented that Polly and Tyler have his vote. Hopkinton, however, is over 4%; will the State even approve this? Chair Giusti stated that might be a Town Council conversation as well.

Polly Hopkins made a motion, seconded by Tyler Champlin and it was
VOTED: To add $437,000 back to the budget for Hope Valley School. In favor: Champlin, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot and Reynolds. Opposed: Chambers, McQuaide and Purcell. The motion carried by a vote of 9 in favor with 3 opposed.

Larry asked if they could make a motion to cut all items recommended by Sharon Davis. It was explained to Larry that motions would need to be made for each cut he would like to make. Larry began with a motion to reduce the benefit line 52046. He then retracted his motion as he needed to figure this out as it looks like there will not be a savings on this. He then made a motion, which was seconded by Polly, to cut the benefits/health row #1375, item 52000. Gina advised all that she is making no recommendation for cuts to this item. We are already over what it was reduced to last year. Andrew added that the Committee just added $400,000 for the purpose of retaining Hope Valley School, but we are looking to reduce an item that this School Committee made a strategic choice last year to cut. He will vote against this request. Why would we make the same mistake twice? Larry replied because it is a savings to the community to which Andrew tried to explain that it isn't a savings to the community when the District is still incurring the cost. Larry stated they can have the teachers pay more. Gina noted that the exact same thing happened last year. They advised against it and the cut was too aggressive. Chair Giusti asked Larry if he wanted to rethink this to which Larry replied "yes". He removed his motion and Polly removed her second. Chair Giusti requested that if there are any other cuts to be made, please know what action you want to take. She suggested that research be done before making a motion.

2. Approval of FY25 Budget – Superintendent Picard recommended approval of the FY25 budget in the amount of $66,564,592, with an increase to Charlestown of 1.65%; Richmond 1.84% and Hopkinton 4.26% for a 2.7% overall increase before State Aid. After State Aid, it would be an overall increase of 2.18%. This does not include the possibility of a reduction in State Aid to the District of $330,000.

Tyler Champlin made a motion, seconded by Karen Reynolds and it was
VOTED: To approve the budget as it currently stands. In favor: Chambers, Champlin, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds. Opposed: McQuaide. The motion carried by a vote of 10 in favor with 1 opposed (Louzon was not in attendance for the vote).

IX. Consent Agenda Items
Chair Giusti asked if there were any items to be pulled. Tyler pulled A-1. Craig acknowledged the donations and thanked the donors.

Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Tyler Champlin and it was
VOTED: To move the balance of the Consent Agenda Items. In favor: Unanimous.

A. Minutes – Approved the following:
2. Executive Session Minutes of January 9, 2024 – Approval of Executive Session Minutes of December 12, 2023 (minutes not sealed).
3. Regular Session Minutes of January 9, 2024.
4. Special Meeting/Budget Workshop Minutes of January 11, 2024.

5. Omnibus Meeting Minutes of January 17, 2024.
6. Special Meeting Minutes of January 23, 2024.
B. Bill Review – Accepted.
C. Personnel Actions – None at this time.
D. Permission to Issue Bids/Request Quote – Approved issuance of the following:
1. CTC Roof RFP
E. Permission to Award Contracts – Awarded the following:
1. Bond-Related Financial Advisor Services to Hilltop Securities Inc. per the memo from Ned Draper dated February 7, 2024 and the attached agreement.
F. Home Instruction – Action taken in executive session.
G. Grants – None at this time.
H. Donations – Accepted the following:
1. Donation from RICAN, Charlestown, RI of 1 case (48 ct) Poland Spring water, 1 case (36 ct) Apple & Eve Juice, 1 case (40 ct) Pirate's Booty (popcorn), 1 case (36 ct) Pretzels and 1 case (28 ct) Pop Corners to Richmond Elementary School for student snacks. They donated in the fall and again the middle of January.
2. Donation from Downey-Weaver Auxiliary Unit 34 of miscellaneous school supplies, valued at $224.00, to Hope Valley Elementary School.
3. Donation from the Maddie Potts Foundation of $1,100 for CHS Unified Sports. Parent Alicia Fusaro purchased shirts for the Unified Volleyball Team and the rest was put into their account.
4. Donation from Global Partners LP, Waltham, MA of a $500 Grant through their partnership with ExxonMobil Educational Alliance Program to Hope Valley Elementary School.

A-1 Minutes – Craig Louzon made a motion, seconded by Linda Lyall and it was
VOTED: To approve the Special Meeting Minutes of January 3, 2024. In favor: Chambers, Colasante, Giusti, Hopkins, Louzon, Lyall, McQuaide, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell and Reynolds. Abstained: Champlin. The motion carried by a vote of 11 in favor with 1 abstention.

X. Reports
A. Subcommittee Reports
1. Health and Wellness Subcommittee will meet on Tuesday, March 5, 2024 at 4:00 PM in the High School Library.
2. Necessity for School Construction Committee met on January 31, 2024. They met again Monday night which was their last meeting.
B. Superintendent's Report
1. CHARIHOtech Open House was a success. We have received hundreds of applications.
2. SurveyWorks – Superintendent Picard noted that she hopes all will take part in this survey.
3. Annual District Public Budget Hearing – Will be held on Tuesday, March 5, 2024 at 7:30 PM in the Middle School Auditorium. If there is inclement weather or lack of a quorum (must have 25 registered voters from each town), the meeting will be postponed and held on Wednesday, March 6, 2024 (same time and place). The Warrant for this meeting was included in the packet.
C. Coming Events are noted on the District Calendar and she asked all to please review this.

XI. School Committee Requests for Future Agenda Items or Legal Opinions
There were no requests.

XII. Adjournment
Andrew McQuaide made a motion, seconded by Karen Reynolds and Tyler Champlin and it was
VOTED: To adjourn at 10:20 PM. In favor: Unanimous.

Donna J. Sieczkiewicz, Clerk