MINUTES PUBLIC SESSION
CHARIHO REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
JULY 14, 2026

Location: Chariho HS Library & Conference Room, 453 Switch Rd., Wood River Junction, RI
Call to order: 6:30pm
Executive Session: 6:32pm
Reconvene Public Session: 7:00pm
Adjourn: 9:24pm

The public portion of this meeting can be viewed HERE

Call to order with Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence – This meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by Chair Callhan.

Members in attendance at call to order: Callahan, Eaves, Hopkins, Louzon, Lowe, Lyall, Phelps, Purcell, Reynolds, and Tefft. (Pouliot – entered at 7:00pm); (Chapman – entered at 6:40pm)

Motion/Vote to go into Executive Session was made by Member Louzon and seconded by Member Reynolds and the members entered into Executive Session at 6:32pm. **A. Under the authority of R.I. Gen. Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(5) for the purpose of discussions or considerations related to the acquisition of real property for public purposes, wherein advanced public information would be detrimental to public interest.** *(1. Land update; 2. Work with Charlestown Town Council for Lease).* **B. Under the authority of R.I. General Laws § 42-46-5(a)(2); Sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation, or work sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation**. *(ESP Negotiations Update).* **C. 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 the sealed Executive Session Minutes of June 9, 2026 - Home Instruction Requests;* ***2.*** *Approval of additional Home Instruction Requests.* ***Any persons being discussed had been notified.***

Closing/Sealing of Executive Session Minutes – Superintendent Picard recommended closing and sealing the minutes of tonight's executive session as they pertain to the following: 1) Discussions or considerations related to the acquisition of real property for public purposes, wherein advanced public information would be detrimental to public interest; 2) Collective bargaining or litigation, or work sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation; 3) Reviewing and/or approving matters which relate to the privacy of students and their records. **Motion:** The motion to close and seal the Executive Session minutes was made by Member Louzon and seconded by Member Reynolds. **Discussion:** None. **Vote:** Unanimous in favor (all members were present) ***Approved.***

Disclosure of Executive Session Votes Chair Callahan disclosed three votes from tonight's Executive Session: 1) Vote to approve Executive Session Minutes from June 9, 2026 – 9 in favor (Callahan, Eaves, Hopkins, Lowe, Louzon, Lyall, Phelps, Purcell, Reynolds); 1 abstention (Tefft); two members absent (Pouliot and Chapman) ***Approved.*** **2.** Vote to approve homeschooling requests – 10 in favor (Callahan, Eaves, Hopkins, Lowe, Louzon, Lyall, Phelps, Purcell, Reynolds and Tefft); two members absent (Pouliot and Chapman) ***Approved.*** **3.** Vote to end this evening's Executive Session – 11 in favor (Callahan, Chapman (just arrived), Eaves, Hopkins, Lowe, Louzon, Lyall, Phelps, Purcell, Reynolds and Tefft); 1 member absent (Pouliot). ***Approved.***

Recognitions – Superintendent Picard read the following recognitions aloud. Both Leonardo Paradise and Ms. Prior were in attendance. **2026 National Competition for FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) – Leonardo Paradise**, a rising senior, will be entering his fourth year in the Computer Technology Pathway program. He placed 6th in the Networking Infrastructures competition. "I had an amazing time competing at the FBLA NLC in San Antonio, Texas. It was great to explore such a unique location and meet countless FBLA members from all across America. We were able to learn directly from real-life business leaders during the workshop and were able to experience the culture of Texas through an authentic Rodeo and great local food. I'd

like to thank Ms. Prior, the Chariho School Committee and our sponsors for helping to give me and my fellow members such a spectacular opportunity. I can't wait to compete again next year." Additionally, Chapter advisor **Susan Prior,** was honored at the opening ceremony, Parade of States, and Eastern Regional Rally as the ***Rhode Island Outstanding Local Chapter Advisor***. Chariho FBLA was acknowledged for achieving **Silver Chapter status**. "It has been an honor and a pleasure seeing our Chariho students showcase their immense talents on the national stage. As their advisor, I had the privilege of watching them grow into confident leaders, who support one another and never stop striving for excellence. Their accomplishments reflect not only their hard work and commitment but also the character and pride they have brought to Chariho High School every day." The following Chariho students also competed in their respective categories: Ezri Acton (Job Interview); Mackenzie Andrade (Public Speaking); Dennis Alvarez Bliven (Supply Chain Management); The team of Lillian Baxter, Ella Murphy, and Lidia Taber (Digital Video Production); George Browning (Introduction to Business Procedures); Rose Chapkounian (Chapter Voting Delegate); Connor Gormly (Personal Finance); Efe Koseoglu (Healthcare Administration); Karen Linke (Business Communication); Abigail Nunn (Introduction to Business Concepts & Chapter Voting Delegate); Nicholas Wilusz (Economics).

2026 National Competition for SkillsUSA - Abigayle Fortin who graduated in CHARIHO's class of 2026, earned the Education Careers graduation Cord from Mrs. Schofield. Abigayle placed Gold in Early Childhood in the State competition this year and Silver in the Early Childhood National Competition in Atlanta, Georgia this year. Abigayle also leads the charge for kindness every day!

The 2026 STEAM Month Logo Designer is from Chariho! The Chariho School Committee, The Rhode Island Department of Education, and the Rhode Island STEAM Center congratulate Kaitlyn Charette, of CHARIHOTech, who designed the 2026 RI STEAM Month logo. It will be used on promotional items and public announcements during RI STEAM Month 2026 (November). STEAM month celebrates opportunities that RI Schools offer students in STEAM areas as well as highlighting the application of learning in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Design, and Mathematics.

Public Forum – Three members of the public signed up to speak in the Public Forum: Justin Bentley (Hopkinton); Steven Chalifoux (Hope Valley); and Nick Testa (town not provided).

Mr. Bentley expressed disappointment at School Committee Members from his town who, he attests, provided false information to the public at a recent public meeting in Hopkinton. He asked that all members of the Committee be cautious and refrain from disseminating information, referencing the most recent draft of the Bureau Veritas report, and making derogatory remarks about the School District. He requested accuracy, less "cherry picking" of the presentation data which he feels is done as a "scare tactic", and to refrain from degrading our students with their remarks. He asked that they do better moving forward, to refrain from using anecdotal data, and to work in support of Chariho students. Mr. Chalifoux questioned the Committee about when the decision to build two buildings on the parcel of land selected happened as he recalls the vote being for one unified elementary school. Mr. Zenion and Superintendent Picard explained that the entirety of the process is available in the Necessity for School Construction information and previous minutes from that body as well as the School Committee body, which are all publicly available. Mr. Zenion, along with Mr. Sullivan (Facilities) did a very thorough search for suitable property and this Committee voted to use the Charlestown site. The Architects and Project Manager, after many community meetings and appearances before this Committee took all of the feedback into consideration for what the community wants to see in a Unified Elementary Campus and came up with the conceptual design that works for our needs. Mr. Chalifoux stated that he will review the information as noted. Mr. Testa stated that parent of an elementary school student, and he encourages a subcommittee being created to discuss computers for elementary children. Member Louzon called point of order as this is an item for discussion on our agenda this evening. Chair Callahan explained the process to Mr. Testa, inviting him to speak during that portion of the agenda.

Business

Unified Elementary School Campus – Stage 2 Update for discussion. Superintendent Picard gave a brief update about the Stage II application and the progress to date on the Unified Elementary School Campus. She shared that in the Fall of 2024 RIDE contracted with Bureau Veritas to complete a comprehensive facility assessment of all the public schools in Rhode Island, ours included, and this is part of the State Law. The goal of the Bureau Veritas report is to provide the General Assembly with the information necessary to make decisions around state infrastructure for schools. Bureau Veritas is an independent, third party, engineering evaluation. It is one source of information for our districts and communities providing an objective understanding of the condition, lifespan, and future investment needs of school facilities across Rhode Island. While all our schools were reviewed in the Bureau Veritas draft reports (posted on our Website) she cautioned that it is STILL in draft form. However, she made the decision to provide it publicly for full transparency. The currently available version of this report is not meant to be used as a final document until RIDE has it officially published. Chariho's elementary schools have served generations of children with pride. We are focusing on the Elementary Schools this evening because that is the conversation we are all having now. The district has continued to maintain all its buildings, complete repairs, and keep students and staff safe, but even the strongest maintenance programs cannot turn a building designed in 1935 into a school designed for the needs of children from now until 2035. In addition to the Bureau Veritas report, the Chariho School Committee spent over $ 2 Million dollars on facility needs assessments and reviews – this was our Stage I process and is required by State law. The Stage II application is also required by state law. In the last six years, in an effort to comply with the State law and provide a five-year capital improvement plan for our elementary schools, we have done four stage I applications, with all the evaluations of our facilities by architects and engineers for the extensive reviews of our aging facilities so our district can make thoughtful, long-term decisions about maintaining and modernizing these public assets. The Bureau Veritas reports reinforce what our communities already know, our elementary schools have served our students extraordinarily well, for generations, because of the wonderful care, maintenance, and continuous investment over many decades. The assessments recognize functioning systems, active maintenance efforts, and buildings that continue to support teaching and learning every day. The methodology specifically considers maintenance history, environmental conditions, usage patterns, and installation quality when completing the evaluation of the remaining useful life of building systems. Our elementary schools have significantly exceeded the lifespan for which many public buildings were originally designed. One of the strongest themes across all three elementary school reports is the majority of the future investment needs stemming from the normal building life cycles, not from neglect or failure to maintain. Our district has done a commendable job. At Richmond Elementary School, approximately 95% of identified capital needs are related to life cycle renewal. This means the systems have reached the point where replacement is anticipated as part of the building's natural life. At Ashaway Elementary, the majority of projected investments fall into the category of life cycle renewal – considered aged, but functional, reflecting that the systems continue to operate successfully while approaching the end of their expected life service. Similarly, Charlestown Elementary School's projected needs are overwhelmingly tied to systems that continue to function but have simply served students for decades beyond typical industry expectations. The architects, engineers, facility specialists, educational planners, and RIDE have evaluated our schools as well. They identify aging and obsolete building systems which include heating, ventilation, electrical, plumbing, windows, doors, roofs, etc. Additionally, they discuss issues regarding safety, support, technology and communications infrastructures that need to be able to work in the modern world because they, along with security, accessibility, traffic concerns, classroom and support spaces no longer meet the modern educational standards. We have psychologists, OTs, and Pts that did not exist in the 1930s. These were individuals added to school teams that school buildings were never designed around. They say that many major systems are old, inefficient, and beyond the expected use of life. The term is "FCI" (facility condition index) and the lower the number, the better the building. Ashway Elementary received an FCI of 77%. In 2016, with the Jacobs report, we were already reaching near the 50% mark (as many of our buildings were) which was considered "close to the cost of the need for replacement". Richmond received an FCI of 70% and Charlestown received an FCI score of 92%. None of these scores represent neglect, just the natural aging process indicating that these buildings have reached a stage in their life where our community needs to evaluate continued major reinvestment or new construction, like many of the communities across the country. New construction is the best long-term value for the taxpayers and, most importantly, our students. Our efforts in maintaining these buildings is a clear indication of strong stewardship. The question before our Chariho community is not whether these schools have served us well, because they have, but how do we honor that legacy while preparing for the next generation of Chariho learners. As stewards of these public resources, we have an opportunity to determine how

to best invest in facilities that will support our students for the next 50 years. The work before us now is ensuring that the next generation of Chariho students inherits facilities that can do the very same. Chair Callahan stated that the public can find all of this information on the Chariho Website homepage under headlines. There is a link there where you can access every single evaluation of all the buildings.

Questions and Comments: Member Purcell provided a timeline of Chariho's efforts to implement a 5-year Elementary Improvement plan citing that this is a very important moment in the timeline of Chariho. In 2021, at one of the first School Committee meetings she attended, there was a presentation of a unified elementary campus concept that never made it to stage two. Then there was a Stage I for three new Elementary schools, (May 2024) also voted down. She was on the Necessity for School Construction subcommittee at that time, and the reason they posed the option of three new schools was because of the vocal community push back against one elementary school at the time. That failed narrowly by 70 votes district wide. She reports seeing posts that on social media that this Committee voted down a Unified Elementary School, which is not the case. Mr. Zenion came to us with multiple reports at every Executive Session about land options. The decision was made to move forward with the parcel chosen and it's reflected in the bond legislation, which was approved by the School Committee and General Assembly regarding the Unified Campus, which will have more than one building. The current concept is a lower elementary building (Pre K, Gr. 1, and Gr. 2) and an upper elementary building for (Grades 3-5), on the same campus where the current Charlestown Elementary School sits. Charlestown Town Council had a public hearing on July 7th about this and have scheduled a local referendum on August 4th. In order for this plan to move forward, they have to vote to demolish the current building so they can continue to rent the land to Chariho. That is the next step in this process. She stated that there have been some misleading comments on Social Media that this Committee did not vote for a Unified Elementary School, and that is not correct. Chair Callahan offered Member Purcell as a great source of this information if anyone in the public wants to reach out for further discussion.

Member Chapman asked if the Chariho United report, in the FYI section of this month's agenda, was provided to the public. It was. She feels that may be a source of confusion for many people as it gives a breakdown from our previous discussions. These discussions included one unified school, renovating schools, building three new schools, etc. and all of that may be confusing. Member Louzon stated that the architects provided community outreach in the Spring. They listened to the community feedback and gave a consensus of that information to this Committee. Then this Committee voted on putting two buildings on the land versus one. Additionally, Mr. Zenion explained that this will also be a little bit less expensive than one huge school. SLAM also showed conceptual renderings of all the options, and this is what the people prefer. The option of two buildings on one campus is the advice of the architects, who are well paid by this Committee to do this work. That's their area of expertise. Member Phelps stated that he remembered the discussion of "one new school". Mr. Zenion explained that when we originally hired SLAM (architects) we asked for one new school, SLAM came back to this Committee because we could not find suitable land for that option, and it did not have support of the community. Then this Committee voted for the option of a Unified School Campus. Member Tefft stated that at the time we met with Charlestown, we were told that the cost was not supposed to change (it was then $110M but is now $116M. She asked Mr. Zenion for clarity. Mr. Zenion explained that this was a result of the information provided by the architects, who are the experts, that the State of R.I. was going to increase the reimbursement to $15 per foot. Therefore, their recommendation was to go ahead with the total of $116M now because you cannot change that after a vote. He did put the option of $113M or 116M to the Committee and almost all voted YES. She stated that it started at $110M. Member Tefft asked what size was needed (for the land). Mr. Zenion stated that we did look at a lot of properties, and originally they architects said that, ideally, we needed 25-33 acres, so he looked at anything above 20acres. Member Tefft asked how much land the Charlestown site has. Mr. Zenion reported that the land the current Charlestown school sits on is 15 acres and the adjoining land (Wicklund field) is an additional 4.2 – 6.1 acres, depending on which report you read. Together they are at least 21 acres. Member Tefft stated that this seems too small for what we're looking to build. Mr. Zenion explained that he was not able to secure a parcel bigger within the Committee's price range. Member Tefft asked if the Richmond land has the same footage as Charlestown or even more. Mr. Zenion stated that the Richmond land was not recommended due to current traffic patterns and wetlands. Member Tefft feels there is a traffic pattern issue at the Charlestown site as well. Member Phelps asked about the information from Chariho United in the FYI section. Superintendent Picard reminded him that this Committee voted to allow the public to send information to be included in FYI because you want them to be able to share information with other members across the State. FYI is solely a School Committee function, but Chariho is one of the only School Committees that utilize it. Chair Callahan

stated that we should not take something from FYI and compare it to what we publish on our website, however, because the documents we reference are fully vetted for accuracy. Member Pouliot asked if two separate buildings would increase administrative costs. The Superintendent explained that we would need all those Administrators anyway. We are staffed to serve the number of students and do not hire personnel based on the structure. Mr. Andrew McCoy of Richmond asked what time frame (in years) would be left to the Charlestown school based on the FCI score of 92%. It was explained that based on the FCI RIDE would only be reimbursed for health and safety because the building is too close to the end of it's useful life. Chair Callahan explained that if the bond didn't pass, the Committee would ultimately look at severity and balance over the budget cycle if we needed to do repairs on the school versus building a new one allocating capital to cover documented repairs. He wanted to know what the cost of maintaining the building for another ten years would be versus building new. Superintendent Picard explained that once a building reaches 35 FCI (with an average building life of 50 years) it's a better investment for us to use due diligence (hence the State requires the application stages). At 92% FCI, RIDE would have a lot of questions about why anyone would consider major renovations on a building that will have hidden issues typically found in a building from 1935 and may not reimburse us at all.

Member Hopkins stated that all repairs would have to be achieved during the five-year timeline too. Chair Callahan stated that RIDE will establish protocols and rules related to what is in the five-year plan, but the School Committee determines what that plan will include. He reports never seeing the School Committee body dumping 100% of any report findings (Jacobs or Bureau Veritas) into a five-year window. They can only afford to put out one fire at a time. Superintendent Picard reminded this body that they have a 5-year capital plan for the main campus but not the elementary schools. Therefore, right now, without an approved five-year capital plan, RIDE only allows reimbursement for $500,000 (health and wellness), anything over that we have to pay dollar for dollar. The State requires that we set aside 3% of our operating budget for maintenance because these buildings are so old. Member Louzon reported that a RIDE representative came to our Necessity for School Construction meeting and stated that RIDE has a big day in whether they'll invest money into schools they feel are too old to continue maintaining.

Member Pouliot inquired about the swing space and how that would factor in while putting up new buildings. Superintendent Picard stated that the Pre K, K, Gr. 1 structure would be built first, and the kids will fit there while they are constructing the other building. Mr. Justin Bentley of Hopkinton asked why this is all being rehashed. He also offered the series of events that led up to the vote for the Unified Elementary Campus and reminded this Committee of the roll call vote that was requested by Ms. Purcell at the time. The vote was: Pouliot (yes), Phelps (Yes), Louzon (Yes), Reynolds (Yes), Tefft (Yes), Chapman (Yes), Hopkins (No), Lyall (Yes), Lowe (No). Chair Callahan stated that we do want to keep talking about this and make sure there is a forum to disseminate accurate, factual information. Member Chapman reminded Mr. Bentley that we consulted with Karen Grande (our bond attorney) in January about bond language when there was supposed to be one school. After much feedback with the towns, there was a revision to the language to incorporate all the feedback that was received. At that point it went from one unified school to one unified campus to offer more flexibility.

Mr. Lowe stated that the presentation from the Superintendent was a good historical summary of where we are in this process now. He asked for clarification on what exactly constitutes Stage II and feels there may be some underlying concerns. He asked why we need to focus on Stage II for the early September meeting and inquired about the schedule for Stage II submittal to the State as well as what issues we are working on now. Mr. Zenion explained that we can only submit these applications to the State on either February 15th or September 15th of any year. Stage I, of course, has to be submitted before Stage II and if you do not submit Stage II within one year of submitting Stage I, you have to go back and resubmit Stage I again. That process costs this district over a million dollars each time as there are architect costs, etc. It is not cheap to have architects and project managers design all of this. Your Stage II is (approximately) a 1,500-page document, maybe more. It outlines everything that the State requires for us to move forward with the building of a new school. If you don't approve of Stage II by September 15th, you have to go all the way back to stage one and start all over. Once submitted, the State will review it and let us know if something needs to be redone, etc. Then you work with your architects on a final plan, IF the voters approve the bond in November. He felt that it may be confusing to see the words "main campus" in the language and defers to the decades of knowledge that our bond attorney (Karen Grande) has in this area, especially with regard to the Chariho Act. He explained that if the work comes in at a lower number, for instance $105 million, having the additional dollars to use on repairs on the Main Campus would be a good option for consideration by this committee should something unforeseen come up. It gives us the most

flexibility. Superintendent Picard further explained that Stage I is to determine facility conditions, and to hire an architect and an owner's project manager; If your project is over 2.1 million it's a requirement by the State. Stage II is building a plan to rectify our current building situation. There is a checklist on the RIDE website to explain this, and you have it in your shared drive as well as on our website. Stage II is conceptual – proof of a concept that will work. Stage III is the actual work to put up new buildings. The Building Committee leads that portion. Member Lowe asked about the bond for the Main Campus and how it addressed the needs of the campus for maintenance and refurbishment. Superintendent Picard reminded him that every one of these is a five-year plan, a five-year process and we never know what might occur or need to be fixed in the coming years. That bond was only 15 Million. In the Bureau Veritas report you will also see that the main campus will have similar needs in the years to come and the Jacobs report from 2016 showed the needs at that time. The main campus, just like the elementary schools is aging but has had more opportunities for renovations, unlike the elementary schools. Member Lowe inquired if there will be additional asks of this Committee and the public to go out to bond or do other things to repair or maintain buildings on the main campus that are not yet addressed? She reminded him that this Stage II is only talking about elementary schools. The Building Committee is very good at watching every dollar that is spent. Mr. Avedisian from the Town of Hopkinton asked about the considerable expense that all the previous stage I and II applications have been for the district, including this one. Each of these applications processes have cost the district approx. $2 million dollars. Mr. Avedisian said the thinks this is as good as this will get. Not everyone will agree on every detail of this project, and each time we go through the process we'll keep spending money on the stages and the maintenance of the buildings with costs increasing each year.

Chair Callahan reminded this body, and the public, that we've had other reports and audits of our district based on infrastructure. He pointed out an electrical issue at Charleston in May 2026 which came about due to an unrelated incident of a telephone pole breaking outside of the school. These types of infrastructure repairs must be made whether upgraded or repaired at any given time. Member Phelps would like to see a report outlining how much money has been allocated for each school's repairs over the last five years. The Superintendent reminded him that those figures are part of the budget report they get each month, under maintenance. Mr. Zenion reported that we spend $5.3 Million on maintenance this year which is well beyond the 3% of our operating budget as is required by State law. It is about 7.39%. Chair Callahan asked if this report has the expenditures broken down per building. They are not but Mr. Zenion can do this. Superintendent Picard stated that if you go back to the capital plan in the back of the budget books you can view the audit and see the alignment. It is given to the committee each month, and each year, in a variety of ways. She also offered to meet with anyone, along with Mr. Zenion, who may require navigation to find these items.

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the FY28 Budget Subcommittee's Request to revise the budget presentation format for the School Committee – requested by K. Reynolds. Member Reynolds, who sits on the Budget Subcommittee, reported that there were several requests during the last budget season for a more "real time" budget book that incorporated the most up to date information available. The team created the necessary reports straight from the Keystone software, which can be updated in real time on our website for public viewing. Discussion: Member Chapman expressed that she prefers an excel document to be able to "get into the weeds" of the budget so she can answer constituent questions related to the budget that this version does not supply. Mr. Zenion offered that this new version is prepared to allow the Committee to plan and update accordingly so Chariho can be proactive in the budget process and if Member Chapman would like to download the information she is given into excel format for consideration of her needs, she can do so, but the school department does not have the bandwidth to accommodate that request each time a change is made. **Motion:** Member Louzon made a motion to approve and accept the new budget binder and process, seconded by Member Purcell. **Vote:** 6 in favor (Callahan, Eaves, Louzon, Lyall, Purcell, Reynolds); 6 opposed (Chapman, Lowe, Hopkins, Phelps, Pouliot and Tefft). As this was a tied vote, the ***motion failed.***

Review and Discussion of School Facilities Audit Request requested by P. Hopkins. Member Hopkins reported that she ran a four-year budgeting analysis which gave some recommendations on reporting. Superintendent Picard stated that all of the recommendations that Member Hopkins mentioned are already available to everyone if they go onto the RIDE financial dashboards; she also offered to have Mr. Santiago, from RIDE, revisit this Committee and do another presentation on the dashboard. Ms. Hopkins stated that our maintenance costs are increasingly going up, and the state average seems to be increasing more slowly. The Superintendent reminded her that in 2018, when the option to bond came out, every district except Chariho and North Kingstown were able to build. Now we need to do the same. The Capital Improvement Plan also made a requirement in 2018 to follow the Stage I and Stage II application process. Member Chapman asked if there is a reason that Chariho has not had a five-year capital plan in place all this time. She was reminded that the community has yet to vote for a project and the Committee has not yet been aligned on a project. Mr. Zenion offered that, if we include capital, we have spent $8.5 Million on maintenance for FY 26. The Superintendent also stated that the Committee has

lessened the amount requested from the towns, regarding capital improvements, because we really need new buildings. The plan was to have a new facility in 2021/2022, so in good faith, we have not asked.

Request to develop a subcommittee to review computer use in Elementary Grades requested by L. Chapman. Chair Callahan stated this topic is for discussion only tonight, but it will be put on the August agenda for a vote. Member Chapman stated that this was brought up in March. Members of the public came forward to request some information about the Chromebooks and voiced their concerns about screen time. There was a discussion about the financial cost of the Chromebooks and all the pieces of having them that need consideration. Dr. Comella recommended establishing a subcommittee to analyze the data before bringing a proposal about Chromebook use for students in the younger grades to the full committee. It appears to be a much heavier lift than most people first thought. Member Chapman took her own anecdotal experience, along with Member Hopkins, regarding the need for Chromebooks at different ages and grade levels. Since covid, she believes there isn't a need for them as much as before. Member Hopkins feels that the district (prior to receiving 1:1 devices) always pushed the agenda of only allowing 2 hours of screen time each day, which is also the recommendation of her pediatrician. Both state that there are several districts across the country in much bigger states that have walked back the use of computers in the classroom, especially for really young learners. Some have no technology in grades K-5 at all (no computers, tablets, whiteboards, etc.) However, she is not averse to using a whiteboard for teachers. Superintendent Picard stated that we do have "tech free days" here as well. Member Chapman identified that there are well documented studies showing that computer time is hurting kids attention spans and mental health. Sometimes, she reports, parents struggle with giving kids screentime at home too after they've had it so much during the school day. She would like to collaborate with parents as well. She'd like to involve Administration, teachers, students, and parents on this subcommittee. Superintendent Picard stated that we would need to pay teachers and staff to attend subcommittee meetings per their contract and suggested this work start at the SIT (School Improvement Team) level where faculty, staff, and students are already working together. Chair Callahan cited that he'd read a Forbes article related to Maine's deployment of their analogous one-to-one program and there were comments on the cognitive ability of the students. The argument was that it wasn't beneficial. He feels the idea of developing a subcommittee to take a look at how this investment is truly benefiting the students is intriguing to him. However, he does have concern from the standpoint of integrating this work into the work that the district is mandated to undertake via the State of R.I. and with our own program, depending on the functional output of this subcommittee.

Member Lyall stated that she's not sure if this would be a standing subcommittee (ongoing) or one with a narrower scope of responsibility. We do need the input of the educators, administrators, students, etc. (Guardrails) Member Chapman envision that Dr. Comella will have a substantial amount of input here. There would also be elementary educator involvement, and she would seek feedback from all facets, including community (parents of elementary students). We'd have to look at existing policies too.

Consent Agenda Items

A. Minutes - Public Session Minutes of the Chariho School Committee Regular Meeting on June 9, 2026. ***(Pulled by Members Tefft and Pouliot)***
B. Bill Review – as provided
C. Budget Transfers and Reports – as provided ***(Pulled by Member Lowe)***
D. Out of State Field Trips – **none**
E. Grants
  1. Champlin Grant – Chariho Middle School
  2. U.S. Dept. of Education **(**USDOE) School-based Mental Health Grant ***(Pulled by Member Lowe)***
F. Permission to Issue Bids/Request Quote **– none**
G. Personnel Actions – none as of this writing
H. Donations – (read aloud by Member Louzon) The Chariho School Committee offers sincere gratitude for the following donations to the Chariho FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) student activities fund: The sum of $1,800 from Lickety Splits Ice Cream of Wyoming, RI; and the sum of $400.00 from Businext Rhode Island of Carolina, RI.

Motion: Member Louzon made a motion to approve Consent Agenda items B, C, and E1, seconded by Member Reynolds. Discussion: None. Vote: Unanimous in favor. ***Approved.***

Motion: Member Louzon made a motion to approve Consent Agenda item A (Minutes), seconded by Member Reynolds. **Discussion:** Member Purcell asked if these were the revised draft minutes, and the Clerk acknowledged that they were. **Vote:** 10 in favor (Callahan, Chapman, Eaves, Hopkins, Louzon, Lowe, Lyall, Phelps, Purcell, and Reynolds); none opposed; 2 abstentions (Pouliot and Tefft) ***Approved.***

Motion: Member Louzon made a motion to approve Consent Agenda Item C (Budget Information and Transfers), seconded by Member Reynolds. **Discussion:** Member Lowe questioned a negative amount listed on the budget report provided- under Medicaid reimbursements; Mr. Zenion explained that this represents a positive revenue item but appears as a negative in the context of the report due to the previous expected return being higher than anticipated. Chair Callahan recommended that Member Lowe and Mr. Zenion continue their discussion offline to offer further understanding of this monthly budget report. **Vote:** Unanimous in favor. ***Approved.***

Motion: Member Louzon made a motion to approve Consent Agenda Item E2 – USDOE grant, seconded by Member Reynolds. **Discussion:** Member Lowe questioned if receiving this grant now frees up current local budget funds (relative to the position of coordinators). Mr. Zenion explained that these are stipend positions and will be given to current certified personnel. Therefore, the grant will not affect our local budget. **Vote:** 11 in favor (Callahan, Chapman, Eaves, Lowe, Louzon, Lyall, Phelps, Purcell, Pouliot, Reynolds and Tefft); none opposed; one abstention (Hopkins). ***Approved.***

Reports

A. Superintendent Reports - 26-27 School Improvement Plans: All Chariho schools have finalized their 2026 2027 school improvement plans. Each plan is aligned with the district's new strategic plan which was presented at the school committee meeting in May and approved by the Department of Education in June. The plans establish clear, measurable goals, initiatives, and action steps designed to build upon the progress already being made and underway in the district. They reflect each school's individual needs while maintaining a consistent district-wide focus on academic excellence, student growth, and well-being, attendance, engagement, and continuous improvement. Throughout the school year, school teams will regularly review data, monitor implementation, and adjust strategies as needed to ensure that the plans remain active tools for improving outcomes for all students. All school improvement plans will be posted on the district website in August, providing families, staff, and community members with clear a clear view of each school's priorities and the important work that will continue during the 2026 2027 school year.

B. Coming events - can also be found on our district website calendar at the following address under the District Information tab: ***https://www.chariho.k12.ri.us/***

DATE	**EVENT**
Mon, July 20 - Thu, July 23	Chariho Administrator Summer Advance – Chariho HS Library
Tuesday, August 18	Regular School Committee Meeting 7pm – Chariho HS Library

School Committee Requests for Future Agenda Items or Legal Opinions - None

Adjournment – **Motion** to adjourn made by Member Louzon and seconded by Member Reynolds. Discussion: None. **Vote:** Unanimous in favor. ***Approved.***

Adjourned at 9:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted by

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Angela Brasil, Clerk