

Board of Education Meeting  
December 15, 2015

Call to Order

Board Chair Gee called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Media Center. Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Natalie Semyanko, Jeanne Gee, Kendra Wiesel, Matt Service, Michael Sepko (via phone), Susi Keane, John Richter, Superintendent Karen Berasi, Assistant Superintendent Brian Hendrickson and Business Manager Bill Hoff.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Suffield High School Student Representative

Giancarlo Isotti gave an update of the events at Suffield High School for December:

- The Drama Club put on *Little Women* with two casts performing four shows
- The World Language Society held French culture week
- SHS had its first live morning announcements broadcast
- Agriscience held its annual holiday sale last week; they also decorated Main Street and the Commons
- The winter concert was held on December 9<sup>th</sup>
- The National Honors Society completed the Toys for Tots drive, 650 toys were donated
- The Wildcat Advisory group gave a presentation to freshmen regarding mid-year exams and academic eligibility
- The Student Senate is celebrating spirit week next week
- The guidance department is holding meetings with all juniors regarding their upcoming college search
- All classes are preparing for mid-year exams

Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Semyanko moved to approve the December 1, 2015 minutes. Richter seconded the motion and all members voted in favor except Sepko, who abstained. The motion carried 7-0.

Consent Agenda

**MOTION #15-79:** D'Ostuni moved, Semyanko seconded to approve the following items on the consent agenda: Policies/Regulations: P&R #5135 – Participation in Athletics & Extracurricular Activities; P #6145 – Interscholastic Competition/Extracurricular Programs; P #6145.22 – Sportsmanship; R#6145.23 – Appeals to the “C” Rule; Bylaw #9311; Formulation, Adoption, Amendment of Policies; P #5118 – Non-Resident Students; P #5117.2 – Inter-District School Choice; P #3240 – Tuition Fees.

All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

**MOTION #15-80:** D'Ostuni moved, Semyanko seconded to move Item A – Naming of the High School Track – under Action Items before Discussion Items. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

**MOTION #15-81:** Semyanko moved to name the Suffield High School track after Joseph Sinicrope, D’Ostuni seconded the motion. Board member D’Ostuni said she was moved by the letters written by those in support of naming the track after Mr. Sinicrope. Board member Sepko said Mr. Sinicrope was one of his former teachers and he highly respected Mr. Sinicrope. Board Chair Gee thanked everyone who was involved in this effort and presentation presented to the Board. Board Chair Gee called for a vote. All members voted in favor. The motion carried. Board Chair Gee added a committee should be formed and a ceremony planned to officially name the field. Mr. Bosworth said a ceremony would be planned for sometime in May during the track season and he will be in contact with the Superintendent’s office relative to the planning of the event.

#### Discussion Items

- Superintendent’s Proposed 2016-2017 Budget Overview Presentation  
Superintendent Berasi said the proposed budget represents the work of the Leadership Team who started at zero and justified their proposed school or department budgets based on priority needs and district priorities. The budget is focused on student needs, mindful that teacher growth equals student growth. Questions throughout the process will be recorded and question and answers with stakeholder interest will be posted on the district website. Administrators will present their budgets at upcoming Board workshops. Superintendent Berasi highlighted the good foundation that this budget will build upon. She noted the increase in state and federal mandates that is challenging to districts and budgets.  
Superintendent Berasi reviewed the class size projections and the non-negotiable items: union contracts, health insurance and salaries. Superintendent Berasi showed the results of the proposed budget relative to staffing (FTEs), which results in a net -13.6 FTEs over this year’s staffing level. She noted the reduction in paraprofessionals is being reduced through attrition; there are currently 11 vacancies. The Superintendent showed the drivers of the budget, resulting in a proposed 3.9% increase, or \$35,033,218. She highlighted the budget increases and decreases. Salaries and benefits alone represent a 2.5% increase to the budget. Superintendent Berasi shared the indicators of success: improved assessment scores, increased graduation rate, improved attendance rate, and effective district curriculum development process. Board members had several questions, some related to the proposed technology integration coach position.
- November 2015 Financial Report  
Mr. Hoff said the projected year end shows a net surplus of \$240,510. This is a decrease of \$138,283 from last month, mainly due to an increase in the internal substitutes account and BCBA services. The only significant change in the State and Federal Grants report was an increased expense of \$180,000 to the Open Choice grant for the K-5 Math textbooks. The food service report for October shows a gain of approximately \$8,000 and a slight loss for November.
- Grade 7/8 and K-5 Math Textbooks  
**MOTION #15-82:** Service moved to add the K-5 math textbooks to the discussion item, Richter seconded and all members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Mr. Hendrickson said administration is recommending *Big Ideas* for grade 7 and 8. This text was adopted last year for grade 6 and is currently being piloted in grades 7 and 8. The administration is also recommending *Investigations* for K-5 to be implemented in January. K-5 has currently been piloting both *Investigations* and *Eureka*, and overwhelmingly

teachers prefer *Investigations*; positive feedback was also received from parents and students. Board Chair Gee said she attended the curriculum cabinet meeting and the K-5 pilot process was very sequential and clear. Board members had questions relative to the selection of the textbooks and the pilot process. Board member D'Ostuni asked about the criteria established for the pilot. She reminded the board from board training, that going forward the board should make decisions that include pre-determined effectiveness criteria established by administration.

**MOTION #15-83:** Wiesel moved to approve the K-5 math textbook, *Investigations*, Richter seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried.

**MOTION #15-84:** Keane moved to approve the grade 7-8 math textbook, *Big Ideas*, Wiesel seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried.

#### Action Items

- Approval of SHS Courses: American Sign Language 1 & 2; AP Physics 1; English IV(A); Tractor Driving and Agriculture Equipment Operations; and Sustainable Agriculture & Local Food Production

In response to Board member Sepko's question, Mr. Hendrickson said there is a teacher at the high school who is certified to teach sign language and is a unique opportunity to provide another offering in world language. This course was proposed due to strong student interest. Other board member questions were answered.

**MOTION #15-85:** D'Ostuni moved to approve the proposed courses contingent upon budget decisions. Semyanko seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried.

#### Reports to the Board

##### Superintendent's Report

- None

##### Chair's Report

- Board Chair Gee said the subcommittee structure will remain the same with the exception of adding Board member Wiesel to the Budget and Policy subcommittees. Board member Service will chair the HR/Personnel/Negotiations committee. The subcommittee list will be emailed to board members. Board Chair Gee thanked Superintendent Berasi, Steve Moccio, Brendan Canny, Gina Olearczyk and the Suffield Police Department for the collaboration in the work being done at the high school. She said the district is moving forward with the security upgrades at the schools and Mr. Hoff, Mr. Plano, Ms. Berasi and Mr. Hendrickson presented the security needs to the Board of Finance at their meeting Monday night. Board Chair Gee said she will be scheduling a Board workshop with Nick Caruso in the near future.

##### Business Manager's Report

- The architects visited the schools today to look at the vestibule areas, and will attend the January 7 Permanent Building Committee meeting.

#### Subcommittee Reports

- Board member D'Ostuni stated the Policy subcommittee met on December 3 and Policy & Regulation #4118.113/4218.113 – Harassment (Cert. & Non-Cert. personnel) is being placed on a 30-day read. The committee will meet on December 17 at 7:00am.
- Board member Semyanko said the Teaching and Learning subcommittee met on December 7. In addition to reviewing the courses that were approved tonight, the

committee will have future discussion on electives at SHS and also how Suffield Middle School courses will align with the Suffield High School course offerings

- Communications: None

Future Business

None

Adjournment

Wiesel moved, Service seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

*Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting on January 4, 2016.*

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D'Ostuni  
Secretary

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