

Board of Education Meeting
July 18, 2016

Call to Order

Board Chair Gee called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m. in the Central Office Conference Room. Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Natalie Semyanko, Jeanne Gee, Kendra Wiesel (via phone), Susi Keane, Matt Service, Michael Sepko, John Richter (via phone) and George Beiter

Executive Session

Keane moved, Beiter seconded to go into executive session at 5:36 p.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel matters: Superintendent's evaluation. All members voted in favor.

Beiter moved, Keane seconded to come out of executive session at 6:34 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Regular Session

The regular session resumed at 6:42 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Auditorium. Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Natalie Semyanko, Jeanne Gee, Susi Keane, Matt Service, Michael Sepko, George Beiter, Superintendent Karen Berasi, and Business Manager Bill Hoff

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Beiter moved to table recognition until later in the meeting. Semyanko seconded and all members voted in favor. The motion carried 7-0.

Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Service moved, Semyanko seconded to approve the June 20, 2016 minutes. All members voted in favor except for Beiter who abstained. The motion carried 6-0-1.

Consent Agenda

None

Discussion/Action Items

- SHS Course Approval: Human Relations/Organizational Dynamics
Ms. Gina Olearczyk, SHS Assistant Principal, explained the new high school course which focuses on social emotional supports and strategies for students. In response to Board members' questions, Ms. Olearczyk said this class is for identified special education students whose primary barrier is social emotional issues, such as depression or anxiety. She said it is a credit bearing class open to all grade levels. She stated school counselors will work with general education students who need behavioral intervention.
MOTION #17-01: Beiter moved to approve the Human Relations/Organizational Dynamics course. Semyanko seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried 7-0.

Recognition

Laura LaFlamme explained how she approached Carl Casinghino last fall to produce a promotional video for the recruitment of students to the Agriscience program. Mr. Casinghino's film class produced the video over the course of the spring semester last year in collaboration with the Agriscience department. Phil Semyanko and Ryan Carzello explained the film production process which included writing a script, recording voice-overs and many hours of filming and editing.

Ms. LaFlamme added that Sara Oliver also was integral in the process, who worked closely with Mr. Casinghino. Grace Artioli, an Agriscience student, was in the film and explained what the Agriscience program is all about. The film students stated how much they learned about what Agriscience is all about and Ms. LaFlamme said the Agriscience students learned a lot about film and media production. She said multiple disciplines came together to complete a project which is real world learning. They showed the promotional video and also the year in highlights of the morning updates at SHS. Superintendent Berasi thanked them for coming and for their hard work. She stated these projects were a perfect example of 21st century skills and learning.

Discussion/Action Items (continued)

- 2016 Fiscal Year Close-out and Budget Status

Mr. Hoff reviewed the June 30, 2016 financial report and noted a net end-of-year surplus of \$52.00. Mr. Hoff pointed out funds encumbered from the previous fiscal year (2014-2015) cannot be expended, so \$60,610 will now revert to the Town. All required grant spending was completed. Food service year-end loss was \$22,012 which was \$58,219 less than last year. Next year's guarantee is \$13,000. Mr. Hoff noted they are not recommending lunch price increases this year. In response to a board member's question, he said there were no complaints or drop in participation rates due to the price increase last year. Mr. Hoff thanked the building principals for their efforts in helping to manage the budget. He also thanked Brian Hendrickson, Eileen Cybulski and Mary Poit. Mr. Hoff said the Board will need to approve the end-of-year transfers. Board member Beiter said this was a successful year budget-wise and was appreciative of Mr. Hoff's efforts. Board member Beiter said he would like to see better tracking going into last month of fiscal year, but noted the tremendous job Mr. Hoff has done.

MOTION #17-02: D'Ostuni moved to approve transfers as presented. Sepko seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried 7-0.

Reports to the Board

Superintendent's Report

- Ms. Berasi said the ESY and summer school programs were underway and going smoothly. Students and teachers are highly engaged.
- The Superintendent said paraprofessional training occurred this summer by CCSN and the feedback received was the paraprofessionals found it beneficial. Ms. Berasi said a report will be given to the Board in September relative to para training, and the ESY and summer school programs. In response to a board member's question, Ms. Berasi said some families did opt out of the ESY program which is typical every year for reasons such as family vacation schedules.
- Ms. Berasi gave an update on the hiring going on over the summer. Several positions have been filled from within: instructional coaches, a math specialist, a reading specialist, and an elementary classroom teacher. Currently there are still seven positions to fill plus the Director of Special Services. Board members discussed exit interviews.
- The Connecticut Water Company conducted water testing at all four schools and all results were below the actionable level as specified by the EPA. Spaulding and the high school had no detectable lead, and McAlister and the middle school had small amounts of lead, but significantly under "actionable" levels.
- The Superintendent received a thank you note from Chris and Denise Nikolis for the district's support of the PMC ride.

Chair's Report

- Board Chair Gee thanked board members for attending graduation and thanked Mr. Moccio for the well planned graduation.

Business Manager's Report

- Mr. Hoff said the finger scanning equipment for elementary students will be operational at the start of this school year. He will be meeting with the vendor and principals. Mr. Hoff emphasized a finger scan is not a fingerprint, and the data is only stored on the school's server. Board member Beiter suggested seeking guidance from counsel as to how to communicate the use of the finger scan technology to parents. In response to a board member's question, Mr. Hoff said the driver to using this technology was to shorten the time students wait in the food lines.
- Mr. Hoff said the new visitor management system will also be put in place at the start of this school year, which will run visitors' IDs through a database. Board members discussed public relations and communication to parents and the community around this new security measure. They discussed having procedures in place and specifically established protocols to deal with a problem with a visitor. Superintendent Berasi said a policy will be developed.
- Mr. Hoff, Ms. Berasi and Mr. Plano met with Powerpoint representatives last week. Mr. Hoff said they were open to solutions and had ideas to address the issue. Mr. Hoff said the Powerpoint representatives were to meet with Eversource today.

Subcommittee Reports

July 13, 2016 Teaching and Learning subcommittee meeting - Board member Semyanko said the committee discussed the Human Relations course that was approved tonight, and they discussed a meeting schedule for the coming year. It was determined that meetings will start at 7:00 a.m., and the schedule will be sent to all Board members.

Future Business

None

Executive Session

Beiter moved, D'Ostuni seconded to go into executive session in the Central Office Conference Room at 7:38 p.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel matters: Superintendent's evaluation and staffing matters. All members voted in favor.

Board members Wiesel and Richter joined via telephone at 7:38 p.m.

D'Ostuni moved, Beiter seconded to come out of executive session at 8:35 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Adjournment

D'Ostuni moved, Beiter seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting on August 15, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D'Ostuni
Secretary