



## SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

February 4, 2014

Chatfield-LoPresti School

7:30 p.m.

**BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Yashu Putorti, Chairman  
Saundra Gesek  
Kristen Harmeling  
Allison Sobieski-McAndrew  
Fred Stanek  
Ed Strumello  
Lee-Ann Dauerty, Board Clerk

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jay Hatfield  
Theodora Klarides  
Jennifer Magri

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Christine Syriac, Superintendent of Schools  
Nancy Snopkowski, Associate Superintendent  
Rick Belden, Assistant Superintendent, Finance & Operations  
Virginia Tagliatela, Director of Special Services  
Jim Freund, Assistant Principal, Seymour High School  
Bernadette Hamad, Principal, Seymour Middle School  
Glenn Lungarini, Principal, Seymour High School  
Rob Dyer, Systemwide Technology Coordinator

### I. CALL TO ORDER

#### A. Salute to the Flag

Mr. Putorti called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:31 p.m.

### II. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

#### A. Recognitions

1. The Geography Bee was held on December 18 in Bungay School and on January 9 in Chatfield-LoPresti School. Congratulations to the Geography Bee Winners Nourus Shehaj (5<sup>th</sup> grade Bungay School) and Vincent Rose (4<sup>th</sup> Grade Chatfield-LoPresti School)
2. Congratulations to Chatfield-LoPresti students Bryannah Horne and Suzana Imetovski and Bungay students Marcy Kucsera and Madeline Dunham who will be attending the Elementary Arts Recognition Festival on February 4. This event honors two outstanding students from each elementary school who have excelled in the areas of visual or performing arts, while exhibiting high levels of citizenship and cooperative skills. Mrs. Syriac noted that these students are receiving their awards tonight and the Elementary Principals are attending the ceremony.

#### Correspondence

1. None

### III. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

### IV. REPORTS AND INFORMATION

#### A. REPORTS

##### 1. Chairman's Report

###### a. Chairman's Report

Mr. Putorti reminded everyone that he and Kristen Harmeling will be presenting the budget on Monday, February 10, 2014 at 7:00 in town hall. He reminded Board members to let him know if they were unable to attend meetings.

- b. **Board Member Comments**  
Mr. Stanek requested a meeting of the Nutrition, Health, and Safety Committee be scheduled. He feels this committee has been underutilized and should become more involved in security issues. Mr. Putorti said he felt every committee should meet at least once. Mr. Stanek reminded the Board that support should be shown for the Police Budget and asked if anyone had any objection to him going to the Board of Finance meeting to support their budget. He noted that they have a \$68,000 line item in their budget for a school police officer. No one objected to Mr. Stanek's offer to attend the meeting and Mr. Putorti said he felt this was a good idea and thanked Mr. Stanek for doing this. Ms. Harmeling told the Board that she and Ms. Magri attended the Legislative Breakfast. She said there was quite a bit of support from other districts when they said there were enough laws and unfunded mandates. Mr. Stanek said he agreed with this saying we no longer need two meetings a month because the State has taken away the Board's ability to do things on their own. Mr. Strumello said he felt we need to establish a better relationship between our local legislators and the Board. He feels we need to get them more involved. Mr. Strumello asked about the possibility of adding hyperlinks to the agenda and Mrs. Syriac responded that we are looking into it but it may take some time.

2. **Superintendent's Report**

Mrs. Syriac reported that Theresa Conroy did participate in the SEA Walk in my Shoes program last week and she spent the day shadowing a teacher. The Junior Achievement meeting was cancelled and has been rescheduled to February 26, 2014. Mrs. Syriac asked about cancelling the February 17 Board of Education meeting and Mr. Putorti confirmed that it should be cancelled. She reminded the Board she will be attending the Superintendent's National Conference in Nashville, TN on February 12-15. The Liaison Committee and the Policy Committee are scheduled to meet on February 20 and the Awards Committee and Facilities Committee are scheduled to meet on February 25. Mrs. Syriac said she had a conference call with other superintendents and the Commissioner of Education and will be sharing the content of the call later.

B. **INFORMATION**

1. **School Activities and Recognitions**

- a. **High School Student Representative Report** (the Student Representatives were not present)
- 1) **Semester 1**, including midterm exams has concluded.
  - 2) **Registration for classes** for the 2014-2015 school year has begun.
  - 3) **Winter sports** have reached the mid-season point with a number of teams close to qualifying for post season play.
  - 4) Students are preparing for the first administration of **SBAC testing** in March.
  - 5) Mr. Schneider will be leading a group of students in a performance of **Suesical** this coming March.
  - 6) Senior students continue to receive news from their **college applications** as we track where the class of 2014 will be attending.
- b. **Middle School Activities and Recognitions** (see attached)
- c. **Bungay School Activities and Recognitions** (see attached)
- c. **Chatfield-LoPresti School Activities and Recognitions** (see attached)

2. **Committee Reports**

- a. **Finance Committee Meeting Minutes** – January 6, 2014
- b. **Ad Hoc Budget Committee Meeting Minutes** – January 7, 2014

3. **Appendix E Resignation**

- a. Zach Mihaly
- Assistant Coach
  - Freshman Baseball
  - Seymour High School

4. **Citizens Academy Article** – New Haven Register 01/20/14

5. **Technology Grant** – Nancy Snopkowski, Rick Belden, Rob Dyer  
Mrs. Snopkowski distributed a handout that showed the new purchase breakdown and purchase plan for the funds received in the Technology Grant. She explained this was the result of meeting with many administrators, teachers, and committees to come up with the best plan. Mr. Dyer said that going forward we would be using a sustainable plan and refresh devices on a cycle. He said they were now on a path to be able to do this within the constraints of the budget. Mr. Strumello asked if these computers would be used by teachers and what would be done with the computers in labs. Mr. Dyer explained that student desktop computers would slowly be phased out and these are student devices. Ms. Harmeling said she was very surprised by the number of laptops being purchased and wondered why we were not ordering more Chromebooks. Mrs. Syriac explained that CLS had started using laptops when the school opened and will continue to use until they need replacement. At some point they may be replaced with Chromebooks. Keeping laptops in CLS will allow the students to use the same type of device for testing. After much discussion by the Technology Committee, it was felt this was the way to go in CLS. Mr. Dyer noted that he has been able to get the price of the laptops down from \$750 to \$550. He confirmed that both devices are able to access Google Apps for Education. He said there is a proven track record with laptops and we are still in the trial pilot program with Chromebooks. There have been some issues. Ms. Harmeling said the elementary numbers were not impressive as she would have hoped. She asked how close the district is to a 1:1 ratio. Mrs. Syriac said we are not quite halfway there – around 40%. She reminded everyone that the handout does not include the iPads and Netbooks that are currently in the elementary schools. The Netbooks do not meet the specifications for taking the test. iPADS are not recommended. Ms. Harmeling said at the elementary level, we just want them to be comfortable with the devices. Mr. Strumello reminded her that we need to do what is best for kids. We want them to be comfortable with the devices for testing purposes. Mr. Putorti said Mr. Harmeling is pushing for Chromebooks and she said why spend so much money on laptops. She asked what the role is of the storage carts since they are so pricey. Mr. Dyer said the storage carts have become more intuitive, they charge devices, they have timers, and they are more mobile. They have the flexibility to move from room to room. Good news is carts generally don't break so they will be around for a long time. Mrs. Syriac said she can ask that the plan be reworked with Chromebooks in CLS and presented to the Board again. Ms. Harmeling asked if the mice can be purchased now since they are so needed. Mr. Dyer confirmed that they have been ordered along with headphones.

**A. Minutes**

1. **Regular BOE Meeting – January 6, 2014**  
**MOTION:** (Mr. Strumello/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to approve the minutes of the Regular Board of Education meeting on January 6, 2014 as presented  
**SO VOTED**  
**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello
2. **Special BOE Meeting – January 8, 2014**  
**MOTION:** (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Strumello) to approve the minutes of the Special Board of Education meeting on January 8, 2014 as presented  
**SO VOTED**  
**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello
3. **Special BOE Meeting – January 22, 2014**  
**MOTION:** (Mr. Strumello/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to approve the minutes of the Special Board of Education meeting on January 22, 2014 as presented  
**SO VOTED**  
**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**B. Financial Management Summary**

**MOTION:** (Ms. Harmeling/Ms. Gesek) to approve the Financial Management Summary ending December 31, 2013 as recommended by the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent, Finance & Operations and approved by the Finance Sub-Committee

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**C. Nutrition Services Financial Report - December, 2013**

**MOTION:** (Ms. Harmeling/Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew) to approve the Nutrition Services Financial Report for December, 2013 as presented

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**D. Volunteer Appointment**

**1. Benjamin Blue**

- Volunteer Assistant Coach
- Wrestling Team
- Seymour High School

**MOTION:** (Mr. Strumello/Ms. Harmeling) to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to appoint Benjamin Blue as a volunteer assistant coach for the wrestling team at Seymour High School

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**E. Intra District Transfer Request**

**1. Chandler Elliott (Kindergarten)**

Home School: Bungay School

Transfer School: Chatfield-LoPresti School

Mr. Putorti asked why this request is being made and Ms. Syriac said it was a daycare issue.

**MOTION:** (Mr. Strumello/sec., Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew) to approve the Intra District Transfer Request of Mr. Patrick Elliott to send his child, Chandler Elliott, to Chatfield-LoPresti School for the remainder of the 2013-14 school year

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**F. Graduation Credit for Middle School Students**

Mr. Stanek asked if the criteria were just to pass the course. Mr. Lungarini said yes and it was the same as the high school. Ms. Harmeling asked if the same books and instructional materials were used. Mr. Lungarini said yes. Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew asked if this credit goes toward GPA and Mr. Lungarini said it did not. Ms. Harmeling asked if we can backdate this so the current freshman class can get the same credit. Mr. Lungarini said he had no problem if Mrs. Syriac was ok with it.

**MOTION:** (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Ms. Gesek) to approve the request of Mr. Lungarini, Principal of Seymour High School to issue credit toward graduation for any middle school student who successfully completes (passes) Algebra I and/or Spanish 1 at Seymour Middle School

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**G. Donation**

Mrs. Syriac shared the conversation Mr. Lucke had with Mr. Kozloski's mother and said she had a beautiful story.

**1. Donation**

**MOTION:** (Ms. Gesek/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the donation of tools, equipment, fasteners, screws, sheet copper, and wire from Richard Kozloski and direct the Superintendent to use these donated items at the High School for the Alternative Energy program.

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**H. School Calendar 2014-15**

Ms. Gesek asked why February Break was shortened. Mrs. Syriac said it was decided after seeking input from teachers and parents indicated this preference as well as the potential guidelines from the State. Spring Break and Christmas Break are a full two weeks. Ms. Gesek asked about having the workshop on February 19 changed to February 13. Mrs. Syriac said she had no preference only that the teachers had requested to change professional development days from Tuesday to Thursday. Mr. Stanek said he would like to eliminate short days and change to full days. Mrs. Syriac said the early release days are necessary for professional development and parent conferences. Mrs. Syriac said we have two full days before the start of school and a full day on Election Day. She said it is difficult to get everything done within the time we currently have. Mr. Stanek said he felt shortened days are disruptive to the educational process. Mrs. Syriac said teachers need to prepare for assessment and the common core. She pointed out that some of the shortened days are for parent conferences. Mr. Stanek said in the past the February Break was very necessary as a germ break. Ms. Harmeling said she was not supportive of a February Break. There was also a discussion regarding the addition of snow days to the end of June and possibly taking away from the full weeks sooner. Mrs. Syriac said once she starts to touch a vacation, attendance of students goes down and she experiences teachers who have made plans. Ms. Gesek asked that the workshop on May 21 be changed to May 22.

**MOTION:** (Ms. Gesek/sec., Mr. Strumello) to approve the 2014-15 School Calendar with the following changes: Early Dismissal Day for PD on February 19 changed to February 13 and the Early Dismissal Day for PD on May 21 changed to May 22

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew, Mr. Strumello

**OPPOSED:** Mr. Stanek

**I. Team of One**

Patrick Harmon and Aaron Baur, Seymour High School students, have requested permission to represent Seymour High School as a team of one in Boy's Golf at Woodland High School

**MOTION:** (Mr. Strumello/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to accept the recommendation of the Athletic Director and the Superintendent to approve the request of Patrick Harmon and Aaron Baur to participate as a team of one in Boys Golf at Woodland High School

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**J. Waiver of Facility Rental Fees**

Mr. Putorti said he had a problem and concern with this. He feels we open ourselves up to future requests if we waive this entirely. He proposed maybe a 50% cut in fees since it is for a student within our schools. Ms. Harmeling said she disagreed saying we were nickel and diming. She said she even hoped the custodians would waive their costs. Ms. Stanek asked if we had a policy on this and Mrs. Syriac said we did not. Mr. Stanek said we should probably develop one. Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew said we are talking about a student in one of our schools. She said a policy change may be warranted. We need to establish guidelines for future requests. Ms. Harmeling

reminded the Board that we can say yes or no to future requests. Mr. Putorti said we have a policy now and that is to pay. Mr. Stanek said maybe we need to address charitable events. Ms. Harmeling said she was fine with this request.

**MOTION:** (Ms. Harmeling/sec. Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew) to approve the waiver of facility rental fees for the Seymour Middle School cafeteria for a fundraising pasta dinner for the Poeta Family on February 27, 2014 (snow day February 28, 2014)

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew, Mr. Strumello

**RECUSED:** Mr. Stanek

**K. Out of State Field Trip**

Ms. Harmeling asked if these students had placed and Mr. Lungarini confirmed that they had; one student is placed 5<sup>th</sup> in the state and has a good chance of going to the Nationals in New Hampshire

**MOTION:** (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Strumello) to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve an out of state field trip for the Indoor Track team to participate in the indoor track nationals in New York City, NY on March 14, 2014

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**\*L. Discussion Concerning a Personnel Matter**

**MOTION:** (Mr. Strumello/sec., Ms. Harmeling) move that the board enter Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. Only those invited by the Board may be present in the Executive Session. The Board invites the following individuals into the Executive Session: Mrs. Christine Syriac

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**\*M. Discussion Concerning the Performance and Evaluation of the Superintendent**

**MOTION:** (Mr. Strumello/sec., Mr. Stanek) move that the board enter Executive Session to discuss the performance and evaluation of the Superintendent. Only those invited by the Board may be present in the Executive Session. The Board invites the following individuals into the Executive Session: Mrs. Christine Syriac

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

Enter into Executive Session 8:56 p.m.

Out of Executive Session: 10:00 p.m.

**\* *It is anticipated that the asterisked items will be discussed in Executive Session from which the public will be excluded***

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** (Mr. Strumello/sec. Ms. Harmeling) to adjourn

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski-McAndrew, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

The meeting adjourned at 10:01 p.m.

Submitted by:  
Lee-Ann Dauerty  
Board Clerk