



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

May 20, 2013

Seymour Middle School

7:30 p.m.

Board Members Present:

- Yashu Putorti, Chairman
- Jim Garofolo
- Saundra Gesek
- Kristen Harmeling
- Jay Hatfield
- Peter Kubik
- Jennifer Magri
- Fred Stanek
- Ed Strumello

Others Present:

- Christine Syriac, Superintendent of Schools
- Nancy Snopkowski, Associate Superintendent
- Rick Belden, Asst. Superintendent, Finance & Operations
- Ginny Bauer, Director of Special Services
- Roberta Pratt, Director of Technology
- David Olechna, Principal, CLS
- Leslie Sojka, Assistant Principal, CLS
- Mary Sue Feige, Principal, BS
- Glenn Lungarini, Principal, SHS
- Jim Freund, Assistant Principal, SHS
- Debra Julian
- Kelley Garofalo
- Lisa Heneghan
- Kristopher Boyle

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Salute to the Flag

Mr. Putorti called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance

II. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Recognitions

There were no recognitions this evening.

B. Correspondence

1. Letter dated May 1, 2013 to Christine Syriac from Rich Kearns describing the participation of Seymour High School teens in the Melanoma Foundation of New England's 6th Annual Your Skin is In No Tanning Pledge.
2. Letter dated April 29, 2013 to Christine Syriac from Rich Kearns regarding the Teen Distracted Driver week held at Seymour High School.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments this evening.

IV. REPORTS AND INFORMATION

A. REPORTS

1. Chairman's Report
Mr. Putorti reported that we would be discussing the budget later in the agenda and explained that this meeting is a special meeting in order to add a second meeting of the month.
2. Board Members Comments
Mr. Stanek asked why Mr. Kearns was involved with the Melanoma Foundation Annual Your Skin is In No Tanning Pledge when there is so much to be done with security and so many security issues. He stressed that his comments should not be taken as derogatory at all.
3. Superintendent's Report
Mrs. Syriac reported that her proposal to present at the CAFE convention had been approved and she will be presenting a program on Citizens Academy. She mentioned that Joan McCasland had been named as the 2013-14 Teacher of the Year. She also reported that we had received approval from the State on our SEED Program.
4. Committee Reports
 - a. Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – May 6, 2013
 - b. Awards Committee Meeting Minutes – May 8, 2013

B. INFORMATION

1. 2013-14 Education Budget Discussion
Mr. Putorti noted that after the failed referendum, our budget was cut by \$75,000. He said he felt we should not come out publicly in case we don't cut. We won't know until the budget passes just how much needs to be cut. It can change. Mrs. Harmeling agreed, saying she had no interest in cutting tonight. She said she was mystified at the failure of this budget. She noted the lack of signs advertising the vote, saying in the past she spent her own money to make signs. She felt no one was doing this now. She suggested we ask for support from our teachers. Mrs. Syriac said she reached out to the Teachers Union and they sent out a flyer. Mrs. Harmeling asked about the possibility of doing a press conference; possibly a joint press conference with Kurt Miller. Mr. Putorti said he felt it was too late to do this. Mrs. Harmeling said the only thing different this time was a sign on the Senior Center four days in advance. She said she felt we put no money into marketing ourselves and we really need to do this. Mr. Hatfield said he saw no "Vote Today" signs and suggested we send a letter to the First Selectman asking for signs. He noted that this was one of the lowest budgets I've seen and cannot understand why it did not pass. He said we should put out a press release from the Board of Education saying we support the budget. He feels there is a breakdown of communication between the town and the Board of Education. Mr. Garofolo said we are subject to the community winds. There is a small group of citizens that focus on economics and are protecting themselves from an increase in taxes. Other portions of the community will follow what we present to the community. He feels a large part of the population just don't care and don't vote. He said he felt the word is out there and we have not been remiss in our obligations. Mr. Putorti said we felt that we should do more and we could do more. Mrs. Harmeling said she would like to see the creation of a sub committee that addresses Community Outreach and Public Relations. We can get the community involved along with teachers and unions. She said she felt this committee should work all year on community outreach with a goal being to entice someone to step up and form a PAC (Political Action Committee). Mr. Putorti said he can do an Ad Hoc Committee at any time. When asked what is different in the budget, it was noted that there was an increase in property insurance increase, bus fuel, ECA price increase, and Six to Six Magnet School increase equal to over \$40,000. Along with the \$75,000 cut, this brings our total cut to \$115,000. Mr. Strumello noted that the transportation budget was cut by 19.6% in order to keep ECS funding. Mrs. Harmeling asked if we can fight Six to Six funding and Mr. Belden said he felt that would be a very difficult fight. There have been some towns that fought the funding of pre-schools costs when their town did not provide preschool but as of right now we are

responsible for these costs. It was decided not to discuss budget cuts until we have hard numbers from the town.

V. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Minutes

1. Regular BOE Meeting – May 6, 2013

MOTION: (Mr. Strumello/sec., Mr. Hatfield) to approve the minutes of the Board of Education meeting on May 6, 2013 as presented

Ms. Gesek said she did not vote on the last motion and that she left the meeting at 10:35

MOTION: (Mr. Strumello/sec., Mr. Hatfield) to rescind the previous motion

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

MOTION: (Mr. Strumello/sec., Mr. Hatfield) to approve the minutes of the Board of Education meeting on May 6, 2013 with corrections

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Gesek, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

ABSTAINED: Ms. Harmeling

2. Special BOE Meeting – May 6, 2013

MOTION: (Mr. Strumello/sec., Mr. Hatfield) to approve the minutes of the Special Board of Education meeting on May 6, 2013 as presented

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

B. Awards Recipients

MOTION: (Mr. Stanek/sec., Ms. Harmeling) approve the recipient recommendations of the Awards Advisory Committee for the David A. Brumer Excellence in Education Award to Rich Kearns, the John J. Gallagher Memorial Athletic Award to Paul Sponheimer, the Thomas J. Petruny Memorial Education and Environment Award to Melanie Danka and the Vincentena Kobasa Excellence in Teaching Award to Elaine Roche and Allison Cunningham

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

Mr. Stanek explained that co recipients were chosen for the Kobasa Award because after two tie votes of the committee it was the proper course of action. Mr. Strumello questioned having a Board of Selectman representative on the Awards Committee saying he doesn't remember that being the case. Mr. Stanek confirmed it was done way back and we don't have to include them if we don't want to.

C. Contingency Fund

MOTION: (Mr. Stanek/sec., Mr. Garofolo) pursuant to Connecticut General Statute Sec. 10-248a the Board of Education requests that the Board of Finance create a non-lapsing "Unexpended education funds account" as of June 30, 2013. The purpose of this account is to allow unexpended funds from the prior fiscal year from the budgeted appropriation for education to be deposited into the account by the Board of Finance for future use by the Board of Education for education purposes. Further, such amount shall not exceed one per cent (1%) of the total budgeted appropriation for education for such prior fiscal year.

Mr. Stanek is pro-active on this issue. The legislation passed this in 2010. It is controversial and he knows the fears. He feels we should put it into effect and utilize it if we want to. Mr. Putorti said if they cut us, we will have that amount in the fund. Mr. Strumello said he feared it was going to cause a fight, more

meetings, and negative stories in the newspapers. Mr. Putorti asked how many towns have this type of fund and Mr. Belden said he did a quick survey of business managers and of those who responded nine towns have this type of fund. Five of those towns have budget referendums and four have town council. Mr. Belden said he would have to gather more information from these towns on how to run the fund. He noted that many have a specific reason for the money. Mr. Putorti reminded everyone that we will not have much money in the account. Ms. Harmeling said she does not support this. She said she would like to see the town do away with the current form of referendum and go to a one line item referendum. The town is not able to prioritize. If we have this account we will never be treated as another department. Mr. Garofolo said we are not like any other department by State Statute. Ms. Harmeling said if we go down, we should all go down together. Mr. Stanek said there is a surplus in the salary line item. This year we are in a unique situation in security. We need to spend on security. We should set aside the funds and spend it on security. We are not the bad guys; they are not the bad guys. Referendum would only be changed by a Charter Revision. The money would be spent before the next budget process is undertaken. Mr. Hatfield said there must be a purpose for the money set aside. It would have to be spent or encumbered before July 1. He feels this is more harmful than helpful. He would like to get through the budget process first. Mrs. Harmeling said we have security issues to deal with now such as the purchase of cameras. Mr. Belden reminded her that we are not ready to purchase security items yet and Ms. Pratt followed that up with an explanation that we do not want to throw this together quickly. Mr. Stanek said even if though there is nothing specific yet we should have good faith the town will not penalize us for having the fund. Mr. Strumello said we need to make a decision if we want to put money in an account. He feels this is adding another layer to the budget process. Mr. Putorti said this is a way to save money for ourselves rather than give it back. Either we put it in an account or lose it. Mr. Stanek said it doesn't have to be for security, it could be for artificial turf or we could let it sit there with no specific use. He said he felt we should test it. Mr. Belden said the fund is on the town budget. A Memorandum of Understanding is critical; the process must be clear. They will be the fiduciary agent of the account and must agree to move the funds into the account and we will need to set up a process on how to access the funds. Ms. Harmeling expressed her concern at doing this before the budget passes and Mr. Putorti said it could really hurt us. Mr. Stanek would like to move forward.

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Strumello) to postpone this motion until the next regularly scheduled meeting after the 2013-14 budget passes

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Strumello

OPPOSED: Mr. Garofolo, Mr. Stanek

D. ACES Educational Center for the Arts

Ms. Harmeling asked if this was an unprecedented number of students and Mrs. Syriac explained that the number was the average number of students over a three year period and we cannot go under the three year average. We will cap the number of students next year at six. If a student is already enrolled they will be permitted to finish. Our average has gone down over the years. There is a wait list but our number would not change; we will not exceed our number. Mr. Stanek asked if the letter was decided administratively and Mrs. Syriac said the letter has not been sent and would not be sent until after Board of Education approval. ECA informed us that we cannot just say no. We have never turned a student away. The number has been based on the average number of students attending each year.

MOTION: (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to approve the attendance of nine (9) Seymour students for the 2013-14 school year, as outlined in the May 10, 2013 letter from the Educational Center for the Arts.

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Gesek, Ms Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

E. Donation

The Board asked the value of the book which was \$45.00 and Mrs. Syriac explained that this book was chosen by Mrs. Warecke as her retirement book donation and the Greenwich Workshop decided to donate the book when they found out this was the reason for purchasing the book.

MOTION: (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Strumello) to approve the donation of the book entitled "The Art of James Christensen: A Journey of the Imagination" to the Seymour High School library by Mr. Chris Usher, The Greenwich Workshop Gallery

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Gesek, Ms Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- * A. Interview the recommended candidate for the Assistant Principal of Bungay Elementary School
- * *It is anticipated that the asterisked items will be discussed in Executive Session from which the public will be excluded.*

MOTION: (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Strumello) move that the Board enter Executive Session to interview the recommended candidate for the Assistant Principal of Bungay Elementary School and invite Mrs. Christine Syriac, Mrs. Snopkowski, Mrs. Feige, and the candidate to attend

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Gesek, Ms Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

The Board entered into Executive Session at 8:48 p.m.

The Board entered into Regular Session at 9:28 p.m.

MOTION: (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Stanek) to approve the recommendation of the Superintendent to hire Kristopher Boyle as the Assistant Principal of Bungay Elementary School

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Gesek, Ms Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Kubik) to adjourn the meeting

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Gesek, Ms Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

Submitted by:
Lee-Ann Dauerty
Board Clerk