

Seymour Board of Education



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

February 13, 2013
Central Office
6:00 p.m.

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 2/19/13
TIME: 11:15 AM
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Yashu Putorti, Chairman
Jim Garofolo
Saundra Gesek
Kristen Harmeling
Jay Hatfield
Peter Kubik
Jennifer Magri
Fred Stanek
Lee-Ann Dauerty, Board Clerk

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Ed Strumello

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Rick Belden, Asst. Superintendent, Finance & Operations
Glenn Lungarini, Principal, SHS
Bernadette Hamad, Principal, SMS
Ethan Fry

The meeting was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Putorti explained the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the possibility of changing the 2012-2013 school calendar in order to make up for snow days.

1. Discussion and Possible Action on Changes to the 2012-13 School Calendar

Mr. Putorti started the discussion by saying he was in favor of opening on Monday and Tuesday and asked Mrs. Syriac to discuss it. Mrs. Syriac said by state statute we are able to open on a Federal holiday except during the months of December and January. She said as it stands now, we have already used Friday of spring vacation to make up for snow days. She stated that she had received suggestions from parents who wanted to open on Monday and Tuesday and she would like to be able to do this because we still have the remainder of winter to get through and we are not sure if we can open on Friday yet. If we open on Monday and Tuesday the last day of school would tentatively be set for June 27. She has checked with the staff and found that we would be able to cover classes with substitutes. Mr. Hatfield asked about the state statute about opening on federal holidays stating that the lessons must deal with the meaning of the holiday. Mrs. Syriac said this would not be a problem. Mrs. Harmeling asked about possibly bringing the teachers in on Friday if the students were not able to attend. There was also some discussion on reducing the number of student days to 181 and later, if necessary, we could reduce it again to 180 days. Mr. Belden asked for clarification on opening the buildings for teachers only.

Mrs. Syriac stated that she had already given permission to go forth with any scheduled athletic events on Thursday since the school had been cleared of snow. Mr. Garofolo asked Mrs. Syriac what her thoughts were on opening on Friday. She responded she was very fearful of the town not being able to complete the clearing of all town roads. She said that while they are doing a good job the fact that the job is so enormous makes completing it difficult. The safety of the students is what will influence her decision to open. Ms. Harmeling said opening the schools on Monday and Tuesday would provide a two day buffer for the students. Mrs. Harmeling stated the residents and the town need to do everything they can to get the sidewalks cleared. Mrs. Gesek asked if we bring the teachers in on Friday would they report to one school or go to their individual schools. Mrs. Syriac said they would go to their individual schools. Mr. Garofolo said he was in favor of opening the schools because it shows good faith that we are trying to preserve April vacation. Mr. Hatfield asked if the time would be productive for teachers if they come in on Friday if schools are closed. Mrs. Syriac said this would enable the teachers to prepare for school on Monday and Tuesday should that motion pass. Mr. Garofolo asked about the remaining professional development days and if we could use them as make up days. Mrs. Syriac said these days were early release days and would not count as more days. Mr. Putorti said he felt we should use the two days now and asked Mrs. Syriac what parents thought. Mrs. Syriac said she felt it was pretty much equal for and against. Mr. Hatfield asked about contractual obligations and Mrs. Syriac said it would cost \$1600 to staff the office at All Star Transportation on Monday. The custodians and secretaries would get a floating holiday. Substitutes would cost between \$1600 and \$2000 on Monday and between \$1100 and \$1500 on Tuesday. Food Services would have to pay their staff at time and a half but Mr. Belden said Mrs. Brooks' budget would be ok. Mr. Stanek asked how staff that would miss those days would be handled and Mrs. Syriac said she would ask them to take personal days or a day without pay. Mr. Stanek asked about the information going to parents and Mrs. Syriac said she has assured those parents who have contacted her that no penalties would be incurred by their children. She said she feels time with family is important and family adventures are opportunities for learning and are an important element of children's lives. Mr. Stanek said he felt this was a good message. Mr. Garofolo asked Mrs. Syriac to talk about the process of obtaining a waiver from the state. Mrs. Syriac said in order to begin the process of obtaining a waiver from the state; this district must first utilize all other possibilities first such as vacations and legal holidays. After all possible days off have been utilized, only then we would be able to apply for a waiver.

MOTION: (Ms. Magri/sec., Mr. Stanek) to vote to open schools on Monday, February 18, 2013 and Tuesday February, 19, 2013.

Mr. Belden suggested the motion be changed to read "change the 2012-13 school calendar". Mr. Stanek rescinded his second so that the motion can be restated.

MOTION: (Ms. Magri/sec., Mr. Stanek) to change the 2012-13 school calendar to reflect the decision of the board to have school on Monday, February 18, 2013 and Tuesday, February 19, 2013

SO VOTED

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

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Hatfield) that in the event school is closed on Friday, February 15, 2013 bring in the teachers and reduce the number of student days to 181.

Mr. Kubik asked why it was important to bring the teachers in on Friday. Mrs. Syriac said she was still uncertain about the decision to open on Friday because of the safety of the students. If school was closed, Friday would be a prep day for teachers to prepare for Monday and Tuesday.

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield

OPPOSED: Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek

The motion failed.

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

SO VOTED

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Submitted by:
Lee-Ann Dauerty
Board Clerk