

SEYMOUR BOARD OF EDUCATION

REGULAR MEETING
Seymour Middle School

May 3, 2010
7:30 P.M.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ed Strumello, Chairman
Bruce Baker
Frederick Stanek
Judith Flood
James Garofalo
Yashu Putorti
Peter Kubik
Jeanne Loda
James Ward (arrived 7:40 P.M)

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

Kristiann Kassay
Stephanie Walsh

OTHERS PRESENT:

MaryAnne Mascolo, Superintendent
Christine Syriac, Associate
Superintendent
Richard Belden, Assistant Superin-
tendent of Finance & Operations
Paul Roy, First Selectman
Kirsten Bruno, Administrative
Intern, Bungay School
Mary Deming, SHS
Allison Cunningham, Chatfield
MaryEllen Loguidice, SMS
Michelle Proto, Bungay

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ed Strumello, Chairman, called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:32 P.M.

II. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A) Recognitions:

1. Congratulations to the staff and students of Seymour Middle School on the conclusion of their penny war. They collected \$700.00 which was matched by the Haitian Ministries and a total of \$1400.00 will go toward the purchase of clean drinking water for the citizens of Haiti.
2. Congratulations to the Seymour Middle School cheerleading team on their first place trophy and an award for the most original routine in the USA Wildcats Cheerleading Competition that was held on March 20-21, 2010.

3. Congratulations to Jessica Forsyth who came in 1st place for individual Top Gun Tumbler and Leanna Dahn who came in 2nd place for Individual Top Gun Jumper at the USA Wildcats Cheerleading Competition that was held on March 20-21, 2010.
4. Congratulations to the Seymour High School HOPE Club who were recognized by the Umbrella Program for raising the most money (over \$2000) among all the youth organizations that participated in their annual Bowl-to-Benefit in March. This is the second year in a row that the HOPE club was recognized for their fundraising ability.
5. Congratulations to 8th grader Phillip Sarrazin who competed and did very well in the National Geography Bee at Central Connecticut State University on April 9, 2010. Ms. Mascolo added that Phillip placed 11th overall.
6. Congratulations to Cathy Goodrich and the members of the NEASC Committee on the Five Year Progress Report for Seymour High School which continued the school's accreditation and removed the school from the warning for the Standard on Curriculum which acknowledges significant progress addressing the cited deficiencies.

B) Board Correspondence

1. Chatfield LoPresti Building Committee meeting minutes-April 13, 2010
2. Letter dated April 6, 2010 from Governor Jodi Rell to Cathy Goodrich, Principal Seymour High School thanking her for her "overwhelming generosity" when it comes to relief efforts in Haiti.
3. Letter dated April 21, 2010 from MaryAnne Mascolo to Denise Romaniello in response to her March 28, 2010 letter
4. Letter from MarySue Feige to Steve Ditria, Rich Kearns and the High School students who assisted with the 911 program thanking them for their time and energy in presenting the program to the Bungay School 2nd graders
5. Letter from State of CT representative Robert Kane to Edward Strumello, Board of Education chairman, acknowledging the Board report "Respecting Diversity in Education" and offering support if needed.

- III. PUBLIC COMMENT: Meghan Cabrera of Seymour, a student at Seymour High School brought before the Seymour Board of Education a petition signed by 504 of 698 Seymour High School students requesting that the dress code be reinvestigated in regard to footwear. The students are requesting that backless shoes (flip-flops) be allowed as appropriate footwear. Ms. Cabrera cited that the students polled 22 schools; 16 of which allowed backless footwear. The 6 schools which did allow this type of footwear were either private or technical schools. Mr. Strumello advised Ms. Cabrera that their petition would be directed to the Policy Committee of the Board for consideration.

Kristine Bourret, a Seymour High School parent, questioned why the achievements of the Seymour High School Boys Swim Team in state competition had not been recognized. Mr. Strumello directed the question to Ms. Kassay, student representative, who noted that the team and individual achievements had been recognized in the student newspaper and school announcements. Ms. Mascolo noted that the team would be recognized at the next board meeting.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A) Approval of Minutes

1. Regular BOE meeting-April 5, 2010

B) Staff Resignation-Certified

1. Bruno, Kristen

- Administrative Intern
- Bungay School

2. Junko, Barbara

- 3rd grade teacher
- Chatfield School

3. Panasci, John

- Computer Teacher
- Seymour Middle School

C) Staff Resignation-Non Certified

1. Wendy Castelot

- Clerical Paraprofessional
- LoPresti Elementary School

D) Nutrition Services

1. Financial Report-March 2010

10-2977 MOTION: (Mrs. Loda, sec. Mr. Stanek) to remove Section B) Staff Resignations, Items 1, 2 and 3 from the Consent Agenda.

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Baker, Mrs. Flood, Mr. Garofalo, Mr. Kubik, Mrs. Loda, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello, Mr. Ward

10-2978 MOTION (Mr. Stanek, sec. Mr. Putorti) to approve the Consent Agenda as presented with the removal of Section B.

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Baker, Mrs. Flood, Mr. Garofalo, Mr. Kubik, Mrs. Loda, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello, Mr. Ward.

V. ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA

C) Staff Resignations – Certified

1. Bruno, Kristen

- Administrative Intern
- Bungay School

10-2979 MOTION: (Mr. Stanek, sec. Mrs. Loda) to accept with deep appreciation and regret the resignation of Kristen Bruno as Administrative Intern at Bungay School.

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Baker, Mrs. Flood, Mr. Garofalo, Mr. Kubik, Mrs. Loda, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello, Mr. Ward

10-2980 MOTION: (Mr. Stanek, sec. Mrs. Flood) to accept with deep appreciation and regret the retirement of Barbara Junko as 3rd grade teacher at Chatfield Elementary School.

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Baker, Mrs. Flood, Mr. Garofalo, Mr. Kubik, Mrs. Loda, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello, Mr. Ward

10-2981 MOTION: (Mrs. Loda, sec. Mr. Stanek) to accept with deep appreciation and regret the retirement of John Panasci as computer teacher at Seymour Middle School.

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Baker, Mrs. Flood, Mr. Garofalo, Mr. Kubik, Mrs. Loda, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello, Mr. Ward

Ms. Mascolo recognized Mrs. Bruno, who was present this evening, and thanked her for her commitment to the district, also recognizing that she had served the district previous to her term as administrative intern as the district's inclusion facilitator. Mrs. Bruno has accepted an administrative position with the Fairfield School System.

VI. INFORMATION AND REPORTS

INFORMATION:

A. Student Representative Report

1. National Honor Society Banquet –May 6, 2010 Villa Bianca. Mr. Putorti will be attending and will represent the Board. The Honor Society also hosted a very successful blood drive recently. Mr. Strumello inquired as to how many new members would be inducted. Miss Kassay will advise at the next meeting.
2. Pep Rally will be held on May 7. Each class will represent a different color and will participate in many competitions. All spring sports teams will be introduced.
3. Cool Schools-May 21, 2010-Channel 3 will visit and televise SHS that morning.

4. Take a Stand-May 13, 2010-will be presented at Oxford High. Seymour Juniors will attend.
 5. Prom-Junior/Senior Prom to be held on May 14, 2010. The Post prom will be held at the Middle School from 12:00 A.M. -5:00 A.M. This year's theme is "Cruisin"
- B. Invitation to Inside Out-7th Annual Seymour High School Art Show to be held at the Greenwich Workshop Gallery 151 Main St. Seymour on May 8, 2010 from 2:00 P.M. -4:00 P.M.
- C. Education Legislation Summary
Mr. Strumello noted that a number of new laws affecting boards of education and school districts had been passed.
- D. Revised Board of Education Minutes-March 15, 2010
- E. Ms. Mascolo reported that the Seymour Kindergarten Transition Committee has been awarded a \$1000.00 grant for the purpose of familiarizing incoming kindergarteners with their schools and personnel. She also reported that the addition of 3 nights to kindergarten registration was highly successful. 53 students were registered during these sessions and parents were grateful to not have had to disrupt their work day.

REPORTS:

A. Committee Reports

1. Facilities Committee Meeting-April 5, 2010-Minutes will be revised to note that Mr. Stanek was not a member, nor in attendance and to note that Mr. Kubik, a member, and Mr. Belden were in attendance.
2. Curriculum Committee Meeting-April 27, 2010-Mr. Stanek reviewed the minutes of the meeting including lengthy discussion on the World Language offerings in the district with regard to high school and college preparation. Also presented was that the funding from NVCC had been obtained for the purchase of Algebra II textbooks. It was also noted that NEASC has removed Seymour High from the curriculum warning list and been praised for the excellent work in reaching this goal. Mr. Putorti questioned the awarding of a grant prepared by Mr. Lucke which will provide the high school students with an in-school bank to be staffed by Sikorsky Credit Union personnel and students. This grant has been obtained. Mr. Strumello lauded Mrs. Syriac's vision for District Curriculum Committee in particular to teachers from all schools being placed on the committees.

3. Liaison Committee Meeting-The Liaison committee reviewed that 30 applicants had applied for the position of District Technology Coordinator; 8 were interviewed. 2 finalists were walked through the district and the final candidate was invited to meet the Superintendent. Mrs. Loda noted the importance of this position within the district and the importance of filling the job as soon as possible due to the responsibilities of the post. Mrs. Flood noted that the committee had approved the contract of the position; that the committee was not involved in the hiring process.

B. Chairman's Report

Mr. Strumello reported that there had been a communication with Ms. Mascolo regarding the actions of an employee. This will be discussed in Executive Session after he meets with the board attorney and a date will be set for such. Mr. Stanek will be unable to attend on May 12; Mr. Ward will not be available on the 11th. Mr. Strumello will attempt to secure a meeting date for Thursday, May 13, 2010 at Central Office at 7:00 P.M.

1. Discussion and Evaluation of Board of Education Performance-Mr. Strumello noted particular areas of this document which he would like to see addressed. Mr. Baker questioned as to how Mr. Strumello planned to proceed with this. Mr. Strumello indicated that he would like the policy committee to set up a meeting to further review and address this plan.
2. Board member comments- Mr. Putorti questioned whether the budget would be addressed at tonight's meeting. It was put forth that the Board of Finance was looking for direction as to how to proceed due to the rejection of both the town and education budgets in referendum.

10-2982 MOTION: (Mr. Putorti, sec. Mr. Stanek): to add discussion of budget to evening's agenda as Item VI, E.

Discussion: Mr. Baker indicated that he thought it would be premature to discuss the budget this evening as the Board did not come prepared with figures. Mrs. Loda expressed her agreement adding that she would like direction from the Board of Finance. Mr. Putorti expressed his willingness to give direction to the Board of Finance. Mr. Stanek indicated that the eyes of the community were upon this board and they should be prepared to give the Board of Finance the exact bottom line that the school district can be prepared to accept without being in trouble. He expressed his agreement with Mr. Putorti. Mrs. Flood agreed discussion was necessary but felt that the Board was not prepared for votes or final decisions. Ms. Mascolo noted that all new positions and initiatives proposed were in danger and expressed concern in striving to keep all current positions intact.

SO VOTED:

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Stanek, Mr. Garofalo, Mrs. Flood, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Strumello, Mr. Ward

OPPOSED: Mrs. Loda, Mr. Baker, Mr. Kubik

Mr. Putorti also noted at this time that the student population has been discussing Board policy on dress code. Ms. Mascolo provided a copy to board members.

C. Superintendent's Report

1. May 21 Channel 3 will be at Seymour High School for the "Cool Schools" program
2. May 26 has been set as the date for the sniffer dogs to go through Seymour High School in conjunction with the Seymour Police Dept., Officer Ditria, and Director of Security Kearns. The students will sign off as to their awareness of the action. Mr. Strumello clarified that Seymour High will be the only town school involved.

VII) RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- A) The Superintendent recommends the Seymour Board of Education approve the update of the name of the Curriculum, Library and Technology Committee of the Board to Curriculum and Technology Committee while maintaining the charge/scope of the committee.

10-2983 MOTION: (Mr. Putorti, sec. Mrs. Loda): to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the update of the name of Curriculum, Library and Technology Committee of the Board to Curriculum and Technology Committee while maintaining the charge/scope of the committee.

SO VOTED:

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Baker, Mrs. Flood, Mr. Garofalo, Mr. Kubik, Mrs. Loda, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello, Mr. Ward

- B) The Curriculum Committee recommends the Seymour Board of Education to approve the Algebra 2 textbooks for Seymour High School

10-2984 MOTION: (Mrs. Loda, sec. Mr. Putorti): to approve the Algebra 2 Textbooks for Seymour High School

Discussion: Mr. Stanek noted that the minutes should read Arabic numeral 2, not roman numeral II, so noted.

SO VOTED:

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Baker, Mrs. Flood, Mr. Garofalo, Mr. Kubik, Mrs. Loda, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello, Mr. Ward

- C) The Liaison Committee recommend the approval of the contract and the hiring of Roberta Pratt as the Systemwide Technology Coordinator (replacing Michael Skott)

10-2984 MOTION: (Mrs. Loda, sec. Mr. Baker): to approve the contract and the hiring of Roberta Pratt as the Systemwide Technology Coordinator (replacing Michael Skott)

Mrs. Flood noted the wording of the motion did reflect the actions of the board.

10-2985 MOTION: (Mrs. Flood, sec. Mr. Stanek): to table the motion to approve the contract and hiring of Roberta Pratt as the Systemwide Technology Coordinator (replacing Michael Skott) on the basis that this not an existing individual but a new stand alone contract to be approved when the budget is approved.

SO VOTED:

AFFIRMATIVE: Mrs. Flood, Mr. Garofalo, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Putorti

OPPOSED: Mrs. Loda, Mr. Kubik, Mr. Baker, Mr. Ward, Mr. Strumello

MOTION 10-2985 DENIED; MOTION 10-2984 WILL EXIST

Discussion: Mr. Garofalo presented questions in regard to the contract as to the certifications and transcripts of the candidate. Ms. Mascolo noted that they were included on page 3 of the packet and that they had been checked and were accredited. The candidate will be receiving a degree in May. Mr. Garofalo questioned whether the candidate had multi-platform experience. Mrs. Syriac assured that the candidate did have these qualifications. Mr. Garofalo noted that the candidate currently works as a consultant and asked whether she would continue in this position when in the board's employ and if so whether this would conflict with her duties and performance. He also expressed concern that the candidate's references did not have signatures. Ms. Mascolo indicated that this was because they had been sent electronically and they had been thoroughly checked and were all favorable. He also noted that this candidate was being hired at the same salary as the previous candidate and questioned why a candidate could not be hired at a lower salary considering the economic conditions at the current time. Mr. Ward noted that technology is changing so frequently that it is vital to hire a candidate who reflects this continual training which the current candidate does. Mr. Garofalo asked where the candidate would be based and if she would travel throughout the district. Mrs. Flood felt that the contract should not be approved until the budget is in place. Mr. Putorti agreed with Mrs. Flood expressing that it would be inappropriate to add staff when the budget is not yet in place. Mr. Baker indicated that this is a critical position to the district and the quality of the individual in the position must be kept high. Ms. Mascolo noted that teachers in the district need technological assistance to keep standards updated, as well as the fact that numerous state reports are upcoming that will require the attention of this position.

SO VOTED:

AFFIRMATIVE: Mrs. Loda, Mr. Ward, Mr. Baker, Mr. Kubik, Mr. Strumello

OPPOSED: Mr. Garofalo, Mr. Stanek, Mrs. Flood, Mr. Putorti

- D) The Curriculum Committee recommends the approval of the District Curriculum Committee

10-2986 MOTION: (Mr. Stanek, sec. Mr. Ward) to approve the structure of the District Curriculum Committee

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Baker, Mrs. Loda, Mr. Ward, Mr. Kubik, Mr. Strumello, Mr. Garofalo, Mr. Stanek, Mrs. Flood, Mr. Putorti

VI. BUDGET

Mr. Putorti noted that if the Board of Finance need the Board of Education's direction and it is not given the Board of Finance may not work in education's favor. Mrs. Loda felt that even with direction the Board of Finance would still draft their own plan and would like them to give the Board of Education a figure to work with before the Board of Education gives them their figures. Mrs. Flood agreed with Mrs. Loda but deferred to the recommendations of the Superintendent and staff for further direction. Mr. Garofalo added that the Board should receive the message from the voters that needs to be understood; what the reasons are that they are not approving the budget. At this time a Board of Finance member asked to be recognized. The chairman opened the meeting to a second Public Comment for elected officials only.

Kristen Harmeling, Board of Finance member, speaking as a member of the community, advised that the Board of Finance does not want to assign arbitrary numbers to a budget. They are looking for the lowest numbers that the education budget can survive with. It is necessary for them to have these numbers to work with and that the Board of Education should be ready to present them this evening.

Bill Paecht, Vice-chair Board of Finance, noted that a letter had gone out to all Boards today to request their assistance in preparing appropriate figures and indicated that it was imperative that all boards especially the Board of Education comply.

Jay Hatfield, Board of Finance alternate, expressed his concern that the Board should be looking into all areas to make concessions.

Paul Roy, 1st Selectman, suggested that the level services area, in particular insurance costs, be looked into for possible savings.

The second Public Comment was then closed.

Mr. Ward appreciated both public and board comments. He noted the dedication of all Board members. His primary concern would be to set in place the best possible budget for the benefit of the school district taking into account the wishes of the taxpayers. Mr. Stanek stated that is essential to rehire teachers, that ancillary and administrative areas need to be addressed. He believes a new era of education requires more teachers and less specialized positions. Mr. Garofalo stated that every Board of Education works in the best interest of the children but in the final analysis, the board needs to listen to what the taxpayers are saying. In regard to the Board of Finance's request for figures for their meeting for tomorrow, Ms. Mascolo explained that she and Mrs. Syriac had been out of district all day and did receive the message until 6:00 P.M. She would only be able to express recommendations to the Board of Education; ultimately it would be the board's

decision to present these figures to the Board of Finance. Mr. Strumello stated that the Board of Education was not ready to present these figures. The Board of Finance indicated that they could wait until 4:00 P.M. tomorrow for the figures. Mr. Belden indicated he had no figures prepared. Mr. Baker would like figures from the Board of Finance. Mr. Putorti inquired as to insurance savings for the Board of Education that would be similar to the insurance savings of the town. With clarification from Ms. Mascolo and Mr. Belden, it was noted that approximately \$70,000.00 could be removed from level-services. Mr. Ward noted that any cuts to the education budget are significant. Mr. Strumello reiterated this noting all cuts will provide an impact on education services. It was decided that the \$70,000 cut would be provided to the Board of Finance to aid in their deliberations. The Board of Education will receive the Board of Finance's final figures prepared for referendum on Thursday, May 6. These figures will go to referendum on May 11.

The Board hold a Special Meeting on Thursday evening May 6, 2010 at 7:00 P.M. at Central Office.

10-2986MOTION: (Mrs. Loda, sec. Mr. Baker) to adjourn Board meeting.

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Baker, Mrs. Flood, Mr. Garofalo, Mr. Kubik, Mrs. Loda, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello, Mr. Ward

Board meeting adjourned at 9:33 P.M.

Submitted by
Lisa Willadsen, Clerk

