

Seymour Board of Education



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

December 7, 2015

Seymour High School

Cafeteria

≈ 7:45 (Immediately following Special Organizational Meeting)

COPY RECEIVED

DATE: 12/15/15

TIME: 6:00 PM

TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Yashu Putorti, Chairman
Jim Garofolo
Kristen Harmeling
Jay Hatfield
Theodora Klarides
Jennifer Magri
Allison Sobieski
Fred Stanek
Ed Strumello

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Daniel Robinson, Student Representative
Cassandra Quintiliano, Student Representative
Christine Syriac, Superintendent of Schools
Vonda Tencza, Associate Superintendent
Rick Belden, Assistant Superintendent, Finance & Operations
Lee-Ann Dauerty, Board Clerk
Rob Dyer, System Technology Coordinator
Ginny Tagliatela, Director of Special Services
Wayne Natzel, Director of Operations
Bernadette Hamad, Principal, SMS
Ernie DiStasi, Assistant Principal, SMS
Mary Sue Feige, Principal, BS
Roxanne Melaragno, Asst. Principal, CLS
Christine Kaszeta
Corey Wootten
Andrew Chapin
Harvey Catlin
Sam Pollastro

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Putorti called the meeting to order at 7:41 p.m.

II. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Recognitions

1. Congratulations to the students of the Electrathon program at Seymour High School who competed in races at Lime Rock Raceway on Friday, October 23. Our Electrathon cars placed first and second in the classic division of the CT Electrathon race
2. Congratulations to the grade 8 winners of the Seymour Lions Club Peace Poster contest! Grand Prize – Maya Sepulveda, 1st Runner Up – Ariana Deljanin, 2nd Runner Up – Maya Pekarek, 3rd Runner Up – Sarah Peel
3. The annual CAPSS Superintendents Award of Excellence dinner was held on December 3, 2015 at Villa Bianca. Congratulations to the middle school recipients Anna Graf and Nicholas Marchetti and the high school recipients Cassandra Rossetti and Daniel Robinson
4. Congratulations to Basilla Stevens and the 8th grade class who collected 277 turkeys during their annual Turkey Drive on November 21, 2015. The collected turkeys will go to Seymour families, the Seymour/Oxford Food Bank and Spooner House

5. Congratulations to Meagan Krushinski, Craig Prasauckas and the SMS Student Council for collecting and organizing the non-perishable food items from each homeroom. These food items will be added to the collected turkeys for a complete Thanksgiving meal for our community members. A grand total of 1,759 food items were collected
6. Congratulations to the members of the Art Club who decorated a float for the Seymour Christmas Parade and to the Performing Arts club members who performed on the float. They received a first place ribbon and the LoPresti Trophy
7. Congratulations to the Seymour High School football team on their 56-28 win over Granby. The Wildcats will play Bloomfield in the semifinals on December 7. Good luck!
8. Mr. Stanek asked for a moment of silence to honor the victims of the violence in San Bernardino, California and Paris, France and for those who lost their lives in attacks at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

B. Correspondence

1. None

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular BOE Minutes – November 4, 2015
2. Special BOE Minutes – November 4, 2015
3. Special BOE Minutes – November 16, 2015

B. Finance Committee Meeting – December 7, 2015

1. Financial Management Summary - ending November 30, 2015
To approve the recommendation of the Finance Committee meeting to accept the November 30, 2015 Financial Management Summary as presented

C. Nutrition Services Financial Report – October, 2015

D. Staff Hiring – Certified

1. Wooten, Corey
 - Art Teacher
 - Bungay School
 - Replacing Cheryl Welch
2. Fitch, Deborah
 - Special Education Teacher
 - Bungay School

E. Staff Hiring – Non Certified

1. Ryder, Jane
 - Monitor Paraprofessional
 - Chatfield-LoPresti School
 - Replacing Laura Botelho
2. Matrigali, Mark
 - Instructional Paraprofessional
 - Seymour High School
 - Replacing Alane Oleksiak
3. Parsons, Courtney
 - Instructional Paraprofessional
 - Seymour High School
 - Replacing Cindy Kiwanis

MOTION: (Ms. Magri/sec., Ms. Harmeling) move to approve the consent agenda with Item B1 removed

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Klarides, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

V. **ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA**

B. **Finance Committee Meeting – December 7, 2015**

1. Financial Management Summary - ending November 30, 2015

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Ms. Magri) to accept the November 30, 2015 Financial Management Summary as presented

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Klarides, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

VI. **REPORTS**

A. **Board of Education Report**

1. Chairman's Report

Mr. Putorti reported on the CABA/CAPSS Conference that several Board members were able to attend. The workshops were very informative and learned that when there is a report on the agenda, the items that are going to be talked about must be listed on the agenda so the public knows. He also said he was able to attend the CAPSS Award of Excellence dinner and that it was a very nice evening for the students that were honored and their families. He congratulated Jim Freund and the high school performing arts students who took first place and were awarded the LoPresti Trophy at the Seymour Christmas Parade.

2. Board Member Comments

Mr. Strumello also attended the CABA/CAPSS Conference and said that he would like to have the opportunity for all of those who attended to share what they have learned at Board meetings.

B. **Superintendent's Report**

Mrs. Syriac introduced Corey Wooten who has been hired as the art teacher in Bungay School.

1. Parent Conferences

Mrs. Syriac distributed a report that showed the number of parents who attended parent teacher conferences in the fall.

2. Budget Workshop Dates

Mrs. Syriac suggested January 6 and January 12 as possible dates to hold the Budget Workshops. She informed the Board that the Board of Finance has set their meeting date as February 3, 2016. After everyone checked their schedule, it was determined the best dates for the Budget workshops would be January 7 and January 13 (if a second meeting is needed). Ms. Harmeling asked if the Superintendent can send preliminary information this month so they can prepare better for the meetings and share ideas. Mr. Hatfield said he thought this was a good idea and would like to see what the budget looks like. Mr. Strumello also agreed. Mrs. Syriac said she was meeting with Administrators this week and thought that she could share information when each document is ready and could probably get some preliminary information together before the Christmas Break. It was decided that the information they receive before Christmas would be discussed at the January 4, 2016 Board meeting.

3. Stakeholder Feedback Target – Vonda Tencza

Mrs. Tencza reported that she has been very busy getting to know the members of the Seymour Educational community and still has quite a few stakeholders she would like to get to know. She extended an invitation to each of the Board members to set up a time so she can meet with them. She said her assistant, Pat Boyle will be reaching out to set appointments.

C. **Committee Reports**

1. Finance Committee – November 4, 2015

D. **Student Representatives Report – Daniel Robinson, Cassandra Quintiliano**

Mr. Robinson cannot attend tonight's meeting because he is playing football with the high school team so Ms. Quintiliano did the Student Representatives report. She reported that several colleges have visited Seymour High School and have met with the students who wish to gather more information about their college. On November 9, 8th grade students visited the high school. The Powder Puff Football game was played and once again, the juniors won the game. An alumni fair was held where recent grads came back to the school to share their college experiences. It was a little different this year in that it was held in the auditorium and open to all grades. She reported that the Performing Arts float took 1st place in the Seymour Christmas Parade.

Fall sports have ended and winter sports are starting. There is an Angel Tree for faculty to buy gifts for the less fortunate. A coat drive is going on and will continue through the end of December and there is also a can food drive. She said Mr. Kearns had safe driving simulators set up for students to show them how dangerous it is could try to text and drive. Mr. Strumello complimented Ms. Quintiliano on her use of the term "men and women" vs. "boys and girls". Mr. Putorti said her report was very informative.

VII. INFORMATION

A. School Activities and Recognitions

1. Bungay School
 - a. Bungay School Students Pay Homage to Veterans – New Haven Register 11/18/15
2. Chatfield-LoPresti School
3. Seymour Middle School
 - a. Veterans Day Candle Light Vigil – New Haven Register 11/11/15

B. Staff Resignations – Certified

1. Katrenya, Catherine
 - Special Education Teacher
 - Seymour High School
 - Effective November 25, 2015

C. Staff Resignations – Non Certified

1. Baker, Kelly
 - Monitor Paraprofessional
 - Bungay Elementary School
 - Effective November 25, 2015
2. Cisero, Lisa
 - Cafeteria Manager
 - Seymour High School
 - Effective November 23, 2015

D. Staff Resignations – Appendix E

1. Gilbert, Jeffrey
 - Assistant Coach, Baseball
 - Seymour High School
 - Effective November 6, 2015

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. 8th Grade Field Trip Revisit Venue– Harvey Catlin, Bernadette Hamad

Ms. Hamad, Mr. Catlin, and Ms. Kaszeta led a discussion regarding the 8th grade field trip to Washington DC. They have been approached by concerned parents and teachers who are questioning the trip to Washington DC. Mr. Catlin said he is well into the process of setting up the Washington DC trip and so far we have 90 students signed up to go. He feels if the destination stays the same, he would lose about 30 of those students. Mr. Catlin said if we go to Washington DC, it will be hard to predict how many venues they would be able to see since there is a "hardening" around most of the monuments and getting into them will take a lot longer. There are also some chaperones that have indicated they have reservations about attending a trip to Washington DC. They have investigated a trip to Philadelphia and Gettysburg instead with day one in Gettysburg and days two and three in Philadelphia. He feels this is a good alternative but needs to make a decision soon because of limited hotel space. Ms. Hameling asked if the parents who are concerned would be willing to send their kids on a trip to Philadelphia. Mr. Catlin said based on feedback of the parents he talked to at the turkey drive most would be willing to allow their kids to go to Philadelphia. Mr. Strumello said he felt a formal survey of all the parents and chaperones should be done and Ms. Hameling agreed. Ms. Syriac said that CAPSS had done a survey regarding field trips and it was found that 14 districts changed the destination of domestic trips. Mr. Putorti asked if a new pool of chaperones is necessary. Mr. Catlin said he would do a second appeal if necessary. It was decided that a decision would be made at the Special Meeting on December 21, 2015.

B. Board of Education Proposed Meeting Schedule 2016

MOTION: (Mr. Stanek/sec., Mr. Strumello) to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the proposed Board of Education Meeting Schedule for 2016 as presented

Mr. Hatfield said there are many meetings at the middle school and he would like to move around more. Ms. Magri said moving around to different schools was done with the hopes that it would raise public attendance. That has not happened. Ms. Harmeling asked about having the meetings on video and Mr. Stanek said the equipment in the Norma Drummer room at Town Hall is not good enough; it will not video all nine members of the Board. Ms. Harmeling said that room is not big enough but we have been talking about it for two years and we need to get it done we have been talking about this forever. Mr. Miller suggested changing the seating configuration may help, having five members sit in the front and four members sit in the back would allow for all to be on camera. He said this would be better than nothing but it is the decision of the Board. Mr. Strumello asked if can post the meeting schedule without locations. It was felt this would not satisfy the requirement of having this posted by December 31.

MOTION: (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Strumello) to table the approval of the 2016 BOE meeting schedule to the December 21, 2015 Special BOE meeting

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Klarides, Ms. Magri, Mr. Strumello

OPPOSED: Mr. Putorti, Mr. Stanek Ms. Sobieski

ABSTAIN: Mr. Garofolo

Ms. Harmeling said she felt that she has not heard from everyone on the issue of where to meet. Mr. Stanek said he felt we should be meeting in the schools. Mr. Miller suggested buying video equipment. Ms. Harmeling said she was concerned about sound quality. The schools are not conducive to videotaping. Mr. Stanek said we can purchase microphones for each Board member if it is a priority. Ms. Magri said the best attendance is when students come and present and she would like to see more of this type of thing. She also said the modified seating arrangement will not work for her. Mr. Putorti said he will bring options to the 12/21 meeting.

C. Indigenous Peoples Day

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Hatfield) to move Item 8D Indigenous Peoples Day to precede 8C Seymour Public Schools Proposed 2016-17 School Calendar

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Klarides, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

Ms. Magri is not in favor of changing history and pointed out that August 9 is International Indigenous Peoples Day so we already have a day for this. Mr. Garofolo said that there are political ramifications with Columbus Day vs. Indigenous People's Day. Columbus' discovery is an important day in history and set the path for others to follow. Everyone agreed.

D. Seymour Public Schools Proposed 2016-17 School Calendar

Mrs. Syriac said this is the first year where we are required to follow our regional area. Ms. Harmeling asked if this meant all schools in the state would start on the same day. Mrs. Syriac said no that it is a regional calendar and we would follow the ACES calendar; meaning all schools in our region would follow their calendar. She said once we have school cancellations; all calendars can potentially be different. Mr. Putorti suggested we should look at Columbus Day and decide if it should be a work day similar to Veterans Day where students would have instruction on the history or if it should be kept as a holiday. Ms. Harmeling said it is a long stretch between holidays without Columbus Day. Mr. Hatfield suggested we allow athletic practices on Columbus Day.

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec. Ms. Sobieski) to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the proposed Seymour Public Schools Proposed School Calendar for 2016-17 as presented

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Klarides, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

E. Early Retirement Incentive Program (ERIP) Update – Christine Syriac

Mrs. Syriac updated the Board on where we are with the ERIP. Teachers have another week before the deadline and we have received one retirement letter so far. Mrs. Syriac asked for the Board's guidance with regard to Ms. Cheryl Welch's request to participate in the ERIP although she retired effective November 30, 2015. Ms. Magri said she felt that Ms. Welch disqualified herself from participation because she left on November 30 and the ERIP says the retirement must be effective as of the end of the year.

Ms. Harmeling said the contract says this must be offered one every contract cycle and since it was not offered in year one or year two, it was a given that it would be offered this year. Mr. Stanek said this discussion was not on the agenda; the agenda item says ERIP update.

MOTION: (Ms. Magri/Ms. Harmeling) to add to the agenda the discussion of Ms. Cheryl Welch's request to participate in the ERIP

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Klarides, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Strumello

OPPOSED: Mr. Garofolo, Mr. Stanek

Mr. Garofolo asked if there was a deadline communicated to the staff and Mrs. Syriac confirmed it was. Ms. Welch had retired prior to the ERIP being communicated. Mrs. Syriac said Ms. Welch will receive a buyout for her sick time which under the ERIP would be spread over five years. Mr. Putorti asked for a motion to allow Ms. Welch to participate in the ERIP program. No motion was made.

F. First Selectman Request to Find \$95,000 in Current Budget Should

Governor Reduce Funding – Christine Syriac

Mrs. Syriac explained that it is not guaranteed that this will happen but the State will be meeting tomorrow in special session. Ms. Magri asked how the ratio of \$95,000 (BOE) and \$65,000 (Town) was determined. Mr. Miller indicated our budget is about a 1/3 more than the town. Ms. Magri asked if the cuts are to the ECS funds and Mr. Miller said it was to municipal funds in general. She asked why we are being impacted if the ECS funds are not affected. Mr. Miller said it's because we are all in this together. Ms. Harmeling said the budget process has never been "we are all in this together". Mr. Miller said that since the cuts are not to ECS then the thinking is the town departments should have to carry the full load. He mentioned the money that was given to the Board of Education for Workers Compensation. Ms. Harmeling said her comments were directly related to the budget process. Mr. Miller said they are just trying to prepare in case there are cuts and he was disappointed by the confrontational attitude. All he is doing is asking folks to prepare. He acknowledged it is harder for the BOE to find the funds because the budget is so tight. Ms. Harmeling said it was not her intent to come across as confrontational and asked where we would be able to come up with these funds. Mr. Garofolo asked if the Board rejects to find or are unable to find \$95,000 will the Board be portrayed as bad guys. Mr. Miller said no. At this time, we do not have a plan. The Governor will set a number to cut. We have two options come back with a plan or let the Town absorb. Mr. Stanek said he was appreciative to Mr. Miller for bringing this to the attention of the Board. No decision will be made until a number comes from the state. This will be discussed at our Special BOE meeting on December 21, 2015

G. Graduation on the Turf Field Research/HS Sign Light – Wayne Natzel

Mrs. Syriac said the Board had requested additional information regarding having graduation on the turf field at the high school and Mr. Natzel has some information to report. Mr. Natzel reported that the light for the high school entrance sign is on order and they have chosen one that they hope will not be easily destroyed. He shared that graduation can be held on the field without voiding the warranty. Oxford, Wolcott, and Cheshire cover the stage area with ply board and Oxford and Cheshire use bar rail chairs, Wolcott uses regular chairs and prohibits the use of silly string, food, and high heels. They have experienced no damage. He showed the Board interlocking boards that are used to cover turf fields. He indicated while they were easy to work with, they were expensive with an estimated bill of \$40,000. He said he recommends the use of ply board under the stage and bar rail chairs which are the same price as the regular chairs. It was decided there was no problem having graduation on the field.

H. Awards – Jay Hatfield

Board member Jay Hatfield would like to discuss adding an additional annual award from the Board of Education (tabled from the 10/05/15 BOE Meeting)

Mr. Hatfield said he thought it would be nice to recognize our para educators with an award. He previously talked about the state level program where a paraprofessional would need to be nominated. Mrs. Syriac said anyone can nominate. A process would have to be put in place. Mr. Strumello asked if this was a new award to be added to our annual list of awards or participation in the state level program. Mr. Hatfield said he felt paraprofessionals should be honored but was unsure how to recognize them. Mr. Stanek said he felt this was a great idea and Ms. Harmeling said she couldn't see why we would not do this. Ms. Magri said it would depend on whether a paraprofessional was nominated and may not occur every year. Mr. Hatfield asked how we can get the process in motion.

MOTION: (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Strumello) to direct the Superintendent to execute Seymour's participation in the State Para Educator of the Year Award

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Klarides, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

IX. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. District Rapid Response Team

MOTION: (Mr. Garofolo/sec., Ms. Magri) to add to the agenda the discussion and possible action on a District Rapid Response team

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Klarides, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

Mrs. Syriac shared the information on the Rapid Response Team.

Rapid Response Team

This new legislation also requires boards of education, by January 1, 2016, to establish a confidential rapid response team to coordinate with DCF to:

1. ensure prompt reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect, or 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th degree sexual assault; 1st degree aggravated sexual assault; or 3rd degree sexual assault with a firearm of a student not enrolled in adult education by a school employee; and
2. provide immediate access to information and individuals relevant to DCF's investigation of such cases.
The confidential rapid response team must consist of:
 1. a local teacher and superintendent,
 2. a local police officer, and
 3. any other person the board of education deems appropriate.

Mrs. Syriac recommended that the rapid response team be made up of herself, Vonda Tencza, Associate Superintendent, Sara Morgatto, teacher/school psychologist, and the SRO.

MOTION: (Mr. Garofolo/sec., Mr. Stanek) to approve the recommendation of the Superintendent to create a rapid response team inclusive of herself, Vonda Tencza, Associate Superintendent, Sara Morgatto, teacher/school psychologist, and the SRO for DCF reporting that involves an employee

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Klarides, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

B. One-Man Team Request

MOTION: (Mr. Strumello/sec., Mr. Hatfield) to approve the recommendation of the Athletic Director to allow Ansonia High School students Noah Falkowski, Michael Shortell and Victor Falkowski to participate with the Seymour Boys Swim team as a team of one.

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Klarides, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

C. Policy #5141.21 – Administering Medication

MOTION: (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Strumello) to adopt the revision to Policy #5141.21 – Administering Medication that was approved at the Board of Education meeting on November 4, 2015

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Klarides, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

*** D. Salary Reopeners**

MOTION: (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Strumello) to postpone this item indefinitely

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Klarides, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

OPPOSED: Ms. Harmeling, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski,

ABSTAIN: Mr. Garofolo

Motion Tied, Motion Failed

MOTION: (Ms. Magri/sec., Ms. Sobieski) move that the board enter Executive Session to discuss and take action on the salaries of the Superintendent of Schools, the Associate Superintendent, and the Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations. 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, Mrs. Vonda Tencza, and Mr. Rick Belden

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Ms. Klarides, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

OPPOSED: Mr. Hatfield

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

Executive Session began at 9:53 pm

Executive Session ended at 10:41 pm

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Putorti) to adjourn

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Klarides, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

The meeting adjourned at 10:42 pm

Submitted by:
Lee-Ann Dauerty
Board Clerk