Seymour Board of Education

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES (revised)

November 5, 2018
Seymour Middle School
6:00 p.m.

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 12/10/18
TIME: 1:35pm
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

COMBINED MEETING OF
THE SEYMOUR BOARD OF EDUCATION
AND
THE SEYMOUR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:
Christopher Champagne (6:10 pm)
James Garofolo
Kristen Harmeling
Jay Hatfield (6:26 pm)
Edward Hendricks
Peter Kubik
Jennifer Magri
Ed Strumello
Sukhman Singh, Student Representative
Ashley Sirowich, Student Representative

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:
Fred Stanek

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:
Michael Wilson, Superintendent of Schools
Rick Belden, Asst. Sup - Finance & Operations
Lee-Ann Dauerty, Board Clerk
Rob Dyer, System Technology Coordinator
Jim Freund, Principal, SHS
Paul Lucke, Assistant Principal, SHS
Dibran Trepca
Mahad Khan
Sophia Fioretti
Cyrus Gagaza
Josh Magri
Dan Bouzoulin
Molly Adamo
Mya Oliwa
Lauren Adamo
Quinn Lounsbury
Kaya Banka

I. **CALL TO ORDER**
Ms. Magri called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:04 pm
The meeting was put on hold while all enjoyed pizza. The meeting resumed at 6:25 pm.

II. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
None

III. INFORMAL DISCUSSION

A. Informal Discussion between the Seymour Board of Education and the Seymour High School Student Council

The Board and the High School Student Council introduced themselves. Ms. Magri explained that this was an informal discussion and the students should feel comfortable telling the Board what they like and what they dislike. Some of the items that were discussed included that the students were very happy that the newspaper is up and running. They feel it is an excellent tool for communication. The newspaper is distributed in the cafeteria during lunch. Ms. Magri said she would love to see a copy. The students talked about spirit week and said it was good. There will be an upcoming volleyball tournament. The details are still in the works but students who sign up will pay a fee that will then be used to buy can goods or buy gifts for the giving tree. They talked about how having a student representative for each class has been very good as they get to hear from each grade level. Mr. Belden asked the students if they were principal for the day what they would change about the school. The students agreed that they would change the bathroom situation. The said the bathroom monitor holds the door open and there is no privacy. They have a difficult time using the bathroom between classes and getting to classes on time. They said there is still a lot of vaping going on. They suggested having a male and a female monitor that would be allowed to enter the bathroom. Ms. Harmeling asked if the students felt the problems have been solved with closing the bathroom. The students agreed that the problems have not been solved as there is still vaping in the bathrooms. One student explained the new vapes are really small which allows them to be hidden very easily; some kids vape in the hallways. Ms. Harmeling asked about the vaping monitors. Mr. Freund confirmed they have not yet been installed as the vendor cancelled the meeting with the administration. The students said there are more students in the bathroom to vape than there are students there to use the bathroom. The students talked about the adjustment to the new schedule. The all agreed they would like teachers to post homework in advance so they can better prioritize the work. The other issue with the schedule is that major tests occur on the same day which causes the students to spend late hours studying to prepare for multiple tests on the same day. They would like teachers to coordinate with each other to try and avoid this. Both students and teachers are struggling to adjust to the new schedule. Some students indicated that their grades have suffered. As they do adjust the students said the one hour classes are very effective for some subjects and they like meeting with teachers 3-4 times a week. There was a discussion on a student mentoring program they want to get started which would help to reduce the student dropout rate and help to establish relationships with more students so they feel less disconnected. The problem they have run into is they have lots of mentors but not many mentees. They hope to establish some type of incentive to get struggling students to participate. It was noted that it doesn't have to be only students who are failing but if a student is struggling in just one class they can get the help for that class. The students said they conduct a lot of "business" in the cafeteria as this is where they do things such as sell tickets, distribute the newspaper, etc. The students said there have been 239 school shootings this year and they said that Mr. Kearns has done a good job of showing them what to do in a shooting incident. However, the students feel this is something that should be practiced in drills. They feel we have more than enough fire drills but do not have practice drills for a shooting situation. While it may be upsetting for some students, overall they feel that high school students are mature enough to cope with practice drills. One student brought up graduation and asked why students cannot decorate their graduation caps since the students actually purchase them. She said decorating the caps is their final remark for their high school years and it would help parents to find their child in a "sea of blue". She said other valley towns allow this and it is done in college. She pointed out that not all students continue on to college and the high school graduation may be their last opportunity. She said she felt very strongly that they should be allowed to do this. Ms. Magri said this is something that cannot be decided tonight but the Board will look into it. Mr. Hatfield thanked the young lady for her comments on graduation. One student said there should be more field trips. There was a discussion about moving the spirit rock to the front of school. Ms. Magri said she actually envisioned four rocks (one for each grade).

Mr. Strumello suggested the student council should formally contact Public Works about moving the rock. The students said they really enjoyed this meeting and hoped to be able to have more of them.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

V. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: (Dr. Hendricks/sec., Mr. Garofolo) to adjourn

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Hendricks, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Strumello

MOTION PASSES: 8-0

The meeting adjourned at 7:08 pm

Submitted by:
Lee-Ann Dauerty
Board Clerk