

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

November 6, 2019
Seymour Middle School
Library Media Center
7:30 pm

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 11/13/19
TIME: 11:30am
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Christopher Champagne
James Garofolo
Kristen Harmeling
Jay Hatfield
Peter Kubik
Jennifer Magri
Fred Stanek
Ed Strumello
Ashley Sirowich, Student Representative
Zachary Braca, Student Representative
Edward Hendricks
Michael Wilson, Superintendent of Schools
Vonda Tencza, Associate Superintendent
Sherry Holmes, Business Manager
Kris Boyle, Director of Special Services
Lee-Ann Dauerty, Board Clerk
Jim Freund, Principal, SHS
Paul Lucke, Assistant Principal, SHS
Ernie DiStasi, Assistant Principal, SHS
Jodie Roden, Principal, SMS
Mary Sue Feige, Principal, BS
David Olechna, Principal, CLS
Kevin Pimpinelli
Derek Martin

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Magri called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:33 p.m.

II. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Resignation of Board Member

MOTION: (Mr. Kubik/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to accept the resignation of Dr. Edward Hendricks as a Seymour Board of Education member effective immediately

SO VOTED

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

MOTION PASSES: 8-0

Ms. Magri explained that Dr. Hendricks has submitted his resignation from the Board of Education so he can focus on his health. He will be missed and we wish him well.

B. Appointment of Board Member

Ms. Magri said the replacement must be a member of the same political party as Dr. Hendricks. She has worked with First Selectman Miller to find a replacement. Ms. Jennifer Magri nominates Ms. Kristen Bruno to serve the remaining term of Dr. Edward Hendricks.

MOTION: (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to approve the nomination of Ms. Kristen Bruno to serve as a Seymour Board of Education member for the remaining two years of Dr. Hendricks' term

SO VOTED

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

MOTION PASSES: 8-0

MOTION: (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Stanek) to appoint Ms. Kristen Bruno as a Seymour Board of Education member to serve the remaining two years of Dr. Hendricks' term November 7, 2019

SO VOTED

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

MOTION PASSES: 8-0

III. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Correspondence

1. Letter dated October 8, 2019 to Ms. Sharon Brezina on behalf of the Board of Education thanking her for her donation of a HP DesignJet 800 printer.
2. Letter dated October 8, 2019 to Mr. Richie Kearns on behalf of the Board of Education thanking him for his monetary donation of \$550.00 to be used to purchase a flagpole for the Seymour High School Football Field
3. Letter dated October 11, 2019 to First Selectman Kurt Miller from Sherry Holmes, Business Manager reporting on the discussion at the Transportation Committee regarding the condition of several roads in Seymour. Ms. Magri asked Ms. Holmes if she has heard anything back regarding this letter. Ms. Holmes said she has not. Mr. Stanek said the Board of Selectmen contacted Public Works to see what might be able to be done immediately. The Buckingham Road project is an engineering problem so it was put off to a later date.
4. Email dated October 24, 2019 from John Zseller of the Housatonic Council of Boy Scouts recognizing Thomas Robertson (grade 12) and Alexander Robertson (grade 10) for their participation in the Flag Ceremony at the Mayors' Breakfast on October 24, 2019

B. Media Coverage

1. Media Links
Seymour schools hire 2 more armed security officers

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment provides the opportunity for the public to make a comment. It is not a dialogue between the Board and the public. Based upon what is heard during Public Comment, the Board may choose to add a topic to the agenda. If questions are posed that the Chairman is able to answer, those questions may be addressed under the Chairmen's Report portion of the agenda. The Board will not discuss personnel matters. Comments should be respectful and be no longer than two minutes in length so that all who wish to comment may have the opportunity to do so. All public wanting to comment will need to state their name and address for the record prior to addressing the Board.

None

MOTION: (Mr. Strumello/sec., Mr. Champagne) to have the High School Student Representative present her report (Item 7A) at this point in the agenda

SO VOTED

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

MOTION PASSES: 8-0

Miss Sirowich reported that the Fall Festivities night at Seymour High School went very well and was a lot of fun. The quarter has ended at Seymour High School. Sports are as follows: Swim – NVL Finals are on Friday, Volley ball finals are today. Girls' soccer ended 8-8 and the first round of states is next week. Boys' soccer is 5-5-4 and Football is 5-2. Homecoming is Saturday and it is a space theme. Spirit week is the week leading up to the Homecoming game. She invited the Board to attend the Pep Rally on Friday. She said the Student Council is trying to resurrect the Cat Cave and they have bought some furniture for the space. She reported on the upcoming Color Wars. And congratulations to Freshman Katrin Feasy who broke a freshman record in swimming.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes
 - 1. Regular BOE Meeting Minutes – October 7, 2019
 - 2. Special BOE Meeting 1 Minutes – October 21, 2019
 - 3. Special BOE Meeting 2 Minutes – October 21, 2019
- B. Financial Management Summary – ending October 31, 2019
- C. Nutrition Services Financial Report – July-August, 2019
- D. Staff Hiring – Non Certified
 - 1. Ortiz, Nicholas
 - Nutrition Services
 - Bungay School
 - Replacing Ellen Beardsley
 - 2. Shah, Monali
 - Monitor Paraprofessional
 - Bungay School
 - Replacing Vicki Fitzsimmons
 - 3. Johnson-Evans, Geri
 - Monitor Paraprofessional
 - Seymour Middle School
 - Replacing Diana Diaz Ballero
 - 4. Yustin, KellyJo
 - Instructional Paraprofessional
 - Chatfield-LoPresti School
 - Replacing Ronda Taramelli
- E. Out of State Field Trips
 - 1. Magic Mountain Ski Resort, Londonderry, VT
Seymour High School Students Grade 9-12 to Magic Mountain Ski Resort in Londonderry, VT on February 1, 2020
 - 2. Apollo Theater, New York, NY
Seymour High School US History Students to the Apollo Theater in New York, NY on December 2, 2019, December 6, 2019 or December 9, 2019

- F. Acknowledge the receipt of homeschooling notification and render no opinion as to the appropriateness of the planned program
1. Alexander Chaves, Montgomery Chavez, Lucian Chavez
Ms. Jennifer Chavez has informed the Board of Education of her intent to home school her children, Alexander Chaves, Montgomery Chavez, and Lucian Chavez for the 2019-2020 school year

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Kubik) move to approve the consent agenda as presented

SO VOTED

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

ABSTAIN: Mr. Garofolo

MOTION PASSES: 7-0-1

VI. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

None

VII. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. New Positions

1. Bungay School

This is an existing job classification and is a new position not a replacement to fulfill IEP requirements (1-1 paraprofessional). Ms. Magri voiced her concern that the paraprofessionals have increased by 20 since last April. She asked where the funds come from. Mr. Wilson said it is not ideal to have unpredicted needs due to IEPs but we must do our best to educate the students. The State doesn't care about how it is funded. He said the budget is watched closely. The funds must come from somewhere and that may be a frozen line item, there are only a limited number of places to pull the funds from. Ms. Harmeling suggested having a floating teacher instead of 1-1 paraprofessionals and asked if we feel good about our current model. It was pointed out that our paraprofessionals do more than just instructional and a floating teacher would not be able to do that. Ms. Magri said we need to think about this during the budget process. Mr. Wilson agreed. Mr. Hatfield asked if there was anything more that we can do to lower the turnover rates of paraprofessionals. He suggested we reach out to our alumni as a way to build their resumes. Ms. Magri said this is a problem that is not specific to just Seymour.

MOTION: (Mr. Kubik/sec., Mr. Strumello) to accept the recommendation of the Director of Special Services to create a new Instructional Paraprofessional position for Bungay School

SO VOTED

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

MOTION PASSES: 8-0

2. Chatfield-LoPresti School

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Strumello) to accept the recommendation of the Director of Special Services to create a new Instructional Paraprofessional position for Preschool/Pre-K at Chatfield-LoPresti School

SO VOTED

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

MOTION PASSES: 8-0

MOTION: (Mr. Strumello/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to add to the agenda a discussion on the revision of Policy #3524.1

SO VOTED

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

MOTION PASSES: 8-0

Mr. Wilson explained that Ms. Wendy Martel of DEEP visited us and while here she checked on our policies and procedures with regard to pesticide use. She found that policy 3524.1 had not been updated and provided Mr. Wilson with the red line changes. Just a few changes are required. Ms. Magri reviewed the changes and since all Policy Committee members are in attendance and the urgency of getting these changes implemented, the Board is being asked to approve it. Mr. Strumello expressed a concern on being put on the spot to read over the changes. Ms. Harmeling asked if the custodians were always responsible for this and Mr. Wilson confirmed they were.

MOTION: (Mr. Kubik/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to approve the revision of 3524.1

SO VOTED

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

MOTION PASSES: 8-0

B. 2020-2021 BOE Meeting Schedule

Ms. Harmeling suggested the Board do something different with the committee meetings. Mr. Strumello said there is some reluctance of the committees to meet if there is no meeting scheduled. Ms. Harmeling suggested we include the Finance Committee on the schedule but not submit the other committees. Mr. Hatfield asked if a discussion regarding changing the start time of the regular meeting can happen. There was concern that this would impact the start of the finance committee meeting. Ms. Harmeling said the Finance Committee usually lasts 15 or 20 minutes and wondered if it could be part of the regular Board of Education meeting. Mr. Hatfield asked about the meeting locations saying he thought we visited each school twice in the past. Mr. Strumello explained that we starting going to the different schools in an effort to beef up our audience. This has not been successful. The middle school is a good place to hold meetings. Ms. Harmeling said she would like to see them held at the high school in the library media center.

MOTION: (Mr. Strumello/sec., Mr. Champagne) to table this discussion until the December 2, 2019 Board of Education meeting

SO VOTED

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

MOTION PASSES: 8-0

C. 2020-2021 School Calendar

MOTION: (Mr. Strumello/sec., Mr. Champagne) to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the 2020-2021 School Calendar as presented

SO VOTED

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

VIII. REPORTS and DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

A. HS Student Representative Report – Miss Sirowich, Mr. Braca
Moved up on the agenda.

B. Committee Reports

1. Finance Committee Meeting – October 7, 2019

C. Fall MAP Data Review – Mrs. Tencza

Mrs. Tencza presented a brief overview of the Fall MAP data and said this confirms what we are seeing in the other Smarter Balanced data, which indicates fidelity of the assessments. Current 2nd graders did not meet the target in reading. In math we are seeing the same pattern in grade 6. She said principals see school based data. One factor ~~is~~ may be last year's several grade one teachers out on maternity leave. This is uncontrollable and does have an impact. In math we are seeing a slow upward trend progressing toward the 70th percentile. Only a few grades took the science assessment last year. The trajectory is where we want it to be. The grade 8 class did pretty well. Regarding the spring SAT 2018; in literacy 62% met goal, this is good progress. In math 36% met goal. We are continuing to work on meeting the math benchmarks. Ms. Harmeling said the Seymour gap is much wider than in 2017. Ms. Tencza was not sure why this happened and they are continuing to look at it.

D. Board of Education Report

1. Chairman's Comments

Ms. Magri address the Board; below is a transcript:

This is it. The end of my 8 years and the last time that you will hear from me as a member of the BOE. I am truly grateful for having had the opportunity to serve the town of Seymour and our students, faculty and staff in this capacity. When I began this journey over 10 years ago I was a frustrated parent. I was tired of the school budgets failing and what I perceived to be a lack of transparency regarding board meeting content. In 2010, I became a very angry parent after the high school graduation led to newspaper headlines. I attended the monthly board meetings and was a frequent critic during public comment. Our former Superintendent MaryAnne Mascolo ultimately engaged me in dialogue outside of those meetings which then led to her encouraging me to run for a position on the BOE. I vividly recall my mother telling me that I did not have the temperament to be in public office. My brother cautioned me that I would struggle with the politics. I believe that I have grown personally through my participation on this board. My patience has increased while my tongue has been tamed. I admit that it does hurt sometimes from biting it. I have tried my best to listen, learn and then act collaboratively, always in the best interest of our students. Politics have not played a major role in our discussions. And I will stand by my statement that I am far more comfortable leading a meeting with a crowd of upset parents and community members than be a judge at a high school debate tournament. Those were far more stressful! I have had the pleasure to work with 3 very different Superintendents - MaryAnn Mascolo, Christine Syriac and Michael Wilson, 3 Assistant Superintendents in Christine Syriac, Nancy Snopkowski and Vonda Tencza and 2 Business Managers in Rick Belden and Sherry Holmes. I appreciate the relationships that I fostered with each of them and their willingness to work with me, their sharing their knowledge and experiences and for answering my sometimes endless questions when presented. I know that each of these individuals have always wanted what is best for our students and our district. Over the past 8 years I have had the opportunity to learn more about collective bargaining than I could have believed possible. I thank Attorney Fred Dorsey for his guidance in those matters. In a weird way I might actually miss those negotiation sessions, but not the one which required us to spend an entire night from 6 pm to 6 am at the Middle School. That was rough. And I would be remiss if I did not publicly thank Lee-Ann Dauerty for all of her hard work and dedication to helping to keep all of us on track. To all of the administration, teachers and staff that I have had the pleasure of interacting with, I thank you for your commitment to your profession, our district and our students.

You are the key to our success. My intent in joining the Board was always about trying to make a difference. I am proud of the speeches that I was able to give at convocations and graduations. The More You Know Monday Facebook series provided important information about our district to the community. We increased our interaction with our high school students, giving them a larger voice in their education. Together we navigated through some difficult challenges and have put forth responsible budgets to the taxpayers that are now being approved on the first vote. After over 100 meetings and countless hours of work I can say that I am proud to have participated alongside all of you as we did the work needed to provide for our district. To my fellow board members while we may not have always agreed, I thank you for your support and even your challenges which at times gave me pause and caused me to expand my thinking. I have learned something from each of you. And I do have to say it has been enjoyable sitting alongside one of my 4th grade teachers Ed Strumello over the past 2 years as he served as our Vice Chair. Moving forward I wish you all the best as you continue to do the important work of moving the district forward. I thank each of you for your continued service as I know the sacrifices that are made in being able to participate as a member of the Board. I ask that you continue to put the needs of our students and staff first and that you not govern with a Blue or Red heart on your sleeve but rather with the Blue and Gold hearts in your chests, as your collective love for Seymour and our community will always guide you in the right direction. Thank you all again for this tremendous opportunity. I am so grateful to have been able to serve.

2. Board Member Comments

Ms. Harmeling honored Ms. Magri's work on the Board by presenting her with a bracelet. She said Ms. Magri's dedication to the Board sometimes came at a cost. She thanked her for her commitment. Mr. Stanek said Ms. Magri was the epitome of "Once a wildcat, always a wildcat." He also reported on the Seymour High School Sports Hall of Fame banquet. He felt it was the best one yet. He reported the Seymour Christmas Parade is scheduled for Sunday, December 1, 2019 at 2:00 pm. Several school groups will be participating, including, but not limited to, the Seymour Middle School Band, the Debate Club, the Kinder Cats, the Teacher of the Year, the Seymour High School Performing Arts/ Arts Club and the High School Football Team in some capacity. Mr. Freund will be driving the vehicle pulling the Performing Arts/ Art Club float and Mr. Wilson has been invited to march perhaps with the Teacher of the Year. The Parade Committee is waiting to hear whether any other school groups wish to participate. Gene Coppola will once again serve as the Master of Ceremonies. Harvey Catlin will be the grand marshal. Mr. Hatfield said he thought Mr. Cunningham was the NVL Coach of the Year.

E. Superintendent Report

1. As this Board is aware, we had our full day PD day yesterday on November 5th and it went very well. Mrs. Tencza did a wonderful job organizing this and she was able to secure several teachers and Administrators to present on a variety of topics such as Google Classroom, Google Apps, NGSS workshops, Differentiated Instruction, Close Reading Strategies, Phonics, and Math workshops. Mrs. Tencza and Mr. Wilson went around to each of the rooms throughout the entire day in order to hear and see what was taking place at these training sessions. The teachers were engaged and seemed to really benefit from the day. We look forward to observing their new learning in action when we go on our classroom visits.
2. Mr. Wilson was very happy to report that as of this afternoon, we have 1543 followers on our Facebook page.

3. As has been the case, Mrs. Tencza and Mr. Wilson have continued to be visible in all of the buildings this past month and we will continue to visit the buildings in order to witness the great things taking place within our schools.
4. Mr. Wilson attended the Seymour Sports Banquet on Saturday evening along with Mr. Stanek, Mr. DiStasi and Mr. Lucke in order to recognize our former student athletes who were being inducted into the Sports Hall of Fame.
5. Mr. Wilson has continued to attend been at various sporting events is very proud of how well our students have performed. A special recognition goes out to our Volleyball team who is playing for the NVL Championship this evening.
6. On behalf of all Seymour staff, teachers, Administrators, and students Mr. Wilson recognize and say thank you to Dr. Hendricks and to Board Chair Magri for their dedication and years of service. It has been an honor and privilege to work alongside these two individuals whom we have all learned a great deal from. Serving your community is a testament to both of your characters and it has been a pleasure getting to know each of you. Know that your efforts will have a lasting impact on all that you have touched. Mr. Wilson presented Ms. Magri with a small token of our appreciation in recognition for all that you both have done for Seymour's students.

Mr. Strumello expressed concerns about our technology after reading several districts were hacked recently. Mr. Wilson said he understood his concerns but felt that Mr. Dyer and his team are on top of our security. We have firewalls in place. Mr. Dyer makes security a priority and keeps well informed. He has a proactive approach. This is a good thing to bring up but Mr. Wilson is confident that we are protected. Mr. Strumello also wanted to note that Coach Perrucci was honored at the Seymour Sports Hall of Fame banquet. He reminded the Board that he and Jay are delegates and if anyone has anything they would like to have discussed at the delegate assembly please contact them.

IX. INFORMATION

- A. Activities and Recognitions
 1. Seymour Middle School
 2. Bungay Elementary School
 3. Chatfield-LoPresti School
- B. Special Education Monthly Enrollment Update – Dr. Kris Boyle
- C. BOE Special Meeting Report – October 21, 2019
- D. Staff Hiring – Appendix E
 1. FitzGerald, John
 - Marching Band Advisor
 - Seymour Middle School
 - Replacing Sarah Meek
- E. Staff Resignations – Non Certified
 1. Johnson-Evans, Geri (Transfer)
 - Monitor Paraprofessional
 - Seymour High School
 - Effective October 25, 2019
 2. Moore, Donald
 - Instructional Paraprofessional
 - Seymour Middle School
 - Effective November 16, 2019

3. Yustin, KellyJo
 - Monitor Paraprofessional
 - Seymour Middle School
 - Effective November 16, 2019

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

A recess was called at 9:00 so everyone could enjoy cake and wish Ms. Magri well. The meeting resumed at 9:10 pm. Ms. Harmeling left the meeting at 9:00 pm.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

*A. Assistant Principal – Chatfield-LoPresti School

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

MOTION: (Ms. Strumello/sec., Mr. Champagne) move that the Board enter Executive Session for discussion and possible action on the appointment of the assistant principal of Chatfield-LoPresti School. The Board invites Michael Wilson, Vonda Tencza, and the candidate into the Executive Session

SO VOTED

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

MOTION PASSES: 7-0

Enter into Executive Session: 9:13 pm

Enter into Regular Session: 10:05 pm

XII. POSSIBLE ACTION AFTER EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: (Mr. Champagne/sec., Mr. Garofolo) to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools to hire Stacy Albertson as the Assistant Principal of Seymour Middle School

SO VOTED

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

MOTION PASSES: 7-0

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: (Mr. Strumello/sec., Mr. Champagne) to adjourn

SO VOTED

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

MOTION PASSES: 7-0

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 pm

Submitted by:
Lee-Ann Dauerty
Board Clerk