

The minutes presented within this document provide a summary of the discussion that took place at the Board of Education meeting. For the complete discussion of the agenda items, please view the video of the Board meeting on our website at www.southingtonschools.org. These minutes are considered a draft until approved at the following regular Board of Education meeting.

SOUTHINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

SOUTHINGTON, CONNECTICUT

REGULAR MEETING

JUNE 9, 2016

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education was held on Thursday, June 9, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. in the Municipal Center Public Assembly Room, 200 North Main Street, Southington, Connecticut with Executive Session scheduled for 6:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Brian Goralski, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Board members present: Mr. Robert Brown, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Juanita Champagne, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mr. Zaya Oshana, and Mrs. Patricia Queen. Board member absent: Mr. David Derynoski.

Administration present: Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Steven Madancy, Assistant Superintendent; and Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance (*left at 6:42 p.m.*).

MOTION: by Mr. Oshana, seconded by Mr. Brown:

"Move to go into Executive Session, excluding the public and the press, for the purpose of discussing Personnel, Unaffiliated Employees, Paraprofessional Negotiations, and Student Expulsion, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session."

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL, UNAFFILIATED EMPLOYEES, PARAPROFESSIONAL NEGOTIATIONS AND STUDENT EXPULSION

Mr. Goralski declared Executive Session ended at 7:23 p.m.

3. CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

At 7:25 p.m., in Celebration of Excellence, the Board of Education honored the following students who were presented with plaques:

- Timothy Cocuzza, Class of 2016 Valedictorian; Emily Maciejewski, Class of 2016 Salutatorian; and Natalia Gimenez, Class of 2016 Essayist who were the top three students out of 486 seniors.

- James Brino and Christopher Iverson, Student Representatives who served on the Board of Education for two years and were graduating.

Members of the Southington Veterans Committee and the American Legion Kiltonic Post #72 presented the Board of Education a framed flag that flew over Baghdad, Iraq with a plaque that reads, *“On behalf of the Veterans of the town of Southington, this flag is presented for your support and dedication to the memory and incidences of all veterans.”*

Mr. Goralski called for a recess at 7:40 p.m.

4. RECONVENE MEETING ~ REGULAR SESSION

The regular session was reconvened at 7:55 p.m. by Mr. Goralski, Chairperson.

Board members present: Mr. Robert Brown, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Juanita Champagne, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mrs. Terry Lombardi, Mr. Zaya Oshana and Mrs. Patricia Queen. Board member absent: Mr. David Derynoski.

Administration present: Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Stephen Madancy, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance; and Mr. Peter Romano, Director of Operations. Administration absent: Ms. Margaret Walsh, Director of Special Services.

Student Representative present was Miss Samantha Martins.

5. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Miss Martins led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ~ May 26, 2016

MOTION: by Mr. Oshana, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

“Move to approve the regular Board of Education minutes of May 26, 2016, as submitted.”

Motion carried by voice vote with Mrs. Lombardi abstaining.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from Audience

The following audience members addressed the Board of Education regarding the nonrenewal of the Hartford Healthcare contract for Occupational Therapists and Physical Therapists:

- 1) Megan Mariani, 174 Rethal Street - Student
- 2) Katrina Toce, 114 Lepage Drive - Parent
- 3) Andrea Zak, 35 Foley Drive - Parent
- 4) Mary Peterman, 71 Wilbur Street - Preschool Special Education Teacher
- 5) Heather Cekauskas, 60 Birmingham Drive - Parent

- 6) Christopher Kelly, 18 Franklin Street - Parent
- 7) Chris DeMello, 48 Trotters Lane - Parent
- 8) Lisa Klee, 31 Darling Street - Parent
- 9) Steve Straub, 24 Valley View Court - Parent
- 10) Cheryl Hatheway, 10 Yorktown Road - Day care provider
- 11) Jessica Heeran, 21 Dogwood Drive - Parent
- 12) Theresa Gambardella, 36 Homestead Lane - Hartford Healthcare Physical Therapist
- 13) Laura Summers, 572 Spring Street - Parent
- 14) Sue Mikosz, 86 Ladyslipper Lane - Parent
- 15) Laurie Straub, 24 Valley View Court - Parent

There were 15 people in the audience who spoke comprised of parents of special needs students, a student using assistive technology, a Physical Therapist (PT) who is employed by Hartford Healthcare, which is contracted by the Southington Public Schools, Preschool Special Education Teacher, and Southington citizens. They spoke of their concerns of not renewing the contracted OT/PT services with the Hartford Healthcare Rehab Network and the school district hiring OT/PT employees to provide these services. They addressed the short notice of recently learning about this change through an email that they received from Mr. Connellan, Superintendent of Schools, transparency, the affect that this change would have on the special needs students and the need for a transition period.

Ms. Karina Toce, a parent of two disabled children stated that she started an online petition that has collected over 400 signatures for the purpose of the Board of Education renewing the contract with Hartford Healthcare and not making any changes to the excellent care the children are receiving. The parents noted that some children do not handle change well, need consistency and routine, and sometimes regress with change. If change needs to be made, the parents requested a transition period and plan for each of the special needs students.

Theresa Gambardella, Physical Therapist employed by Hartford Healthcare, spoke of the associated costs for the seven Hartford Healthcare staff members, years of experience, and pointed out that their health insurance and benefits are paid by Hartford Healthcare. She noted that they work beyond the hours for which they are paid, they are dedicated and actually live in town. They understand highly medically complex students, have low staff turnover and work as a team. The Hartford Healthcare staff members believe that the services that they provide are cost effective because they go above and beyond what is expected of them.

Mr. Goralski emphasized that the consideration of a change is not a reflection on the current staff members working in the Southington schools or Hartford Healthcare, who do an excellent job. He recommended that any further communication regarding this should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools and Ms. Meg Walsh, Director of Special Services.

b. Communication from Board Members

The Board members reported on the following:

- Mr. Brown read the following statement for the record: *“I am not blaming anyone in the room, but the delays on the Board of Education budget being finalized will have a negative impact on the school system’s ability to best serve our students. The longer the process is or has been dragged out, the smaller the pool of potential quality candidates to fill vacant and new positions becomes. The*

best candidates will certainly be taken by other districts. It is also hampering plans for professional development and other educational activities this summer because of uncertainty of what funds will be available. Also, to leave our employees hanging for so long as to whether they have jobs or what those jobs might be for next year as the end of the school year arrives is disrespectful to our employees. Finally, I have heard many rumors, which I hope are not true, that there are talks by members of other elected bodies in this town to take some of the money being returned to us from the state, which we thought was promised to us to be restored, and use it for other non-educational purposes. I hope that all the monies that we were promised, in fact, goes to help us educate our students.”

- The Wall of Honor Committee met and selected six new people, who are in the process of being notified. A ceremony is scheduled for October 24, 2016, at 6:00 p.m. at Southington High School.

MOTION: by Mrs. Carmody, seconded by Mr. Oshana:

“Move to add Agenda Item 11.h ‘Student Expulsion 2015-2016-09’ to the agenda.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

c. Communication from Administration

Administration reported on the following:

1. American Legion Literacy Auxiliary Grant: Ms. Rachel Wache gave a history of how the American Legion Reading Program was started with book bins and the number of literacy grants made to various schools throughout the years totaling \$10,000 to date. With the assistance of Ms. Susan Lockes, they presented a literacy grant check to South End Elementary School for \$572 and Strong Elementary School for \$542. In the fall, Derynoski and Thalberg Elementary Schools will be receiving grants. Ms. Sue Lockes announced that the book/magazine Invisible: The Story of our Flag, which was a centennial promotion with the American Legion family and was a story about the American flag, will be presented to all the Southington schools and the Southington Library.
2. Staff Evaluations: Mr. Connellan reported that administrators have completed the staff evaluations, which is a very time consuming process.
3. Professional Development and Evaluation Committee: Mr. Madancy reported that the committee met on Wednesday and looked at the district’s priorities with the input from various departments. Through a collaborative effort, they are prepared to meet the needs for professional development next school year with everything now planned and in place.

d. Communications from Student Representatives

Miss Martins reported on the following:

- She heard that Senior Class Day and Class Night were enjoyable.
- The recent AP Expo showcased the students work for the school year.
- The volleyball, softball and baseball teams made it to the semi-finals.

- Graduation is Friday, June 10, 2016 followed by an All-Night Graduation Party at the high school.
- Best Buddies will have a picnic at Camp Sloper's on Monday, June 13, 2016.
- She thanked the Board members for a great year serving on the Board of Education as a Student Representative.
- Miss Martins introduced the two new Student Representatives for the 2016-2017 school year who introduced themselves: Joey Martin, will be a junior in the fall, and Samantha Steeves, will be a senior.

8. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

a. Personnel Report

MOTION: by Mr. Oshana, seconded by Mrs. Clark:

“Move to approve the Personnel Report, as presented.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Policy and Personnel Committee Meeting ~ June 6, 2016

Mrs. Queen reported that the committee reviewed two policies and five job descriptions at their last meeting. She shared the process of how the policies are prioritized and reviewed by the committee focusing on content, language changes, and recommendations, which are made on the computer at the meeting without being proofed as a first read. She asked the Board members to review the first reads and share their comments with her before they vote at a subsequent Board meeting. She emphasized that a first read is not a final draft. The committee reviewed Policy #3245.1, Pesticide Application and Policy #5113, Attendance and Excuses. The committee also reviewed five job descriptions: Lead Therapist, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Occupational Therapist Assistant and Physical Therapist Assistant.

b. Curriculum and Instruction Committee Meeting ~ June 7, 2016

Mrs. Carmody reported that the committee reviewed the Technology Education Curriculum for grades 6-8 and the Perkins Grant with the opportunity to improve the school-based DECA store through the funding from the grant. The grant was in addition to the regularly allotted Perkins grant awarded to the various departments within the high school. The committee reviewed the upcoming work of a newly formed Curriculum Leadership Team and the curriculum renewal cycle. The committee also reviewed data from an elective course enrollment survey at the high school and recommended that each department engage in a self-study. A sub-committee will be established to develop the self-study and will include a Board member from the Curriculum and Instruction Committee.

10. OLD BUSINESS

a. Town Government Communications

Mr. Goralski reported that on Wednesday, June 8, he, Mr. Connellan and Mrs. DiNello participated in a conference call with the Chairman of the Board of Finance and the Chairman of the Town Council regarding the budget. The Board of Finance will hold a special meeting on Monday, June 13 and will add the Board of Education appropriation request to their agenda. The concern is that there is still a \$20 million reduction at the state level that is an unknown on how it will be reduced. However, it appears that the Board of Finance and Town Council are going to lean toward restoring all the ECS money minus the transportation reductions that happened in the final approved budget. The Board of Education should be looking at a restoration of approximately \$626,000. Mr. Goralski will attend the special Board of Finance meeting and then attend the Town Council meeting regarding restoring the money to the Board of Education budget.

11. NEW BUSINESS

a. UPSEU (Paraeducators / ABA Therapists) Contract 2016-2019

MOTION: by Mrs. Queen, seconded by Mrs. Lombardi:

“Move to approve the agreement between the United Public Service Union (Paraeducators / ABA Therapists) and the Southington Board of Education for 2016-2019.”

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mrs. Carmody, Mrs. Clark, Mr. Brown, Mrs. Lombardi, Mrs. Champagne, Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Queen, Mr. Goralski. **Motion carried unanimously.**

b. Healthy Food Certification

MOTION: by Mrs. Lombardi, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

“Move to participate in the Healthy Food Certification program for the 2016-2017 school year.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The question arose that at one point the Board voted to not participate because of the federal reimbursement. Mrs. DiNello stated that they get ten cents per meal for participating in the Healthy Food Certification and for a number of years the Board chose not to participate because it affected fundraising and the DECA store. However, the nutrition requirements for breakfast and lunch are very stringent now and that it does not make sense at this point to opt out of participating.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

c. Compensation for Unaffiliated Employees for 2016-2017

MOTION: by Mr. Oshana, seconded by Mrs. Clark:

“Move to table.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

d. Draft Policy #3524.1, Pesticide Application ~ First Reading

Any comments, questions or typos are to be directed to Mrs. Queen.

e. Draft Policy #5113, Attendance and Excuses ~ First Reading

Any comments, questions or typos are to be directed to Mrs. Queen.

f. Job Descriptions

MOTION: by Mrs. Queen, seconded by Mrs. Clark:

“Move that the Board of Education approve the new job descriptions for Lead Therapist, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant, and Physical Therapist Assistant, as recommended by the Policy and Personnel Committee.”

Mrs. Lombardi abstained from all discussion and voting on this topic because she is a Hartford Healthcare employee who is currently providing the services to the town of Southington.

The job descriptions will be posted on Friday, June 10, 2016. Mr. Goralski asked Mr. Connellan to follow-up with Hartford Healthcare on June 10 to request that their employees, who are currently providing these excellent services, are able to apply for these new positions. He questioned if there might be preclusions in their contracts that would prevent them from applying.

Mr. Connellan stated that the officials at Hartford Healthcare have indicated through Ms. Meg Walsh, Director of Special Services, that they would work with the Southington Public Schools on a Transition Plan.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mr. Brown, Mrs. Carmody, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Champagne, Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Queen, Mr. Goralski. **Motion carried with Mrs. Lombardi abstaining.**

g. Approval of Middle School Technology Curriculum

MOTION: by Mrs. Carmody, seconded by Mr. Brown:

“Move that the Board of Education supports the recommendation from the Curriculum and Instruction Committee to approve the revised Technology Education Curriculum for Grades 6-8.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

h. Student Expulsion 2015-2016-09

MOTION: by Mrs. Carmody, seconded by Mr. Oshana:

“Move to expel Student 2015-2016-09 as stipulated by the Superintendent of Schools.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: by Mr. Oshana, seconded by Mrs. Champagne:

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Blanchard

Recording Secretary