

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

JANUARY 23, 2020

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education (Committee of the Whole – Operations) was held on Thursday, January 23, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. in the John Weichsel Municipal Center Public Assembly Room, 200 North Main Street, Southington, Connecticut and an Executive Session was held at 6:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Terri Carmody, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Board members present: Mr. Joseph Baczewski, Mr. Robert Brown, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. James Chrzanowski, Mrs. Missy Cipriano, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mr. David Falvo, and Mr. Zaya Oshana.

Administration present: Mr. Steven Madancy, Assistant Superintendent, and Mr. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION ~ CONTRACT AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING NEGOTIATIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION, SECRETARIES AND FOOD SERVICE EMPLOYEES

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

"Move to go into Executive Session, excluding the public and the press, for the purpose of discussing Contract and Collective Bargaining Negotiations for Transportation, Secretaries and Food Service Employees, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session."

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mrs. Carmody declared Executive Session ended at 6:49 p.m.

3. RECONVENE MEETING ~ REGULAR SESSION

Mrs. Carmody reconvened the Board of Education Regular Session at 7:00 p.m.

Board members present: Mr. Joseph Baczewski, Mr. Robert Brown, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. James Chrzanowski, Mrs. Missy Cipriano, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mr. David Falvo, and Mr. Zaya Oshana.

Administration present: Mr. Steven Madancy, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance, and Ms. Margaret Walsh, Director of Special Services.

Student representatives present were Mr. Trevor Messina, Mr. Brett Sheldrick and Miss Amrit Kaur.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The student representatives led in reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Carmody called for a moment of silence in memory of Victor DiNello, former educator and Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations for the Southington Public Schools for over 30 years, who recently passed away.

Mrs. Carmody explained that Mr. Connellan, Superintendent of Schools, was absent due to illness and stated that the Board members wished him well.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ~ January 9, 2020

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

“Move to approve the regular Board of Education minutes of January 9, 2020, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

6. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

a. Communications from Public

Mr. Christopher Poulos, 158 Prospect Street, and Town Councilor, stated that he has two children in the Southington Public Schools and that he was also a teacher. He praised the Southington teachers and their dedication and hard work with both academics and extracurricular activities. He questioned if there was any movement to restore middle school athletics in the budget and, if so, he wanted to know the dollar amount and what percentage would be restored from what was cut?

Mrs. DiNello explained that the proposed operating budget for 2020-2021 included \$40,000 for middle school athletics and the current operating budget (2019-2020) included \$15,000. The Superintendent’s proposal increased the funding by \$25,000. The 2018-2019 total cost for Middle School Athletics was just under \$95,000. With the Board’s \$40,000 potential contribution, if it remains in the budget, along with the participation fees for students participating in athletics, which amounts to \$53,000, it would be approximately \$93,000. It would reduce the funding by the SMSAA (Southington Middle School Athletic Association) to \$5,000 a year versus the amount of revenues the SMSAA contributed in the 2018-20219 budget, which was \$39,000. It would help the SMSAA in the amount of fundraising required.

b. Communications from Board Members

Board members discussed the following:

- Mr. Brown attended a conference in New York City on Child Poverty last week that was attended by over 800 people nationwide. He is working with the State Teacher's Union on a Child Poverty Plan and the keynote speaker at the conference spoke about the same plan as the State's.
- Mr. Brown reported that the Wall of Honor was progressing. He planned to hold a gala event at the Aqua Turf in August 2021 for all the honorees. He hoped to unveil a mobile Wall of Honor at the event. The committee was also looking into creating posters to go into classrooms.
- Mr. Brown requested that the Board members, as elected officials with their differing opinions, be civil, polite and respectful to each other as they deliberate the budget.
- Mrs. Cipriano explained the collaboration between Paul Gregory's and the local community for young adults with disabilities 18 years old and older. On February 12, there will be a ribbon cutting and Open House at Paul Gregory's with the young adults. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday's, between 2:00-5:00 p.m., the adults with disabilities would be working at Paul Gregory's as cashiers, servers, waiters, cleaning, and cooking to learn life skills. All the tips would go to the young adults. The theme of the project is, "You are a gift". There is another restaurant in town also interested in helping young adults with disabilities.
- Mr. Derynoski reported that the Technology Education Advisory Committee met last Thursday. They are partnering with Tunxis Community College, which is in the process of acquiring a manufacturing building and outfitting it with capital equipment to train for manufacturing jobs such as machine operators and CNC programming in an effort to help manufacturing companies in Connecticut. There was also discussion about having off-site participation with manufacturing companies for SHS students to learn skills and earn credits.

c. Communication from Administration

Administration reported on the following:

1. Polar Plunge: Mr. Madancy thanked everyone in the school community who participated in the YMCA Polar Plunge at Camp Sloper on Saturday, which raised \$68,000 for students to attend camp.
2. Addition of multiple languages to website: Mr. Madancy explained that on the school district's home webpage at www.southingtonschools.org (the bottom right corner), people can now click on Polish, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Albanian, or Mandarin for the website to be translated to the requested language.
3. Professional Development Sessions: Mr. Madancy reported that professional development sessions for elementary school Equity Leadership Teams were held with the theme, "Hurtful and Biased Comments in the Classroom", to train teachers how to address these comments.
4. STEPS Survey: Mr. Madancy explained that the survey was a biennial process in partnership with Youth Services about Asset Building. There are a variety of topics covered including risk-taking behaviors. Families are notified in advance if they want their child to opt out from taking the survey.
5. Stop Bleed Kits: Ms. Walsh explained that she has been working in a collaborative effort through the Interagency Safety Committee to purchase "Stop the Bleed Kits" that are mounted on the wall and inside the kits there are tourniquets, quick

coagulants, and other materials needed for emergencies when people are bleeding out. They are writing a grant in collaboration with Police Officers Chad Butler and Brian Leppard, Shane Lockwood from the Health Department, Cathy O’Hara, Nurse Supervisor, and Joanne Kelleher, Grant Writer, through the Main Street Foundation. A Stop the Bleed Kit will be installed in every school and on every floor. The nurses and other employees have been trained on how to use the kits. Kits will also be purchased for the STELLAR and ALTA programs, Southington Catholic School, Municipal Center and Town Hall. It is a town-wide effort to provide safety.

6. Southington Athletics: Mr. Madancy reported that Southington had been recognized by the Central Connecticut Conference (CCC) as the school district to receive the Sportsmanship Award for all the sports teams. It is voted on by officials and coaches from opposing teams across all athletic teams. Mrs. Carmody requested that a press release be sent.

d. Communication from Students Representatives

Mr. Trevor Messina reported on the following:

- On February 11, the Marching Band will hold their Disney Band Concert playing songs for their upcoming trip to Disney World.
- On Friday, the Boys Basketball team will have their “purple out” game in honor of Julia Bruno.

Mr. Brett Sheldrick reported on the following:

- Mid-terms started January 23 and would be held through January 28.
- On February 5, the YMCA will hold their Awards Night recognizing nominees Brian Goralski, Sergeant Leppard and Officer Butler.

Miss Amrit Kaur reported on the following:

- The Veterans Oratorical Concert was scheduled for January 29 at the high school.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Finance Committee Meeting ~ January 7, 2020

Mr. Oshana, Chairperson of the Finance Committee, reported that the committee discussed the Self Insurance Report and Transfer of Funds. Mr. Derynoski questioned the transfer of funds from the librarian salary account to the teacher salary account.

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

“Move to approve the Transfer of Funds, as presented.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Oshana reported that the committee also discussed the Rubbish Removal and Recycling Contract that expires on June 30, 2020. He addressed the organic recycling at the middle schools and expanding the program. The current vendor will be attending a February Board of Education Finance meeting to give a presentation on extending the five-year contract and expanding the organic recycling to all cafeterias. The committee also reviewed a financial

update showing that the Board of Education budget was in the black. Mr. Derynoski requested a copy of the Financial Update.

8. OLD BUSINESS

a. Town Government Communications

Mrs. Carmody thanked the town officials who had attended the Board of Education Budget Workshops.

9. NEW BUSINESS

a. Review / Adoption of 2020-2021 Board of Education Operating Budget

Mrs. Carmody provided a brief recap of what had occurred during the budget process. The Board received the Superintendent's 2020-2021 budget on January 3, 2020 to begin their review and the Superintendent provided a PowerPoint presentation of his proposed operating budget during the Board of Education meeting on January 9, 2020. The Board held two budget workshops where they reviewed every page of the budget document. All Board members had the opportunity to ask questions of the administration during the workshops. In addition, over 34 written responses were provided to Board members regarding questions they had on the budget. At the last workshop, Mr. Derynoski requested that they add \$5,000 into Account #39450, Systemwide Field Trips, to provide more opportunities for high school students to visit and tour manufacturing sites. The consensus of the Board of Education members in attendance at the workshop was to make that adjustment. Adding the \$5,000 would change the budget total to \$101,628,445, which is an increase of 3.12%.

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

“Move that the Board of Education adopt the 2020-2021 Operating Budget at \$101,628,445, which is an increase of 3.12%.”

Mr. Baczewski thanked the administration for putting forth a budget that was well balanced to continue the education that Southington provides. He understood that the budget contained all the things that they were trying to maintain. When he first was elected to the Board, the cutting of the middle school sports was being addressed. In talking with colleagues and people in the community, he noted that some of the best relationships that were built in the school years were through sports and similar programs. He also addressed the “Stop the Bleed” kits, which makes him upset that they even have a discussion about that and the fact there are companies pushing sales for a kit. He noted that if somebody had field training, the best thing someone could do would be to take off their belt and use it as a tourniquet. He had discussions with Mr. Madancy about offering EMT (Emergency Medical Training) or CNA (Certified Nurse Assistant) programs, which could be taught to the students rather than playing into the false sense of security. Mr. Baczewski stated that he would rather see the \$56,000 in the budget for a Visitor Verification System, which would be able to read driver licenses, be used to fully fund middle school sports.

Mr. Brown thought that they would be putting the cart before the horse. He thought that when they get a budget number from the Town Council of how much money they are going to

have to spend would be when they would discuss what in the budget could be added or cut. He thought to do that now was too early, even though Mr. Baczewski made some valid points.

As a point of information, Mr. Derynoski thought that a request for an amendment to the motion could be made to the person who made the motion and that if Mr. Oshana agreed to do it, then changes could be made.

Mr. Brown explained parliamentary procedures. He noted that there were two kinds of amendments that could be made. One would be a "Friendly" amendment to ask the maker of the motion if they would accept a friendly amendment and, if accepted, then the Board would vote on that. If it is not a friendly amendment, in which the maker of the motion does not accept the friendly amendment, then someone could make a motion, which would need to be seconded, to amend the original motion with discussion and vote on that, then they would go back to the main motion.

Mr. Baczewski asked Mr. Oshana if he would be open for a friendly amendment to his motion. Mr. Oshana respectfully did not consent. He thought the Visitor Verification System would help in potentially stopping something from happening. He thought that if the Board had the opportunity to aid in the prevention of something going wrong then they should take that chance. Anytime they could spend the money on making the students, teachers and staff safer, then they should. With that being said, he stated that Mr. Baczewski brought up an issue and if the Board thought that it would be an appropriate change to make, then he would remove his motion and Mr. Baczewski could make an amendment to add to the budget or remove from the budget and the Board could vote on that and then he would amend his original motion.

Mrs. Clark stated that Mr. Baczewski asked if the money could be moved from the Visitor Verification System to middle school sports; therefore, the net gain/loss would be zero and the dollar amount would still be the same, which was what they were voting on. There was no reason to make an amendment because the dollar amount would be the same. Mr. Derynoski did not agree. He stated that they were voting on this document on a line item basis. Any changes that they made to this would have to be made after the Town Council voted on the final dollar amount and then they would have the discussion on how they would reallocate. The Board's action at this meeting was to vote on each line item as presented, which would be the Board's budget going forward.

Mrs. Carmody summarized that they had a motion to accept the Superintendent's budget, as proposed. Then they had discussion on adding an amendment to that. She clarified that Mr. Oshana responded that it was not a friendly amendment. The option now was that Mr. Baczewski could make an amendment, which would need to be seconded, and they could discuss that, then vote on it, and then go back to the main motion.

MOTION: by Mr. Baczewski, seconded by Mrs. Cipriano:

"Move to make an amendment to the operating budget to reallocate the money of \$56,000 and put it toward middle school sports and fully fund it."

Mr. Brown was opposed to this. When they find out how much money they would receive from the town, they were going to have to change what was in the budget. He stated that he did not know enough about the \$56,000 expenditure for the Visitor Verification System. He suggested addressing this with administration and if they needed to adjust the budget at the next

Board meeting, they could have that discussion. He thought that it was much too early to start reallocating within the budget. Mrs. Carmody recalled that at the last meeting when Mr. Connellan was asked if the Visitor Verification System would make the school district safer, he said, "Yes."

Mrs. Cipriano thought what Mr. Baczewski was saying was that they had done such a great job in the schools with safety and that none of the Board members wanted any of the students or faculty to be in any danger. However, she looked at the system as an impediment to the office staff and that it would add to their workload. She thought it was none of their business if a parent was red flagged that had a past history and had redeemed themselves; consequently, they were exposing the staff to something that they would have never known, or that the parent wanted to be known. The other side of the issue was that they needed to know if there was a parent that should not be retrieving their child. She questioned if the Visitor Verification System was a necessity. She agreed with Mr. Baczewski and would reallocate the money to youth sports.

Mr. Falvo commented about the visitation system and the amendment on the floor. He agreed that safety and security of the schools was of the utmost importance and noted that everybody on the Board agrees with that. He acknowledged that he was the one who asked Mr. Connellan the series of questions regarding the visitation system. One of the questions was if the system that was in place now was secure and he noted Mr. Connellan answered, "yes." Mr. Falvo's philosophy was, "if something was not broken, then don't fix it." He would rather move the \$56,000 cost over to middle school sports, especially since the schools are safe with the procedures that are already in place now. He thought that the community would be in favor of this and it would be for the best interest of the students.

Mrs. Clark noted that many times they have a company spring up because of a tragedy and they pander to fears and concerns; however, in the case of a Visitor Verification System her thoughts go to the staff that have to deal with the parents and the questions and make the decision if the parent is okay, or not, to let into the building. She discussed how it affects her as the director of a local nursery school when she must make a decision every day to let someone into the school that she does not know even though they have a camera system. She noted that the school district staff are very professional with the confidential information that they already have access to. She noted that the school administrators have said that their number one priority was safety. She thought that with the contribution the Board was making to middle school sports this year, the SMSAA fundraising efforts would be minimal. Mr. Baczewski stated that with the Visitor Verification System someone would need to walk into the door and scan their card. The person who could do potential damage would already be in the building.

Mr. Madancy recommended that this conversation should be made through the Interagency Safety Committee of the current procedures versus the benefits of a Visitor Verification System. The benefit of adopting a budget that would be reallocated in May gives them time to meet with the safety officials and talk about it more in-depth offline and weigh the pros and cons of the system. In addition, they may be talking about reallocation of the \$56,000 to a security system or middle school sports that may not even be there for further debate. If they had a choice and there was a reduction, he would hope that the administration would have the opportunity to figure out where the best reductions would come from and have that information to share with the Board. Mr. Brown requested more information about the system to be discussed in executive session. As an elected official, he was not prepared to say "no" to a security issue right now. They could reallocate the funds at a later date. Mr. Derynoski stated that when they had this discussion at the last workshop, Mr. Connellan said that the office staff would operate the

Visitor Verification System when someone came into the building. He questioned what would happen when someone came into the building and they found something out about the person when the person is already in the building. What do you do if the person refuses to leave? He thought it was a lot of money for a system that he was not 100% sure was going to offer any safety. Mr. Oshana stated that there are panic buttons in the offices and that they could call the police. He addressed the middle school sports and that he served on the committee when it was cut and noted that the SMSAA (Southington Middle School Athletic Association) had done a great job. One of the biggest concerns with middle school sports was being able to maintain it.

Mrs. Carmody called for a roll call vote on Mr. Baczewski’s amended motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

YES – Mr. Baczewski, Mr. Chrzanowski, Mrs. Cipriano, Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Falvo.

NO – Mr. Brown, Mrs. Clark, Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Carmody

Amended motion carried with five in favor and four opposed.

Mrs. Carmody called for a roll call vote on the main budget motion, as amended.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

YES – Mr. Baczewski, Mr. Brown, Mr. Chrzanowski, Mrs. Cipriano, Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Falvo

NO – Mrs. Clark, Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Carmody

Motion carried with six in favor and three opposed.

Mrs. Carmody acknowledged that this was no longer the Superintendent’s 2020-2021 budget and was now the Board of Education 2020-2021 Operating Budget, which according to policy, all nine Board members had to support the budget that was passed whether they agreed with it or not, which was their job as an elected official.

10. ADJOURNMENT

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

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Blanchard
 Recording Secretary