

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

SEPTEMBER 9, 2021

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education was held on Thursday, September 9, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. as a public meeting in the J. F. Kennedy Middle School Auditorium, 1071 South Main Street, Southington, Connecticut with an Executive Session preceding 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 were Mr. Joseph Baczewski (Vice-Chairperson), Mr. Robert Brown, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. James Chrzanowski, Mrs. Colleen Clark (Secretary), Mr. David Derynoski, and Mr. Zaya Oshana. Absent were Mrs. Missy Cipriano and Mr. David Falvo.

Cabinet administrators present were Mr. Steven Madancy, Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Frank Pepe, Assistant Superintendent.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION – SEA (TEACHERS) AND NIPSEU (SECRETARIES & FOOD SERVICE) CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

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

“Move to go into Executive Session, excluding the public and the press, for the purpose of discussing SEA and NIPSEU Contract Negotiations, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Executive Session ended at 6:58 p.m.

The Regular Board Meeting was reconvened at 7:06 p.m.

3. RECONVENE MEETING – REGULAR SESSION

Board members present were Mr. Joseph Baczewski (Vice-Chairperson), Mr. Robert Brown, Mrs. Terri Carmody (Chairperson), Mr. James Chrzanowski, Mrs. Colleen Clark (Secretary), Mr. David Derynoski, and Mr. Zaya Oshana. Absent were Mrs. Missy Cipriano and Mr. David Falvo.

Cabinet administrators present were Mr. Steven Madancy, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Frank Pepe, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Jennifer Mellitt, Director of Business & Finance and Ms. Rebecca Cavallaro, Director of Pupil Services.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / MOMENT OF SILENCE

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

Mr. Madancy requested a Moment of Silence in memory of Brian Goralski, former Board of Education member for 16 years, 12 years as Board Chairman, who was a selfless civic leader in the community and devoted to doing what was best for the students in the Southington Public Schools.

Mrs. Carmody called for a Moment of Silence in memory of the victims of 9/11.

5. CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE ~ Sandra Chavez, Teacher of the Year

Mr. Madancy introduced the Southington Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Sandra Chavez, who has recently moved on to be a semi-finalist for the Connecticut Teacher of the Year. He stated that Mrs. Chavez started teaching in Southington in October of 2006 at Plantsville Elementary School, which is now Oshana Elementary School. Mr. Madancy spoke of her credentials, accomplishments, leadership skills, and programs that she implemented through the years. Mrs. Chavez stated that it was an honor to represent the excellent and hardworking Southington teachers and gave a short speech. The Board presented Mrs. Chavez with an engraved glass apple.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ~ August 12, 2021

MOTION: by Mr. Oshana, second by Mr. Chrzanowski:

“Move to approve the Regular Board of Education meeting minutes of August 12, 2021, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

7. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from Public

Mrs. Carmody asked Mrs. Clark, Board Secretary, to read the policy for “Meeting Conduct” (*Attachment #1*) that addressed name calling, boisterous behavior, and that three (3) minutes would be allotted to each speaker including emails that were received by the Board members from people who could not attend the meeting in person and requested that their email be read into the record.

Mrs. Carmody requested that Southington residents who approached the podium to speak complete a sign-in sheet with their name and address (*Attachment #2*). She noted that Mrs. Clark would start a 3-minute timer for each speaker. There were 15 people who came to the podium and voiced their opinions about moving the meeting to JFK, mask mandates (unmasking), effectiveness of masks, physical and psychological / emotional harm and special needs children, medical exemptions, statistics, safety, school vouchers for homeschooling/tax refunds, letters/documents from FDA to Pfizer on the vaccine and adverse event reporting, Southington

Self Insurance meeting minutes of May 24, 2017, petition signed by over 100 residents to unmask students, and requesting Mr. Shane Lockwood, Regional Health Director, to attend a Board of Education meeting to discuss town Covid data, current 18.6 case rate per 100,000 that put Southington in the “red” zone and mask wearing. Many participants were against their children wearing masks.

Another topic of discussion was Critical Race Theory (CRT), inclusion, and a teacher workshop on “white privilege” being taught in the public schools. Speakers wanted to know the Board members positions on mask mandates and CRT before the election. Some participants yielded their 3-minutes to people already speaking so they could finish their speech.

Mrs. Clark read emails that she received into the record regarding universal masking of students / staff for safety, unmasking of students, vaccinations, and Critical Race Theory (CRT) that the Board received (*Attachment #2*).

Please see the YouTube video link of the meeting and over one-hour of public communication below that can be found on both the Town of Southington and Southington Board of Education websites:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC59RScd50ReAqz-PnbXUSSQ/playlists>

b. Communications from Board Members

Mr. Baczewski stated that his children were happy to be back in school again and with their friends. He read an excerpt taken from Carl Sagan’s 1995 book, The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark. Mr. Baczewski trusted the scientific process as a nurse and thought that the Board members and the community could make the best decisions for the children and that it was unfortunate that Governor Lamont could dictate mandates without question and without the input of how it affects school districts. He thought that the one-hour and 20-minutes of public communications was spent on two situations that involved top-down management from federal-state-municipal and did not define what was right for Southington. He thought time was being wasted on not doing what was best for the children, community, and educational process. He thanked the public who came to the podium to speak.

Mr. Chrzanowski agreed with Mr. Baczewski and stated that last year his daughter did remote learning and was happy to be attending her first school year in-person at Hatton Elementary School. He thanked the public for taking the time to share their comments and opinions because whether they agree or not, the Board likes to hear what the public feels is the right solution. He noted that, unfortunately, the state disagrees with many of the people who spoke, and he wished the state answered some of the public’s questions and took the time to answer them directly instead of hiding and passing it on to the Board of Education.

Mr. Brown stated that during the week several Board members attended the funeral of Mr. Brian Goralski, former Board member and Chairperson. He noted that Brian was once a 15-year-old student of his and became a respected colleague. He acknowledged that the Board members heard what the public had to say. He noted that at the last Board meeting, after many people left, he shared his personal stance on masking and Critical Race Theory (CRT). He would be happy to share his thoughts on those topics after tonight’s meeting with anyone. He thought that everybody needed to listen to each other with compassion, even if they disagree. However, he defers to the health experts that the state and town hires because they have the force of law behind

them and there are very serious consequences to the Board for not following the state mandate. The district and individuals would face serious fines. There is also the possibility of losing state funding that the Board relies on for many of the programs. There is also personal liability, with the Board members held harmless for most of the things that the Board does, but if a Board member intentionally violates something that has the force of law behind it, they would face personal liability, which is based on a legal opinion that the Board members received. He noted that they all would agree that they would prefer not wearing a mask, but he must rely on what the medical experts and the state tells the Board of Education to do. Mr. Brown stated that as a teacher and Board member he has spent 48 years of his life standing up for what is best for the students and was upset about the threats he received because he was not willing to break the law. He acknowledged that the Board also received many emails supporting mask wearing. He agreed with some of the public comments that the Board should question the state and that he wrote a letter to Governor Lamont regarding looking at ages of students and geographic areas of the state for masking mandates.

c. Communication from Administration

Administration reported on the following:

1. Opening of School Report: Mr. Pepe gave an update on the preparation for the opening of school that included a two-day retreat for administrators on August 12 and 13 and meeting the new special education attorney, Michelle Laubin from Berchem Moses. Ms. Rebecca Cavallaro reported that Attorney Laubin provided legislative updates specific to special education changes as of July 1, 2021, that were received from the State Bureau of Special Education along with federal updates. Mr. Pepe explained the topics covered at the two-day administrative retreat included blended learning, Title IX, and Bullying legislation changes. On August 18, Attorney Rich Mills of Shipman & Goodwin presented administrative legal updates. The New Teacher Orientation occurred on August 19 and 20, with presentations by Southington staff.
2. Professional Development: Mr. Pepe reported that staff professional development spanned five days from August 26-September 1 and he explained the topics covered. Ms. Cavallaro reported that all special education staff received professional development with Attorney Christine Sullivan from Berchem Moses, who provided an update on Individual Education Plans (IEP) processes and procedures. Ms. Cavallaro reported on the special education professional development sessions offered by the Special Education Coordinators. Professional development was also offered to Paraeducators, which included mandated training. Mr. Pepe stated that the first day of school was September 2 and explained the central focus for this year was continuing to make the vision of the graduate come to life in everyday work with staff integrating the four C's (Collaboration, Communication, Critical thinking, and Creativity) in their classrooms.
3. Amy Perry: Mr. Pepe reported Amy Perry, Kennedy Middle School Social Studies teacher, was recognized by the Connecticut Council for Social Studies with a special projects award that highlights exceptional projects that engage students in unique, relevant, and inspirational learning activities. Ms. Perry created "JFK Rocks the Community", which linked sixth graders with senior citizens at The Summit at Plantsville Senior Living Center and focuses on citizenship and leadership. The award included a plaque, recognition at an annual fall conference, and a grant of \$350.
4. Year-End Fiscal Closeout: Mrs. Mellitt reported that the district closed out the 2020-2021 Operating Budget with \$1,020,236 in unexpended funds. Several factors contributed to the unexpended funds included: 1) the 2020-21 budget was developed in November 2019 when COVID-19 was not yet a consideration; 2) higher than budgeted turnover of veteran teachers resulting in lower than budgeted teaching salaries; 3) lower energy costs with no summer school

or camps during the summer of 2020 and limited afterschool and evening activities in the buildings all year; 4) transportation costs were lower than budgeted due to students opting for remote learning and parents driving their students; 5) transportation savings from limited athletic seasons, no band competitions, and no system-wide field trips; 6) spending on supplies was lower due to fewer students in the classrooms; 7) spend on computer software was higher than budgeted due to shifting to a combination of in-school, remote, and hybrid teaching platforms; 8) the district benefited from the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) grant in the amount of \$856,000. The CRF grant was available through December 2020 helping to offset COVID related salaries, PPE supplies, and COVID-related services. The Town of Southington will deposit these unexpended funds into the fiscal year 2021 Non-lapsing Account. Administration will work to bring recommendations for the spending of these funds to the Board of Education Finance Committee and then the full Board for approval.

c. Communication for Student Representatives

Ethan Solury reported on the following:

- He stated that he was a senior this year and the president of the Class of 2022.
- The Third Annual Senior Sunrise was held the morning of August 31 at Fontana Field for the Class of 2022 to kick start the new school year.
- Most students were happy to be back in school, in-person for the 2021-2022 school year. COVID protocols were in place and students felt safe on campus.

Angelina Micacci reported on the following:

- She stated that she was a junior this year.
- The CIAC Fall sports season kicked off September 9 with the Boys Soccer Team hosting Conard at 6:30 p.m. at Fontana Field. The Girls Soccer Team traveled to Conard for their opening game. The Girls Volleyball Team was playing at Avon for their season opener.
- For the first time since the fall of 2019, high school football was back. The Blue Knights will host Maloney at the opening night game on Friday, September 10 at 7:00 p.m. at Fontana Field. Students were excited because it is the first home game in two years.

Jhalissa Vincent reported on the following:

- Mr. Crocco started the school year as the new principal of Southington High School. She noted that he has done a fantastic job in a short time, has a kind spirit, and cared about the opinions of students and staff. Mr. Crocco has an Instagram account titled, "SHS Principal Perspective" where he reports the things happening at SHS and what is happening behind the scenes. The student representatives were looking forward to working with him.

Mrs. Carmody thanked Miss Vincent for the wonderful job that she did singing at Convocation.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Finance Committee Meeting – September 2, 2021

Mrs. Clark reported that the Finance Committee met via Zoom and discussed the Bid Award #2022-05 for Snow Removal and Sanding Services. There were some new vendors this year with a significant change at the Municipal Center with the Maintenance department no longer doing the plowing. She reported that the committee also discussed the unexpended funds for the 2020-2021 school year. The full Board will be voting on the bid award later in the meeting.

9. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

a. Personnel Report

MOTION: by Mr. Baczewski, second by Mr. Derynoski:

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

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mrs. Carmody thanked Mrs. Passamano, Human Resources Manager, and her staff for all the hard work that they continue to do with staffing.

10. OLD BUSINESS

a. Town Government Communications

Mr. Baczewski reported that he read a post from the Town Open Space Committee that an Eagle Scout was doing a project at DePaolo Middle School replacing the current fence with a new split-rail fence system. It is currently in the fundraising stage.

11. NEW BUSINESS

a. Bid Award – Bid #2022-05, Snow Removal and Sanding Services

MOTION: by Mr. Oshana, second by Mr. Baczewski:

“Move that the Board of Education award Bid #2022-05, Snow Removal and Sanding Services, as recommended by administration.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

12. ADJOURNMENT

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

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Blanchard

Recording Secretary

ATTACHMENT #1

9325

Series 9000: Bylaws of the Board

Methods of Operation

Meeting Conduct

Meetings of the Board of Education shall be conducted by the Chairperson in a manner consistent with the bylaws of the Board.

All Board meetings shall commence at the stated time and shall be guided by an agenda, which has been prepared and delivered in advance, to all Board members and other designated persons.

The conduct of meetings shall, to the fullest possible extent, enable members of the Board to (1) consider problems to be solved, weigh evidence related thereto, and make wise decisions intended to solve the problems, and (2) receive, consider, and take any needed action with respect to reports of accomplishment both as to students and to school system operations.

Provision for permitting any individual or group to address the Board concerning any subject that lies within its jurisdiction shall be as follows:

1. Three minutes may be allotted to each speaker.
2. No boisterous conduct shall be permitted at any Board of Education meeting. Persistence in boisterous conduct shall be grounds for summary termination, by the Chair, of that person's privilege of address. If necessary, the Chairperson may direct those who are acting in a boisterous manner to leave the premises.
3. No oral presentation shall include charges or complaints against any employee of the Board of Education, regardless of whether or not the employee is identified in the presentation by name or by another reference that tends to identify an individual. All charges or complaints against employees shall be submitted to the Board of Education under provision of Board of Education policy.

The Board of Education may adjourn any regular or special meeting to a specified time and place. If all members of the Board are absent, the clerk may adjourn the meeting. A copy of the notice of adjournment shall be conspicuously displayed near the meeting room door within twenty-four (24) hours of adjournment.

9325

Series 9000: Bylaws of the Board

Methods of Operation

Actions by the Board

No action will be taken unless the subject acted upon was listed in the agenda published for that meeting, except that an item of business not included on the agenda of a regular meeting may be considered and acted upon after a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting to add such business to the agenda.

All actions taken by the Board shall be identified clearly in minutes of the Board meeting as provided the Bylaw 9326, Minutes.

(cf. 1120 – Board of Education Meetings to public participation)

(cf. 1312 - Public Complaints)

(cf. 9321 – Time, Place, Notification of Meetings)

(cf. 9322 – Public and Executive Sessions)

(cf. 9323 – Construction/Posting of Agenda)

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes

- 1-200 Definitions.
- 1-206 Denial of access of public records or meetings. Notice. Appeal.
- 1-210 Access to public records.
- 1-225 Meetings of government agencies to be public.
- 1-226 Recording, broadcasting or photographing meetings.
- 19a-342 Smoking prohibited in certain places. Sign required. Penalty.
- 1-231 Executive sessions.
- 1-232 Conduct of meetings (re disturbances).
- 10-224 Duties of the Secretary.

Bylaw adopted by the Board: January 1990

Bylaw reviewed by the Board: April 2003

Bylaw reviewed by the Board: February 2009

Bylaw updated and recoded: June 22, 2017

ATTACHMENT #2

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS



BOE Meeting Public
Comments 9-9-21.pdf