

*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](http://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**

**MAY 27, 2021 (Revised 10-22-21)**

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The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education was held on Thursday, May 27, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. as a Zoom and teleconference meeting with an Executive Session held prior as a Zoom video meeting at 6:30 p.m.

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mrs. Terri Carmody, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Board members present were Mr. Joseph Baczewski (*arrived 6:36 p.m.*), Mr. Robert Brown, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. James Chrzanowski, Mrs. Missy Cipriano, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, and Mr. Zaya Oshana. Absent was Mr. David Falvo.

Cabinet administrators present were Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools, and Mr. Steven Madancy, Assistant Superintendent.

#### **2. EXECUTIVE SESSION ~ UNAFFILIATED EMPLOYEES AND STUDENT MATTERS**

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

**"Move to go into Executive Session, excluding the public and the press, for the purpose of discussing unaffiliated employees and student matters, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session."**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

*Executive Session ended at 7:06 p.m.*

#### **3. RECONVENE MEETING ~ REGULAR SESSION**

*Mrs. Carmody reconvened the Board of Education Regular Session at 7:11 p.m.*

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

Cabinet administrators present were Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Steven Madancy, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance; and Ms. Rebecca Cavallaro, Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

Student representative present was Miss Jhalissa Vincent.

#### **4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Connellan led in reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **5. CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE**

##### **a. SHS Scholar Athletes**

The SHS Scholar Athletes, who are seniors, will be recognized at the June 10, 2021 Board of Education meeting as tonight is Senior Class Night.

##### **b. Invention Convention National Finalists**

Mrs. Amy Zappone, Science Coordinator, introduced the two (2) fifth grade Connecticut Invention Convention finalists who won awards at the state level and will be moving forward to the National Invention Convention. She introduced Abigail O'Connor from South End Elementary School and her teacher Mrs. Mallett. Abigail's invention was called "Book-E-Lit" that enabled her to read a book in bed without holding the book herself and included a battery-operated light. The Board members and South End School Principal, Mrs. Erin Nattress, congratulated her. Mrs. Zappone introduced Anthony Jozczyk from Kelley Elementary School and his teacher Ms. Diane Raczynski. Anthony's invention was called "Grow Bowl" that enabled him to take food scraps and put them in a biodegradable bowl and then bury it in a compost manner to reduce waste. His invention was also recognized by the Nucor Steel Corp. for sustainability. The Board members, Kelley Elementary School Principal, Mrs. Marilyn Kahl, and teacher Ms. Raczynski congratulated him. On Friday, May 28, Mrs. Zappone planned to visit their classrooms with ice pops.

#### **6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 13, 2021**

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

**"Move to approve the regular Board of Education meeting minutes of May 13, 2021, as submitted."**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

#### **7. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION**

##### **a. Communications from Public** (*Revised 10-22-21*)

Mrs. Clark stated that she received two emails sent to the Board of Education that she read into public record. One email was from Mr. Richard Cooper, 79 Barbara Lane (*Attachment #1*) and the other was from Ms. Amy Cooper (no relation to Richard), 43 Brothers Way. Both emails addressed the social media private Facebook page of "Southington Talks" and their concerns. Mr.

Richard Cooper addressed his concerns of the role of Mr. David Falvo (Board of Education member) as a moderator of the Southington Talks Facebook page. He was under the impression that Southington Talks was supported by the town. Mrs. Amy Cooper's email explained that Southington Talks is an independent, private Facebook page administered by citizens of Southington and in no way is affiliated with the Town of Southington or the Southington Board of Education. She noted that Mr. David Falvo, an elected Board of Education member, is a member of the private Southington Talks Facebook group representing his own independent views, not the Board of Education's or the Town of Southington.

**b. Communications from Board Members**

Mr. Brown stated that the activities for the Wall of Honor at Southington High School were put on hold for over one year due to the pandemic and now was back up and running. As Chairperson of the Wall of Honor Committee, he announced that there will be a Gala at the Aqua Turf Club for past and present Wall of Honor Honorees on April 26, 2022. All the honorees will receive free tickets with a \$40 charge to everyone else. This year, they will be honoring four people: Sandra and Gino Brino, Rob Dibble, and Cara Belvin.

Mr. Brown, Mrs. Carmody, Mrs. Cipriano and Mrs. Clark attended the Military Luncheon on May 27 that honored five (5) students who were joining the military including Mrs. Cipriano's son, Jacob, and another student who will be attending military academies. The Board members congratulated these students.

Mr. Oshana attended the SHS Scholarship Award ceremony held outside at Southington High School and noted the generosity of the town of Southington with many scholarships awarded to the students.

**c. Communication from Administration**

Administration reported on the following:

1. Pupil Personnel Services: Ms. Rebecca Cavallaro explained that the Pupil Personnel Services Department received a grant / stipend for \$20,000 from the State of Connecticut Bureau of Special Education to assist school districts with addressing any of the delayed, inaccessible, interrupted, or suspended IEP supports and services for students with IEPs to remediate skills or lack of progress due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The district will be focusing on the preschool evaluation process. The grant was written around targeted professional development for teams teaching 2-year-old and 3-year-old preschoolers.
2. Military Luncheon: Mr. Connellan praised the Veteran's Committee that was not able to meet last year due to the pandemic. Once they heard that Governor Lamont was relaxing Covid restrictions they met outside under a tent at the high school and jumped at the chance to reengage and provide a Military Luncheon once again. They provided certificates and Challenge Coins to the students and invited the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, Thomas Saadi, as keynote speaker. Mr. Connellan praised his Executive Assistant, Teresa Colegrove, for putting it all together at the last minute with the Military Luncheon held at the Back Nine Pavilion at Southington Country Club. He noted that Mr. Walter Hushak, retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel who flew B-24 Liberators during World War II and is in his 90's, wore his uniform to the luncheon. He thanked everyone who was involved to honor the students.
3. SHS Student Ceremonies: Mr. Connellan reported that more than \$200,000 in scholarships were awarded at the SHS Scholarship Night Awards ceremony. The Academic Awards and National Honor Society / World Language Honor Society inductions were held

outside on two chilly nights. He was happy that they were able to hold these events after what the students have been through over the last 14-15 months due to the pandemic. He praised the SHS staff for making these presentations special for the students. Tonight, is Class Night with student representatives, Brett Sheldrick and Amrit Kaur, who are seniors, attending that event along with the Scholar-Athletes who were to be recognized tonight at the Board meeting. The Scholar-Athlete recognition has been rescheduled to the June 10 Board meeting.

Mr. Connellan thanked all staff for working hard to keep the schools open and to make everything work for students and families during the pandemic; however, he wanted to thank the school nurses and Mrs. Cathy O'Hara, Nurse Supervisor, who provided sage counsel and a steady, calm demeanor dealing with the craziness of the pandemic. The School Nurses will be recognized at the June 10 Board meeting. Mr. Madancy added that Mrs. O'Hara is on call along with Mr. Connellan, Mr. Madancy and Mrs. Michelle Passamano, Human Resources Manager, who split the responsibility on weekends and evenings of checking the email inbox and hotline and contacting families regarding COVID. He gave a shout-out to the many people who work behind the scenes.

Mr. Madancy thanked STEPS and the Southington Police Department for their partnership in helping with the fifth and sixth grade transitioning to middle school event that typically is offered during the school day but was held in the evening this year with parents driving the students. They engaged in two workshops: 1) Planning Ahead: How to constructively use time and resources to ensure success; and 2) Resistance Skills: Resisting negative peer pressure and understanding the dangers of risk-taking behaviors.

Mrs. Carmody stated that on Monday she went to the high school to give the Board's gift to the two senior Board of Education Student Representatives, Brett Sheldrick and Amrit Kaur. She thanked the Board members for their generosity and noted how appreciative the two students were for their gift.

#### **d. Communication from Student Representatives**

Senior Student Representatives, Brett Sheldrick and Amrit Kaur, were at Senior Class Night and excused from this meeting.

Miss Jhalissa Vincent reported on the following; however, she was having bandwidth problems and her computer kept freezing:

- Senior Class Night was May 27, 2021, from 6:00-9:00 p.m.
- She thanked Mr. Connellan, Superintendent of Schools, who is retiring June 30, 2021, for his unrelenting years of dedication and support of the students, families, and staff of the Southington school district. His dedication to the district was very inspirational to her.
- Senior Class Day is Friday, May 28, 2021, at High Meadows from 6:00-10:00 p.m.
- AKGP Fundraiser is June 5 at Fancy Bagel from 7:00 a.m. – Noon.
- Senior Motorcade is June 15 starting at 5:00 p.m. following the same route as last year.
- Each graduating senior can invite four (4) guests for graduation instead of two (2) guests as in the past.
- Two new student representatives will be introduced to the Board members at the June 10 BOE meeting.

## **8. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **a. Elementary Facilities Committee Report ~ May 18, 2021**

Mrs. Clark reported that the committee discussed input received from administration's meeting with Colliers that included the Town Manager, Mark Sciota. Also discussed was an additional scenario using the Derynoski Elementary School site with information to be developed and included in the Collier's material. The committee discussed the work that needed to be done to accommodate the Karen Smith Academy on the current site or on a different site.

Mrs. Clark reported that Collier gave a presentation to the Town Council on Monday, May 24, 2021 presenting the facts and to begin the discussion on the elementary facilities. Mr. Connellan thought the presentation was well received and presented as indicated by responses by Town Councilors Ms. Triano and Mr. DelSanto. He stated that Mr. Chuck Warrington from Collier's did a wonderful job presenting the facts. The presentation will be sent in PDF form to the Town Council, Board of Finance, and Planning & Zoning members for the opportunity to ask questions. Mrs. Clark stated that the day after the presentation she sent a follow-up email to the Town Council to start the conversation. She had the impression that Town Councilors had heard gossip, rumors and wanted to make sure that they had the actual facts. As a point of clarification, Mr. Connellan stated that when the Collier people gave a presentation to the Board of Education at a Special Board Meeting in March, emails were sent to the entire Town Council and Board of Finance members inviting them to participate and the PDF presentation was forwarded to those elected officials at the same time. Monday night was not the first time that the elected officials received the presentation. He stated that this was a very important decision for the entire community just like what was done with the middle school renovations.

### **c. Finance Committee Meeting – May 19, 2021**

Mr. Oshana reported that the committee discussed the Self-Insurance Report with claims for this year continuing to run under budget. The committee also discussed the 2021-2022 Operating Budget Reallocation Plan. Mrs. DiNello explained in detail the BOE Operating Budget Reallocation due to the reduction of the BOE budget by the Town Council of \$1.5 million. The plan would use three (3) funding sources to maintain what the district currently has. The funding sources are: 1) Utilizing current year operating dollars to pre-purchase some equipment and supply items; 2) Non-Lapsing Account Surplus FY'2020 due to \$1.9 million saved because of the pandemic; and 3) ARP ESSER Funds (American Rescue Plan, Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) of \$4.1 million to assist and transform education, which allows funds to be used to maintain current staffing levels. The grant application was just released this week.

Mrs. DiNello stated that the committee also discussed the Non-Lapsing Education Funds Fiscal Year 2020. She explained that the \$500,000 loan to the Food Service Program would be repaid using ESSER II funds. She addressed shifting funds from the operating budget to fund major projects and equipment to the Non-Lapsing FY'20 Account and provided a list of the projects. This will be voted on by the Board under New Business. She emphasized that traditionally the Board budget ended the year on budget and that the pandemic was the main cause of the current two-years of surplus. The norm was that the Board of Education utilized the money in the operating budget. However, in the past, monies that were returned to the town at the end of a given fiscal year were \$1,500, \$12,000, and \$13,500. This is what the Board should anticipate in future years.

Mr. Oshana reiterated that a large amount of these funds that were available was due to COVID-19 and the money that was not spent. He cautioned that these funds were there because of a global pandemic that stopped the Board from doing things for the school system and these funds are not always going to be there.

Mr. Derynoski questioned the dollar amount for the pre-purchases the previous year. Mrs. DiNello did not have that amount available.

Mr. Oshana, Mrs. DiNello and Mrs. Mellitt, Accounting Manager, spoke in detail and at length regarding the motions made below and as outlined in the Finance Committee minutes.

**1. Bid Award RFP 2021-101 – Replacement of SHS Auditorium Sound System**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Oshana, seconded by Mr. Baczewski:

**“Move to Award RFP 2021-101 - Replacement of Auditorium Sound System at Southington High School to Sound Stage Systems in the amount of \$118,439.**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**2. Five-year Copier Lease**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Oshana, seconded by Mr. Baczewski:

**“Move to award a Five-Year Districtwide Copier Lease to Automated Business Solutions beginning July 1, 2021.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**3. SHS Marching Band Uniforms**

Mr. Oshana explained that the last purchase of band uniforms was in 2008 and that Band Director, Sara Ossias, was disappointed in the quality of that purchase. Mrs. Ossias recommended purchasing new uniforms from Fred Miller Uniform Company and received a quote for 100 uniforms at \$56,220. Funding would be from the Non-Lapsing Education Funds FY’2020.

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

**“Move to waive the bid process for new band uniforms.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

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

**“Move to award purchase of band uniforms to Fred J. Miller Uniform Company.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

#### **4. CNC Mini-Mill Simulator**

Mr. Oshana explained that the Perkins Grant funds were awarded in April 2021 and included funding for a CNC Mini Mill with Simulator for use in the Technology & Engineering Department at the high school. The purchase price is \$37,258 with Trident Machine the exclusive distributor in New England.

Mr. Baczewski stated that this purchase could machine parts for existing equipment that the high school already has and thought it would be valuable for students to be career ready. Mr. Oshana added that it was hard to find people who could do the advanced manufacturing processes and that this CNC Mini Mill was high tech. Mr. Derynoski stated that he participated in a Zoom meeting with MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), and this was one of the items discussed regarding technology and manufacturing. MIT is looking forward to working with high schools to enhance the technology aspect of manufacturing to support their goals for high tech power generation for the future. Mr. Derynoski hoped that the school district would be able to get additional equipment such as laser technology and other advanced manufacturing elements in the future.

**MOTION:** by Mr. Oshana, seconded by Mr. Baczewski:

**“Move to waive the bid process for the purchase of Perkins funded CNC Mini Mill Simulator.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Oshana, seconded by Mr. Baczewski:

**“Move to award purchase of CNC Mini Mill Simulator to sole source vendor Trident Machine Tools.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

Mrs. Mellitt spoke in detail on the three (3) projects related to the high school fitness center that the Finance Committee discussed at their meeting, which includes equipment, demolishing / replacing the concrete flooring, and installation of rubber flooring. She explained that state contract pricing was available for the equipment and flooring and spoke at length about pricing sources.

Mr. Oshana addressed the Food Service loan repayment of \$500,000 that the Finance Committee discussed. The plan is to use the ESSER II funding to repay the loan. It would be easier to make the repayment in the current year so the funds could easily be replaced back into the Non-Lapsing Account. The timing would be based on when the ESSER II grant application is approved, and the funds are made available. Mrs. DiNello acknowledged that the grant funds were approved this week and explained in detail the plan moving forward.

#### **9. OLD BUSINESS**

##### **a. Town Government Communications**

There was no communication.

**b. 2021 – 2022 Operating Budget Reallocation / Adoption**

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

**“Move that the Board of Education adopt the 2021-2022 operating budget reallocation plan, as presented.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**10. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Appointment of SEA Negotiating Committee**

Mrs. Carmody thanked the Board members who volunteered to serve on this committee. She appointed Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Clark, Mr. Brown, and Mr. Falvo. Mrs. DiNello explained that the committee should start negotiations with teachers by August 5, per state statute. Most of the negotiations would take place in the evening between August and September with a contract agreed upon by October.

**b. Action on Non-Lapsing Education Fund FY’20**

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

**Move that the Board of Education approve the projects listed on the Non-Lapsing Education Fund Fiscal Year 2020, as presented.”**

Mr. Derynoski questioned if the Visitor Verification System was in the Non-Lapsing Account. Mrs. DiNello explained that the funding was moved from the operating budget to the Non-Lapsing Account due to the budget cuts. Mr. Derynoski had a problem with that because there would be an annual recurring charge and questioned what it would be. Mr. Madancy stated the recurring charge would be \$7,140, subject to the software vendor cost increases. Mr. Derynoski was not in favor of the Visitor Verification System that is included in the list of projects to be funded with Non-Lapsing FY’20 Funds.

**Motion carried by voice vote with Mr. Derynoski opposed (7 in favor, 1 opposed).**

**c. SHS Fitness Center**

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

**“Move to award purchase of concrete demolition and replacement based on EZIQC pricing and to award the purchase of rubber flooring and fitness center equipment based on State Contract and Sourcewell Consortium pricing, as noted on the agenda reporting form.”**

Mrs. Clark stated that this project was long overdue and was happy to see that the work was finally being done.

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**



**11. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**“Move to adjourn.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Linda Blanchard*  
Recording Secretary

## ATTACHMENT #1

**From:** R <[richardtcooper1989@gmail.com](mailto:richardtcooper1989@gmail.com)>

**Date:** May 27, 2021 at 8:57:00 AM EDT

**To:** "COLLEEN W. CLARK" <[cwclark@southingtonschools.org](mailto:cwclark@southingtonschools.org)>

**Subject: Official Public Communication (BOE meeting on 05/27/2021) \*edited for typos and date error**

To the Board of Education,

My name is Richard Cooper. My address is 79 Barbara Ln.

A couple months ago I emailed David Falvo to ask him about his role on social media - particularly his role as a moderator for the group Southington Talks. Unfortunately, instead of addressing any of my concerns Mr. Falvo seemingly blocked me instantaneously.

This raised even more concerns, as I now worry about the implications of an elected Board of Education member believing he can act with impunity and ignore the very people he has an obligation and responsibility to answer to.

My question is for Mr. Falvo: What do you say to those who think you spend too much time on the private Facebook group Southington Talks, and worry about your role as a moderator being a conflict of interest and unethical?

Thanks for addressing my questions/concerns.

Sincerely,

Richard Cooper

P.S.

This is an updated version of an email previously sent. The original email had the date wrong; It was corrected from 05/27/2021 to 05/27/2021. I also fixed a typing mistake - fixing "Board of Education membering" to "Board of Ed member."