

*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**

**JANUARY 28, 2021**

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The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education (Committee of the Whole – Operations) was held on Thursday, January 28, 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 6:33 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, Mr. David Falvo, and Mr. Zaya Oshana.

Administration present were Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Steven Madancy, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance; and Mr. Peter Romano, Director of Operations.

#### **2. EXECUTIVE SESSION ~ SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY**

**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 School Safety and Security, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session."**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

*Mrs. Carmody declared Executive Session ended at 7:11 p.m.*

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

*Mrs. Carmody reconvened the Board of Education Regular Session at 7:14 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, Mr. David Falvo, and Mr. Zaya Oshana.

Administration present: 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 Special Services.

Student representatives present were Mr. Brett Sheldrick, Miss Amrit Kaur and Miss Jhalissa Vincent

#### **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 Richard “Dick” Lorenzo, who retired in 1995 after 34 years of teaching mathematics at J. F. Kennedy Junior High School and business at Southington High School and passed away on January 13, 2021.

#### **5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ~ January 14, 2021**

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

**“Move to approve the regular Board of Education minutes of January 14, 2021, as submitted.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

#### **6. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION**

##### **a. Communications from Public**

There was no communication from the public.

##### **b. Communications from Board Members**

Board members discussed the following:

- Mr. Baczewski thanked the administration for their hard work putting together a budget that reflected the values of the town and school system and handling the ongoing COVID-19 and staff issues. He noted that in February the Board would be meeting with the Board of Finance and Town Council on the 2021-2022 budget.
- Mrs. Cipriano thanked the STEPS (Southington Town-wide Effort to Promote Success) Youth Council who prepared a presentation to the Town Council on Monday, January 25. They will also give a presentation to the Board of Education in February. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, they have done a great job building relationships with one another and keeping in line with the goals of STEPS with emotional integrity and building support for students. She praised Meghan Albanese who was the new STEPS Coordinator.

##### **c. Communication from Administration**

Administration reported on the following:

1. Positive Student Activities – Key Club Food Drive: Mr. Connellan deferred this item to the student representatives to address in their report.

2. Alpha Delta Kappa Organization: Mr. Madancy thanked this organization consisting of former educators who still support the mission of education and sent a donation to the Southington Community Services on behalf of the Southington teachers to thank them for their work through the pandemic. He noted that Mrs. Joyce McAloon informed administration about the donation.
3. Teacher's College Workshop: Mr. Madancy reported that the Teacher's College Workshop was held over the past three Saturdays titled "Black History is American History" and how to integrate that history into everyday lessons and assignments and integrate into the curriculum, which was voluntary for staff to attend. Southington had 33 teachers and administrators attend these virtual Saturday workshops on their own time, which was impressive compared to attendance by other districts. He thanked Mrs. Stephanie Lawlor, Language Arts Coordinator, for coordinating the workshop.
4. Technology Update: Mr. Madancy reported that all classrooms should have one-to-one devices by Friday, January 29.

**d. Communication from Students Representatives**

Mr. Brett Sheldrick reported on the following:

- The second semester ended on Friday, January 29, 2021 and that all new classes would be pushed out on Canvas.
- On Saturday, January 23, the Key Club held a Food Drive at Southington High School. Key Club members Kevin Lee and Amanda Thompson organized the advertising and Key Club President Gabe LeBlanc ensured that the event followed safety protocols for Covid.
- The Key Club manufactured PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) face shields by reproducing two-liter bottles, which were distributed to all Southington public schools.

Miss Jhalissa Vincent reported on the following:

- Spirit Week was held in the beginning of January with teachers and staff dressed thematically each day competing for valuable prizes.
- In the spring, the Drama Club production will take place outside at the YMCA Camp Sloper amphitheater.

Miss Amrit Kaur reported on the following:

- The Connecticut High School Art Premier Competition was held with three (3) Southington students winning.
- Student, Emily Bracket, created homemade masks and distributed them to her teachers. Mr. Frank Pepe, Principal, will be modeling his masks during traffic duty.

Mr. Brown suggested adding a student representative from the middle schools and from an elementary school to the Board in the future because he enjoyed hearing directly from the students.

Mr. Baczewski stated they he enjoyed having the chance to complete Mr. Sheldrick's Capstone survey online regarding reducing carbon footprint.

**7. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**a. Finance Committee Meeting ~ January 25, 2021**

Mr. Oshana reported that the committee met virtually and discussed updated information including a credit for the current community peer tuition for student remote learners.

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

**“Move to approve the recommendation for the 20% reduction in tuition for the current Community Peer Student Remote Learner’s.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

Mr. Oshana reported that the committee received an update on the Non-lapsing Account and asked Mrs. DiNello to update the full Board on specifics. Mrs. DiNello explained in detail the expenses incurred related to COVID-19 through December, which was close to \$1.4 million for reopening schools, the available Education Non-lapsing funds from last year’s operating budget, and the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) grant and projected costs January through June. She estimated that \$1.3 million would not be covered by the CRF and possibly would need to come from the Non-lapsing fund. She discussed the potential that the Food Service Program may need an additional \$300,000 loan from the Non-lapsing fund besides the \$300,000 already provided if there is no federal funding relief received, which would leave less than \$100,000 in the Non-lapsing Account. However, she anticipated a surplus in the current year operating budget. At some point, the Board would have to decide whether to use the funds from the Non-lapsing fund or to keep those funds intact and do projects down the road and use any current budget surplus to cover the operating expenses first.

Mrs. DiNello explained that the ESSER I (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) grant funds that were received last spring were used for the purchase of Chromebooks for the students for the one-to-one plan. She stated that the ESSER II grant funds, which is another round of funding, could possibly be more than \$1.2 million with the purpose of those funds yet to be determined on what could be covered under that grant and the specific criteria. Mr. Oshana thought it would be great to have the extra funding coming in and then be able to use the Non-lapsing fund to do the things that it was set up to do.

Mrs. DiNello provided the Board with a financial update through December 2020 and spoke at length regarding funds not utilized in the operating budget due to the reduced fall athletic schedule, transportation for cancelled field trips, cancelled student activities, and special education unknowns at this time since the district does not receive the first Excess Cost Grant payment until late February. There could be a potential surplus of \$600,000 depending on grant funding. The Finance Committee would update the full Board in the spring with recommendations of how to move forward once there is more information about funding and the overall special education costs.

Mr. Oshana reported that there was new Federal Uniform Guidance Procurement Standards that would require a policy update and that Mrs. DiNello and Mrs. Jennifer Mellitt, Accounting Manager, would be bringing these changes before the Personnel & Policy Committee.

Mr. Oshana questioned who the Board could reach out to at the Town regarding the Board of Education recorded budget workshops discussions and meetings because they had not been posted on the Town’s website yet and other Town Board’s had their meetings posted. Mr.

Connellan stated that he would look into it. Mrs. Clark stated that she had called the town and they were in the process of transferring everything over to the new YouTube channel. Mr. Madancy pointed out that the Superintendent's PowerPoint and budget voice presentation was on the front page of the Southington Public School's website.

## **8. OLD BUSINESS**

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

Mrs. Carmody stated that she spoke to Ms. Vicky Triano, Town Council Chairperson and Mr. Mark Sciota, Town Manager, who asked for the Board of Education's support for the proposed Town purchase of the Southington Country Club property for open space and that she told them the Board members would support the proposal because of the impact that it would have on the school system if the golf course was developed with homes. Mrs. Carmody planned to speak at a public hearing that the Town Council is having in February. She stated that the Board would need to inform the public on the importance of the referendum that would be held on May 4<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> and to get the information out to the community. Mr. Oshana addressed the referendum, the initial and long-term return on the investment by the Town, the per pupil costs of the additions to the schools, overall redistricting that would be needed, and number of new students that could potentially attend South End School if the golf course were to be developed. He thought it was a good investment for the Town and noted that the potential purchase had been on the books for quite some time and was not a snap decision. He requested to focus on the facts, not the emotion of the purchase. Mrs. Carmody added that there would be presentations forthcoming. Mrs. Clark stated that she attended the Town Council meeting on Monday where an excellent presentation was given strictly on the facts, which covered all areas including education, road maintenance, and required services. She thanked the Open Space Committee for a presentation that was unemotional, and all data related. She noted that it was estimated that if the property were to be developed with over 100 houses there could be approximately 108 school-aged children added to the school district. Mr. Christopher Palmieri, Town Council member, stated that the PowerPoint presentation was a stand-alone item on the Town Website to view.

Mr. Brown questioned if a motion was needed so the Board could take a position on their support because no vote was taken. Mr. Oshana requested for a consensus to be taken.

**CONSENSUS:        The Southington Board of Education is 100% behind the purchasing of the property rights for Southington Country Club.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES - Mr. Baczewski, Mr. Brown, Mr. Chrzanowski, Mrs. Cipriano, Mrs. Clark, Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Falvo, Mr. Oshana, and Mrs. Carmody.

**Consensus was unanimous to support the purchase.**

Mr. Baczewski stated that he serves on the Open Space Committee and noted that the Town of Southington was trying to preserve a good track of land for the foreseeable future and it also provided the ability for private ownership to continue to use the property.

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Review / Adoption of 2021-2022 Board of Education Operating Budget**

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

**“Move that the Board of Education adopt the 2021-2022 Operating Budget at \$103,613,171 for an increase of 3.30%.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES - Mr. Baczewski, Mr. Brown, Mr. Chrzanowski, Mrs. Cipriano, Mrs. Clark, Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Falvo, Mr. Oshana, and Mrs. Carmody.

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

Mrs. Carmody thanked the Board members for unanimously approving the budget, and administration and, staff for a fair and equitable budget and doing what is needed to be done to keep the schools as great as they are. Mr. Brown added that the increase in the budget involved things that are needed such as nurses and psychologists and other essentials due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mrs. Clark thanked Mrs. DiNello for all the work she did on the budget and making it look so easy. Mrs. DiNello noted that it was a team effort with many people involved in the process. Mr. Oshana added there was no fluff in the budget. He urged the community to look at the bare bones budget with only the essentials.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**“Move to adjourn.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Linda Blanchard*  
Recording Secretary