

*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**

**MARCH 25, 2021**

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The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education was held on Thursday, March 25, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. as a Zoom and teleconference meeting and 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 6:30 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; and Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance.

#### **2. EXECUTIVE SESSION ~ CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS - NIPSEU**

**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 NIPSEU (Nutmeg Independent Public Safety Employees Union) Contract Negotiations, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session."**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

*Mrs. Carmody declared Executive Session ended at 6:51 p.m.*

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

*Mrs. Carmody reconvened the Board of Education Regular Session at 7:01 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.

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 the following:

1. Dr. Jerome “Jerry” Auclair was the principal of Southington High School for 15 years 1987-2002 during which time the school was honored as a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the United State Department of Education. Dr. Auclair passed away on March 11, 2021.
2. Mr. John DeMello, Sr. was very active in the Southington community and was instrumental as a member of the American Legion Southington Veteran’s Committee and partnering with the school district on programs. Mr. DeMello passed away on March 20, 2021.
3. The people effected by the recent tragic shootings in Atlanta, Georgia and Boulder, Colorado.

#### **5. APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL – SOUTHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL**

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

**“Move to appoint Mrs. Erica Northcutt to the position of Assistant Principal of Southington High School at a salary of \$139,219, prorated to a starting date which will be determined by the administration.”**

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

**Motion carried unanimously 8-0.**

Mrs. Northcutt thanked the Board for the opportunity and introduced her family who joined the meeting via Zoom.

#### **6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

##### **a. February 25, 2021 Regular Meeting**

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

**“Move to approve the regular Board of Education meeting minutes of February 25, 2021, as submitted.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**b. March 11, 2021 Special Meeting**

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

**“Move to approve the special Board of Education meeting minutes of March 11, 2021, as submitted.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**c. March 18, 2021 Special Meeting**

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

**“Move to approve the special Board of Education meeting minutes of March 18, 2021, as submitted.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**7. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION**

**a. Communications from Public**

There was no communication from the public.

**b. Communications from Board Members**

Board members discussed the following:

- Mrs. Carmody announced that Student Representative Brett Sheldrick was voted the Record-Journal Student-Athlete of the Week as a member of the Blue Knights Swim & Dive Team. She noted that the National Guard soldiers housed on Woodruff Street were deployed a couple of weeks ago and received a police escort with students outside waving to them.
- Mr. Brown updated the Board on the Social Justice Committee that had recently formed sub-committees. They received a \$10,000 grant to market and inform people in town, who need assistance, of the available agencies in town that could help them. One week ago, he testified in front of the Connecticut state legislature about Child Poverty and how to reduce poverty for children. The COVID situation has made the poverty situation even worse than before.
- Mrs. Cipriano was a judge this year for the fourth time for the DECA competition and noted that DECA did a stellar job since it was virtual and not face-to-face and in person as in the past.

**c. Communication from Administration**

Administration reported on the following:

1. Southington Education Foundation (SEF) Awards: Mr. Connellan reported that the SEF continues to support education in the community by fundraising and providing grants to teachers for innovative projects with Mrs. Paul Knight, former Southington teacher as Chairperson of the organization. Ms. Elizabeth Curtin at DePaolo Middle

School was awarded funding for the grant “Diversifying Our Libraries” and Ms. Jessica Fletcher and Ms. Gina Krar, first grade teachers at Oshana Elementary School received two grants for “Multicultural Mentor Texts” and “Multicultural Libraries.” He thanked the community for supporting the fundraising for these grants and the teachers for their hard work in putting information together and submitting for these grants.

2. Southington DECA Student Competition Awards: Mr. Connellan reported that DECA was recognized for outstanding School-Based Enterprise (SBE) and achieved the Gold-Level Certification for 2020-21 and will be recognized during DECA’s Virtual International Career Development Conference in April. The Southington DECA members who are moving on to the International competition are AJ Colwick, Cooper Burdette Matt Hotchkiss, and Rory Missal.

3. STEPS Partnership: Mr. Connellan reported that STEPS was approached by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DEMAS) regarding a Prevention Grant working in partnership with the school district serving as the fiscal agent. This would bring a substantial amount of money into the community working on prevention that would benefit the students.

4. South End Elementary School Roof Repair Schedule: Mr. Connellan reported that through the efforts of Mr. Peter Romano, Director of Operations, this issue that has been ongoing for years will finally be taken care of by the vendor and completed over the April break. The shingles for the roof repair should be a close match.

5. District-based Vaccine Distribution: Mr. Connellan reported that the vaccination distribution was a partnership with Hartford HealthCare who provided a clinic for over 500 staff members that received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at the Toyota Oakdale Theatre a couple of weeks ago and, per staff feedback, was run very smoothly. The next clinic at the Oakdale will be on Sunday, March 28, not Saturday as originally planned. The vaccine for approximately 125 staff members on March 28 will be the Pfizer. On Monday, March 15 the schools were closed after 500 staff received the J&J vaccine on Sunday, March 14<sup>th</sup> in case of reactions. It was not a free day off for the staff because they will be making up the day at the end of the school year as an added workday on June 18. Mr. Connellan noted that through information from the state and local Department of Public Health this is not the time for people to let their guard down once they are vaccinated. The school district will still need to ensure that all mitigation strategies are still in place to keep students and staff safe.

#### **d. Communication from Students Representatives**

Mr. Brett Sheldrick reported on the following:

- He thanked Mrs. Carmody for the recognition she gave him as the Record-Journal Student-Athlete of the Week and on behalf of the student body congratulated Mrs. Erica Northcutt as the new Assistant Principal at SHS.
- The SHS Swim & Dive Team participated in the CCC postseason meet and competed against Farmington High School at the Cornerstone Pool in West Hartford. Landon Colby was a double winner in the 200 IM and 100 Fly breaking the Southington High School record that stood since 1992 for the new record of 52 second’s flat. Alex Rosiani took first in diving setting a new 11 dive school record with a score of 463.90. The Blue Knights Swim & Dive Team finished with a 6-1 dual meet record in the CCC region this winter and were awaiting the final event individual standings from all the CCC and state meets.

- The tentative Senior Class plans are to have a Senior Pep Rally at Fontana Field, Senior Class Night on the athletic fields, Senior Prom at Lake Compounce and a Senior Motorcade. Currently, there are no set dates depending on the COVID situation.

Miss Jhalissa Vincent reported on the following:

- The defending CIAC Class L and State Open Girls Gymnastic Team won the CCC Champion meet on Sunday afternoon and were the overall leaders in all four categories of vault, bars, beam, and floor exercise. The team posted an undefeated 5-0 dual meet record during the CCC regular season remaining unbeaten for the last two seasons.
- The Girls and Boys Indoor Track Teams were able to compete in three special outdoor meet exhibitions against Middletown, Xavier, Mercy, and Avon in the month of March.
- The Juniors took the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) on Wednesday at SHS with grades 9, 10 and 12 having a day of remote learning.
- Navigating the College Experience/NCAA Virtual Program was held March 25 at 6:30 p.m. and the third quarter ends Thursday, April 1, 2021.

Miss Amrit Kaur reported on the following:

- The Southington/Hall Co-op Ice Hockey Team finished first in the CCC South with a record of 8-1-1 and losing in the CCC South Semifinals.
- The Girls Ice Hockey Co-op Team was the second seed in the CCC tournament before losing.
- The Girls Basketball Team won the Region B regular season championship with a 10-2 record and advanced to the CCC championship bracket semifinals before losing to undefeated Newington.
- The CIAC winter season concluded March 25 with the Boys Basketball Team playing Rocky Hill that could be viewed on the YouTube channel. The Blue Knight Cheerleaders supported the basketball teams all season.
- The National Honor Society and World Language plan to hold a combined event on Fontana Field and the Awards and Scholarship Nights will take place on Fontana Field. The Senior Graduation Party will be held at Lake Compounce.

Mr. Baczewski questioned if volunteers were needed for the senior class festivities. Mr. Frank Pepe, Principal of SHS, replied that there was an All-Night Graduation Party Committee established and a letter would soon be sent to the seniors. The Graduation Party runs on donations, generosity of the community, and they were in need volunteers.

## **8. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **a. Finance Committee Meeting ~ March 16, 2021**

Mr. Oshana reported that the committee met virtually and discussed the Self Insurance Report with the claims for the year continuing to run under budget. The Self Insurance Committee will be meeting to discuss renewal information.

#### **1. Transfer of Funds**

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

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

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

## **2. Preschool Regular Education Tuition Rates 2021-2022**

Mr. Oshana reported that the committee reviews the preschool regular education tuition rates annually and based on the BOE history of fee increases and competitive rates in town the committee decided to keep the 2021-22 rates the same as the current year.

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

**“Move to approve keeping the 2021-2022 Preschool Tuition rates the same as the 2020-2021 school year, as presented.”**

**Motion carried by voice vote with Mrs. Clark abstaining.**

## **3. YMCA Before & After Care Program Rates 2021-2022**

Mr. Oshana explained that the proposed increase in rates was due to contractual wage increases and MERS contributions.

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

**“Move to approve the 2021-2022 YMCA Lease Rates, as presented.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

## **4. Bid Award #2021-05: Lawn Mowing & Trimming Services and Ground Debris Clean-up & Removal Services**

Mr. Oshana explained that the bid was for four school sites and that the remaining school sites were in the second year of their existing contract. There were eight bids submitted.

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

**“Move to award the three-year Lawn Mowing and Debris Clean-up bid at Flanders School to BMS Property Maintenance, and Hatton, Strong and Thalberg Elementary Schools to Little K’s Landscaping, as presented.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

## **5. Loan Food Service Program**

Mr. Oshana explained that Mrs. Jennifer Mellitt, Accounting Manager, and Mrs. DiNello discussed the Food Service Balance Sheet and Income Statement for July-February 2021 with the committee and the new COVID related grant funding available to the district. The proposal this evening is for an additional loan to the Food Service Program to keep the program viable. The

Board of Education approved a \$300,000 loan last year. Mrs. Mellitt explained to the Board in detail that the net loss for the past eight months was (-\$243,000) because of a reduction of revenue with a lower number of students in the schools participating due to random school closings, remote learning, and the hybrid model at the high school compared to a net loss in the previous eight-month period of February 2020 of \$66,000. She discussed at length comparative data from last year to this year and the reduction of revenue from cash sales for breakfasts and lunches, the government seamless summer option, government reimbursement receivables, student prepaid lunch funds, the \$300,000 loan last year from the Non-Lapsing FY'20 funds, and reimbursement for COVID expenses from the CRF (Coronavirus Relief Fund) Grant of \$65,597. She noted that a receivable from the government that was not yet received would be in the amount of \$450,000 to offset losses. Mrs. Mellitt reported that the Finance Committee recommended a \$500,000 loan to the Food Service Program from the Non-lapsing Account FY'2020 due to the low cash balance, anticipated loss at the year-end, increasing cost of paper products and packaging, and cash flow concerns in the fall to cover operating costs until the government reimbursements are received. She addressed developing the repayment plan schedule of the \$500,000 for the spring of 2022.

Mr. Baczewski questioned the \$450,000 not yet received from the government that was reported on the balance sheet. Mrs. Mellitt clarified that it was basically a timing difference and that the revenue was being reported on the income statement by showing it as a receivable, which means the district earned it, but the government has not physically paid for it yet. The district has never had a problem collecting it from the government and it will help fund the operations through the end of this year. They were looking for the \$500,000 to help supplement this year and to help get through the September-December period in the fall with the startup process.

Mr. Derynoski questioned the sizeable amount of money owed to the students from prepaid lunches and if graduating seniors who prepaid would be reimbursed money from their account that was not spent. Mrs. Mellitt explained that parents could request a refund from the MyPaymentsPlus account at any time. At the end of the school year, graduating students receive a refund on balances; however, last year it was not addressed because of the COVID situation but all those funds are still in their accounts and available at any time. Mrs. DiNello added that the plan at the end of each school year is to send a form letter to the graduating seniors of their balance and that they would have the option to request a refund, roll the funds over to another student in the district, or donate the funds in their accounts to offset the costs for a student that could not afford meals. The form letters will be sent to the graduates of 2020 this spring and in the fall of 2021 the letters would be sent to the graduates of 2021. Mrs. DiNello addressed the upcoming ESSR II grant funding of \$1.8 million and that the State Department of Education stipulates some of that funding is to be used for the Food Service Program. However, they have not provided guidelines of the types of reimbursements the funds could be applied to regarding revenues lost due to COVID. She explained that next spring a portion of the \$500,000 the Board would be voting on tonight would be repaid with a plan for future principal repayments.

Mr. Oshana recognized and thanked Ms. Nya Welinsky, Food Service Director, and her staff for all the work that they were doing for the Food Service Program with so many constant moving parts because of the COVID situation.

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

**“Move to approve a \$500,000 payment from the FY20 Non-Lapsing Account to the Food Service Program in the form of a loan. The Finance Committee of the Board of**

**Education will meet in the Spring of 2022 to review the financial statements of the program and any COVID related grant receipts. The Finance Committee will then make a recommendation for a principal repayment to the Non-Lapsing Education Fund to the full Board of Education.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

Mrs. DiNello addressed the Financial Expenditure Report through February 2021 and noted that the Board had decided to not make any reimbursements to the Operating Budget from any COVID related grant funding. However, there were many expenses that were not going to be covered by grant funding. She explained the projected yearend surplus of \$1.2 million in the Operating Budget without using ESSER II funds for reimbursement of COVID expenses. Mrs. DiNello discussed in detail the Non-lapsing Account Fund and suggested not using it to reimburse the Operating Account for the COVID related school opening costs due to the anticipated surplus in the Operating Budget. This would allow funds to be available for Capital Projects and Major Projects and Equipment. The Finance Committee agreed that the administration should work to maximize available funds for the Non-lapsing Account and ESSER grants for 2021-2022 and give another update in May.

Mr. Oshana reported that there was a proposal from Automated Business Solutions (ABS), the current copier vendor, for a new five-year lease that would include 63 new copiers and the ability to reuse 14 of the current copiers and to add a document management system to the copiers across the district and still come in below the current monthly lease rate that the district has been paying. The administration will bring a final proposal to the Finance Committee in May. The Finance Committee also discussed Purchasing Policies and the need to create one comprehensive policy that is in compliance with the uniform guidelines for audit. The new policy will be brought to the upcoming Personnel & Policy Committee meeting for discussion.

**9. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

**a. Personnel Report**

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

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

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

Mr. Brown noted that Mr. Connellan and Mrs. DiNello were on the Personnel Report for retirement. Mrs. Carmody thanked Mrs. Michelle Passamano, Human Resource Manager, for all the work done by her office during a very difficult year.

**10. OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Town Government Communications**

Mr. Baczewski stated that he attended the recent Open Space Committee and there was discussion on whether any PTO Zoom meetings were planned in the district to discuss the purchase of the development rights for Southington Country Club property. Mr. Connellan explained that if it was a normal school year, without COVID, that he would have personally



spoken to the PTOs; however, he sent the PowerPoint presentation to all the school district families instead. The referendum is planned for May 4th and he planned to send a public service announcement prior to the referendum.

**11. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Leonard & Gladys Joll Scholarship Recipient**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Derynoski, seconded by Mrs. Cipriano:

**“Move that the Board of Education approve the recipient recommended by the Leonard & Gladys Joll Scholarship subcommittee.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**b. Southington High School Graduation Date**

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

**“Move to approve Friday, June 18, 2021 as the date for the Southington High School graduation ceremony.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**“Move to adjourn.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Linda Blanchard*  
Recording Secretary