

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
JUNE 24, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education was held on Thursday, June 24, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. as a public meeting in the John Weichsel Municipal Center Public Assembly Room, 200 North Main Street, Southington, Connecticut and an Executive Session held at 6:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Terri Carmody, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Board members present were Mr. Joseph Baczewski, Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mrs. Missy Cipriano (*arrived at 6:35 p.m.*), Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, and Mr. Zaya Oshana. Absent were Mr. Robert Brown, Mr. James Chrzanowski, and Mr. David Falvo.

Cabinet administrators present were Mr. Steven Madancy, Assistant Superintendent; and Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business & Finance; and Mr. Frank Pepe, SHS Principal. Present was Mr. Tony Morrison from the Town Board of Finance.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION – SEA CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS, AFSCME CUSTODIAL & MAINTENANCE CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS AND UNAFFILIATED EMPLOYEES

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 Contract Negotiations, AFSCME Custodial & Maintenance Contract Negotiations, and Unaffiliated Employees, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session."

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Morrison left Executive Session at 6:25 p.m. and Mrs. DiNello left at 6:42 p.m.

Executive Session ended at 7:04 p.m.

3. RECONVENE MEETING ~ REGULAR SESSION

Mrs. Carmody reconvened the Board of Education Regular Session at 7:15 p.m.

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

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

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Davina Hernandez, Girls’ Softball Coach, led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

a. SHS Lady Knights Softball Team – State Championship (19th SHS Win) and SHS CIAC Class LL Individual Event State Champions

Mrs. DiNello, who played on the Southington High School Girls’ Softball team in the 1980s that won two State Championships in 1983 and 1985, addressed the 2021 SHS Softball State Champions and proudly showed them her State Championship Jacket that she still kept in her closet.

Mr. Steve Risser, Athletic Director, stated that the theme this year was “A Tradition Defended” with 25 straight wins for the SHS Girls Softball team who won the State Championship game at the CIAC Class LL tournament against Fairfield Ludlow High School on Saturday, June 12 at West Haven High School. They won the 19th Championship in the history of SHS. He congratulated the team and coaches. Coach Davina Hernandez introduced her Assistant Coach, Michele Boisvert, and the 2021 SHS Softball State Champions at the meeting (*Attachment #1*). The Board of Education presented the team with a Certificate of Excellence. Mr. Risser added that the team won the first ever Conference Championship this year and received a trophy.

Mr. Risser recognized and congratulated the SHS CIAC Class LL Individual Event State Champions in Girls’ Track: Kayla Pelletier, Shannon Litchfield, Abby Sowa, and Riley Prozzo. Aiden Chesanow represented the Boys’ Track Team and won the State Championship in the Pole Vault for the Class LL Division. He also won the Conference Championship (*Attachment #1*).

The Board members recognized and congratulated Mrs. Sherri-Lin DiNello, Director of Business & Finance, who retires from central office on June 30, 2021 and presented her with gifts. Board members praised Mrs. DiNello for everything that she had done for the Southington Public School district, her credibility, and always having answers to their questions.

Mrs. Carmody called for a short recess to congratulate all the recipients of the Celebration of Excellence at 7:43 p.m.

Mrs. Carmody reconvened the regular meeting at 7:50 p.m.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 10, 2021

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

“Move to approve the regular Board of Education meeting minutes of June 10, 2021, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

7. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

a. Communications from Public

Miss Bianca Spataro, 37 Mountain Pond Road, and Mr. Nicholas Mangene, 146 Butternut Lane, former SHS Student Representatives as seniors in 2019, updated the Board members on how the pandemic affected them, college, and their work experiences along with their plans for the future.

Susan Zabohonski, 28 Werking Street, spoke at the June 10 Board of Education meeting and was back to discuss the mask issue. She requested that the Board of Education put pressure on the Commissioner of Education and Commissioner of Early Childhood and create a resolution for students to not have to wear masks in the next school year and to not go by what are just “guidelines” by the CDC, state, and federal governments. She also addressed the budget and federal funds allocated due to COVID. She asked the Board to not use the federal funds for operational expenses and not create a fiscal cliff, which would place a burden on taxpayers when the federal money runs out. She asked the Board to make responsible budgetary decisions based on available funds.

Kristen Ritchie, 270 Chesterwood Terrace, spoke as a mother of a preschool student who was mandated to wear a mask for nine-hour days. She addressed current reasons why students should not have to wear masks and emailed Governor Lamont and the Board members of 40 consequences of masking children such as physical symptoms, health, social, emotional, and psychological impacts, etc. She thought some of the consequences would have lasting and irreversible repercussions for the younger children. She requested that the school administration and Board of Education act in the best interests of the children and raise concerns with the state government about the current mask mandate. She asked them to stand alongside the parents and children and not follow the state “binding guidance” as mentioned in the Southington Public Schools Reopening Plan.

Richard Cooper, 79 Barbara Lane, stated that at the May 27 Board of Education meeting Board members eroded his trust when someone from the public wrote an essay attacking him and it was read into the minutes. He stated that it did not have anything to do with the Board of Education and found it deceitful and unethical. He filed an ethical complaint against two members of the Board of Education. Mr. Cooper clarified what was read about him at the May 27 Board of Education meeting and addressed digital access and technology along with the internet and social media platforms and that it was difficult to decipher the truth from lies, facts from opinions, authenticity from scams, and scrutiny from harassment. He thought that students should be proficient in computer use and navigating the internet starting from an early age. He thought that not being able to use a computer in the 21st Century was the equivalent of not knowing how to read. He hoped that the Board had curriculum on how to be a good digital citizen. He thanked the Board for their hard work.

Kristi Sadowski, 46 Luciano Drive. Mrs. Clark read email correspondence that she received from Ms. Sadowski to be read into the record regarding a recent film that was shown in the middle schools (*Attachment #2*). She stated that she was not privy to the film contents but offered her support behind teaching the children love, acceptance, ally-ship, and diversity. She wanted the community to raise kind children who will be empathetic and understanding towards

others and celebrate differences. She supported the schools discussing LBGTQIA+, racial, cultural, ethnic histories, and ally-ship issues.

b. Communications from Board Members

Mrs. Carmody commented on how beautiful the 2021 Southington High School graduation was on Friday, June 18, 2021. She was impressed that Mr. Frank Pepe, Southington High School Principal, knew the names of the seniors. She thanked the high school staff and Mr. Rich Aroian, Assistant Principal, who organized the graduation.

Mrs. Cipriano stated that the All-Knight Graduation Party was held at Lake Compounce and was well organized. She was happy to see the students having a great time and thanked the organizers.

Mr. Oshana was impressed that for a big graduating class Mr. Pepe knew every senior's name and the section where they were seated. Mr. Oshana pointed out that he was wearing a mask at the Board meeting even though he was double vaccinated, because the mask mandate does not end until July 19. He thought that if the Board was asking students and staff to wear masks for eight-hours a day, then the Board should wear it and model the behavior that they were asking of staff and students.

Mr. Baczewski addressed attending the All-Knight Graduation Party and the amazing raffle prizes and support from the community. It was a positive experience and he hoped that, like the senior motorcade, it becomes a permanent option for the graduating class.

c. Communication from Administration

Administration reported on the following:

1. SHS Graduation: Mr. Madancy thanked Mr. Pepe and all the high school administration, staff, and maintenance crew for their team effort to make graduation a success.
2. Summer School: Mr. Madancy stated that grant funds were being used for Summer School transportation, which was not previously provided, and helps parents who are working. He noted that it was a big undertaking coordinating bus routes at this time of year to start after July 4th. He thanked Mr. David DeStefano, Summer School Director, and Mrs. Susan Velsor, Extended School Year (ESY) Coordinator, for a tremendous job this year with so many moving parts and many more students attending.
3. Device Collection: Mr. Madancy explained that at this time last year they did not have 6,500 devices that they have today, and they were currently bringing the devices back into the district for cleaning, maintenance, and inventorying. He thanked the high school technology team for getting all the devices returned from the graduating seniors.
4. Central Office Transitions: Mr. Madancy congratulated Mrs. DiNello on her retirement and stated that she had taught him a lot about school district finances and was very knowledgeable. He noted that as a father of three daughters, if any of his daughters could project the confidence, strength, and knowledge that Mrs. DiNello projects, then he would be very happy. He acknowledged that at the next Board meeting Mrs. Jennifer Mellitt and Mr. Frank Pepe would be sitting at the dais. Mrs. Mellitt will be transitioning from Account Manager to Director of Business & Finance, and Mr. Pepe will be transitioning from Principal of SHS to Assistant Superintendent.

Mr. Oshana questioned the conditions of the returned devices. Mr. Madancy remarked that there were some devices with nicks or cracked screens, but mostly the students did a great job taking care of them.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Elementary Facilities Committee Report – June 22, 2021 Meeting

Mrs. Clark reported that the committee discussed scenarios and planning with the town’s Economic Development Director, Mr. Louis Perillo, to see what the economic impact would be to the town depending upon the school discussed. The committee was still in the beginning stages of dialog and Mr. Perillo shared some very interesting points for further discussions. A handout was distributed to the Board regarding Pre-Referendum Summer Work related to the scope of the work and funding sources. Mrs. Clark noted a change in the schedule estimate for preliminary geo-technical borings, which was reduced. Mr. Madancy clarified that the overall price projected was correct and discussed timelines for the Board of Education and town.

9. OLD BUSINESS

a. Town Government Communications

There was no communication.

b. Unaffiliated

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

“Move to approve the grant-funded STEPS Youth Advisor position, as presented by the administration.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

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

“Move to approve the duration of the contract for the Director of Operations as agreed upon by the Board and administration with amendment.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

10. NEW BUSINESS

a. Scope & Agreement Approvals – Elementary Facilities Committee

Mr. Madancy recognized representatives from Colliers International who were in the audience in case Board members had any questions and thanked them for attending.

b. Resolution for Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services “DMHAS” and the Town of Southington – Board of Education

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

“Move to approve the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Resolution, as presented.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

c. Approval of Additional Special Education FTEs

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

“Move to approve the additional Special Education positions of 1.0 FTE Teacher for EASE and .5 FTE BCBA – District-wide.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

d. Discussion and Approval of STELLAR Lease

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

“Move to approve the new lease agreement for STELLAR program space.”

Mr. Derynoski questioned if the additional \$37,000 was per year and would be coming out of the IDEA grant and how long the lease was for. Mr. Madancy stated that the \$37,000 would be an annual increase. Mrs. DiNello clarified that they were in year one of a three-year lease and if the Board approved this, there would need to be an addendum to the current lease document for the change in space and added cost. Mr. Derynoski noted that they were doubling the size in space. Ms. Rebecca Cavallaro explained that within the budget they looked to increase the size of the STELLAR program by adding an additional teacher for an increased number of students. The current 2,609 square foot space that they are utilizing would be doubled to provide for additional access for students with mobility issues.

Mrs. Amy Aresco, Special Education Coordinator, came to the podium and explained that the current program space that they were using was for 10 students full time and next year they would be starting the year with 23 students. The space that they are looking at has all contained space and would not be shared with the public as it is currently. She explained in detail the new spacing had room to grow and that the changing state laws were to keep the students in the community. She did not anticipate the addition of another teacher for a few years besides the one already added in the budget and that the existing staff should be able to manage for a couple of years. Mr. Madancy noted that utilities were part of the lease.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

e. BID 2022-108 – Demolition and Removal of Existing Concrete Slab and Installation of New Concrete Slab at SHS Fitness Center

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

“Move to rescind the May 27, 2021 decision to award the concrete demolition and installation of new concrete flooring project based on EZIQC pricing.”

Mr. Derynoski noted that there was not a major impact to funds; however, originally, they were budgeting \$38,000 and now the low bid was up to \$50,000. He questioned the discrepancy. Mrs. Mellitt explained that in the budget in the fall Mr. Peter Romano, Director of Operations, was involved in preparing the bid price. They had two vendors to look at the project and one gave a price on the demolition and removal and one vendor on pouring a new slab and he had a second price for the whole project that was an average of the two at \$38,000, which was in the budget. The EZIQC price came in at almost \$76,000 due to the problems with COVID, the supply chain, and labor workforce, which was driving pricing up. After seeing that price, administration went out to bid with a wide variety of pricing on the returned bids. Mrs. Mellitt spoke in detail about the bids. The lowest bidder was Tabacco & Son Builders of Bristol with a bid price of \$50,000, which includes \$3,000 for the Barrier One moisture additive. However, once the project is developed, they will determine if the moisture additive is needed. If not, then the price would be \$47,000.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

MOTION: by Mr. Baczewski, second by Mrs. Clark:

“Move to award BID 2022-108 for the demolition, removal, and installation of concrete slab at the Southington High School Fitness Center to Tabacco & Son Builders in the amount of \$47,000 with an add/alternate of \$3,000.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Blanchard
Recording Secretary

ATTACHMENT #1

2021 Girls Softball State Champions
Davina Hernandez, Coach
Miehele Boisvert, Assistant Coach
Stella Blanchard, Pitcher
Lily Murphy
Ashlyn Desaulniers
Madison Furniss
Dominique Gaudio
Nicole Greco
Kaitlynn Griffin
Lilyann Kenefick
Jazmin Lasane
Madelyn Napierski
Julia Panarella
Elyse Picard
Alyssa Ouellette
Alison Rembish
Samantha Rogers
Samantha Sullivan
Taylor Sullivan
Nicole Szuba
Elizabeth Urcinas
Lauren Verilli (Only Senior on team and R-J Female Athlete of 2020-2021)
SHS CIAC Class LL Individual Event State Champions
Kayla Pelletier (Girls' Javelin, Girls' 4 x 100 meter relay)
Shannon Litchfield (Girls' 4 x 100 meter relay)
Abby Sowa (Girls' 4 x 100 meter relay)
Riley Prozzo (Girls' 4 x 100 meter relay)
Aiden Chesanow (Boys' Pole Vault)

ATTACHMENT #2

Email Correspondence Mrs. Colleen Clark received from
Kristi Sadowski, 46 Luciano Drive

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing today in response to articles in local papers about an outcry over a recent film shown in the Middle Schools. While I am not privy to that exact film, I want to wholeheartedly throw my support behind teaching our children love, acceptance, allyship, and diversity. I want our community to raise kind children who will be empathetic and understanding towards others and celebrate differences. More explicitly, I support and encourage our schools to discuss LGBTQIA+ issues, racial, cultural, and ethnic histories, and allyship.

Respectfully,
Kristi Sadowski
46 Luciano Drive, Southington