

*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  
APRIL 27, 2023**

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The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education (Committee of the Whole - Operations) was held on Thursday, April 27, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. as a public meeting in the John Weichsel Municipal Center Public Assembly Room, 200 North Main Street, Southington, Connecticut with an Executive Session preceding at 6:30 p.m.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mrs. Colleen Clark, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Board members present: Mrs. Dawn Anastasio, Mr. Joseph Baczewski, Mr. Sean Carson, Mr. James Chrzanowski, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mr. Zaya Oshana

Board members absent: Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. Jasper Williams

Cabinet administrators present: Mr. Steve Madancy, Superintendent of Schools, and Mr. Frank Pepe, Assistant Superintendent (*left executive session at 6:42 p.m.*)

**2. EXECUTIVE SESSION – Unaffiliated Compensation, SAA (Southington Administrators Association) Contract Language, 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 Compensation, SAA Contract Language, and Student Matters, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

*Mrs. Clark ended Executive Session at 7:01 p.m.*

*The Regular Board Meeting was reconvened at 7:08 p.m.*

**3. RECONVENE MEETING – REGULAR SESSION**

Board members present: Mrs. Dawn Anastasio, Mr. Joseph Baczewski, Mr. Sean Carson, Mr. James Chrzanowski, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mr. Zaya Oshana

Board members absent: Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. Jasper Williams

Cabinet administrators present: Mr. Steven Madancy, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Frank Pepe, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Jennifer Mellitt, Director of Business & Finance

Student Representatives Angelina Miacci, Uptej Singh, and Ryan Ogren were absent.

**4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE**

The American Legion veterans in the audience led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Clark called for a moment of silence in memory of:

Nellie Shepard, passed away on March 27, 2023. She was a former chemistry and physics teacher at Southington High School for 31 years until her retirement in 1989.

Robert Smith, former Purchasing Agent for the Southington Public Schools from July 1974 to October 2006, passed away on April 18, 2023.

Bill Chisholm, dedicated Culinary Arts Teacher in the Family & Consumer Science Department at Southington High School since August of 2010, passed away April 25.

## 5. CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

### a. Oratorical Contest Winner – Amanda Thompson

Southington High School senior, Amanda Thompson, shared that her topics to speak on the Constitution at the 2023 Oratorical Contest, sponsored by the American Legion, were the first and second amendments and taxes. She will be attending the University of New Haven next year. Ms. Thompson was presented with a Certificate of Excellence from the Board members.

### b. Veterans Recognition Award to J. F. Kennedy Middle School

Mr. Stephen Armstrong from the State Department of Education / Department of Veterans Affairs and co-presenters from the Southington American Legion Veterans Committee (Sgt. First Class Steve Pintarich, Sgt Major Steve McCarty, and Specialist Wayne White), presented Amy Perry, Social Studies Teacher, with a plaque for her “Remembering Our Veterans” Program at J. F. Kennedy Middle School. Mr. Armstrong noted that Amy Perry’s program at Kennedy Middle School was the best in the state in conjunction with the Southington American Legion Committee. Mr. Armstrong presented Ms. Perry with a plaque from the state.

Sgt. First Class Pintarich announced that the American Legion and Women’s Auxiliary were accepting applications for Boys & Girls State for students between their junior and senior year go away for a week and learn about the governments in different towns. Another program is Connecticut State Police Youth Week for students between their junior and senior years attend the State Police Academy for a week in classes and experiences with the Police Cadets. He asked the Board to promote those programs at the high school.

*Mrs. Clark called for a brief recess at 7:23 p.m.*

*Mrs. Clark reconvened the regular meeting at 7:35 p.m.*

## 6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 23, 2023

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

**“Move to approve the regular Board of Education Minutes of March 23, 2023, as submitted.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

## 7. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

### a. Communications from Student Board Representatives

The three Student Representatives were absent. Ms. Amanda Thompson spoke about her Southington High School Foreign Field Trip to London, Paris and Normandy during Spring Break and brought back boxes of French Shortbread from Mont St. Michel Abbey that she distributed to the Board members along with a thank you card.

**b. Communications from Board Members**

Mr. Baczewski spoke about the Silver Star Band performance held at the high school along with the Southington High School Concerts held the past week. He congratulated the bands and Mrs. Sara Ossias, SHS Band Director, for these successful programs.

Mr. Oshana addressed the Budget Public Hearing on Monday, April 24 and Safety-related Capital Plan needs. He noted that the Chair of the Board of Finance stated at the hearing that there was \$7 million of excess rainy-day funds that could be used for capital needs immediately to address safety concerns. He asked the Superintendent and Mrs. Clark to put a list together of safety items that were on the original BOE Capital Plan and put on the back burner to discuss in Executive Session with the Board of Finance. Mr. Madancy will put a list together for Executive Session at the next BOE meeting.

Mrs. Clark remarked on the middle school performance of “Matilda” and the very talented cast who put on an amazing production. She congratulated Mr. Christopher Palmieri, DePaolo Middle School Principal and Director of the joint middle school drama productions.

**c. Communications from Administration**

1. Team 195: Mr. Madancy thanked the mentors and community volunteers for their contributions to Robotics Team 195 and their competitions. He noted that the Blue Knights Robotics Team was sought after by other national and world teams in building alliances at competitions. The team had another successful season. Team 195 will be invited to the first BOE meeting in May to give a demonstration to the Board.

2. NAMM Music Award: Mr. Madancy announced that Southington received a “Best Community for Music Education Award” from the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM).

3. SHS Softball Field: Mr. Madancy thanked Jonathan Gombotz and the SHS Softball Booster Club who were instrumental in raising funds for the SHS Softball field regulation fence that will be installed the first week in May. The current softball field fence is not regulation.

4. Innovation Grant Submission: Mr. Madancy explained that the Summer School Program for the past couple of years used the ARRP ESSER funds as part of COVID recovery that the district will no longer be receiving. This grant is for \$141,000 in partnership with the Southington-Cheshire YMCA that would provide free classes, meals, transportation, and an afternoon at Camp Sloper for students who attend free of cost, if awarded the grant.

**d. Communication from Public – Agenda Items Only**

There were two (2) speakers who came to the podium:

Christopher Robertson, 47 Cowles Avenue, stated that he was a former Fire Commissioner and was concerned with how the world was changing and that he had public safety and security concerns at the schools using outside cleaning contractors where they do not know who is cleaning the schools. He asked the Board to table the Contracted Custodial Services

on tonight's agenda and that the BOE hire their own inhouse cleaning staff. He stated that the Board was not saving money by using contracted cleaners. He addressed healthy green cleaning.

Seth Korn, 8 Yorktown Road, was concerned about delaying the Elementary Facilities Projects another year when Kelley Elementary School is in dire need of a new building or renovation now and that it was not equitable with other elementary schools in town that have already been Renovated-to-New. He stated that he attended the Elementary Facility Projects meetings and noted the reasons why the Southington BOE is delaying another year on acting on the four scenarios presented by SLAM. He pointed out that other school districts were moving forward with school building projects. He asked the Board of Education members and town leaders to tour Kelley School and the Districtwide Facilities Committee to call for an emergency meeting to apply for the state grant before the June 2023 deadline to move forward with the projects, which are overdue.

## **8. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **a. District-wide Facilities Committee Meeting – April 4, 2023**

Mr. Madancy reported that the committee met and discussed the recent Community Forum and BOE meeting follow-up. He sent out the two prior presentations done for the BOE by SLAM Collaborative on Enrollment and Facilities and had a link added to the school district website with all associated Elementary Project information and costs. The committee discussed the complexities and tight timelines for grant application submission, referendum, and endorsing any specific scenario due to a list of concerns and uncertainties. Due to these concerns, the committee reached a consensus to hold off on a June 2023 application submission for school construction and discussed consideration of a May 2024 Special Referendum with a June 2024 application submission or to wait until 2025. The committee discussed a Master Districtwide Facilities Plan prioritizing all projects and costs to better inform the community of needs.

The Board members spoke at length regarding the need to identify the size of school for construction to apply for the state grant (which determines reimbursement rate), the challenge of closing a school, acknowledging old schools were not the same as new schools but were being well maintained, rumor of declining enrollment when it's increasing, no scenario of what to do with Flanders School if it is not closed, debt service, state-level leadership problems, other possible scenarios, facilities management, example of building the new Southington Library and inflation costs resulting in building smaller, communication between the town boards, no one wanted to delay longer because facts will change but not enough detailed information to sell to community at this time, going to referendum in November and failing, waiting until next year when other big town projects such as road repaving will be on the referendum as part of the town's plan, having a Special Referendum in April/May 2024 regarding school projects that will give more time to present to the community and the importance of not waiting another year.

### **b. Finance Committee Meeting – April 20, 2023**

Mr. Chrzanowski reported that the Finance Committee met virtually and discussed two contracted custodial services bid awards #2024-06 for SHS (Summer only) and #2024-05 for DePaolo, Kennedy Middle Schools and Derynoski Elementary School (12 months).

#### **1. Bid Award #2024-05: Contracted Custodial Services – JAD, JFK & DES**

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

**“Move to award Bid #2024-05: Contracted Custodial Services – JAD, JFK & DES to Champion Maintenance & Construction of Fairfield, Connecticut.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**2. Bid Award #2024-06: Contracted Custodial Services – SHS**

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

**“Move to award Bid #2024-06: Contracted Custodial Services at Southington High School for the summer only to Coastal Cleaning of Stratford, Connecticut.”**

Mr. Oshana questioned the process of how the firms were vetted and performance monitored for the public’s knowledge. Mrs. Mellitt acknowledged that there is language in the bid document that refers to the Connecticut Public Act 16-67, which requires background checks for new school employees with a subsection that refers to vendors in schools. The vendors are responsible for doing background checks and the custodial cleaning at the high school is only over the summer months and they report to the SHS Head Custodian who is a school employee. The contracted cleaning at JAD, JFK and Derynoski Elementary school takes place in the evenings when all the school night custodians are on site to oversee the contracted custodians. Mr. Baczewski questioned if copies of the background checks of contracted custodians were on file in central office and spot checked to see if contracted custodians were in compliance.

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**3. YMCA Before & After Care Program Rates 2023-2024**

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

**“Move to approve the 2023-2024 YMCA Rates, as recommended by the Finance Committee.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

Mr. Chrzanowski reported that the Finance Committee discussed a financial update through April 20, 2023 with several changes from the previous update. The district does not anticipate having a large surplus at the end of June.

**4. Selected Physical Therapy Three-Year Contract Extension**

Mr. Chrzanowski reported that the Selected Physical Therapy Contract Extension included language stating that Laurie Martin will continue as Athletic Trainer assigned to Southington.

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

**“Move to approve the three-year contract extension with Select Physical Therapy, as recommended by the Finance Committee.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**5. Mobile Device Management Five-Year Agreement**

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

**“Move to approve the five-year agreement for Mobile Device Management Software through SHI, as recommended by the Finance Department.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

Mr. Chrzanowski reported that the committee received an update on the Town Self-Insurance meeting of April 19 and that the March claims paid, and claims incurred, were higher than budgeted and higher than March of the prior year. No adjustments were proposed to the 2023-2024 budget.

**9. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

**a. Personnel Report**

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

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

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**10. OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Town Government Communications**

Mrs. Clark thanked the Town Councilors who visited the high school and Hatton Elementary School to see first-hand what is happening in the schools.

**b. Policy 4118.5 – Responsible Use of Staff Technology – Second Reading**

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

**“Move that the Board of Education approve Policy 4118.5, as presented by the Policy & Personnel Committee.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**c. Policy 4118.7 – Social Networking – Second Reading**

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

**“Move that the Board of Education approve Policy 4118.7, as presented by the Policy & Personnel Committee.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**d. Policy 5131.2 – Use of Private Technology Devices by Students – Second Reading**

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

**“Move that the Board of Education approve Policy 5131.2, as presented by the Policy & Personnel Committee.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**e. Policy 6141.9 – Responsible Use of Technology – Second Reading**

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

**“Move that the Board of Education approve Policy 6141.9, as presented by the Policy & Personnel Committee.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**f. Policy 6141.10 – Bring Your Own Device Policy (BYOD) and Protocol for Use in Schools – Second Reading**

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

**“Move that the Board of Education approve Policy 6141.10, as presented by the Policy & Personnel Committee.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**g. SHS – Asian Studies Course – Second Reading**

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

**“Move that the Board of Education approves the SHS – Asian Students Course, as presented by the Curriculum & Instruction Committee.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**h. SHS – Criminal Justice Course Proposal – Second Reading**

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

**“Move that the Board of Education approves the SHS – Criminal Justice Course Proposal, as presented by the Curriculum & Instruction Committee.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**11. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. NEASC Reaccreditation Report**

Mr. Madancy thanked teachers and NEASC Co-Chairs Kari Luise-Peschal and Michael Gagnon, faculty, staff, and administrators who did an outstanding job. He noted that the report was favorable and that there were areas for growth. It was a process that went through three (3) high school principals ending with Mr. Crocco.

Mr. Michael Crocco, SHS Principal, and Mrs. Amy Zappone, Director of Teaching & Learning for Secondary Education, gave a PowerPoint presentation (*Attachment #1*). The overview on the NEASC Reaccreditation Report highlighted the NEASC Mission and Goals, purpose and process, recommendations from NEASC, status updates and next steps. They spoke in detail and at length about the NEASC Accreditation Standards Elements 1) Learning Culture (Safe Environment and Mission & Vision), 2) Student Learning, 3) Professional Learning, 4) Learning Support and 5) Learning Resources. The presentation included Foundational Element Ratings that meet or do not meet standards and NEASC recommendations for each of the Standards Elements. Mr. Crocco noted that he was a NEASC Commissioner prior to coming to Southington. Addressed were the priority areas, BKAPP (Blue Knights Advisory & Portfolio Program), Elective Course Requests for the 2023-2024 school year and the reason that students would not be able to obtain all their elective course requests. The electives included college and career additions. Noted was that the high school will be shifting to Block scheduling for the 2023-2024 school year to provide more opportunities during the day.

The Board members discussed curriculum design, next steps, state requirement of three additional credits needed to graduate, students not being able to obtain all course requests due to enrollment caps, staffing levels and challenges, a level services budget with no new personnel, electives to include the medical field / CNA (Certified Nursing Assistants) that Mr. Baczewski

has been requesting for years, how students were selected for elective courses (giving priority to seniors and software algorithms), curriculum tying into the Vision of a Graduate, grading, and Capstone projects. Mrs. Clark stated that it was a great report and presentation and thanked everyone involved in the NEASC Reaccreditation.

**b. Titan Presentation of ConEd Battery Storage Project**

Mr. Peter Romano, Director of Operations, introduced Adam Teff, Titan Energy Consultant for the town, along with Gregg Carey a representative from RWE Energy (ConEdison), who gave a PowerPoint presentation (*Attachment #2*). The town of Southington is considering an agreement with RWE Clean Energy to lease property at Joseph A. DePaolo and John F. Kennedy Middle Schools for a battery storage system that would pull power off the grid at night and dispense power into the school during the day with a rate decrease on the power consumption from Eversource. The concern is leasing a piece of school property for the batteries. Southington Water Pollution Control has approved batteries to be placed on their land. Mr. Teff explained in detail Titan Energy's role with the town to keep energy costs low, including the solar panel program, and now this iteration of battery pack storage. The PowerPoint presentation included an overview of the RWE Energy company located in Valhalla, New York, which is a private energy utility; RWE proposal for owning, operating and maintaining a battery on site, at no cost to the schools, and in exchange for leasing the property (10-20 years) RWE would offer a low risk and high potential long-term revenue stream by paying an annual lease payment and dispatching the battery to reduce the school district's utility bill; size and layout at each middle school; proposed lease payment of \$25,000/year for each school subject to terms of a tax agreement with the Town; the project development process and benefits to the town. There would be no cost to install and operate the battery storage project which would generate new annual revenues to the town and backup power to the schools in case of an outage.

Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Baczewski, Mr. Carson, and Mr. Oshana had many questions regarding the safety, security and placement of the AC battery packs (locked chain link fence as far away from schools as possible), access to battery packs, cost to RWE to purchase a battery pack (\$2-3 million with supply and demand of Tesla Batteries difficult), batteries catching fire (.01%), revenue to the town, off gassing, receiving fire department and planning & zoning input, lifespan (20 years), responsibility for the equipment (RWE), RWE annual revenue (8-10%), Eversource vs. RWE, where the power source comes from and who pays for it, why RWE is in the equation if Eversource is power supplier (state incentive to private utilities to keep cost down), payments from state to RWE (administered by the Connecticut Green Bank), defined payments, federal tax benefits to town, why school property and facilities vs. other town property or an industrial/commercial site (location on the grid and long term ability), lease payments for a small piece of unused land 950 sq. ft., who pays for power source, benefit to RWE, BOE need to make an informed decision for the community and a long-term agreement.

Mr. Oshana stated that this was the first time the Board had looked at this information. He requested to table this agenda item and that the Board put together a list of questions regarding specific data.

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

**“Move to table.”**

Roll Call Vote: YES – Mrs. Anastasio, Mr. Baczewski, Mr. Carson, Mr. Chrzanowski, Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Clark.

**Motion carried unanimously to table.**



**c. Approval of Out-of-State/Overnight Field Trips****1. SHS – Beijing and Chengdu, China**

Mr. Oshana had concerns regarding the China trip and the current world problems. Mrs. Tina Riccio, SHS World Language Department Chair, explained that student and staff safety always comes first and that cancellation insurance is purchased by all students. SHS students had taken a trip to China in the past. The Board also reserves the right to cancel the trip at any time. She pointed out that she watches the news in three languages (English, Spanish & Italian) and that news is presented differently in the different languages and cultures and somewhere in-between them all is the truth. She is also linked to the State Department and at any time she can tell if there is a threat anywhere in the world. Also, the United States could be looked at by other countries as the most dangerous country to visit right now. Mr. Carson questioned the Board's required vote to cancel the trip. Mr. Derynoski pointed out that in the past the Board gave the Superintendent the authority to act on behalf of the Board in the event of a situation, which was done with COVID.

**2. SHS – Madrid and Salamanca, Spain****3. SHS – Paris and Normandy**

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

**“Move to approve the Trips as presented for 2024.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**d. Adoption of 2024 Board of Education Meeting Dates**

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

**“Move that the proposed regular Board of Education meeting dates for 2024 be approved.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**12. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS****a. Communications from Public on Non-Agenda Items**

Mr. Michael Riccio, former Town Councilor, addressed the RWE battery packs and calculated that it was \$30 a square foot for 950 sq. ft. and believed that it was a good number. He thought that if the Board could get comfortable with the safety concerns then it would be a no brainer and free money. It is different than the Solar Program and a straight lease payment in an area not generating any revenue right now.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**“Move to adjourn.”**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Linda Blanchard*

Recording Secretary

**Southington Public Schools**

**ATTACHMENT #1**

**NEASC Reaccreditation Report**



NEASC Updates 4-27-23.pdf

**ATTACHMENT #2**

**Titan Presentation of Battery Storage Project**



Titan Program Overview 4-27-23 v4.2.pdf