

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

FEBRUARY 22, 2018

The regular meeting of the Southington Board of Education was held on Thursday, February 22, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the John Weichsel Municipal Center Public Assembly Room, 200 North Main Street, Southington, Connecticut with an Executive Session scheduled for 6:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Brian Goralski, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Board members present: Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. Joseph Baczewski, Mr. Robert Brown, Ms. Lisa Cammuso, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mr. Brian Goralski, Mr. Zaya Oshana, and Mrs. Patricia Queen.

Administration present: 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 UPDATE AND SAFETY AND SECURITY ISSUES

MOTION: by Mr. Derynoski, seconded by Mrs. Carmody:

"Move to go into Executive Session, excluding the public and the press, for the purpose of discussing Contract Negotiations Update and Safety and Security Issues, and upon conclusion reconvene to public session."

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Goralski declared Executive Session recessed at 7:05 p.m.

3. RECONVENE MEETING ~ REGULAR SESSION

Mr. Goralski reconvened the Board of Education Regular Session at 7:10 p.m.

Board members present: Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. Joseph Baczewski, Mr. Robert Brown, Ms. Lisa Cammuso, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mr. Brian Goralski, Mr. Zaya Oshana, and Mrs. Patricia Queen.

Administration present: Mr. Timothy Connellan, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Steven Madancy, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Sherri DiNello, Director of Business and Finance and Ms. Margaret Walsh, Director of Pupil Services.

Student Representatives present: Mr. Joseph Martin and Mr. Sean Young.

4. PLEGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Student Representatives led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Goralski called for a moment of silence for the victims, families, survivors, and Parkland, Florida community who were recently affected by the shootings at their high school.

5. CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

In Celebration of Excellence, the Board of Education and Mr. Tom Horanzy, Art Department Chair, recognized the following students who received awards from the prestigious Connecticut Arts Education Association Award Program, juried by professional artists and university art faculty. These talented students were presented a Certificate of Excellence from the Board of Education:

- Jacqueline Carbone – Silver Key for her painting “The Yellow Wallpaper”
- Rebecca Dorzens - Silver Key in drawing “Me, Myself, and I”
- Kathy Ponce - Silver Key in drawing “Engine”
- Jennifer Thai – Silver Key in drawing “The Whip”
- Abigail Legere – Gold Key in painting “Pomegranates in Low Light”
- Jacob Manente – Gold Key for his photo “Abandoned Soul”
- Thomas Palko – Gold Key for his photo “Lago”

Mr. Horanzy announced that the Annual Art Show will be held in the Southington High School Auditorium Lobby on May 14, 2018 from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Mr. Goralski called for a recess at 7:20 p.m.

Mr. Goralski reconvened the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES ~ January 25, 2018

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

“Move to approve the regular Board of Education minutes of January 25, 2018, as submitted.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications from Audience

Mr. Dan Hart, 256 Pacer Lane, Teacher and President of the Southington Education Association, spoke regarding the budget crisis caused by the state of Connecticut and how the town is being punished by the state for being fiscally responsible by cutting funds and ECS grant money, which worries the teachers. He recognized the difficult decision that the Board of Education and town elected officials have to make due to the budget climate. However, many of the teachers feel that the worst is yet to come.

Ms. Melissa Combs, 119 Buckland Street, spoke of the mass shootings in Florida and that on February 15, 2018 State Representative Liz Linehan posted a document in a group chat that provided guidance to parents on how to discuss mass shootings with their children. She noted that a newly elected Board of Education member responded in the group chat and called Liz Linehan a derogatory name. Ms. Combs stated that the safety and security of children in the school system was very important and that she was upset about the bullying name calling. She cited the Board policies and requested that the Board review the policies with newly elected Board members.

b. Communication from Board Members

Board members discussed the following:

- Mr. Brown thanked Mr. Madancy for presenting the 21st century skills to the Southington Rotary Club.
- Mr. Brown addressed the recent school shootings and the inadequate gun laws, mental health services and a society that glorifies violence in movies, television and video games. He would like to start a conversation on how to legally address those issues with students.
- Mr. Brown addressed the current year and next year's budgets and requested that the public contact the state legislators, Town Council, and Town Board of Finance members about restoring more money to education in Southington. He addressed the town's rainy day fund, a one-time special school tax, and stated that the Board of Education has already made many significant cuts, operates on a low amount of funding with Southington ranked 154 out of 166 districts, and that any other cuts would be devastating to the school system.
- Mr. Oshana addressed the recent Florida school shooting and the dysfunction of the federal and state government leaders to take action to address these frequent occurrences. He praised the Parkland, Florida high school surviving students who are protesting this inaction.
- Mr. Baczewski took ownership of the unbecoming comment that was referenced earlier in the meeting. He addressed the shooting and spoke about the resiliency of children. He apologized and noted that some of his comments were taken out of context.
- Mrs. Queen stated that she was moved by the Florida students' resiliency who are speaking up and applaud them for taking a stance and fighting for change.
- Mr. Derynoski reported on the Technology Advisory Board meeting and that there is now more involvement and interaction between the high school and middle schools with technology and the opportunities available at the high school.
- Mr. Goralski explained that following "Old Business" on the agenda, the Board will be returning to Executive Session.
- Mr. Goralski pointed out that he has been serving on the Board of Education for 15 years and that over all those years the number one priority has always been about student safety.

c. Communication from Administration

Administration reported on the following:

1. School Security: Mr. Connellan explained that each school has a safety and security plan in place and that parents can see both a flow chart and flip chart on the wall in each school classroom and in offices that describes actions that should be taken in response to different emergency situations. He addressed some of the terminology used and the difference between a “secure school” versus “lockdown”. There are also security procedures in place that cannot be shared with the public. The individual school security procedures, based on state adopted protocol that were developed by state, local and national experts after the tragedy in Newtown, are not released to the public for the safety of the children. Mr. Connellan addressed a communication that he sent to parents, faculty and staff members after the shooting in Florida regarding the established communications protocol and working closely with the police department, who have an Everbridge System in place to communicate with key administrators and staff. Next week, administration and the police department, will review each school plan individually, do a walk through the building, and ask school administrators about their biggest concerns.

Mr. Connellan spoke at length about security measures and wanted parents to be assured that there are plans in place working closely with first responders. He also discussed future restructuring of entryways in some of the buildings. Mr. Connellan addressed monthly and quarterly safety drills that are conducted with students. For more detailed information regarding school security, the public can view a video of this Board meeting on the district website www.southingtonschools.org under “Board of Education Minutes”.

Mr. Goralski addressed the student representatives and asked that if they hear anything that is being planned on the student level; i.e., walk out protests, it should be orchestrated with administration so that administration can help them have a voice to do it safely as it should not disrupt education.

2. Letter from Speaker of the House: Mr. Connellan announced that State Speaker of House, Joe Aresimowicz, appointed Meg Walsh to the Advisory Council for Special Education.

3. Professional Development Activities: Mr. Madancy reported that the district had their fourth professional development day this year. Youth Services gave a presentation on the topic of recognizing signs of potential adolescent mental health issues at no cost to the district. He reported on the MOPI Training (Modified Oral Proficiency Interviews) that took place at the regional conference hosted by Southington using grant funds. Teachers from the east coast interviewed our students in a target language with our students proficiently responding in the language. No English was spoken from the directions to the close of the interview. Mr. Madancy also addressed the continued work with the teacher collaboration Time and Instructional Learning Team Model, which is the teacher-led differentiated professional development. Mr. Madancy thanked the Language Arts, Science and Math Coordinators for the large task in coordinating their professional development with a lean budget. Ms. Walsh and the special education coordinators provided meaningful professional development to all Paraeducators on a day when all certified staff was also in-district.

4. Superintendent Meetings with PTOs and Staff: Mr. Connellan reported that he was able to attend a number of PTO meetings with most of the questions regarding the budget.

5. Community Engagement Event – Rotary: Mr. Madancy explained that he was a guest at the Rotary luncheon where he discussed the 21st Century Skills and Southington’s Vision of a Graduate.

Mr. Connellan announced that the Southington Education Foundation (SEF) was holding a gala at the Mountain Room at Mount Southington on Saturday, March 24, 2018 with a buffet dinner. He will send information to the Board members on how to purchase tickets.

d. Communications from Student Representatives:

Mr. Young reported on the following:

- Last weekend, he flew to North Carolina to tour Duke, University of North Carolina, and Wake Forest and is waiting for admission decisions.
- The Talent Show was hosted by the senior class on Thursday, February 8.
- Navigating the College Process presentation was on Tuesday, February 13 sponsored by the School Counselling Department.

Mr. Martin reported on the following:

- On Thursday, March 1, a Spectrum Concert will be held in the high school auditorium starting at 6:00 p.m.
- The SHS Drama Club will be sponsoring a production of Les Miserables on Friday, March 9 from 7:30-10:30 p.m. and Saturday, March 10 a matinee from 3:00 to 5:30 p.m. with the final show on Saturday 7:30-10:30 p.m. in the SHS auditorium.
- On March 3, the Key Club will be sponsoring the annual Kiddie Carnival from 8:00 a.m. through 12:00 p.m. at Southington High School.
- The in-school SAT will be administered Wednesday, March 21.
- Regarding the school shootings, he noted that students are walking on eggshells. Mr. Martin felt that change should start with the students and work its way up to the national level.
- Mr. Martin was accepted into Purdue University, his first choice.

8. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

a. Personnel Report

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

“Move to approve the Personnel Report at presented.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting ~ February 8, 2018

Mrs. Carmody reported that the committee discussed AP Microeconomics and agreed not to make changes at this time because the graduation requirements for the Class of 2023 are being reviewed and this will be revisited at a later date. The committee also discussed middle school homework and grading with Mrs. Rebecca Savekoul, Instructional Technology, giving a presentation on the outcomes of the change. There will be a presentation to the Board by the middle school principals in the future. The Board members discussed the Homework policy at length. The committee also discussed the district’s Promotion and Retention Policy and that the administration is recommending that a student that fails any one course in ELA, Math, Social Studies, or Science, be required to attend summer school. This revision will be forwarded to the Personnel and Policy Committee for further discussion.

b. Finance Committee Meeting ~ February 20, 2018

Mrs. Clark wanted the public to be aware that there is a fund balance in the Self Insurance Fund and that no one is talking about taking money out of the fund balance; they are talking about not putting additional money into it.

Mrs. DiNello reported that the Board of Education self-insurance claims July 2017-January 2018 were currently \$824,000 under the anticipated budget amount. Between the Town and Board of Education claims combined, they are running \$794,000 below budget. The Self Insurance Committee met last week and discussed both the Town and Board of Education working together to reduce their expenditures this year to help mitigate the lack of revenues coming from the State of Connecticut. They discussed a possible reduction could be made with contributions into the Self Insurance fund because both the Town and Board claims are running so well. The Self Insurance fund balance grew from June 30, 2016 through June 30, 2017 by \$1 million and if claims continue on this pace they would be adding to the Self Insurance fund balance again. For this reduction to happen, the Self Insurance Committee would need to make a recommendation to the Town Council and Town Board of Finance.

Mrs. DiNello reported that the committee discussed the 2017-2018 Financial Update and that, to date, the school system has received two separate appropriations from the Town, which leaves a \$3,468,681 shortfall of what is needed to make the Board of Education whole. Two additional appropriations are expected at \$850,000 each. The Board of Finance planned to allocate the funding from the town's \$3,000,000 contingency fund with the Board of Education receiving 85% of that money in three installments. The Board of Education anticipates receiving \$1.7 million more, which will still leave the current 2017-2018 budget with a shortfall of \$1,768,000. Mrs. DiNello explained that the committee reviewed the expenditure report through January 2018 and discussed the austere budget savings that were put into place in the fall to make up some of the difference from the approved 2017-2018 budget and the current cuts from the state to mitigate the situation.

Mrs. DiNello explained that the Board of Finance asked the Board of Education to put together a Mitigation Plan that will amount to 75% of \$2.1 million and that the Board of Finance members are requesting the Superintendent send the plan to the Board of Finance prior to March 13, 2018.

Mr. Goralski, Chairperson, reconvened Executive Session at 8:51 p.m.

Board members present: Mrs. Terri Carmody, Mr. Joseph Baczewski, Mr. Robert Brown, Ms. Lisa Cammuso, Mrs. Colleen Clark, Mr. David Derynoski, Mr. Brian Goralski, Mr. Zaya Oshana, and Mrs. Patricia Queen.

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

Mr. Goralski, Chairperson, ended Executive Session at 9:15 p.m. and reconvened back into Regular Session.

10. OLD BUSINESS**a. Town Government Communications**

Mrs. Queen gave a brief report on the Town Ordinance Committee of which she and Mr. Oshana are members. The three ordinances reviewed were 1) Excess police calls to a residence, 2) Blight Ordinance, and 3) Use of the Town Seal.

Mr. Goralski gave an update on the Committee of the Chairs and the discussion on the Rainy Day unassigned fund balance and Mitigation Plan. He referenced a letter from the Committee of the Chairs that he signed on behalf of himself personally and not on the behalf of the Board of Education. He believed that they would be irresponsible like the state if they used money saved for the rainy day to pay for staff. He did not want to offend his colleagues and he clearly wanted to sign it as a member of the Committee of the Chairs. He thought that structural changes should be made at the beginning of the fiscal year, not in the middle.

Mr. Goralski announced the upcoming budget meetings:

- Board of Finance Budget Public Hearing, March 13, 7:00 p.m. at DePaolo Middle School
- Board of Finance/Board of Education Workshop, March 21, 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall
- Board of Finance adoption of budget, March 28, 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall
- Town Council Public Hearing, April 23, 7:00 p.m. at the Municipal Center
- Town Council adoption of budget, May 14, 7:00 p.m. at the Municipal Center
- Board of Finance setting of the Mill rate on May 16, 7:00 p.m. Town Hall

Mr. Goralski stated that the Board of Finance March 13 hearing is supposed to be followed by a special meeting but the Board of Finance members are having second thoughts about a special meeting where the Mitigation Plan can be presented to them by Mr. Connellan and Mr. Sciota. Mr. Goralski thought that the Mitigation Plan should be a public discussion.

b. Budget 2017-2018

Mr. Goralski referenced an email that was sent to staff in the district that represented some things that were said by the Board members, but the Board never had a public discussion on what was in the email. He reiterated that he takes responsibility for the letter that he wrote regarding not using the Rainy Day Fund to pay for staff, which in his opinion, was not appropriate. He stated that one thing they needed to talk about, as a Board, was teamwork because nothing gets solved alone in isolation. Mr. Goralski explained that he was a state employee for 21 years and a union leader for 15 years and had to take multiple furlough days. He believed that it was one possible solution that employees offer to take a furlough day to alleviate the loss colleagues. He encouraged all employees in the district to offer some suggestions or ideas and attend Board of Education meetings and share ideas with building administrators. However, the final decision is by the Superintendent and the Board of Education working collaboratively.

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

“Move that the Board of Education authorize and direct the Superintendent to formally request that each of the Board Bargaining Units agree to take one (1) unpaid furlough day during the remainder of the 2017-2018 fiscal year in an effort to address the projected budget shortfall for the 2017-2018 fiscal year.”

Mr. Goralski reiterated as mandated by the Board of Finance, that the Board of Education needs to give them a Mitigation Plan by March 13, 2018. Mr. Connellan stated that it would be

appropriate to request responses in time for the next Board of Education meeting on March 8, 2018.

Mr. Goralski announced that the Superintendent surprised the Board with a memo in Executive Session that read, *“In the spirit of every member of this organization helping to solve the current situation, my intention is to implement a furlough day, one day within my own schedule, and the selected day will be chosen so that it has the least impact possible on the day to day operations of the school district.”* Mr. Goralski believed that this was a sign of good leadership.

Mr. Goralski pointed out that the unaffiliated group that included cabinet administrators, some secretaries, crossing guards, and many other nonunion people did not get a raise until December 1, 2017, and it was not retroactive to July 1, 2017, when every union employee did receive a raise. The nonunion group also will be taking a zero percent (0%) raise in the 2018-2019 fiscal budget. He thanked the unaffiliated employees for already sacrificing some of their salary and pay. Because of this, he is not asking the unaffiliated employees to take a furlough day unless they choose to.

Mr. Brown explained that there was a teacher tax in January that applied to administrators and teachers; therefore, they actually took a pay cut in January. He did not like the furlough day but there was no better option available except laying off a lot of people, which would be the most devastating thing to do. He urged the unions to accept the furlough day. Mrs. Carmody did not like Furlough days either because they already ask a lot from the teachers, but the alternative was horrible. She asked the membership to accept the furlough day. She pointed out that the Board had to accept their answer without too much criticism.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YES – Mrs. Carmody, Mrs. Clark, Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Brown, Mr. Baczewski, Ms. Cammuso, Mr. Oshana, Mrs. Queen and Mr. Goralski.

Motion carried unanimously

Mrs. Queen addressed the “structural change” concept where she heard at a Board of Finance meeting that they want to reduce the size of government. She stated that in 2017-2018 the Board of Education is providing less services than in 2016-2017 and lost a number of positions as well as programs. She thought it would help for administration to share some of the consequences from these reductions. Mr. Madancy stated that in the 14 Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) lost, it has impacted the course offerings at the high school, elementary class sizes have increased, and less Paraeducator Kindergarten support for the incoming students.

Mrs. Queen added that everything is different this year and will be next year because of the reductions in revenue from the state. She hoped at the upcoming workshops the public would attend and have a discussion on what they value in government on the town side and Board of Education side. She requested that an open letter be sent to the local newspapers encouraging the public to attend the hearings and have a community conversation around what the community values. Mr. Oshana gave the definition of a “structural change”, which means it goes away now and never comes back. If a program is eliminated, then it never comes back.

Mr. Derynoski recommended having a combined Board of Education and Town Council Town Hall meeting at the high school and publicize that they need to address, as a community, the situation the town is in because of the lack of funding from the state. Mr. Goralski will propose the idea at the next Committee of the Chairs meeting on March 7 that they host a Town

Hall meeting. Mr. Goralski requested that Mrs. Queen write a letter to the editor of local newspapers based on the Board's discussions and that they work together to publicize it. Ms. Cammuso thought to advertise to the younger generation to attend that they look into social media, email groups, websites and the student representatives.

11. NEW BUSINESS

a. Leonard & Gladys Joll Scholarship Committee Appointment

Mr. Goralski appointed Ms. Cammuso, Mr. Derynoski, Mr. Brown and Mrs. Carmody to serve on the committee.

b. UPSEU, Local 424, Unit 113, Occupational & Physical Therapists Contract Approval

MOTION: by Mrs. Queen, seconded by Mr. Derynoski:

“Move to approve the tentative agreement between the Southington Board of Education and the UPSEU Occupational and Physical Therapists, as presented.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

c. AFSCME, Local 1303-0072 and 123, Maintenance & Custodians Contract Approval

MOTION: by Mr. Brown, seconded by Mrs. Queen:

“Move to approve the tentative agreement between the AFSCME Custodial and Maintenance Employees and the Southington Board of Education, as presented.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Goralski pointed out that these bargaining units agreed to help the community move forward by taking a zero percent (0%) raise in the 2018-2019 school year. He thanked them for their sacrifice. He asked Mrs. DiNello to extend that appreciation to the union representatives.

12. ADJOURNMENT

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

“Move to adjourn.”

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Blanchard
Recording Secretary