

Board of Education Meeting  
August 15, 2016

Call to Order

Board Chair Gee called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Auditorium. Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Natalie Semyanko, Jeanne Gee, Kendra Wiesel, Susi Keane, Matt Service, Michael Sepko, John Richter, Superintendent Karen Berasi, and Business Manager Bill Hoff

Executive Session

Keane moved to go into executive session at 5:32 p.m. for the purpose of discussion and review of the Tentative Agreement between the Suffield Board of Education and the CT Health Care Associates (Nurses' Union), and for the purpose of discussing personnel matters: Superintendent's evaluation. Kendra seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

***Superintendent Berasi and Mr. Hoff left at 5:58 p.m.***

***Superintendent Berasi returned at 6:21 p.m.***

At 6:33 p.m., Wiesel moved to come out of executive session, Keane seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

Regular Session

The regular session resumed at 6:38 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Auditorium. Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Natalie Semyanko, Jeanne Gee, Kendra Wiesel, Susi Keane, Matt Service, Michael Sepko, John Richter, Superintendent Karen Berasi, Assistant Superintendent Brian Hendrickson and Business Manager Bill Hoff.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognition

Board Chair Gee recognized Board member D'Ostuni who has received the Master Board of Education Member Designation by the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE). On behalf of the Board, Board Chair Gee thanked Ms. D'Ostuni for her time, energy, the knowledge she brings to the Board and the wonderful example she is to her fellow Board members.

Public Comment

Jen Bombard, 6 Whitfield Way, would like to see a middle school softball team formed. The Town league typically does not draw enough 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls to form their own team, and they have to combine with other towns. This issue would be remedied by having a middle school softball team. Cost estimates to form a school team is between \$5,000 and \$6,000, and Ms. Bombard is willing to solicit grants to offset the cost this year and organize fundraising since it is not in this year's budget. She asked for the Board's support.

Approval of Minutes

Service moved, Keane seconded to approve the July 18, 2016 minutes. All members voted in favor except Wiesel, who abstained. The motion carried 7-0-1.

D'Ostuni moved, Keane seconded to approve the July 28, 2016 minutes. All members voted in favor except Service, who abstained. The motion carried 7-0-1.

Consent Agenda

None

**MOTION #17-04:** D'Ostuni moved, Richter seconded to add the Superintendent's evaluation to Discussion/Action items as Item A. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Discussion Items

• Superintendent's Evaluation

**MOTION #17-05:** Service moved, D'Ostuni seconded to extend the Superintendent's contract by one year (through 2019) and approve a 1% increase in base salary. Board member Gee thanked the Superintendent and Board members for their thoughtful work on this process. She said it is a tremendous pleasure to have Superintendent Berasi in the district and she has done an extraordinary amount of work and is working hard to move the district in the right direction. Board member Wiesel said she is looking forward to the Board working together to put forth more concrete measurable goals. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

**MOTION #17-06:** D'Ostuni moved, Sepko seconded to move agenda item C – Approval of Extra Remuneration for Extra Duty (Stipends) to Item B under Discussion/Action Items. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

• Approval of Extra Remuneration for Extra Duty (Stipends)

Superintendent Berasi reviewed the proposed coaching positions at the high school and middle school that are presently in place but never came to board for approval. She noted these positions were budgeted for this year and last year. The middle school girls' softball coach is new. No funds were budgeted this year, but could be put in the 2017-2018 budget. The Superintendent reviewed the other changes proposed to the high school, middle school and McAlister offerings for this year. Superintendent Berasi said she met with Mark Janick to review the changes, and Mr. Janick was going to review with his teacher representatives. Board members asked for clarification on specific stipends and discussed the changes.

**MOTION #17-07:** Service moved, D'Ostuni seconded the approval of the following stipends:

1. Boys Freshman Soccer Coach (SHS) - \$1,245
2. Freshman Volleyball Coach (SHS) - \$1,245
3. Indoor Spring Track Assistant Coach (SHS) - \$3,321
4. Earth and Outing Club (SHS) – (2) at \$830 each/total \$1,660
5. Gaming Club (SHS) - \$830
6. Science Fair (SHS) - \$830
7. Student Activity & Awards Coordinator (SHS) – \$2,500
8. Suffield Unites (SHS) - \$1,020
9. Unified Theatre (SHS) – (2) at \$830 each/total \$1,660
10. Writing Center Advisor (SHS) – paid through CHOICE grant
11. Wingman (SMS) – (2) at \$1,142 each/total \$2,284
12. Unified Theatre (SMS) - \$934
13. Art (SMS) - \$830
14. Variety Show (SMS) - \$830
15. Fifth Grade Student Council (MIS) – (2) at \$1,142 each/total \$2,284
16. Math Olympiads (MIS) – (2) at \$830 each/total \$1,660

All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

- July 2016 Financial Report

Mr. Hoff said the projected end of year surplus is \$37,971, however there are very few actual expenditures or encumbrances as the school year has not yet begun. He noted the current overall salary savings from turnover are projected at \$88,855. An unbudgeted salary cost of \$32,200 was due to paying paraprofessionals for attending the week long CCSN training during the last week of June. Mr. Hoff stated the Choice Academic Support Grant has not been issued by the State yet. He said the administration continues to monitor spending throughout the district.

- Report on M & J start-up for 2016-2017 school year

Mr. Hoff said M&J continues to improve their service; specifically they added an additional manager which has greatly improved their responsiveness. The district has reduced one bus so routes have changed which may cause addition issues to the typical beginning of the year bus issues. There will be less stops this year, however, this will not jeopardize student safety. He will monitor overcrowding and the length of bus runs and work closely with schools and families to resolve any issues.

- Educator Retention Report (2011/12 SY – 2015/16 SY)

Superintendent Berasi reviewed the report and noted that this year was typical to year's past. In response to a board member's question, Ms. Berasi said she is conducting exit interviews only when it is unknown why a faculty member is leaving. Mr. Sepko asked how we compare to other district in our DRG. Superintendent Berasi said she would get that information, and she noted the district is well above the national average on retention.

- Approval of Tentative Agreement between the Suffield Board of Education and CT Health Care Associates (Nurses' Union)

Board member Service said the subcommittee met several times and the negotiations went very well. The nurses involved helped the committee understand their concerns and this contract addresses their concerns very well.

**MOTION #17-08:** Service moved, Sepko seconded to approve the tentative agreement between the Suffield Board of Education and CT Health Care Associates (Nurses' Union). All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

- Adoption of Free and Reduced Price Meals Policy Statement

Mr. Hoff said the Board must approve this program annually in order to participate. Families qualify for free and reduced lunch based on income level, and the program helps provide for the district's food service programs, however, there are restrictions to the offerings. Board members had questions over costs, funds provided, and participation rates of students receiving free or reduced meals.

**MOTION #17-09:** Service moved, Wiesel seconded to adopt the free and reduced price meals policy statement. All members voted in favor except Gee, who abstained. The motion carried 7-0-1.

## Reports to the Board

### Superintendent's Report

- Ms. Berasi shared the professional development (PD) participation rate information that was requested by Board member Sepko at the last meeting. Mr. Hendrickson reviewed the data presented, which was broken out by school and the type of PD attended: in district and out of district. He gave examples of each type of PD. Board members asked questions relative to trends related to which teachers are attending the PD offerings. Mr. Hendrickson added that PD will be a focus of PDEC this year.

- Superintendent Berasi said the District Management Council (DMC) was in district one day last week and it was very valuable. It was attended by principals and cabinet. Dianne Ullman and Melissa Donaher will be back in district on Sept. 7.
- Ms. Berasi said she is deeply honored to be asked by the Suffield Police Department to serve on the interview panel for the hiring of a new police officer. She said the whole police department has been great to work with.
- Convocation is August 26th starting at 8:00am with breakfast and music by Suffield High School Jazz Band. The ceremony will begin at 8:45am and Caelie Flanagan will be singing the national anthem. After the ceremony, all certified staff will break into groups and review the district improvement map and come up with three questions to ask the Superintendent.

#### Chair's Report

- Board Chair Gee also noted the wonderful relationship between the school district and the Suffield Police Department.

#### Business Manager's Report

- Mr. Hoff said the district's electricity generation contract expires in November 2017. He is currently reviewing the possibility of an extension, which is 3% less than the district is currently paying and will extend the contract through 2020. In response to a Board member's question, Mr. Hoff said administration has met with Powerpoint and Eversource but are still waiting for a response from them. Mr. Plano will be meeting with Powerpoint representatives this week on improvements that can be made in the schools.

#### Subcommittee Reports

August 9, 2016 HR/Personnel (Negotiations) subcommittee meeting - Board member Service said the committee held its first strategy meeting with counsel relative to the administrator's contract. The committee discussed contract language they would like to clean up, timelines and tentative meeting dates.

In response to Board member Sepko's question, Board members discussed the implications of the State budget issues on the district's budget this year.

#### Future Business

None

#### Adjournment

Service moved, Richter seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

*Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting on September 6, 2016.*

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D'Ostuni  
Secretary