

Suffield, Connecticut

Approved by Bd. of Ed.

Board of Education Meeting  
January 4, 2016

Executive Session

Keane moved, Semyanko seconded to go into executive session at 5:36 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter: sabbatical leave request.

Semyanko moved, Keane seconded to come out of executive session at 6:27 p.m.

Call to Order

Board Chair Gee called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Media Center. Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Natalie Semyanko, Jeanne Gee, Kendra Wiesel, Matt Service, Michael Sepko, Susi Keane, John Richter, George Beiter, Superintendent Karen Berasi, Assistant Superintendent Brian Hendrickson and Business Manager Bill Hoff.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Semyanko moved to approve the December 15, 2015 minutes. Richter seconded the motion and all members voted in favor except Beiter, who abstained. The motion carried 8-0-1.

Consent Agenda

None

Discussion Items

**MOTION #16-01:** Richter moved to add Jen Lord's sabbatical leave request to the discussion items. Wiesel seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

- Sabbatical Leave Request

Board Chair Gee said the Board met in executive session before the regular meeting to discuss Jen Lord's request for sabbatical leave for the Spring of 2017 to fulfill her Master's program requirement. She is requesting to do her counseling internship at Suffield High School.

**MOTION #16-02:** D'Ostuni moved to approve the sabbatical leave request and give the Superintendent authorization to work out the details of the leave. Semyanko seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Board member D'Ostuni noted it would be valuable for Ms. Lord to participate in the freshman orientation process. Board member Semyanko said it is good to invest in teacher growth and it also benefits the district. Board member Wiesel said Ms. Lord's dedication to teaching and to her students was evident. Board Chair Gee said she felt fortunate to support Ms. Lord in this endeavor. Superintendent Berasi said the approximate cost of granting this sabbatical leave was \$18,000.

- Policy #1250 – Visits to School and Policy #1250.1 – Classroom Visits  
Board member D'Ostuni said at the request of the Board, the subcommittee removed language from the Visits to Schools policy and moved it to a new Classroom Observation policy for more clarity. These policies will be placed on the January 19 agenda for a vote.
- Capital Budget Discussion  
Mr. Hoff reviewed the revised capital plan and stated the plan has been reviewed and revised by the Budget/Finance/Facilities subcommittee during several of its meetings. The plan was revised once more because it was thought the handicap access work at Spaulding would be done this school year, but the work will not be done until this summer so the cost was moved to next school year. Handicap access is needed in the nurse's and preschool bathrooms. Everything else in the capital plan is the same as presented at the December 22 budget/finance/facilities subcommittee meeting. Mr. Hoff said the Board needs to approve the capital plan before presenting it to ACCE at its January 28 meeting. Board Chair Gee suggested inviting ACCE members to tour the schools with the Board to show them the work that has been done as a result of their funding and the items the Board is asking ACCE to fund. Board members were in agreement and they will extend the invitation to the Board of Finance.  
**MOTION #16-03:** Service moved to approve the capital plan as presented. Beiter seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried.
- 2016-2017 Proposed Facilities Budget Presentation  
Superintendent Berasi reminded the Board they will be seeing several department budget presentations during the next few meetings. These budgets are designed to support student growth and achievement of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Mr. Hoff reviewed facilities services which are the utilities for the schools: electricity, natural gas, water and sewer, and rubbish removal. The proposed budget is based on historical data. He reviewed the budgeted amounts for each category. Mr. Hoff noted the district has a fixed generation rate contract through November 2017 for electricity. Higher electricity usage is projected for next year. The transmission rates from Eversource are slightly higher than last year. Mr. Hoff reviewed future opportunities to reduce utility costs.  
  
Mr. Plano reviewed the facilities objectives within the department throughout the district. School safety is a large focus in the department and this budget as well as improving school grounds. He reviewed the impact to the budget for each item in the facilities budget. Mr. Plano reviewed the facilities staff restructuring that is currently being done. His department is replacing two custodians with two cleaners, which will help reduce costs and makes more sense for the type of work being done in the department. The proposed grounds maintenance person will address landscaping but will also serve as a floater during the day when there is a shortage, which will save in overtime costs.
- 2016-2017 Proposed Technology Budget Presentation  
Ms. Osleger reviewed the technology budget highlights and noted this budget directly aligns to the district priorities. Ms. Osleger discussed each budget category in the technology department and how each impacts the overall technology budget. She highlighted the department's goals and showed the changes to the department's organizational structure, which will add a network administrator II and replace the tech support position with an

application support specialist. Ms. Osleger reviewed the criteria for evaluating progress, specifically in the reliability and effectiveness in the use of technology by all users, and the increase of teacher collaboration and planning for engaged instruction.

- 2016-2017 Proposed Transportation Budget Presentation  
Mr. Hoff said there are two parts to transportation: regular education and special education transportation, and he reviewed the costs for both. Transportation cost drivers are the number of buses (each bus costs \$46,837) and the cost of fuel. He reviewed future opportunities to improve transportation costs in the district.

Board members asked questions during each budget presentation.

#### Action Items

None

#### Reports to the Board

##### Superintendent's Report

- None

##### Chair's Report

- Board Chair Gee asked that Board members get back to her relative to scheduling an upcoming workshop with Nick Caruso.

##### Business Manager's Report

- Mr. Hoff said the district is moving forward with upgrading the schools' vestibules. The proposal will go before the Board of Selectman this week for their approval. The proposal will then be presented to the Permanent Building Commission on January 7. The next step will be to move the proposal to the Board of Finance and then go out to bid to get the project done by the June 30, 2016 deadline.

#### Subcommittee Reports

- Board member D'Ostuni said the Policy subcommittee met on December 17 and Policy #5145.4, Non-discrimination, and Regulation #6145.22, Sportsmanship, are being placed on a 30-day read. The next subcommittee meeting will take place after the Board workshop session with Nick Caruso from CABE.
- Board member Beiter stated the Budget/Finance/Facilities subcommittee met on December 22 to discuss the Capital Budget Plan that was presented and voted on this evening.
- Communications: Superintendent Berasi said she received two positive notes from parents: one thanking the administration for help and assistance for their child, and the other thanking the teachers and administration for the children's positive experiences at Suffield Public Schools and all the work they have done.

#### Future Business

None

#### Adjournment

Beiter moved, Semyanko seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

*Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting on January 19, 2016.*

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D'Ostuni  
Secretary

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