

Suffield, Connecticut

Approved by Bd. of Ed.

Board of Education Meeting
February 17, 2016

Executive Session

Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Natalie Semyanko, Jeanne Gee, Kendra Wiesel, Matt Service, Susi Keane, John Richter, Michael Sepko (arrived 6:30p.m.), George Beiter (arrived 6:27p.m.), Superintendent Karen Berasi (for student disciplinary issue sessions only)

Semyanko moved, Keane seconded to go into executive session at 5:04 p.m. for the purpose of discussing student records: student disciplinary issue.

Keane moved, Semyanko seconded to come out of executive session at 5:58 p.m.

Richter moved, Service seconded to go into executive session at 5:59 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter: Superintendent's mid-year evaluation.

Service moved, Richter seconded to come out of executive session at 6:16 p.m.

Semyanko moved, Keane seconded to go into executive session at 6:16 p.m. for the purpose of discussing student records: student disciplinary issue.

Keane moved, Semyanko seconded to come out of executive session at 6:17 p.m.

Richter moved, Service seconded to go into executive session at 6:18 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter: Superintendent's mid-year evaluation.

Service moved, Richter seconded to come out of executive session at 6:29 p.m.

Call to Order

Board Chair Gee called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Media Center. Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Natalie Semyanko, Jeanne Gee, Kendra Wiesel, Matt Service, Susi Keane, John Richter, Michael Sepko, George Beiter, Superintendent Karen Berasi, Assistant Superintendent Brian Hendrickson, and Business Manager Bill Hoff

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Suffield High School Student Representative

Giancarlo Isotti updated the Board on the events that are taking place at Suffield High School this month:

- Freshman orientation was held on February 3
- The high school Pops concert is February 24
- National Honors Society is holding a volleyball marathon scholarship fundraiser on March 4 and 5
- Standardized testing will take place on March 2: SAT's for juniors, Science CAPT test for sophomores, and practice Science CAPT test for freshman
- Science Fair display is being held on March 14
- Robotics Team annual scrimmage is on February 20

- The Drama Club is performing the Wizard of Oz on March 17-19
- The Agriscience interview night for prospective students is on February 22
- The A-Team, Suffield Unites, and GSA are hosting a cultural International Café night on March 23
- Winter sports are underway: Indoor track will hold an NCCC meet on Feb. 22, Wildcats hockey team are 7 and 3, Boys basketball is in 3rd place in the NCCC, the wrestling team is in 1st place in their league, and Unified Basketball participated in their first game on February 9 against Ellington and Windsor Locks

Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Semyanko moved, Richter seconded to approve the February 1, 2016 minutes. All members voted in favor except Beiter, who abstained. The motion carried 8-0.

Consent Agenda

MOTION #16-08: Service moved, Semyanko seconded to approve Policy #5145.4 – Non-discrimination and Regulation #6145.22 – Sportsmanship. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

MOTION #16-09: Service moved, Semyanko seconded to add an agenda item to the Action Items: “D. Action on Student Disciplinary Issue”. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Discussion Items

- Presentation by Dr. Mark Palmieri, Center for Children with Special Needs

Dr. Palmieri said that he has met many staff members and parents in the district and noted how welcoming everyone is in Suffield. He explained what the Center for Children with Special Needs (CCSN) does and how the program integrates with public schools. Their mission is to support public school teams to grow in order to support students with complex learning needs. The program empowers students and makes them more independent and in the long term reduces the need for supports later in life. The consultant works day-to-day in the schools with school teams, made up of special education teachers, related services (OT, PT, etc.) staff, general education teachers, paraprofessionals, students and families. This program provides the needed training for team members to ensure sustainability of the program. The teams work collaboratively and collectively to ensure success. Board members had specific questions about what the model looks like, how to grow the program to all the schools, and how the success of the program will be measured. Dr. Palmieri addressed all their questions, noting the program provides embedded professional training and development that is measurable, transferable, and unique to Suffield. Board Chair Gee thanked Dr. Palmieri for his informative presentation.

- SHS Field Trip Request – Montreal, Canada – May 13-16, 2016

Superintendent Berasi explained that the field trip request was not submitted within the required four month time frame because the original trip to Paris, which was already approved by the Board, was cancelled due to the tragic events in Paris last fall.

MOTION #16-10: Beiter moved, Richter seconded to approve the Suffield High School field trip request to Montreal, Canada on May 13-16, 2016 as presented to the Board of

Education and in accordance with Board of Education Policy/Regulation #6153. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Gee left at 7:32 pm, returned at 7:35 pm

- Discussion of Proposed 2016-2017 Superintendent's Budget
Superintendent Berasi said this budget invests in students which invests in Suffield's future. She noted that CCSN provides an excellent program for students in district, reducing the number of students in outplacements. Superintendent Berasi reviewed the changes in enrollment since her December presentation. She highlighted the other changes, decrease in insurance costs and changes in FTE's, resulting in a budget request of a 3.1% increase. The Board discussed the drivers of the budget, specifically CCSN. Board of Finance member, Ryan Anderson, suggested the Board develop talking points to present to the Board of Finance which clearly articulates the district's needs. The Board discussed holding a vote at the next meeting. All members were in agreement to add the budget approval to the March 7 agenda.

Berasi left at 7:45 pm, returned at 7:47 pm

Richter left at 8:17 pm, returned at 8:22 pm

- January Financial Report
Mr. Hoff said the projected year end net surplus is \$176,353, which is a decrease of \$24,143 from last month due to increased need for long-term substitutes and an increase in special education legal fees. Food service had two strong months in December and January. Board members requested for a later date more information around the Certified Substitutes category. Mr. Hoff reviewed the budget transfers proposed.
MOTION #16-11: Semyanko moved, Sepko seconded to approve the budget transfers as presented. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.
- Pre-School Tuition Increase Proposal
MOTION #16-12: D'Ostuni moved, Semyanko seconded to approve an annual tuition rate of \$1,400 for the Pre-K program effective July 1, 2016.

Action Items

- Acceptance of Technology Grant
MOTION #16-13: Semyanko moved, Wiesel seconded to accept the State Technology Grant award in the amount of \$52,000 and authorize the Superintendent to use the funds as determined by district need. Board member Beiter asked if the Town needs to approve this grant as well. Mr. Hoff will ask the Town Finance Director. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.
- Student Disciplinary Issue
MOTION #16-14: Service moved, Semyanko seconded to accept the stipulated agreement as presented to the Board of Education. All members voted in favor except for Beiter and Sepko, who abstained. The motion carried 7-0.

Reports to the Board

Superintendent's Report

- Superintendent Berasi said she received a phone call from Mr. Scanlon from Eversource. He stated he would not attend the BOE meeting tonight because Eversource is hiring an engineering firm to look at the data before coming to the Board of Education.
- She also received a phone call from Representative Zawistowski that there will be a public hearing relative to the security grant. No date has been determined yet, but Rep. Zawistowski would communicate with her as details become available.
- CAPSS is looking for superintendents to attend and testify at upcoming Education Committee Public Hearings relative to State mandates that will affect districts. She will attend the March 17 hearing.

Chair's Report

- Board Chair Gee thanked Board member Semyanko, Mr. Hoff, and Superintendent Berasi for attending the Town meeting last night. The school vestibules project was approved. She also thanked the Town for their support.
- She and the Superintendent are meeting with Nick Caruso and Lighthouse trainers tomorrow relative to the Lighthouse Training project. Board members will be receiving an online survey to take.

Business Manager's Report

- Mr. Hoff said the vestibule project bids will be opened next week and a recommendation will be presented to the Permanent Building Committee next Thursday.

Subcommittee Reports

- Budget/Finance/Facilities Subcommittee Meeting of December 12, 2016 – The committee discussed reducing the budget request, the insurance rate increase, staff vacancies, substitute costs, adding a retirement line item, and reviewed high school drop-out rates.
- Communications – None

Executive Session

D'Ostuni moved, Semyanko seconded to go into executive session at 8:53 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter: Superintendent's mid-year evaluation.

Semyanko moved, D'Ostuni seconded to come out of executive session at 9:23 p.m.

Future Business

None

Adjournment

Richter moved, Beiter seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting on March 7, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D'Ostuni
Secretary