

Suffield, Connecticut

Approved by Bd. of Ed.

Board of Education Meeting
October 7, 2014

Call to Order

Superintendent Baldwin called the meeting to order at 5:42 p.m. in the Suffield High School Media Center. Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Scott Schneider, Natalie Semyanko, Mary Roy, Jeanne Gee, Mary Lou Sanborn, George Beiter, Michelle Zawawi, Superintendent, Karen Baldwin, and Board Attorney, Rebecca Rudnick Santiago

Executive Session

Gee moved, Semyanko seconded to go into executive session at 5:42 p.m. to discuss confidential attorney-client privilege documents.

Semyanko moved, Gee seconded to come out of executive session at 6:30 p.m.

Regular Session

Superintendent Baldwin called the regular session to order at 6:38 p.m. Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Scott Schneider, Natalie Semyanko, Mary Roy, Jeanne Gee, Mary Lou Sanborn, George Beiter, Michelle Zawawi, Superintendent, Karen Baldwin, Assistant Superintendent, Jim Collin and Business Manager, Bill Hoff.

Public Comment

None

Communications

Board member Sanborn said she was notified that the Republican Town Committee was endorsing Eric Harrington to fill the vacant Board of Education seat.

Approval of Minutes

Gee moved, Semyanko seconded to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2014 Board of Education meeting with minor typographical changes. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Discussion/Action Items

- Election of Officers

Chairperson of the Board

MOTION #14-48: Gee moved, Roy seconded the nomination of Mary Lou Sanborn as Suffield Board of Education Chairperson. All members voted in favor. The motion carried. Board Chair Sanborn thanked Board members for their vote of confidence and said she would do her best for the Board and the district.

Vice Chairperson of the Board

MOTION #14-49: Zawawi moved, D'Ostuni seconded the nomination of George Beiter as Suffield Board of Education Vice Chairperson. D'Ostuni moved, Semyanko seconded the nomination of Jeanne Gee as Suffield Board of Education Vice Chairperson. Board Chair Sanborn called for a vote for Jeanne Gee as Vice Chairperson. Semyanko, D'Ostuni,

Schneider, Roy and Sanborn voted in favor. Board Chair Sanborn called for a vote for George Beiter as Vice Chairperson. Zawawi voted in favor, Beiter abstained. Board member Gee was elected Vice Chair with five votes.

- Appointment of new Board of Education member to fill Bob Eccles seat (term shortened - ending 2015)

Board members said both candidates would be a great addition to the Board.

MOTION #14-50: Board Chair Sanborn called for a vote to appoint Eric Harrington as a Suffield Board of Education member. Zawawi, Gee and Beiter voted in favor, Semyanko abstained. Board Chair Sanborn called for a vote to appoint Sue Porcello as a Suffield Board of Education member. Roy, D'Ostuni, Schneider, and Sanborn voted in favor. Sue Porcello was appointed as a member of the Suffield Board of Education with four votes.

- Discussion of the 2015 Board of Education meeting dates
Board members discussed reducing the number of meetings to once a month. They discussed keeping the two meeting-a-month schedule but designating the meetings for different purposes; one meeting to conduct business items and the other meeting to conduct activities such as workshops, subcommittee work or strategic planning. Board Chair Sanborn said the 2015 Board of Education meeting dates will be filed with the Town Clerk's office.
- Agri-Science Update
Laura LaFlamme, Director of the Agri-science program, and Steve Moccio, Suffield High School Principal, gave an update on the Agri-science program. They shared enrollment data and retention and recruitment strategies. Ms. LaFlamme highlighted the changes in curriculum including the use of technology through iPads and Chromebooks, new course offerings, including ECE courses, and revisions to the Ag 1 course. The large animal facility is being used as well as the small animal lab.

Board member Zawawi left at 7:49 p.m.

- Status of SHS Construction Audit (Project #139-0037N – 1999-2004)
Superintendent Baldwin said she has updated the Board in her weekly updates on two separate occasions relative to the high school construction project. The district was notified at the end of June of the draft audit findings from the State. She notified the State that administration would be reviewing the findings. Bill Hoff and Deb Cerrato, Town Finance Director, researched the State's findings. Mr. Hoff said the project began in 1999 and was finished in 2004. The difficulty in researching the State's findings is there is no documentation to disprove the findings. Both the construction company and the architectural firm that worked on the project disposed of their documents without supplying a copy to the district. He said the other complication is that some of the work charged to the construction project was actually work done on the greenhouse, which is part of the LAF project. He has responded to some of the findings and will continue to do so as he continues his research. Board members had questions on the construction project process. Dr. Baldwin communicated the timeline of the construction project, the audit findings and the research that the district has been engaged in to reduce the amount the State says the Town owes. Mr. Hoff said the State's findings are overstated because the largest amounts in the findings were related to work not being publicly bid, but he has found documentation proving they were publicly bid. Board member Beiter

asked if this information has been shared with the Town. Dr. Baldwin said she has communicated this information to the First Selectman as well as Joe Sangiovanni, Chairperson of the Permanent Building Committee. She said work will continue to reduce the amount of the State's claims, and she will update the Board of any changes and communicate next steps to the Town. Board Chair Sanborn thanked Mr. Hoff, Ms. Cerrato and the Superintendent for their hard work.

Superintendent's Report

- All Hazards Security and Safety Plan submission to the SDE - Dr. Baldwin said the Plan was submitted to the State on October 1, 2014. She thanked Larry Plano for his hard work and leadership on this project. She also thanked local Town Department Heads; Fire Chief Flynn, Fire Marshal Thibedeau, Police Chief Manzi, Police Captain Huntley, SRO Antrum and Emergency Management Director Woods. The district and Town expect feedback from the State and will continue to refine the Plan. This project has been a tremendous undertaking but was a collaborative effort. The focus going forward will be to work collaboratively with the Police and Fire Departments on training. Board member Gee suggested informing the public of the great work that has been done and putting the Plan on the district's website.
- District Enrollment as of October 1, 2014 – Dr. Baldwin said the October 1, 2014 district enrollment report has been submitted to the State as required. There are 40 less students this year as compared to October 2013. The biggest fluctuation is at the middle school level due to a much smaller 6th grade class entering the middle school than the outgoing 8th grade class (now 9th graders). Administration will continue to monitor enrollment relative to resource allocation and budgeting. Board member D'Ostuni asked that Board members be sent the enrollment report.

Chair's Report

Board Chair Sanborn asked for an update from principals on their open houses.

Board Chair Sanborn said the Board conducted a self-evaluation on October 6th. A facilitator attended and helped the Board to establish goals and objectives. One of the goals is how to make Board meetings more effective, and she will work with the Superintendent to achieve this goal. The October 21st meeting agenda will include a discussion of the second year of the district's strategic plan from a status perspective, and present the 2014-2015 goals and objectives. She also said because of new membership and changing roles, the subcommittee lists should be changed. She said the weekly updates are working well and encouraged members to send her any comments or questions and she will forward a complete list to the Superintendent.

Subcommittee Reports

Board member Gee said the ad hoc Minutes committee met on September 24th and October 1st to discuss the format of Board minutes. The committee discussed providing access to the public, providing clarity, and reducing/streamlining the work of taking the minutes. Lisa Trase, the First Selectman's secretary, was also in attendance because the Town is experiencing similar issues. The committee talked about videotaping the meetings and posting or streaming the meeting online. The committee was comfortable moving to the taking of action minutes. Central Office also provided information on the CAFE-meeting service, a web-based paperless meeting program.

Board member Beiter said the committee is at the brainstorming stage. Cox Communications could record, produce and broadcast Board meetings for \$150 per meeting. The Town applied for a grant through the Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) which would provide the Town with mobile recording equipment to videotape meetings. The committee is looking at all possibilities and reviewing costs and logistics.

Future Business

Board members added to the agenda:

- A presentation of the Superintendent's choice with rationale for the district administration structure with two alternative structures from high performing districts.
- Curriculum for approval
- Update on LAF/school construction close-out
- Middle School schedule update – Dec./Jan.
- Summer reading program

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

Beiter moved, Semyanko seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting on October 21, 2014

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D'Ostuni
Secretary

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