

Suffield, Connecticut

Approved by Bd. of Ed.

Board of Education Meeting
May 5, 2015

Call to Order

Board Chair Gee called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. in the Suffield High School Media Center. Present: Board members Lori D'Ostuni, Natalie Semyanko, George Beiter, Jeanne Gee, Michael Sepko, Susi Keane, Michelle Zawawi, Matt Service, and Interim Superintendent Mel Chafetz, Assistant Superintendent Jim Collin, and Business Manager Bill Hoff.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognition

Principal Steven Moccio introduced Sam Cutler, the Class of 2015's Valedictorian. Sam is heading to UCONN the fall to study Physics. Mr. Moccio also introduced Kira Bourret, the Class of 2015's Salutatorian. Kira is heading to Virginia Tech in the fall to study pre-med. Kira was unable to attend due to a track meet. Parents and teachers were in attendance to celebrate their accomplishment. Dr. Chafetz presented certificates to Sam and Kira (Kira's was accepted by her parents).

Public Comment

No public comment.

Communications

No communications.

Approval of Minutes

Beiter moved, Sepko seconded the motion to approve the April 21, 2015 Board of Education minutes. The minutes were approved 7-0-1 with Zawawi abstaining.

Consent Agenda

No consent agenda.

Discussion/Action Items

- Appointment of New Superintendent of Schools
MOTION #15-28: Beiter moved, Semyanko seconded the motion to appoint Karen Berasi, Superintendent of Suffield Public Schools. The motion carried unanimously 8-0-0. Board member Richter was traveling on business tonight but sent a letter of support for hiring Karen Berasi.

Kaye Griffin, Search Consultant from CES, commented on the excellent pool of candidates, thanking the Board for their diligence and the community for welcoming Karen. The board expressed their gratitude to Kaye for her partnering with the Board and keeping everyone focused during the search process.

All board members expressed their welcome to Karen Berasi as well as looking forward to working together to benefit Suffield's children.

John Richter's vote on Karen's nomination for Superintendent: Yes (Please note John was not in attendance at the meeting in person or on phone so the vote could not be officially counted).

"Jeanne please read comment: I am unable to attend tonight due to business related travel commitments. However, I wanted to share with all of you attending our meeting tonight as well as our Board Team the excitement and great expectations I feel in welcoming Karen to our team and community as the new superintendent. A great chemistry exists within the Suffield community that is clearly focused on the quality of our student's education. I see this chemistry being enhanced by Karen's strengths in a strong educational background, a natural inherent ability in building trust, understanding the importance of collaboration and most important...a natural warmth to openly communicate with all stakeholders including Parents, Administrators, Teachers, Community, BOE and most important...our Children...the Students. It's time to move forward with the mindset of great success. Karen...welcome to "Team Suffield".

Karen Berasi stated how honored and excited she is to be part of the Suffield Family. She was especially warmed by the number of people whose well wishes have said, "Welcome home!" and feels like she has indeed returned home.

- Approval of Revised 2015-2016 BOE Budget

MOTION #15-29: Beiter moved, D'Ostuni seconded the motion to approve the revised 2015-2016 BOE Budget totaling \$33,704,325. The motion carried unanimously 8-0-0.

Bill Hoff explained there was a \$1,020 error discovered in the Board's favor in the proposed budget.

- Non-renewal of Long-term Substitutes

MOTION #15-30: Beiter moved, Zawawi seconded the procedural motion to non-renew the long-term substitutes of James Lee, Tamera Zacchera, Stephanie Perez, Nicole Scalise. All members voted in favor. The motion carried 8-0-0.

- Approval of 2015-2016 Educator Evaluation and Support Plan

MOTION #15-31: Zawawi moved, Beiter seconded the motion to approve the 2015-2016 Educator Evaluation and Support Plan as presented. The motion carried unanimously 8-0-0.

Jim Collin presented the System of Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED) and one recommended change from the Professional Learning Committee comprised of teachers and administrators. The change is for non-tenured teachers in years three and four who are rated proficient or exemplary to move from three formal plus three informal with one review of practice to one formal with one review of practice. To move to this level is determined by administrators. There was a lengthy discussion and questions on both the TEAM Mentor development for new teachers and the SEED model. Dr. Collin will forward the data from questions asked to board members. He stated if change is not accepted by the state, the Professional Learning Committee will make a new recommendation to the board. He also stated other districts are requesting this change to the state. Major comments by board members include creating an in-house evaluation model similar to other districts using the Danielson Rubric as a framework (Semyanko),

requesting a timeline so the board has reasonable time for discussion prior to state deadline which is May 15 (Zawawi), and teaching as an art and difficult for a prescribed evaluation model (Beiter).

- Discussion of Policy #9325.2 – Order of Business

D'Ostuni noted usually a need for policy change would be brought to the Board from: 1) administration with supporting evidence, 2) from a change in legislation or CAGE suggested update, or 3) review of policies over time. The Board will send policies to be reviewed/changed to subcommittee – board members should let subcommittee members know any questions or thoughts. The policy will come to the board for a 30 day read where additional questions or suggestions should be made. The policy will be referred back to the subcommittee for additional work or be voted on at the first board meeting after the 30 day timeframe.

D'Ostuni distributed a draft of the board meeting format, noting the changes are in a section to celebrate student and teaching and learning achievements, as well as taking out the second public comment section at the end of the meeting. In addition, the Board is working on policy 9325 on public participation. The Board discussion included the Board's wish to have an effective and efficient meeting of the Board in public but have some time for the public to comment on operational and instructional issues. The subcommittee will meet again to finalize both policies and hopefully bring them back for the 30 day read at the next meeting

- Electricity Report

Bill Hoff has met with Larry Plano and Joe Sangiovani on the three different electricity projects, the cost of the first project not producing the expected savings being the issue. Bill stated Project 1 monies were paid to Power Point by CL&P. The Board now owes CL&P for the remaining dollars. Beiter asked that the tri-board chairs send a letter to Power Point stating our position and negotiating a reasonable solution. Gee asked Beiter to draft the letter she will contact the Board of Finance Chair and First Selectman for a discussion.

Reports to the Board

- Superintendent's Report

- Mel Chafetz invited everyone to the Teacher of Year and Paraprofessional of Year ceremony on May 12, 2015 @ 2:00 p.m. at Suffield High School.
- Public hearing turnout was not large; the town meeting vote is on May 13, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at Suffield High School. He thanked the Boards of Finance and Selectmen for their collaboration during the budget process.
- SBAC testing is ending next week
- Karen Berasi and Mel Chafetz are meeting and will continue to do so for a smooth transition.

- Chair's Report

- Gee reported an ad hoc subcommittee is being created out of a subset of Policy subcommittee work looking at metrics and reporting on strategies, objectives and

- major policies. Board members are to let her know if they are interested in serving – Michael Sepko was asked to be on for his expertise in this area.
- Please come to the Teacher of Year and Paraprofessional of Year celebration.

Subcommittees Reports

Policy Subcommittee meeting of April 28, 2015 – D'Ostuni stated the Board is looking at online credit enhancement and had a discussion with Steve Moccio on information needed to make a decision. Credit enhancement is meant to give students the opportunity to delve into areas of interest not offered through the high school. From the discussion, Dr. Chafetz is asking administrators for policy topics for the subcommittee (i.e. Attendance).

Agriscience Consulting meeting – Beiter stated agriscience enrollment is up 57%. Laura LaFlamme brings high energy and passion to the program. Three teachers, Leah Gawlak, Celia Wagner, and Sarah Oliver, gave updates on welding, marine biology, and food science opportunities with UCONN. UCONN has 100% job placement. Applauded what they are doing. The boat is in the water and they are looking for certified drivers and life guards that meet the age requirement. It was also noted Enfield and other towns may have students who want to come but are not able due to tuition costs to those boards.

Public Comment

Natalie Semyanko visited Spaulding's Art Show and thanked Patty Piellucci for all her work. In addition, she attended Suffield Idol Talent Show and commented on our very talented students.

Kendra Wiesel, 37 Willow Crest

She welcomed Karen Berasi. She gave her support for the current public comment sections at beginning and the end of the meeting which appears to be working. The Board should be here to listen to townspeople - limiting comment may not build the bridge the Board wants. The Board is spoken of in a positive manner in circles she is in because of the public commentary. She questions leaving the time to the discretion of the chairperson but maybe a cap on overall time. She doesn't feel it is necessary to imbed public comment into the middle of the agenda. She stated Granby's agenda is well written for before/after comments

Jeff Kew, 46 Cedar Crest Lane

He welcomed Karen Berasi. He echoed Kendra Wiesel's comments regarding public comment – he has been to all board meetings in Suffield and likes Board of Education meetings best. He likes public comments at the end. He likes having recognitions first on the agenda.

Adjournment

Service moved, Beiter seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting on May 19, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D'Ostuni
Secretary

Z:\Laura\BOE\2015\05 - May 5\Minutes - 05 MAY 2015.docx