

Suffield, Connecticut

Approved by Bd. of Ed.

Board of Education Meeting
February 1, 2016

Executive Session

Present: Lori D'Ostuni, Natalie Semyanko, Jeanne Gee, Kendra Wiesel, Matt Service, Susi Keane, Michael Sepko

Semyanko moved, Sepko seconded to go into executive session at 6:07 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter: Superintendent's mid-year evaluation.

Sepko moved, Semyanko seconded to come out of executive session at 6:32 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, Michael Sepko, Superintendent Karen Berasi, Assistant Superintendent Brian Hendrickson, and Business Manager Bill Hoff

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognition

Karen Berasi introduced Dorian Vicedomini and said she is being recognized tonight for her child advocacy efforts. Ms. Berasi said Ms. Vicedomini has invested more time in advocating for children than anyone else she knows. Ms. Vicedomini worked tirelessly to secure a grant, which resulted in the district receiving \$150,000 to benefit children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Superintendent Berasi said Ms. Vicedomini advocates for the needs for all children and is selfless and child focused. Ms. Vicedomini is the voice of reason, empathy, humility, honesty and grace. Superintendent Berasi thanked Ms. Vicedomini.

Ms. Taylor said Ms. Vicedomini has worked tirelessly on the grant process for the last two and a half years, and she has never seen anyone put the time in that Ms. Vicedomini does. Ms. Vicedomini has a positive and kind manner, and she is the definition of grace. She thanked Ms. Vicedomini for all her time and effort.

Ms. Melissa Sullivan said Ms. Vicedomini is remarkable and serves in many capacities in the district, community and state. What makes this effort extraordinary is Ms. Vicedomini will not personally benefit from this grant. This and many other attributes is what make her special and she deserves this recognition.

The Board took a five minute break and reconvened at 6:46 p.m.

Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Keane moved, Semyanko seconded to approve the January 19, 2016 minutes. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

MOTION #16-05: D'Ostuni moved to add Approval for the Board to join the CABLE Lighthouse Project to the action items on the agenda. Sepko seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Consent Agenda

None

Discussion Items

- Discussion of Proposed 2016-2017 Proposed Budget
Superintendent Berasi began the discussion with reviewing the enrollment projections and asked for any questions. The Board asked how the projections were calculated. Mr. Hoff explained it was based on a formula which is averaged over three years. He anticipates actual kindergarten enrollment for next year will be higher than projected. In response to Board members questions, Mr. Hendrickson explained the professional development being conducted in the district. Board members discussed the use of substitutes in the schools. Board members also asked questions relative to the initial budget process among administrators. Superintendent Berasi stated the process began with looking at a zero percent budget increase, and administrators were asked to base their budget requests on needs and not based on last year's budget. Board Chair Gee reminded the Board that a zero percent increase translates to reductions since there is a fixed budget increase in salaries and benefits due to union contracts. Board Chair Gee also explained the Board's obligation relative to the budget as prescribed by the State, as the Board is elected by the Town and agents of the State. The Board is responsible to move the district forward. She reviewed the budget schedule stating that the Board of Education budget must be submitted to the Board of Finance by Monday, March 28, 2016. Board Chair Gee has asked the Superintendent to provide information to the Board which will explain the three main budget drivers over salary and benefits, the reason for these items, and how their effectiveness will be measured. This information will be presented at the February 17 Board meeting. The Board could then potentially vote on the budget at the March 7 meeting or at the March 21 meeting. Mr. Hoff noted he is meeting with the MDG insurance consultant next week and should have more definitive insurance costs.
- Discussion of 2016 Graduation Date
Superintendent Berasi said since there have been no snow days to date, she suggest the Board discuss options for graduation. She stated Boards of Education may not set the graduation date until after April 1 each year according to State statutes; however, for planning purposes for families, it would be helpful to look at tentative dates. It was also stated in the event of snow days, there is the avenue to forgive days, as well as some other options within the State Statutes to meet state requirements. The Board discussed the issue and concluded Saturday, June 18 would be a viable date for graduation.

Action Items

- Approval of Tentative Agreement through June 30, 2016 between the Suffield Board of Education and the Food Service Union, UE Local 222, CILU#38
Mr. Hoff said this is a one year contract extension retroactive to July 1, 2015. He said the past contract extensions had no changes to the agreement. This extension would give food service employees a 2% wage increase, and the premium cost share for employees would increase from 16% to 17%.
MOTION #16-06: Service moved, Semyanko seconded to approve the Tentative Agreement through June 30, 2016 between the Suffield Board of Education and the Food Service Union, UE Local 222, CILU#38. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.
- Approval for the Board to Join the CABE Lighthouse Project
Board Chair Gee said this project is professional development for Boards of Education that focuses on the roles and responsibilities of Boards and how to improve student achievement. The training aids the Board as a whole and as Board members individually. This program will take about a year to complete, carry over to whoever serves on the Board in the future, and not cost the district any dollars.
MOTION #16-07: Semyanko moved, Wiesel seconded to join the CABE Lighthouse Project. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Reports to the Board

Superintendent's Report

- Superintendent Berasi said the technology grant was approved by the State in the amount of approximately \$55,000. The Board will need to vote on this, so it will be placed on February 17 agenda.

Chair's Report

- Board Chair Gee thanked the administrators and staff who attended the Permanent Building Committee meeting and their work on the vestibule project. She also thanked Mr. Hoff, Mr. Hendrickson, and the schools' custodial staff for a very successful tour of the buildings with members of ACCE and the Board of Finance. She also thanked M&J Bus Company for donating the bus.

Business Manager's Report

- Mr. Hoff said typically districts must go out for request for proposals (RFPs) every five years for food service contracts and those contracts are only valid for one year. Districts can renew food service contracts four times. However, the State is requiring that districts go out for an RFP this year regardless of where they are in their food service contracts. Therefore the district will be putting out an RFP in the next month.
- Board member Keane said she and Board member Service attended the Agriscience SAE Achievement Night last week and was impressed with the student capstone presentations and their knowledge and passion for their fields of study.

Subcommittee Reports

- Budget/Finance/Facilities Subcommittee Meeting of January 28, 2016 – Nothing further to report
- CREC – Board member Semyanko said Dr. Greg Florio, CREC Executive Director, stated that magnet school tuition will increase by 3% next year. Brendan Sharkey, Democratic Speaker of the House, was in attendance and spoke relative to the need for districts to regionalize. Board member Semyanko informed Board members of the upcoming legislative breakfast on February 18 at the State Capitol.
- Communications – None

Future Business

None

Adjournment

Service moved, Semyanko seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting on February 17, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D'Ostuni
Secretary

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