

Board of Education Meeting
January 3, 2017

Call to Order

Board Chair Gee called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. in the Suffield High School Media Center. Present: Board members Natalie Semyanko, Kendra Wiesel, Jeanne Gee, Lori D'Ostuni, George Beiter, John Richter (arrived 6:25 p.m.), Michael Sepko, Susi Keane, Superintendent Karen Berasi, Assistant Superintendent Brian Hendrickson and Business Manager Bill Hoff.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognition

None

Public Comment

Steve Aube, 1126 North Grand Street, said he was opposed to the early release day proposal due to a reduction in instructional time for students.

Approval of Minutes

Beiter moved, Semyanko seconded to approve the December 15, 2016 minutes. D'Ostuni, Beiter, Semyanko, Wiesel, Keane, Sepko and Gee voted in favor. The motion carried 7-0.

Beiter moved, D'Ostuni seconded to approve the December 19, 2016 minutes. Board member Wiesel would like to amend the minutes under the Superintendent's Report to state the Board wants clarification around the comments made at the Board of Finance (BOF) meeting not an amendment to the BOF's minutes. D'Ostuni, Semyanko, Wiesel, Keane, and Gee voted in favor of the amended minutes, Beiter and Sepko abstained. The motion carried 5-0-2.

Consent Agenda

MOTION #17-23: D'Ostuni moved to approve the following items on the consent agenda:

1. Revisions to Policy #0100 - Mission Statement/Purpose
2. Revisions to Policy #0521 - Equal Opportunity Plan/Nondiscrimination

Semyanko seconded the motion and D'Ostuni, Beiter, Semyanko, Wiesel, Keane, Sepko and Gee voted in favor. The motion carried 7-0.

Discussion/Action Items

● 2017-2018 Technology Budget Presentation

Ms. Osleger discussed the budget highlights including the addition of staff and infrastructure needed, and the reduction of hosting fees and memberships. She explained the increases and decreases in each category of the technology budget as compared to this year's budget.

Ms. Osleger explained the two new staff members proposed and their roles in the IT department. The Board discussed how the state is now mandating districts to pay for CEN internet service, which was free to districts over the last five years.

Richter arrived at 6:25 p.m.

- 2017-2018 Facilities Budget Presentation

Mr. Plano discussed the facilities objectives for 2017-2018, including improving school safety, preserving school assets, and managing energy consumption. He reviewed the notable budget drivers for 2017-2018 and explained the increases and decreases in each category of the facilities budget as compared to this year's budget.

Mr. Hoff reviewed the facilities services budget, which includes electricity, natural gas and propane, water and sewer, and trash removal. Mr. Hoff discussed the increases and decreases to the budget for each category compared to this year's budget, noting savings in electricity due to a new fixed generation rate beginning in December 2017, from Eversource energy savings projects, and a credit from a solar farm. He reviewed opportunities to improve on utility costs including conducting a conservation audit and looking at gas supply contracts.

- 2017-2018 Transportation Budget Presentation

Mr. Hoff reviewed the busing services provided to all students including vocational students and in-district and out-of-district special education students. Board members discussed the number of buses and the number of students using the buses. He reviewed increases and decreases to the budget in each category for both regular education and special education transportation compared to this year's budget. Mr. Hoff discussed potential areas to improve transportation costs and service.

- Approval of Tentative Agreement between the Suffield Administrators Group and the Suffield Board of Education

MOTION #17-24: D'Ostuni moved to approve the Tentative Agreement between the Suffield Administrators Group and the Board of Education. Beiter seconded the motion. Mr. Hoff noted under Article XV, Terms; the third paragraph is unclear. He discussed this with the Board's attorney and it will be removed as it is redundant. Since this paragraph does not change the meaning of the contract or the negotiated terms, the Board can still vote on the contract.

MOTION #17-25: Beiter moved to amend the original motion to remove the third paragraph under Article XV – Terms. Semyanko seconded the amended motion. All members voted in favor except D'Ostuni, who voted against. The amended motion carried 7-1.

Board member D'Ostuni requested that more current examples be used in future contracts. Board Chair Gee noted the administrators were great to work with and the process went very well. Board Chair Gee called for a vote to the original motion to approve the Tentative Agreement. All members voted in favor. The motion carried 8-0.

Reports to the Board

Superintendent's Report

- Superintendent Berasi said she sent Board members a document from SDE relative to cuts to the Excess Cost Sharing Grant (ECS). She also sent a list of the state mandates to Board members at a Board member's request. As of February 2016 there are 380 mandates. She will take some of the mandates and quantify them for Board members. Ms. Berasi reminded Board members of the January 26 Legislative Breakfast where they can voice concerns over cuts to districts and additional mandates. Board members discussed the impact of unfunded mandates on the budget.

Board Chair's Report

- CAFE is holding a board chair roundtable after the Legislative Breakfast. She asked for BOE members input on any issues they may like feedback from at the meeting.

Business Manager's Report

- Mr. Hoff said the district conducted a radon test, which is required by the State every five years, and the results were fine.

Subcommittee Reports

None

Future Business

Recording of meetings

Adjournment

D'Ostuni moved, Keane seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting on January 9, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D'Ostuni
Secretary