

Board of Education Regular Meeting
May 6, 2019

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Auditorium. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Board members Susan Mercik Davis, Maureen Sattan, John Richter, Matt Service, Michael Sepko, Jamie Drzyzga, James Mol, and Brian Fry; Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi, and Business Manager Bill Hoff, and SHS Student Representative Hannah Stack (arrived 6:54pm)

Absent: Debra Dudack and SHS Student Representative Sarah Dubocq

Recognition

Justin Kaput, SHS Science teacher, was recognized by the Board of Education for being selected as a 2018 Grosvenor Teacher Fellow by the National Geographic and Lindblad Expeditions. Mr. Kaput shared his experience of traveling to Antarctica last December. He explained the fellowship program which is a partnership between National Geographic and Lindblad Expeditions. He highlighted the work being done by the scientists on the trip and showed photographs he took of Antarctica's landscape and wildlife. He will be going to Alaska this summer with National Geographic.

SHS Student Representatives

Ms. Stack updated the Board on happenings at SHS including the game changer training for students about bullying and peer pressure, a corn hole tournament May 18th designed by the Interact Club to raise funds for student with cancer, AP testing is happening this week, the prom is Friday, May 10, and the senior banquet and the Brownstone trip are coming up in June.

Public Comment

Board Chair Mercik Davis said the Board received an email communication from Alex Fraser in regards to the Board of Finance cuts to the BOE budget. The communication has been filed in the BOE communication log.

Presentations

None

Reports to the Board

- Superintendent's Report - None
- Board Chair Report
 - Board Chair Mercik Davis attended the Spectrum Unplugged program at McAlister School where adults with autism shared what it is like to live with autism to help create more understanding and inclusion. The students were very interested and asked great questions.
 - She also attended the Chris Herren parent presentation, which was put on in collaboration with the high school administration and the town Youth Services department. She said his story was very moving and impactful.

- Dr. Betty Osga, NESDEC consultant, will be conducting three workshops with the Board and Superintendent-elect Tim Van Tassel on May 20, 29 and June 10. These workshops will involve setting ideals and leadership expectations, looking at the current vision, goals and mission of district, and defining procedures for superintendent evaluation and BOE self-evaluations.
- Board Chair Mercik Davis encouraged Board members who are part of the Wellness challenge to keep walking.
- The Suffield Regional FFA Awards ceremony is on May 22nd.
- Ms. Zawawi thanked all the teachers in the district in recognition of Teacher Appreciation
- Business Manager's Report
 - Mr. Hoff said six teams have already completed the walking challenge of walking across the U.S.

Consent Agenda

Service moved, Richter seconded to approve the following consent agenda item:

1. Approval of Minutes – April 2, 2019 Regular Meeting
2. Approval of Minutes – April 22, 2019 Special Meeting
3. Approval of Revisions to Policies: #3542.22 – Food Service Personnel – Code of Conduct; #1250 – Visits to School; #3541 – Transportation; #3541.24 – Transportation: Parent/Guardian Responsibility; #1180 – Memorials for Deceased Students and Staff

Board Chair Mercik Davis said she and Ms. Zawawi met with two families in regards to Policy #1180 – Memorials for Deceased Students and Staff. These families asked for a provision to be added to the policy which allows for the consideration of a memorial other than a living memorial. The Board discussed pulling this policy off the consent agenda.

Sattan moved to remove Policy #1180 off of the consent agenda, Drzyzga seconded the motion. All members voted in favor except Sepko, who opposed. Board member Sepko said he is in favor of the policy but voted against as he thought the policy should be approved as is and then revised by the subcommittee at a future meeting. The motion carried 7-1.

MOTION #19-50: Mol moved to approve the amended consent agenda, Richter seconded. All members voted in favor. The motion carried 8-0.

Discussion/Action Item

- Rescind Prior Decision to Non-renew a SHS World Language Teacher
Ms. Zawawi explained that due to internal movement of staff, the prior decision to non-renew a world language teacher at the high school was no longer necessary. It was noted this is not an additional position and has zero impact on the budget.
MOTION #19-51: Service moved, Mol seconded to rescind the Board's prior decision to non-renew a SHS World Language teacher. All members voted in favor. The motion carried 8-0.
- March 2019 Financial Report
Mr. Hoff said the projected year end net surplus is \$175,924. This increase over last month's year-end of \$1,537 is due to the excess cost reimbursement the district will receive. These funds will be used to reduce next year's budget by placing this money in the Open Choice grant fund. Mr. Hoff noted the year-to-date food service loss is down significantly over last year due to increased state reimbursements for free and reduced lunch.

- Discussion of Instituting Pay-to-Participate
Board Chair Mercik Davis said the Board will now present the Board's budget at the Town meeting on May 8. The Board will need to present how it will adjust our budget based on BOF reductions. The Board discussed instituting pay-to-participate to bridge that gap of \$130,000 after already making additional cuts to other areas in the budget. Board Chair Mercik Davis shared a list of area towns who have pay to play (participate) from 2012. Mr. Hoff presented three areas to institute fees: student parking fees, activity fees, and athletic fees. He gave three scenarios that would all total the \$130,000: (1) SHS student parking of \$100 per year, SMS/SHS activity fee of \$30/\$50, respectively, and SMS/SHS athletic fee of \$60/\$135, respectively, per sport with \$540 family maximum; (2) SHS student parking of \$100 per year, SHS athletic fee of \$225 per sport with a \$675 family maximum; and (3) SHS athletic fee of \$250 per sport with a \$750 family maximum. He added there would be waivers for financial hardship for activity and athletic fees. The Board and administration talked about the management challenges of instituting pay-to-participate. Ms. Zawawi said she was not in favor of charging fees for activities as many of these clubs are student generated and could be detrimental to students. The Board discussed instituting activity fees for only major activities such as the drama and robotics clubs. Mr. Hoff shared data on the cost per student of various sports and noted nine sports cost over \$1000 per student. Board members discussed at length the different scenarios and many expressed concern over the high cost that will be imposed on families. There was discussion over using a sliding scale in the fee structure or charging a percentage of the cost of the sport to families. Board Chair Mercik Davis said the Board could also consider the other reductions presented to the Board at the April 2 Board meeting. The Board discussed the message and information they wished to communicate at the Town meeting.
- Speech by Board of Education Chair/Rep at SHS Graduation
Board Chair Mercik Davis said the administration has been talking about how graduation will look this year and has asked if a Board member will be speaking this year. She asked Board members for their input. Board members were mixed on whether a Board member should give a speech at graduation, but came to a consensus that a Board member should speak at graduation this year.

Sattan left the meeting at 8:48pm

Subcommittee Reports

April 22, 2019 Policy Subcommittee meeting - Board Chair Mercik said the committee discussed revisions to the graduation requirements policy necessitated by changes in state requirements. This policy will be discussed again at an upcoming subcommittee meeting before moving to the full Board for review.

Future Business

None

Adjournment

Sepko moved, Richter seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of June 3, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Guerrette
Secretary Pro Tem