

Board of Education Regular Meeting
February 20, 2019

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Auditorium

Present: Board members Susan Mercik Davis, Maureen Sattan, John Richter, Matt Service, Michael Sepko, Jamie Drzyzga, James Mol, Debra Dudack, Brian Fry; Interim Superintendent Mark Winzler, Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi, Business Manager Bill Hoff; SHS Student Representative Hannah Stack; Interim Special Services Director Glenn McGrath, SHS Principal Jim Blain, SMS Principal Ken Smith, McAlister Principal Karen Carpenter-Snow, and Spaulding Principal Roxanne Pangallo

Absent: Sarah Dubocq

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Discussion/Action Item

- Approval of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Suffield Board of Education and the Suffield Police Department regarding access to school cameras by the Suffield Police Department
MOTION #19-39: Dudack moved, Richter seconded to approve the MOU as presented. Mr. Hoff gave the brief background into the development of the MOU for new Board members. Police have requested access to school cameras in cases of emergency. In response to a Board member's question relative to public awareness of the MOU, Mr. Hoff said there have been discussions at several Board meetings and there was a public forum on school safety where police access to school cameras was discussed. Board members suggested sending a communication out to families once the MOU is signed by both parties. Board Chair Mercik Davis called for a vote. All members voted in favor. The motion carried 9-0.

Budget Workshop

The Board reviewed the list of questions that Board members submitted to the administration prior to the Board meeting, along with answers supplied by the administration. Discussions included what further can be done from a budget standpoint to improve math performance, the savings of instructional specialists not working the additional 10 days in the summer, and the need for an additional 0.5 special services administrative assistant. Board members also asked for clarification in the plans for CCSN next year. Mr. McGrath said in discussing his proposal to reduce CCSN by \$100,000 next year with Dr. Palmieri, the Director of CCSN, Dr. Palmieri did not believe CCSN could continue providing its services with fidelity at that level. Mr. McGrath has revised the special services budget to decrease CCSN by the original \$50,000 and, therefore, an additional special education teacher at the middle school will not be added. Board members expressed concerns about the significant financial investment in CCSN, the fidelity of the program, the lack of data on the effectiveness of the program, the length of time CCSN will be in

the district, and the program model moving into the secondary level. Mr. McGrath said that Dr. Palmieri would be happy to present the program's accomplishments to the Board. Board members preferred to receive a report outlining the program's achievements and goals attained to date. The Board also discussed the pros and cons of instituting pay to play and the possible reduction of teaching staff and the effect on the entire district due to bumping into other positions because of certification and seniority.

The Board next looked at a list of possible reductions the administration provided to the Board for their review and consideration. Mr. Winzler noted that the list is not in order of priority but rather by highest to lowest dollar amount. He also emphasized that the administration is not advocating for any reduction to the budget, but is offering this list for the Board's consideration as this now becomes the Board of Education's budget. Mr. Winzler said his original budget has been revised from 4.89% to 4.67% due to savings in shared services with the Town. He reviewed how much a 1%, 1.5% and a 2% reduction in the budget request would be in dollar amounts. The Board asked for clarification and impacts on the district of the listed reductions. They also discussed the middle school schedule and the unintended consequences to other schools' teachers that have less seniority than the middle school teachers who could bump those teachers if the middle school positions were eliminated. Mr. Winzler said the two secondary reductions in the world language positions have been identified; one reduction is a retirement and the other is an elimination. Mr. Smith explained the current teaming model and schedule at the middle school and has looked at various ways to increase class size, which would eliminate positions; however, it cannot be done by keeping a double block of ELA or the teaming model. The Board and administration discussed moving from a teaming model at the middle school to a departmental model, essentially becoming a junior high school. Mr. Smith did not recommend a departmental model as the teaming model is preferable to this age group's social emotional development and learning. He has tried many different scheduling changes but none will significantly increase class sizes and cannot be done without eliminating the teaming model. The Board concluded by discussing the message they want to convey to the Board of Finance. They will discuss the budget again at their March 4 Board meeting.

Adjournment

Service moved, Drzyzga seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of March 4, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Dudack
Secretary