

Board of Education Regular Meeting
April 2, 2019

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Auditorium.

Present: Board members Susan Mercik Davis, Maureen Sattan, John Richter, Matt Service, Michael Sepko, Jamie Drzyzga, Debra Dudack, Brian Fry, and James Mol (arrived 6:24 p.m.); and Interim Superintendent Mark Winzler

Executive Session

Sattan moved, Richter seconded to go into executive session, along with Interim Superintendent Mark Winzler, to hold a discussion concerning of the non-renewal of contracts for long-term substitutes, one-year assignments, and positions due to a reduction in force in the district, and to discuss the employment contract of a new superintendent of schools. Mr. Winzler left the executive session after the discussion regarding non-renewals at 6:10 p.m.

Board Chair Mercik Davis ended the executive session at 6:33 p.m.

Regular Session

The regular session began at 6:36 p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Auditorium and opened with the pledge of allegiance.

Present: Board members Susan Mercik Davis, Maureen Sattan, John Richter, Matt Service, Michael Sepko, Jamie Drzyzga, James Mol, Debra Dudack, and Brian Fry; Interim Superintendent Mark Winzler, Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi, Business Manager Bill Hoff; and SHS Student Representative Hannah Stack (arrived 6:40 p.m.)

Absent: SHS Student Representative Sarah Dubocq

Discussion/Action Item

- Possible appointment of a new Superintendent of Schools

Board Chair Mercik Davis gave an overview of the superintendent search process which included input from stakeholders through surveys, interviews and focus groups, several candidate interviews, reference checks and culminating with today's site visit in the district and community.

MOTION #19-44: Drzyzga moved that the Suffield Board of Education appoint Timothy Van Tassel as Suffield Superintendent of Schools, effective July 1, 2019 and continuing through June 30, 2020, subject to the following conditions:

1. approval of the Commissioner of Education in accordance with Section 10-157 of the Connecticut General Statutes;
2. Mr. Van Tassel's agreement to the terms and conditions set forth in a proposed contract of employment between the Suffield Board of Education and Mr. Van Tassel.

Drzyzga moved further that the Board Chairperson be authorized to finalize and execute the proposed employment contract, in consultation with legal counsel, on behalf of the Board of Education.

Sattan moved to amend the motion, to make the contract effective July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2022. By consent, the Board agreed to the amended motion. Mol seconded the original motion. Board Chair Mercik Davis shared Mr. Van Tassel's educational and professional background. She said Mr. Van Tassel stood out during the interview process and she highlighted the characteristics he demonstrated during the process that made him a great fit for Superintendent of Schools in Suffield. Board Chair Mercik called for a vote. All members voted in favor. The motion carried 9-0.

Mr. Van Tassel thanked the Board for giving him the opportunity and placing their trust in him. He said this was a special night for his family who were in attendance. He stated he has been fortunate to work in several great districts, and is impressed and inspired by all he has seen in the communities he has worked and has seen that in Suffield today as well. He will work very hard with district and town leadership to do what is best for the Suffield community.

The Board took a short recess for attendees to welcome Mr. Van Tassel and his family.

Recognition

None

Suffield High School Student Representatives

Hannah Stack updated the Board on events at Suffield High including prom tickets are on sale, an April 28 blood drive, the May 25 Dustin Doyon scholarship 5k run/walk race, a trivia night will be held as a fundraiser for the Brianna Mailloux scholarship fund and the Dustin Doyon scholarship fund, over 3,000 pairs of socks were donated by students to various community organizations to help those in need, and the Volleyball Marathon was last Friday where 28 teams and about 300 students participated.

Public Comment

Kelli Young, 285 North Stone Street, spoke on behalf of the SFES board of directors and thanked the board members, administrators and staff who attended the SFES gala. She said through this fundraiser, SFES will be able to provide a TouchIT board to both Suffield Middle School and Suffield High School.

Laura DeLango, 644 Hill Street, spoke about her concerns regarding school safety at Suffield Middle School after an incident occurred at the Wax Museum where a local reporter verbally attacked her son. She asked the administration to review policies and procedures for ensuring school safety when outside visitors come into the school and requested copies of the policies, but she still has not received them. She asked the Board to ensure safety protocols are enforced and if there are no policies in place, that policies be created to ensure student safety.

Presentations

None

Reports to the Board

Superintendent's Report

- Mr. Winzler stated the Board of Education budget was presented to the Board of Finance (BOF) last evening. He was appreciative of the support from administration and staff who attended the meeting, and he congratulated Board Chair Mercik Davis and Budget Subcommittee Chair Sepko on their presentations to the BOF. The BOF will meet on April 8 and 15 and the public hearing on the budget will be April 24.

- The Director of Special Services position will be posted this week.
- Mr. Winzler received the CREC report today and the CREC consultants will present their findings to the Board of Education.
- Mr. Winzler and Ms. Zawawi have met with all four principals to discuss their goals for this year.
- Mr. Winzler met with the Teacher of the Year committee co-chairs and the process is underway.

Board Chair's Report

- Board Chair Mercik Davis and First Selectwoman Melissa Mack met with their counterparts in East Granby to discuss collaboration between the towns to provide students and staff with more opportunities. The next meeting will include Ms. Zawawi to discuss the potential for combining professional development for staff and enrichment programs for students.
- Board Chair Mercik Davis thanked the SFES committee for the tremendous amount of work they do all year long and said the gala was wonderful. She thanked all board members, administrators and teachers who attended.
- She thanked Mark Winzler, Bill Hoff, Michelle Zawawi and Laura Guerrette for their work in preparing for the BOF presentation. She also thanked all board members for their input and work in the process and expressed appreciation to the staff and administrators who attended the meeting. She encouraged board members to attend upcoming BOF meetings.
- Board Chair Mercik Davis also thanked Dr. Betty Osga, NESDEC superintendent search consultant, for her guidance and work during the superintendent search process as well as Mr. Winzler. She thanked Suffield by the River for their graciousness in providing the venue for the interviews. She thanked the Board for their work in the search process and emphasized the extensive amount of work and time commitment needed to conduct a successful search. She said she was honored to be a part of this Board.
- The Agriscience Expo is happening on April 10th and 11th.

Business Manager's Report

- Mr. Hoff said the State will be reviewing Suffield's food service program next week.
- He thanked Kathy Carney and Karen Ziembra for their efforts putting on the wellness fair. The walking challenge has begun. Ms. Zawawi added that Youth Services is promoting the movie *Angst*, which is being shown tomorrow evening at SMS at 6:00 p.m.

Consent Agenda

MOTION #19-45: Dudack moved, Sepko seconded to approve the following on the consent agenda:

- A. Approval of Minutes – March 4, 2019 Regular Meeting
- B. Approval of Minutes – March 4, 2019 Special Meeting

All members voted in favor. The motion carried 9-0.

Discussion/Action Item

- Establish the 2019 Graduation Date
Mr. Winzler reviewed the State statute requirements regarding Boards of Education setting graduation dates. He stated most schools graduate on the 180th day of school but Suffield's tradition has been to hold graduation on the Saturday following the last day of school. Mr. Winzler stated Mr. Blain conducted a parent/student survey relative to their preference on when graduation should take place; Friday night or Saturday and whether a rain date should

be scheduled. The majority of respondents were in favor of a rain date, 45% favored a Saturday graduation, and 38% favored a Friday night graduation. Mr. Winzler also noted there will be no safe graduation party this year due to low student interest.

MOTION #19-46: Dudack moved to hold this year's high school graduation on Saturday, June 15, 2019 with rain date of Sunday, June 16, 2019. Sattan seconded the motion.

Ms. Stack noted that a few seniors on the track team have qualified for Nationals which will take place that weekend and those students would not be able to attend graduation. Board members discussed the option of presenting these students with their diplomas at a Board meeting. Ms. Zawawi said it would be best for those students to have a discussion with Mr. Blain first. The Board discussed different options for holding graduation, but the consensus was the date should be reflective of the dates that were posed in the survey to parents and students. Board Chair Mercik called for a vote on the motion on the table. All members voted in favor. The motion carried 9-0.

- In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes it is recommend the Board non-renew the contracts of long-term substitutes, one-year assignments, and positions due to a reduction in force in the district

Mr. Winzler said this is a statutory formality where districts notify teachers who are being non-renewed by May 1 each year. He stressed the non-renewals have nothing to do with these teachers' performance. Once a person is in the same teaching position for 40 days, that person attains teacher association rights; after 90 days that person attains teacher tenure rights. Mr. Winzler met with each affected staff member personally.

MOTION #19-47: Sattan moved to approve the non-renewal of the contracts for the staff listed in the communication from Interim Superintendent Winzler for the 2018-2019 school year and that the Superintendent of Schools is directed to advise such persons in writing of this action. Service seconded the motion and all members voted in favor except Dudack, who abstained. The motion carried 8-0-1.

- February 2019 Financial Report

Mr. Hoff said the projected year end net surplus is \$1537. Instructional supplies will be monitored carefully through the end of the school year. There were no changes to state and federal grants as well as food service this month.

Subcommittee Reports

March 20, 2019 Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee Meeting - Board member Drzyzga said the committee met and discussed the format of this spring's panorama survey, specifically looking at changing some of the questions and breaking the surveys out by school. Ms. Zawawi said in surveying board members, students, parents and administrators on making changes to the survey, there was no clear direction moving forward. She said the committee determined keeping the same format this year and creating a new survey for next school year. Board member Drzyzga said the committee also discussed the planned development of a portrait of the graduate. Discussion included state changes to graduation requirements for the Class of 2023 and what Suffield-specific requirements the Board would want to adopt to align with the portrait of a graduate. Patrick Brintle and Jim Blain were in attendance for the discussion. The graduation requirements will eventually move to the Policy subcommittee for review.

April 1, 2019 Policy Subcommittee Meeting - Board member Dudack said the committee reviewed the graduation requirements policy and what direction the district should go in conjunction with implementing the new state requirements for the Class of 2023 and beyond. She anticipated the committee will need to meet one or two more times on this topic before

moving the policy to the full board for review. She noted the policies placed on 30 day read: #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 and encouraged feedback from the board members and the public.

Future Business

Workshop on Preschool

Adjournment

Service moved, Sepko seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of May 6, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Dudack
Secretary

DRAFT