

Frank Todisco, Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. in the Stonington High School Commons. Members present were, Alexa Garvey, Secretary, Candace Anderson, Deborah Downie, Jack Morehouse, Alisa Morrison, and Craig Esposito.

Also, present were Dr. Van Riley, Superintendent of Schools, Ana de Oliveira, Recording Secretary, Madison Geiger, Student Government Representative, members of the staff, and interested citizens.

Board Presentations:

Junior Project: Students from the junior class presented their junior project, which connects the school and community. The project is called 14 Silhouettes. The students had a PowerPoint presentation, which showed the different silhouettes that will be painted throughout the school campus and where they will be located. The students chose this activity to showcase the many activities the student body is involved in. The project promotes diversity of students and individuality. This idea gets students excited about learning and participating in extracurricular activities. The students gave a list of supplies and cost to complete the project. Some of the supplies were donated and the work will be done after school with art teacher Mrs. Bonillo. They explained there will be very low maintenance involved and it will be the Student Government's job to touch up the silhouettes in the future. The students added they incorporated the 4C's and shared that the target for completion of the project would be the end of school year 2019.

Curriculum Presentation: Mary Anne Butler, Assistant Superintendent presented the new Spanish I, Biology and Modern World History Curriculum. She added that the Teaching and Learning Committee has reviewed all three at their last meeting. Deborah Downie further explained that the committee was clear on all. The Board had no questions on the curriculum. This is being brought back for a first read at the next Board meeting.

Middle School Steering Committee Report

Tim Smith, Pawcatuck Middle Principal gave a report on the recent events related to the middle school consolidation. Mr. Smith shared the Stonington Middle School's mascot was revealed on May 15 which is the Stingrays and school colors will be blue and gold. There was a parent meeting on June 11 at Mystic Middle School for parents to share their questions, suggestions, and concerns regarding the consolidation. Mr. Smith added that teachers Tina Eisenbeis and Jocelyn Kepple have created a plan to bring classes together. They elected 10 student ambassadors from each middle school to play a summer day to bring both middle school students together. On August 17, there will be a summer activity to bring all students together for a day of team building and fun. He also shared a list of classes that will be piloted next year. There will also be classes during the summer for students that are interested. The complete report can be found on the Middle School Steering Committee website. Alexa Garvey asked who are the summer courses open to? Mr. Smith said all students are welcome to attend and we will provide transportation.

Communications and Recognitions

Jack Morehouse communicated he and Craig Esposito met with high school senior students to talk about their experiences at the high school. Mr. Morehouse requested that we also meet with juniors next time, overall it was a nice positive experience and students look forward to these meetings in the future. He had the opportunity to play together with students and parents and friends of Mr. Hilbie, we played an original song of Mr. Hilbie and thanked Ellen Gilbert for putting this together Mr. Hilbie was truly surprised it was a great experience.

Student Government Representative, Madison Geiger recognized guidance and administration for putting on a wonderful senior banquet for all the scholarship winners and all seniors, they did a good job. She added we were able to recognize all seniors not just those going to college but also into the workforce.

Alexa Garvey communicated the senior night was nice and recognized those seniors heading on to college or whether they were heading onto the armed forces or workforce. Ms. Garvey noted they presented scholarships totaling over 5.7 million dollars at Academic Achievement Night and thanked all for inviting her to be a judge in the senior project event.

Candace Anderson noted it is the time of the year we can really see the success of the students and how far all have come and where they are going. Ms. Anderson recognized the recent events such as, retirement celebrations, the recognition event for Mr. Hilbie, and the many different ways we celebrate and recognize success and appreciations.

Frank Todisco recognized Student Government Representative, Madison Geiger for being part of the Board, and added she has made some significant changes. The Board presented Ms. Geiger with a small gift as a token of their appreciation.

Dr. Van Riley shared he had the opportunity along with Becky Fowler, Director of School Nutrition and Gary Shettle, Director of Finance to participate in an award presentation given by the Elks Club for \$500 donated to the School Nutrition Program. Dr. Riley also congratulated Allison Van Etten, Director of Special Services and her staff for the wonderful Unified Sports Banquet held last night.

Comments from Citizens

Cindy Nadeau congratulated Mr. Smith and Band Teacher, Richard Manning for an excellent band concert at Pawcatuck Middle School. She also added that both band and chorus received medals at their recent adjudication. Ms. Nadeau thanked Mark Friese, Margo Crowley, and Allison Van Etten for their work with her students. She went on to add now we have two Stonington graduates who would not have walked with this class if it were not for these three people. She thanked everyone.

Julie Holland thanked the Board for their time and efforts this school year. Ms. Holland spoke we need to seek out the best options for the students. She feels bringing music down to grade four will benefit students as well as making it mandatory. She thanked the band director and athletic coaches. Students can have a choice between band and athletics. She asked the Board to engage in conversations with music leaders past and present regarding this. Ms. Holland added the Board's decision for the future music programs would impact what the high school music will look like in the future.

Sue Jones thanked the Board for their great support. She added she will no longer have a student in the district but as a community member would like the Board to consider using an alert now method to communicate about upcoming Board meetings so the community can stay engaged and attend these meetings in the future.

Sue Fornara spoke on the proposed changes to the music program. She voiced that she still feels we are not where we need to be with the music program and feels we should give the opportunity for all students to take music and incorporate this into the school day. Ms. Fornara added colleges are looking for well-rounded students and music is a plus.

Ray Jones spoke in opposition to the proposed music changes. He spoke of his own experiences with athletics and music, adding that he did not attend a school that made chorus or band mandatory. He urged the Board to make music a compulsory part of the curriculum and feels people are choosing Stonington because of the arts program.

Krista Jones a junior spoke about the changes in the music program in the elementary and middle schools. She also added how much she enjoyed the chorus classes with Mrs. Gilbert and how the music program has been the pride of this town.

Tara Jones a graduate of the high school shared her experience in middle school with the music program. She spoke on the mandatory music program and how it changed her life by helping her gain confidence from music. She shared information about her music involvement in college. Ms. Jones said that at the age of ten she could not envision how music would change her life and feels that if music were to be optional students would not take it especially if their friends didn't. She asked that the Board consider mandatory music education.

Kaylee Jones a graduate of Stonington took music during high school and now is a music major in college spoke of her experience as a student teacher working with the music teachers. She also spoke about the current proposed music program and feels it will not be enough. General music education is crucial. She commented on the instruments that are proposed in the new curriculum and what she feels should be used in the elementary model.

Lori Jones a music educator who teaches at a public charter school in Rhode Island asked the Board to look at the town of Westerly's music program changes and their impact. She also commented on the proposed music program.

Kristin Lichtenberg spoke she is in favor of the strongest possible music program for our students. She added that music is an essential building block before coming adults in the world; music can help with communications and attention skills in children. She hopes we can conserve the music program that now exists in the middle and high schools.

Helen Morehouse commented on the 5th grade music program. She spoke of her own experience with attending the music program with Mr. Hilbie. She added that she knows that providing four years of music will be hard logistically and financially but hopes that the Board does not vote to stop mandatory music.

Millie Donovan a mother of students in band and chorus spoke on the future of the music program. She spoke on how students do not like mandatory music classes but where would they be if they did not have these. She added, music and art should be no different and should be mandatory. It is a place they can see results immediately. She asked not to forget the programs that have shaped these schools.

Karin Hansen commented she has been part of the music program since 5th grade and is fortunate to be part of a great music program. She added she enjoyed going to school every day because of band and begged do not touch the middle school music program. She feels the quality of the music program will suffer and if funding is needed for other things asked why is it taken from the music program. She closed by stating that the music program helped her make the decision not to transfer out of Stonington.

Jake Abrect a graduate of Stonington commented he was confused as to why we want to take music away from students in middle schools. He feels band once a month will not work and is not enough to learn music.

Laura Marseglia spoke that she is part of a band not a sport, feels it is a critical piece of education, it helps students to cope with disappointment, take risks, tolerance, and self-respect. She spoke on her belief of the importance of having a music program.

Alison Marseglia stated she wants to become a professional musician as an adult and values the expertise and experience of our teachers. She feels the music proposal sends a message to students that what they do is not important. She would like the Board to reconsider the music program changes.

Brian Biddle spoke on the music document that was part of the Board agenda. He strongly asked the Board to consider the ramifications before they make the decision of not making it mandatory to the daily curriculum.

Gary Anderson spoke of his own experience with his students with music as part of their lives. He added it provides the balance in their life today. He asked that we do not lose something that is good. He thanked everyone involved in the music program.

Faith Gately a student at the high school spoke on her positive experience at the middle school with band, it is a good trait to have going into high school. She added if band had not been mandatory she would not have had the experience she had with other people and feels it is also beneficial academically not just socially.

Joelle Wellemans commented her sons took part in Mystic Middle School and high school jazz band. They are able to play and read music and she is very grateful they have so much knowledge of music. She added that when you apply to colleges they look at students with a music background. This is a great asset they take through life.

Faith Leitner commented that as a take away the music program has a sense of community. She added she is a professional harpist for 45 years and said she would not have played if it was not for her teachers in school. She feels music will affect other occupations, with elderly, special needs, and she is a supporter of the music program.

Karin Carlson spoke on how her son has learned a lot from the music program at Mystic Middle School. She spoke that the teachers work great together to make great concerts. She feels music is important in a students' life, allows them to communicate better, and brings people together. She added that she is a music teacher in East Lyme and explained the offerings at that school district. She feels that Stonington should continue to have four music teachers. She added making cuts in music program would not be good, especially in the elementary and middle school levels would have a big impact in students in the high school music program. The music program attracts families to our district. The consolidation should not be used to cut student opportunities but bring back music in the 4th grade, which is the best time to start kids. She also voiced that she is against before or after school music programs, and feels they should be during the day so all can be involved, not have parents forced to provide transportation.

Susan Johnston a retired East Lyme Public Schools teacher asked that when we do the consolidation we should bring back music in 4th grade, which is the best time to start these kids, if you do this you will be ahead of the other schools. She feels if you take away 5th grade band, Stonington will not be represented in our state as it should be. She would like to see a 4th grade band opportunity. Feels middle school students cannot make the decision about electives, so having it mandatory is better. She believes band needs to be a part of the curriculum in 5th grade. If you put it before or after school, you are saying this is not important and are making band an extracurricular activity. She also commented you are making this only for the wealthy kids because some parents cannot transport students to school. Ms. Johnston asked don't take the music program away.

Bill Sternberg commented he attended the concert for Jim Hilbie and thanked him for all he did for his students. He stated he is dumb founded that we have to defend the music program. Would like the Board to think back three years ago when the town voted to have state of the art elementary schools and feels the community did not think they would house a 3rd grade music program at that time. He added the town would not like it if we did not make use of those facilities.

Jason Kilcoyne spoke on his own experiences in the band in middle school and high school. He added that involvement in school activities has made him who he is today. He spoke about students who dropped out of band because of peer pressure and asked students not to do this. Feels you should not take music away from students when they are younger because many of his fellow students wish they had done band now that they are in high school.

Ryan O'Dell commented he does not think cutting middle school band would benefit our arts program in the future. He does not believe making younger students make the decision about choosing band or chorus is a good thing because if he were given the option to he would not have done band.

Jillian Holland shared she has been involved in band for eight years and could not imagine if it was made optional. Hopes the Board would not cut this program and reconsider. The Board should talk to more people involved in it, it is educational. She added it has given her many memories and has made her school experience better.

Lucy Sternberg a student in the high school band spoke on her first experience in jazz band and added this has made her a better student. She asked instead of focusing on changing it we need to focus on making it better.

Filip Aubrecht a student in the jazz band at the high school said he would never of picked up a trumpet if this was not mandatory in 5th grade and will remember music for the rest of his life. He does not feel the program should be cut.

Christian Donovan a high school band member feels music measures how town cares about students. Music shows that a school is dedicated to making good students and urges to continue the music program the way it is.

Mike Spellman spoke on the world class facilities. He congratulated the Board for their support. He added would support the music program financially and in our taxes. He stated he will back up the music program. He commented on our drama program. Feels we have an excellent program and asked to continue the trend.

Rob Marseglia asked the Board to lead this effort and to decide what the music program should be and make curriculum and staff the program based on the curriculum. He would like the Board to listen to the community and give them what they are asking for. He gave his recommendations for the 4th and 5th grade music programs. He asked administration to develop a schedule that will offer music in 4th and 5th grade and make music mandatory in middle school as it is now. He commented on the data that was available in the music report.

Harriett Statchen thanked the Board for their service and for listening to us and giving the community this opportunity. She feels the music program is one of the most important programs in the school district and asked the Board to listen to all these people when considering making changes to program. She would like the Board to look at the whole system not just elementary and is concerned with the 5th grade program. Ms. Statchen spoke on the music document provided. She spoke about the middle school consolidation offerings and staffing.

Brenda Hultgren spoke on the proposed changes to music program. She added she supported the consolidation because was led to believe we would have more opportunities, but if we make band or chorus optional many students will not opt for it. She also spoke of her own experience with her students. She feels this will help students cope with challenges, and it must stay in the core curriculum and not an elective. We should not steel these opportunities from the 5th grade. We should offer band and chorus to 4th graders. Feels we need to do our research, and asked the Board to consider what everyone is saying and reach out to music educators so we can keep Stonington's music an award-winning program.

Amy Hambly spoke on the passion in the room for music. She spoke on the research she did on other area towns in Connecticut on their music program and will share this information with the Board. She added that she found that in other districts music starts in 4th grade. She said the programs that are in place are award winning why would you mess with it and there are models out there that work and look at those to form ours.

Sara Lewandowski stated she believes Stonington has set the bar high with the music program and asked the Board why you would lower the bar. She feels this is not a good example to set for our students. She commented how much the music program has done for her students, and asked the Board to keep the bar high. She feels giving them a choice is wrong they are too young to decide and asked the Board to do the right thing.

Don Marnell spoke on his son's physical needs and his experience when he had Mr. Hilbie for band he made his world large and it helped him perform better academically. He feels people that are involved in music perform better academically. He commented our music program is one of the best in state. He spoke about adding music after school is a step back and asked the Board not to fix something that is not broken.

Brian Williams stated his family moved here because of the music program, and asked the Board to consider bringing an alternative proposal rather than basing the decision on this existing proposal. He feels we deserve that as a community.

Aidan Languedoc student at the high school spoke about his experience in the music program. He would like the Board to reconsider the music program proposal.

Cindy Nadeau gave a history of how music was during her enrollment in Stonington. She added we were pulled out in 5th grade; we were not forced to take music. She is not sure that forcing our children into a path is a good thing maybe in 6th grade it is a better time for students to make that choice. She also added that some children are not made to be musicians of any sort and we need to respect that.

Consent Agenda

- A. Minutes –May 10, 2018 (Regular)
- B. Checks and Bills
- C. Transfers
- D. Personnel Report
- E. Approval of Assistant Superintendent Employment Contract
- F. Approval of Director of Special Services Employment Contract
- G. Approval of Director of Finance Employment Contract

The following motion was made by Deborah Downie and seconded by Alisa Morrison:

Motion 1: To approve items A - G on the Consent Agenda.

All: Aye

Report of the Superintendent of Schools

Director of Facilities: Dr. Riley reported that we are now advertising for the new Director of Operations and Facilities, Bill King will be resigning the end of the month.

2018-19 School Calendar: Dr. Riley noted the Board asked to bring the calendar back for discussion regarding the February 19 Professional Development day. We have talked to the principals and they agreed to leave this date as is. We suggest the Board leave this as a half day for Professional Development.

2018-2019 Budget Discussion/Approval

Chairman Todisco reminded the Board we were asked to reduce the budget. Dr. Riley has come up with \$110,000 of recommendations that includes, \$20,000 in unemployment, \$59,000 in curriculum, \$8,200 in reduction of STAR testing materials, \$10,000 in special ed equipment, and \$12,800 in technology, this list was part of the Board packet. The Board had no questions.

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Alisa Morrison:

Motion 2: To accept the budget recommendations as presented.

All: Aye

Elementary Schedule/Music

Dr. Riley noted that in the Board packet there was data information the Board requested with numbers of current and proposed music minutes. Dr. Riley spoke on the past regarding student success and how we are trying to continue with what is successful in reading and science in the elementary level. We do not want to interfere with that progress. We looked at how we could include the music program during the day and in order to do that we will have to make other decisions. He added we will take your directions but wanted you to know how we came up with this proposal.

Jack Morehouse had a few questions regarding the music proposal. He said he called the National Association of Music to get their thoughts regarding scheduling music outside regular school day. He reported that they said this would limit student success, and student access because of transportation access. Mr. Morehouse voiced his concern that this will hurt the high school program. He spoke that when we consolidate our program should get stronger and there is no way that is what this proposal shows.

The following motion was made by Jack Morehouse and seconded by Frank Todisco:

Motion 3: To request that Dr. Riley revisit the music proposal that would include band in the 4th and 5th grade which would be very similar to what we have now.

Jack Morehouse – Yes	Craig Esposito – No
Frank Todisco – Yes	Deborah Downie - No
Alexa Garvey – No	Alisa Morrison – No
Candace Anderson - No	

Motion: Did not Pass – 5-2

Chairman Todisco voiced he would like to look at other options to see what the schedule would look like. He added we would need to look at this as a whole approach, and look at other electives to see how that plays out.

Deborah Downie added that she has always been a supporter of all arts. She feels we should look at all the programs not just the music program and keep the big picture in mind. We need to see how they tie into the main curriculum, take more of a holistic approach to this issue. She added she would like to make sure we are offering art and language and we are not jumping the gun.

Jack Morehouse agreed he would like to see more language, but added that we are talking about music at this time. He asked that administration to come up with a plan that will have band during the day.

Alexa Garvey added she does not think we have to make a rush decision, we agreed to move the 5th grade in 2019 and make the decision as a whole.

Craig Esposito stated that Dr. Riley is charged with implementing the program and if they feel they can come up with other options then we will look at them.

Chairman Todisco explained a proposal was given to Board, if administration felt there were other options they would of given them to the Board.

Candace Anderson said that she feels that this is a starting point and agreed would like to know how other options would work out. She added that it all ties in together and it is important to look at all the offerings overall.

Jack Morehouse commented we can set a tone that music is important to us and community wants to set a policy here as a Board. He also commented on music as it relates to test scores.

Dr. Van Riley commented that you are suggesting setting a policy without looking at the impacts on other subjects. He suggested that we bring back a proposal to see how it works with other programs and classes and to see how it fits together. He will have more information for the next meeting.

Alisa Morrison commented we need to look at everything and understands the passion about music; it all comes together as one big pie. She would like to have language in kindergarten; you have to look at the entire thing she added. We made the decision to hold off until the consolidation so we have plenty of time to look at this and bring it back.

The Board agreed to bring this back to the next meeting and will have more information then.

Monthly Reports

Deborah Downie asked about the underground storage tanks and their replacement, especially at the Central Administration building and why we are replacing this. Dr. Riley explained it is legally time to do so.

Chairman Todisco asked how much is the current Food Service account balance. Mr. Shettle, Director of Finance reported \$20-30 thousand dollars, and added student charges make up \$11,100 of that. Chairman Todisco asked is it the district's obligation for the entire piece. Mr. Shettle said yes. Chairman Todisco asked for an update in the account in the fall.

BOE Retreat/Goals

Chairman Todisco explained that traditional the Board has had a retreat at the end of June to August, there will be one coming up and will work with Ana for days and location. Chairman Todisco also reminded the Board that we would need to work on a date for the superintendent evaluation.

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports in the month of May.

Building Committee Update

Deborah Downie reported there are some challenges as we move towards completion of the new additions, such as, security and EPA. We have received approval on abatement work. Dr. Riley added still working on security camera issue, will meeting with police, committee and Jason Jones on the status of this issue. He reported that he requested the Building Committee to add the item of moving the Smart Boards on the agenda for the next meeting, which will cost around \$14,000 to move these into the classrooms and feels this, should not come out of the operation fund since it is due to the building project. We will need to move the boards into other classrooms so we can use them and do the abatement.

Comments from Citizens Relative to Board Action on this Agenda

There were no comments from citizens relative to Board action on the agenda.

Items for Future Agendas

- Partnerships
- Electives Report
- Food Service Account Update-September/October
- Proposals – September

Craig Esposito would like to discuss tuition rates for students of faculty members. Candace Anderson commented there is staff that has asked about discounted tuition rates. Chairman Todisco stated this would need to go to the Policy Committee for

review first.

Board Comments/Concerns

Madison Geiger, Student Government Representative thanked the Board and added she would not have accomplished all she has without the Board's support.

Adjournment

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Alexa Garvey:

Motion 4: To Adjourn at 10:06 p.m.

All: Aye



Alexa J. Garvey Board Secretary