

Alexa Garvey, Chairwoman called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. in the Stonington High School Commons. Members present were, Candace Anderson, Jack Morehouse, Alisa Morrison, Farouk Rajab, and Craig Esposito.

Members Absent: Deborah Downie

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

Alexa Garvey, Chairwoman, explained the first comments from citizens would be anything that does not relate to the elementary music program. Once the report of the elementary music program is completed, we will open up to public comments with no more than 5 minutes per person and no more than a total of 20 minutes of comments.

Board Presentation

Student Recognitions AP/National Merit – Mark Friese, SHS Principal – Principal Friese recognized the following students past and present for various awards (current students in bold):

- National AP Scholar (Average of 4 or higher on all exams taken, 4 or higher on eight or more exams)
 - Abby Wang
- AP Scholar with Distinction (3.5 average on all exams taken, 3 or higher on five or more exams)
 - Regan Anderson, Halle Anderson, Riley Casadei, Blake Edwards, Adam Gibbs, Charlotte Johnstone, Jason Kilcoyne, Laura Marseglia, **Caroline Morehouse**, Abby Wang, Jessica Weber
- AP Scholar with Honor (3.25 average on all exams taken, 3 or higher on four or more exams)
 - **Caroline Andrews**, Maddie Britto, John Bury, **Julia Chomowicz**, Charles Fornara, Brielle Frantoni-Jaskiew, Jessie Gentilella, Alexis Gomes, Ainsley Johnstone, Pat Nowak, **Lindsey Orr**, Emily Rundlett, Katja Sieling, **Daisy Williams**, Hallie Wiltshire, Nicola Wood, Elizabeth Yarnell
- AP Scholar (3 or higher on three or more exams)
 - William Hardy, **Joseph Hinkley**, **Hannah Lamb**, Trinity Lennon, Hannah Middleton-Kranc, Luke Monteiro, Jake Mueller, Max Mueller, **Justin Paoloni**, **Emma Sabbadini**, Samuel Snediker, Emily Tieu
- National Merit Scholarship
 - National Merit Semi-Finalist - **Caroline Morehouse**
 - National Merit Commended Students - **Daisy Williams**, **Christian Donovan**, **Julia Chomowicz**

Communications and Recognitions

There were no communications and recognitions.

Comments from Citizens

There were no comments from citizens.

Elementary Music Program

Dr. Van Riley gave a summary of the proposed elementary music program. He explained the financial differences between a 0.4 music teacher and a 0.5 music teacher. A 0.4 music teacher would cost \$19,024/yr and a 0.5 teacher costs \$46,000/yr this includes a full benefit package. He spoke on potential enrollment issues. Dr. Riley gave his recommendation of providing voluntary band instruction in the 5th grade in the 2019-20 school year.

Public Comment

Heidi Ferrier commented on the consolidation and the promise of more opportunities for students, instead opportunities are being eliminated. She voiced she is frustrated and disappointed that comments that were said by parents in the last Board meeting did not have an impact on what is being presented for the music program.

Christina Fullerton said she attended the open dialogue last week between the Board, teachers and administration regarding the music program and feels this is a move in the right direction. She also commented on the scheduling of the instrumental band lessons and suggested that we give instrumental band lessons in 4th grade. She added it is important to have equality in all the arts. She commented on the financial impact and savings with the consolidation and would like to see a Board member take part in managing the deadline of the music curriculum deadline.

Allison Marseglia spoke of her personal experiences in band in middle school and how participating in an ensemble setting helped her in many ways. She advocated for music and instrumental instruction in 4th grade. She added, the savings from the consolidation could be used to help fund instruments for the 4th grade. She stressed the importance of vocal music and would like students to be allowed to choose between chorus and band and not general music in 5th grade.

Rob Marseglia shared an informational document with the Board regarding specifications of the music rooms in the new elementary buildings. He added that both buildings will provide adequate space for the music programs and also shared information of number of classrooms at each

building. He explained how enrollment at each school played a part in determining the number of classrooms. He would like to see at a minimum band be offered in 5th grade but offering it in 4th grade would be even better. He would also like to see the additional music position be offered as a 0.5 in order to have more consistency of staff.

Amy Hambly commented on the Middles School Consolidation Meeting minutes posted on the website were not useful. She commented on the discussions that were had by the Board of Education at previous meetings regarding the music program.

Susan Fornara asked that the Board listen to people and hear their suggestions. She feels all 5th graders should have band or chorus like they have now, and should have the opportunity to choose between band and chorus like they do now.

Harriet Statchen commented she feels it should take more than a week to incorporate the plan that the teachers presented in the meeting last week. She feels chorus is not given the full weight to the vocal music, and is very disappointed that it is ignored in this plan. She added we are not creating a new program for the 5th grade band we are just moving from one building to another. She spoke on the existing 0.5 position still in the budget, we are not cutting it. She commented on the expense of the instruments. She commented on the plan that Jim Hilbie presented in the previous meeting and offered to share the plan with the Board. She applauded the Board for making this change, but would like the Board to take time and do it right.

Dan Kelley commented he feels as a Town we can do better than what is being proposed. He spoke of other events where parents have come together to support the district. He asked that the Board not vote on the proposed music program and send it back to include more, chorus and drama, and added that the Pawcatuck Middle School has a great drama program. He feels we still have time to do this and does not believe in a one year trial. He commented we have elementary teachers that are non-instrumental teachers and are not looking forward to giving lessons. Mr. Kelley ended by saying we are better than this lets do better.

Board Discussion and Action

Chairwoman Garvey, reminded the Board, Dr. Riley was asked to bring forward the financial difference between the 0.4 and 0.5 music position. Jack Morehouse shared he had an opportunity to visit the 3rd grade music class at Deans Mill School and added Emily McMinn does a remarkable job. He met with Principal McCurdy to discuss scheduling for the music program. He added it would be nice to give students a choice of chorus and would like to see music be taken to another level.

The following motion was made by Jack Morehouse and seconded by Farouk Rajab:

Motion 1: To have band and chorus split like we have now in 5th grade and give students the choice of band or chorus.

Jack Morehouse – Yes

Alisa Morrison – No

Farouk Rajab – No

Craig Esposito – No

Candace Anderson – No

Alexa Garvey – No

Motion: Did Not Pass

Discussion on the Motion:

Craig Esposito commented we have a recommendation from the teacher and administration and is reluctant to overrule their expertise and judgment. He added he would not make this change without hearing from those responsible to implement the program. He likes the proposed plan it is an improvement or enhancement of what we already offer and added we want a program that offers something for everyone. The program has improved, do we add chorus specifically is the question; this is incorporated in the music.

Alisa Morrison commented the administration and teachers have worked hard on the plan. She is also reluctant to go against the teachers and administrators plan. She spoke about how tight the schedule is and how it is hard to get everything to fit within the schedule. She feels it is a good compromise and proposal.

Caroline Morehouse, Student Government Representative, spoke as a musician performing was a crucial part of being motivated with an instrument and with anything, you work towards a goal. She added in 4th grade she worked on the recorder and by 5th grade was ready to have a real instrument. Feels it is not a good idea to not give choral instruction until 5th grade.

Jack Morehouse added the motion on the table is in response to the meeting with the teachers and what he heard from Ellen Gilbert who stated that chorus is being overlooked. He shared that Mr. Hilbie asked that he ask his own students about music. Mr. Morehouse shared his daughter gave him a list of things that differentiated general music from chorus. Mr. Morehouse feels that is not an additional cost, would like more emphasis on chorus instead of general music.

Candace Anderson asked Dr. Riley for clarification of a past discussion regarding band and chorus in the elementary program. Dr. Riley noted that the elementary teachers supported the music program that is being presented. Ms. Anderson shared she also agreed with Mr. Esposito and Ms. Morrison and feels the program that was put forward by the teachers and administrators is important. She believes it sets the ground work for a love of music. She understands the importance of music, but feels there is a small percentage of students who take band and chorus. She commented on the accusations from the community regarding the Board's role and decisions.

Chairwoman Garvey commented the Board attended the meeting last week with teachers and administrators and asked for their suggestions. She noted we need to go forward with the plan they decided on therefore are bringing forward the plan that they created.

Farouk Rajab shared he seconded the motion on the table so Mr. Morehouse could have a voice on the table. He said to the comment from the community member, he has spent a lot of time listening to administration; this was not done in a week. We asked teachers what their thoughts were of the plan and they agreed it was a compromise.

Chairwoman Garvey asked Mary Anne Butler, Assistant Superintendent for a timeline of when the curriculum will be done for music. Ms. Butler shared she will be meeting in February with staff to create a plan and will ask teachers if they would like to work during the summer on curriculum. There are priority areas that are not in compliance with the State that need to be addressed. Ms. Butler offered to share her working documents with the Board.

Principal Dawe, clarified comments that were made by Mr. Morehouse pertaining to the discussion with Principal McCurdy. She added teachers are able and qualified to teach chorus and band but as administrators, we do not support this because it does not give students a well-rounded music experience.

The following motion was made by Alisa Morrison and seconded by Candace Anderson:

Motion 2: To approve the plan as presented and to provide the option of voluntary band instruction in 5th grade beginning in the 2019-2020 school year

Jack Morehouse – No
Farouk Rajab – Yes
Candace Anderson – Yes

Alisa Morrison – Yes
Craig Esposito – Yes
Alexa Garvey – Yes

Motion: Passes

Discussion on the Motion:

Jack Morehouse stated he feels that this is less than the students are getting now in 5th grade and feels that we are watering down another program and cannot support this program.

Dr. Riley added the discussion regarding the 0.4 and 0.5 music position would take place during upcoming budget discussions.

Middle School Consolidation Report/Update

Dr. Riley reported there will be a meeting regarding the Middle School Consolidation next week to discuss issues of facilities, technology and communication. Dr. Riley shared the timeline for the consolidation process. He will keep the Board updated on the various activities.

Consent Agenda

- A. Minutes –
 - October 11, 2018 (Regular)
 - October 1, 2018 (Special)
 - September 13, 2018 (Regular)
- B. Checks and Bills
- C. Personnel Report

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

Motion 3: To approve items A - C on the Consent Agenda.

All: Aye

Report of the Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Riley reported the consolidation issues have been taking a lot of time. The building committee met last week, there have been building project issues. He has met with Colliers who are also working on some issues. Dr. Riley shared he hopes to present the 2019-2020 school calendar at the December meeting or at the latest in January and added teachers and parents shared they like starting after Labor Day. This also gives teachers time to set up for the moves.

Approval – Stonington High School Location for the Connecticut Department of Public Health Point of Dispensary

Dr. Riley explained that at this time our community would have to travel to Fitch High School for this service. We met with Ledge Light who requested that Stonington High School be a point of dispensary. Dr. Riley explained how and where this would be located at the high school location.

The following motion was made by Alisa Morrison and seconded by Jack Morehouse:

Motion 4: To allow the Stonington High School location for the Connecticut Department of Public Health Point of Dispensary beginning in the 2019-2020 school year

All: Aye

First Read - Wellness Policy 6142.101

Chairwoman Garvey explained due to a November deadline this policy would need to be approved and a motion to waive the second read would need to be done.

The following motion was made by Alisa Morrison and seconded by Jack Morehouse:

Motion 5: To waive the second read for the Wellness Policy 6142.101

All: Aye

Candace Anderson gave some background information on the policy which was discussed with the Policy Committee. She spoke on behalf of Deborah Downie regarding changes and alternative language be added before the policy is approved. Mary Anne Butler noted the state does not give much room for change in this policy. The Board discussed how and what types of foods could be shared with students to meet the healthy requirements. Principal Dawe, spoke on her experiences with food allergies in school. She explained how the district presently deals with this issue. Caroline Morehouse asked if food could be brought into the classroom. The administration explained only if it is related to the curriculum.

The following motion was made by Farouk Rajab and seconded by Jack Morehouse:

Motion 6: To approve the Wellness Policy 6142.101 as presented.

All: Aye

First Read - Graduation Requirements Policy 6146

Mark Friese explained the District is aligning to the state requirement for world language. This allows a student to use the extra credit in another class instead of being forced into a second year of language class. No offerings are being reduced. This policy will be brought forward next month for a second read and approval.

First Read – Personal Finance I and Broadcast Journalism Curriculum

Craig Esposito questioned the amount of technology incorporated in the Broadcast Journalism Curriculum. Mark Friese explained it is all based on digital technology. Farouk Rajab commented on how impressed he was with the Personal Finance I Curriculum, good job.

Second Read/Approval – Science 6, 7, 8 Curriculum

The Board had no questions or comments on the curriculum.

The following motion was made by Jack Morehouse and seconded by Craig Esposito:

Motion 7: To approve the Grade 6, 7, and 8 Science Curriculum as presented.

All: Aye

Approval of Board of Education 2019 Meeting Calendars

The Board had no questions or comments on the calendars.

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Candace Anderson:

Motion 8: To approve all the Board of Education Meeting Calendars for 2019 as presented.

All: Aye

Monthly Reports

The Board had no comments on the monthly reports.

Committee Report

Candace Anderson reported on the Policy Committee meeting – The committee had considered to waive or reduce tuition for staff members. The committee discussed the proposal, would really like to see that happen but are not able to at this time because there are too many logistical complications at the elementary level, so we are leaving that as is for now.

Building Committee Update

Dr. Riley reported the committee talked about looking at the warranties for heating systems on the new buildings, will meet with Colliers on this issue. Peter Anderson, Director of Facilities and Operations looked up codes for the equipment in the restrooms at the new buildings, and found they are at adult height. To help with the issue we have purchased stools for students. Mr. Anderson will work with the Building Committee on that issue.

Closed Session

Strategy Regarding Negotiations with Stonington School Administrators' and Supervisors' Association Strategies Regarding Negotiations with Stonington Educators' Association

The following motion was made by Candace Anderson and seconded by Farouk Rajab:

Motion 9: To move into Closed Session and invite Dr. Van Riley, Superintendent, Mary Anne Butler, Assistant Superintendent and Gary Shettle, Director of Finance to discuss the Strategy Regarding Negotiations with Stonington School Administrators' and Supervisors' Association Strategies Regarding Negotiations with Stonington Educators' Association

All: Aye

The Board entered into Closed Session at 8:49pm

The Board exited Closed Session at 9:21pm

Approval of Contract with Stonington School Administrators' and Supervisors' Association

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Candace Anderson:

Motion 10: To approve the Contract with Stonington School Administrators' and Supervisors' Association as presented.

All: Aye

Board Action Regarding Retirement Incentive

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Farouk Rajab:

Motion 11: Move to accept the Voluntary Retirement Incentive package submitted by Dr. Van Riley on November 8, 2018.

All: Aye

Comments from Citizens Relative to Board Action on this Agenda

No comments at this time.

Items for Future Agendas

No items for future agendas at this time.

Board Comments/Concerns

The Board had no comments or concerns.

Adjournment

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Farouk Rajab:

Motion 12: To Adjourn at 9:23 p.m.

All: Aye


Candace Anderson, Secretary