

Alexa Garvey, Chairwoman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Stonington High School Commons. Members present were, Jack Morehouse, Farouk Rajab, Candace Anderson, Alisa Morrison, and Craig Esposito.

Member 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.

Presentation - Service Learning at Deans Mill School – *Jennifer McCurdy, DMS Principal*

Brittany Sutera and some of her second grade students gave a presentation on being good citizens and helping the community. The students explained the project tied back to *The Rag Coat* story about helping the community. The second grade students explained how they brainstormed ways they could help their community and make the world a better place. They challenged classes to bring 25 or more canned goods to support the project, if they did they were invited to a teacher vs. teacher basketball game. The project tied back to the social studies, reading, writing, speaking and brought the entire school together as a community. The students reported the project helped the entire school work together by raising 1,185 canned goods equaling 848 meals. (Presentation Attached)

Communications & Recognitions

Farouk Rajab reported he recently attended as Board of Education representative the Mystic River Boathouse Community meeting. The committee commented they would like to see the Board of Education more engaged with the committee and perhaps get a learning element into the project. There was not a clear direction as to what that means. He will work with Dr. Riley to see what can be added and how the Board of Education could bring an educational aspect to the park.

Candace Anderson commented high school teachers are special in the way they make the environment so special at school. Teachers contributed to the junior students having the best week before the Christmas break. The home base teachers had stockings with student's names on them. Mrs. Anderson added these things make Stonington High School a special place and kids will remember these things forever.

Comments from Citizens

No comments from citizens.

Middle School Consolidation Report/Update

Tim Smith reported on the consolidation and the upcoming events. He shared there will be a joint family movie night with both middle schools students and families on January 25th at the high school. PTO groups are organizing a joint ski trip to Yawgoo Valley on February 14th. He added we are organizing a dry run of the bus routes for the consolidation which will take place on March 8th. Mr. Smith explained the results have been compiled from the student interest surveys for possible encore classes. There will be a meeting with teachers to look at the data. Plans are being made to work with the high school Link Crew students to create an orientation in August for the students attending Stonington Middle School. Mr. Smith reported a walk through will be done of the Mystic site to compile information regarding items that need to be cleaned, fixed or replaced before the move and can be done over the summer by maintenance and custodial staff. He has met with Printing Plus to replace the wooden street sign from Mystic Middle School to Stonington Middle School. The sign on the building will also be replaced. A new website for the Stonington Middle School is being developed. Mr. Smith's complete report to the Board can be found on the front page of the district website.

Consent Agenda

- A. Minutes – December 13, 2018
- B. Checks and Bills
- C. Transfers
- D. Personnel Report

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

Motion 1: To approve items A - D on the Consent Agenda as presented.

All: Aye

Report of the Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Riley thanked Tina Eisenbeis, a teacher at Pawcatuck Middle School for the math newsletter which was shared with the Board. He noted that he attended the Mystic Middle School select choir performance at the La Grua Center, it was amazing as usual. Dr. Riley reported we had the first ever retirement incentive for teachers, there are thirteen teachers who have taken the retirement incentive. This has helped with staffing and budgeting.

Approval/Discussion - 2019-2020 School Calendar

Dr. Riley explained we met with principals on the calendar, we start school after the Labor Day holiday and principals agreed that November 5th Election Day will not be a school day, since some of our buildings are used for voting places. He noted a couple of other changes on the calendar, the snow make up days have been added to the end of the year instead throughout the calendar. The last day of school is June 16th and the next three days are snow make up days. We have graduation set on June 19th.

Jack Morehouse said a parent had approached him and asked about moving spring vacation to March which would line up with spring breaks during the college breaks. He asked if we have ever been asked that before and is there a reason it is in April. Dr. Riley explained the calendar coincides with the regional calendar and other area schools and aligns with the spring break. Mr. Morehouse also added he read that several districts do not have snow days but have on-line learning days and has this been something we have thought of. Dr. Riley said we have checked on that and state does not allow that. Mr. Morehouse asked if we could pilot that program. Dr. Riley will ask Kate Rotella, State Representative, to find out from the state if the on-line learning day is an option.

Candace Anderson asked if there is a reason why February 5th is an early release for professional development, but have it instead on the February 14th so students can have a longer weekend. Dr. Riley explained early release days on a Friday are not as beneficial, seems to work out best to have them on Wednesdays.

Alisa Morrison commented she would like to see school in session on Veteran's Day for the next school year. She feels students would get more meaning of the day if they were in school.

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

Motion 2: To approve the 2019-2020 school calendar as presented.

All: Aye

2019-2020 Budget Discussion

Dr. Van Riley thanked the leadership team, Mr. Shettle and Ana for putting together the document. He explained we have a few upcoming Board meetings set for budget discussion, and asked the Board to submit their questions for discussion for review at the next meeting. He commented we usually come in at 2.5 - 3.0% increase but with the consolidation we were still able to save \$1million. He added this is a complex budget but meets the needs moving forward and for the next several years. Dr. Riley spoke that staffing, programs, consolidation, and closing of two buildings has impacted the bottom line of the budget. We were able to fund HVAC units at the high school with funds from this year's budget and did not need to go to the Board of Finance to fund them. We continue to regionalize programs and share in the cost savings with area schools. Peter Anderson, Director of Operations and Facilities has looked at replacing lights with LED lights in the gyms which will save money. We implemented a retirement incentive for teachers with six options which met different needs of the teachers and have 13 teachers taking the incentive. Dr. Riley reported the 2019-2020 proposed budget is coming in at a zero percent increase while still meeting major priorities. He explained the staffing and program summary of changes for the 2019-20 school year, which are included in the proposed budget. He reviewed the list of items and needs at each school level and the new alternative ed program that will be housed at the district office. He added administration has looked at the funding for extracurricular sports and clubs and were able with the consolidation to use some of the funding for extracurricular at the elementary schools and extra clubs at Stonington Middle School. Dr. Riley also reviewed where the extra furniture and items from the moves would be stored in the Pawcatuck Middle School gym. The town would come look at the items and what is left will be offered to other schools. He will share the timeline of the moves in February.

Gary Shettle, Director of Finance did a brief summary of each line item of the proposed budget and explained the increases and reductions. The following are only some of the items that were discussed the entire list can be found on our District website. He explained the decrease in administrative salary line due to one less principal at the middle school, teacher salary reduction in most part due to retirements, increase in secretarial due to an addition of staffing at Central Office in the business office for backup in

HR and payroll, reduction in maintenance and custodial reducing one in middle school level, reeducation in nurse salary line which is a retirement of one nurse at the middle school level will not be replaced, paraprofessional salary line we are reducing six paras, increase in non-certified due to employment agreements, added teaching stipend increase added additional at middle school and elementary schools, tutor salaries increase added two tutors for special education due to State requirements, health insurance increased. Jack Morehouse asked when students attend Magnet there is a tuition associated with that and asked is that wrapped into the tuition line item and can that be separated out of the tuition line? Dr. Riley will get a list of cost associated with Magnet student tuition by school.

Candace Anderson questioned the six paraprofessional reductions. Are some retiring and not being replaced? Dr. Riley explained we are always short paras, but this is due to duplicated program and changes.

Farouk Rajab had a question regarding the price of the LEDs rolled into the utility costs? Gary Shettle explained that line item. He also asked about the copiers and contracts. Have we looked into the future years and when the contract expires? Mr. Shettle explained the new contract will be for four years.

Chairwoman Garvey questioned the reduction of one world language teacher due to the consolidation and its impact. Dr. Riley explained we have a teacher that is currently split in world language and would like to go back to teaching LA, but we will still have the same amount of teaching in world language there is no impact. Chairwoman Garvey asked the Board if they have other questions to send them to Dr. Riley and they will go over them at the meeting next Thursday.

Monthly Reports

The Board had no questions on the monthly reports.

Committee Reports

The Board had no questions on the monthly reports.

Building Committee Update

Dr. Riley gave an update on what was discussed at the last K-12 Building Committee meeting. He added the big item is the playground and resurfacing. The committee wants to reconsider the rubberized surface that Board approved, so at their next meeting they will be discussing going back to putting wood chips. Dr. Riley add that the PTOs, Peter Anderson and Allison Van Etten will be querying other towns that have used the rubberized surface to get their feedback. He added the committee still doesn't have state approval on the playground. If we go to wood chips they will have to change many things. Peter Anderson will be meeting with principals and Colliers to go over the move schedule and punch list. There is a tentative furniture delivery date of March 4th with CO tentative of March 31st. Rob Hart, Colliers representative will review all the furniture issues and discuss next week.

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

1. Snow days changed to on-line virtual learning day

Board Comments and Concerns

Candace Anderson thanked Neal Curland, Assistant Principal for the student presentation on vaping. She added the initiative and Mr. Curland's passion for the project was such a testimony to every administrator in the district and the different ways they are engaged.

Adjournment

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

Motion 3: To Adjourn at 8:13p.m.

All: Aye

Candace Anderson, Secretary