

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

Member Absent: Alisa Morrison

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.

Board Presentations

Interdisciplinary Writing – Elaine Temel, a teacher at Pawcatuck Middle School and some of her students presented information regarding their studies in their social studies class. The students spoke on how they connected real world issues and the connection of community and its history as part of their studies. They spoke on such things as the ban of plastic bags, straws, recycling of Crayola crayons back to the manufacturer for recycling, and climate control. The students ended their presentation by singing a short song with lyrics they wrote related to Earth Day and the presentation.

LED Presentation - Peter Anderson spoke on the proposal / idea for an LED sign at the Stonington High School to replace the existing sign. He shared information and pricing if the district were to go this route. He explained it is a programmable sign and one advantage is of having our emergency services, such as police and fire being able to override the notice on the sign in an emergency by having the system display an emergency message if needed. Chairwoman Garvey asked if the sign was similar to the one that Wheeler High School in North Stonington has. Mr. Anderson explained no, it is 50% larger than the one that is now in front of the school now. Mr. Anderson added he was looking for the Board's approval to then go before the town with this proposal. Dr. Riley noted the police and fire are very supportive of this idea. Mr. Anderson also added the high school is a point of dispensary. Chairwoman Garvey asked if it is budgeted. All Board members present were in consensus with the new sign proposal to have Mr. Anderson go forward with this idea to the town.

Communications & Recognitions

Jack Morehouse communicated he had the opportunity to go to the SEF fundraising event; it was wonderful they did a nice job, but believes they were hoping for a few more people to attend. He added it was a nice venue, had an opportunity to also join Candace Anderson and Mary Anne Butler there and hopes that next year more people attend.

Deborah Downie communicated there will be an Empty Bowls event next Tuesday, April 30 at the high school from 6pm to 8pm to raise awareness about food insecurity and fighting hunger. The community will purchase a handmade bowl filled with soup and bread. The money from this event is used to help support local and global organizations that impact food resources.

Caroline Morehouse, Student Government Representative spoke in the past couple months they have done some new things, a wellness week in March and first every spring pep rally before April break she added it was an experience but it was to recognize athletes, musicians and other talented students and hopes this will be done in the future.

Candace Anderson attended the SEF event, it was a great event but would of have been nice to see more people. She also commented the Margo Crowley, Director of Guidance held a college emissions night for parents and students which was really good and informative. She added her son filmed this event.

Farouk Rajab attended the joint concert with the high school and Fitch High School and added it was incredible and showcased the great music program we have. He also recognized Alicia Dawe for her recent award of Principal of the Year, added well deserved.

Dr. Van Riley, Superintendent recognized the four Pawcatuck Middle School teachers, Sheila Adams, Heather Pescatello, Peggy Romeo and Tina Eisenbeis who received the Fund for Teachers award. He also recognized Deidre Toole, Special Education Teacher at the high school who received the Mystic Seaport Museum Orion Award for 2019.

Chairwoman Garvey communicated she attended the recent drama production by the Pawcatuck Middle School and added that the story line was perfect and staff and students did a great job.

Comments from Citizens

There were no comments from citizens

Middle School Consolidation Report/Update

Principal Tim Smith reported the main focus recently has been shifted to the logistics of packing and moving, of the work that will start June 14th for the transition. The other focus has been on the hiring of six staff positions for Stonington Middle School. He explained some math interviews have been done, and we have openings in social studies, art and language arts. He added we hope to have all positions filled by the second week in May. Mr. Smith reported we have started technology installs and upgrades. Some teachers are working together to get students together from each middle school. August 21 and 23 will be orientation days with the help of Link Crew group from the high school. Jen Bausch, Curriculum Specialist is working with teachers on the encore classes, coming up with lists of supplies needed for those classes. Chairman Garvey asked when students will know the encore choices. Principal Smith responded the first week of June. Ms. Bausch noted she will present the list of classes at the next Teaching and Learning Committee. Principal Smith added that all students coming from Pawcatuck Middle School transitioning to Stonington Middle School have visited the school.

Consent Agenda

- A. Minutes – March 14, 2019 (Regular Meeting)
- B. Checks and Bills
- C. Transfers
- D. Personnel Report
- E. Stonington Educator and Administrator Handbook
- F. IDEA Grant

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Deborah Downie:

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

All: Aye

First Read – Curriculum

Criminology Grades 11 and 12
Probability and Statistics
English Grade 10
Health Issues
Science Grade K, 1, 2

Chairwoman Garvey had a question regarding the English Grade 10 and the recommendation stated on the curriculum but will get that question over to Principal Mark Friese and Assistant Superintendent Mary Anne Butler. Chairwoman Garvey noted the curriculum will be brought back for a second read at the next Board meeting.

Second Read/Approval AP Economics Textbook and Algebra I Textbook

The following motion was made by Candace Anderson and seconded by Deborah Downie:

Motion 2: To approve the AP Economics Textbook and Algebra I Textbook as presented.

All: Aye

Report of the Superintendent of Schools

Title I Staffing – Dr. Riley explained two suggestions for the use of the Title I funding. He noted that Deans Mill and Mystic Middle do not qualify for these funds, but Stonington Middle School will qualify for the funding. Dr. Riley met with Principal Smith and asked what his priority is for use of some of the additional Title I funds. Principal Smith recommended to continue with the Dean position currently at Pawcatuck Middle School for one year and Dr. Riley concurred. Dr. Riley added he wants to make sure students at Pawcatuck Middle School have the supports for the transition. Mr. Howe has made strong relationships with the Pawcatuck students and needs to keep those going. The plan is to keep that position at middle school level. Another idea is to change the structure of K-5 summer school programs. He explained there are districts in Connecticut that rather than having eight or ten students in a classroom, you would have one teacher working with one student. We are looking at having one teacher for one student to have a one on one teacher help.

Child Care Proposal - Dr. Riley shared his idea of providing a means of child care for staff in district, he has done this in other districts. The child care would be provided at one of the schools either the district office or the high school. He explained parents would pay 50% or less for the child care compared to area facilities and feels it would be better quality. Staff would know where the child is and it is run by our own staff. Dr. Riley encouraged those that want more information to meet with him.

Dr. Riley communicated on the elementary music; there will be an opportunity for students try different instruments. He noted we have been advertising for a half time music teacher. There will be ribbon cutting ceremonies happening at each school which will be the same night of the back to school nights, more information to follow. Dr. Riley explained we will be updating the 2018-2019 school calendar to reflect the change in the Professional Days in June, moving those days to Monday, June 17 and Tuesday, June 18 with graduation still on Friday, June 21.

Chairwoman Garvey commented the idea of child care is a great one and asked for more clarity on the Title I regarding the Dean position. Dr. Riley explained the dean position will give students continued strong relationships with the dean. Chairwoman Garvey asked what would the dean's day look like and how will this directly affect the students? Dr. Riley answered the assistant principal will be highly involved in the teachers and the dean position will be dealing with student issues, hallway time, lunch time, talking to parents about issues. He added having a person that students are comfortable with is important, the dean would spend his full day with students.

Candace Anderson commented she loves the idea of child care, asked about its funding and would it be for next year? Dr. Riley explained it would be paid for by the parents. Ms. Anderson said the child care could tie into student opportunities. She commented on the dean position and understands transition is major, but the number of students does not warrant that position and she feels we need to increase in counselor support not administrative. Dr. Riley explained he met with the Director of Special Services who assured we are meeting the social services and psychologist needs at all our schools and suggested we fund the dean out of Title I funds to support a strong support for the transition. Ms. Anderson questioned do we not need a math interventionist.

Deb Downie commented she loves the child care proposal. She also spoke that other schools in the area have only one assistant principal in the middle school level. She added we have been told we have issues and need in social services and math.

Jack Morehouse agreed with Ms. Downie statement. He added he would like to see funds be put directly into the classroom in some way, whether it be a tutor or direct targeted assistant for our students. He said it seems that we are very top heavy at the middle school. Mr. Morehouse also communicated we are limited on funds and would like to see these be used to directly impact students. Mr. Morehouse added he loves the child care proposal and feels will be fantastic. Dr. Riley stated having someone that has personal relationships and trust with our students is a direct impact but will bring back more information and options for the Title I funding to the next meeting.

Action Regarding Relinquishing Control of West Broad Street School

Chairwoman Garvey explained we are required to state the date in which we will be relinquishing control of West Broad Street School.

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

Motion 3: I move that effective June 1, 2019, the Stonington Board of Education relinquish control of the Town of Stonington-owned property located at 131 West Broad Street and known as West Broad Street School, including the land, grounds, buildings, facilities, structures, and improvements thereon, to the Town of Stonington. By such action, control of such property shall revert back to the Town of Stonington, and the Stonington Board of Education shall no longer be responsible for the care, maintenance, and operation of such property.

All: Aye

Budget Discussion and Direction

Dr. Riley explained Gary Shettle, Director of Finance has updated the Board with a copy of the budget which reflects the \$255,000 reduction which was removed by the Board of Finance. He explained the Board does not determine where those funds come from until the referendum passes. He explained that the Board of Finance did not fund five major projects in the Capital Improvement Program, such as heating and air conditioning systems at the high school and both middle schools, parking and roof at the new middle school. Dr. Riley suggested the Board put together a bonding subcommittee. He would like to have a Bonding Subcommittee to put together a package. Chairwoman Garvey asked Board members interested on being on the subcommittee to email her.

Monthly Reports

There were no questions on the monthly reports.

Committee Reports

There were no questions on the committee reports.

Building Committee Update

Deborah Downie reported students are all in the new sections of the schools. She is thankful for Peter Anderson worked on those systems that were not working properly. She added the contractors are still not done and everyone is working hard to make sure all works well. The K-12 Building Committee asked if there would be a ribbon cutting ceremony there was concern they would not be included. Dr. Riley noted we are doing this on a back-to-school night and will make sure all the community is invited. Jack Morehouse commented he thought it would be nice to invite student that want to go to magnet schools. Ms. Downie asked principals and Board members share ideas on how to put something like this together.

Comments from Citizens Relative to Board Action on this Agenda

There were no comments from citizens related to Board action on this agenda.

Items for Future Agendas

1. Accountability Report
2. Bus Tracking System

Deb Downie suggested having discussion regarding community service and making it a part of the school culture starting from K-12. Chairwoman Garvey suggested adding this to the Board retreat agenda first.

Dr. Riley noted there will be a retirement reception at the May 9th Board meeting.

Board Comments and Concerns

Jack Morehouse asked about the student athletes and issue with makeup classes. Dr. Riley noted Principal Mark Friesse does not have students' makeup gym classes if they had a track meet. Mr. Morehouse noted students still need to makeup gym class even after doing a rigorous athletic event. Dr. Riley did add that in other districts they count the athletics as a class.

Chairwoman Garvey noted Craig Esposito will join her on the Health Reserve Committee. She said they have already gathered information on that and once that is put together will meet with the Board of Finance. Chairwoman Garvey also asked the Board to email her and Ana de Oliveira their attendance at the upcoming end of the year school events.

Adjournment

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

Motion 4: To Adjourn at 8:13p.m.

All: Aye


Candace Anderson, Secretary