

Board of Education Special Meeting  
December 5, 2019

Call to Order

Superintendent Van Tassel called the meeting to order at 7:01p.m. in the Suffield Middle School Auditorium. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Board members Susan Mercik Davis, Maureen Sattan, Jamie Drzyzga, Brian Fry, Debra Dudack, Melissa Finnigan, Glenn Gazdik, Scott Lingenfelter, and Michael Sepko; Superintendent Timothy Van Tassel, Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi, and Business Manager Bill Hoff; SHS Student Representative Akshita Jindal (arr. 7:08p.m.); First Selectwoman Melissa Mack, Board of Finance Chair Ryan Anderson, and Board of Finance member Brian Kost (arr. 7:14p.m.)

Absent: SHS Student Representative Abigail Sperrazza

Election of Board of Education Officers

**Board of Education Chair** - Drzyzga nominated Sue Mercik Davis for Board of Education Chair. Mercik Davis accepted the nomination and Fry seconded the nomination. Lingenfelter nominated Michael Sepko for Board of Education Chair. Sepko declined the nomination. There were no other nominations.

**MOTION #20-18:** Lingenfelter moved to close the nominations for Chair, Fry seconded. All members voted in favor. Votes were taken by written ballot and the votes were tallied.

**MOTION #20-19:** All members voted in favor of electing Sue Mercik Davis as Board of Education Chair in a 9-0 vote.

*Superintendent Van Tassel turned the meeting over to Board Chair Mercik Davis.*

**Board of Education Vice Chair** - Lingenfelter nominated Michael Sepko as Board of Education Vice Chair. Sepko accepted the nomination and Gazdik seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations.

**MOTION #20-20:** Lingenfelter moved to close the nominations for Vice Chair, Dudack seconded. All members voted in favor. Votes were taken by written ballot and the votes were tallied.

**MOTION #20-21:** All members voted in favor of electing Michael Sepko as Board of Education Vice Chair in a 9-0 vote.

**Board of Education Secretary** - Finnigan nominated Maureen Sattan for Board of Education Secretary. Sattan accepted the nomination and Lingenfelter seconded the nomination. Fry nominated Debra Dudack for Board of Education Secretary. Dudack accepted the nomination and Drzyzga seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations.

**MOTION #20-22:** Lingenfelter moved to close the nominations for Secretary, Drzyzga seconded. All members voted in favor. Votes were taken by written ballot and the votes were tallied.

**MOTION #20-23:** Gazdik, Sepko, Finnigan, Sattan and Lingenfelter voted for Maureen Sattan. Drzyzga, Fry, Dudack and Mercik Davis voted for Debra Dudack. Maureen Sattan was elected as Board of Education Secretary in a 5-4 vote.

### Suffield High School Student Representatives

Akshita Jindal introduced herself to the new Board members. She said Spaulding had over 60 Veterans who attended the Veteran's Day assembly; McAlister's PTO sponsored a book fair that was held today and their winter concert is December 18; the middle school chorus performed at the Town's tree lighting ceremony on November 30 and the holiday boutique will be held on December 12; and high school students visited kindergarten classes for the annual Readers Are Leaders read aloud and the high school production, *BFF*, is being held on December 5, 6 and 7.

### Public Comment

None

### Board Member Comment

Board member Dudack reminded Board members of the Board of Education book drive this Saturday and asked for Board members' help to sort books and to promote the event.

Board Chair Mercik Davis and Board member Sepko thanked Board member Dudack for her work as Board Secretary during the last two years that she has served in that capacity.

### Consent Agenda

**MOTION #20-24:** Dudack moved, Drzyzga seconded to approve the following on the consent agenda: Revisions to:

- A. Policy #5144.4 – Physical Exercise and Discipline of Students
- B. Policy #5145.511 – Sexual Abuse Prevention Program
- C. Policy #6146 – Graduation Requirements
- D. Policy #6171.2 – Preschool Students with Disabilities
- E. Policy #6172 – Alternate Education Programs
- F. Bylaw #9230 – New Board Member Orientation

**MOTION #20-25:** Lingenfelter moved to remove Policy #6146 and Bylaw #9230 from the Consent Agenda. Sepko seconded the motion. Board member Lingenfelter asked to remove these for clarification of the proposed changes. Board member Dudack said extensive work had been done by the subcommittee on Policy #6146. It is a policy the subcommittee will have as a standing item on upcoming agendas. Lingenfelter withdrew his motion and Sepko removed his second.

**MOTION #20-26:** Lingenfelter moved to remove Bylaw #9230 from the Consent Agenda. Sepko seconded the motion. Board member Lingenfelter said he disagreed with the proposed changes in the bylaw relative to the Superintendent inviting candidates of the Board of Education to meetings at the discretion of the Board Chair. He said the Board Chair should not be involved with the Superintendent inviting candidates to meetings. Board member Dudack said anyone can attend a board meeting. The intent of this language was for the Superintendent to extend the invitation as a courtesy to candidates. Board Chair Mercik Davis called for a vote. Lingenfelter and Sattan moved in favor of removing Bylaw #9230 from the Consent Agenda. Dudack, Drzyzga, Mercik Davis, Fry, and Sepko voted against removing the bylaw from the Consent Agenda. Finnigan and Gazdik abstained. The motion failed 2-5-2.

Board Chair Mercik Davis called for a vote to approve the Consent Agenda. Dudack, Drzyzga, Sattan, Mercik Davis, Fry, and Sepko voted in favor; Lingenfelter voted against; and Finnigan and Gazdik abstained. The motion carried 6-1-2.

## Discussion/Action Items

- Superintendent's Proposed 2020-2021 Budget Presentation

Mr. Van Tasel read his budget transmittal to the Board of Education, which proposed a \$36,509,475 budget request for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, or 2.71% increase over this year's budget. He identified the drivers of the budget, which include key budget initiatives, wage and benefit increases, and personnel reductions. He provided the board with a formal budget book to provide an organized, transparent and comprehensive resource for board members. Mr. Van Tasel reviewed the district's mission, values and vision, as well as the hopes and dreams of our students, expectations and desires of the Suffield community, the objectives and aspirations of the faculty and staff and the State of Connecticut legislative mandates. The Superintendent shared this year's student enrollment data and next year's projected enrollment, which is projected to be a decrease of 31 students. He reviewed lunch demographics, the number of special education and 504 students, the number of certified and non-certified staff for this year and proposed for next year, magnet school attendance, and per pupil expenditures. Superintendent Van Tasel highlighted the many accomplishments in the district which include student academic accomplishments, a caring staff, safe and welcoming school environments, family and the community involvement in our schools, dedicated parent organizations and town partnerships, strong academic, athletic and extracurricular programs, a NEASC accredited high school, Advanced Placement and Early College Experience opportunities, a regional Agriscience program, social and emotional supports for students, Teachers College project, and college and career pathway opportunities. Mr. Van Tasel explained the increases and decreases in the major budget categories. He spoke about efforts to minimize budget increases through shared community services, negotiating fair collective bargaining agreements, participating in local and regional partnerships, exploring self-operated special education programs, participating in energy conservation measures, grant procurement, cooperative purchasing arrangements, and expanding learning opportunities.

### ***Ms. Jindal left the meeting at 8:02p.m.***

Superintendent Van Tasel explained the proposed program enhancements for 2020-2021. They include system wide support for special education programs, additional paraprofessional support, Autism Spectrum Disorder program development, K-8 universal screenings, the addition of two STEM teachers at the elementary schools, Spaulding classroom libraries, Teachers College Readers and Writers Project, grades 8-11 SAT assessments, grades 6-12 developmental guidance program, the addition of middle school social worker, a special education teacher, and a reading interventionist, the addition of a high school College and Career guidance counselor, Agriscience summer internship staff, and three new courses at the high school.

Superintendent Van Tasel reviewed the budget book contents with the Board which gave more information about the content he presented this evening. Also included was a detailed budget report by line item, budget by object code, school and department program goals, strategic plan (district and school advancement plans), high impact legislative mandate costs, per pupil expenditure data, student enrollment data, magnet tuition and open choice enrollment, food service data, grants and revenues, salary and benefits and the capital projects list.

He asked Board members to read through and send any questions in advance of the upcoming budget deliberation meetings so the administration is prepared to answer those questions. Mr. Van Tasel thanked the administration, central office staff, and Board members for their work in the budget preparation and process.

Future Business

Board member Sattan asked for future business items to be listed on each agenda.

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

Board Chair Mercik Davis said she will seek board members' interest on which subcommittee they would like to serve.

Adjournment

Sepko moved, Fry seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

*Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of January 6, 2020.*

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Sattan  
Secretary