

STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING December 12, 2019 - Page | 1

Alexa Garvey, Chairwoman called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. in the District Office Board Room, Pawcatuck, CT. Members present were, Candace Anderson, Board Secretary, Jack Morehouse, Alisa Morrison, Farouk Rajab, Craig Esposito and Heidi Simmons. Also present were Dr. Van Riley, Superintendent of Schools, Ana de Oliveira, Recording Secretary, Alexandra Kapell, Student Government Representative, members of the staff, and interested citizens.

Election of Board Officers – Board Chair – Dr. Van Riley, opened the meeting with the election of the Board of Education chair and asked for nominations.

Alisa Morrison asked that a motion be made to move the item Election of Board Officers to after item eleven Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Initiating an Independent Investigation. Craig Esposito asked if there was a rationale for moving the agenda item and questioned the difference between doing it now or at the end of the agenda. Heidi Simmons explained she would like to know how our new officers are invested in team building, transparency and the private investigation. She explained further that if an officer were elected before the discussion of item eleven she would not feel as comfortable with her commitment. Candace Anderson, Secretary and Alexa Garvey, Chair explained the protocol of the term of each existing officers. Alisa Morrison also commented on when the officers' term expires.

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

Motion 1: To move the agenda item Election of Board Officers to after agenda item eleven Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Initiating an Independent Investigation on the agenda.

Alexa Garvey – Opposed	Candace Anderson – Opposed	Craig Esposito – Opposed	
Farouk Rajab – Opposed	Jack Morehouse – Yes	Alisa Morrison – Yes	Heidi Simmons – Yes

Motion did not pass.

Dr. Riley began the election of the Board Chair and accepted nominations for the Board Chair. Candace Anderson recommended Alexa Garvey to continue as Board Chair. Farouk Rajab also nominated Alexa Garvey.

Candace Anderson – Yes	Craig Esposito – Yes	Farouk Rajab – Yes	Jack Morehouse – Yes
Alisa Morrison – Opposed	Heidi Simmons – Opposed	Alexa Garvey – Yes	

Nomination passes

Alexa Garvey, Chair asked the Board for nominations for Board Secretary. Craig Esposito nominated Candace Anderson for Board Secretary. There were no other nominations for Board Secretary.

Alexa Garvey – Yes	Craig Esposito – Yes	Farouk Rajab – Yes	Jack Morehouse – Abstained
Alisa Morrison – Opposed	Heidi Simmons – Opposed	Candace Anderson – Yes	

Nomination passes.

Board Presentations

School Start Times – Mark Friese, SHS Principal, Alicia Dawe, WVSS Principal – Principal Alicia Dawe and Principal Mark Friese shared their research regarding school start times. They reviewed the impacts of change in start times at each school level. A PowerPoint presentation was shared. (See Attached PowerPoint Presentation)

Jack Morehouse had questions regarding if the elementary and high school times were flipped how much more time would students have to sleep. He also asked if these were switched is there research that shows high school students stay up later. Mrs. Dawe answered, the high school students would have more hours to sleep and yes research shows these students do stay up later. Mr. Morehouse asked how flipping the times would affect the really young kids. Mrs. Dawe explained how the younger students currently function at the start of school versus towards the end of the day. Candace Anderson thanked administration for the researched information and feels it is worthwhile to start a committee to discuss this issue. She added all the information provided was beneficial and added there are many moving parts. Mr. Morehouse also expressed his interest in being part of this committee. Chair Alexa Garvey asked the Board those interested in being on the committee to contact her.

Student Government Representative Alexander Kapell she feels if we had later start times it would be a benefit to have that extra hour to have breakfast in the morning. Mrs. Dawe added in her home district they have a delay start time on only Wednesdays. Mr. Friese added the changes need to be significant.

Manufacturing Program – Preparing Our Students for Work – Mark Friese, SHS Principal – Principal Mark Friese presented a presentation on the manufacturing program at the high school. He added the students in the program have an opportunity to start working after graduation. He shared information on the community partnerships with the Eastern CT Youth Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative. He spoke about the specific course content and schedule of the program. (See Attached PowerPoint Presentation)

State of the District Part III – Facilities and Infrastructure - Dr. Van Riley, Superintendent – Dr. Riley gave a report that covered information on facilities and infrastructure in three areas, District, School Sites and Technology. He reviewed the changes that have taken place at the district office and each of the school buildings. Dr. Riley thanked Rob Marseglia for two beautiful new buildings. A complete report can be found on the district website.

Communications & Recognitions

Jack Morehouse communicated he had the opportunity to attend the high school band concert, it was amazing. He added he looked at Mrs. Gottlieb's graduating class last year and thought she would struggle this year but the band sounded better than ever. He acknowledged that Mrs. Anderson's daughter did an amazing solo and congratulated her. He also finished by thanking Mrs. Gottlieb and the students who played their hearts out. Candace Anderson recognized the band concert by saying it was really fantastic, it seemed to go up this year and it gave her a lot of hope for the future, with so much stress going on it was so refreshing to sit and listen to the music. Mrs. Anderson also communicated she attended the CABA/CAPSS convention the morning was filled with an incredible speaker who spoke about diversity. Mrs. Anderson also attended the high school play Enter Laughing which was very well done and very impressed. She also was able to go on the New York trip and gave a shout out to her group and Leah Kennedy for arranging the trip.

Mrs. Anderson wished good luck to those students who are receiving college admission responses. Chair Alexa Garvey thanked the Student Government for always doing the veteran's dinner it was a great event.

Congratulation to West Vines Street School to the teachers and staff that won the fitness challenge. She thanked Mary Anne Butler for organizing the event and everyone who donated the surprises.

Comments from Citizens

Faith Leitner thanked the Board for allowing members to have comments at this time. She added every time she comes to these meetings she learns the great things that the school district is doing, however it is painful to talk about the negative things. She commented on the recent December 7th article in The Day paper regarding Mr. Chokas. She read the editorial that came out in The Day on December 10th. She asked again that the Board do an independent investigation since it has been almost a year since Mr. Chokas was terminated. She acknowledged that this will be expensive, but asked what is the price of a student's safety in the district and feels we need to do everything possible to get to the bottom of this, because these girls deserve this.

Consent Agenda

- A. Minutes – November 14, 2019
- B. Checks and Bills – November
- C. Personnel Report
- D. Transfers
- E. Revised 2019-2020 School Calendar

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

Motion 2: To approve the consent agenda items A-E as presented.
All: Aye

Approval of Educational Specifications for Stonington Middle School Roof Replacement

Dr. Riley explained this is required so that we can move forward with the Stonington Middle School roof project and receive reimbursement from the State of Connecticut.

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

Motion 3: To approve Education Specifications for Stonington Middle School Roof Replacement as presented.
All: Aye