

Board of Education Special Meeting
Suffield High School Media Center
and Remotely via Zoom
June 1, 2021

Call to Order

Board Chair Davis called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

Present: Board members Jamie Drzyzga, Debra Dudack, Melissa Finnigan, Glenn Gazdik, Brian Fry, Susan Mercik Davis, Maureen Sattan, Michael Sepko (arrived at 6:44 p.m.); and Superintendent Timothy Van Tassel and Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi

Absent: Scott Lingenfelter

Executive Session

At 6:06 p.m., Finnigan moved, Drzyzga seconded to go into executive session for the purpose of (1) a discussion concerning twelve-month non-affiliated personnel employment terms; and (2) a discussion concerning an attorney client communication related to administrative appointments, inviting the Superintendent for both discussions and inviting Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi to join for the second discussion. All members voted in favor.

Brian Fry left the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

The executive session ended at 7:19 p.m.

Regular Session

Present: In addition to the individuals noted above, Business Manager Bill Hoff joined the regular session.

Discussion/Action Items

- Discussion and Possible Action on Twelve-Month Non-Affiliated Personnel Employment Terms
MOTION #21-58: Dudack moved to approve the twelve-month non-affiliated personnel employment terms as presented. Drzyzga seconded the motion and all members voted in favor except Sepko, who voted against. The motion carried **6-1-0**.
- Approval of Revised 2021-2022 Board of Education Budget
MOTION #21-59: Sepko moved to approve the revised 2021-2022 Board of Education budget in the amount of \$35,901,022, which reflects a 0% increase over the 2021-2022 Board of Education budget. Sattan seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried **7-0-0**.
- Discussion on use of COVID-19 Relief Funds
 1. ESSER II and American Rescue Plan (ARP) ESSER III Funds – The Superintendent reviewed the COVID-19 relief funds received to date and the proposed ESSER II and ARP ESSER III funds the district is anticipated to receive, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) priorities, and the application timeline for ARP ESSER III funds. The

district plans to use these funds for Teaching and Learning, Pupil Services, Technology, and Facilities and Operations proposals. It is anticipated the district will receive a total of 1.38 million dollars from all of these funds. Teaching and Learning proposals include additional personnel, professional development and programming. Funds for Pupil Services will be used for a family-school liaison, an additional temporary psychologist, nurse aides, additional radios for personnel, and paying for some existing pupil services salaries to reduce next year's budget. Technology initiatives include the projection systems for Board meetings at the high school, technology devices and accessories, providing an IT help line, and interactive online teaching tools at the high school. Funds for Facilities and Operations will be used for cleaning, summer workers, HVAC upgrades, bus costs for remote days, and the replacement of asbestos floors at Spaulding School. The Superintendent said a Tri-Board meeting will take place on June 14, 2021 where the three Boards (Board of Education, Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen) will discuss how to use these funds. He said he is soliciting stakeholder feedback from parents, union leadership, students and the community. A School Reopening Plan must be submitted to the CSDE by August 16, 2021 in order to qualify for the ARP funds. The district's draft plan is posted on the district website and a survey has been sent to all families to gather their feedback. Board members asked for more information relative to how additional academic support will be utilized, the structure of summer school, and the advantage to FVDC membership. Board members expressed concern on future budgeting impacts with moving salary expenses from the operating budget to these funds.

2. Tri-Board Meeting Planning – Board Chair Mercik Davis said she met with First Selectwoman Melissa Mack and Board of Finance Chair Ryan Anderson to plan for the Tri-Board meeting. She explained the structure of the meeting and the topics that will be discussed, including review of the current estimate of available funds for both the town and school, proposals for use of funds by both parties broken out by non-recurring and capital expenses and operation expenses, a discussion of relief funding for residents and businesses, ACCE offsets, and the process for evaluating the use of these funds to ensure transparency. The Board of Finance Chair will wrap up the meeting and provide next steps. Board members asked if the grant money given to the district could be re-appropriated by the Board of Finance, discussed the importance of advocating at this meeting for the use of these funds for the educational purposes proposed this evening and confirmed that the BOE would have a future vote on the plans to spend the grant funds.

- Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Learning Plan for Suffield Public Schools 2021-2022

Board Chair Mercik Davis reminded everyone that the school reopening plan is a fluid one and may change based on guidance from the CSDE. One of the requirements of the Plan is to solicit feedback from stakeholders and therefore public comment on this topic is being offered this evening. The Suffield Public Schools Draft Continuity of Learning Plan is posted on the website. The Superintendent said to date, the state has been non-committal on whether they will require districts to offer distance learning next year. The Superintendent said the district needs to consider what to do with students on quarantine next year. In response to a Board member's question, the Superintendent does not anticipate that the vaccine will be a requirement to attend school next year. In response to a Board member's question relative to terms and conditions of the COVID-19 relief funds, Mr. Hoff said the application gives very clear expectations on the requirements and they are very standard.

Public Comment on ARP COVID Relief Funds and Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Learning Plan for Suffield Public Schools 2021-2022

None

Adjournment

Dudack moved, Gazdik seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Click here to view the meeting:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/11GtDOwVp1tI-ZwCAqP2Ix6lWlixogDU5/view?usp=sharing>

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of June 22, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Sattan
Secretary