

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
83 Mountain Road, Suffield, CT
and via Zoom
July 22, 2021

Call to Order

Board Chair Davis called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

Present: Board members Jamie Drzyzga, Melissa Finnigan, Glenn Gazdik (via Zoom), Susan Mercik Davis, Maureen Sattan, Michael Sepko (arr. 6:10 p.m.); and Superintendent Timothy Van Tasel

Absent: Board members Debra Dudack and Scott Lingenfelter

Executive Session

At 5:33, Sattan moved, Drzyzga seconded to go into executive session for the purpose interviewing a candidate for the Director of Athletics and Student Activities, inviting the Superintendent to join the executive session.

Sepko left the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

The executive session ended at 6:46 p.m.

Regular Session

Present: In addition to the individuals noted above, Board member Brian Fry (via Zoom at 6:50 p.m.) and Business Manager Bill Hoff joined the regular session, which began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognition

None

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

None

Reports to the Board

- Superintendent's Report
 - The Superintendent congratulated Denise Raymond for being selected as the 2021 Connecticut Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (CTAHPERD) Elementary Physical Education Teacher of the Year.
 - Following Ashley Eichorn's resignation, Shannon Insero will continue as the Interim Assistant Principal at the high school until a decision is made regarding the position.
 - In regard to mask wearing, the state has yet to give any guidance on mask protocols for the 2021-2022 school year. At this time the state mandate is masks must be worn indoors on school property.

- September 1 is the first day of school.
- The Superintendent recognized the great work being done this summer by the custodial staff and student workers in preparing the school buildings for the new school year.
- Board Chair's Report
 - Board Chair Mercik Davis said Board meetings, subcommittee meetings and workshops are being scheduled for the coming school year. She said Board members can review the updated Google document for more details.
 - She asked Board members to check their emails regularly.
 - She said she and the Superintendent were considering different locations to hold Board meetings, and in order to keep the Board meeting schedule consistent and provide for the option of the public to attend remotely, Regular Business meetings will be held in the middle school auditorium. The Board can revisit this topic at a later date.
- Business Manager's Report
 - Mr. Hoff said the food service program is serving about 100 meals a day, 7 days a week as well as providing lunches to students attending the summer program.
 - Summer facility projects that are underway include air conditioning projects at Spaulding and Suffield Middle School, floor installation at Spaulding, STEM lab project at Suffield Middle School, and stair tread installation at Suffield High School.
 - The State has opened its financial reporting system for districts to submit their yearly financial report which is due September 1.
- Board of Selectmen's Report
 - No report
- Board of Finance Liaison's Report
 - No report

Sepko rejoined the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION #22-01: Gazdik moved to approve the Board of Education meeting minutes of June 17, 2021 and June 21, 2021. Finnigan seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **7-0-0**.

Consent Agenda

None

Discussion/Action Items

- COVID-19 Update: Discussion of School Year 2021-2022 COVID-19 Protocols
The Superintendent has been attending the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) meetings regularly to receive information on protocols for the upcoming school year; however, to date, there are no definitive protocols being provided from the CSDE. He reviewed current case rates and in the last two weeks there is a marked uptick in cases. The Superintendent said unless required by the CSDE, the district will not be providing a remote learning option. In the event that the CSDE does require a remote learning option, he reviewed several options that could be utilized. Quarantine protocols are expected to remain the same as they were at the end of the 2020-2021 school year, with the exceptions of vaccinated students, who are close contacts, will not be required to quarantine at the elementary level, and no quarantine requirements for secondary students, who are close contacts, regardless of vaccination status. Board members asked questions regarding the self-reporting of vaccination status, quarantining policy complexities, the current state guidance, and how district decision-making may change before the beginning of the school year. The Superintendent reviewed the prevention strategies that have been used and will continue to be used

in the 2021-2022 school year. The district will continue to make decisions based on guidance from the Department of Public Health, CSDE, and Centers for Disease Control, and in monitoring transmission trends, number of cases and vaccination data.

- Discussion and Possible Action on Remote Learning

Board Chair Mercik Davis said at the time of the agenda development, the administration expected to have more information from the CSDE on this topic. She recommended revisiting this topic at the August Board meeting.

- Approval of Memorandum between the Suffield Board of Education and Suffield Administrators Group

MOTION #22-02: Finnigan moved to approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the Suffield Board of Education and the Suffield Administrators Group as presented. Sepko seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried **7-0-0**.

- Possible Appointment of the Director of Athletics and Student Activities

MOTION #22-03: Drzyzga moved to appoint Todd Zenczak as the Director of Athletics and Student Activities for the Suffield Public Schools and authorize the Superintendent to complete the hiring process. Finnigan seconded the motion and all members voted in favor except Sepko, who abstained. The motion carried **6-0-1**.

- Discussion and Possible Action on Board of Finance Communication Regarding Non-Lapsing Account

MOTION #22-04: Sepko moved to authorize the Board of Education Chair and Superintendent to submit a formal request to the Board of Finance regarding the allocation in the amount of \$47,079 into the non-lapsing account. Sattan seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried **7-0-0**.

- End of Year Fiscal Status Report

Mr. Hoff said the end of year surplus is \$47,079, which is significantly lower than the reported surplus in April of \$835,675. The reduction is a result of transferring \$652,922 expenses from the Open Choice grant fund to the operating budget, as well as transferring additional expenses from the ESSER grant fund to the operating budget. In addition, some of the surplus was used to complete various facilities projects. The food service report is not available at this time. He reviewed the end of year balances in the after school funds account and the Open Choice grant fund account. Mr. Hoff reviewed the list of budget transfers that needs Board approval.

MOTION #22-05: Finnigan moved to approve the budget transfers as presented. Sepko seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion carried **7-0-0**.

Subcommittee Reports

None

Board Liaison Reports

- CREC – Board member Sattan said CREC held a workshop for council members as an introduction to Critical Race Theory
- Agriscience – Nothing to report
- CABA – Nothing to report

Future Business

Discussion on the district's role in Critical Race Theory

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

Board member Sepko wished all teachers, staff and students a great summer.

Board members Finnigan and Fry expressed their excitement in the appointment of Todd Zenczak as the Director of Athletics and Student Activities.

Board member Fry urged all to get vaccinated and wished all an enjoyable summer.

Board member Mercik Davis thanked faculty, staff and parents who participated in the Director of Athletics and Student Activities interviews.

Adjournment

Sepko moved, Finnigan seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Click here to view the meeting:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UprFJ-C_XPryLIor28J4-jL6sEON89BI/view?usp=sharing

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of August 23, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Sattan
Secretary