

Farouk Rajab, Board Chairman called the regular virtual meeting to order at 6:30p.m. Members present were Heidi Simmons, Secretary, Craig Esposito, Daniel Kelley, Kevin Agnello, Christopher Donahue, and Sara Baker. Also present were Ana de Oliveira, Recording Secretary, Dr. Van Riley, Superintendent of Schools, Student Government Representative Kyle Lowry and members of the administration staff and interested citizens.

Communications & Recognitions

Dr. Riley recognized the nurses who have done an amazing job for the past two years managing the COVID-19 issues. He noted the number of positive cases are posted on the district website. He gave a shout out to the parents for doing their part. Heidi Simmons spoke in regards to the superintendent search and focus groups. She applauded Dr. Osga for doing a commendable job with the search. Ms. Simmons noted we are moving in a positive direction. Dan Kelley recognized the passing of Jerry Desmond and spoke of his contributions to the town. Sara Baker thanked all who worked in putting forth the start of the 2021-22 school year. Chris Donahue recognized the nurses and parents that have been very patient during these times. He also recognized the administration for making things happen when shorthanded with staff. He spoke of Jerry Desmond as a true loss for Stonington and the community. Kyle Lowry, Student Government Representative recognized Mr. Freeman for agreeing to get pied for a fundraiser which raised \$700. Farouk Rajab, Chair noted he was touched by every Stonington staff member. He added he appreciates everyone and is proud to be in this community and thanked all for everything they do. Chair Rajab recognized Jerry Desmond who touched him deeply and was a friend.

Comments from Citizens Relative to Items on the Agenda

Mr. Dane Lewis commented on the Jerry Desmond memorial proposal. He added he is grateful for the efforts that were made to get this item on agenda, and thanked Dr. Riley, Mary Anne Butler, Mark Friese, Alicia Dawe and Bryan Morrone for putting this forward for consideration. He also recognized Mr. Desmond's wife Jackie for her support, Peter Anderson, and Scott Howard for their efforts.

Greg Howard commented he supports the memorial proposal "Desmond Way" noting it is perfect. He was a great asset for this community and a terrible loss. He also spoke on the outstanding job that Dr. Osga is doing with the superintendent search, it will help our community move forward after Dr. Riley's departure. Mr. Howard commented on school transmissions of COVID-19 and willingness to share data that he has been following.

Adam Lincus commented on the positive experience he had during the focus group for the superintendent's search, adding it was fantastic and very transparent. He also shared a statement from the parent advisory committee on diversity, equity and inclusion. (see attached)

Ashley Tewell spoke on the focus group with Dr. Osga and thanked her for the opportunity. She added we should have a new superintendent by April 1st and voiced the new superintendent should be involved in hiring of the new high school principal since they will be the one working with this principal and maybe include them in the search.

Board Presentations

Kevin Agnello and Allison Van Etten – Social Media and Mental Health - Kevin Agnello and Allison Van Etten shared a presentation which focused around social media and how it affects mental health in students. Mr. Agnello shared in depth information regarding data surrounding this topic. See attached presentation document. Allison Van Etten spoke the district is looking at opportunities for presentations specific to on line safety and shared upcoming initiatives for parents and students to attend. She spoke of future potential partnerships with Child and Family agency which will be located at the district office. Mrs. Van Etten noted the district would like to potentially do more surveys with students, targeting middle school students with regards to social media. Kevin Agnello noted that he feels something about mental health should be included in the Board Goals. He added we should be present, aware and involved in the community. Sara Baker commented the district should look at the roll of narcissism and how it could possibly play a role with what we are seeing. Chris Donahue spoke on empathy and caring for other classmates and what can we do to enhance these programs and continue to move forward. Heidi Simmons spoke she is hopeful that within the next month we will be able to confirm the goals and voiced that the children's mental health is primary. Dan Kelley asked what can the district do to bring that trend down and instead of upwards. He voiced he thinks we need to have a stricter policy during the day in the schools from classroom to classroom regarding use of cell phones. It is up to the administration to crack down on the cell phone issues in the schools, the policy needs to be enforced. He would like the district to step it up.