

STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING June 9, 2022-Page | 1

Farouk Rajab, Board Chairman called the regular meeting to order at 6:33p.m. Members present were Heidi Simmons, Secretary, Chris Donahue, Dam Kelley, Sara Baker, Craig Esposito, and Kevin Agnello. 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.

Farouk Rajab, Chair opened the meeting by asking for a motion to table item eleven on the agenda.

The following motion was made by Kevin Agnello and seconded by Farouk Rajab:

Motion 1: To table item XI on the agenda Approval of Board of Education Goals.
All: Aye

Chair Rajab explained he would like a second review of the goals. He will schedule a special Board of Education meeting next week to give Board members time to get a second read of the goals.

Communications & Recognitions

Dr. Riley recognized Tori Gimple from Stonington Middle School as the 2023 Paraeducator of the Year and Holly Saad, Guidance Counselor at Stonington High School as the 2023 Educator of the Year. He communicated that the Child Guidance Center will hopefully be opening in August in the HTP building across from the police station. Dr. Riley noted the National Honor Society Induction took place in the high school commons where new students were inducted. He communicated that Deanna Brucoli was hired for the middle school principal position and the interviews for the assistant principal will take place the week of June 21st. He communicated he attended the high school academic awards ceremony and noted that the senior awards will be held on Monday, June 13th. He recognized the outdoor boys' track team and girls' tennis team for their state championships, adding this has been the most successful year in the history of high school sports. Dr. Riley recognized the Stonington Police Department for the High Five Fridays program at each school.

Dan Kelley recognized Tori Gimple as the Paraeducator of the Year and Ms. Saad for the Educator of the Year. He also recognized the drama department who won best musical and received the Halo Award. He acknowledged students Ryan Orr and Josh Mooney for winning the outdoor track State Opens and moving onto New England Track and Field tournament. He also recognized George Crouse who led the girls' tennis team to a state championship. He communicated that Sunday was the high school pops concert. He attended the meet and greet at the fire house with the incoming superintendent. He also noted he attended the student achievement awards night and is looking forward to the senior awards night. He shared they are still looking for funds for the all night grad party and are accepting donations and door prizes.

Chris Donahue gave a big congratulations to the sports teams for their state championships. He recognized the Paraeducator of the Year and Educator of the Year and the new administrators, Deanna Brucoli and Manny MacDonald. He thanked Kyle Lowry, Student Government Representative for all his hard work on the Board this year.

Heidi Simmons communicated she had a nice interaction with students during her visit to West Vine Street School, where she also read one of her favorite books to the students.

Sara Baker acknowledged the women's lacrosse team for their commitment and excellence as well as the women's tennis team. She communicated it was a pleasure to attend the Student Government ceremony and thanked Kyle Lowry for his commitment to the Board. She looks forward to having Diya Patel as the student voice and representation. She also thanked Dr. Riley for his commitment to education, thoughtfulness and is very appreciative that his journey ends here in our town. She added we will miss Dr. Riley but excited for what the future holds for him.

Farouk Rajab, Chair dittoed all that was said and congratulated the soon to be graduates. He thanked Kyle Lowry for his participation on the Board by presenting him with a small gift from the Board members. He recognized the high school band for marching in the Memorial Day parade adding they were fantastic. He gave a shout out to West Vine Street School for their Sensory Garden, adding it is a joy watching the children there. Chair Rajab congratulated Gary Shettle on his retirement and Principal Mark Friese. He thanked his fellow Board members for their service to the students and town. He thanked the students for their dedication and hard work. He also gave a shout out to the Stonington Public Schools staff for their hard work and thanked the paraeducators for their hard work and attendance at the Board meetings. Chair Rajab, thanked Dr. Riley noting he looked up to him, appreciated him and is grateful for all he has done.

Kyle Lowry, Student Government Representative recognized the new Student Government Executive Board student members.

Comments from Citizens Regarding Items on the Agenda

Matthew Guarnieri commented on Columbus Day and Indigenous Peoples Day.

Farouk Rajab, Chair respectfully asked that Mr. Guarnieri not comment because he was not citizen. Mr. Guarnieri disregarded Chair Rajab's request and continued to make comments.

Ashley Tewell congratulated the sports teams. She thanked administration for the High Five Fridays. She commented and gave her feedback on the Board goals and asked how the goals will be achieved. She commented there should be more discussion regarding the Columbus Day and Indigenous Peoples Day. She wished good luck to Kyle Lowry and all the seniors and hoped all have a great summer.

Consent Agenda

- A. Minutes – May 12, 2022/May 23, 2022
- B. Checks and Bills – June
- C. Personnel Report
- D. Teacher Evaluation Flexibility Waiver
- E. Director of Food Service Annual Contract Increase

Craig Esposito withdrew his motion to approve the consent agenda and a new motion was presented.

The following motion was made by Dan Kelley and seconded by Sara Baker:

Motion 2: To approve all items on the Consent Agenda except Item D.
All: Aye

Item D was removed from the Consent Agenda for further explanation. Mary Anne Butler explained item D, Teacher Evaluation Flexibility Waiver on the Consent Agenda in detail per the Board's request.

The following motion was made by Dan Kelley and seconded by Sara Baker:

Motion 3: To accept the Teacher Evaluation Flexibility Waiver.
All: Aye

First Read of Curriculum

- Marine Ecology
- Surviving the Outdoors
- Food & Nutrition 1: Foundations
- Forensic Science

Second Read/Approval of Curriculum

- Vocational Math
- Entrepreneurship

The following motion was made by Kevin Agnello and seconded by Chris Donahue:

Motion 4: To waive the second read of the curriculum on item VI of the agenda and approve all curriculum under Items VI and VII as presented.
All: Aye

Craig Esposito asked if administration agreed to waive the second read. Kevin Agnello chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee noted the curriculum was discussed during tonight's committee meeting and all were in agreement to waive the second read.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Riley gave an update on COVID-19 issues. He noted the Stonington Middle School HVAC update was presented at the Finance and Facilities Committee meeting and the Board will receive estimates for the project in September or early October. Chris Williston gave an update on various grants for technology. The Board had questions regarding grant funding for cyber security services. Mr. Williston explained what has been put in place to help with the districts technology and security issues.

2022-23 Budget Update/Approval

Chris Donahue shared a list of staff reductions affecting the budget in the amount of \$308,167.

The following motion was made by Sara Baker and seconded by Heidi Simmons:

Motion 5: To approve the recommended reduction of \$308,167 and approve the 2022-2023 budget that was approved by town vote and Board of Finance.
All: Aye

Farouk Rajab, Chair thanked the Board for approving the 2022-23 budget. Heidi Simmons asked if we have had many responses to the search of the music teacher. Dr. Riley responded he would get back to Ms. Simmons on that issue.

The Board and administration exchanged dialogue regarding the ending balance of the budget and what the Board's direction is to do with the remaining fund balance. They also discussed the boiler repair at the high school. Peter Anderson answered the Board's questions regarding the boiler repair.

The following motion was made by Dan Kelley and seconded by Craig Esposito:

Motion 6: To put the remaining balance in the Health Reserve Account.
All: Aye

Incoming Superintendent Updates

Mary Anne Butler gave an update on her meeting with Child and Family Agency. She reported Danielle Chesebrough is organizing a meeting to maximize family communication and suggests the Board have a presentation in the fall on this issue. Mrs. Butler reported she met with school art teachers and the Westerly/Pawcatuck Chamber of Commerce representative to discuss a couple of projects with student involvement. She spoke that the High Five Fridays are receiving a good response and the next one will take place at the middle school. She shared that ten teachers will be participating with NESS in their free professional development day. She shared an update on curriculum. Mrs. Butler noted that traditionally the Board does not have a July meeting and suggested using that regular meeting of July 14th date as her evaluation meeting. She also noted the Board will have three policy workshop meetings on July 19, 20 and 26. There will be facility tours on August 10th and 17th for Board members. The Welcoming Schools assignments will be coming out soon for the Board. She reported the survey that Kevin Agnello helped craft will be going out tomorrow to families. She shared that our new Director of Finance has already visited the District Office twice. Mrs. Butler noted we will be interviewing for the new middle school assistant principal on June 20th and 22nd. She communicated she will be announcing summer hours for the staff at District Office. Dan Kelley asked where the idea of the High Five Fridays came from and if we had any PR on it. Mrs. Butler explained that Officer Browning shared that idea with the district and believes it has been used in the New London schools. As far as PR, The Day has come out to Deans Mill. Chris Donahue questioned if we applied for the HBI grant. Mrs. Butler noted that we were offered the grant.

Approval of Board of Education Goals

Itemed tabled.

Parent Square Tutorial

Chris Williston, Director of Technology gave an overview of the Parent Square platform and how users can change preferences for receiving messages.

Monthly Reports

Kyle Lowry, Student Government Representative gave an overview of his monthly report. Heidi Simmons voiced she appreciated Mr. Lowry's reports during the past year and asked what areas he thought the district needs improvement on.

Items for Future Agendas

Heidi Simmons asked for a discussion surrounding Columbus Day and Indigenous Peoples' Day. Dan Kelley asked for a discussion regarding communication between athletic coaches and students, evaluations of extracurricular activity leaders. Chair Rajab will ask Mrs. Butler for a meeting the first week of July to discuss these topics.

Board Comments/Concerns

Farouk Rajab, Chair explained the constitutional requirement to allow public to speak and explained what is allowed during Board meetings in regards to public comment, which was in reference to tonight's meeting incident during public comment.

Dr. Van Riley thanked the Board for allowing him to serve the community, students and teachers. He explained what he wants his legacy to be. He added he is proud of the leadership team and support staff. He hopes that the Board works together with the leadership team in the future. He noted this was the 912th Board meeting in his career and it has been an honor and thanked the community and the Board.

Adjournment

The following motion was made by Sara Baker and seconded by Craig Esposito:

Motion 7: To adjourn 8:02p.m.
All: Aye


Heidi Simmons, Secretary