

Board of Education Regular Meeting  
Suffield High School Media Center  
and via Zoom  
November 7, 2022

Call to Order

Board member Maureen Sattan called the meeting to order at 5:52 p.m.

Present: Board members Josh Barrows, Tracy Cloyd, Jamie Drzyzga, Melissa Finnigan, Brian Fry, Glenn Gazdik (via Zoom), James Mol, and Maureen Sattan; and Superintendent Timothy Van Tassel

Absent: Terry Antrum

Executive Session

Board Chair Sattan moved to go into executive session for the purpose of (a) discussion and review of the Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Suffield Board of Education and the Suffield Administrators Group and (b) personnel matter relating to terms and conditions of unaffiliated personnel, inviting Superintendent Van Tassel and Assistant Superintendent Zawawi to join. Board member Brian Fry seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. Assistant Superintendent Zawawi left the executive session at 6:10 p.m. The Board went into recess at 6:47 p.m. The regular meeting resumed at 6:50 p.m.

Board Chair Sattan opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi, Business Manager Bill Hoff and SHS Student Representative Sophia Mormino (via Zoom) joined the regular meeting in addition to those listed above.

Recognition

The Board recognized McAlister's fifth grade students who were nominated for this year's Kid Governor: Lilah Benton, Olivia Grenier, Patrick Kaleta, Farren Mol, Valerie Richardson-White, Fiona Padykula and Eva Upton. Patrick Kaleta was chosen by his fifth grade peers to represent McAlister at the state competition. Patrick's platform was on gun violence. Superintendent Van Tassel commended the students for their hard work and congratulated Patrick Kaleta. The Board congratulated all the students on a job well done.

Suffield High School Student Representatives

Sophia Mormino, Class of 2023, shared the news and events at all schools. Student Representative Mormino said congratulations go to the Suffield Middle School Boys Cross Country runners for winning the Class S Championship at Wickham Park. The SMS Variety Show will take place on Thursday and a Veterans Day celebration is planned for Friday. Over 20 SMS students participated in the Student Leadership Program run by Jay Bonstingl. Suffield High School Agriscience held a First Look Open House on November 3. SHS Spirit Week ran last week and the Homecoming Dance was on Saturday. The SHS National Honor Society Induction Ceremony is on November 16. Student Representative Mormino said Spaulding and McAlister parent-teacher conferences will take place next week. As colder weather approaches, parents are reminded to please dress students appropriately.

## Public Comment

None

## Board Member Comment

- Board members Gazdik, Drzyzga and Cloyd congratulated the Kid Governor nominees and winner as well as their families.
- Board member Fry complimented the parents and students who were nominated as Kid Governor and the winner, Patrick Kaleta, for his platform on gun violence. Board member Fry said November is Native American Heritage Month. He encouraged the community to vote on Tuesday.
- Board Chair Sattan said to please vote on Tuesday and that there is no school for students on Election Day.

**MOTION #22-83:** Board Chair Sattan made a Motion to move Discussion/Action Item XI B - M&J Transportation Update to VII A. Finnigan moved, Mole seconded. All voted in favor. The motion passed **8-0-0**.

- **M&J Transportation Update**

Superintendent Van Tassel gave a brief update on the current busing situation in Suffield and introduced Jon Hipsher, M&J Chief Operating Officer. Mr. Hipsher began by saying he feels there is a wonderful partnership between Suffield Public Schools and M&J Transportation. He said that safety is never compromised and is always the first priority. Mr. Hipsher said the driver shortage is a national problem. During this shortage, he has built a close relationship with the Secretary of Education and the Department of Motor Vehicles. He said M&J will be running some exciting campaigns to obtain and retain drivers for school routes and athletics, he feels athletic transportation is equally as important. Mr. Hipsher said there are currently four individuals in the M&J driver training program and those individuals will be assigned to Suffield. The training program consists of 5 - 6 weeks of training. Mr. Hipsher is also planning to hold a job fair in the schools. He said parents of young children are allowed to take their children on the bus with them. Mr. Hipsher said routes have been consolidated as much as they can be. Board members discussed the forecast for improvement and the fact that M&J is not meeting its contractual obligations. Business Manager Bill Hoff asked Mr. Hipsher to explain the training process. Mr. Hipsher said recruitment is difficult, driving a 40-foot-long bus with children proves challenging and background checks are time consuming. Board members emphasized the importance of reliable transportation to the district and discussed why routes are not being combined when someone is out sick. Mr. Hipsher said capacity is an issue.

## Reports to the Board

- **Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Van Tassel thanked the Kid Governor nominees and winner, Patrick Kaleta. He said the district will be applying for a CSDE waiver to include Teachers College as a recommended program. Programs on the current recommendation list are being reviewed by our literacy coaches. Superintendent Van Tassel thanked Kate Powers and Emily Boone from

Suffield Youth and Family Services for hosting a special parent evening on the documentary Chasing Childhood. He thanked Human Resource Specialist Kathy Carney for coordinating another successful walking challenge for the district. Superintendent Van Tasel thanked all those involved with the SHS Pep Rally, Homecoming and tournament games. He thanked the sports teams that helped the Town with the Field of Flags. Superintendent Van Tasel congratulated the SMS Boys Cross Country Team for winning the Class S Championship at Wickham Park. He congratulated the SHS Boys Cross Country Team for participation in the CIAC State Open Championship and recognized Junior Griffin Mandirola for finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> overall with a time of 15:48, only six seconds behind the overall winner. Superintendent Van Tasel said there will be no school on Election Day, faculty will be engaging in professional development activities. Superintendent Van Tasel thanked all Veterans for their service to our country.

- Board Chair's Report

Board Chair Sattan congratulated Board members on receiving the CAFE Board Recognition Award and thanked members for their commitment to Suffield Public Schools. She said Suffield was one of ten districts to receive this recognition. Board Chair Sattan encourages BOE members to engage in CAFE professional development offerings in some capacity. She said she, Superintendent Van Tasel, Board of Finance Chair Ryan Anderson and First Selectman Colin Moll met via Zoom to discuss next year's budget process. She said the Board budget process will be tweaked this year and the BOE will hold a Board Workshop on a Saturday morning, January 21. Board Chair Sattan said she will not be in attendance at the second meeting on November 21 and Board Vice Chair Gazdik will run the meeting.

- Business Manager's Report

Business Manager Bill Hoff said the free breakfast and lunch program will be ending on November 30, 2022.

- Board of Selectmen's Report

No report

- Board of Finance Liaison's Report

No report

#### Approval of Minutes

**MOTION #22-84:** James Mol moved, Josh Barrows seconded to approve the Board of Education meeting minutes of October 3, 2022, October 11, 2022 and October 17, 2022. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **8-0-0**.

### Consent Agenda

Board Chair Sattan said the *Optional* wording under section C 3 should be omitted in Policy #5113.

**MOTION #22-85:** Melissa Finnigan moved to approve the consent agenda, omitting the *Optional* wording under section C 3, containing Policy #5113 – Attendance, Excuses, Dismissal. James Mol seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of approving the consent agenda. The motion passed **8-0-0**.

### Discussion/Action Items

- September Financial Report

Business Manager Bill Hoff reported on the projected surplus for the year, state and federal grants, and food service. Board members discussed the M&J contract and if costs are adjusted for absent drivers. Board members discussed offering the before-school program as an option for parents to drop students off early during this shortage. Mr. Hoff said the before-school program is currently full.

- Suffield Middle School Building Project Community Survey and Feedback Results

Board Chair Sattan reported on the results of the SMS Building Project Survey that was shared with district families on October 12. A total of 273 people completed the survey. Survey results showed that 60.1% of respondents were in favor of a new build for the Suffield Middle School, 32.6% preferred to renovate as new and 7.3% felt the Town should not be considering a school facility project. The current 6-8 grade structure was preferred. If there was a renovation, renovate with addition was the preferred choice. The Town would like a recommendation from the Board by November 17. Board members discussed disruption to educational learning, building supply costs and building efficiencies and it was generally agreed that a new build was the best building option to advance with Board support. SMS Principal Ken Smith said the current middle school was retrofitted many years ago. Principal Smith said he has worked through a renovate to new building project before and it is extremely disruptive. Board Chair Sattan said the recommendation of build to new will be brought forward to the town.

### ***Tracy Cloyd left at 8:15, returned at 8:19.***

- Discussion and Possible Action on the Proposed HVAC Grant Project to be considered for possible Board of Finance resolution

Director of Facilities, Larry Plano, reported on Suffield Public Schools' HVAC state grant opportunities. The Spaulding and McAlister boiler rooms were discussed and options were reviewed. McAlister classroom air conditioner units were reviewed and discussed. Suffield High School is looking for a complete HVAC system overhaul. Board members discussed the process of grant approval, the timeline of spending the grant and selection process for equipment. Superintendent Van Tassel thanked Mr. Plano and said he will be attending the BOF meeting on November 17. A Board vote is not required at this time.

- Adoption of Proposed 2023 Board of Education Meeting Dates

**MOTION #22-86:** Tracy Cloyd moved, James Mol seconded to adopt the 2023 Board of Education meeting dates as presented. The motion passed **8-0-0**.

- Discussion and Possible Action on the Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Suffield Board of Education and the Suffield Administrators Group

Superintendent Van Tassel asked the BOE to approve the Agreement. He said BOE members heard details in Executive Session and the Agreement will go into effect on July 1, 2023.

**MOTION 22-87:** James Mol moved, Glenn Gazdik seconded to approve the Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Suffield Board of Education and the Suffield Administrators Group. The motion passed **8-0-0**. Board Chair Sattan thanked the administrators of SPS.

#### Subcommittee Reports

- October 7 - Policy – Board member Fry said the following policies are being placed on a 30-Day Read: Policy #4131 – Staff Development, Policy #6143 – Advanced Coursework, Policy #6172.7 – Remote Learning, Policy #0200 – Goals and Objectives. He said Policy #9325 – Meeting Conduct was discussed and will remain on the agenda. Board member Fry said Policy #5144 – Student Discipline was presented to the subcommittee with language proposed by legal counsel and the CT Department of Education. Additional changes to this policy are anticipated and it will remain on the subcommittee agenda.
- October 27 – Finance & Facilities – Board member Finnigan said Athletic Director Todd Zenczak provided an update on athletic busing and Business Manager Bill Hoff provided an update on the current transportation situation. Mr. Hoff also provided the September Financial Report for review. The subcommittee met with the PBC along with Tecton to discuss the Suffield Middle School project. Board member Finnigan said D2C (Dedication to Community) will be presenting to secondary schools in December to help create healthier school environments going forward. Board member Finnigan secured \$3500 from the Parent Teacher Advisory Council and \$3500 from the Foundation for Exceptional Children of Suffield to help with the program costs. She will be putting together some marketing to promote the program. Board Chair Sattan thanked Board member Finnigan for bringing this program to life.
- November 7 – Curriculum & Instruction – Board member Drzyzga said the K-5 MTSS team attended the meeting and explained the process of data collection. The MTSS platform was reviewed and the team explained how it enhances teaching practices. SMS will begin using the MTSS platform and it will eventually be used at SHS. SHS Humanities Coach, Stephannie Holland, reviewed ECE courses that are planned for SHS. An update on the K-5 World Language program was given. MIS will not be offering Spanish this year and the Subcommittee is in agreement. A suggestion was made to offer a World Language program as an enrichment opportunity after school.

#### Board Liaison Reports

- CREC – Board Chair Sattan said Robin Cecere, Division Director for School Choice, reviewed the Sheff settlement. CREC is struggling with transportation needs as well.
- Agriscience – Board member Fry said AgSci is a robust program. The AgSci food lab is complete. AgSci students created and distributed corsages at the Big E. The 4-H Biotech Club is learning about DNA extraction. The FFA Convention took place at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis and our Suffield students showed well. AgSci held open house on Nov. 3. There is a FFA competition at UCONN on Friday.

- C ABE – Board member Finnigan said C ABE has many PD offerings available to BOE members. Board member Finnigan and Board Chair Sattan will be attending the C ABE Convention on November 17 and will receive the C ABE Board Recognition Award on behalf of the entire Board.

#### Future Business

- Nursing Review (TBS)
- World Language Program Review (SNT)
  - Board Chair Sattan said the World Language program at McAlister was reviewed during the Curriculum Subcommittee meeting today. Board members should direct any World Language questions to Assistant Superintendent Zawawi.

#### Public Comment

None

#### Board Member Comment

- Board member Drzyzga thanked all who attended the Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee meeting.
- Board member Finnigan thanked the district representatives for the Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee presentation on MTSS.
- Board member Sattan thanked the SMS PTAC and FECS for their financial support of the D2C program.

#### Adjournment

Brian Fry moved, James Mol seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Click here to view the meeting: [11.07.22 BOE Meeting](#)

*Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of December 5, 2022.*

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Drzyzga, Secretary