

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Suffield High School Library Media Center
and via Zoom
February 6, 2023

Call to Order

Board Chair Sattan called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Board members Terry Antrum (via Zoom), Josh Barrows, Tracy Cloyd, Jamie Drzyzga, Melissa Finnigan, Brian Fry, Glenn Gazdik, James Mol and Maureen Sattan; and Superintendent Timothy Van Tassel, Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi and Business Manager Bill Hoff

Absent: None

MOTION #22-99: Maureen Sattan made a motion to move Item X. C. Discussion and Possible Approval of the 2023-2024 District School Calendar to Agenda Item VI A. James Mol seconded the motion and all members voted in favor. The motion passed **8-0-0**. A technical sound problem prevented Board member Antrum from casting this vote; his other meeting votes were cast via Zoom chat.

Suffield High School Student Representatives

None

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

- Board member Fry acknowledged that today marks the 100th day of school, February is Black History Month, and the Black Student Union is currently running a clothing drive. He would like to see Suffield Public Schools serve free lunch to all students and he has reached out to State Representative Tami Zawistowski. Board member Fry encourages the public to reach out to representatives to provide this service.

Discussion and Possible Approval of the 2023-2024 District School Calendar

Assistant Superintendent Michelle Zawawi began by thanking the District Calendar Committee. The committee consisted of Principals Gina Olearczyk, Kris Pryce and Ken Smith; Assistant Principals Matt Dobi and Melissa Todd; teachers Mark Janick, Shannon Picard, Denise Rigby, Suzanne Wosko and Kristen Zavisza; Academic Support Sara Schulz; Teamster member and SPS employee Mary Poit; Board members Jamie Drzyzga and Melissa Finnigan; and parents Kristi Upton and Kelli Young. Assistant Superintendent Zawawi said the committee met on three different dates, were a motivated group and were pleased with the outcome of the proposed calendar. Committee members reviewed the new calendar format that is free of symbols and uses shaded boxes to signify no school and professional development days. Three full professional development days have been proposed for next year and will fall on Tuesdays (after Columbus Day and on Election Day) and the Wednesday following February break. Five early dismissal days were

proposed. One of the early dismissal days would fall on a Friday prior to a long weekend. The remaining four early dismissal days would be held on Tuesdays to provide more in-depth collaboration time for teachers. Teachers are contractually obligated to stay one hour longer on Tuesdays and with students now required to receive lunch on early dismissal days, this helps to lengthen collaboration time. The committee reviewed the proposed April break which would fall the week of April 15. This was selected as a near midpoint from February's break to the next break and to match with Massachusetts schools as 20% of the SPS staff reside in Massachusetts. Parent teacher conferences were reviewed. Columbus Day is a federal holiday and that is why it has remained on the calendar as such.

Board Chair Sattan said it was not required that the proposed calendar be approved tonight. Board members thanked the committee for the work put into the calendar. Board members discussed concerns with holding early dismissal days on Tuesdays and the impact it may have on families. Committee members explained the disparity of professional development time for teachers as compared to surrounding districts. Board members discussed the BOE Goal for Professional Growth, how early dismissal on Tuesdays would impact instructional time and if childcare could be offered through the AWS After School Program or through the Suffield Parks & Recreation Department.

MOTION #22-100: Fry moved to accept the proposed 2023-2024 District School Calendar as recommended by the District Calendar Committee, but with a name change to call the October holiday Indigenous Peoples Day instead of Columbus Day. Mol seconded the motion. Board members expressed different points of view relative to the naming of the Columbus Day holiday and to the professional development days being placed on Tuesdays rather than Fridays. Board members discussed waiting to vote in order to gather feedback from community members on the professional development days. A vote by roll call was conducted. The motion failed **0-9-0**.

MOTION #22-101: Finnigan moved to accept the proposed 2023-2024 District School Calendar as recommended by the District Calendar Committee. Drzyzga seconded the motion. Board members discussed the effort that was placed into creating the proposed calendar and the desire for more time to review and to discuss ways of supporting families on the early dismissal days. A vote by roll call was conducted. Drzyzga and Finnigan voted to accept the proposed 2023-2024 District School Calendar. Antrum, Barrows, Cloyd, Fry, Gazdik, Mol and Sattan voted against. The motion failed **2-7-0**.

Superintendent Van Tasel said he will contact Suffield Parks & Recreation Director Peter Leclerc and AWS After School Care Program Coordinator Melissa Colon to be part of the conversation relative to student coverage on early dismissal days. Board members requested the district comparisons from the Calendar Committee. Assistant Superintendent Zawawi would like an end date for the approval of the proposed calendar.

MOTION #22-102: Sattan moved to approve Spring Break during the week of April 15, 2024 as presented on the proposed 2023-2024 District School Calendar. Mol seconded the motion. The motion passed **9-0-0**.

Reports to the Board

- Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Van Tasel said A.Ward Spaulding School Assistant Principal Jack Ferraro will be retiring at the end of the year. He said he is grateful to Principal Ferraro for his leadership over the

last 16 years and that his retirement will leave a void that will be especially hard to fill. Superintendent Van Tassel said Mr. Ferraro will be celebrated at the June 5 BOE meeting. Suffield High School Class of 2023 graduation planning has begun, and he encourages Board members to participate in some way. He thanked Human Resource Specialist Kathy Carney and Director of Technology Rebecca Osleger for coordinating the Wellness Midyear Summit. Superintendent Van Tassel congratulated SHS Senior Joshua Nieroda on his 100th win in wrestling and the SHS men's and women's Indoor Track teams for placing first and second, respectively, in their conferences. Superintendent Van Tassel congratulated Basheer Wehelie and Max Hanson for being honored with the North Central Chamber of Commerce Kindness Award. He recognized the SMS Girls Basketball team on being tied for first place in an extremely competitive conference. He attended a Joint Facilities Long-range Study Committee meeting on Tuesday with Bill Hoff and Melissa Finnigan. Superintendent Van Tassel said over the course of this month students in all grades will be celebrating Black History Month. Highlights from these special activities will be shared in school newsletters and a video collage will be posted online.

- Board Chair's Report

Board Chair Sattan said Joint Facilities and Dedication To Community will be discussed by Board member Finnigan. She said budget questions may still be submitted. Policy is a big function of the Board and she welcomes Board member input. The next regular meeting of the BOE is Wednesday, February 22. This meeting is scheduled on a Wednesday due to February break. An interim BOE meeting may be added for budget deliberations.

- Business Manager's Report

Business Manager Bill Hoff said he informed Superintendent Van Tassel that he intends to retire in September. He said he has had the pleasure of going to a job he loves but the time has come for him to spend more time with his wife, children, sons-in-law and grandchildren. He said it has been a pleasure serving the people of Suffield and he thanked them for the opportunity to do so. He thanked the many administrators, teachers and staff who have helped him over the years, thanking many by name: Mary Poit, Eileen Cybulski, Tim Van Tassel, Becky Osleger, Larry Plano, Kathy Carney, Laura (Guerrette), Jamie (Berry), Melissa (Bielonko), Lorin (Kelleher), Terri (Zaczynski), Sharon Strzegowski, Ben Gashi, Tim Malley, Jackie McDonough at M&J Bus Company, Michelle Zawawi and Diana Kelley. Lastly, Mr. Hoff thanked this Board of Education, and all previous Board members, for their support. He said he knows he is leaving Suffield better than when he came and that is due to all the support, advice and hard work he received from those mentioned above.

- Board of Selectmen Liaison's Report

None

- Board of Finance Liaison's Report

None

Approval of Minutes

MOTION #22-103: James Mol moved, Tracy Cloyd seconded to approve the Board of Education meeting minutes of January 3, 2023, January 10, 2023, and January 23, 2023. The motion passed **9-0-0**.

Consent Agenda

MOTION #22-104: Brian Fry moved to approve the following on the consent agenda: Policy #9325 – Meeting Conduct. James Mol seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of approving the consent agenda. The motion passed **9-0-0**.

Discussion/Action Items

- Budget Presentations

Superintendent Van Tasel recognized Business Manager Bill Hoff. He said Mr. Hoff is a rare individual and this is a significant loss. His character and trustworthiness is outstanding. Superintendent Van Tasel said it has been an honor to work with him and wished him a full and enjoyable retirement.

Business Manager Bill Hoff reviewed the 2023-2024 Summary of Additional Adjustments to Superintendent’s Budget. Adjustments in out-of-district tuitions, transportation, the building repairs budget and Open Choice budget were discussed. Mr. Hoff then shared the adjusted budget increase is now 6.75%.

Director of Special Services Dr. Diana Kelley thanked Dr. Sharon Goulet and Jana Volpe for attending tonight’s meeting. Dr. Kelley reviewed some highlights from this year. She thanked the Special Services staff for their work on transitioning from Frontline to CT-SEDS. Adjustments to the Special Education budget were reviewed and an explanation of Excess Cost Reimbursements was given. Board members discussed the adjustment for the nurse for transportation position.

Business Manager Bill Hoff reviewed the utilities budget including water, electricity and natural gas. General Services and Health Insurance were discussed. There is a 9% increase in rates for medical and dental. Adjusted General Services were discussed. Board members discussed staff turnover.

Tracy Cloyd left at 8:47, returned at 8:50
Michelle Zawawi left at 8:51, returned at 8:53

Business Manager Bill Hoff reviewed entitlement grants and private donations. He reviewed Federal and State Grants for 2023-2024. BOE Grant Expenditures were discussed. Mr. Hoff explained the ARP ESSER funds and the positions they are funding. Open Choice Grant Expenditures were reviewed. Board members asked questions regarding Open Choice. Mr. Hoff explained the impact of grant FTEs moved to BOE budget and the impact of other expenses moved to BOE budget. Mr. Hoff discussed the total expenditures budget.

Board members discussed the positions flow between the BOE budget and grants. Board members said movement from Grant back to BOE budget should be clarified. Mr. Hoff said there are 13.37 FTEs that may need to be moved back to BOE budget in the future. Offsets to inflation and impact of inflation were discussed and reviewed. Superintendent Van Tasel recognized that Mr. Hoff is trying to position the Board for the future.

Josh Barrows left at 8:57, returned at 8:59
Jamie Drzyzga left at 9:04, returned at 9:07

- December Financial Report

Business Manager Bill Hoff reported on the general operating budget, federal and state grants, and food service income. The projected year end shows a net surplus of \$1,169. Mr. Hoff said that since this report was written, he is going to ask the BOF for a refund on budgeted gas and diesel.

- Discussion and Possible Approval to waive BOE Policy #3320 Purchasing Procedures to waive the requirement for sealed bids for the LAF outbuildings project

Business Manager Bill Hoff said they would like to work with a local contractor who is in line with this project. Board members asked why this request is being made. Mr. Hoff said all bids would need to be rejected and another bid would have to go out which could take another 4-6 weeks.

MOTION #22-105: Tracy Cloyd moved, Glenn Gazdik seconded to approve to waive BOE Policy #3320 Purchasing Procedures to waive the requirement for sealed bids for the LAF outbuildings project. The motion passed **9-0-0**.

Subcommittee Reports

- January 6 and February 3 – Policy Subcommittee – Board member Fry said at the January 6 Policy meeting Policies #4117.6 and #4217.6 were discussed and will be moved to 30-day read. Policy #5144 will be reviewed at a future meeting. Policies #1324 and #1325 were discussed at length and no modifications will be made. At the February 3 Policy meeting, Policy #6174 Summer Learning Academy and Policy #5123.2 Summer School Work for Credit was reviewed. Administration feels now is the time to implement existing policy for charging a fee for student participation in the summer enrichment programs. Operational decisions will need to be made in regard to fees. Policy #3280 Gifts, Grants and Bequests was discussed and no modifications were made. Board member Fry encourages all BOE members to share thoughts and/or concerns related to Policy.
- January 18 and February 6 – Curriculum and Instruction – Board member Drzyzga said an overview of the ELA Program K-8 was given at the January 18 meeting. STAR and SBAC assessment scores were reviewed and the waiver for Suffield’s curriculum model was discussed as the curriculum team takes a deep dive into all recommended resources. The February 6 meeting was canceled.
- February 2 – Finance and Facilities – Board member Finnigan said the ACCE walkthrough took place on February 2. The December Financial Report was reviewed. First Selectman Colin Moll and Director of Finance Eric Remington reviewed bonding options for the middle school project. The thought was that the middle school project would move forward. D2C was discussed and a pathway for future meetings with the school district was looked at.

Board Liaison Reports

- CREC – Board Chair Sattan said CREC and CABA are sponsoring a legislative forum next week.
- Agriscience – Board member Fry said 45 students have been accepted into the AgSci program for next year. 38 senior students presented their AgSci Capstone projects, incorporating elements of Portrait of the Graduate.
- CABA – Board member Finnigan said legislative update is taking place next week. The ELA waiver procedure will be clarified.

Future Business

- Nursing Review (TBS)
- Gifted and Talented Population (TBS)

Board member Fry would like to have a future discussion on digital signs. He would like to seek support from the Board and then move to Planning & Zoning.

Key: RTS (Referred to Subcommittee), SNT (Scheduled Near-Term),
TBS (To Be Scheduled), HLD (On Hold)

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

Board member Gazdik thanked Bill Hoff for his work and said it will be hard to replace him.

Board member Drzyzga echoes Board member Gazdik. She said it has been a pleasure working with Bill Hoff.

Board member Barrows thanked Bill Hoff for his help when he joined the BOE and wished him a happy retirement. He said he hasn't received a text about buses in a while and his children are happy to have a steady driver.

Board member Cloyd will save her goodbyes for Bill Hoff.

Board member Finnigan said the relationship between the BOE and the BOF has come a long way and that Bill Hoff played a big role in that and she thanked him for his work.

Board member Fry congratulated Bill Hoff on his retirement. He said it will be a challenge to find a replacement.

Board member Mol thanked Mr. Hoff and Mr. Ferraro. He is concerned about enrollment with the movement of Lego.

Board Chair Sattan thanked Mr. Ferraro for his years of service.

Adjournment:

James Mol moved, Tracy Cloyd seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:52 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Click here to view the meeting: [06FEB2023 BOE Meeting](#)

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of March 6, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Drzyzga, Secretary