

STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING October 12, 2023-Page | 1

Complete Board Meeting can be heard on the Stonington Public Schools YouTube Channel at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFXjoLyIU1KT9YnO3SQSryQ/>

Farouk Rajab, Board Chairman called the regular meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. Members present were Heidi Simmons, Secretary, Chris Donahue, Dan Kelley, Sara Baker, Kevin Agnello, and Craig Esposito. Also present were Mary Anne Butler, Superintendent of Schools, Recording Secretary, Ana de Oliveira, Student Government Representative, Catherine Statchen, and members of the administrative staff and citizens.

Communications & Recognitions

Mary Anne Butler, Superintendent wished the Stonington Bears football team good luck in their upcoming game, the team is undefeated. She recognized the high school Student Government students for hosting the Fall Feast for Veterans Day in the high school cafeteria on November 15. The SHS kitchen staff will provide the food and students will donate desserts and drinks. There will also be a guest speaker and entertainment. Mrs. Butler also shared information on Veterans Day events at the middle school and elementary schools. She recognized and thanked the two parting Board members, Heidi Simmons and Craig Esposito for their years of service while presenting them with a parting gift. Catherine Statchen, Student Government Representative gave a shout-out to Ms. Dawe and the guidance counselors for the recent college day event at the high school. Dan Kelley spoke about his personal experience with his new college student and gave kudos to the high school for organizing the college fair. He also thanked Ms. Simmons and Mr. Esposito for their great job on the Board. He shared that he has received numerous emails from concerned parents and parents regarding the recent incident at West Vine Street School and is hopeful the district will do its due diligence in this matter. Kevin Agnello agreed with Mr. Kelley's words of praise for the two Board members. Craig Esposito thanked everyone for letting him serve the community. Heidi Simmons communicated her appreciation for serving on the Board and thanked the administration and staff for their support through her years on the Board. Farouk Rajab, Chairman recognized Mr. Esposito for his twelve years of service and is grateful for his leadership, friendship, and commitment. He also recognized Ms. Simmons for her four years of service and preparedness at each meeting. Mr. Rajab recognized the paraprofessionals attending the meeting.

Comments from Citizens Regarding Items on the Agenda

Bruce Yarnall, SEA President commented on behalf of the teachers regarding the recent incident at West Vine Street School. He shared the teacher's asks if an incident were to happen again. Ashley Tewell thanked Mr. Esposito and Ms. Simmons for serving on the Board. She thanked Ms. Simmons for being a Board member who responded to her first emails and for making her feel heard. Ms. Tewell voiced she really liked the new Enrollment form, which is a good improvement from the old one. She also commented on the District Improvement Plan. She looks forward to seeing how the testing scores and chronic absenteeism pans out. She noted she likes seeing the encore classes and Future Focus professional development but would like to see it expand to the middle school and elementary schools and perhaps make it a K-12 experience. She would like to see updates on how the Board liaisons are feeling about the schools. Rachel O'Dell commented on the importance of para support for students, para pay rates, and para retention. Ciara Licht a middle school teacher spoke on the para shortage and how it affects the teachers in the classroom.

Board Presentation – Child and Family Updates/Presentation

Allison Van Etten, Director of Special Services introduced Erin Saylor and Courtney Seely from Child and Family Agency and shared information on their partnership with the district. Ms. Saylor and Ms. Seely explained the type of services the agency offers to students and their families. They noted they would be opening an office at the high school. See attached for the PowerPoint presentation. They entertained the Board's questions.

Report of the Superintendent of Schools

District Improvement Plan - Mary Anne Butler, Superintendent reviewed each section of the District Improvement Plan and highlighted new programs and partnerships.

HVAC Grant Update – The contract for the estimator has been signed and the district will get a professional estimate around the first week of December in time for the Board of Finance meeting.

Public Comment on the Eastern CT Corridor Rail Feasibility Study – Ms. Butler made everyone aware of the plans to add a rail stop behind the high school. She noted this would create security and traffic issues. She will be writing a letter opposing the plan that will go out to public comment and be co-signed by the Board chair.

Consent Agenda

- A. Minutes – September 14, 2023
- B. Checks and Bills – September 2023
- C. Teacher Evaluation Waiver
- D. Personnel Report

The following motion was made by Dan Kelley and seconded by Chris Donahue:

Motion 1: To approve the consent agenda items A-D.

All: Aye – Motion Passes

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Approval of Board of Education 2024 Regular Meeting Calendar

Farouk Rajab, Chairman explained the calendar has a few extra meeting dates for budget purposes.

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Heidi Simmons:

Motion 2: To approve the Board of Education 2024 Regular Meeting Calendar.
All: Aye – Motion Passes

Sub-Committee Reports -

Teaching and Learning – Kevin Agnello reported the committee learned of two new programs, one in partnership with the Seaport and the other with local city officials. There is a first read with no vote needed on the B.E.A.R. curriculum. There is a vote required on a second read for the Food and Nutrition II: Explorations curriculum.

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Heidi Simmons:

Motion 3: To approve the Food and Nutrition II explorations curriculum.
All: Aye – Motion Passes

Finance and Facilities Sub-Committee – Chris Donahue reported we would receive an estimate for the HVAC in 4-5 weeks. He asked Mr. Anderson to share information on the status of the middle school contract for the boilers with Emcor.

Policy Sub-Committee – Dan Kelley explained all the policies for first read and second read are linked in the agenda for review.

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

Motion 4: To move to approve the four policies P1800, P5118.1, P6146.3, and P6154.
All: Aye – Motion Passes

Mr. Kelley noted that some of the new policies would now make the policies for repeal obsolete.

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

Motion 5: To approve the repeal of the four policies P5123, P5131, P5131.1, and P5131.8.
All: Aye – Motion Passes

Monthly Reports

Catherine Statchen, Student Government Representative reported on her monthly report.

Board Comments and Items for Future Agendas

Craig Esposito noted that the Board will need to appoint a new LEARN representative. He added it was a great experience, which gave him an overview of what other districts are doing and exposure to other Board members from other districts. Dan Kelley spoke on the continued para shortage and would like this item to be brought to the Personnel Sub-Committee and then reported back to the Board. Kevin Agnello would like to add the Welcoming Schools Committee to the Sub-Committee Reports section of the Board agenda. Chris Donahue requested that the administration keep the Board updated on the West Vine Street School situation. Farouk Rajab, Chair noted the Board met last night and received feedback from the attorneys and are waiting on the police report. The Board will give an update as soon as possible.

Adjournment

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Heidi Simmons:

Motion 6: To adjourn at 7:45 pm
All: Aye – Motion Passes


Heidi Simmons, Secretary