

SEYMOUR BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Seymour Middle School
Library Media Center
January 8, 2024
7:00 pm

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Stephan Behuniak
Kristen Bruno
Christopher Champagne
James Garofolo
Kristen Harmeling
Jay Hatfield
Shannon Levey
Lori Nespoli
Ed Strumello

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Sophia Motyl, Student Representative
Caitlin Hamilton, Student Representative
Dr. Susan Compton, Superintendent of Schools
Salvatore A. Bucci, Business Manager
Lee-Ann Dauerty, Board Clerk
Mary Sue Feige, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Kris Boyle, Director of Special Services
Derrick Martin, Technology
Jim Freund, Principal, SHS
Keith O'Rourke, Principal SMS
Lauren Reid, Principal, BES
David Olechna, CLS
Ronald Barnard

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Champagne called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

II. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Seymour Champion Recognitions

1. Bungay School
 - a. Aarushi Shah
 - b. Caralyn Horowitz
2. Chatfield-LoPresti School
 - a. Liam Castro
 - b. Vera Crudo
 - c. Leilani Gonzalez
3. Seymour Middle School
 - a. Cara Liposky
 - b. Brayden Ferreira

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment provides the opportunity for the public to make a comment. It is not a dialogue between the Board and the public. Based upon what is heard during Public Comment, the Board may choose to add a topic to the agenda. If questions are posed that the Chairman is able to answer, those questions may be addressed under the Chairman's Comments portion of the agenda. The Board will not discuss personnel matters. Comments should be respectful and no longer than 3 minutes in length so that all who wish to comment may have the opportunity to do so. All the public wanting to comment will need to state their name and address for the record prior to addressing the Board.

V. REPORTS

A. HS Student Representative Report- Sophia Motyl, Kaitlyn Hamilton

B. Bungay School Facility Needs Study Committee Report

Dr. Compton said the Bungay School Facility Needs Study committee was very thorough and dedicated. She thanked the members of the committee. She thanked Ms. Reid for the PowerPoint she presented at the last meeting. She said Ms. Bennett and Mr. Connors did an exemplary job. Dr. Compton said she attended every meeting. Mr. Stanek presented an excellent summary. Mr. Strumello said the Town decided to go forward with a building committee. First Selectwoman said the building committee would have the same members as the facility needs committee. Mr. Hatfield asked if they would consider more residents and possibly a teacher who could also serve on this committee. Ms. Drugonis said she would check into having a teacher serve on the committee. She says they prefer to keep the committee small. She said they will take advice from the Board of Education. The goal of the committee is to get the project to a referendum in May or November in the 2024-25 season. The public will need to be educated regarding the project.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. Special Organizational Meeting Minutes – December 11, 2023
2. Special BOE Meeting Minutes – December 11, 2023

B. Nutrition Services Finance Report – January 8, 2023

C. Staff Hiring

1. Certified

- a. McLean, Stephanie
 - Literacy Numeracy Tutor
 - Bungay Elementary School
 - Replacing Cheryl Halchak

2. Non-Certified

- a. Giuliani, Ryann
 - Instructional Paraeducator
 - Bungay Elementary School
 - Position Transferred from Chatfield-LoPresti
- b. Moktan, Kanchhi
 - Food Service Worker
 - Central Office
 - Replacing Dyan Gordon
- c. Nintzel, Julie
 - Payroll and Benefits Specialist
 - Central Office
 - Replacing Lisa Stowe

D. Volunteer Appointment

1. Strumello, Edward

- Volunteer Coach
- Boys Basketball
- Seymour High School

MOTION: (Mr. Behuniak/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to approve the consent agenda with Item A1 and item D removed

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Behuniak, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Levey, Ms. Nespoli, Mr. Strumello

MOTION PASSES: 9-0-0

VI. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

Item A1 - Mr. Champagne questioned the Organizational Meeting minutes saying the counts were right but the votes were incorrect. Ms. Harmeling said the minutes are correct but are confusing as written.

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Ms. Bruno) to accept the December 11, 2023 Organizational Meeting minutes with some adjustments with the wording for clarity.

Item D – Ms. Harmeling said she had an issue with the volunteer appointment of Mr. Ed Strumello. Dr. Compton shared additional paperwork for Mr. Strumello's appointment. She was nervous that there would be personal conflict if Mr. Strumello served on the Athletic Committee which would be uncharted waters. Legal was consulted and they indicated if Mr. Strumello was filling a position that we normally pay a person to do there could be issues but there is no legal conflict. Dr. Compton said Mr. Strumello will receive his coaching certification and it will be shared with the Board of Education. Mr. Strumello is meeting with Nurse Bennett to complete his CPR certification. Mr. Hatfield said Mr. Strumello is a former employee of the district, and he doesn't agree with the concerns. He said he was certain Mr. Strumello would recuse himself during the winter season should he serve on the Athletic Committee. Ms. Harmeling said we should be certain there is a true need before we appoint volunteers.

MOTION: (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Ms. Bruno) to approve the volunteer appointment of Mr. Strumello pending certification.

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Behuniak, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Levey, Ms. Nespoli

ABSTAIN: Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Strumello

MOTION PASSES: 7-0-2

VII. DISCUSSION and POSSIBLE ACTION

A. BOE Committee Assignments

Mr. Champagne talked about the process of making the subcommittee assignments. There was a discussion regarding when the committee meetings would be held. Ms. Harmeling voiced her opposition and concern regarding a committee assignment and left the meeting to gather her thoughts.

1. Finance Committee
Ms. Lori Nespoli
Mr. Chris Champagne
Mr. Stephan Behuniak
2. Athletic and Health Committee
Mr. Strumello
Mr. Hatfield
Ms. Levey

3. Liaison Committee
Ms. Bruno
Mr. Hatfield
Mr. Behuniak
4. Facilities and Transportation Committee
Mr. Garofolo
Ms. Harmeling
Ms. Nespoli
5. Policy Committee
Mr. Champagne
Ms. Harmeling
Mr. Strumello
6. Curriculum and Technology Committee
Mr. Garofolo
Ms. Levey
Ms. Bruno

MOTION: (Ms. Bruno/., Ms. Levey) to approve the recommendation of the Board of Education Chairperson for the appointment of members for the standing BOE Subcommittees as presented
SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Behuniak, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Levey, Ms. Nespoli, Mr. Strumello

MOTION PASSES: 8-0-0

Mr. Champagne said the committee meetings will be scheduled within the next two weeks. Thank you to Mr. Behuniak who stepped in to serve on Finance Committee and who did not get any of his first or second choices. Dr. Compton offered her help in scheduling the committee meetings. Ms. Harmeling returned to the meeting.

B. Job Description Revisions

1. Day Custodian
Dr. Compton said Mr. Connors, Mr. Pelosi, and Mr. Celello worked on these revisions and all have signed off on the changes. The changes are to add some detail to some of the job functions and all agreed. Dr. Compton said they can table this item to the next meeting so she can get a signed agreement from Mr. Connors, Mr. Pelosi, and Mr. Celello.
MOTION: (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Strumello) to table the revision of the job description for Day Custodian to the February meeting

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Behuniak, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Levey, Ms. Nespoli, Mr. Strumello

MOTION PASSES: 9-0-0

2. Supervisor of Accounting Services
MOTION: (Mr. Strumello/sec., Mr. Behuniak) to approve the revisions of the job description for Supervisor of Accounting Services as presented

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Behuniak, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Levey, Ms. Nespoli, Mr. Strumello

MOTION PASSES: 9-0-0

- C. Substitute Teacher Rate of Pay
Dr. Compton explained that they want to include this in the budget. Mr. Bucci talked about the cost of using teachers during their prep times. Mr. Champagne asked for more detail on what we have spent doing this. Mr. Hatfield wondered if this will be enough to entice substitutes. Mr. Behuniak suggested we do a deep dive and come up with the appropriate pay. We need to come up with a rate that attracts people.
- D. Building Substitute Teachers
Bungay School, Chatfield-LoPresti School, Seymour Middle School
This will be included in the budget.
- E. New Entry Age for Kindergarten
https://drive.google.com/file/d/15rpOTqW0he4gmiSCgnpFOUHSFsFgA2Br/view?usp=drive_link
Dr. Compton talked about the change in age for entry into Kindergarten and how the state has allowed entry into kindergarten after an assessment has been done for those parents who have requested their child be admitted to kindergarten. The decision will be up to the principal. The assessment is very subjective. The assessment is being used by all the valley schools.

VIII. INFORMATION

- A. Special Education Enrollment Report – Kristopher Boyle
- B. School Activities and Recognitions
 - 1. Bungay School
 - 2. Chatfield-LoPresti School
 - 3. Seymour Middle School
 - 4. Seymour High School
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HA-0k0X1_AblUvoPmmSHVN0s6TjyAK0wd6mf-OP8YAc/edit?usp=drive_link
- C. Staff Hiring (Current Staff)
 - 1. Certified
 - a. DeLorenzo, Kristen
 - Board Certified Behavior Analyst/Teacher Consultant
 - Districtwide
 - New position
- D. Staff Transfers
 - 1. Non-Certified
 - a. Schutte, Tom
 - Custodian
 - Seymour Middle School
 - Replacing Fred Kershaw
- E. Staff Resignations
 - 1. Certified
 - a. Scarpa, Michelle (Retirement)
 - Teacher
 - Seymour Middle School
 - Effective June 30, 2024
 - 2. Non-Certified
 - a. Bellavance, Linda (Retirement)
 - Secretary
 - Central Office
 - Effective July 5, 2024

- b. DeMarco, Taylor
 - Monitor Paraeducator
 - Bungay Elementary School
 - Effective December 22, 2023
- c. Guerra, Cathy (Retirement)
 - Secretary Bookkeeper
 - Central Office
 - Effective August 2, 2024
- d. Manente, Barbara
 - Food Service Worker
 - Seymour High School
 - Effective January 12, 2024

- F. CABA Webinar
 - a. The Board's Role in Advocacy – January 24, 2024
Registration required.

IX. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS/SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

- A. Board of Education Comments
 - 1. Chairman's Comments
No comments
 - 2. Board Member Comments
Ms. Bruno attended the BOS meeting, and she appreciated the work of Ms. Bennett and Ms. Reid's presentation. Mr. Hatfield reminded the Board of the Legislative Breakfast on Thursday. Ms. Nespoli also attended the meeting about the Bungay School renovation. Mr. Strumello said it will be important to get taxpayer support for the referendum. Ms. Harmeling apologized for the language she used but will not apologize for taking time to gather her thoughts. She encouraged the Board not to shy away from hard and difficult issues.
- B. Superintendent Report
Dr. Compton reminded everyone about the Finance Committee meeting on Wednesday. The first Budget Workshop will be on Thursday.

X. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: (Mr. Garofolo/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to adjourn

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Behuniak, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Levey, Ms. Nespoli, Mr. Strumello

MOTION PASSES: 9-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm

To view this meeting, please use the link below.

YouTube Link (01/08/2024): <https://youtube.com/live/ESgA3VZYV8?feature=share>

Submitted by:
Lee-Ann Dauerty
Board Clerk