

May 31, 2018

The Stillwater Township Board of Education met on May 31, 2018, at 7:00 p.m. in the Stillwater School Library for a Special Board of Education Meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Shannon Nothstine at 7:00 p.m. In accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law, the time, date and location of this meeting was provided to the New Jersey Herald & Township Journal on May 29, 2018. Notices were posted in the Stillwater School, Town Hall, Stillwater Post Office, and the Stillwater School Website.

Mrs. Nothstine led the flag salute. The following Board members were present: Mrs. Nothstine, Mrs. Santore, Mrs. Svendsen, Mrs. McPeek, Mrs. LoCascio, Mrs. Saul (arrived at 7:06 pm), and Mr. Theys.

Absent: Mr. DeGroat and Mrs. Galante.

Also present were Matthew Robinson, Superintendent, René Metzgar, Business Administrator/Board Secretary, Cali Roberts, Assistant Principal, Jaclyn Morgese, Board Attorney and members of the public.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mrs. Nothstine notified the public that we anticipated the executive session to last about one hour.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by Mrs. Santore, second by Mrs. LoCascio at 7:02 pm the Stillwater Township Board of Education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 and 10:4-13 that said public body hold a closed session for the purpose of Student Matters, Personnel Matters, Attorney Client Privileges, Policy and Safety & Security it is expected that the minutes taken of this closed session will be made public when the reason for confidentiality no longer exists. A voice vote was taken and approved: Mrs. Svendsen-Aye; Mrs. Nothstine-Aye; Mrs. Saul-Absent; Mr. Theys- No; Mrs. McPeek-Aye; Mrs. LoCascio-Aye; Mrs. Santore- Aye.

Mrs. Saul arrived at the meeting at 7:06 pm.

Motion was made by Mrs. Svendsen and seconded by Mrs. McPeek at 8:04 p.m. to come out of executive session. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

The public was invited back into the room.

At 8:08 pm a motion was made by Mrs. Svendsen, second by Mrs. McPeek to return back into public session. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

POLICY

1. Discussion of Code of Conduct & Discipline Policies:

Mrs. Nothstine read the following notice:

On Thursday, May 17, 2018, a staff member reported that a student was in possession of a mini taser like device which is not permitted on school grounds. The device was immediately confiscated. The parents of the students involved were notified. Mr.

Robinson felt that he removed the immediate threat and the investigation continued. The District followed the established policy and procedures set forth in the Student Code of Conduct. As more information developed, the board was notified of the incident on Tuesday May 22, 2018 and at that time, law enforcement was notified, and a public statement was issued. In the future, whenever an object and or device of concern is brought onto school property, law enforcement will be notified immediately and the board will be notified as well.

The Board understands the concerns of the school community and public regarding transparency and threat assessment. In light of current events, the Board has begun a comprehensive review of its policies and procedures to ensure compliance with all statutes and regulations. Where appropriate, the Board will modify its policies to address the concerns expressed by the Stillwater community.

The safety and security of our students is of paramount importance to the Board. The Board understands the concerns of the students, parents, and community members. The Board shares those concerns. The Board will continue to diligently work to address not only this incident, but to prevent future incidents from occurring.

The following recommendations are actively being revised for policy improvement:

1. A full policy review has begun in consultation with counsel.
2. Develop a standardized incident report when objects and/or devices of concern are brought on campus.
3. Police are notified anytime an object and/or device of concern is brought to school. The police will determine if there is a public threat or a public need to know. The Superintendent or designee will make notifications to the public in consultation with the police.
4. In the event of a reported incident, a risk assessment will be conducted.
5. The Board president will be notified anytime the police are called in related matters.
6. Any students affected by such an incident will be offered guidance services, in consultation with the student's parents/guardians.

Mrs. McPeek stated she feels her child is safe in this school. Really glad to see the district is reviewing policies and moving forward.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mrs. Nothstine welcomed all members of the public and thanked them for attending tonight's meeting. Please state your name and address for the record, each public member will be limited to about two minutes until everyone had a chance to speak. Public participation was opened.

-Moir Douglas- Ridge Road, Newton, NJ- commended the board for thoroughly reviewing and revising policies and procedures. She also commended the board for taking into consideration everyone involved with the school.

-Jim Cantelmo- Marigold Way, Newton, NJ- said that the administration violated the law by not immediately notifying authorities and questioned why a policy was not already in place at the school. He also questioned the status of Mr. Robinson's employment.

The attorney responded if the policies do not comply, it is the board's responsibility to correct any issues, which the board is currently in process of doing. This began at the last meeting and will continue until complete. She also mentioned the board is not allowed to comment on personnel matters.

Seeing no other comments from the public, a motion was made by Mrs. Svendsen, second by Mrs. Santore to close the public comment section. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

Mrs. Nothstine thanked the public for attending the meeting tonight. She notified the public that the board would be going back into executive session, however, no action would be taken following executive session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by Mrs. Svendsen, second by Mrs. McPeek at 8:17 pm the Stillwater Township Board of Education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 and 10:4-13 that said public body hold a closed session for the purpose of Personnel Matters and Attorney Client Privileges it is expected that the minutes taken of this closed session will be made public when the reason for confidentiality no longer exists. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

Motion was made by Mrs. Saul and seconded by Mrs. Santore at 9:30 p.m. to come out of executive session and return to public session. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

ADJOURN

Motion made by Mrs. Svendsen and seconded by Mrs. Santore to adjourn the meeting at 9:31 p.m. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,



René Metzgar

Business Administrator/Board Secretary