

September 28, 2020

The Stillwater Township Board of Education met on September 28, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. remotely via Zoom for a Regular Board of Education Meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Dennis DeGroat at 7:09 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 & Star Ledger on January 7, 2020. Notices were posted in the Stillwater School, Town Hall, Stillwater Post Office, Middleville Post Office, Swartswood Post Office and the Stillwater School Website. Notice of remote meeting access due to current emergency regarding COVID-19 was also provided to the public on August 19, 2020.

Mr. DeGroat led the flag salute. The following Board members were present: Mr. DeGroat, Mrs. Svendsen, Mrs. Nothstine, Mrs. Williver, Mrs. Saul (arrived 7:13 pm), Mrs. Galante, Mrs. LoCascio, Mrs. Kraft and Mrs. Thibault.

Absent: None.

Also present were William Kochis, Superintendent, René Metzgar, Business Administrator/Board Secretary, Marissa Cramer, Principal/Supervisor of CST and Special Education/Basic Skills, Cali Roberts, Assistant Principal/Regional Curriculum Coordinator, and members of the public.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. DeGroat apologized for the delay in the meeting due to technical difficulties.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by Mrs. Nothstine, second by Mrs. Svendsen at 7:11 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 Attorney-Client Privilege 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.

Mrs. Cramer was excused from the meeting at 7:11 pm.

Mrs. Roberts was excused from the meeting at 7:11 pm.

Motion made by Mrs. Thibault and seconded by Mrs. Svendsen at 7:16 p.m. to come out of executive session and return to public session. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

-Mark Teresi- 1001 Fairview Lake Road- Would like to see virtual classes consecutively, rather than 3-4 google meets a day separately. This makes it difficult to juggle and adds another variable to the education.

-Christine Bello- 1059 Stillwater Road- Questioned if anyone entertained the option of doing what McKeown School has done with an early dismissal each day. This would allow students in 5 days a week, specials to be virtual, and teachers would have more time. It is also concerning that her friend that had a kindergarten student last year cannot read. Students are feeling defeated.

-Jessica Pappa- 998 Owassa Road- Concerned that Friday being virtual now, we are going backwards. Understands teachers are working hard, but put students first. Fridays being all virtual is not the same education as in person.

-Christine Prtorich- 922 Fairview Lake Lane- Concerned with Fridays being fully remote. She can see the difference in the quality of education from in person to hybrid. She would rather see more days in school than less. Teachers and administration are taking everything serious, however more in person days is better than less. Teachers cannot give as much attention to remote students vs. in person students.

-Kristin Oldenburg- 907 Hardwick Road- Kudos to administration and teachers for working so hard. There is no good plan. She expressed that she thought we were moving forward and now she feels we are moving backwards. She understands teachers have to split themselves. Her recommendation would be shorter days, more academics in school, and specials to be virtual.

-Kate Teresi- 1001 Fairview Lake Road- She stated she is a teacher at KRHS and understands high school students are on a period schedule. She feels her children at Stillwater are all over the place with the virtual learning. Should have instructional lesson one after another. She felt the Spring was easier with all the hyperlinks in the documents. This setup is very distracting to kids, it would be great if they could all be back in school, maybe similar to Hampton.

Mr. DeGroat thanked the public for all their participation. He expressed we all feel the pain, frustration, pressure and hopes this will all end soon.

## **BOARD BUSINESS**

1. Motion made by Mrs. Williver, second by Mrs. Thibault to approve the Committee of the Whole Board of Education Meeting minutes from September 14, 2020. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.
2. Motion made by Mrs. Nothstine, second by Mrs. LoCascio to approve the revised Restart and Recovery Plan for the 2020-2021 school year.

Discussion: Mr. Kochis discussed the changes in the revised plan to move Fridays to all virtual instruction, with early dismissal, allowing for time for staff in the afternoon for planning and focus on virtual learning students. This was not an easy decision for the committee, however, this will allow for Stillwater to continue our high level of instruction in all areas, allow staff to instruct in the areas they are trained in, allow for specials to be in person as well, and continues our special education inclusion model. The committee felt Friday's would be the least impact on families since we already rotate Fridays for in person instruction. Mr. Kochis stated that it is important that we continue to reevaluate this plan in order to be sustainable. Currently there is no word from the DOE or Governor about any guidelines changing soon.

Discussion also incurred on why the model Hampton is using, is not the best fit for Stillwater, due to special education requirements and not enough teaching staff members to allow for a third homeroom.

Motion approved by roll call vote: Mrs. Svendsen-Aye; Mrs. Nothstine-Aye; Mrs. Galante-Aye; Mrs. Saul-Aye; Mrs. LoCascio-Aye; Mr. DeGroat-Aye; Mrs. Williver-Aye; Mrs. Kraft-No; Mrs. Thibault-Aye.

3. District Goals Action Plan Update- Mr. Kochis reported out on the 2020-2021 District Goals action plans. The district has begun to progress forward to accomplish the goals.
4. Board Goals Action Plan review- Mrs. Williver, Mrs. Galante, and Mrs. LoCascio provided an update on the 2020-2021 Board goals action plans. The plans will be finalized and approved at the next board meeting.

### **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

Mr. Kochis reported on the following items:

- Thanked the community, faculty, and students for being supportive during these times.
- First virtual Back to School Night.
- Election Day- executive order issued stating all schools must be closed to in person instruction on Election Day. Therefore, the calendar will be adjusted to reflect November 3<sup>rd</sup> as an all remote learning day for students, but will be staff in the building.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

- Thank you card to the BOE, Administration, Faculty, and Students for support of Sussex County Teacher of the Year, from Meghan Radimer.
- Thank you letter to Christine Bello for running a successful PTA Tricky Tray!- Vera Rumsey

### **PRESIDENT’S COMMENTS**

Mr. DeGroat expressed that he understands what everyone is saying. The last thing he wants is a board meeting held via zoom. He wants to be in person, seeing everyone’s faces!

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

#### **PERSONNEL**

1. Motion made by Mrs. Nothstine, second by Mrs. LoCascio, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve attached professional days. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.
2. Motion made by Mrs. Nothstine, second by Mrs. LoCascio, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to retroactively approve professional development training as listed. Costs to be split with the KRHS region, with KRHS being the LEA, paid by Title II funds:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>STE Cost</b>
September 2, 2020	Remote Learning	Kiker Technology	\$3,500	\$700

September 2, 2020	Social Emotional Learning	Eileen Dachnowicz	\$1,800	\$360
September 2, 2020	LGBTQ Inclusive Curriculum	Garden State Equality	\$1,000	\$200

A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

- Motion made by Mrs. Nothstine, second by Mrs. LoCascio to approve Settlement Agreement and Release with employee #719 and issue payment of \$1,500 as per agreement. A roll call vote was taken and unanimously approved.
- Motion made by Mrs. Nothstine, second by Mrs. Svendsen to approve the following graduate class at Centenary University for Sam Scocoza, no reimbursement as per SEA contract:

<u>Title of Course</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Educational Administrative Theory	September 2020-December 2020	\$1,877.85
Administrative Internship	September 2020-December 2020	\$1,877.85

A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

- Motion made by Mrs. Nothstine, second by Mrs. LoCascio, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the following substitute nurse for the 2020-2021 school year:

Jennifer Mondrone

A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

- Motion made by Mrs. Nothstine, second by Mrs. Svendsen, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, to retroactively approve FMLA Leave for employee#755 from September 15, 2020 and return on or about October 1, 2020. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.
- Motion made by Mrs. Nothstine, second by Mrs. LoCascio to accept the resignation of Diane Hornung, LDTC, effective no later than November 15, 2020, but sooner if possible. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

## **POLICY**

- Technology/Chromebook lost/damage fees discussion- Mrs. Metzgar informed the board that administration is reviewing policies regarding equipment loans & fee schedules due to the increased report of damages to technology. Updated policies and schedules to be presented at a future meeting.

## **EDUCATION & CURRICULUM**

- Motion made by Mrs. Saul, second by Mrs. Svendsen to approve the following resolution:

Resolution declaring October 5-9, 2020 Week of Respect

WHEREAS, The Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights, Assembly Bill 3466, was approved by the New Jersey Legislature in November 2010 and signed into law as P.L. 2010, c. 122, by Governor Chris Christie on January 5, 2011; and

WHEREAS, The statute is intended to protect students from harassment and intimidation that would substantially interfere with their education; and

WHEREAS, In a 2009 survey by the National Centers for Disease Control, one in five New Jersey students indicated they had been the subject of bullying on school grounds during the previous year; and

WHEREAS, The Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights places expanded responsibilities on teachers, school administrators and boards of education to protect students from incidents of bullying, harassment and intimidation; and

WHEREAS, The Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights designates the week beginning with the first Monday in October as “Week of Respect” throughout New Jersey”; and

WHEREAS, The law directs school districts to observe the “Week of Respect” through age-appropriate instruction in accordance with New Jersey’s core curriculum content standards; and

WHEREAS, The Stillwater Board of Education recognizes the harmful impact of harassment and bullying on children and is committed to providing all of its students with a safe and secure learning environment free from intimidation; and

WHEREAS, The Stillwater Board of Education supports the intent of the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights to protect our children, as well as the goal of previous law to enhance training and instruction to prevent harassment, intimidation and bullying. Now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Stillwater Board of Education declares October 5 through 9, 2020 as a “Week of Respect” in all district schools, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Week of Respect will be a part of the Stillwater Public Schools’ ongoing efforts to foster respect among students and staff for the diverse cultures and personalities represented in our school community, and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be sent to Governor Phil Murphy, State Senator Oroho, Assembly Representatives Space and Wirths, the New Jersey School Boards Association and the Sussex County School Boards Association. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

2. Motion made by Mrs. Saul, second by Mrs. Thibault to declare October 19-23, 2020 School Violence Awareness Week:

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A:36-5.1. declares the week beginning with the

third Monday in October of each year is designated as "School Violence Awareness Week" in the State of New Jersey. School districts shall observe this week by organizing activities to prevent school violence including, but not limited to, age-appropriate opportunities for student discussion on conflict resolution, issues of student diversity, and tolerance. Law enforcement personnel shall be invited to join members of the teaching staff in the discussions. Programs shall also be provided for school board employees that are designed to help them recognize warning signs of school violence and to instruct them on recommended conduct during an incident of school violence. The Department of Education shall provide guidelines and information to boards of education for use in planning the activities in observance of the week and such funds as are necessary to pay the costs of the required activities and programs.

RESOLVED, That the School Violence Awareness Week will be a part of the Stillwater Township Schools' ongoing efforts to help students and staff to recognize the importance of tolerance and to understand and apply conflict resolution techniques.

A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

### **BUILDING & GROUNDS**

1. Building & Grounds Update- Mrs. Metzgar provided an update on the following Buildings & Grounds Items:
  - 1966 Wing Boiler Project
  - Preschool Playground Install
2. Motion made by Mrs. Galante, second by Mrs. Svendsen to approve building and use calendar for October 2020, pending direction from the State of NJ. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

None.

### **BUDGET & FINANCE**

1. Audit/Financial Update- Mrs. Metzgar reported the 2019-2020 audit was completed last week. No audit findings or recommendations. The audit presentation is scheduled for November.
2. Cafeteria Update- Mrs. Metzgar announced the SSO application was approved beginning in September. All student accounts will be refunded for those that purchased a complete meal prior to the start of the SSO program for September.
3. Motion made by Mrs. LoCascio, second by Mrs. Nothstine to approve regular checks from August 25, 2020-September 28, 2020 numbered 26717-26783, N0828, N0831, N0911, N0914, N0922, void #26702, for a total of \$435,343.67. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.
4. Motion made by Mrs. LoCascio, second by Mrs. Thibault to approve the attached list of purchase orders over \$1,000 for 2020-2021 school year. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

5. Motion made by Mrs. LoCascio, second by Mrs. Svendsen to approve monthly travel as attached. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.
6. Motion made by Mrs. LoCascio, second by Mrs. Thibault to approve transfers from August 1, 2020 to August 31, 2020 as attached. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.
7. Motion made by Mrs. LoCascio, second by Mrs. Svendsen to approve the 2020-2021 IDEA-B grant amendment for changes due to Covid-19. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

## **LEGISLATION**

Mrs. Kraft provided an update on the following legislative items:

- State School Nurse Consultant
- Easing of substitute teacher requirements- 30 credits rather than 60 credits
- Remote Learning Pods

## **COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

Mrs. Williver reported on the following items:

- October 12<sup>th</sup> is Columbus Day, so our next BOE meeting is Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>
- Stillwater PTA Tricky Tray was this past Saturday, very successful and a big Thank You to Christine Bello and everyone else who was able to help!
- Kittatinny Players Community Cookbook Fundraiser
- September 25-Nov 1- Jack-O-Lantern Drive Through at Skylands Park
- October 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>- Fire Prevention Day
- October 4<sup>th</sup>- Pig Roast & Harvest Day at Fairview Lake YMCA Camp
- October 4<sup>th</sup>- "Where Did Summer Go?" Food Truck & Music Festival at the fairgrounds
- October 11<sup>th</sup>- Town of Newton's Annual Fall Festival and Car Show
- October 29<sup>th</sup> -EXPO 2020- Sponsored by Sussex County Chamber of Commerce

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Board member required training- Due December 31, 2020.
2. New Jersey School Boards Virtual Workshop October 20-22, 2020. Registration is now open. Please let Mrs. Metzgar know if you would like to attend. \$199 per person or \$900 for up to 25 team members.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. DeGroat mentioned how Teacher Appreciation Day is usually in the Spring, but due to all the recent changes, maybe the Board would be willing to provide a Teacher Appreciation Day soon!

The board was interested in putting something together.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

-Jess Steffens- 950 Fredon Road- Thanked the Board of Education. She expressed that in all her years teaching she has never experienced anything like this before. There is no right fix, and everyone is doing the best they can. Going virtual is a double edge sword, but she will be able to see her students and her students will be able to see her without a mask on. This also gives teachers time to get on their feet. She remains a proud teacher of Stillwater School and is very thankful for this decision.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

## ADJOURN

Motion made by Mrs. LoCascio, second by Mrs. Svendsen to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m.  
A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rene Metzgar  
Business Administrator/Board Secretary