

# Seymour Board of Education



## Minutes Special BOE Meeting – Budget

January 14, 2025

Central Office

6:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Champagne, Chairperson  
Kristen Bruno, 6:37  
Stephan Behuniak  
Kristen Harmeling  
Jay Hatfield  
Ed Strumello  
Lori Nespoli

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Jim Garofolo

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Susan Compton, Superintendent of Schools  
Shannon Levey, Board Clerk  
Keith O'Rourke, SMS Principal  
Lauren Reid, Bungay Principal  
Jean Falbo-Sosnovich

### I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Champagne called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:05 pm

### II. 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 Chairperson is able to answer, those questions may be addressed under the Chairperson'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.

- Called 3 times, no public comment

### III. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

A. Seymour Education Budget 2025-2026

- **ELL/ML Student Growth:** Dr. Compton highlighted the increased number of students, particularly newcomers, moving into the district. There are now 165 ML students across the district, with 23 new students from abroad since the school year began. This includes students speaking 23 different languages. She suggested hiring 1-2 additional ELL teachers to meet the growing demand and fulfill state mandates. Dr. Compton is going to get clarification from the state regarding the laws and regulations for servicing our ELL/ML students.
- **Staffing and Budget:** Mr. Hatfield inquired about filling positions for retiring staff, particularly in PE, Math, and English and questioned if there would be any cost savings from retirements. Mr. Champagne discussed the challenges of hiring teachers, citing potential costs ranging from \$84,000 to \$150,000, depending on qualifications of applicants and which insurance plan they opt for; which cannot be predicted. Dr. Compton emphasized the importance of meeting district needs while being fiscally responsible.
- **School Security:** The Police Department is not recommending filling the School Resource Officer (SRO) vacancy, so the district will need to budget for a School Security Officer at approximately \$40,000. Dr. Compton suggested streamlining security needs in line with staffing, which includes one security officer and additional ELL/ML staff.

- **Curriculum and Instruction Needs:** Ms. Harmeling questioned whose line item the digital curriculum costs should be part of. Dr. Compton clarified that the district is investing in necessary digital resources for teachers and updated curriculum materials. She also addressed the need for assistant coaches in athletics for the middle school, supplies for clubs, school climate coordinator and proposed adjustments to a language program in favor of computer science/co-op workplace teacher at Seymour High School.
- **Shared Services and Insurance:** The shared services cost is projected to be around \$600,000, with the town proposing a contribution of about \$291,000. Ms. Harmeling suggested the district may want to counter-propose a 50/50 split on shared services, totaling approximately \$250,000. Mr. Bucci will provide updates on the insurance costs, which he expects the state partnership plan to stay within a 12-15% increase. Mr. Behuniak recommends going 50/50 with the town.
- **Budget Proposal and Needs Assessment:** Dr. Compton noted the importance of presenting the true educational needs to the public and recommended that principals refine their needs assessments.
- **Next Steps:** The board will review budget updates from Mr. Bucco and finalize numbers once insurance bids are received. Dr. Compton stressed the importance of pushing for necessary resources to ensure a 21st-century education for students. The board requested Mr. Bucci to update the budget worksheet with at least three columns (level services, what's truly necessary, and then including all the needs assessments).
- **Additional Items:** Mr. Strumello shared information from CAFE advocating for increased ECS funding. Noting special education excess cost reimbursement grant funding was \$50 million below reimbursements sought in 2024.

**Next Meeting:** To follow once final insurance numbers are available and Mr. Bucci updates the budget worksheet.

#### IV. REPORTS

- A. Chairman's Report – none
- B. Superintendent's Report – none

#### V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm.

Prepared by: Shannon Levey,  
Board Clerk