

SHERMAN BOARD OF EDUCATION
SHERMAN, CONNECTICUT 06784
REGULAR MEETING, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2016
LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER, THE SHERMAN SCHOOL
7:00 PM

A regular meeting of the Sherman Board of Education was called to order by Mr. Hanley at 7:06 PM in the Library Media Center of the Sherman School.

1. PRESENT:

For the Board:	Mrs. Diotte, Mr. Hanley, Mrs. Lenihan and Mrs. Seeger
Absent:	Mrs. Alexander and Mrs. Enright
For the Administration:	Dr. Melendez and Mr. Schoefer
School Staff:	Mrs. Davidson and Ms. Hamilton
SPTO:	Mrs. Johnson
Town Residents:	Mr. Thomas Hackett and 4 Residents

Mr. Hanley shared although two Board members are absent, there is a quorum and voting will take place at the meeting.

2. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPOINTMENT TO FILL BOARD VACANCY

Mr. Hanley moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded the appointment of Mr. Thomas Hackett to the open Board vacancy created by the resignation of Mr. Chris Jellen, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Mrs. Diotte was pleased with the response of highly qualified candidates who applied for the Board vacancy. She is thrilled to have Mr. Hackett as a Board of Education member and feels his background and expertise will fill a void that the Board is missing.

Mr. Hanley further added he will send out a press release regarding the appointment of Mr. Hackett. Upon the Board's self assessment, it was apparent that the Board had a weakness in the Facility and Capital Improvement areas since Mr. Keneally and Mr. Jellen are no longer Board members. Mr. Hackett is the current building inspector for the Town of New Milford. He oversaw the construction of NMHS and renovation of Sarah Noble. Mr. Hackett will be sworn in by the Town Clerk in the near future.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mrs. Deirdre Fitzpatrick, 13 Smoke Ridge. Mrs. Fitzpatrick expressed concern regarding the doors being locked after school. At present, there is no way for a parent to retrieve their child attending an afterschool event, or contact them, prior to dismissal. She shared this issue is not new and has complained to the Administration in the past.

Mr. Hanley shared the issue was raised several years ago and the Board did approve funding in the past. Mr. Hanley is aware this is a high priority for parents to be able to access their children. Mr. Hanley and Dr. Melendez will discuss.

4. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

No additions to the agenda.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded that the Board approve the consent agenda, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

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| 5.1 | Minutes – Regular Meeting, November 2, 2016 | Enclosure 5.1 |
| 5.2 | Personnel Actions | |
| 5.3 | Reports – Monthly Enrollment Report | Enclosure 5.3 |
| 5.4 | Monthly Budget Report 16-17(Prior to Transfers) | Enclosure 5.4 a - b |
| 5.5 | Monthly Budget Report 16-17 (After Transfers) | Enclosure 5.5 a - b |

Mrs. Diotte expressed concern over the Electricity transfer of \$18,000.00. The adjusted level is higher than last year's expenditures. (Please see New Business, 8.1 Discussion and possible approval of transfers between funds as presented for additional information on this topic).

6. APPROVAL OF CURRENT BILLS:

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded that the Board approve the current bills as presented, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0

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| 6.1 | 2016-2017 Current Bills | Enclosure 6.1 |
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7. ORAL REPORTS:

7.1 SPTO Update

Mrs. Johnson recapped the November 9, 2016 SPTO meeting. The SPTO has a treasury balance of \$5,729.21. Dr. Melendez and Mrs. Lenihan attended the meeting and provided updates.

New Business

The Senior Luncheon was a success. 52 seniors attended, and 13 homebound meals were delivered. Mrs. Johnson gave special thanks to Deanna Hicks and Nikki Mareello for chairing the event.

Requests:

Request from Deanna Hicks for the Senior Luncheon, \$200.00. Full request approved.

Upcoming Events:

Teacher Appreciation Breakfast, December 9, 2016

"Not" the SPTO Dinner Dance Ladies Night Event, March 4, 2017

7.2 Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dorinda Lenihan - Negotiations Committee

A mediation meeting (if needed) on January 10th as been scheduled. Mr. Hanley requested a more detailed update during Executive Session.

Mrs. Susan Seeger - Policy

Mrs. Seeger shared the committee is still working on the Evaluations, but are waiting for the Vision Statement to be completed. She also shared that the attorney cleaned up the High School Tuition policy. This policy was further discussed under 8.2 New Business.

Mrs. Kasey Diotte - Budget

Mrs. Diotte shared that she along with Dr. Melendez and Mr. Hanley will be meeting on December 8th to discuss the preliminary budget. The first budget workshop scheduled for December 15 will be rescheduled, but the date has not been determined at this point in time.

Mr. Rowland Hanley – Curriculum Committee

Mr. Hanley shared the Curriculum Committee will be having “First Readings” at the January Board of Education meeting. Mr. Hanley will suggest to Mrs. Enright to schedule a Curriculum Committee meeting prior to the next Board of Education meeting.

7.3 Chairman

Mr. Hanley shared that he had the distinct pleasure of attending both of the Vision Workshop for the general public. He was pleased with the turnout, passion and participation from the public and parents.

7.4 Superintendent

Dr. Jeff Melendez - Superintendent/Principal

Dr. Melendez acknowledged Mr. Schoefer for his work on the Veterans Day Assembly. He felt it was a powerful event acknowledging the sacrifices made for our country by Veterans.

Dr. Melendez also felt the Senior Luncheon was a wonderful event. He felt the school came together as a community serving meals and playing instruments. He thanked all involved in the event.

Mr. Hanley also acknowledged Mr. Schoefer for his work on the Veterans Assembly. He understands the number of people involved and feels it gets better each year. He shared the history on how the Assembly was started years ago.

Mrs. Lenihan loves that the school has the Veterans Day Assembly. She feels the students gain so much from the event.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

8.1 Discussion and possible approval of transfers between funds as presented.

Mr. Hanley shared the transfers represent corrections from the initial budget developed last Spring.

Dr. Melendez will investigate the Electricity Transfer (Transaction #1531).

Mr. Hanley noted two additional adjustments on salary: Pre-K salary oversight and resignation of Math Specialist.

Mr. Hanley moved and Mrs. Seeger seconded to approve the transfers as presented in Enclosure 8.1.

Before approving, Mrs. Diotte would like an answer to the Electricity Transfer.

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Seeger seconded to table the approval of transfer between funds until the next Board of Education meeting, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

8.2 Discussion and possible action regarding High School Tuition

Dr. Melendez shared that there are discrepancies pertaining to Policy 3240, High School Tuition. The discrepancies relate to the current practice, Board policy and legal opinion. Dr. Melendez directed the issue to the Policy Committee after a parent expressed a desire to send their child to a high school that the district currently does not have a contract with. Dr. Melendez questioned the Board if they would like to authorize him to engage with the Brookfield School District for a potential agreement allowing our students to attend their high school on a tuition basis.

Mr. Hanley provided history regarding high schools. Currently, New Milford High School is the designated high school for Sherman residents. Students can attend Nonnewaug and Henry Abbott Technical High School. The district also engages with New Fairfield High School and Shepaug Regional High School. Three years ago, Sherman did have a contract with Brookfield for one year (Brookfield Senior moved to Sherman). The Board was under the impression that they were restricted, but the Policy does provide great latitude for making exceptions.

Mrs. Diotte mentioned transportation costs could become an issue.

Mrs. Seeger does not see transportation as an issue since New Milford High School and Brookfield are not a great distance apart. She also feels that high school options are beneficial.

Mrs. Lenihan agrees with Mrs. Seeger, but feels this is a discussion to be had with the entire Board.

Mr. Hanley clarified that the only option to decide at this point in time is if Dr. Melendez should enter into negotiations with Brookfield.

Mr. Hanley moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded to authorize Dr. Melendez to enter into contract negotiations with the District of Brookfield, CT providing High School education to students from Sherman, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Dr. Melendez further shared that both Boards must approve the contract in order for Sherman students to attend.

8.3 Discussion and possible action on Video Camera Usage

Mr. Hanley shared the history and intent of video cameras at the school after the Sandy Hook tragedy. The Board, Administrator, Security Consultant and State Trooper all worked collaboratively on the security system. The Board took very seriously the use of cameras and approved them based on the intended use of the cameras (to be used by law enforcement in the event of an intruder). Over the years, the cameras have been

used in cases pertaining to vandalism, suspicious cars and disciplinary issues. The use has been brought to the Board's attention, in addition to who has access to video footage and who has the login credentials, etc. Mr. Hanley questioned if the Board has a Policy pertaining to video use.

Dr. Melendez and Mrs. Seeger agreed that the school does not have a specific policy pertaining to video usage.

Mr. Hanley wants the Board to be aware that video cameras are used for disciplinary situations because that was never the intent of the cameras. A policy should encompass protocol for accessing videos.

Dr. Melendez feels it is an Administrative issue and would be beneficial if the Board agreed that the Administration can use the video cameras for the purpose of maintaining student health and safety and have the authority to make determination on a case by case basis, until a policy exists that would govern more closely. Dr. Melendez added that student issues can be complicated with conflicting perspectives. In such cases, the video footage can be used as a tool, a piece of the puzzle. The Administration is aware of the many variable that make up student issues.

Mr. Hanley further questioned what the Board's responsibility is to communicate to the public the use of cameras that was not the initial intended use. This issue must be taken up in the Policy Committee.

Mr. Hanley moved and Mrs. Diotte seconded to authorize Superintendent/Principal to use video cameras inside and outside the building for purposes of maintaining health and safety of students and staff on a case by case basis, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Dr. Melendez added that he could send a notice to the community informing that cameras are used for a variety of reasons pertaining to student safety. At this point in time, Mr. Hanley feels this is a Policy issue, and would like the issue to remain on the Agenda until its resolution.

8.4 Discussion and possible action on Public Communications

The Board discussed the potential formation of a Communications Committee. Mrs. Diotte shared feedback from a seminar discussing the importance of communicating conducted work. According to the Bylaws of the Board, a Communication Committee can be a standing committee, similar to Curriculum, Policy, etc. With the addition of Dr. Melendez, she feels a Communication Committee is a worthwhile committee to start.

Mrs. Seeger added that a quarterly mailing to the community would be helpful. She also feels that there should be a High School committee containing representation from both Middle School and High School teachers.

Mr. Hanley understands the importance of communication. He feels the Board does a very good job communicating when needed, and mindful when it should be done from a strategic perspective. He is aware of the amount of time and work involved in effectively communicating. If the Board decides to start a new committee, Mr. Hanley shared his

views on developing a three dimensional matrix, followed by engaging with a paid consultant. Mr. Hanley will support the potential committee, but is very aware that it is a huge undertaking.

Mrs. Seeger feels that the entire Board should weigh in and discuss.

Mrs. Lenihan feels it would be helpful to take time to dissect and form the committee. In the meantime, once the Vision Statement has been established, she would like it mailed to the community along with the budget dates.

No action was taken. The Board will continue to discuss the Communication issue.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

9.1 K-Wing Task Force Update

Mr. Hanley shared the K-Wing Task Force met on November 30th. They discussed the initial intent of the committee, and feel it has come to fruition and will focus on the next steps. He gave background information on the Advisory Committee which had the purpose of advising the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education on K-Wing issues. The committee was charged with recommending investigation steps and hiring. The Advisory Committee will be providing a final presentation to both Boards and will recommend the formation of a Town Building Committee to take over the future of the K-Wing. More details will follow, but Mr. Hanley did mention that the general consensus will recommend that the K-Wing be restored back to the original intent of occupying students and staff.

10. COMMUNICATION

No communication at this time.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jeannine Johnson, 27 Smoke Ridge. Mrs. Johnson is pleased to hear about the potential communication flyer and would like to request that it encompassed the Sherman School and SPTO. She feels it would be beneficial for information on all three (Board, school and SPTO) to be sent to the community.

Mrs. Lenihan added that it would be great for students (both High School and Middle School) to write about highlighted events.

Mr. Hanley shared that the school has a lot of potential and added that the Board of Selectmen are looking into televising their monthly meetings.

Mrs. Sunday Fisher, 3 Brinsmade Lane. Mrs. Fisher questioned how much of the Town's website can be leveraged as we are all one community. From a community member's perspective, she feels it would be helpful if the Town and School could use one website.

Dr. Melendez added that the Town is looking to develop a new website. They will be using a tool comparable to the school's "School Messenger" on a municipal level to communicate clearly with community members.

Mrs. Fisher encourage the Board to look at short term vs. long term communication objectives. She is aware that a website implication will take over a year to develop. She suggested focusing on short term wins and then long term goals.

Mrs. Deirdre Fitzpatrick shared that children wait on the school bus, in the parking lot, until all six buses arrive. Some students are sitting on a bus for 15 minutes. She does not feels that it a good way to start the day. The dismissal time was extended, but the bus pick up times were not altered. Mr. Schoefer shared that the school is gathering data and will be discussing this issue with the bus company.

Mr. Hanley stated that the Administration should reach out to the Board if funding is needed for supervision of student prior to the start of the school day.

Mr. Drew Rocky, 61 Church Road. Mr. Rocky suggested input from the community would be beneficial to raise awareness on the video camera issue before a Policy discussion.

Mrs. Sunday Fisher shared that the school should be concerned about privacy legal issues involved with the video camera.

12. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS

No additional comments

13. FUTURE MEETINGS AND TOPICS

- 13.1 Regular Meeting, Wednesday, January 4, 2016 at 7:00 PM - LMC
- 13.2 Maintenance Meeting, To Be Determined
- 13.3 Curriculum Meeting, To Be Determined
- 13.4 Policy Meeting, To Be Determined

14. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hanley moved and Mrs. Diotte seconded that the Board of Education move into Executive Session at 8:20 PM, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Mr. Hanley moved and Mrs. Diotte seconded that the move out of Executive Session at 9:58 PM, and adjourn the Board of Education meeting, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kasey Diotte
Vice Chair, Sherman Board of Education

Prepared by Recording Secretary: Nancy Winkler