

SHERMAN BOARD OF EDUCATION
SHERMAN, CONNECTICUT 06784
REGULAR MEETING, MARCH 6, 2019
THE SHERMAN SCHOOL - MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM
7:00 PM

A regular meeting of the Sherman Board of Education was called to order by Mrs. Diotte at 7:14 PM in the Multi-Purpose Room on March 6, 2019.

1. PRESENT:

For the Board:	Dr. Alexander, Mrs. Diotte, Mrs. Lenihan, Mr. Neunzig and Mrs. Seeger
Absent:	Mrs. Enright and Mr. Laughlin
For the Administration:	Dr. Melendez, Ms. Edwards, Mr. Schoefer and Mrs. Snowden
School Staff:	Ms. Blanchard, Mr. Butler, Mr. Carlone, Mrs. Linero, Mrs. Loira-Marrero, Mrs. Lynch, Ms. Reidy, Mrs. Rianhard, Mrs. Schipul, Mrs. Scott, Mrs. Shook and Mrs. Vermilyea
SPTO:	Mrs. Ribisl
Residents:	3 Residents

The Board and attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. CELEBRATIONS:

Mrs. Diotte commented positively on the Gig Band that performed prior to the Board meeting and described the performance as amazing. She noted the band is comprised of 4th and 5th grade students and started as an XP course in September. Mrs. Diotte also commented positively on Mr. Carlone's leadership and passion, as well as the entire music program.

Dr. Melendez shared March is Board of Education Appreciation Month. He publicly thanked Mrs. Diotte, Mr. Neunzig, Dr. Alexander, Mrs. Enright, Mr. Laughlin, Mrs. Lenihan and Mrs. Seeger for their service to the District. He noted that it is an honor to work with them.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Susan Zeitler read a letter she wrote to the Editor, which she intended for the newspaper, but did not make it in on time. The letter is regarding the opposition of regionalization of School Districts in the State of Connecticut. Mrs. Zeitler noted other Boards are opposing this issue and is surprised there is no discussion in Sherman. Mrs. Zeitler feels this issue is part of a sweeping agenda throughout the nation and feels something can be done if you stand against it.

Mrs. Lenihan acknowledged the issue and suggested concerned parents reach out to the State Representatives to discuss.

Mrs. Diotte noted that she was not quoted correctly in Mrs. Zeitler's letter. For public record, Mrs. Diotte read verbatim the response she had emailed to Mrs. Zeitler: "At this time, the Board of Education has not had any formal discussions on this matter and it is not on an upcoming agenda to do so. Of course I would urge anyone - Board member or otherwise - to voice their opinion with their state representative whom would ultimately be asked to vote on these bills."

4. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:

None at this time

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded that the Board approve the consent agenda items 5.1 to 5.4 and the motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

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| 5.1 | Minutes - Regular Meeting, February 6, 2019 | (Enclosure 5.1a) |
| | Minutes - Board of Education Retreat, February 9, 2019 | (Enclosure 5.1b) |
| | Minutes - Budget Workshop #4, February 11, 2019 | (Enclosure 5.1c) |
| | Minutes - Budget Workshop #5, February 25, 2019 | (Enclosure 5.1d) |
| 5.2 | Personnel Actions | |
| | Sandra DiResta, Resignation as Para, and Appointment as Tutor, effective 3/4/2019 | |
| 5.3 | Reports - Monthly Enrollment | (Enclosure 5.3) |
| 5.4 | Monthly Budget Report 18-19 | (Enclosure 5.4a-5.4b) |

Mrs. Seeger noted two corrections to the February 6, 2019 meeting minutes. Public Act 18.185 was not identified correctly under items 9.3 and 9.4. The approved minutes will reflect the corrections.

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, 5-0.

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| 6.1 | 2018-2019 Current Bills | Enclosure 6.1 |
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7. ORAL REPORTS:

7.1 SPTO Update

Mrs. Ribisl provided an update on recently approved SPTO requests:

Preschool - \$ 450.00

Kindergarten - \$ 375.00

First Grade - \$ 600.00

Third Grade - \$1447.00

Fifth Grade - \$1000.00

Eighth Grade - \$1500.00

Buses for Festival in The Park - Up to \$1500.00

The SPTO Annual Fundraising Event will take place on April 27th at Candlelight Farms. Mrs. Ribisl shared the committee is still planning the event and more details will be available soon.

7.2 Sub-Committee

Budget Committee - Mr. Neunzig

Mr. Neunzig shared the Budget Committee is presenting to the Board of Selectmen on Monday, March 11th at 7:30 PM.

Negotiations - Mrs. Lenihan

Mrs. Lenihan shared the Para/Tutor Contract Negotiations committee will meet on Monday, March 11th at 5:30 PM.

7.3 Chairperson

Mrs. Diotte commented on the Board Retreat held February 9th. She thanked her fellow Board Members and felt it was time well spent. Mrs. Diotte appreciates the diverse opinions of the group, and their ability to come together and arrive at a consensus in the best interests of the students.

7.4 Superintendent Update - Dr. Jeff Melendez

Dr. Melendez commented on the Board request to analyze High School Performance Data. The Administration is in the processes of collecting and organizing the data. A Curriculum Committee meeting will be held to discuss and determine next steps.

Dr. Melendez provided an update to the Board on the Goal Teams, Progress towards Goals and Communication Plan.

8. PRESENTATIONS

8.1 2019-2020 Overall Budget Proposal

Mrs. Diotte shared the Budget has the support of all Board members. It speaks to investments in areas that drive the goals of the Strategic Plan. Mrs. Diotte is confident in the budget and supports it.

Dr. Melendez shared the timeline of the Budget development process. He noted the Budget Committee will be meeting with the Board of Selectmen on Monday, March 11th. If there are recommendations made after their review, another Budget Workshop maybe held to discuss changes.

Dr. Melendez provided an Executive Summary to support the Budget recommendations, and a 2019-20 Budget at a Glance. Dr. Melendez noted the budget has a 0% increase.

Mrs. Jeanine Johnson requested an explanation for the Budget After Transfers column. Mrs. Diotte explained that in previous years, it was difficult to compare a proposed budget to an adopted budget for a current year. As the year progresses, you have a better idea in December what the end of the year actuals might be. The Budget after Transfers column was added to get a more accurate picture of spending for the current year.

Mrs. Diotte shared that Dr. Melendez will be putting together a comprehensive document that will be going to the community. Mrs. Diotte would like the community to be as informed as possible and to understand the budget. Dr. Melendez and Board Members will be representing the budget to many different community groups in an effort to

educate them on the District's direction. Mrs. Diotte noted that the budget has been many years in the making and it is where this Board wants to go.

Dr. Alexander commented positively on the Budget process. She felt the discussions were robust, well evidenced and feels good were we ended up.

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Discussion and Possible Action to Approve One-time Capital Spending Request Not to Exceed \$130k from Current Operating Budget

Mrs. Diotte shared as a result of the Building Study, the Maintenance Committee has identified \$130,000.00 in repairs that must be addressed regardless of any future enhancements to the building. The Maintenance Committee discussed requesting funds from the Town's Capital Nonrecurring Fund. Due to timing, Mrs. Diotte noted that Dr. Melendez requested using funds from the current operating budget, which she supports.

Mrs. Diotte further shared that Mr. Lombardozzi provided a spreadsheet to the Maintenance Committee identifying areas that need attention and associated estimated costs. Also, identified are savings for repairs that can take place in-house. Mrs. Diotte also noted, all projects over \$10,000.00 will need to go out to bid.

Mrs. Diotte moved and Dr. Alexander to approve a one-time Capital spending request not to exceed \$130,000.00 from our current operating budget to address maintenance health and safety concerns in the building, and the motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

9.2 Discussion and Possible Action to Determine Next Steps Regarding Playground Improvements and a Larger Capital Project Plan

Mrs. Diotte shared the Board is fully aware of the need to replace the Pirate Ship playground, and noted the Playground committee expressed a strong opinion to keep the two playgrounds separate. Mrs. Diotte noted a new playground is a huge investment of approximately \$300,000.00 and should have a lifespan of 20 years, but will most likely be negatively impacted by the future status of the K-Wing space. Mrs. Diotte reviewed the multiple moving parts, timing issues and financial investment involved with both the playground and space issue. Mrs. Diotte linked items 9.2 and 9.3 together and suggested forming an Advisory Committee to move these issues. The Advisory Committee by law would be a temporary Board Special Subcommittee, including both Board members and lay people. The focus of the committee would be to advise the Board on how to shape and improve the physical environment of the building. The committee would have a very specific task and once complete, the committee would dissolve.

Mrs. Diotte requested feedback from the Board.

Dr. Alexander questioned the size of the committee.

Mrs. Diotte shared perhaps a twelve-member committee, including the full Board of Education. Mrs. Diotte suggested meeting the third Wednesday of each month.

Mrs. Seeger noted the Board and Maintenance Committee have done their part, and it is time to get the community involved.

Mr. Neunzig briefly reviewed the decisions involved in replacing the playground, and noted the Town will have to be in agreement because of the investment that will be requested. He also shared that a master plan will be needed to see what the school will look like in the next twenty years.

Mrs. Diotte read Bylaw 9133: The Chairperson of the Board of Education shall appoint such temporary and special committees as may be deemed necessary or advisable by the Board of Education, and the Chairperson shall be an ex-officio member of each such committee. The duties of the committee shall be outlined at the time of appointment, and the committee shall be considered dissolved when its final report has been made to the Board of Education. Lay people, as well as members of the Board of Education, may be appointed to temporary committees. Mrs. Diotte requested fellow Board members email their opinions/suggestions to her.

Mrs. Diotte noted there will be no action on the playground at this time.

9.3 Discussion and Possible Action to Form a Special Advisory Committee for the Purpose of Making Recommendations per Policy 9133

See item 9.2

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

10.1 First Reading Policy 6145 Extracurricular Activities

10.2 First Reading Policy 1250.1 Classroom Observations

10.3 First Reading Policy 4212.42 Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus Drivers

10.4 First Reading Policy 5141.21 Administration of Medication

10.5 First Reading Policy 5118 Nonresident Students

Mrs. Seeger noted 10.1 to 10.5 are the second readings. Policy 1250.1 is a new Policy, and the remaining were amendment updates.

Mrs. Seeger moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded to approve Policies 6145, 4212.42, 5141.21, and 5118 with the amendments as noted, and new Policy 1250.1, and the motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

11. COMMUNICATION

Mrs. Diotte shared that the Board did receive a communication from a parent regarding concerns over regionalization. Mrs. Diotte informed the parent that she and the Superintendent would discuss if the topic should be included on the Agenda. The issue was discussed, but it was decided not to include due to the amount of work that keeps the Board incredibly engaged in Education in the Town of Sherman. Mrs. Diotte noted there are a lot of Education bills currently, and did not detect a sense of urgency from fellow Board that one request from a citizen was enough to change the Agenda. If at any time there is a strong feeling from the Board that the topic should be discussed, then it will be considered.

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jeannine Johnson, 27 Smoke Ridge Drive. Mrs. Johnson noted that a security consultant is not on the budget and questioned if someone is qualified to monitor and maintain the plan and train the teachers annually, assuming the last security consultant did.

Dr. Melendez shared the full time Armed Security Guard Officer will take the responsibility. He has been working with our current consultant and is learning the steps for the process and will resume the responsibility.

Susan Zeitler shared after reviewing the Executive Summary, she has concerns.

- Mrs. Zeitler expressed concern with the same agenda taking place across the country and feels the school is part of an International Education system.
- Mrs. Zeitler expressed concerned with the term culture. In her opinion, changes in school are coming from the State/CASBO website.
- Mrs. Zeitler is concerned with the purchase of more Chromebooks and feels screens are an issue affecting children.
- Mrs. Zeitler shared concerns with Google data mining and forming 360 images of students.
- Mrs. Zeitler is not pleased with increased use of school work put on screens and feels it is an experiment of our children.
- Mrs. Zeitler expressed concern with the Social, Emotional Learning Curriculum and feels it is replacing academics and influencing children's beliefs and values.
- Mrs. Zeiter shared no studies support online learning as beneficial.

Mrs. Diotte requested that Mrs. Zeitler summarize, or reach out to Dr. Melendez.

Mrs. Lenihan noted that many of the topics mentioned by Mrs. Zeitler were discussed at the Budget Workshops. Mrs. Lenihan is aware that Mrs. Zeitler is busy, but shared these issues are discussed in detail at budget meetings by Board members.

Mrs. Diotte shared there are avenues to hear, but must go to meetings.

Mrs. Ribisl suggested that teachers should be included on the newly formed playground committee. Mrs. Diotte reassured Mrs. Ribisl that teachers would absolutely be included.

13. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS

14. FUTURE MEETINGS AND TOPICS

- 14.1 Board of Education Meeting - April 3, 2019 at 7:00 PM - Library Media Center
- 14.2 Policy Meeting - March 18, 2019 at 5:30 PM - Library Media Center
- 14.3 Communication Committee - March 18, 2019 at 6:30 PM - Library Media Center

15. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded that the Board adjourned at 8:18 PM, and the motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

James Neunzig
Vice Chair, Sherman Board of Education

Prepared by Recording Secretary: Nancy Winkler