

**SHERMAN BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**SHERMAN, CONNECTICUT 06784**  
**REGULAR MEETING, APRIL 3, 2019**  
**THE SHERMAN SCHOOL - LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER**  
**7:00 PM**

A regular meeting of the Sherman Board of Education was called to order by Mrs. Diotte at 7:04 PM in the Library Media Center on April 3, 2019.

**1. PRESENT:**

For the Board:	Dr. Alexander, Mrs. Diotte, Mrs. Enright, Mr. Laughlin, Mrs. Lenihan, Mr. Neunzig and Mrs. Seeger
Administration:	Dr. Melendez, Ms. Edwards, Mr. Schoefer and Mrs. Snowden
School Staff:	Dr. Corso, Mrs. Linero and Mrs. Rianhard
SPTO:	Mrs. Ribisl
Residents:	4 Residents

The Board and attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded that the Board move into Executive Session to discuss a legal matter and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Seeger seconded that the Board move out of Executive Session and resume the monthly Board of Education meeting, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

**2. CELEBRATIONS:**

No Celebrations

**3. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Jen Freed, 61 Church Road. Ms. Freed expressed concern regarding regionalization in the State of Connecticut. She feels Sherman lags in comparison to other districts and does not understand why it is not an agenda item for discussion. She feels the Sherman Board should come together to make a statement against the regionalization bills, and she encouraged them to work with other Town leaders.

Susan Zeitler, Curtis Drive. Mrs. Zeitler expressed concern regarding school leaders justifying implementing Social Emotional Learning Curriculum. She shared her opinion on the topic and informed the Board that she plans to email them articles on Social Emotional Learning and would like them to provide an explanation.

**4. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:**

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mr. Laughlin seconded to add to the Agenda: Discussion of a Possible Change in Practice of Including Enclosures with the Meeting Agenda under New Business, as item 9.6.

**5. CONSENT AGENDA:**

Mrs. Diotte moved and Dr. Alexander seconded that the Board approve the Consent Agenda items 5.1 to 5.4 and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

- 5.1 Minutes - Regular Meeting, March 6, 2019 (Enclosure 5.1a)
- Minutes - Policy Meeting, March 18, 2019 (Enclosure 5.1b)
- Minutes - Communication Meeting, March 18, 2019 (Enclosure 5.1c)
- Minutes - Maintenance Meeting, March 22, 2019
- Minutes - Special Board of Education Meeting, March 26, 2019 (Enclosure 5.1e)
- 5.2 Personnel Actions  
Appointment:
  - Herbert James Hamill, Tutor, Effective April 2, 2019
  - Meredith Belden, Paraprofessional, Effective April 3, 2019
  - Anthony Rowella, Director of Finance & Operations, Effective April 22, 2019Reduction in Workforce:
  - Kenneth Palmer, Teacher, Effective 6/17/2019
- 5.3 Reports - Monthly Enrollment (Enclosure 5.3)
- 5.4 Monthly Budget Report 18-19 (Enclosure 5.4a-5.4b)

Dr. Melendez noted the Reduction in Workforce is not a reflection on Mr. Palmer's performance, but a seniority issue as a Kindergarten position is being eliminated.

**6. APPROVAL OF CURRENT BILLS:**

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mr. Laughlin seconded that the Board approve the current bills as presented, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0

- 6.1 2018-2019 Current Bills Enclosure 6.1

**7. ORAL REPORTS:**

**7.1 SPTO Update**

Mrs. Ribisl provided a SPTO update:

- The Book Fair will take place the week of April 8th.
- Pizza & Bingo Night is scheduled for April 11th.
- Mrs. Ribisl shared the Annual Fundraiser, Boots and Bowties is scheduled for April 27th. She commented positively on the amazing responses from the community regarding donations but noted tickets must be sold. There will be both a silent and live auction at the event. Entertainment will be provided by Potter's Field (Mr. Trinchillo and Mr. Carley are both band members), as well as a DJ. Mrs. Ribisl noted responses from the teachers have been very positive. She further added that teacher participation all year has been amazing. Please RSVP if you plan to attend.
- All SPTO officer terms are ending at the end of this year.

**7.2 Sub-Committee**

**Negotiations - Mrs. Lenihan**

Mrs. Lenihan shared the next Negotiation meeting will take place on April 22, 2019.

### **Communication Committee - Dr. Alexander**

Dr. Alexander provided a Communication Committee update:

- The committee reviewed the Faculty-Student Handbook regarding parent/guardian communication. The revisions will be discussed under Item 9.2. The committee feels the process of seeking interaction with various people in the school is clearer.
- The committee confirmed that all email messages are received by the full Board.
- The committee endorsed the Budget Summary community mailer.
- The committee discussed and endorsed a monthly Board of Education column in the local newspapers (Town Tribune and Sentinel). Dr. Alexander suggested each Board member take turns, or partner on a rotating basis. The framework of the articles will be discussed at a future meeting.

Mrs. Diotte added the full Board will approve the monthly articles prior to submission to the local papers.

Mr. Neunzig commented positively on the Parent/Guardian communication guidelines.

### **Policy - Mrs. Seeger**

Mrs. Seeger shared the committee is reviewing the 7000 Series New Construction/Renovation. The committee focused on three policies. Policy 7115 Developing Educational Specifications and Policy 7211 Architect Selection has been reviewed and are on the Agenda as First Readings under Item 9.3 and 9.4. The Policy Committee recommended the Maintenance Committee review Policy 7100 prior to the Policy Committee reviewing.

### **Curriculum Committee - Mrs. Enright**

Mrs. Enright provided an update from the Curriculum Committee meeting. They discussed the purchase of pre-written K-5 Math Curriculum from EdAdvance. Mrs. Enright noted that Mrs. Snowden and Mrs. Rianhard researched and did their due diligence. Mrs. Enright shared the consensus at the Curriculum Meeting was that the curriculum should be purchased.

The Board agreed to purchase the K-5 Math Curriculum.

Mrs. Enright noted time will be devoted over the summer months for Curriculum Writing of middle school math and other content areas.

The committee also reviewed the high school data and Mrs. Enright feels it was beneficial. Mrs. Enright reflected on the inherent disadvantage the school has in terms of curriculum alignment as the students filter to three high schools. She noted the importance of continued dialogues with the Math, Science, English departments to help make transitions smoother. The committee would like to also have a dialogue with parents of high school students to gauge the academic transition to high school.

### **Maintenance Committee - Mr. Laughlin**

Mr. Laughlin provided an update from the Maintenance Committee's March 22nd meeting regarding the water treatment system and capital planning coordination.

The committee reviewed a proposal from Professional Water Systems, the district's water consultant to install a new technology. The school will not incur a cost for the system, only testing, monitoring and ongoing maintenance. Mr. Lombardozzi reviewed the costs which Maintenance Committee found reasonable.

Mr. Laughlin briefly shared how the water system would function resulting in clean drinking water at a relatively low cost. The proposal was reviewed by Mr. Tim Simpkins, Town Health Inspector. A secondary State approval would also be required. Mr. Laughlin plans to report a progress update. The goal of the Maintenance Committee is to start the new school year with clean functioning water throughout the building.

Mr. Laughlin additionally shared that Mr. Lombardozzi has been evaluating and eliminating dead-end pipes throughout the building that resulted from multiple renovations over the years. This will help insure the pipes are efficient and operable as possible to continue moving forward. Additional testing of the current water will continue to insure appropriate levels as well.

Mr. Laughlin also shared the Maintenance Committee reviewed the health and safety issues in depth and potential costs. The issue was further discussed under Item 9.5.

Mrs. Lenihan questioned the cost of the water system. Mr. Laughlin shared the estimated cost of the installation is \$6000.00. Mrs. Lenihan inquired about maintenance of the systems. Mr. Laughlin shared the committee feels there will be a generalized cost savings.

#### **Budget Committee - Mr. Neunzig**

Mr. Neunzig shared the Board attended the Board of Selectmen public hearing on April 2, 2019. No one from the public attended. The Board of Selectmen adopted the school's budget to move forward. The next step is a Town meeting on April 26th and then referendum vote on May 4th.

Mr. Neunzig shared he, along with Dr. Melendez and Kasey Diotte spoke to the Democratic Town Committee to review the budget. They will also speak at the Senior Center. Mr. Neunzig reported a Republican Town Committee meeting is pending, as well as SPTO.

Mr. Tim Laughlin questioned for the record, the number of meetings regarding the budget where the public had an opportunity to provide input and comment. Dr. Melendez confirmed there were 6 Budget Workshops that were warned and available for public comment. Mr. Laughlin added there were also a variety of discussions at the monthly Board meetings. He feels it is important to note that there were several opportunities for public input in multiple formats from any and all members of the public.

Mrs. Enright and Mrs. Diotte added the Board of Selectmen had two workshops for the public as well. Mrs. Diotte further shared there was ample opportunity for the public to comment.

Mrs. Enright reflected on how the budget was developed many years ago and commented on how transparent the entire process has become.

### **7.3 Chairperson**

Mrs. Diotte referenced the Advisory Committee that the Board discussed at the March meeting, regarding space modifications and educational enhancements of the facility and campus. Mrs. Diotte noted that she shared a document with the Board outlining the parameters of the committee and thanked them for their feedback. The next step is for Dr. Melendez to send a communication to the community to solicit participation.

Mrs. Diotte also publicly apologized for omitting Public Comment from the March 26th Special Meeting. She shared it was an oversight, as the intent of the meeting was to approve the budget, since the Board of Selectmen were voting on March 27th. The school budget was intended to be voted on at the March Board meeting, but since two members were not present, Mrs. Diotte felt it was best practice to have all members vote.

### **7.4 Superintendent Update - Dr. Jeff Melendez**

Dr. Melendez presented the finalized Strategic Plan to the Board. The Strategic Plan is available on the school's website for all to view. Dr. Melendez shared the initial phase of the plan was the formation of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee. The Steering Committee devoted approximately one year to create a Strategic Plan consisting of thirteen goals. Upon completion of the plan, Dr. Melendez recommended the faculty develop action steps that will help the school achieve and operationalize the goals. The faculty and administration articulated 55 action steps. Dr. Melendez explained the details are broken down specifically, to determine evidence, if the goal/action step was met, as well as accountability and time frames. Dr. Melendez noted that some action steps may never be completed as they are constantly pursued, for example, Develop a Mindset for Learning.

Dr. Melendez explained the very detailed process involved in developing the 55 action steps. He looked to the Board for input.

Mrs. Diotte questioned if the plan should be view as a fixed document or changing. Dr. Melendez shared that it is intended to be a live document and adjustments will be made as needed.

Dr. Melendez acknowledged the work put forth by the administration, faculty, parents, community and Board members.

## **8. PRESENTATIONS**

8.1 No Presentations

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

### **9.1 Discussion and Possible Approval of the 2019-2020 School Calendar (Enc. 9.1)**

Dr. Melendez presented the recommended 2019-20 school calendar. Dr. Melendez pointed out several shifts, some of which are associated with the Strategic Plan.

- First day of school scheduled for August 29th. The purpose is to afford a full day of new teacher orientation. Teachers start back to school on August 26th for two full days of Professional Development.

- Conference and Report Card distribution will not take place at the same time to eliminate redundancies. Conferences will take place in October, and Report Cards distributed in December. A similar schedule will take place in the Spring.
- Morning Conference will have a three-hour delay, as opposed to two hour delay. This will afford additional time slots for Parent/Teacher conference to accommodate all families.
- Recommendation to add three half days throughout the course of the year above and beyond what the school currently utilizes. The purpose of the additional time is due to time required to work with teachers to achieve the goals within the Strategic Plan.

The Board questioned how these half days would be used? Dr. Melendez shared the specific plans have not been established.

Mrs. Lenihan agrees that Professional Development is important but feels too much is scheduled (holidays/half days) in October 2019 and feels it will be difficult for working parents.

The Board discussed issues regarding the calendar at length.

Mrs. Diotte shared that she supports Professional Development and is aware of what is expected of the teachers with the Strategic Plan but does not want to set a precedent for the school calendar moving beyond 2019-20.

Mrs. Lenihan further questioned when the Patrick Flynn work would take place? Dr. Melendez shared it would take place this school year.

Mrs. Enright would like a better understanding of missed instructional time.

Mr. Laughlin restated, in the next 90 days if we retain the services outlined in the working session how much instructional time will be lost to those participating in the leadership team during the school day?

Mrs. Snowden shared:

- One half day for the Communication Norms Committee (4 Teachers)
- One full day and one half day for the Leadership Team (which has not been selected yet)

Mr. Laughlin agreed additional Professional Development time in the upcoming year is necessary, and also agreed with the calendar comments for October and February, and does not want to set a precedent for the following school year calendar.

Dr. Melendez shared he understand the Board's concerns, but noted when you look at the plan, action steps and the work that must be done, he does not believe it will be completed in one year.

Mrs. Enright stressed the level of student motivation will be diminished with the number of half days and scheduled days off in October.

Mrs. Diotte requested that Dr. Melendez review the calendar.

Mr. Neunzig appreciates how the month of November has been cleaned compared to past years. He understands the quantity of work that is expected and does not have a problem with the calendar.

Some Board members also expressed concern with the amount of time allotted for conferences compared to the size of the school.

Dr. Melendez will review the calendar and provide options to the Board. He also shared the last day of school is June 17th and Graduation will take place on June 14th.

**9.2 Discussion and Possible Adoption of Family-Student Handbook Section on Communication (Enclosure 9.2)**

The Board commented positively on the update made to the Family-Student Handbook section on communications. The update will be reflected in the 2019-20 handbook, which will be updated over the summer months.

**9.3 First Reading Policy 7115 Developing Educational Specifications (Enclosure 9.3)**

No action. Second Reading will take place at the May Board of Education meeting.

**9.4 First Reading Policy 7211 Architect Selection (Enclosure 9.4)**

No action. Second Reading will take place at the May Board of Education meeting.

**9.5 Discussion and Possible Action to Solicit and Retain Architectural Services Related to Facility/Campus Planning and Improvements**

Mr. Laughlin briefly reviewed past discussions regarding the health and safety repairs for the building that were identified in the Code Compliance study. He shared that additional questions have been raised with cost implications. Mr. Laughlin shared that the Maintenance Committee would like to recommend the Board retain architectural services with some of those funds allocated for the health and safety improvements. The intent of architectural services is to create a baseline and provide direction and consistency for future purchases (ie fire doors/windows, etc).

Mr. Neunzig added that the committee does not want to spend money twice. He noted bringing an architect on board, combined with the new sub committee will allow the Board to move forward with all of the things they must do.

Mr. Laughlin moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded to proceed with a request for proposals/solicitation to retain Architectural services related to facility campus planning and improvements utilizing funds allocated by the Board for that purpose in the current fiscal year, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

**9.6 Discussion of Possible Change in Practice of Including Enclosures with Meeting Agenda**

Dr. Melendez suggested the Board evaluate the practice of distributing attachments publicly through the Board Agenda. He recommended waiting until after Board approval in an effort to avoid confusion regarding what is a draft, and what has actually been approved by the Board. From a legal perspective, it is completely legal, and consistent

with Board policies. He also noted it is consistent with the Board of Selectmen's best practice in terms of enclosures and attachments made public after approval.

Mrs. Enright noted that if misinformation is documented incorrectly in the minutes, she can see how that would be problematic if the public reviewed, prior to the Board correcting it.

The Board discussed that unofficial minutes are available 72 hours after the Board meeting.

Mr. Laughlin suggested that monthly Board meetings be video recorded. He is aware of the school's limitations, but noted it could increase participation. The Board briefly discussed.

Mrs. Enright does not feel the public is losing much by not including enclosures and noted there are risks of including enclosures that are not approved.

Mrs. Seeger feels that certain enclosures (Strategic Plan, Handbook, etc.) are important for the public to see. Some people may want to view an enclosure and determine if they should attend a meeting. She added that enclosures should state draft/unofficial so there is no confusion. Mrs. Seeger questioned how a member of the public can make a comment during Public Comment if they have not seen the information.

Mr. Laughlin questioned how other districts proceed.

From a majority of other districts that Dr. Melendez heard back from, they do not distribute prior to the Board meeting, but within a 48 to 72 hour window after Board approval. Dr. Melendez shared that if the school calendar was included with April's Agenda, it could have been viewed by anyone, and some parents may have thought there were 3 additional half days included, but in reality, the Board did not approve the calendar.

Mrs. Diotte mentioned the purpose of the two Public Comment sections. The first one is to inform discussion of Agenda items. The second is to provide feedback to what the Board discussed. Mrs. Diotte suggested as best practice, the Board should follow what the sections are intended for.

The Board agreed the Consent Agenda items will not be included in the Agenda packet for public viewing. New Business items will be included. If the Board will be voting on a New Business enclosure, it will be clearly marked as draft.

**10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**11. COMMUNICATION**

None

## 12. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mrs. Zeitler noted that she sent the Board an email regarding forced Regionalization at 3:44 PM (prior to the April Board meeting) and inquired if they received it. Mrs. Zeitler also read articles which highlighted concerns associated with Social Emotional Learning curriculum.

Mrs. Joanna Ribisl shared that she is curious how the Social Emotional Learning curriculum will be implemented in the school. She would like to know where she can hear more about it.

Mrs. Diotte shared that Social Emotional Learning curriculum was discussed at the first Budget Workshop at length. It is a proposed curriculum to be adopted, meaning it will be worked through the Curriculum Committee and there will be proposals by the Director of Curriculum. She invited anyone who would like to learn more about the topic to attend the Curriculum Committee meetings.

Mrs. Ribisl also inquired about the DARE program, and noted surrounding towns utilize the program. The Board briefly weighed in. Mr. Laughlin noted the issue is part of the Health Curriculum, and concerns should be followed up with the Curriculum Committee.

Mrs. Zeitler questioned the cost of the Social Emotional Learning program. Mrs. Diotte shared that it has not been proposed yet, but \$7,000.00 has been allocated for the program.

## 13. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS

Mr. Neunzig noted that due to his job and family, plus the fact that he has been at a Board of Education meeting for five hours, it is impossible for him to read and respond to an email sent at 3:44 PM. He requested time to read and process emails.

Mr. Laughlin commented on both verbal and written comments pertaining to SP874. He noted the original proposal from Governor LaMonte and his team, along with a corresponding Bill in the house were much different from the Bill that was just passed by the education committee. He shared the Board has been tracking the legislation and it has significantly changed, and does not include any forced Regionalization elements whatsoever. It included language that encourages people to work together. Mr. Laughlin touched on the original proposed penalties for not participating in forced regionalization, but feels there should not be a fear as long as the school has the continued support of Town residents to support operations and improvements that are needed to the campus. Without State support, the school will remain a locally controlled school district.

Dr. Melendez added that the school district has always taken a collaborative approach to savings, by working with other districts regarding purchasing through EdAdvance, the school's RESC.

## 14. FUTURE MEETINGS AND TOPICS

- 14.1 Board of Education Meeting - May 1, 2019 at 7:00 PM - Library Media Center
- 14.2 Policy Meeting - April 23, 2019 at 5:00 PM - Library Media Center
- 14.3 Curriculum Committee - May 1, 2019 at 5:00 PM - Library Media Center
- 14.4 Maintenance Committee - TBD

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mr. Laughlin seconded that the Board adjourn at 9:28 PM and the motion passed unanimously,7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

James Neunzig  
Vice Chair, Sherman Board of Education

Prepared by Recording Secretary: Nancy Winkler