

**SHERMAN BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**SHERMAN, CONNECTICUT 06784**  
**REGULAR MEETING, NOVEMBER 6, 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 7:07 PM in the Library Media Center on November 6, 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. Kalkreuth and Mrs. Snowden
Staff:	Mr. Carlone and Mr. Trinchillo
Residents:	10 Residents

The Board and attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. CELEBRATIONS:**

**2.1 Casey Lenihan - Regatta performance**

Dr. Melendez recognized Casey Lenihan, 10th grade New Milford High School student, for her achievement in rowing. Casey began rowing in 8th grade. This season she has competed in 4 regattas and won two golds and 2 silvers. She placed top 10 at the Head of the Q regatta and top 20 in the Head of the Charles, an international regatta.

Dr. Melendez further added that the school is very interested in celebrating the achievements of Sherman high school students and welcomes emails/calls informing of achievements.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

No public comment

**4. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:**

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Seeger seconded to move Presentation 8.1 to the top of the Agenda, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

**8.1 Nail that Audition - XP Course focusing on Preparing, Auditioning and Participating in the CMEA Western Regional Band/Chorus/Jazz Festival**

Mr. Carlone explained the focus of the XP Course - Nail that Audition. The course prepares students to audition for the CMEA Western Regional Band/Chorus/Jazz Festival.

Students performed a selection of musical pieces that they have been working on and spoke of their experience preparing, auditioning and participating in the festival.

The following students participated at the presentation and all received a warm round of applause from all:

Nathaniel Bruzinski  
Isabella DiNatale  
Michael Hatcher  
Sam Head  
Katie Smith

Doug Conrad  
Mollie Garcia  
Ryan Hatcher  
Alexander Ostrosky  
Bryce Vore

**5. CONSENT AGENDA:**

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Seeger seconded to table item 5.4 Monthly Budget Report due to the e-finance transition, as well as turnover in the Business Office have caused a reporting delay. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Mrs. Diotte shared that a PowerSchool representative was on-site and worked with the new Business Manager for three days. Mrs. Diotte noted the importance of methodically and correctly reporting the financial information and expects the Board to receive a complete packet for the December meeting.

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded the Board's approval of the Consent Agenda items 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.5, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

5.1 Review of Minutes:

Minutes - Regular Meeting, October 2, 2019  
Minutes - Curriculum Meeting, October 1, 2019  
Minutes - Executive Session, October 2, 2019  
Minutes - Policy Committee, October 15, 2019

5.2 Personnel Actions

Appointment

Carrie DePuy, Director of Finance & Operations, Effective October 15, 2019  
Ronald Barnard, Security Officer, Effective October 21, 2019

Resignation

Anthony Rowella, Director of Finance & Operations, Effective October 18, 2019  
Meredith Belden, Paraprofessional, Effective, November 1, 2019  
Herbert Furhman, Security Officer, October 18, 2019

5.3 Monthly Enrollment Report

5.4 Monthly Budget Report 2019-2020 Budget by Function & Summary of Funds

5.5 Acceptance of donation of \$2,000 from Goldring Family Foundation for STEAM Materials

**6. APPROVAL OF CURRENT BILLS:**

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Seeger to second to table the approval of 2019-20 Current Bills due to the same issue as discussed with Item 5.4.

6.1 2018-2019 Current Bills

Enclosure 6.1

## **7. ORAL REPORTS:**

### **7.1 SPTO Update**

- Mrs. O'Neill shared \$650.00 was raised at the Election Day Bake Sale. She thanked the teachers and Administration for their donations.
- The next SPTO meeting will take place on November 12th at the Painted Lemon.
- The Senior Thanksgiving luncheon is scheduled for November 20th.

### **7.2 Sub-Committee**

#### **Maintenance Committee**

Mr. Laughlin reported the Maintenance Committee continues to discuss the goal of potable water. They have been reviewing a variety of options to utilize the well water and are awaiting final quotes to analyze the projected costs. The committee hopes to have a formal recommendation to proceed with a full scope, modified scope, or no scope to the full Board.

The committee also had a planned school visit with the Connecticut Department of Administrative Services and head of the Office of School Construction. The state representatives analyzed the components of the building. They noted some concerns that were identified in the Friar report, but were impressed with the general upkeep and maintenance of the property. Mr. Laughlin recognized and gave special credit to Mr. Lombardozzi and his team.

#### **Curriculum Committee**

Mrs. Enright would like to propose a Curriculum Committee agenda of getting an outside 3rd party consultant to address research issues regarding setting SBAC improvement goals. Mrs. Enright is unsure if the Board agrees to discuss this issue as an agenda topic.

Mrs. Diotte noted as Curriculum Chair, Mrs. Enright can set the agenda and date, and all who can attend should be prepared to discuss.

#### **Policy Committee**

Mrs. Seeger noted the Policy Committee met on October 15th and discussed seven policies. Some policies were combined and the Policy Committee is recommending eliminating a few policies due to being covered under one policy. First Readings will take place under New Business.

#### **Budget Committee**

Mrs. Diotte reported the Budget timeline is being developed.

### **7.3 Chairperson**

Mrs. Diotte congratulated Dr. Alexander and Mr. Laughlin on the re-election of their new four year term.

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

Dr. Melendez presented the November StopLight report and provided an update on many 2019-2020 Action Steps. The report can be viewed on the school's website.

Mrs. Seeger would like the StopLight report hyperlinked and provided to the Board prior to the monthly meetings. Also, she suggested moving the monthly report under the Strategic Plan tab on the website.

Mrs. Snowden provided an update to the Board outlining various Professional Development workshops attended by teachers and a brief synopsis on what they gained. Mrs. Snowden plans to periodically provide update on Professional Development at future Board meetings.

## **8. PRESENTATIONS**

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

### **9.1 Discussion and Possible Action to Select an Architect Firm for Conceptual Design**

Dr. Melendez shared a total of eleven firms participated in the RFP/Q walk-through and the school received seven qualified proposals. The Maintenance Committee reviewed all proposals and selected four firms to interview on November 4th. Each firm provided thorough presentations and the Board had an opportunity to ask questions.

Mrs. Diotte added the Design and Innovation Committee drove the decision for a conceptual design. Many ideas came out of the committee, but cost estimates were necessary to make any concrete decisions. The selected firm will provide a conceptual design, not blue prints. They will host visioning workshops with community groups, staff, administration, students, parents, etc. and provide cost estimates to do all that is suggested. The Board will be making a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen to request funding for initial step of this project.

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Seeger seconded to engage Tecton Architects for design and conceptual drawings of this project, and the motion passed unanimously 7-0.

Dr. Melendez shared that he reached out to Tecton and requested references for every single project that Tecton has worked on for the past 3 years. Dr. Melendez shared a document with the Board containing twelve references of which he contacted each one and received feedback from nine thus far. Dr. Melendez received affirmation from each person he spoke to.

Dr. Melendez will coordinate site visits for the Board to view projects completed by Tecton.

Mr. Laughlin suggested increasing the fund request to accomodate for a third-party cost estimator. He suggested a number not to exceed \$50,000.00.

Dr. Melendez questioned if he should contact Tecton to let them know of their status due to the timing of the contract.

Mr. Laughlin suggested letting them know they have been selected by the Board as the finalist and will be informed when funding has been secured.

Mr. Diotte will contact the First Selectman and let him know of the Board's intention to make a request on November 21st and will confirm the dates for potential approval.

**9.2 First Reading of Policy 5131 Students/Conduct and Discipline Enc 9.2**

Mrs. Diotte noted First Reading of Policy 5131.

**9.3 First Reading of Policy 6171 Instruction/Special Education Enc 9.3**

Mrs. Diotte noted First Reading of Policy 6171.

**9.4 First Reading of Policy 6172.1 Instruction/Gifted and Talented Students Enc 9.4**

Mrs. Diotte noted First Reading of Policy 6172.1.

**9.5 Discussion and Possible Action to form Ad Hoc Sub-committee on School Lunches**

Mrs. Lenihan briefly updated the Board about a meeting that she and Mr. Neunzig had with a few students in the school cafeteria regarding the school lunch program.

Mrs. Lenihan and Mr. Neunzig will be meeting with Aramark to discuss possible small immediate changes. Mr. Neunzig feels that Aramark is doing the best they can with the available resources in the cafeteria, and that additional changes will require the support of the Board of Education.

Mr. Laughlin moved and Mrs. Seeger seconded the approval of the Sub-committee on School Lunches and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Mrs. Lenihan will Chair the newly formed committee.

**10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**10.1 Discussion and Next Steps regarding Design and Innovation Committee**

Mrs. Diotte would like the Design and Innovation Committee informed of the next steps regarding selecting an Architect firm for Conceptual Design.

Dr. Melendez noted once the firm is engaged, they will be doing visioning work with faculty, students, administration, parents, community members, etc. and there will be plenty of opportunity to come to provide input. Both the firm and Board understand the value of engaging all parties.

## **11. COMMUNICATION**

Mrs. Diotte noted two communications have been received. She acknowledged that she would spend a few minutes explaining how one could engage the Board and the appropriate process.

Mrs. Diotte explained the Board's main focus is Policy, which governs the function of the Board. As part of Policy, a function of the Board is to employ a Superintendent of schools. Dr. Melendez is in charge of the District.

Mrs. Diotte shared concerns do arise to the Board level, but must first follow the steps identified in the Family-Student handbook. The Communication Guidelines were recently revised by the Communication Committee to make them clearer. She also shared that concerns can be shared at the committee level, for example, a curriculum concern could be shared at a Curriculum Committee. Mrs. Diotte explained that the Board is aware of generalized issues, but not specific information on individual situations. It is the Superintendent's job to handle all operational decisions. She further shared the Board should not be involved in the event that a situation arises to a Board level, there could then be a hearing and the Board must remain unbiased to make a fair decision.

Regarding Public Comment, public feedback is welcomed. There are two opportunities for public comment. The first public comment is typically meant to inform the Board's deliberation on an agenda topic. The second public comment is to reflect back on what the public heard from the Board deliberations and to request further considerations. Mrs. Diotte added the Board does let the public comment on non-related agenda items, but noted it is not meant to be a dialogue.

Dr. Alexander further shared that although not a dialogue, the Board does take the information for consideration.

Mr. Neunzig agreed and added the Board does want to hear your comments, and they do discuss as a Board.

Mrs. Seeger added if a Board member hears something and feels strongly, they can request it be added to the Agenda.

Mrs. Diotte agreed, but added that it will be asked if it was addressed at the committee level first. She feels there is good oversight and governance with the structure and it works.

Dr. Alexander stressed the importance of attending subcommittee meetings to have your concerns addressed.

Mr. Laughlin added to email the Board with general issues or concerns at [BOE@Shermanschool.com](mailto:BOE@Shermanschool.com).

## **12. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Amanda O'Neill questioned if the new Director of Finance has a conflict of interest as the SPTO Treasurer. She was hoping there would not be.

Dr. Melendez shared there is no conflict since payroll and vendor checks, as well as Student Accounts require a dual signer.

**13. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS**

**14. FUTURE MEETINGS AND TOPICS**

- 14.1 Board of Education Meeting, December 4, 2019 at 7:00 PM - Library Media Center
- 14.2 Curriculum Committee, November 21, 2019 at 5:00 PM - Library Media Center
- 14.3 Policy Committee, November 21, 2019 at 6:00 PM - Library Media Center

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mr. Neunzig seconded the Board adjourn at 8:38 PM and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

James Neunzig  
Vice Chair, Sherman Board of Education

Prepared by Recording Secretary: Nancy Winkler