

SHERMAN BOARD OF EDUCATION
SHERMAN, CONNECTICUT 06784
REGULAR MEETING - NOVEMBER 4, 2020
MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM FOR THE PUBLIC PARTICIPANTS
7:00 PM

A regular meeting of the Sherman Board of Education was called to order by Mrs. Diotte at 7:02 PM on November 4, 2020 at the Sherman School for the Board of Education and via Zoom.

1. PRESENT:

For the Board: Mr. Berlandi, Mrs. Diotte, Mr. Laughlin, Mrs. Lenihan, Mr. Neunzig (Zoom),
Mrs. Seeger and Mr. Vogt
Administration: Dr. Melendez and via Zoom: Mr. Dudics, Mr. Kalkreuth and Mrs. Snowden
Staff: Ms. DePuy
Residents: 2 Residents (via Zoom)

The Board and attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. CELEBRATIONS:

Mrs. Diotte welcomed new Board Member Matt Vogt. Mrs. Diotte thanked the Democratic Town Committee for recommending such a strong candidate. She shared how impressed she and the Board are with Matt's dedication to community, leadership qualities, and commitment to our school.

Mrs. Snowden celebrated Mr. Chris Carlone. Mr. Carlone's lesson plans were accepted as models by the State Department of Education. Mrs. Snowden noted the struggle many Districts are facing to keep students singing and playing band instruments due to the COVID restrictions.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Deirdre Fitzpatrick and Ryan Fitzpatrick, 13 Smoke Ridge Drive. Mrs. Fitzpatrick expressed concern regarding the recent change of New Fairfield High School students changing buses in the center of New Fairfield every morning on the way to school. Mrs. Fitzpatrick noted the change is due to the Abbott Tech students moving to in person learning. She feels this is a safety issue and is looking for a better solution.

Ryan Fitzpatrick shared his personal experience of sharing a seat with another student, which makes him nervous. Also, the hassle of navigating two buses with two back packs each morning.

Mrs. Diotte acknowledged Mrs. Fitzpatrick's email and noted the Administration will be reviewing the issue and following up with her.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick also expressed frustration with the lack of communication from New Fairfield to both the parents and Sherman School, and noted the feeling of high school students falling through the cracks.

4. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

None

5 CONSENT AGENDA:

Mrs. Diotte moved Mr. Berlandi seconded the approval of Consent Agenda Items 5.1 to 5.5 and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

5.1 Review of Minutes:

Minutes - Special Meeting - August 14, 2020
Minutes - Monthly Meeting - October 7, 2020
Minutes - Special Meeting - October 15, 2020
Minutes - Policy Meeting - October 21, 2020

5.2 Personnel Actions

New Hire

Vanessa Cotto, Para, Effective 10/13/20
Grace DiPonio, Building Substitute, Effective 10/13/20
Courtney Onofer, School Secretary, Effective 11/9/20

Resignation

Vanessa Cotto, Para, Effective 10/27/20

5.3 Monthly Enrollment Report

5.4 Monthly Budget Report 2020-2021 Budget by Function & Summary of Funds

5.5 Removal of Damaged and Unusable Equipment/Furniture

Regarding the Monthly Enrollment Report, Mr. Laughlin questioned the need for a new enrollment projection based on the number of students moving into the District and number of families homeschooling their children due to COVID.

Dr. Melendez confirmed that 17 students are homeschooled and not reflected in the total student headcount report. He also noted the headcount does include 10 students that are here due to the special Policy change to accommodate the teachers for the 2020-21 school year.

Due to Board discussion on this topic, Mrs. Diotte noted as a point of order, the topic of updating enrollment projections will be warned as a separate agenda item for a future meeting.

6. APPROVAL OF CURRENT BILLS:

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded the approval of current bills, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

6.1 2020-2021 Current Bills

7. ORAL REPORTS:

7.1 SPTO Update

Mr. Vogt, SPTO Vice President provided a SPTO update:

- The movie fundraiser at Veterans Field was a success and positive feedback was received. SPTO will continue to host upcoming movie events.
- Positive interaction with SPTO and the Administration
- Memberships are steady

**7.2 Sub-Committee
Policy Committee**

Mrs. Seeger noted both First & Second Readings will be addressed under New/Old Business. She shared that the committee tabled Policy 6142.101 Student Nutrition/Student Wellness for input from James Nuenzig and Dorinda Lenihan, and formation of a Nutrition Committee.

Negotiations Committee

Mr. Berlandi shared the committee continues to finalize accommodation requested by the Union on behalf of the teachers related to the COVID situation. Mr. Berlandi noted they are close to the end and are hopeful for a positive outcome.

7.3 Chair Report

7.4 Superintendent Update - Dr. Jeff Melendez Budget Update

Carrie DePuy presented a budget overview slide and highlighted three budget lines: Special Education, Education Media and High School Tuition. Ms. DePuy pointed out the high school budget line is tracking a negative balance due to increased high school enrollment. Mrs. Seeger questioned the high school enrollment headcount remaining consistent for the past three months. Dr. Melendez noted the Business Office will review and respond.

Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Melendez highlighted Action Step 7.2, Leverage technology to allow families greater access to school events. This step has moved to “ongoing” due to successfully leveraging Zoom Parent/Teacher conferences.

Mr. Laughlin questioned Zoom conferences attendance in comparison to in person conferences.

Mrs. Snowden shared that she did not do an in-depth analysis at this point in time but will research. She feels there was an uptick in comparison to last year and additional requested time slots were accommodated. If feedback leans towards more Zoom conferences, then perhaps the school should continue to offer this option.

Health Trends

Dr. Melendez provided an update on the Health Data Trends (October 23 - November 3rd) and noted the steady increases in the Primary Indicator percentages. He acknowledged that many factors determine the decision to move to fully remote, but feels it is inevitable.

The Board discussed future COVID communication to families at length. Dr. Melendez noted that he appreciated the feedback.

Dr. Melendez presented a slide with a sample remote learning schedule. Mrs. Snowden added that in comparison to the Spring, there will be a new level of interaction with live lessons and all students will be encouraged to join, but recorded lessons will be available for students who can not participate. Remote schedules will be provided to families in advance of moving to a remote learning platform.

8. PRESENTATION

8.1 Summer Curriculum Work Update

Mrs. Snowden provided a brief update on the Summer Curriculum work. Based on the advice of Heidi Hayes Jacobs as well as other consultants, the following guidelines were used to plan for the 2020-21 school year: evaluate what must be kept, eliminated and consolidated/streamlined. Based on these guidelines, Mrs. Snowden explained the process every teacher followed this summer to create their subject/grade level 2020-21 curriculum. She noted the amount of work involved in the process and felt the teachers were very thoughtful about staying focused on the

most important topics. Mrs. Snowden noted revisions will be made to the report cards to reflect the curriculum changes and families will be informed about the revisions. Mrs. Snowden feels identifying priority standards across all grade levels and in all content areas will provide a roadmap for the future.

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1 First Reading Policy 5145 Civil and Legal Rights and Responsibilities

Mrs. Seeger noted the regulations for this policy are being reviewed.

9.2 First Reading Policy 4152.6 Personnel-Certified/Non-Certified, Personal Leaves, FMLA

Mrs. Seeger noted Dr. Melendez and Ms. DePuy are working on regulations.

9.3 Timeline for 2021-2022 Budget Development

Dr. Melendez presented a slide with the 2021-2022 Budget Development Timeline. He suggested moving staffing from Budget Workshop #1 to Budget Workshop #2.

The Board discussed the December 7th Informal Budget Prep meeting at length. It was agreed that since the Board of Selectmen are invited to all Budget Workshops, then the meeting was not necessary and will be removed from the timeline.

The following changes were also made:

- Budget Workshop #2 will take place on January 13th
- Budget Workshop #3 will take place on February 17th
- All meetings will begin at 6:00 PM

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

10.1 Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Conceptual Design Services Project

Mrs. Diotte noted this is a standing agenda item. The Board of Selectmen will add the Board of Education to their November 19th meeting agenda for discussion.

10.2 Discussion and Possible Action to Approve Playground Design

Dr. Melendez provide a status update on the playground:

- Demolition and installation should go out to Bid
- Committee consensus is that funding should come from the Town, not the school community
- Limited foundations grants due to COVID
- Fine tuning includes possible extension of the 2-5 year old section and potential addition of Tree House design
- Septic evaluation for footings installation

10.3 Second Reading Policy 4131 - Certified Staff Development

10.4 Second Reading Policy 5131.911 - Student Bullying

10.5 Second Reading Policy 5141.6 - Students Emergency Preparedness Policy

10.6 Second Reading Policy 5145.12 - Student Searches/Desks and Lockers

10.7 Second Reading Policy 4118.237/4218.237/5141.8 Face Mask/Coverings

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Seeger seconded to approved Policy 4131, Policy 5131.911, Policy 5141.6, Policy 5145.12 and Policy 4118.237/4218.237/5141.8, and the motion passed unanimously. 7-0.

Mrs. Diotte reminded the public that all policies are available on the school's website under the About Us Tab/Board of Education/Bylaw and Policy.

11. COMMUNICATION

No communications

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comment

13. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS

Mrs. Seeger commented on the playground update and agreed that funding should come from the Town and not the community.

14. FUTURE MEETINGS AND TOPICS

- 14.1 Board of Education Meeting, December 2, 2020 at 7:00 PM
- 14.2 Policy Committee, November 17, 2020 at 9:30 AM
- 14.3 Communication Committee, November 10, 2020 at 5:00 PM

15. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Lenihan seconded the Board adjourn at 8:45 PM and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

James Neunzig
Vice Chair, Sherman Board of Education

Prepared by Recording Secretary: Nancy Winkler