

**SHERMAN BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**SHERMAN, CONNECTICUT 06784**  
**REGULAR MEETING - FEBRUARY 3, 2021**  
**MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM**  
**7:00 PM**

A regular meeting of the Sherman Board of Education was called to order by Mrs. Diotte at 7:01 PM on February 3, 2021 via Zoom.

**1. PRESENT:**

For the Board:	Mr. Berlandi, Mrs. Diotte, Mr. Laughlin, Mrs. Lenihan, Mr. Neunzig, Mrs. Seeger and Mr. Vogt
Administration:	Dr. Melendez, Mr. Dudics, Mr. Kalkreuth and Mrs. Snowden
Staff:	Ms. DePuy
Residents:	5 Residents

The Board and attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. CELEBRATIONS:**

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No public comment

**4. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA**

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mr. Vogt seconded to add to the agenda, 9.7 Discussion and Possible Action to rescind the Board of Education's endorsement of Option 3, Capital Planning Project, as proposed by Tecton Architects, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

**5. CONSENT AGENDA:**

**5.1 Review of Minutes:**

Minutes - Monthly Meeting, January 6, 2021  
Minutes - Policy Committee, January 21, 2021

**5.2 Personnel Actions**

**5.3 Monthly Enrollment Report**

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

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mr. Berlandi seconded the approval of the January Monthly Meeting Minutes, Policy Committee Minutes, Enrollment Report and Budget Reports, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

**6. APPROVAL OF CURRENT BILLS:**

**6.1 2020-2021 Current Bills**

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mr. Berlandi second to approve the 2020-2021 current bills and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

**7. ORAL REPORTS:**

**7.1 SPTO Update**

Mr. Vogt shared the SPTO is working on potential fundraiser options within the constraints of the COVID climate. He also shared the SPTO has received significant donations for the playground for extra add-ons from community members.

**7.2 Sub-Committee Negotiations**

Mr. Berlandi reported that the committee is in the discussion phase of negotiating the high school contract with Region 12.

**Policy Committee**

Mrs. Seeger reported four policies are slated for First and Second Readings. She also noted under New Business, Regulation 4217.41, not Policy is under review for rescindment.

**Special Committee on Capital Planning**

Mr. Vogt briefly noted the committee met with Tecton to discuss possible options for the building.

**7.3 Chair Report**

Mrs. Diotte commended the Administration and staff for the smooth transition into remote learning.

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

Ms. DePuy noted the school is awaiting the COVID Relief Funds (CRF) payment that was discussed at the January meeting. She also noted the school has been approved for additional funding in the amount of \$75,000 which can be expended to 2023. Ms. DePuy will provide more details once allocation guidelines have been received.

**Strategic Plan Update**

Mrs. Snowden referenced Action Steps 2.2, 2.4 and 3.5, and shared they were addressed during Professional Development on January 15th. The main focus of the day was on Blended Learning. EdAdvance provided coaching and teachers were given PD options. A discussion also took place regarding the lessons and strategies that have been acquired over the year and what teachers will bring forward.

Mrs. Snowden referenced Action Step 7.2 - Leverage technology to allow families greater access to school events. Spring conferences will be held via zoom, and Middle School group conferences will be scheduled at the teacher's request.

Mr. Kalkreuth provided an update on Action Step 11.1 and shared a faculty virtual scavenger hunt took place at the end of Professional Development.

Mrs. Seeger commented on the benefits of PD and would like to hear more future updates and potential for the Board to interact as well.

Health Data

Dr. Melendez shared the health data which prompted the move to Remote Learning on January 28th. The health team which includes Dr. Hack and Mr. Simpkins (Town Health Director) will meet on February 5th to review data and confirm reopening on Monday, February 8th.

Remote Snow Day

Dr. Melendez shared that the afternoon of February 2nd was held as a remote snow day. Morning remote instruction took place, and the afternoon was dedicated for students and families to enjoy being outside in the snow. Photos were submitted to the school and everyone enjoyed a Zoom presentation of students and their snow day adventures.

Sparkler App

Mr. Dudics shared a free Early Intervention Screening App, "Sparkler". The App allows parents to do an at home screening to show the developmental stage of their child, ages 5 years and younger. Please visit the school's website for more information.  
<http://www.shermanschool.com/academics/pre-school/sparkler>

**8. PRESENTATION**

**8.1 Assessment Data Update**

Mrs. Snowden presented an update on the assessment data testing. She shared a timeline of where testing left off due to the onset of the pandemic, to the start of 2020-21 STAR assessment which took place in November/December. Mrs. Snowden explained STAR Assessment is a nationally normed computer adaptive test and noted the benefits of seeing growth over time.

Mrs. Snowden reviewed the average scale scores spanning from September 2019 through November 2021. Despite moving to remote at the tail end of testing in December, Mrs. Snowden reported overall the assessment process went well. She noted in all cases, positive growth was concluded, ranging in various increments. Mrs. Snowden pointed out that the teachers are on pace with the curriculum and noted positive results are credited to them.

Mrs. Snowden noted that the assessment data is only one snapshot, and although positive, it will be with other sources of data to make decisions.

Mrs. Lenihan questioned if the data is reported to the State. Mrs. Snowden shared that results are used internally, and shared with families.

Mrs. Diotte questioned how the data compared with the results from past years. Mrs. Snowden will research and report back to the Board.

Mrs. Snowden reported that the State will move forward with Smarter Balance and NGSS testing this Spring and noted there will be no accountability report.

Dr. Melendez reflected on the steps that have been taken in response to Smarter Balanced results from years past. He realizes that the STAR results are just one measure, but he is pleased to see progress and commended his colleagues and the teachers.

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

**9.1 Discussion and Possible Action to Rescind Regulation 4217.41 Just Cause**

Mrs. Seeger noted the regulation is being rescinded as a result of the CAFE audit. The regulations are covered under another policy.

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mrs. Seeger second to Rescind Regulation 4217.41 Just Cause, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

**9.2 First Reading Policy 9330 Board/School Records**

**9.3 First Reading Policy 9240 Board Member Development**

**9.4 Discussion Regarding 2021-2022 Budget Feedback**

In response to the Board's budget workshop questions, Dr. Melendez requested clarification on several topics which he had emailed the Board.

The Board discussed the purpose of reviewing the budget feedback data and requested that it be reserved for a separate budget meeting.

Dr. Melendez expressed his concern over transparency, as well as timing if changes need to be made to further reduce the 0% draft budget before the next budget workshop. He also noted that some recommendations do not coincide with the Strategic Plan.

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mr. Berlandi seconded to table the 2021-2022 Budget Feedback, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

**9.5 Discussion Regarding meeting with Board of Selectmen on February 2, 2021**

Mrs. Diotte noted both the Board of Education and Board of Selectmen met on February 2nd to discuss the needs of the building.

Mr. Vogt shared that the Board of Education received good feedback from the meeting and noted that Option 3 will most likely not be supported. The Capital Planning will work on facilitating future communications/conversations. Mr. Vogt looks forward to future productive meetings with the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Laughlin noted the Capital Planning Committee and Maintenance Committee will have to work together to discuss what has been done thus far, how the projects are grouped and the impact. He is aware that specifics and dimensions of phasing will have to be communicated in an effort to move forward with a consensus.

Mrs. Seeger recommended a Board of Selectmen member participate at the Maintenance and Capital Planning Committee meetings.

Mr. Vogt agreed and noted he will address it again.

Mrs. Diotte noted her takeaway from the meeting:

- More details are needed as to what must be addressed. She referenced a working document with prioritization that Mr. Lombardozzi created from the Friar document. Since he is well versed in the needs of the building, Mrs. Diotte feels it would be beneficial for a BOS member to attend a Maintenance Committee or

Capital Planning so that Mr. Lombardozzi can address immediate and long-term needs.

- As suggested by Mr. Keenan, a communication package is needed which shows the facility needs and educational needs with phasing for the public to understand.
- The Board is aware that now is not the right time for the community to be looking at a project the scale of Option 3. Mrs. Diotte acknowledged the Board is not afraid to change direction.

Mrs. Lenihan added that due to the Pandemic, construction costs have increased and feels projected figures will have to be updated.

Both Mr. Vogt and Mr. Laughlin were in agreement.

**9.6 Discussion of the Open Choice Program**

Mr. Laughlin informed the Board of Senate Bill 255 which will be introduced to expand the State's existing Open Choice Program. Mr. Laughlin explained the goal of the program is to take Districts that have increasing enrollment with space challenges and provide a pathway for voluntary choice of surrounding Districts. Mr. Laughlin believes the State will pay a per pupil enrollment fee for each student and transportation costs. The sending district would cover special education costs. Mr. Laughlin is aware of details that need to be analyzed, but given the current enrollment, felt it was worth investigating.

The Board briefly discussed and would like Dr. Melendez to research and report his findings at a future Board meeting.

**9.7 Discussion and Possible Action to rescind the Board's Endorsement of Option 3, Capital Project as Proposed by Tecton Architects**

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mr. Vogt seconded to rescind the Board's Endorsement of Option 3, Capital Project as Proposed by Tecton Architects, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Mrs. Diotte noted that the Board is responsive to the new information and feedback that they have received, and although they felt Option 3 was the best option for the District, they will be rescinding their endorsement and allow the Capital Planning committee to work on next steps.

Mr. Vogt added that he is aware of all of the work that went into Option 3. The Capital Planning Committee will explore other options in response to the feedback that they received.

**10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**10.1 Second Reading Policy 9325 Meeting Conduct**

Mrs. Seeger moved and Mr. Laughlin seconded to adopt updated Policy 9325 Meeting Conduct, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

**10.2 Second Reading Policy 5111 Admission and Placement of Students: Attendance Ages**

Mrs. Seeger moved and Mr. Berlandi seconded to pass Policy 5111 Admission and Placement of Students: Attendance Ages, and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

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**10.3 Review and Possible Approval of RFQ/P for Playground Site Work and Installation**

Dr. Melendez reported due to recent weather conditions, the contractor is unable to perform the requested septic testing. The school is looking for another qualified contractor and will include the results in the RFQ/P.

Mr. Neunzig noted the oil and water tanks will have to be replaced which will impact the parking lot. Mr. Laughlin noted that he will take up the issues in the Maintenance Meeting.

**11. COMMUNICATION**

None

**12. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Susan Zeitler, 8 Curtis Drive. Mrs. Zeitler noted she that she put a video in the chat box (YouTube/Allison McDowell) regarding education. She feels the video explains the direction of education, who is responsible for the educational agenda, as well as who is benefiting from it. Mrs. Zeitler does not feel that the children will benefit.

**13. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS**

Mrs. Diotte thanked fellow Board members for participating at their meeting on Sunday. She felt it was valuable time together.

**14. FUTURE MEETINGS AND TOPICS**

- 14.1 Board of Education Meeting, March 3, 2021 at 7:00 PM
- 14.2 Budget Workshop, February 17, 2021 at 6:00 PM
- 14.3 Budget Workshop - Monday, February 8th, 2021 at 6:00 PM
- 14.4 Policy Committee - February, February 25th at 10:30 AM

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

Mrs. Diotte moved and Mr. Vogt seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 PM and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

James Neunzig  
Vice Chair, Sherman Board of Education

Prepared by Recording Secretary: Nancy Winkler