

## **STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING January 14, 2016-Page | 1**

Frank Todisco, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Stonington High School Commons. Members present were Faith Leitner, Secretary, Deborah Downie, Alisa Morrison, Alexa Garvey, Terry Stefanski, and Craig Esposito.

Also present were Dr. Van Riley, Superintendent of Schools, Ana de Oliveira, Recording Secretary, Mallorie Geiger, Student Government Representative, members of the staff, and interested citizens.

### **Board Presentations**

#### **Deans Mill School Student Senate:**

Jennifer McCurdy introduced a group of DMS students who are the Student Senate at Deans Mill School. The students explained the group meets after school to discuss how to make their school a better place. The students also gave a PowerPoint presentation. (see attached). Alexa Garvey asked if the students could serve more than one year on the senate. A student replied "No, only one year to give other students an opportunity to be on the senate."

### **Communications & Recognitions**

Alexa Garvey recognized Tim Flanagan, a Pawcatuck Middle School teacher, for an article about him that who appeared in the Westerly Sun recently.

Terry Stefanski spoke on the upcoming SEF Education Celebration scheduled for March 19 from 6pm – 10pm at the Inn in Mystic.

Faith Leitner spoke on her appreciation of the voicemails regarding half-day school sessions on Friday and noted she received emails asking notifications be at least 24 hours' notice.

Dr. Van Riley recognized the presentation from the Deans Mill School Student Senate and remarked that the students did a great job. Dr. Riley also introduced the new Director of Finance, Gary Shettle. The Board welcomed Mr. Shettle.

### **Comments from Citizens**

There were no comments at this time.

### **Consent Agenda**

- A. Minutes – December 10, 2015 (Regular)
- B. Checks and Bills
- C. Personnel Report
- D. Transfers

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Faith Leitner:

**Motion 1:** To approve the Consent Agenda A-D as presented.  
All: Aye

### **Report of the Superintendent of Schools**

Van Riley asked that all put on your calendar the SEF event, and he was looking forward to the event. Building Committee Architect: Van Riley noted that as of this morning, DRA architects signed the contract for the Elementary Modernization project. They are officially our architect and the first order of business will be meeting with our elementary teams.

**Report of the Superintendent of Schools (continued)**

Middle School Task Force: Dr. Riley reported the Middle School Task Force had one meeting and will be meeting again on January 20. The group is looking at all different aspects of the middle school programming structure and will be bringing recommendations to the Board when the meetings are finished.

Eighth Grade Class Credit Issue: Dr. Riley noted he met with Mr. Friese and decided that students will not be given high school course credits for taking 8<sup>th</sup> grade foreign language and algebra classes.

Adult Education Update: Dr. Riley met with Superintendents of Groton and North Stonington to discuss looking moving away from the current consortium and creating our own. If we are making a change, it would need to be done by April.

Food Service Program: The forensic audit is finished and a report will be put together for the next BOE meeting. We are going to bid for the program and are looking at the possibility of regionalizing, by talking with Groton, North Stonington, and Ledyard to see if they are interested in going in together.

Bus Requests: Dr. Riley met with all the PTOs in elementary and middle schools concerning the issue of the number of requests for students changing bus routes. We have too many changes each day and will be meeting with principals and secretaries to come up with consistent forms and a district procedure. This will reduce daily parent requests for changes and hopefully implement in the next month or two. Craig Esposito asked if it is possible that technology could help in this matter like the use of a computer application. Dr. Riley said we would look at that.

**Superintendent's Proposed Budget Presentation of 2016-2017**

Dr. Van Riley noted there are two handouts provided to the Board and the public. Dr. Riley explained his recommendation is a 2.88 % increase. Dr. Riley gave an overview of his proposed budget and how the budget was compiled, and explained the site allocation formula while noting that there has been a decrease in enrollment and how this and the number of retirees affects the staffing in each grade levels. Dr. Riley also shared a list of budget positives, new accomplishments, and items not included in the budget and reviewed the increases and decreases in each line of the budget summary. Dr. Riley thanked everyone who helped put the budget together.

The Board had no questions for the Superintendent.

Frank Todisco recommended a similar process as last year, and noted we do not need the workshops that are all on the schedule. Mr. Todisco asked the Board if it would be okay to meet two weeks from tonight, with no meeting next week. Mr. Todisco also asked the Board come up with the questions for Dr. Riley regarding the budget before the next meeting.

**NEASC Report**

Mark Friese spoke on the NEASC accreditation process, which is every ten-year cycle with the last one in 2006. We asked for an extension, and it was granted so now it is up in 2017. Mr. Friese gave a background on self-studies and spoke on how the whole school community is using the standards and preparing them for the students' future. Mr. Friese shared a slideshow regarding the NEASC process and standards. Mr. Friese gave a timeline of the events to get prepared for the NEASC and noted the Board's input would be appreciated. Deborah Downie asked how do you get on these committees and when do they meet? Mr. Friese explained to basically just let him know which committee you would like to be on and they meet in the mornings. Mr. Downie also asked why documents were not sent electronically; Mr. Friese said some items could be sent that way unless they are actual projects. Faith Leitner asked if middle or elementary schools need accreditation as well. Mark Friese explained it is similar but not a requirement.

**Approval of Policy 6146 Graduation Requirements**

Frank Todisco and Alexa Garvey spoke of the changes that were made at the last BOE meeting on Policy 6146 and noted they were not changed on the Policy attached to the agenda. Mr. Todisco noted we will postpone action on this Policy until February and will bring it back to the Board.

**Update on Assessment Penalty Issue**

Nikki Gullickson reported that no changes have been received.

**Monthly Reports**

Jason Jones addressed the Board on the CIP item for technology. Mr. Jones asked the Board to support our ability to increase the funding for school equipment and explained the reason behind request. Deborah Downie asked if this could be transferred to the new building. Mr. Jones explained some of the things we would be able to include, mostly the wiring. Frank Todisco noted that he and Mr. Jones have met with Bryan Bentz to share some of this information and get a feel for his thoughts. Mr. Bentz gave us some favorable feedback but no promises or guarantees. Mr. Todisco will bring the CIP back in two weeks for approval.

**Committee Reports**

There were no comments on the Committee Reports.

**Comments from Citizens Relative to Board Action on this Agenda**

Sue Jones spoke on the algebra and the foreign language for the middle school students, gifted and talented program, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class credit issue, and asked if parents have been informed about the late start at the high school.

**Items for Future Agendas**

- Graduation requirements
- Foreign language update
- Art department needs and success from the elementary to the high school

**Board Comments/Concerns**

There were no comments or concerns at this time.

**Executive Sessions:**

Pending Litigation Walsh vs. Board of Education

Discussion with respect to strategy regarding collective bargaining with the SEA

The following motion was made by Alisa Morrison and seconded by Faith Leitner:

**Motion 2:** To enter into executive session to discuss Pending Litigation Walsh vs. Board of Education and discussion with respect to strategy regarding collective bargaining with the SEA and invite Van Riley, Mark Friese, and Nikki Gullickson.  
All: Aye

Frank Todisco noted the Board would be coming back into public session for the purpose of voting on the executive session items only.

The Board entered into Executive Sessions at 8:26 p.m.

The Board exited executive sessions at 9:06 p.m.

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Alisa Morrison:

**Motion 3:** To authorize the BOE to enter into a settlement of Walsh v. Stonington Board of Education, et. al., Doc. No. 3:15-cv-00769-VAB and to authorize the Chair and Superintendent to be authorized to finalize and execute the settlement agreement on behalf of the Board.  
All: Aye

**Adjournment**

The following motion was made by Alisa Morrison and seconded by Craig Esposito:

**Motion 4:** To adjourn 9:08 p.m.  
All: Aye

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Faith Leitner, Board Secretary