

STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING September 10, 2015

Frank Todisco, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. in the Stonington High School Commons. Members present were Deborah Downie, Secretary, Faith Leitner, Alexa Garvey, and Craig Esposito.

Late Arrival: Terry Stefanski – 7:08 p.m.

Absent: Alisa Morrison

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

Frank Todisco announced that Paul Smotas is back with us as Interim Director of Finance and Mallorie Geiger as the new Student Government Representative to the Board.

The Following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Deborah Downie:

Motion 1: To move item AP Scholar Awards to the first item on the agenda.

All: Aye

Mark Friese recognized students for the 2015 AP season. Mr. Friese announced we had 35 students designated as AP Scholars, these scholars are based on how well they do on an assortment of AP exams, number of exams and scores. It was a very successful year; of 81% of students who took the tests were considered a success. Mr. Friese recognized three of our students; Alex Green, John Moody, and Claire Morehouse as part of the 2015 AP Scholars; the other 32 are happily enjoying their college life now.

Board Presentations

Nurses: *Gloria Murray-DeBiasi, Head Nurse and Allison Van Etten, Director of Special Services*
No discussion at this time.

Communications & Recognitions

Faith Leitner recognized Craig Esposito for his appointment as LEARN Regional School Board Chair. Mrs. Leitner also recognized the SHS back to school night and added that staff did a really great job. Mrs. Leitner communicated about the insert in the Mystic River Press that included bus routes and letters from principals. She noted this is good way to advertise our schools to those that do not have children in system to know more about the Stonington school district.

Alexa Garvey recognized Convocation day, acknowledged the teacher of the year for her wonderful speech, and also welcomed back the teachers.

Frank Todisco congratulated Mallorie Geiger for her recent appointment to the State Student Advisory Council.

Comments from Citizens

No comments from citizens at this time.

Consent Agenda

- A. Minutes –July 9, 2015 (Regular)
August 3, 2015 (Special)
August 5, 2015 (Special)
August 20, 2015 (Special)
- B. Checks and Bills (July & August)
- C. Transfers
- D. Personnel Report
- E. Healthy Food Certification ED099

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

Motion 2: To approve the Consent Agenda A-E.

All: Aye

Smarter Balance Assessment Update

Dr. Van Riley gave an update on the Smarter Balance Assessment using a PowerPoint presentation and thanked Nikki Gullickson for having this ready to share. Dr. Riley went through the results by subject, grade, and special education. Dr. Riley also explained the achieving levels by school and a comparison where our schools stand to other schools in our DRG. Dr. Riley noted the Board will be receiving more information at a later Board meeting and will answer questions tonight or bring back answers to the Board at a later date.

Faith Leitner asked what the state requires for a percentage of participation. Dr. Riley replied the state goal is for 95% participation. Deborah Downie asked about using SAT testing and those who already have taken the test, would they need to retake it. Dr. Riley stated that someone would be paying for this test.

Frank Todisco voiced his concern regarding the scores between schools and efforts put into this and feels the Teaching and Learning Committee needs to be involved in what we do from here and keep the Board up to date. Mr. Todisco also feels that there is a need for standardization of curriculum.

Report of the Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Van Riley and staff reported on the following items:

Response to Site Reports - The Board received the site reports with their Weekly Board Letter on Friday and asked the Board if they would like to continue to receive them. The Board agreed.

Sick Day Donation - We now have our third teacher using this and added there are over 188 days have been donated which is an amazing participation from our staff.

Unified Sports Funding – Allison Van Etten acknowledged and thanked Alan and Tanya Sylvestre, parents and graduates of SPS for their donation of \$7,000 from the golf tournament that they hosted. Allison Van Etten noted she would like to use these funds to expand special ed programs beyond sports and looking at other possibilities such as, art, drama production, talent program, and programs in SHS, elementary and middle schools.

Computer Analysis I Positions - Dr. Van Riley spoke on the computer analyst positions and his proposal for reconfiguring these positions. Dr. Riley noted that we have had difficulty finding people over the years to do this work with the salary we offer; therefore, we are going to reconfigure the existing tech para positions and make these into two full-time positions. Dr. Riley stated financially it works out; we would like to move the current para into one of these positions and open the other position.

Organic Field Pilot Program – Dr. Riley noted Bill King generated a report that went out to the BOF and BOS that program is moving along. Mr. Osborne has been out here a couple times and looks forward to having a very successful program and to expand this to the town.

MOU for Tuition - Dr. Riley spoke we had previously gone to the Board of Finance with an MOU to keep funds in district if we brought students to our district for any reason but that proposal was rejected by the BOF. The BOF said that if you we have a specific area or program to bring that back to the BOF as a single MOU and they would consider it. Dr. Riley suggested he would work with Allison Van Etten to discuss areas in special education that could bring students from area districts, DCF program, and a summer program. Dr. Riley asked for the Board's approval to go to BOF with an MOU and request funds stay in the district. Board came to a consensus and agreed.

Approval of Director of Special Services Contract

The following motion was made by Faith Leitner and seconded by Deborah Downie:

Motion 3: To approve the contract for the Director of Special Services.

All: Aye

Courier Position Direction/Approval

Dr. Van Riley reported this position was up for discussion; this position delivers any type of supplies, and correspondence to the district, to the town and Human Services; he noted the other part of it was the security monitor position. Mr. Friese was able to cover the security portion of this position with moving some of the hall monitors to cover the night position by doing so we are now able to hold this position to a 24-hour position.

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Terry Stefanski:

Motion 4: To approve the Courier position.

All: Aye

Strategic Plan/Finance Plan Discussion and Direction

Dr. Van Riley suggested that a committee be formed of parents, BOE members, teachers, district and site administrators, community members and support staff for a total of 18 individuals with an option for additional members if necessary to come up with the mission and vision statements. Dr. Riley shared a copy of a strategic plan format and schedule from San Dieguito Union High School district. Another component discussed was to come up with a 5-year finance plan, to help make decisions about funding in future years and suggested bringing this item back in October so the Board could share their ideas and members that the Board chose.

Deborah Downie and Alexa Garvey commented that they really liked the format that was shared by the Superintendent. Craig Esposito asked if this report would include major capital programs or would that be a separate item. Dr. Riley explained the 5-year finance plan is more than just a percentage and can include any area. Frank Todisco asked the Student Government Representative what her thoughts were on this. Student Government Representative, Mallorie Geiger shared her thoughts of not only having representation from SHS students but also students from other schools.

Approval of Equipment Lease

The following motion was made by Alexa Garvey and seconded by Deborah Downie:

Motion 5: To approve the US Bank Equipment Lease as presented.

All: Aye

Transportation Issues Discussion and Direction

Dr. Van Riley wanted to bring a major concern to the Board's attention regarding daily student transportation changes. Parents are used to this and like having this option. Dr. Riley explained that there is a number parent requests for changes in transportation as many as over 40 changes for one day. Dr. Riley noted that in talking with principals, we are unanimous and agree that something needs to be done. Dr. Riley asked for the Board's ideas. Frank Todisco stated that he feels this decision is not for the Board to make. Dr. Riley noted he wanted to make the Board aware of this situation and will have to come up with something to limit these changes because is not a safe situation.

NSBA Conference in Boston April 9

Frank Todisco noted this is the National School Board Association conference it is in Boston this year, and individuals might want to take advantage of attending. Dr. Riley added that this is very interesting conference and different from the local state conferences, if anyone is interested in going he would consider joining them if possible.

Facilities Update

Bill King reported the portables are in place and power is available. The hallway is not constructed yet but expected to be ready by the next meeting. Mr. King added the radios are here the last 8 going to MMS via the courier. Mr. King also reported the WVSS fence is installed and there will be a gate. Frank Todisco asked if the town is going to clear out a path. Mr. King reported there will be a clear path for fire trucks. Terry Stefanski asked if there would be an emergency door installed in the hallway, and Bill King responded yes there will be.

Monthly Reports

All monthly reports were presented in written form as part of the Board packet. Deborah Downie commented on the Student Government report.

Committee Reports

Frank Todisco made the Board aware of the upcoming scheduling of the review of their sections of the policy book that will be part of a future Policy Committee agenda.

Comments from Citizens Relative to Board Action on this Agenda

Sue Jones thanked Mark Friese, Mr. Curland and everyone at SHS for a very nice presentation. It's nice to see what our high schoolers do. WVS fence nice to see that they finally did the fence. Mrs. Jones commented on the PMS students' difference in test scores, and it is very concerning, and would like to see an update on each month what we are going to do about it.

Cindy Nadeau commented in regards to student representation on the Strategic Plan and suggested to have one from the SHS and one from each of the middle schools. Mrs. Nadeau also commented on the transportation issue and suggested to leave a little bit of wiggle room.

Dr. Van Riley commended Leanne Theodore and Stonington Prevention Council for their event at SHS "Shine a Light on Heroin" this is something that will be important for our community and neighboring communities. This event will be held on September 16 at 7pm.

Items for Future Agendas

- Presentation from the Nurses

Board Comments/Concerns

Terry Stefanski commented on the different school site reports. Mr. Stefanski notes they are really appreciated and gives an insight of what is happening in the different schools keep up good work, thank you.

Faith Leitner commented on the upcoming season of Powder Puff football, and voiced her concern on providing safety to the girls during the game and asked to look into providing helmets or any headgear. Frank Todisco asked Mark Friese to look into this issue.

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

Motion 6: To move into closed executive session to speak about the Walsh Lawsuit.

All: Aye

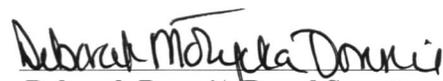
Board moved into Closed Executive Session at 8:15 p.m.

No actions were taken.

The following motion was made by Alexa Garvey and seconded by Faith Leitner:

Motion 7: To adjourn at 8:35 p.m.

All: Aye


Deborah Downie, Board Secretary