

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

Absent: Alisa Morrison

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**

#### **West Vine Street School Sensory Garden:**

Alicia Dawe, WVSS/WBSS Principal, introduced students from WVSS who shared a presentation with the Board on the Sensory Garden and its benefits. The staff also shared a slide show of the Sensory Garden events. Mrs. Dawe thanked Mrs. Holland and Mrs. Pratt for their help with the sensory garden. The Board asked the students a few questions regarding the Sensory Garden and commended the students for a great job on the presentation.

#### **Special Education Transition Services:**

Deidre Toole and Allison Van Etten spoke about the Special Ed transition services. Mrs. Van Etten thanked Mrs. Toole, who serves as transition counselor and special education teacher. They presented a presentation on secondary transition services for our students and spoke on the three major items in the transition services, 1) post-secondary education training, 2) employment, and 3) independent living skills. Mrs. Toole gave examples and history on The "TLC" the community classrooms that the students are enrolled in such as Stoneridge, Westerly Hospital, and the Global Child. She gave an overview on the differences and funding challenges that parents and students are facing concerning DDS and BRS. Mrs. Toole thanked the Board and told them any support they could give to the program would be greatly appreciated.

### **Communications & Recognitions**

Alexa Garvey commented on the Thanksgiving Day football game and recognized the wonderful play at the high school.

Deborah Downie commented she is looking forward to all the school activities coming up.

Frank Todisco stated that he had an opportunity to attend the holiday band concert at Pawcatuck Middle School in which the students did a phenomenal job.

### **Comments from Citizens**

Cindy Nadeau addressed the proposed graduation requirements, questioned how extra activity hours accumulated and what can be used towards the graduation requirements. Frank Todisco noted this would be addressed later in the meeting.

Sue Jones questioned if the Graduation Requirement policy would be approved tonight, and if approved could it be modified afterwards. Ms. Jones also had questions regarding accepting Algebra I credits towards the high school credits.

### **Consent Agenda**

- A. Minutes – November 12, 2015 (Regular)
- B. Checks and Bills
- C. Personnel Report
- D. Transfers
- E. Approval of Policy 1000 Series
- F. Approval of Education Specifications for PMS Roof Replacement Project

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

**Motion 1:** To approve the Consent Agenda A-F  
All: Aye

**Report of the Superintendent of Schools**

Dr. Riley commented he attended both middle schools band concerts and both were outstanding and congratulated the groups. Dr. Riley also spoke on issues with parking during these events, noted that Pawcatuck Middle School's spring concert will be held at the high school to facilitate parking; Mystic Middle School's will stay as is at their school.

Dr. Riley also reported that the budget development is being prepared and is going quite well. Dr. Riley shared handouts with Board members regarding the Special Ed analysis on the proposed new van usage, the savings associated with this new van, a memo to Chief of Police Darren Stewart and Todd Olson, Captain related to video and camera updates in school buildings and a memo to Prek-5 staff regarding new building project design. Dr. Riley reported that by Monday the district would have all new cameras that PD can tie into these cameras in case of an emergency. The district has also ordered new server to archive videos for at least 30 days and by January, we will have full connection with the PD. Dr. Riley also spoke on a memo sent out to Pre-K through 5th grade staff regarding the recent meeting with DRA regarding design and process of the building of the two elementary schools. Dr. Riley also added that both principals would be putting together a committee from each elementary site to look at the design phase. Dr. Riley spoke on the aggressive schedule over the next 14 months, which include, design phase, bidding and then construction. Frank Todisco asked that the van analysis document be added to the CIP request when submitted to the Town.

**Facilities Report/Major Building Component Analysis**

Dr. Riley explained that Ken Donovan has kept this document up to date, which shows the life expectancy of major systems in the schools, based on the professional program that Mr. Donovan uses.

**Chinese Student Program**

Dr. Riley spoke on this program, which is similar to a foreign exchange program. Dr. Riley added that Mark Friese, Nikki Gullickson, Margo Crowley, and him were contacted and met with a company that currently places students, in Woodstock, CT. Dr. Riley noted the group decided there is a lot to consider before starting this program, so Dr. Riley suggested looking at this in the next six months and see how this will work but added that this sounds like an interesting opportunity. Alexa Garvey asked how long Woodstock Academy been doing this? Dr. Riley said he thought a couple of years.

**Approval of 2016-2017 CIP**

The Board discussed items on the CIP. Deborah Downie spoke on funding for the PMS roof, whether it will be part of CIP or part of the building project. Frank Todisco asked when the district would know from the state if funding were available for this project. Bill King and Dr. Riley gave their suggestions on the funding for the roof. Dr. Riley explained that we had bonding for the roof but now the coping stones are cracking so the building committee reallocated the funding to cover both issues of the PMS roof and are awaiting state approval. Bill stated there were two suggestions from the Board for the CIP list, one would be to add the quantity to each item and which has been done where possible, the second is to put a value on the 21 items to be removed, and the value on those was 1.2M.

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

**Motion 2:** To approve the 2016-2017 CIP  
All: Aye

**Board of Education Sub-Committee Membership**

Frank Todisco reported there was an update to the Board Sub-Committee membership, which was added as an attachment to the Board packet, and would be effective for the sub-committees in January.

**First Read/Approval Policy 6146 Graduation Requirements**

Margo Crowley spoke on the major issues and changes to the Graduation Requirement policy, some of which are, a senior project this year is a requirement, next year grades 9, 10, and 11 will be required to do community hours. Ms. Crowley addressed the question asked by a community member, and stated that yes, hours will be honored for volunteering in the community at an outside activity. The Board had questions on testing for 10<sup>th</sup> grade, assisting with transportation for community hours, how hours will be tracked for the credit. The Board also asked about current classes. Ms. Crowley explained that teachers would be tracking hours. Dr. Riley spoke that there will not be giving credit for 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes but will discuss with the Teaching and Learning committee. Deborah Downie asked about CAPT testing for 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Ms. Crowley explained that will be just science CAPT. Mallorie Geiger, Student Government Representative, suggested help for students finding places to do community service and provide transportation. Alexa Garvey questioned the number of hours per year for community service and students graduating who are taking part in a foreign exchange program. Deborah Downie asked how it would be tracked. Ms. Crowley explained this would be done by the teachers at home base. Frank Todisco suggested making the modifications to the policy and bringing it back to the Board at a later date.

**Monthly Reports**

Bill King introduced Becky Fowler who is the interim replacement for Tim Paquette, Food Service Director, who is retiring. Bill King also spoke on the timeline of the softball scoreboard. The Board had questions regarding the existing scoreboard and the cost of the new one. Frank Todisco expressed that he is not comfortable going to the Town for funding as the district goes into a budget season. The Board suggests options to install the new scoreboard without incurring additional cost.

Frank Todisco spoke on an email from Richard Ward that was sent to our new First Selectman related to comments made during a Rec Commission meeting. Mr. Todisco asked Bill King if these items had been addressed before, Bill agreed that this is the first time we heard of these items. Mr. Todisco suggested a letter be drafted to the Chairman of the Rec Commission but will pass it by the Board first to address our concerns.

**Committee Reports**

Deborah Downie spoke on the minutes of the Teaching and Learning Committee about changes in the science curriculum at the high school.

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

Sue Jones asked if a decision was made on citizen comments during regular Board meetings.

Susan Fowler asked the Board on how to go about putting a charge policy into place for the district for student meals, districtwide we are owed \$3,152.73 from meals being charged. Dr. Riley suggested Ms. Fowler meet with Bill King and himself to discuss this.

**Items for Future Agendas**

Faith Leitner requested adding the following discussion items; foreign languages at middle schools and class sizes and future ideas. Dr. Riley explained the district is in the process of forming a task force to discuss these issues.

**Board Comments/Concerns**

None at this time.

**Closed Session: Discussion Regarding Director of Finance Contract**

**Executive Session: Pending Litigation Walsh vs. Board of Education**

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

**Motion 3:** To enter into closed session for discussion regarding the Director of Finance contract and to invite Dr. Van Riley as well as enter into executive session to discuss pending litigation of Walsh vs. Board of Education.

All: Aye

The Board entered into Closed/Executive Sessions at 8:30 p.m.

**Open Session: Approval of Director of Finance Contract**

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

**Motion 4:** To exit closed session at 8:50 p.m.

All: Aye

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

**Motion 5:** To approve the Director of Finance Contract as presented.

All: Aye

**Adjournment**

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Alexa Garvey:

**Motion 6:** To adjourn 8:51 p.m.

All: Aye

  
Faith Leitner, Board Secretary