

## STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING October 10, 2019 - Page | 1

Alexa Garvey, Chairwoman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Stonington High School Commons. Members present were, Candace Anderson, Board Secretary, Jack Morehouse, Deborah Downie, and Craig Esposito.

Absent: Alisa Morrison, Farouk Rajab

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

### **Board Presentations**

**Encore Classes** - Tim Smith, Stonington Middle School Principal started by thanking Jennifer Bausch for her work on the curriculum for the Encore classes. He showed a video of students in action during each Encore class. He shared a presentation on the Encore classes offered at the middle school. Teachers Richard Manning, Olwen Chin and Tim Flanagan shared information on each of their Encore classes; music technology, biomedical engineering and photography. See presentation attached. Mr. Smith also shared communication from the University of Arizona Center for Middle Eastern Studies noting that teacher Tim Flanagan has been selected for authoring a lesson which was part of the sixteenth lesson plan competition. His lesson was chosen for publication on the university's website where it is accessed by other teachers. Mr. Smith added we are very fortunate for having Mr. Flanagan working in our district and thanked him for his work. Jack Morehouse asked how often do the Encore classes meet. Mr. Smith said they meet every other day for a semester for half a year. Chairwoman Garvey asked how the grading end up for these classes. Mr. Smith explained they are graded classes.

**State of the District** - Dr. Riley noted this year represents a year of milestones for the district; opening of two elementary schools, consolidation of the middle school, consignment of the two properties back to the town and the relocation of the district office. He added over the next few months we will be sharing a series of reports and communications that will give highlights and aspects of our schools. We will put all this background material on our website so that the community can access this information. Dr. Riley reported on the academics and programming as the first report of the series. The following are future reports he will be presenting: staffing and teacher retention; facilities and infrastructure; budget and resource allocation; and looking to the future. A link to the presentations can be found on the main page of the district website.

### **Communications & Recognitions**

Alexa Garvey communicated that tonight is Board Member Deborah Downie's last meeting. She added she has served on the Board for eight years and is the liaison for the K-12 Building Committee. Chairwoman Garvey thanked Mrs. Downie for her service and wished her all the best. She noted there will be a brick in her honor placed in the brick pathway.

Jack Morehouse reported he attended the SEF meeting on Monday night and plans on attending all the meetings this year. He added he will report back to the Board what he learns at each meeting. The SEF is planning on having their annual gala sometime in March details to come. Chairwoman Garvey asked if there were any specific goals for SEF this year. Mr. Morehouse shared that they would like to form a stronger relationship with our administration. They would like to make sure they spend their money that they raise in the best way that they can so they are hoping that they can form a better partnership with administration.

Deborah Downie gave a call out to the art department; Sally Motycka, Teresa Bonillo and some of the unified art students and art club students, who painted the sets for the Salt Marsh Opera they are beautiful we should be really proud that they did that. Mrs. Downie also thanked all those who came out to the two open houses for Deans Mill School and West Vine Street School it was fabulous, we are so proud to show off our new schools. She added she met alumni and neighbors that go back many years who were excited to see the new schools. She commented on community service requirements in our schools. She also spoke that the district currently does not have a policy that supports military families and suggested that the district revisit this issue so in the future we can be supportive of active military families.

Candace Anderson reported she attended the Deans Mill School ribbon cutting ceremony which was very exciting. She also noted that Rob Simmons remarks complimented the Board nicely. She added he and June Strunk are finishing their terms and have been great supporters of the Board of Education and great partners, she appreciates their service and support.

### **Comments from Citizens**

There were no comments from citizens.

### **Consent Agenda**

- A. Minutes – August 8, 2019 (Regular)  
September 12, 2019 (Regular)
- B. Checks and Bills – September
- C. Personnel Report
- D. Transfers

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Candace Anderson:

**Motion 1: To approve the consent agenda items A-D as presented.**

‘ All Aye

**First Read – Curriculum – Physical Science**

Craig Esposito had a question why is there a requirement to have biology to have a physics course. Mr. Mark Friese, High School Principal explained the requirements for the courses. Chairwoman Garvey noted we will have a second read at the November meeting, any questions you may have please present those questions so we can have them answered ahead of time.

**Second Read – Curriculum**

- A. Algebra I
- B. Beginning Guitar
- C. Social Studies K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
- D. Health 6, 7, 8

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

**Motion 2: To approve Curriculum A-D as presented**

**All: Aye**

Chairwoman Garvey thanked all who worked on the curriculum.

**Discussion/Approval Increase Substitute Teacher Rate**

Dr. Riley shared a comparison of what we pay and our neighboring districts pay for substitute teachers. He explained we are having difficulty filling these positions and feels increasing the rate will help provide quality substitute teachers when the need arises. Jack Morehouse voiced he looked at what others are paying their substitute teachers and he feels we should do the increase.

The following motion was made by Jack Morehouse and seconded by Candace Anderson:

**Motion 3: To increase the salary rate for substitute teachers to \$100 per day effective October 18, 2019.**

**All: Aye**

**Action Regarding Relinquishing Control of the Administration Office Building, Old Mystic, CT**

Chairwoman Garvey explained there has been a delay in getting the building as clean as we liked it to be. We have more shredding that needs to get done, the shredding company will be coming back on Oct 21 once that happens we can finish cleaning out the old administrative office and have that building ready to hand over to the town on November 1.

The following motion was made by Candace Anderson and seconded by Craig Esposito

**Motion 4: I move that effective November 1, 2019, the Stonington Board of Education relinquish control of the Town of Stonington-owned property located at 49 North Stonington Road, Old Mystic, CT and known as the Administration Office Building, including the land, grounds, buildings, facilities, structures, and improvements thereon, to the Town of Stonington. By such action, control of such property shall revert back to the Town of Stonington, and the Stonington Board of Education shall no longer be responsible for the care, maintenance, and operation of such property.**

**All: Aye**

**Report of the Superintendent of Schools**

Dr. Riley reported we are moving forward with a child care for our staff members and will be sending out a survey soon to find out who is interested. This should be ready by February and will be no cost to the district and a savings for our employees. Dr. Riley spoke on the EEE issue and that we are moving to have fields evacuated by 5:00 p.m. starting and will notify all students and coaches this will start on Monday. He also mentioned that due to the opening night of the drama department the November 14 Board meeting will be held at the district office. Dr. Riley explained we recently had some issues with the upload of PowerSchool information to the School Messenger system. We will be notifying parents who have not re-registered their student to let them know they will not be included on school messages. We will be sending emails and phone messages to those parents who have not done this process in order to have this up to date.

**Monthly Reports**

The Board had no questions on the monthly reports.

**Committee Reports**

Health Reserve Committee - Chairwoman Garvey reported we are getting closer, Mr. Simmons received information from the town attorney and they are working on the draft and we should be hearing from them very soon and will get a draft back.

**Building Committee Update**

Deborah Downie we working along on the punch lists. The Building Committee and administration did a walk through at both buildings and are working on final punch list of things needed to be completed and repaired. Gilbane will be there over the holiday to get as many of those things done. There is still some issues on the water pump and thanked Peter Anderson and Wes Greenleaf who are working with them to get those things done.

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We will be meeting once a month now. She added even though she will not be the Board's liaison she will be staying on the committee until the end of the project. Chairwoman Garvey thanked Mrs. Downie for all the time she has put into the committee.

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

There were no comments from citizens.

### Items for Future Agendas

- A. BOE/Leadership Team joint meeting Oct. – Chairwoman Garvey asked the Board if they would like Nick Caruso from CABA at the meeting. The Board was in consensus to contact Mr. Caruso, Chairwoman Garvey will contact CABA representative to find out what the options would be and will present that at the November Board meeting.

### Board Comments and Concerns

Deborah Downie thanked the Board, it has been really rewarding and has enjoyed her time on the Board. She commented she will not totally go away because she is a huge supporter of all the arts and will comment on this at future meetings. She added she is going to continue to follow the Building Committee. She thanked everyone for the opportunity to be on the Board.

Jack Morehouse commented as a tax payer, small business owner, Board of Education member and father of three daughters, one who is currently a tenth grader at the high school, it is important to him and wants to make sure that students are made to feel comfortable when attending a class. He added to that end, a meeting is subjective, it is important for our Board of Ed and our administration work together. He believes our high school, thanks to Mr. Friese is becoming one of the best premier high school in our region and this issue is casting a negative light on all the good work that is being done at the high school. We are waiting for a report that is coming back from the state but feels that we do not know what will be in the report and has been told that it will only probably just be a set of recommendations. He added it is important for him to know answers to some very basic questions that could be easily answered and would help bring resolution to this matter and bring our community together. He will bring some questions forth to Chairwoman Garvey in the upcoming week and thanked her for her time. Chairwoman Garvey added she will be available whenever that is ready.


Dr. Riley said the district will be going to an FOI hearing on October 25th, we have been challenged by the Day to discuss that issue and will let the Board know how it goes.

### Adjournment

The following motion was made by Craig Esposito and seconded by Jack Morehouse:

**Motion 5: To adjourn at 8:07 p.m.**

All: Aye

  
Candace Anderson, Secretary