

Alexa Garvey, Acting Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Stonington High School Commons. Members present were, Candace Anderson, Deborah Downie, Jack Morehouse, Alisa Morrison, Farouk Rajab, and Craig Esposito.

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

Election of Board Officers

Dr. Van Riley opened the meeting by requesting nominations for a Board Chair.

Board member Farouk Rajab nominated Alexa Garvey for Board Chair.

The following motion was made by Farouk Rajab and seconded by Candace Anderson:

Motion 1: To appoint Alexa Garvey for Board Chair.

**Farouk Rajab – Yes
Deborah Downie – Yes
Candace Anderson – Yes**

**Craig Esposito - Yes
Jack Morehouse - Yes
Alisa Morrison – No**

Motion: Passes

Board Chairwoman, Alexa Garvey asked for nominations for Board Secretary.

Board member Farouk Rajab nominated Candace Anderson for Board Secretary.

The following motion was made by Farouk Rajab and seconded by Craig Esposito:

Motion 2: To appoint Candace Anderson for Board Secretary.

All: Aye

Board Presentation:

Chairwoman Alexa Garvey noted the Board had requested information on Community Partnerships. Mary Anne Butler, Assistant Superintendent, and SHS Principal Mark Friese gave a presentation on the existing and new Community Partnerships developed over the summer. Mr. Friese shared a list of the long-standing partners in our community, the transition program for 18-20 year olds with the Mystic Aquarium, Stoneridge, and the YMCA. He also explained how the internship program works for students, and the college and career readiness through the senior project. Mr. Friese shared information on the Career Center at the high school, where outside career representatives come and speak with students on what they need to know to achieve their career goal. Some of the area representatives are the Electric Boat and the Town of Stonington who assist students with paid internships. Mrs. Butler spoke on new student opportunities this past summer through the Re-imaging Summer School program, such as a weeklong course at the Stone Acre Farm called the Yellow Farmhouse-Farm to Table. Students harvested food and then made a meal. Another theme week was Spy School where the students worked with the Stonington Police and learned how to take fingerprints. Mrs. Butler also added they will be working with the community to add more partnerships in the future. Alexa Garvey and Candace Anderson asked if the summer program was available to all students, were the parents surveyed to see their feedback about this new summer program, and how long was the program. Mrs. Butler said this program was for three weeks through Title I funding and was open just to students at Pawcatuck Middle School. She added we did not do a survey. (See PowerPoint Presentation Attached)

Communications and Recognitions

Jack Morehouse commented he visited Deans Mill School for the first time and added it was quite remarkable and something to be proud of. He thanked the people of our town who supported the project, K-12 Building Committee, Deborah Downie, and Dr. Riley for their work.

Comments from Citizens

Sue Jones gave congratulations to the new Board Officers Alexa Garvey and Candace Anderson. Ms. Jones voiced her thoughts on bullying situations throughout the district mostly in middle school, and added that the popular kids, athletes, and scholars do some of this bullying but still continue to be recipients of awards. She feels that we reward these students and students should be able vote anonymously when giving out awards. She asked that the faculty and anyone who does a review on a student think about the bullying situation before considering giving out an award to a particular student.

Consent Agenda

A. Minutes – August 27, 2018 (Special)
July 25, 2018 (Special)
July 16, 2018 (Special)
June 13, 2018 (Special)

B. Checks and Bills

C. Personnel Report

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

Motion 3: To approve items A - C on the Consent Agenda.

All: Aye

Report of the Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Van Riley shared we are planning a parent night at the high school to discuss what the district is doing about school safety on October 3rd at 6pm. During this time, there will be a group discussion and breakout sessions by school. Dr. Riley mentioned he has notified the COMO Recreation Department and other organizations who have recently requested the use of the new elementary gyms to let them know we will not be allowing public use of these new gyms until we are out of the construction mode which will be fall of next year. He also spoke the Board requested at the Board Retreat information regarding school climate surveys for each school, from students, staff and parents, and information on student exit surveys, which have been all provided at tonight's meeting.

Chairwoman Alexa Garvey added the Board will be using the school climate surveys to assist with the Board Goals with all of the changes going on in the schools we wanted to make sure everyone is taken care of. Candace Anderson noted she received information about the lock down drill taking place at the high school tomorrow from Principal Friese. She asked if the same protocols are set for the middle and elementary schools. Dr. Riley explained they are a little different in elementary, for that reason we will be having the School Safety Forum in October to review these with parents.

Middle School Consolidation Report

Dr. Riley reviewed a document shared with the Board and community on the timeline for the Middle School Consolidation regarding facility needs and extracurricular programs along with information on the 5th grade transition to the elementary schools. He went over the data for the Smarter Balanced Assessment Performance scores for grades 3-8 in math comparing the data from 2014-2018. He also mentioned we are trying to reduce the outside fieldtrips and events, to minimize time outside of the classroom, which will help with student achievement. Dr. Riley also shared the Middle School Staff Handbook. (See attached Middle School Consolidation and 5th Grade Transition Elementary document)

Mr. Smith gave an overview on the advisory programs in each school, the new middle school schedule, and the new pilot programs that will be done this year. He spoke on opportunities with the Mystic Aquarium where they come into the classroom to work with students. There are also high school readiness courses that are being given at both middle schools in 8th grade that are aligned with the high school experience. He added for the first time the two middle schools are on the same schedule and teachers are able to connect between schools during the day because they are on the same schedule. Mr. Smith reported he is working on the Toshiba Grant through NESS where students are directly involved with the long island sound. Our goal is how do we make our middle school experience more rigorous and relevant. Mr. Smith spoke on the new approach to the middle school summer program this year. We added Spy School, Farm to Table and a digital photography class through Pawcatuck Middle School teacher Tim Flanagan. He also mentioned a neat project, which will tie into the Stonington Historical Society; we had students interview people who attended Stonington High School when it was at the Pawcatuck location or Pawcatuck Junior High and get their stories of their experiences while they attended these schools. We will be working all year on producing a final product to share with the community.

Jack Morehouse asked if we have sat down with other high performance middle schools in Connecticut to find out what they feel makes them successful and a high performance school. Dr. Riley responded we have attended different in-service opportunities that had teachers from other schools involved. I feel there is experience within our staff. We are part of the New England Middle School Alliance. We have not visited any one school but we have provided opportunities for our teachers and we will continue to do that.

Dr. Riley spoke on upcoming discussions at the October meeting, such as Grade 5 Transition Summary, 2019 Summary K-8 including, program, electives, staffing, extracurricular and facilities issues. He reminded the Board that the PreK-5 programs will be moving back to the elementary schools in 2019. He also reviewed a handout Additional Information for the Board of Education, which covered information on facilities and extracurricular programs. Dr. Riley summarized this document, and asked the Board to review the document before the October meeting and reach out with any questions. A list of items associated with the middle school consolidation was shared. (See attached Additional Information for the Board of Education document). Dr. Riley asked the Board for direction on the K-5 extracurricular activities during the day, and stressed that if we provide extra world language, music or art during the day this will take away minutes from other academic class minutes. Dr. Riley opened this item up for Board discussion.

Deborah Downie asked that information on this be given a day or so in advance, so the Board can review. Mrs. Downie asked that Administration give their picture of K-8 for each of the areas, such as music, art, language and other things. Jack Morehouse would like a proposal having band during the day at least in 4th and 5th grades. He feels we can find other middle schools in the state that have both and would like to see band included in the elementary schools as part of the proposal. Candace Anderson asked are we going to look at proposed requirements of how long we take certain electives. Dr. Riley noted that we will come in with recommendations but also with other options. Chairwoman Alexa Garvey said it would be helpful to have the curriculum beforehand this way the Board will be better informed to make a better decision at the October meeting.

Second Read/Approval: Curriculum

Biology & Honors Biology

Spanish I

Modern World History

Chairwoman Alexa Garvey explained the curriculum was presented at the last meeting; it was not listed as a first read at the last meeting. She asked if there were any questions for Mary Anne Butler, if none we can put this forward for a vote tonight.

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

Motion 4: To approve the curriculum as presented for Biology and Honors Biology, Spanish I and Modern World History.

All: Aye

Monthly Reports

The Board had no questions on the monthly reports. Deborah Downie commented she is excited that we have a new facilities person. She added I actually know him he is a great person and I am excited that Wes Greenleaf has agreed to stay on to work with him as we transition the new person. Dr. Riley added that Wes will be taking some time off but when he returns he has agreed to help as needed, we are very grateful to have him and Peter Anderson.

Committee Reports

Chairwoman Alexa Garvey reported that we are reviewing our goals set forth by the Communications Committee. She added the committee will be working with the Student Government Representative to reach out to students for feedback on ways to better communicate with the student body. We will be looking at our climate survey data first and then touch base with Mr. Friesse to find out how better to address student concerns. She also added that Jason Jones has some great ideas on how to reach out to parents and how to keep them updated through social media.

Candace Anderson reported the Policy Committee has been looking at the Wellness Policy regarding food distribution and use of foods. The committee will be meeting on Tuesday, September 18th and asked the Board to send any input or concerns to the committee by Tuesday.

K-12 Building Committee Update

Deborah Downie reported that the PCBs and remediation is successfully completed, the tunnel at Deans Mill School is open for use. There is still ongoing issues with furniture, missing and those that don't fit, ongoing delays in the playground construction. We are waiting for consultants and state reviews, and construction will continue throughout the school year with a scheduled completion of construction in the spring, followed by the demolition of the 1975 wing at Deans Mill School and construction and parking in that area. The K-12 Building Committee will be meeting Tuesday, September 18.

Comments from Citizens Relative to Board Action on this Agenda

Bruce Yarnall voiced his concern about the parking lot at Mystic Middle School, which he feels needs to be changed. He communicated he has bus duty and worries about the safety of the students, and is concerned about cars lined up on the Mistuxet Avenue. He feels this needs to be addressed before the consolidation.

Items for Future Agendas

Candace Anderson asked for information regarding later school start times in relationship to school achievement and mental health, and what would be the implications to move the high school start time up.

Board Comments/Concerns

The Board had no comments or concerns at this time.

Adjournment

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

Motion 5: To Adjourn at 8:20 p.m.

All: Aye

Candace Anderson, Secretary