

## STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING May 11, 2017 - Page | 1

Frank Todisco, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Stonington High School Commons. Members present were Faith Leitner, Secretary, Deborah Downie, Candace Anderson, Alexa Garvey, and Craig Esposito.

Absent: Terry Stefanski

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

### **Board Presentations**

Chairman Todisco introduced Senator Heather Somers where she presented a citation proclamation to Deans Mill School staff members, Principal McCurdy, Assistant Principal Bousquet, and Dr. Van Riley. Senator Somers read the citation in recognition for Deans Mill School being chosen for the 2016-2017 Outstanding Elementary School by the Connecticut Association of Schools to the Board and community members present and congratulated everyone.

### **Communications and Recognitions**

Alexa Garvey commented she attended the National Honor Society Induction Ceremony; it and was a wonderful dinner, adding it was sunshiny and bright and congratulated the students that were inducted.

Candace Anderson also commented she attended the National Honor Society Induction Ceremony and also attended the SHS girls and boys track team against Killingly adding they did a great job. Ms. Anderson also noted the best news of all is that Dr. Riley is back.

Deborah Downie welcomed back Dr. Riley and also welcomed the new Assistant Superintendent, Mary Anne Butler and added she was looking forward to meeting her.

Dr. Van Riley publicly introduced the new Assistant Superintendent; Mary Anne Butler. Dr. Riley commented he was pleased to have her with us and added the Board will be approving her contract today. Dr. Riley thanked everyone for his or her kind thoughts and everything everyone did for the last few months for me, it was very appreciated and noted that it was tough being out and nice to be back.

Craig Esposito extended an invitation to the Board to attend the annual LEARN breakfast meeting on June 8 at 8:30 a.m., if anyone is interested he will put your name on the reservation list.

### **Comments from Citizens**

Cindy Nadeau commented the Board missed a great band concert at Pawcatuck Middle School, students did really well. Ms. Nadeau also addressed a comment to Tim Smith, Principal regarding the new format of attending the concerts due to the large attendance, noted that she likes the configuration but misses being able to attend the other grade level concerts.

### **Consent Agenda**

- A. Minutes: April 20, 2017 (Regular Meeting)
- B. Checks and Bills
- C. Personnel Report
- D. Transfers
- E. IDEA Grant 2017-2018

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

**Motion 1:** To approve the Consent Agenda A-E as presented.

All: Aye

### **Discussion and Direction on Study Regarding Middle School Consolidation and Other Budget Issues**

Dr. Riley explained his proposal for the new configuration of the consolidation of the middle schools and shared an outlined list of recommended ideas. Dr. Riley recommended the Board form a steering committee that includes himself, two or three Board members, administrators, and community members. Dr. Riley explained the issue here is the two middle schools and the move of the two fifth grades to the elementary schools, and the continuing decline in enrollment. Dr. Riley spoke on the declining enrollment numbers in the next few years and the issues this causes with the middle school buildings and their capacity, finance issues and timeline. Dr. Riley also mentioned other facility issues, such as the West Broad Street School and the Central Office. Dr. Riley noted he would bring back recommendations to the Board in September. Chairman Todisco asked the Board if there was a consensus to form the steering committee per Dr. Riley's recommendation. The Board was in consensus to move forward with the steering committee. Chairman Todisco asked the Board members let him know in the next week of their interest in taking part in the committee. (see attached outline)

**Approval of Assistant Superintendent's Contract**

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

**Motion 2:** To approve the Assistant Superintendent's Contract as presented.  
All: Aye

**Next Generation Accountability Report, Next Steps**

Chairman Todisco asked that Nikki Gullickson, Assistant Superintendent come to offer some thoughts on possible next steps for the Board in conjunction with the administration team. Mrs. Gullickson said that the district would continue to do the curriculum work, which is an ongoing process, and look at what the academic growth is and students hitting their targets. Mrs. Gullickson said we will continue to work with the RTI and SRBI protocols and getting more consistency with procedures and cut scores. Mrs. Gullickson feels it is important for the District to discuss what the data is telling us and what does this mean in the classroom, what changes need to be done, what resources we need and how do we change the areas that are not doing so well. Chairman Todisco noted his concern regarding Mystic Middle School being a category three school. Chairman Todisco added the Board has a role in supporting and providing the resources necessary and cannot do that if the Board does not have this type of information, the challenges, and the problems that exist. Mrs. Gullickson explained the challenges and problem areas and added if we look at how we can take care of participation in each school, we can get the schools into a higher category.

**Report of the Superintendent of Schools**

Dr. Riley spoke on the 18 non-renewals that were issued at the last Board meeting, adding we do not have a clear picture from the state on the budget impact. Dr. Riley commented that all twenty positions, which include two current openings, a library media specialist and an assistant principal position, are all important but would like to reissue a contract to seven of those 20 positions. Dr. Riley explained these positions are critical and either have special training or are very difficult to fill and those positions would be three special ed teachers, one band teacher at the middle school, one math teacher at the high school, one science teacher at the high school and an assistant principal at the middle school. Dr. Riley explained, depending on what happens at the state and if we needed to, we would reduce elsewhere and hire these positions back anyway. Craig Esposito asked when we would make the decision for the remainder of the teachers. Dr. Riley said we have to wait to hear from the state, hopefully soon, it could be end of June. Chairman Todisco asked what impact does this have with other contracts and what kind of bumping rights. Dr. Riley explained, at this point, not all 11 are coming back, but if we need further cuts we might need to eliminate in other areas, all depends on what happens at the state and how it impacts the help from the Board of Finance. Deborah Downie asks if the seven are within the eighteen, Dr. Riley said yes.

Chairman Todisco shared his thoughts with the Board and is not in favor of bringing back anyone at this point because everything is still influx at the state and adds he understands the importance of having these positions and keeping a balance with both middle schools but the Board made a decision based on a recommendation and feels we should not use the money that has been set aside by the Board of Finance. Faith Leitner feels all teachers are important and if you were one of the 18 would not want to be the number eight, nine, or ten and feel each one has value and agreed with Chairman Todisco and would want to wait to see what happens at the state. Alexa Garvey said there are certain positions that we put the time and money into training those teachers and thinks we need to look at bringing some of these positions back as not that anyone is more important than another but not everyone can provide the same services as some of these can provide.

**First Read of 5000 Series Policies**

Faith Leitner reported that Mark Friese, Gloria Murray-DeBiasi, and Candace Anderson had a very productive meeting and feel very confident to bring forward these for the first read. Alexa Garvey had a question on Policy 5131.3 and asked if we are using the alternative language on the policy. Mr. Friese answered yes we will use the alternative language. Alexa Garvey asked who is trained on the defibrillator and has that policy been implemented. Faith Leitner said that administration and nurses are all certified to use the defibrillators and they are centrally located close to the office and nurses stations. Mr. Friese added that at the high school, there is one by the gym and office and all the coaches in SHS are certified. Deborah Downie thanked for the table in the beginning of the policy section it helps clarify which is a CAFE policy.

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

**Motion 3:** To approve the 5000 Series Policies as submitted.  
All: Aye

**Monthly Reports**

Deborah Downie asked what the life expectancy is of the fuel tank at the Central Office. Gary Shettle, Director of Finance responded within a one year.

**Committee Reports**

Chairman Todisco noted Faith Leitner commented on the Policy Committee meeting item when we discussed the 5000 policy series. Faith Leitner added it was brought up at the meeting that for those parents who want to see the policies on the website, we put on the web in a great order so you can find what has been approved. Craig Esposito added all old and new policies should be on the website with a note these are being revised. Frank Todisco noted they are being uploaded as they are being revised to the website.

**Building Committee Update**

Deborah Downie noted Chairman Todisco was able to attend the K-12 Building Committee meeting but not allowed to speak. Ms. Downie noted she would recommend that something be added to the agenda such as, comments or report from the BOE/district. Ms. Downie updated the Board regarding the delay from the September 2018 opening to as late as November 2018. Ms. Downie reported the committee will be looking at options for phasing and notifying parents in the next week. Alicia Dawe asked for something from the committee be sent to staff about the delay. Craig Esposito asked is there an explanation regarding the delay. Deborah Downie said it is a combination of a couple of things such as general lag, some unanticipated work with regards to remediating building materials, lag time to get windows and hopes by looking at options we would try to pull that date back and look to see if there is any way to get one of the schools to open on time. Ms. Downie says it came as a surprise. Chairman Frank personally thanked Ms. Downie adding that it is a lot of work, time, and dealing with a lot and thanked her for all she does in the committee,

**Discussion on Ways to Promote Stonington Public Schools**

Candace Anderson explained her husband came across an advertisement for Ledyard High School promoting them for out of town registration. Mrs. Anderson commented that if people are making different school choices she would like Stonington to be one of those choices and it is also important to look at neighboring towns and how we might add to our numbers. Alexa Garvey reported the Communications Committee for the last year or so has been addressing how we present ourselves, getting the word out there, letting not just within our district but people in our town, and letting them know how and where we spend our money on and all our success. Mrs. Garvey says we are communicating this better through, Facebook, the newsletter that goes out three times a year, and Twitter. The committee is now looking at ways of marketing our schools. We have great facilities, and we need to market each of our schools where this will be accessible in and outside the district.

Dr. Riley reported at the Board of Ed Finance Committee meeting tonight we looked at the MOU that went to the BOF for the out of town tuition and we will be bringing a revised MOU to the Board of Finance for approval and then to the Board of Ed, where we can keep the tuition for the Board budget. Chairman Todisco said he did have a conversation with the Chair of the Board of Finance regarding this and there is a desire to go down this route.

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

Cindy Nadeau commented on the marketing of our schools and noted NFA is heavily advertised in newspapers, but cautioned about capitol prep and circumventing the system in regards to star athletes. Ms. Nadeau also commented on the consolidation of the middle schools, sees good and bad in this and feels we should of built one big middle school and not renovated the elementary schools. Ms. Nadeau feels this would close the gap of Mystic versus Pawcatuck and to this regard spoke on the website only mentioning the Mystic band and chorus concerts and no mention of the Pawcatuck concerts is just one more stab that has been going on for decades of which side of town gets credit for things and advertisement. Ms. Nadeau feels if a consolidation is accomplished then we need to change the name of school and have a new mascot.

Chairman Todisco reminded the Board and community when the options came forward that our Superintendent was strongly advocating for the K-12 Building Committee to build one middle school adjacent to the high school.

**Items for Future Agendas**

No items for future agendas.

**Board Comments/Concerns**

No comments or concerns from the Board.

**Adjournment**

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

**Motion 4:** To Adjourn at 7:58 p.m.

All: Aye



Faith Leitner, Board Secretary