

STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING DECEMBER 10, 2009

Gail MacDonald called the meeting to order at 7:17 p.m. in the Board of Education Meeting Room. Members present were Gail MacDonald, Chairwoman, Doug Rea, Secretary, Sam Agnello, Rob Cary, Faith Leitner, and Alisa Morrison.

Member excused: Kevin Bornstein

Also present were Paul Smotas, Interim Superintendent of Schools, Michele Melia, Recording Secretary, Michelle Ammirati, Student Representative for the evening, members of the staff, and interested citizens.

The following motion was made by Rob Cary and seconded by Alisa Morrison:

Motion 1: To add item 19 to our agenda for probable executive session and possible appointment of Assistant Superintendent and move adjournment to item 21

Aye: All

Communications

Gail MacDonald updated the Board on the following communications she received:

- Note from Jackie Garvie thanking the Board for the flowers
- Emails from Board members about their goals
- Letter with updates on H1N1
- Information from Leanne Masterjoseph on the impact of last year's budget cuts

Recognitions

Alisa Morrison recognized the following:

- The cast and crew of Stonington High School for their production of "Our Town" and she stated that they did a great job.

Gail MacDonald recognized the following:

- West Vine Street School – Mrs. MacDonald spent some time at the school with kindergarten students and staff. Mrs. MacDonald said they are doing great things at the school, including mental health teams in the classroom, as well as other specialists.
- Dr. Paul Smotas and spoke about this being his last official meeting. Mrs. MacDonald stated that the Board of Education owes him a dept of gratitude for getting us through this transition. Leanne Masterjoseph agreed and added that Dr. Smotas has been a wonderful support to have on board and that the administrators and staff could not thank him enough.

Dr. Paul Smotas responded by saying it has been his pleasure to be here in this wonderful community and the school district. He stated how comfortable he was leaving Stonington Public Schools in the hands of Leanne Masterjoseph and how his time here has truly been an enjoyable experience. Stonington is a community of people where no one cares more than the teachers, custodians, nurses, paraprofessionals, administrators, and Board of Education members.

Comments from Citizens

Jennifer Herbst introduced herself to the Board as the parent of two children that attend Deans Mill School. She expressed her concerns about the upcoming budget and feels that there are deficiencies with the current budget. She cited the lack of elementary Library Media Specialists and an Assistant Principal at the middle schools. She encouraged the Board to stand up to the Board of Finance and asked for advice on what she could do as a resident to assist the Board during the next budget process.

Rob Cary stated that the most important thing is that the budget passes the first time because once money is cut you never get it back. He further explained that getting people out to vote would be essential

Gail MacDonald thanked Jennifer Herbst and asked her to stay involved during the budget sessions.

Doug Rea agreed with Gail MacDonald and stated how important the budget is to the town. He advised Jennifer Herbst stay active and involved.

Student Government

Michelle Ammirati sat in for Amanda Coffey and reported on behalf of the Student Government at Stonington High School in the following areas:

- Winter Spectacular held on December 4th and the \$947.00 that was raised would be donated to the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center.
- Law and Government Forum starting to prepare to compete in the 2010 Connecticut Mock Trial Competition.
- The music department students that were inducted into the Tri-M Music National Honor Society and the students chosen to perform in CMEA's Eastern Regional Music Festival.
- TJ White being named MVP of the Senior Soccer Bowl that was played last week and that he did not allow a goal to be scored.

- Three students, TJ White, Randy Tomlinson and Jeff Pearch being named to the All ECC soccer team.
- Upcoming events at Stonington High School: Winter Band concert, Winter Choral Concert, and Student Government Reindeer Games.

Approval of Minutes

- A. Minutes – November 12, 2009 (Regular)

The following motion was made by Rob Carey and seconded by Alisa Morrison

Motion 2: To approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 12, 2009.

Aye: All

Consent Agenda

- A. Checks and Bills

The following motion was made by Sam Agnello and seconded by Rob Carey

Motion 3: To approve the Consent Agenda items A, B, C and D as presented.

Aye: All

Financial

- A. Monthly Financial Report

Judy Samokar presented the monthly financial report and reported that the Special Education transportation and tuition are over budget. She explained to the Board about the reimbursement that would be received from the State in February.

B. Accounting for the use of Education Cost Sharing Grant/State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (ARRA).

Judy Samokar reviewed the proposed accounting procedure for the Education Cost Sharing Grant/State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (ARRA). She explained the different options, the amount of money that will be received from the state and the different ways to account for it.

The following motion was made by Sam Agnello and seconded by Rob Cary

Motion 4: To approve option number one of the proposed accounting procedures for the Education Cost Sharing Grant/State Fiscal Stabilization Fund as it will provide an audit trail and satisfy the Federal requirements for the transparency of the funding and expenditures.

Aye: All

Operations

A. Project Updates

Bill King provided project updates on the following:

- Stonington High School building closeout
- Intercom installation
- Electrical modification
- Baseball scoreboard donation from the class of 1960
- Asbestos Abatement West Broad Street School
- Daylight Harvesting Grant
- Clean Energy Task Force
- EDO50 filing
- Fuel Bid for 2010-11
- Copiers for the district

The following motion was made by Sam Agnello and seconded by Rob Cary

Motion 5: To authorize the Superintendent to negotiate a copier contract from either the state, municipal or CREC bid award list.

Aye: ALL

B. Capital Improvement Plan Board Review and Action

Bill King presented the schedule for the proposed Capital Improvement Plan for 2010-2011. The Board of Education asked questions and reprioritized the security cameras, bleacher remover and two way radios.

The following motion was made by Faith Leitner and seconded by Sam Agnello:

Motion 6: To approve the Capital Improvement Plan as presented with changes and forward to Town Hall for review.

Aye: ALL

C. LedgeLight Health District Flu Clinic at SHS

Bill King informed the Board of the success of the Flu Clinic that was held at Stonington High School on December 2, 2009. He provided the following information:

- 920 people received a flu vaccination
- 231 of the 920 people were Stonington residents

Bill King explained how the registration process worked as well as how the high school was set up to accommodate for the injections and monitoring of participants. He also advised the Board that LedgeLight was very impressed with how things went at Stonington High school and they have scheduled another flu clinic for December 21, 2009 from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Dr. Paul Smotas explained to the Board how absenteeism is monitored for Stonington Public Schools. He reviewed the school by school analysis of absentee rates for the months of October, November and December.

Curriculum and Instruction

A. Step by Step

Leanne Masterjoseph provided the Board with background and details concerning Step by Step and introduced Jane Giuliani, Principal of Pawcatuck Middle School and Karyn Collins a 7th grade special education teacher from Pawcatuck Middle School.

Jane Giuliani and Karyn Collins addressed the Board on the following:

- What is Step by Step?
- What is an inclusive school?
- How a school program changes with Step by Step
- What it takes to be a inclusive school

Jane Giuliani expressed to the Board the excitement about this program at Pawcatuck Middle School and Dr. Mark Hawk, Director of Special Services added that this model will be brought to every school in the district and talked to the Board about the meetings that have taken place and the plans that have been developed.

Leanne Masterjoseph answered Board members questions and Gail MacDondald said that she thinks this is a terrific program and is thrilled that we are making this kind of progress. Sam Agnello seconded Gail MacDondalds thoughts.

Polices

A. Review Policy 5131.6 (a-j) – Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

Dr. Paul Smotas explained to the Board that this was put on the Agenda because it was thought that Athletic Committee would be meeting tonight. Since no Athletic Committee meeting was held there is no new discussion.

Sam Agnello distributed the alcohol questionnaire that was attached to the Athletic Committee minutes.

Legal Firm Representation

Gail MacDonald explained that she had asked for this to be on the Agenda and discussed reasons why the Board might consider looking into other firms to provide legal representation.

Dr. Paul Smotas advised the Board that there are 5 or 6 legal firms in the state that specialize in education law and he proposed steps that can be taken, including a request for proposal (RFP).

It was the consensus of the Board to direct the Superintendent to develop a request for proposal (RFP) to be sent to the appropriate legal firms within the state.

Board Member Goals

Gail MacDonald explained why she asked for this to be on the agenda. Board members discussed their possible goals and how they will help to shape their actions for the coming year.

The following motion was made by Rob Cary and seconded by Doug Rea:

Motion 7: To adopt and approve as a working goal “to improve communication between the Board and its stakeholders.”

Aye: ALL

Gail MacDonald and the Board members discussed working and updating the policies. Leanne Masterjoseph suggested a subcommittee as being a good way to review all Board of Education policies and talked about the advantages of a sub-committee. Ms. Masterjoseph also suggested a budget goal for consideration by the Board.

The following motion was made by Sam Agnello and seconded by Rob Cary to be a budget goal for 2010-2011:

Motion 8: To maintain a high level of educational services and support to students while continuing to examine our fiscal responsibility

Aye: ALL

Committee Membership

The Board discussed the vacant committee membership positions and the following Board members expressed interest in serving:

- Stonington Education Fund – Faith Leitner
- Policy Review Committee – Doug Rea and Alisa Morrison

Committee Reports

A. Finance

Rob Cary provided updates regarding the Board of Finance meeting that was held last month.

B. Retirement Board

Rob Cary provided the Board with information about this meeting. He further explained that no changes were being proposed at this time.

C. Stonington Education Fund

No report at this time

D. Cable TV Advisory

No report at this time

E. Athletic

Sam Agnello stated that there was no report as the committee did not meet this week.

Interim Superintendent Report

A. Personnel

Dr. Paul Smotas reported to the Board that there were no new hires this month

B. Added Teaching

Dr. Paul Smotas presented the added teaching report and informed the Board that all positions are staffed.

C. Volunteer Appointments

Dr. Paul Smotas presented the Board with the volunteer appointments of Rob Wall and Bill Gaynor.

The following motion was made by Sam Agnello and seconded by Alisa Morrison

Motion 9: To approve the volunteer appointments of Rob Wall and Bill Gaynor as presented

Aye: ALL

D. Enrollment Report

Dr. Smotas presented the enrollment report to the Board and informed the Board that the enrollment is stable with no significant change.

E. Employee Contract Updates

Dr. Paul Smotas provided the following updated information to the Board:

- Ongoing negotiations for union and non-union employees
- Explained the four employees that had not been given a raise for this year
- Recommended a three percent increase for those four employees
- Explained the process of bringing the contracts to the Board

The following motion was made by Sam Agnello and seconded by Alisa Morrison:

Motion 10: To approve the 2009-2010 employee contracts for the Custodial Supervisor and the Computer Technicians as presented. Each of the three technicians will receive a three (3) percent increase retroactive to July 1, 2009 as well as the Custodial Supervisor

Aye: ALL

F. Other

Dr. Paul Smotas had no other reports.

Comments from Citizens Relative to Board Action on this Agenda

Gretchen Noonan wanted to thank Dr. Paul Smotas for coming to Stonington as Interim Superintendent and stated that she enjoyed working with him.

Board Comments/Concerns

There were no Board comments or concerns at this time.

Gail MacDonald stated that the Board would now recess at 9:10 p.m.

The following motion was made by Sam Agnello and seconded by Rob Cary:

Motion 11: To enter executive session for discussion of personnel and contract negotiations and to include the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent.

Aye: ALL

The following motion was made by Sam Agnello and seconded by Alisa Morrison:

Motion 12: To exit executive session and return to regular session.

Aye: ALL

The following motion was made by Rob Cary and seconded by Doug Rea:

Motion 13: To offer the Assistant Superintendent position to Cori Ann DiMaggio

The Vote was as follows:

Doug Rea: Yes

Alisa Morrison: No

Rob Cary: Yes

Faith Leitner: No

Sam Agnello: No

The motion fails 3 – 2

The following motion was made by Sam Agnello and seconded by Alisa Morrison:

Motion 14: To offer the Assistant Superintendent position to Nikki Gulliksen

Aye: ALL

The following motion was made by Doug Rea and seconded by Rob Cary:

Motion 15: To adjourn at 10:35 p.m.

Aye: ALL

Doug Rea, Board Secretary