

## **STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING February 20, 2014**

Frank Todisco, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. in the Stonington High School Commons. Members present were Deborah Downie, Secretary, Faith Leitner, Alisa Morrison, Craig Esposito, Alexa Garvey, and Terry Stefanski.

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

### **Board Presentations**

Jennifer McCurdy and Jennifer Bausch presented a PowerPoint presentation that gave an overview of some of the different programs at Mystic Middle School such as, Safe School Climate, Leadership Team, Dens, and Student Success Plan. Ms. McCurdy and Ms. Bausch showed examples of the new activity called "Together We Can Change the World...We're All In This Together."

The Board thanked them for a wonderful presentation.

### **Communications & Recognitions**

#### **Communications**

Alisa Morrison communicated that parents have communicated their thoughts on the proposed budget items.

#### **Recognitions**

Faith Leitner reminded all of the SEF fundraiser on Friday, February 28, 2014 at the Mystic Aquarium.

### **Comments from Citizens**

Tori Gimple addressed the 2014-2015 School Calendar regarding February vacation and spoke about calendars of neighboring schools regarding February vacation week. Ms. Gimple is not in favor of having February vacation.

John Flaherty who was representing the Stonington Crew Team spoke about fees for the program. Mrs. Flaherty distributed to the Board a packet of information on the program and asked for the Board's suggestions and comments.

Mike O'Neill, head coach of the Stonington Crew Team spoke about the purchase of a boathouse and noted that more information on this is included in the packet distributed to the Board.

Grace Murray asked that the Board reinstate the DMS librarian position in the proposed budget.

Sarah Lewandowski asked that the Board reconsider putting the full-time position of the librarian back into the proposed budget. Ms. Lewandowski thanked Board member, Craig Esposito for responding to her email.

Sue Jones spoke on the budget; the number of other parents in attendance at the meeting and asked that parents also have a presence at the BOF meeting next week.

Tricia Lance a teacher at DMS, commented on the school's need of a Library Media Specialist.

Amy Hambly spoke on the need and supports the Library Media Specialist for DMS and asked that the Board reinstate that position in the proposed budget.

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Cindy Nadeau spoke in regards to the budget process and the need for community presence at the upcoming BOF meeting on March 5 and the need to also attend the town meetings. Ms. Nadeau feels that the Board should go in with a higher budget increase and then have BOF bring the percentage down.

**Consent Agenda**

- A. Minutes – January 9, 2014 (Regular)  
January 16, 2014 (Regular)  
January 23, 2014 (Regular)  
January 30, 2014 (Regular)
- B. Checks and Bills
- C. Transfers
- D. Personnel Report

The following motion was made by Alisa Morrison and seconded by Faith Leitner:

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

**All: Aye**

**SEED Update**

Nikki Gullickson went over the SPS teacher evaluation program (SEED) revised impact information that compares the impact on administrator time based on the initial guidelines with the impact based on the latest flexibilities proposed for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years. Mrs. Gullickson spoke of the three different motions were made by the evaluation committee approving the changes, which will also need the Board's approval by the state's deadline of March 30.

Craig Esposito requested calculations based on the minimum requirements based on the state and how much staffing is needed based on these minimum requirements. Mr. Esposito also requested the impact in cost if we only do the minimum requirements. Mr. Esposito commented on the availability of staffing in the state to accommodate this program.

The Board asked for a ballpark estimate on the actual time needed to do the observations and if these flexibilities change staffing requests.

Dr. Van Riley explained that administration met and spoke of options in staffing to meet SEED requirements. Dr. Riley also stated that the district might not be able to cut positions such as art, music, gym, and library due to contractual issues. Dr. Riley notes that before making any reductions in staff the final budget should be approved by the BOF.

The Board discussed funding levels for SEED and reinstatement of the two teaching positions.

**Approval/Action: 2014-2015 Budget Proposal**

The Board discussed funding levels for SEED and reinstatement of the two teaching positions.

The Board had a dialogue regarding total percentage of increase in the proposed budget.

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

**Motion 2:** To keep the existing funding for administrative positions for SEED and also two additional teaching positions in the 2014-15 proposed budget bringing the total 2014-15 proposed budget increase to 3.37%.

Frank Todisco - No	Craig Esposito - Yes	Terry Stefanski - Yes
Faith Leitner - No	Alisa Morrison - No	
Deborah Downie - No	Alexa Garvey - No	

**Motion Not Passed**

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

**Motion 3:** To reduce SEED funding and keep two additional teaching positions in the 2014-15 proposed budget bringing the total 2014-15 proposed budget increase to 2.96%.

Frank Todisco - Yes	Craig Esposito - Yes	Terry Stefanski - Yes
Faith Leitner - No	Alisa Morrison - No	
Deborah Downie - Yes	Alexa Garvey - Yes	

**Motion Passed**

#### Discussion 2013-2014 School Calendar

Dr. Van Riley explained his proposal of using the March 31 as a half-day school day and half-day staff development day and asked that the Board move to accept his proposal.

The following motion was made by Deborah Downie seconded by Alexa Garvey:

**Motion 4:** To change March 31 of the current 2013-14 School Calendar to a half-day school day and half-day professional development day.

Frank Todisco - Yes	Craig Esposito - Yes	Faith Leitner - No
Alisa Morrison - Yes	Alexa Garvey - Yes	
Deborah Downie - Yes	Terry Stefanski - Yes	

**Motion Passed**

#### Approval/Action: 2014-2015 School Calendar

The Board discussed the various versions of the 2014-2015 School Calendar and noted that many parents support Version "D" of the calendar. The Board also noted that area school districts are also following the same schedule.

The following motion was made by Alisa Morrison seconded by Deborah Downie:

**Motion 5:** To approve Version "D" of the 2014-2015 School Calendar.

Frank Todisco - Yes	Craig Esposito - Yes	Faith Leitner - No
Alisa Morrison - Yes	Alexa Garvey - Yes	
Deborah Downie - Yes	Terry Stefanski - Yes	

**Motion Passed**

**Long Range Facilities Plan**

Dr. Van Riley thanked Ken Donovan for creating the Long Range Facilities Plan report and explained that the purpose of this document is to bring to the attention of the Board, community, and Board of Finance the state of our facilities and show an honest look at what is needed to maintain the facilities that we have.

The Board feels that this should always be a priority. The Board thanked Ken Donovan for his hard work in creating this report and Dr. Riley for his leadership in this issue.

Frank Todisco would like to bring this item back for discussion at the May meeting.

**DMS Roof Project**

Frank Todisco reported that the Board went to the Board of Finance last week with the request of \$549K to repair the DMS roof, the Board of Finance agreed to repair the entire roof at a cost of \$1.2 million.

**Report of the Superintendent of Schools**

**A. District Update:**

Dr. Van Riley reported on the Mobile Food Pantry. Administration met with the United Way representative to discuss the need for this in Stonington. Dr. Riley noted that both town and district agreed to move forward with this program, our first pantry will be on Monday, March 3 at 5pm outside the Human Service building. Dr. Riley reported that PTO groups, Board members, and administration will each sponsor a month to distribute food.

**B. SHS Principal Selection Process:**

Dr. Van Riley explained that this position has been open. Dr. Riley had a positive meeting with students and staff at SHS in which they shared their input on the selection process.

**C. Three Studies Updates – Special Education, Middle School, High School:**

Dr. Van Riley noted that configuration and instruction minutes need to be looked at and hopes to have these completed by end of this year.

**D. Rescheduling of Middle School Conference Day:**

Dr. Riley reported that the Middle School Conference day has been rescheduled to February 27.

**April 10 BOE Meeting Conflict**

Frank Todisco advised the Board of the need to reschedule the April 10 Regular Board meeting due to the scheduled public hearing scheduled for the same date. Mr. Todisco said that the Ana deOliveira, recording secretary will send out notification of the rescheduled date.

**Approval of 2014-17 Cafeteria Workers' Contract and 2014-17 OT/PT/COTA Contract**

Dr. Van Riley noted that these are the last two groups to be approved and contracts are very similar to the other existing contracts.

The following motion was made by Faith Leitner and seconded by Alisa Morrison:

**Motion 6: To approve both the 2014-17 Cafeteria Workers' Contract and the 2014-17 OT/PT/COTA Contract as presented.**

**All: Aye**

**Monthly Report**

All monthly reports were presented in written form as part of the Board packet.

The Board had no comments or concerns regarding the month reports.

**Committee Reports**

Alisa Morrison reported that the Policy Committee met this evening and two policies were discussed, the graduation and student representation policies. The committee will be revising the graduation policy, which will be presented to the Board. No changes were done to the student representation policy.

Craig Esposito reported the Board Finance Committee also met this evening and the committee discussed the budget proposal, additional ways to generate revenue for the district and the two employee contract proposals.

Alexa Garvey attended the Teaching and Learning Committee meeting, which talks focused on various studies.

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

Sue Jones commented on SEED funding and the additional two positions in the proposed budget.

Cindy Nadeau asked the Board if we still have the ability to send out flyers to notify people of the budget process and how to get more people out to the budget meetings. Ms. Nadeau also commented on Dr. Riley's list of budget reduction items and feels this should be presented to the BOF so they know what has already been cut.

Sarah Lewandowski commented that she agrees to leave in all items in order to show the BOF what we need. Ms. Lewandowski commented that the public is depending on the Board to be our voices.

**Items for Future Agendas**

- Facilities report for May meeting
- Reinstatement of student recognition program

**Board Comments/Concerns**

Terry Stefanski noted that he has replaced Faith Leitner as Board representative for the SEF committee. Mr. Stefanski reminded all of the Friday, February 28 SEF fundraiser.

Frank Todisco reminded all of two important dates for budget sessions, March 5 and April 10.

Faith Leitner spoke about the upcoming drama production, on March 7, 8 and 9.

**Executive Session**

Board entered into Executive Session at 8:57 p.m.

The following motion was made by Alisa Morrison and seconded by Alexa Garvey:

**Motion 7: To enter into Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue.**

**All: Aye**

The Board exited Executive Session at 9:10 p.m.

The following motion was made by Alisa Morrison and seconded by Craig Esposito:

**Motion 8: To adjourn at 9:12 p.m.**

**All: Aye**

  
**Deborah Downie, Board Secretary**