

**STONINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING NOVEMBER 12, 2009**

Dr. Paul Smotas, Interim Superintendent, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Board of Education conference room. Dr. Smotas introduced Cindy Ladwig, Stonington Town Clerk, and explained that she would be administering the Oath of office to newly elected Board members.

**Seating of New Board Members**

Cindy Ladwig, Stonington Town Clerk, administered the Oath of office to the newly elected Board of Education members; Faith Leitner, Alisa Morrison, Kevin Bornstein and Gail MacDonald.

Members present were Sam Agnello, Rob Cary, and Doug Rea

Also present were Paul Smotas, Interim Superintendent of Schools, Michele Melia, Recording Secretary, Amanda Coffey, Student Representative, members of the staff, and interested citizens.

**Election of Officers**

Dr. Paul Smotas, Interim Superintendent, called for nominations for Board Chairperson. One name was placed in nomination.

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

**Motion 1: To nominate Gail MacDonald as Board Chairperson**

**Aye: All**

**The Interim Superintendent confirmed the written ballots.**

Gail MacDonald assumed the duties of Board Chairperson.

Gail MacDonald, Chairperson, called for nominations for Board Secretary.

One name was placed in nomination.

The following motion was made by Gail MacDonald and seconded by Sam Agnello:

**Motion 2: To nominate Doug Rea as Board Secretary.**

**Aye: All**

**Gail MacDonald, Chairperson confirmed the written ballots.**

Communications

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

- Two letters from the Southeastern Action Council
- Letter from the legal counsel of Barnes Moving and Storage
- Brochure for new Board member orientation hosted by CABA
- Calls from parents concerning H1N1
- Email concerning West Vine Street School evacuation and an incident at MMS involving silly string
- Attendance reports with H1N1 outbreaks
- Notification re: Strategic Planning process is beginning

Recognitions

Sam Agnello recognized the following:

- Mr. Walters's class and the Student Government for last Thursday night's Fall Feast for Veterans. It was attended by over 100 people and Rob Simmons was a guest speaker. Sam Agnello said that it was well put together and Dr. Paul Smotas seconded this as well as recognizing that the food was excellent.

Kevin Bornstein recognized the following:

- The Girls Cross Country team winning all of their eight meets and also becoming Co-Champions in the ECC division.

Gail MacDonald recognized the following:

- The new Board members, Faith Leitner and Alisa Morrison as well as the re-election of Kevin Bornstein. She welcomed them and stated that she looks forward to working with everyone.
- Stonington Education Fund along with Christine and Mark Kepple for sponsoring the "Blue Monday" Concert series and the money raised for the music programs.
- The work that West Broad Street and West Vine Street Schools have been doing with the Family Resource Center and Preschool. She thanked Terry Jordan, Ginny Brown, Mark Hawk, Sam Mandell, Stacie Payne and Brandy Bunnell.
- SBIT members for a great cross-district meeting that was held on November 4, 2009.

- Michele Melia for the work being put into the reception for newly elected Superintendent Leanne Masterjoseph.

Leanne Masterjoseph recognized the following:

- The student members of the Stonington Public Schools: On theAir Team. The five students; Daniel Nordnen, Lauren Petrie, Christian Rogeson, Dominic Blanchett, and Clarke Chapman, have done an outstanding job in front of the camera and in the control room. Leanne also recognized the parent force behind the program for the public relations for Stonington Schools, Mavnee Rogerson.

Dr. Paul Smotas along with Dr. Stephen Murphy, Principal of Stonington High School recognized the following:

- Channel 30 highlighting Stonington High School. East Lyme vs. Stonington was voted “game of the week” on NBC 30. In addition to highlighting the football game, NBC 30 also gave media attention to the Stonington High School Credit Union. Interviews and pictures were taken of the Credit Union staff and students.

#### Comments from Citizens

John Nickerson, a Pawcatuck Veteran, wanted to thank the school for being in the Veterans Day Parade and for the Fall Feast. He stated that this was the best one in six years.

Dr. Paul Smotas thanked John Nickerson for his service to this country.

#### Student Government

Amanda Coffey reported on behalf of the Student Government in the following areas:

- The Bear Buddies Program
- Stonington Field Hockey
- The Girls’ Cross Country team
- The Stonington High School band
- The Big Brother/Big Sister connection with Stonington Public Schools
- The success of the Fall Feast that was hosted in honor of the community’s Veterans.

SHS Drama “Our Town”

Several student performers from this year’s drama production performed an act from “Our Town” for the Board of Education. The show will take place on November 20 and 21, 2009 at 7:00 p.m and on November 22, 2009 at 2:00 p.m.

SBIT Minutes

There were no comments or concerns.

Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes – October 8, 2009 (Regular)

The following motion was made by Kevin Bornstein and seconded by Sam Agnello:

**Motion 3: To approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 8, 2009.**

**Aye: All**

**Abstained: Newly elected Board members Alisa Morrison and Faith Leitner**

B. Minutes – October 8, 2009 (Special)

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

**Motion 4: To approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of October 8, 2009.**

**Aye: All**

**Abstained: Newly elected Board members Alisa Morrison and Faith Leitner**

C. Minutes – October 20, 2009 (Special)

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

**Motion 5: To approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of October 20, 2009.**

**Aye: All**  
**Abstained: Newly elected Board members Alisa Morrison and Faith Leitner**

D. Minutes – October 22, 2009 (6:50 p.m. Special)

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

**Motion 6: To approve the minutes of the 6:50 p.m. Special Meeting of October 22, 2009**

**Aye: All**  
**Abstained: Newly elected Board members Alisa Morrison and Faith Leitner**

E. Minutes – October 22, 2009 (7:00 p.m. Special)

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

**Motion 7: To approve the minutes of the 7:00 p.m. Special Meeting of October 22, 2009.**

**Aye: All**  
**Abstained: Newly elected Board members Alisa Morrison and Faith Leitner**

F. Minutes – October 28, 2009 (Special)

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

**Motion 8: To approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of October 28, 2009.**

**Aye: All**  
**Abstained: Newly elected Board members Alisa Morrison and Faith Leitner**

Consent Agenda

A. Checks and Bills

The following motion was made by Rob Cary and seconded by Kevin Bornstein:

**Motion 6: To approve the Consent Agenda items A, C and D as presented.**

**Aye: All**

Consent agenda 'B' was taken off for discussion. Clarification was given by Judy Samokar about the transfer requests.

The following motion was made by Kevin Bornstein and seconded by Sam Agnello:

**Motion 7: To approve Consent Agenda item 'B', Intra Account Transfer requests**

**Aye: All**

Financial

Judy Samokar presented the following as part of her financial report:

- Global Financial Statement
- Special Education transportation and tuition
- Reimbursement from the State
- State funding and statutes
- Level funding

Dr. Paul Smotas offered to the Board that he and Leanne Masterjoseph would hold budget workshops to help get the new Board members up to speed before they get the documents in January.

401 (a) Plan

Judy Samokar presented the Board with the Stonington Public Schools Exclusive Benefit Governmental 401 (a) Nontrusteed Plan Amendment and Plan Restatement for adoption. She explained the documentation that was contained in the Board packet and the need to be in compliance with the IRS.

Dr. Paul Smotas explained to the Board that this would have no financial impact.

The following motion was made by Kevin Bornstein and seconded by Alisa Morrison:

**Motion 8: To approve and adopt the 415 Amendment and to adopt the resolution authorizing Amendment and Restatement of Retirement Plan to bring Stonington Public Schools 401 (a) plan into compliance with current IRS regulations.**

**Aye: All**

Review of Budget Planning Regulation 3110

Gail MacDonald called everyone's attention to the Board of Education's steps that begin in January.

Leanne Masterjoseph explained that the budget planning regulation was included in the packet for the Boards review.

Operations

A. Project Updates

Bill King provided project updates on the following:

- Stonington High School Intercom and Improvement projects
- Stonington High School electrical modification
- Stonington High School baseball score board
- Capital Improvement Plan projects and preparations for the holiday break
- Stonington Clean Energy Task Force and the grant to the Town
- Emergency communications and goals
- EDO50 filing
- Next month's fuel bids

B. West Vine Street School Evacuation

Bill King explained and reviewed the water main break on West Vine Street and how it affected West Vine Street School. He explained the evacuation process and the administrative review that followed the crisis response.

Dr. Smotas informed the Board that the use of Alert Now has been exemplary and the number of complaints received were minimal.

Dr. Stephen Murphy, Stonington High School Principal, addressed the Board on the advantages of Alert Now and how they have been able to send messages to select groups and eliminate sending messages to families to whom they would not pertain..

C. Capital Improvement Plan

Bill King presented the proposed five-year Capital Improvement Plan. He explained the number of requests that have come in and which of those will be requested for the 2010-11 Budget. Bill answered the Board's questions and concerns. This will be on next month's agenda for Board action.

Proposed Closeout of Stonington High School Building Project

Bill King discussed contractor communications and the plan to close out the project over the holiday break.

Curriculum and Instruction

A. Full Day Kindergarten Presentation

Leanne Masterjoseph opened discussion concerning Full Day Kindergarten and introduced Virginia Brown, West Vine Street School Principal and Tricia DeLapp, West Vine Street Teacher.

Virginia Brown presented a slideshow and explained each of the following:

- Current Kindergarten Design
- Development of all-day kindergarten program
- Common elements of all kindergarten programs

Tricia DeLapp addressed the Board about meeting the needs of "at risk" students and explained the following:

- Purpose of the program
- Design process
- What the data is saying
- What and how they are monitoring the program
- Visual representation
- Time Frames

- District Assessment

Ginny Brown concluded the presentation by explaining to the Board about how closely the students are tracked, the strengths, ideas for improvement and the continual improvement they see.

Policies

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

Gail MacDonald provided some background information to the new Board members about this Policy and how it was returned to the Athletic Committee for review.

Sam Agnello explained that the policy will be reviewed over the next month so that the Athletic Committee can come to the Board with their recommendations.

Committee Reports

- A. Finance

Rob Cary informed the Board about the finance meeting that he attended and the positive relationship that is developing with the Town of Stonington.

- B. Retirement Board

Gail MacDonald informed the Board about the representation needed for the Retirement Board. Judy Samokar informed the Board of that they usually meet on the first Tuesday in May and the first Tuesday in November.

- C. Stonington Education Fund

Gail MacDonald discussed with the Board the vacancy that was created and that representation is needed for this.

- D. Athletic

Gail MacDonald discussed the vacancy that John Bolduc created when he left the Board of Education.

Sam Agnello discussed the meeting times (6:00 p.m. prior to Regular Board of Education meetings) and how another member of the Board is welcome to join but that it is not absolutely needed.

Gail MacDonald informed the Board about the LEARN Board wanting a representative from the Board of Education. She also discussed having a Board of Education representative on the Stonington Prevention Council.

The following Board members discussed the committees that they had an interest in joining:

Rob Cary – Retirement Committee

Kevin Bornstein – Cable TV Advisory

Alisa Morrison – Athletic Committee

Sam Agnello informed the Board of an unexpected visitor to the Athletic Committee meeting, Mark Wallace and his presentation and request for a wrestling team at the middle school level. Mr. Agnello further explained that this is a program that is currently run in Westerly, Rhode Island, but not something Stonington could currently do.

Dr. Smotas informed the Board about the Friends of Stonington Crew (FSC) and their offer to turn over their equipment to the Board of Education. He also informed the Board of a proposal possibly coming to the Board next month from FSC.

### Superintendent Report

#### A. Personnel

Dr. Smotas updated the Board on the following:

- Two long-term substitute appointments
- The process of hiring a math teacher for the High School

#### B. Added Teaching

Dr. Smotas explained the attachment in the Board packet and that it is the most recent information.

#### C. Volunteer Appointments

Dr. Smotas presented the Board with the volunteer appointments of:

Adam Phaiah –	Unified Basketball
Kevin Dipollino –	Boys Basketball
Jerry Desmond –	Gymnastics
Shelby Buck –	Gymnastics
Nicholas Canzellarini -	Sailing

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

**Motion 9: To approve the volunteer appointments of Adam Phaiah, Kevin Dipollino, Jerry Desmond, Shelby Buck and Nicholas Canzellarini as presented for the 2009-10 season**

**Aye: All**

D. Resignations

Dr. Paul Smotas presented the Board with a resignation letter from Frank Connolly. Dr. Smotas offered to take Mr. Connolly's place in order to begin the negotiation processes of the secretaries, paraprofessionals, nurses and custodian contracts.

The following motions was presented by Sam Agnello and seconded by Faith Morrison:

**Motion 10: To approve with regret the resignation of Frank Connolly.**

**Aye: ALL**

Instruction was given to Dr. Smotas to go forward with the negotiations of contracts.

Dr. Smotas explained that no motion was needed but that direction would need to come from the Board and suggested an executive session be scheduled after the regular meeting next month.

E. Enrollment Report

Dr. Smotas explained that enrollment is stable.

F. Education Legislation Summary

Dr. Smotas explained the attachment for the Board's information and the relevance of the underlined sentences.

G. CAPT 2009 Recognition Letters

Dr. Smotas explained this attachment and that there were eleven recipients in from Stonington High School.

H. Non Public School Report

Dr. Smotas presented the Non Public School Report to the Board and explained the number of Stonington students that are attending Saint Michaels and Pint Point Schools.

I. Legal Opinion Regarding Bus Contract

Dr. Smotas highlighted the opinion by the Town attorney. He will prepare a letter to be presented to the Town Finance Board for deliberation at its meeting of December 2, 2009 and he will ask for support for Board of Education action.

J. Strategic School Profiles

Dr. Smotas explained how each schools information will not see significant changes over last year. He discussed that class sizes at the High School are up and offered his recommendation that when monies free up to reestablish the reducing high school class size. He also discussed the discrepancies between Pawcatuck Middle School and Mystic Middle Schools hours of instruction, at which time Leanne Masterjoseph was able to state that the discrepancy has been identified and rectified so that all hours align.

K. Suspension and Expulsion Policies

Dr. Smotas explained this had already been talked about during the Athletic Committee Report.

L. CT State Department of Education H1N1 update

Dr. Smotas addressed the Board on the following:

- How absenteeism is being monitored at each school
- Absenteeism and percentages of absent students
- The meeting he attended at LedgeLight regarding H1N1
- Vaccination availability

Dr. Smotas concluded by informing the Board that absenteeism rates are good with not significant increase or decrease and there have not been any issues with staff.

M. Other

Dr. Smotas informed the Board about the numerous copiers that have been breaking down, the unreliability of these copiers, and the complaints he has received. He further explained about a new company's proposal and what this entails.

Bill King addressed the Board on what the processes would be in order to secure a new company to handle all copier needs.

Comments from Citizens Relative to Board Action on this Agenda

Gretchen Noonan expressed her thanks for getting new copiers and how it will save, money especially on paper.

Board Comments/Concerns

Gail MacDonald commented on the following:

- SBIT vacancies at West Broad Street School and Deans Mill School. She asked Faith Leitner to fill the SBIT needs at West Broad Street School and Alisa Morrison to fill the vacancy at Deans Mill School.
- She explained to the Board how she asked Leanne Masterjoseph to present her with a recommended policy regarding chaperones at school events.
- She expressed her interest in holding school on Veterans Day and she asked the Board to take this into consideration.
- Goals she would like Board members to work toward
- The amount of paper in the Board packets and how to eliminate the use of so much paper
- She expressed a desire for the Board to send best wishes to Jackie Garvie

Sam Agnello commented that he would like to have as many Board members as possible in the final round of decision making for the Assistant Superintendent

Rob Cary commented that the Board of Education membership identification needs to be on the Town website and also making sure the meeting dates are listed there as well.

Faith Leitner wanted to recognize Glee McAnanly.

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

**Motion 11: To adjourn at 10:00 p.m.**

**Aye: All**

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Doug Rea, Board Secretary