

**Regular Meeting  
Stafford Board of Education  
Electronic Meeting- via Zoom  
May 18, 2020, 6:30 p.m.**

**Board Members Present:** Ms. Kathy Bachiochi  
Mrs. Jennifer Davis  
Mr. Mike Delano  
Mrs. Andrea Locke, Secretary  
Ms. Laura Lybarger  
Mr. George Melnick  
Ms. Sonya Shegogue, Chairperson

**Also Present:** Mr. Steven Moccio, Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Steven Autieri, Director of Curriculum and Instruction  
Mr. Frank Bonavita, Director of School Facilities  
Mr. Jonathan Campbell, Assistant Principal, Stafford Middle School  
Mrs. Peggy Falcetta, Principal, Staffordville School  
Mr. Dean Fortin, IT / Network Coordinator  
Mr. Damian Frassinelli, Director of Athletics and Recreation  
Ms. Anna Gagnon, Principal, West Stafford School  
Ms. Caroline Hargraves, Assistant Principal, Stafford Elementary School  
Mr. Timothy Kinel, Assistant Principal, Stafford High School  
Ms. Beth LaPane, Supervisor of Building Services  
Ms. Trish Lustila, Interim Director of Pupil Services  
Ms. Mary Claire Manning, Principal, Stafford Elementary School  
Ms. Susan Mike, Principal, Stafford Middle School, arrived at 6:39 p.m.  
Mr. Marco Pelliccia, Principal, Stafford High School  
Ms. Diane Peters, Business Manager

The meeting agenda and copies of all Board meeting materials were posted on the district's website ([www.stafford.k12.ct.us](http://www.stafford.k12.ct.us)) prior to the meeting, in accordance with the requirements for electronic meetings. Audience members were able to participate by phone utilizing the phone number provided on the meeting agenda. The live recording of this meeting is available on the district website.

**Item I. Call to Order- Establishment of Quorum**

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m.

**Item II. Pledge of Allegiance**

Ms. Shegogue led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Item III. Secretary's Report- Approval of Minutes**

Regular Meeting, 04/06/2020  
Special Meeting, 04/27/2020

Ms. Lybarger made a motion, seconded by Mr. Melnick, that the Board approve the Secretary's Report for the regular meeting held on 04/06/2020, and the special meeting held on 04/27/20, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

**Item IV. Consent Agenda**

A. Acceptance of Resignation- Certified Staff Member

NAME	POSITION	SCHOOL	EFFECTIVE DATE	REASON
Trafidlo, Ginny	Special Education Teacher	Stafford Elementary School	End of School Year, June 2020	Retirement

- B. 19-20 Bills, 04/15/2020, \$124,558.37
- C. 19-20 Bills and Grants, 04/27/2020, \$128,036.39
- D. 19-20 Bills and Grants, 05/06/2020, \$52,858.89

Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Mr. Melnick, that the Board approve the items listed in the consent agenda, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

**Item V. Correspondence**

A. **Board Meeting Reminder**- Ms. Shegogue read the Board meeting reminder that was posted on the agenda.

**Item VI. Board Reports**

A. **Curriculum Committee**- Ms. Shegogue stated that the Curriculum Committee meeting was cancelled and moved to Monday, June 1, 2020 (corrected date).

Mr. Moccio stated that a Board of Finance meeting would be held on Tuesday, May 19, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. He said that the Board members were invited to attend.

**Item VII. Superintendent's Reports**

A. **Update and Discussion Regarding Celebrations and Graduation**

Mr. Moccio reviewed the steps taken to date to develop a plan for a graduation ceremony at the high school and promotion ceremony at the middle school. He stated that earlier in the day, he attended a meeting facilitated by the high school administrators, at which parents and students were also present. Mr. Moccio stated that the high school and middle school administrators were available via the electronic meeting to respond to questions.

Mr. Pelliccia, Principal, Stafford High School, stated that the high school has a plan for graduation, which is now being reviewed by the health officials. He provided a general description of the high school's plan that includes car lines, distribution of diplomas, recorded speeches and possibly a parade of cars through town.

Mr. Moccio stated that the Board of Education Celebration of Excellence, which typically would have taken place this evening, will be a virtual event and held at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting on June 8.

**B. Update on Stafford School Access Plan**

Mr. Moccio stated that as the district prepares for the end of the 2019-2020 school year, the district is also beginning to plan for the 2020-2021 school year. He said that to date, no specific guidelines or suggestions have been made by the Connecticut State Department of Education regarding next school year, and while it is difficult to plan without guidance, the work must begin. Mr. Moccio said that it is his goal to have the leadership team, comprised of district administration, supervisors, and directors, to oversee the process. Smaller, focused subcommittees will break out to identify potential issues and ultimately provide recommendations to the district leadership team.

The identified subcommittees include:

- Elementary Student Learning
- Secondary Student Learning
- Food Services
- Facilities
- Transportation
- Health Procedures
- Family Supports / Communication

Mr. Moccio said that while the leadership team has begun initial brainstorming, it will be imperative that additional feedback and perspective is garnered from a variety of faculty and staff. Each subcommittee will be comprised of members from administration, teachers, and support staff, and will contain a member of the leadership team who can report back to the main committee.

Mr. Moccio said that the next step is for the district to solicit volunteers to take part in the process. As volunteers are assigned to committees and able to begin meeting, their initial task will be to begin brainstorming the variety of questions that need to be investigated.

**III. Public Comment**

There were no questions or comments.

**Item IX. Old Business**

There was no Old Business.

**Item X. New Business**

**A. Review and Possible Approval of Alternate Grading Procedures for PreK - 5**

Mr. Moccio stated that at a Special Meeting of the Board on April 27, 2020, in response to guidance provided by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), the Board adopted a modified approach to student grading for all students in grades 6-12. As a next step, to provide equitable opportunities for every student throughout the district, Steve Autieri, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, has met with the administration from the primary and elementary schools regarding how PreK-5 student performance will be reported at the conclusion of the year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Autieri outlined the plan, as follows:

Throughout the distance learning process, faculty at Stafford Elementary School, Staffordville School, and West Stafford School will continue to assign measures of performance to evaluate student mastery of key skills and concepts. Faculty will utilize these performance measures to provide feedback and opportunities for student reflection and growth. To communicate student performance to families during the Interim Learning Plan, we propose that the following process be followed:

End of year grades will be based on **meaningful** levels of participation and adherence to the guidelines set forth by the classroom teacher during the distance learning process.

- **Commendable Participation** - Above 70% of activities completed in a timely manner.
- **Satisfactory Participation** - Between 50-70% of activities completed in a timely manner.
- **Limited Participation** - Between 25-50% of activities completed and submitted in a timely manner.
- **Insufficient Participation** - Student engages in 25% or less of assigned activities.

Each student will receive a designation from the classroom teacher as part of the final reporting of performance for the school year. A standard grade level narrative will be provided to families describing the content that was addressed in literacy and mathematics throughout the distance learning program.

Mrs. Locke asked if the district would continue with this system if students were unable to return in the fall. Mr. Autieri stated that if the students do not return in the fall, this procedure would be revisited and a revised reporting tool would be created.

Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Mr. Melnick, that the Stafford Board of Education approve the alternate grading system as presented for all students in grades PreK-5 through the remainder of the school year. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

**B. Review of 2019 – 2020 Budget Projections and Possible Approval of Reductions to the 2020 – 2021 Budget as Mandated by the Board of Finance**

Mr. Moccio stated that following the announcement from Governor Lamont that schools will not return during the 2019-20 academic year, the administrative team reviewed each account line and Mrs. Diane

Peters, Business Manager, prepared a 2019 – 2020 budget summary, sorted by object code, which includes projected remaining balances and explanation for each account line. Mr. Moccio stated that as of May 8, 2020, a remaining balance of \$382,268.57 is anticipated at the conclusion of the 2019-2020 fiscal year, largely due to the extended school closure. This anticipated remaining balance does not include a credit from the bus contractor, as it will be used to reduce transportation costs in the 2020 – 2021 budget.

Mr. Moccio reminded the Board that prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, a Budget Committee meeting was held on March 9, 2020. The committee was presented with a projection showing a year end deficit of \$247,814.91, which was due largely to an increase in special education related expenditures, and in turn impacted the anticipated remaining balance. At the time of the Budget Committee meeting, the town CFO was made aware that the district anticipated requesting Excess Cost Reimbursement Funds to offset the projected deficit, as the funds are meant to assist the district with expenses related to special education. The total amount of Excess Cost Reimbursement Funds sent to the town on the district's behalf for the 2019 - 2020 school year is approximately \$240,000.00. Due to the school closure and anticipated remaining budget balance, he said that he will no longer recommend utilizing the Excess Cost Reimbursement Funds in the 2019 – 2020 fiscal year. Rather, and in alignment with past budget seasons, he will request that the money be utilized as an offset for the Board's 2021 - 2022 budget, to mitigate the artificial deficit that will be created due to prepayments.

Mr. Moccio explained that the 2019 – 2020 anticipated remaining balance of \$382,268, when combined with the anticipated FEMA reimbursement, Excess Cost Funds of \$240,000, and the transportation credit of approximately \$200,000, totals approximately \$850,000, or 3% of the overall budget. Mr. Moccio said that each town's budgetary philosophy and ability to fund on a yearly basis varies, however Stafford's projected 3% savings is in alignment with neighboring towns. Had the district not experienced significant unanticipated special education costs, the total amount would have exceeded one million dollars.

On Tuesday, May 12, 2020, to provide the Town of Stafford with a zero mill rate increase for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, the Board of Finance voted to reduce the Board of Education budget by \$770,575.07. The Board of Education budget, as reduced by the Board of Finance, equals \$28,298,898.00, and represents a 0.85% increase, or \$237,581.00 more than the 2019 - 2020 appropriated amount. The Board of Finance is expecting the updated budget to be sent to them on Tuesday, May 19, 2020.

The 2020 – 2021 Budget History report was reviewed and details proposed adjustments identified since Board approval on February 24, 2020. As outlined within the report, Mr. Moccio proposed utilizing funds from the 2019 – 2020 budget to prepurchase items from the 2020 – 2021 budget. While this will create an artificial deficit entering the 2021 - 2022 budget cycle, it will ensure all items in the Board approved 2020 – 2021 budget are funded. He alerted the Board of the artificial deficit, as he anticipates State revenue will be volatile next year due to the closure of the State's economy.

Mr. Moccio stated that while there are still many unknowns regarding the status of next school year, small adjustments to next year's budget were made to begin addressing mandates related to health, safety and student assistance. Additional funding will be necessary to provide education in a way that is accessible, equitable and meaningful as we continue to adjust our educational practices based on the pandemic. The district will be applying for and anticipates receiving \$187,342 through the Federal

CARES Act, Elementary and Secondary School Education Relief (ESSER). This money must be utilized to address the priorities outlined in the attached memorandum from the Commission of Education.

Following considerable discussion, Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Locke, that the Board of Education approve the revised adjusted budget for the 2020-2021 school year, equaling \$28,298,898.00, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

**C. Update and Discussion Regarding a School Resource Officer**

Mr. Moccio stated that Officer Santos, the district's school resource officer, has accepted a position in another town and is no longer employed by the Stafford Police Department. He said that Board members interested in serving on the SRO interview committee in the future should contact his office via email.

Ms. Shegogue again opened the meeting for public comment. There were no questions or comments.

**Item XI. Personnel Matters**

There were no Personnel Matters.

**Item XII. Student Matters**

There were no Student Matters.

**Item XIII. Adjournment**

Mr. Melnick made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Davis, to adjourn. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Christine C. Marinelli, Recording Secretary**

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**Sonya Shegogue, Chairperson**

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**Andrea Locke, Secretary**