

**Special Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Stafford Elementary School
August 28, 2017, 6:30 p.m.**

Board Members Present: Mr. Peter Kovaleski
Mrs. Andrea Locke
Mr. George Melnick
Mr. Jeff Roberts
Ms. Sonya Shegogue, Chairperson
Mrs. Kathy Walsh

Absent: Mrs. Tracy Rummel, Secretary

Also Present: Dr. Patricia A. Collin, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Jon Campbell, Assistant Principal, Stafford Middle School
Mr. Devin Cowperthwaite, Supervisor of Building Services
Ms. Peggy Falcetta, Principal, Staffordville School
Mr. Damian Frassinelli, Director of Athletics and Recreation
Ms. Anna Gagnon, Principal, West Stafford School
Mr. Steve Montgomery, Principal, Stafford Elementary School
Attorney O'Donnell, Counsel for the Board of Education
Mr. Marco Pelliccia, Principal, Stafford High School
Ms. Jolene Piscetello, Director of Pupil Services

1. Call to Order- Establishment of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. A quorum was established.

2. Discuss and Provide Guidance to Administration Relative to the Governor's Revised Executive Order 58 Resource Allocation Plan

Dr. Collin stated that following receipt of the Governor's revised executive order, she established the following guidelines with regard to the district's budget:

- Budget Freeze; All essential purchase orders are to be reviewed and approved by the Business Manager
- Open, non-classroom, non-mandated positions will not be filled until further notice
- Extra help and overtime must be approved in advance by the Superintendent
- Mileage must be approved by the Superintendent and as always, staff members are being encouraged to carpool and hold electronic meetings.
- No refreshments or field trips with BOE funds

Dr. Collin also stated that the administration discussed delaying the start of school, but decided against it due to the hardship it would cause for parents and some staff members.

Mr. Melnick stated that he feels that the Board shouldn't make any decisions until the district has firm numbers from the State.

Mr. Roberts said the Governor should never have used this scare tactic. He said that he is a big proponent of art and music and that the Board members will all have different opinions about what's most important. He said that they will have some difficult decisions to make, but that is what they were elected to do- make fair, rational decisions.

Mrs. Locke asked if the number of students in the classes at Stafford Middle School and Stafford High School are larger than they have been in the past. Administration confirmed that they are.

Ms. Shegogue encouraged the Board members to begin looking at the budget and what's included in each line item. She asked that the Board members be prepared to make decisions when and if the time comes. She said that she'd like to be proactive.

3. Public Forum

A member of the audience said that she feels that there's a leadership issue in this district and pointed to the high number of resignations in the schools, with the exception of the high school. She stated that she was misquoted in the *Journal Inquirer* stating that she was upset about staffing resignations at the high school, when she was referring to another school. She requested that the Board make a strong decision tonight and put Mr. Marco Pelliccia, high school principal, in as interim superintendent. She said that Mr. Pelliccia has shown that he can be a strong leader, as evidenced by the Silver Medal award recently earned by the high school. She also said that she felt that a consultant isn't necessary and that the staff members are more than capable of assisting in the process of the hiring of the next superintendent.

A member of the audience said that the Board needs to give careful consideration as to how to prepare and proceed with the search.

A member of the audience stated that the hiring committee that hired Dr. Collin didn't use a consultant. She said that it is a lengthy process, but people need to trust in the process and the dedicated committee members.

A member of the audience stated that the administrators seated behind her had expertise, expert understanding and continuity that could have been carried forward had the situation been different. She said that under their leadership, the schools experienced high scores, excellent disciplinary standards and they were role models. She said that it's time to develop that again and go back to where we've been.

A member of the audience said that there are very few opportunities for the community to provide input at Board meetings. She said that there is a lot of knowledge and talent in the community and that they should be called on to collaborate. She said that they should be part of the solution. She asked what the district's three-year and five-year plan were. She said that Mr. Pelliccia should be put in as interim and Ms. Griswold should be brought back as principal. She said that she feels that her comments have been misrepresented in the minutes, which are carefully constructed.

A member of the audience suggested that PTOs, PTAs and PIE groups should be contacted for help with field trips, etc. She said that they are very active in the community and in the schools. Mrs. Locke suggested that the Board members attend some of the meetings.

A member of the audience suggested that with the number of new administrators and staff members, a freeze be put into place on professional development for the school year. She suggested that it be replaced with online learning and professional development given by existing staff members.

A member of the audience asked how the budget issue will be handled moving forward. Ms. Shegogue stated that the Board would be giving an update at the next meeting on 9/11/17.

A member of the audience asked how the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) would affect the proposed budget cuts.

In response to a community member's concern about the lack of opportunities to engage with the Board, a Board member expressed his frustration with the lack of attendance at Board meetings.

Ms. Shegogue said that she wants to stop looking back and start moving forward. She said that the district has hired some amazing new administrators and staff, and she looks forward to the upcoming school year.

4. Discussion Regarding Accepting the Retirement of the Superintendent of Schools (Executive Session Anticipated)

This item was tabled.

5. Action Regarding Accepting the Retirement of the Superintendent of Schools

No action was taken on this item.

6. Discussion Regarding Approving the Separation Agreement for the Superintendent of Schools (Executive Session Anticipated)

This item was discussed in open session. Ms. Shegogue said that the agreement was still in draft form, but was standard and covers vacation, insurance and a letter of recommendation. She said that Dr. Collin has the right to review the package for up to twenty-one (21) days.

A member of the audience asked when the Board members became aware of the agreement and how long the Board members had to review it.

7. Action Regarding Approving the Separation Agreement for the Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Roberts made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kovaleski, that the Board approve the separation agreement as presented and authorize Ms. Shegogue to sign the agreement on behalf of the Board. Mr. Kovaleski, Mrs. Locke, Mr. Melnick, Mr. Roberts and Mrs. Walsh voted for the motion, which carried.

8. Discussion Regarding Procedures to Identify and Appoint an Interim Superintendent of Schools (Executive Session Anticipated)

This item was discussed in open session. After considerable discussion and input from the public, the Board stated that it would like to conduct an in-house search and appoint an interim in the meantime. Ms. Shegogue said that she would gather information from outside sources like the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) regarding available interims and get back to the Board at the September 11, 2017.

9. Action Regarding Procedures to Identify and Appoint an Interim Superintendent of Schools

This item was tabled to the September 11, 2017, meeting.

10.Adjournment

Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kovaleski, to adjourn. Mr. Kovaleski, Mrs. Locke, Mr. Melnick, Mr. Roberts and Mrs. Walsh voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

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

Sonya Shegogue, Chairperson

Tracy L. Rummel, Secretary

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