

**Regular Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Stafford Elementary School
December 4, 2017, 6:30 p.m.**

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

Also Present: Dr. Paul Smotas, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Jonathan Campbell, Assistant Principal, Stafford Middle School
Miss Autumn Gagnon, Senior Class Student Representative
Ms. Susan Mike, Assistant Principal, Stafford High School
Ms. Jennifer Murrhly, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Paul Muska, Principal, Stafford Middle School
Mr. Marco Pelliccia, Principal, Stafford High School
Ms. Diane Peters, Business Manager
Mr. Nicholas Wyse, Junior Class Student Representative

Item I. Call to Order- Establishment of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Dr. Smotas, who ran the meeting until after the election of officers.

Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kovaleski, that the Board move **Item X.A.- Election of Board of Education Officers**, to the next item on the agenda. Ms. Bachiochi, Mr. Kovaleski, Mrs. Locke, Mr. Melnick, Mr. Roberts and Mrs. Walsh voted for the motion, which carried.

Mrs. Locke nominated Ms. Shegogue to be Chairperson. Mr. Kovaleski seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. Ms. Bachiochi, Mr. Kovaleski, Mrs. Locke, Mr. Melnick, Mr. Roberts and Mrs. Walsh voted to accept the nomination.

Ms. Shegogue nominated Mrs. Locke to be Secretary. Mrs. Walsh seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. Ms. Bachiochi, Mr. Kovaleski, Mrs. Locke, Mr. Melnick, Mr. Roberts and Mrs. Walsh voted to accept the nomination.

Ms. Shegogue introduced the newly-elected Board members.

Item II. Pledge of Allegiance

Dr. Smotas led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item III. Secretary's Report- Approval of Minutes

Mr. Roberts made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Locke, that the Board approve the Secretary's Report for the regular meeting held on 11/06/17, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mr. Kovaleski, Ms. Locke, Mr. Melnick, Mr. Roberts, and Mrs. Walsh voted for the motion, which carried.

Item IV. Consent Agenda

- A. Superintendent's Summary
- B. Bills, 11/02/17- \$155,288.53
- C. Bills, 11/16/17- \$153,568.73
- D. Grants, 11/16/17- 158.95
- E. Bills, 11/30/17- \$232,863.87
- F. Grants, 11/30/17- \$1,312.98
- G. Cafeteria Profit and Loss through September 30, 2017
- H. Financial Report through October 31, 2017
- I. Head Start through October 31, 2017
- J. Disposal of Obsolete Equipment
- K. Donation from 3M
- L. Resignations- Certified Staff Members

Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kovaleski, that the Board approve the items listed in the consent agenda, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mr. Kovaleski, Ms. Locke, Mr. Melnick, Mr. Roberts, and Mrs. Walsh 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.

B. Staffordville School's Fall Newsletter

Item VI. Board Reports

A. Report from Student Representatives

Miss Gagnon reported on the following topics:

- Stafford Elementary School Update
- Stafford Middle School Update
- High School Update
- Sports Update

Mr. Wyse reported on the following topics:

- West Stafford Update
- Staffordville Update
- 2018 Teacher of the Year
- Music and Drama Update

Ms. Shegogue said that she attended the Madrigal Feaste and that it was wonderful, as always. Ms. Shegogue also attended the football game and overheard many wonderful things about the Stafford players. She said that we should be very proud of our athletes.

Dr. Smotas said that he attended the Teacher of the Year Ceremony, which was a wonderful experience. He said that Ms. Ledbetter and her family also attended. He also attended the football game in Bridgeport, and the student and parent behavior was exemplary.

Dr. Smotas updated the Board regarding the Lion's Club donation of a vision screening machine. He was able to see the machine at Staffordville School and was very impressed with the printout that is given to parents. He said that this optional test is free and is a great early intervention tool. Mr. Shegogue, Lion's Club member, was in the audience and spoke about the donation.

B. Budget Committee

The Budget Committee members are Ms. Shegogue, Mr. Melnick and Mr. Kovaleski (Mrs. Locke, alternate). Ms. Shegogue said that the Budget Committee met prior to the Board meeting and discussed a billing issue with the bus company and the status of the 17-18 budget. Ms. Shegogue said that the budget has been frozen since August.

C. Curriculum Committee

The Curriculum Committee members are Ms. Shegogue, Mrs. Locke and Mrs. Walsh (Mrs. Rummel, alternate). There was no update from this committee.

D. Policy Committee

The Policy Committee members are Mr. Kovaleski and Mrs. Walsh. There was no update from this committee.

E. Negotiation Committee

The Negotiation Committee members are Mrs. Locke, Ms. Shegogue and Mr. Roberts. There was no update from this committee. Mrs. Locke said that the contract for the non-certified staff will expire in June, so they will begin negotiating soon.

F. District Climate Study Committee

Ms. Shegogue said that the study is complete and that the result summary has been sent to the Board members for their review. She said that it's also been shared with Dr. Smotas, and he will determine next steps. She said that she is most interested in moving the district forward and not focusing on the past, especially since many of the issues noted in the study are no longer relevant. She said that she wants the focus to be on the students.

Mrs. Walsh asked how much the study cost the district. Ms. Shegogue said that it cost \$21,700.

A Board member asked if the committee will continue to meet. Dr. Smotas suggested that the committee be dropped, but that the Board develop a formal process for informal meetings.

Mr. Roberts said that the study was a tool. He said that it is all about the kids and that the Board needs the teachers and staff to trust the Board to keep the lines of communication open.

Ms. Shegogue said that earlier in the year, the Board met with the administrators informally to allow them an opportunity to discuss matters of concern to them. The administrators in the audience were asked if they felt that the meeting was beneficial and if they'd like to continue with the meetings. The administrators indicated that they would like to continue with the meetings.

Mrs. Marinelli was asked to email Board members regarding committee participation for next year.

Item VII. Superintendent's Reports

A. Insights and Next Steps: A Report on 2017 Science Assessments

Dr. Smotas introduced Mrs. Murrehy, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and Mr. Pelliccia, Principal of Stafford High School.

Mr. Pelliccia stated that although the Connecticut Academic Performance Test science scores decreased across the State of Connecticut in 2017, Stafford High School's scores were higher than State and DRG averages. Additionally, Stafford High School outperformed surrounding schools in higher DRGs in the "proficiency or above" category and placed in the top 8.5% for high needs student performance. Mr. Pelliccia noted that graduation requirements will have to change to reflect the fact that students will have to take Chemistry, which will now be assessed for all students.

Mrs. Murrehy presented the scores on the Connecticut Mastery Test for grades 5 and 8. She noted that the scores for eighth graders declined, which may be due to the new online format of the assessment. She noted that middle school students scored first in the DRG for percentage of students at or above goal. Additionally, the average scaled score was on par with districts in higher reference groups.

Mr. Melnick complimented the science teachers on their hard work.

There were no questions.

B. FOI Commission- Notice of Meetings

Dr. Smotas informed the Board that a Notice of Meetings document, which was prepared by the FOI Commission, was provided via the meeting portal. He said that Mrs. Marinelli attended a workshop presented by the Public Education Officer of the FOI Commission in November, along with Mr. Melnick and Mrs. Walsh.

C. Superintendent Search Update

Dr. Smotas updated the Board on the status of the search for a new Superintendent. Dr. Smotas stated that nineteen applications were received for the position. He said that after initial vetting and reference checks, five candidates would be sent forward to the interview committee on December 9, 2017. He said that the full Board will interview up to four candidates the following Saturday.

D. 2018 – 2019 Proposed Budget Assumptions and Priorities

Dr. Smotas reported that he planned to present documents to the Board for approval, which would guide him in the 18-19 budget development process. However, earlier in the afternoon, he received a call from the Board of Finance Chairperson. She informed him that Stafford will likely experience a \$1.2 million shortfall in revenues for 17-18. Dr. Smotas said that he is going to focus on this year's budget before moving forward with the preparation of the 18-19 budget. He said that we need to address the huge shortfall before we begin to address next year.

Dr. Smotas reminded the Board that there has been a budget and hiring freeze in place since late August. When he spoke with the Board of Finance Chairperson, he suggested that a joint meeting between the Board of Finance, Board of Education and Board of Selectmen be held so that they can discuss this matter and come to a collaborative decision.

Item VIII. Public Comment

A member of the audience stated that she has concerns that the interim superintendent was given the authority to whittle down the candidate pool for the superintendent of schools vacancy from nineteen to five. She said that the Board members were elected to speak for the community, not the interim superintendent.

Ms. Shegogue said that Dr. Smotas has vast experience in this area and the Board is very comfortable with the process. She said that she spoke with references, including Board members, from previous districts in which Dr. Smotas worked. She said that they were exemplary. Mr. Melnick said that he's participated on two other searches and the process works.

Dr. Smotas said that the community member should feel free to contact him if she has any questions regarding the process he followed.

A member of the audience applauded the interim superintendent and Board for the open communication and dialogue that took place during the meeting thus far. She said that it is important for the climate study results to become public as validation for teachers regarding what they were dealing with. She asked that the Board not forget the past, but learn from it and move on.

Item IX. Old Business

There was no Old Business.

Item X. New Business

A. Election of Board of Education Officers

This item was addressed at the beginning of the agenda.

B. Proposed Board of Education Schedule of Meetings (2018)

Mr. Melnick made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Walsh, that the Board approve the 2018 Schedule of Regular Meetings, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mr. Kovaleski, Ms. Locke, Mr. Melnick, Mr. Roberts, and Mrs. Walsh voted for the motion, which carried.

C. Proposed Change to the 2017 – 2018 School Calendar

Mr. Melnick made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roberts, that the Board approve the change to the 17-18 school calendar (changing Friday, 12/22/17, from a full student day to an early release day), as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mr. Kovaleski, Ms. Locke, Mr. Melnick, Mr. Roberts, and Mrs. Walsh voted for the motion, which carried.

Item XI. Personnel Matters

There were no Personnel Matters.

Item XII. Student Matters

There were no Student Matters.

Item XIII. Adjournment

Mr. Kovaleski made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Locke, to adjourn. Ms. Bachiochi, Mr. Kovaleski, Ms. Locke, Mr. Melnick, Mr. Roberts, and Mrs. Walsh voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

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

Sonya Shegogue, Chairperson

Andrea Locke, Secretary