

**Regular Meeting  
Stafford Board of Education  
Stafford Elementary School  
September 9, 2019, 6:30 p.m.**

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

**Absent:** Mr. George Melnick

**Also Present:** Mr. Steven Moccio, Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Steven Autieri, Director of Curriculum and Instruction  
Mr. Jonathan Campbell, Assistant Principal, Stafford Middle School  
Mr. Devin Cowperthwaite, Supervisor of Building Services  
Miss Allie Curtin, Alternate Student Representative  
Mrs. Peggy Falchetta, Principal, Staffordville School  
Mr. Dean Fortin, IT / Network Coordinator  
Ms. Anna Gagnon, Principal, West Stafford School  
Ms. Beth LaPane, Supervisor of Food Service  
Ms. Diane Peters, Business Manager  
Miss Grace Zopelis, Student Representative

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

**Item II. Pledge of Allegiance**

The student representatives led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Regular Meeting, 08/19/19

Mrs. Walsh made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Davis, that the Board approve the Secretary's Report for the regular meeting held on 08/19/19, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, and Mrs. Walsh voted for the motion, which carried.

**Item IV. Consent Agenda**

- A. 18-19 Bills, 8/21/19- \$85,535.45
- B. 18-19 Bills, 9/5/19- \$406,943.55
- C. 18-19 Bills, 9/5/19- \$602.05
- D. 19-20 Bills 8/21/19- \$1,304,207.50
- E. 19-20 Bills, 9/5/19- \$108,626.60
- F. 19-20 Grants, 8/21/19- \$4,602.39

G. 19-20 Grants, 9/5/19- \$40.67

H. **Acceptance of Resignations- Certified Staff Members-**

NAME	POSITION	SCHOOL	EFFECTIVE DATE	REASON
Cox, Kerry	Reading Teacher	Stafford Elementary School	1/1/2020	Retirement
McDonald, Mary Kate	School Counselor	Stafford High School	9/27/19	To accept a position in another CT district.
Weise, Anna	Special Education Teacher	Stafford Middle School	10/03/19	Personal

I. **Obsolete Equipment, Stafford Middle School**

Stafford Middle School request the return of 42 obsolete desks to the Town of Stafford, according to the provisions of Board policy 3260-*Sales and Disposal of Books, Equipment, and Supplies*. Mr. Moccio stated that if the Town does not want the equipment, the district will first offer the desks to other surrounding districts, or will otherwise assume responsibility for proper disposal.

Mr. Moccio stated that exit interviews have been scheduled with all three staff members that are resigning, one of which he already conducted.

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

**Item V. Correspondence**

A. **Board Meeting Reminder-** Ms. Shegogue read the New Staff Reception and Board meeting reminders that were posted on the agenda.

**Item VI. Board Reports**

A. **Student Representatives' Reports**

Miss Zopelis reported on the following:

- Music and Drama Report from Mrs. Dillon
- Stafford Elementary School Update
- Stafford Middle School Update

Miss Curtin reported on the following:

- West Stafford School Update

**B. Policy Committee (Chairperson- Kathy Walsh, Kathy Bachiochi and George Melnick)**

Mr. Moccio stated that he has asked the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) to conduct an audit of the district's policy manual, which will take place later this year. In the meantime, he has begun scheduling monthly meetings with the Administrative Policy Committee, and will be requesting a meeting of the Board Policy Committee to take place in early October.

**C. Negotiation Committee (Chairperson- Andrea Locke, Jen Davis and Sonya Shegogue)**

Mrs. Locke stated that the first negotiation session with the Stafford Administrators' Association would take place on Monday, September 16, 2019.

**Item VII. Superintendent's Reports**

**A. Update Regarding Convocation and the First Week of School**

Mr. Moccio stated that on Monday, August 26, 2019, all staff members of the Stafford Public Schools assembled at Stafford High School for the annual convocation exercises. Mr. Moccio said that Convocation is the kick-off of a new school year and this year provided a model for energy, excitement, and increased collaboration across the district. He reported that he has received numerous emails and comments from administrators and staff regarding how much they enjoyed the day.

Mr. Moccio said that following the Marshmallow Challenge, where staff members were assigned to a group and asked to practice the newly unveiled district norms by participating in a friendly, small group, competition-style activity, they were asked to "lean in" and help administration by providing perspective and input regarding the Strategic Education Framework (SEF). Staff members were assigned to groups and were asked to provide feedback and input regarding the SEF and the vision for improvement over the next few years by both creating a "headline" and two questions, one of which was shared with the entire staff following lunch. Some of the headlines were- "Time to Align!", "Teamwork makes the dream work!", and "Consistency is Key!". Mr. Moccio stated that all of the feedback from staff members has been compiled by Mr. Autieri and will be shared at an Administrative Council meeting. He said that a finalized SEF will be presented to the Board for approval at the next regularly-scheduled Board meeting.

Mr. Moccio gave a brief overview of the professional development activities that took place on the three days following Convocation, which concluded on Thursday with all certified staff again coming together in the Stafford High School Auditorium for a "Getting to Know Your Learners" day. Staff were led through an overview of the data process, provided with an overview of instructional data teams, and PowerSchool Analytics, before breaking out into grade level and content area sessions to dig deeper into data provided to them. He also noted that Mr. Autieri ran a two-day New Teacher Academy prior to Convocation, which was very well-received.

Mr. Moccio said that he, Mr. Steve Autieri, Director of Curriculum & Instruction; and Ms. Jolene Piscetello, Director of Pupil Services, visited every classroom in every school. Numerous staff members remarked how excited they were to start the school year. Staff comments echoed their appreciation for the vision of improvement, the new curriculum and instructional materials, the refocused attention on collaboration, and the student-centered focus.

Mr. Moccio thanked all of those that assisted in ensuring that convocation and the opening of school went as smoothly as possible. He said that the positive momentum of last school year resulted in

increased academic achievement and improved culture and climate across the district. The opening of school and initial feedback from staff provides strong indication that the upward trend and positive movement within the district will continue for the upcoming school year.

**B. Update Regarding Educational Cost Share Funding**

Mr. Moccio stated that on Monday, August 26, 2019, he attended a Board of Finance meeting to begin a conversation regarding the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Grant for the 2019-2020 school year. In attendance with Mr. Moccio at the meeting was Sonya Shegogue, Board of Education Chairperson, and Diane Peters, Business Manager. At the meeting, he alerted the Board of Finance that the Board of Education is requesting any increase in ECS allocation be transferred to a separate Board of Education improvement fund for anticipated costs associated with the configuration study.

Mr. Moccio said that the following timeline of events was shared with the Board of Finance:

- To avoid any penalty related to the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), the Board of Finance approved an additional appropriation of \$239,655 to the Board of Education, effective June 1, 2019.
- During budget planning and in preparation for the annual town referendum, the ECS funding was anticipated to decrease \$275,839 for the 2019-2020 fiscal year.
- Prior to the annual town budget being finalized and sent for town approval, the Board of Education approved the use of the MBR appropriation to pre-purchase items allocated within the 2019-2020 budget in an effort to reduce the requested increase and overall impact on the mill rate.
- After the referendum was approved, the Town of Stafford was notified that ECS funding would decrease by \$38,258, which would result in the town receiving \$237,581 more than anticipated.

Mr. Moccio said that during the Board of Finance meeting, it was explained that IF the Board of Education knew then what they know now, THEN the proactive reduction would not have been necessary. Had the MBR money not have been utilized to reduce the 2019-2020 budget, it would have been reflected in the balance at the end of 2018-2019, and the Board of Education would have requested it be transferred to a school improvement fund for future use related to the configuration study. He said that the action of transferring the anticipated additional 2019-2020 ECS appropriation is in alignment with the Board of Education requesting end-of-year balance funds be shifted to the 1% fund.

Ms. Lisa Baxter, Chief Financial Officer for the Town of Stafford, was present at the meeting and confirmed for Board of Finance members that the Town of Stafford is anticipating a greater ECS appropriation than originally reported at the time of the referendum. Ms. Baxter explained the disbursement is in three installments, with the final appropriation being at the beginning of April. The meeting concluded with an understanding that the Board of Education will attend a Board of Finance meeting in the spring to request a transfer of funds following verification of CSDE appropriation.

Ms. Shegogue and Mr. Moccio stated that the members of the Board of Finance were very complimentary of the district's budget process and were supportive of this request.

**C. Update Regarding the Geothermal System**

Mr. Moccio stated that at the Board of Education meeting on August 19, 2019, questions were asked regarding the benefit being realized by the Geothermal systems installed at Stafford High School, Stafford Middle School, and Stafford Elementary School. In response, Mr. Devin Cowperthwaite, Supervisor of Building Services, prepared a memorandum, which was provided via the portal.

Mr. Moccio stated that the Town of Stafford has secured legal counsel with regard to the matter and specific details regarding the overall effectiveness of the system are not to be shared at this time. Mr. Cowperthwaite provided a general background of the work that has been completed and next steps he anticipates being required in order to ensure the buildings are within an appropriate temperature range. As the system is currently not performing to expectation, the district has continued to budget sufficient funds for oil usage and has not reduced the overall expense. The current contract with Dime Oil is for 85,000 gallons of heating oil at a price of \$1.922 per gallon.

Mr. Cowperthwaite was in attendance at the meeting and available to answer questions from Board members. Mr. Moccio said that more detailed updates will be provided as information becomes available.

**D. Requested Information Regarding Food Service Program**

Mr. Moccio stated that at the Board of Education meeting on August 19, 2019, additional questions were asked regarding the Food Service Program. Mrs. Diane Peters, Business Manager, prepared a memorandum detailing responses to each of the questions raised at the Board meeting, which was provided via the portal. Mrs. Beth LaPane, Food Service Supervisor, was in attendance at the Board meeting on September 9, 2019, to answer any additional questions.

Mr. Moccio said that per Ms. Peters’ memo, the overall percentage of students eligible for free or reduced meals in the 2018-2019 school year was 40.26%. The overall percentage of students eligible for free meals was 31.94%, with another 8.32% being eligible for reduced price meals. He also noted that the Connecticut State Department of Education utilizes Medicaid as a method of directly certifying children for free or reduced-price meals. Direct certification is based on a variety of factors including, a family’s participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or being eligible for HUSKY medical insurance. Mr. Moccio said that updated percentages are anticipated as part of the next Cafeteria Profit & Loss Report at the Board meeting on October 21, 2019.

Mr. Moccio also reported that for the 2018-2019 school year, through the National School Lunch Program, the Food Service department received reimbursement for each meal served, and the table below shows the student price and reimbursement received by student designation.

<b>Breakfast*</b>		<b>Lunch</b>	
<b>Price</b>	\$1.55	<b>Price</b>	\$3.00 / \$2.85 / \$2.65
<b>Reimbursement Amount (food, labor, and equipment costs)</b>			
<b>Full Price</b>	\$0.31	<b>Full Price</b>	\$0.31
<b>Reduced</b>	\$1.84	<b>Reduced</b>	\$2.91
<b>Free</b>	\$2.14	<b>Free</b>	\$3.31

\*Additional \$0.06/meal is provided for each breakfast meal served

Mr. Moccio said that for the 2018-2019 school year, the Food Service Program received \$75,985.73 in reimbursement for breakfast, and \$278,030.50 reimbursement for lunch. The Board subsidy for the cost difference between free and reduced price meals for the 2018-2019 school year totaled \$8,429.30. The subsidy is the difference between the reduced and free reimbursement amount. For breakfast this equaled \$2,134.50 (\$0.30 per breakfast meal), and for lunch this equaled \$6,294.80 (\$0.40 per lunch meal).

Mrs. Davis asked if the lunch prices would be increasing by ten cents again next year. Mr. Moccio said that based on this year's calculation, a ten cent increase is likely next year.

### **III. Public Comment**

Mrs. Davis announced that Mrs. Walsh would not be running for the Board of Education in November, after 18 years of service. She also announced that the other members that are up for election would be running unopposed, and that Ms. Laura Lybarger would be running unopposed to fill Kathy Walsh's vacancy.

Ms. Lybarger thanked Mrs. Walsh for her dedicated service and said that she's looking forward to being a part of the Board.

### **Item IX. Old Business**

There was no Old Business.

### **Item X. New Business**

#### **A. Review and Possible Approval to Receive 2019 – 2020 Family Resource Fund**

Mr. Moccio stated that as per the attached memorandum from Diane Peters, Business Manager, the district has submitted a Request for Proposals (RFP) to the State for funding in the amount of \$100,000, for the operation of the Family Resource Center program located at West Stafford School. The funding would support the program from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2021.

The grant application, which was provided via the portal for Board members to review, was due July 15, 2019. In accordance with the terms of the grant submission process, "The application requires official approval and/or endorsement of any Board or like body (e.g. Board of Education, town council, etc.), [and that] the approval and/or endorsement of such body should be submitted with the grant application." While Board approval did not occur prior to the application deadline, Ms. Anna Gagnon, Principal of West Stafford School, received authorization from the Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services, and Adult Education, to submit Board acceptance under separate cover as many Boards of Education do not have summer meetings.

Ms. Gagnon was present at the Board meeting on Monday, September 9, 2019, to provide an overview of the positive impact this grant has on the children and families of Stafford for the past 20 years, as well as to respond to any questions from the Board.

Mrs. Davis stated that the program is very worthwhile and provides Stafford families with much needed support and assistance. She said that she's heard nothing but great things about the program.

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Walsh, that the Board of Education approve the *Application Package for the Renewal of a Family Resource Center Program*, July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2021, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, and Mrs. Walsh voted for the motion, which carried.

**B. Approval of Authorized Signer for Stafford Savings Bank Account**

Mr. Moccio said that per the Corporate Resolution with Stafford Savings Bank, the Stafford Board of Education acts as the "Board of Directors" and must authorize officers and agents of the school district to deposit funds in the Bank. The authorization from the Board of Education allows school officials to conduct other types of transactions as stipulated in the resolution, such as signing checks. Since Mary Claire Manning joined the district in August as the new principal of Stafford Elementary School, it is necessary to add her name as a designated signer for the school.

Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Davis, that the Board of Education authorize Ms. Mary Claire Manning, Principal of Stafford Elementary School, as designated signer for the Stafford Elementary School Activity account. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, 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**

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Locke, to adjourn. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, and Mrs. Walsh voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

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

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**Sonya Shegogue, Chairperson**

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**Andrea Locke, Secretary**