

**Regular Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Stafford Elementary School Cafetorium
Electronic Meeting- via Zoom
September 14, 2020, 6:30 p.m.**

Board Members Present (in person):

- 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 (in person)
- Mr. Steven Autieri, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
- Mr. Frank Bonavita, Director of School Facilities
- Mr. Jonathan Campbell, Assistant Principal, Stafford Middle School
- Miss Allie Curtin, Student Representative
- Mrs. Peggy Falchetta, Principal, Staffordville School
- Mr. Dean Fortin, IT / Network Coordinator (in person)
- Mr. Damian Frassinell, Director of Athletics and Recreation
- Ms. Anna Gagnon, Principal, West Stafford 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
- Ms. Diane Peters, Business Manager (in person)

The meeting agenda and copies of all Board meeting materials were posted on the district's website (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 will be available on the district website.

Item I. Call to Order- Establishment of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 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, 08/17/2020
Special Meeting, 08/24/2020

Mr. Delano made a motion, seconded by Mr. Melnick, that the Board approve the Secretary’s Report for the regular meeting held on 08/17/2020, and the special meeting held on 08/24/2020, 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. Release of Funds for Various SHS Graduation Class Accounts
 - Class of 2008 \$6,575.04
 - Class of 2012 \$10,181.43
 - Class of 2013 \$11,584.23
 - Class of 2014 \$5,462.38
 - Class of 2017 \$3,956.57
 - Class of 2018 \$6,987.73
- B. Acceptance of Resignation- Certified Staff Member

NAME	POSITION	SCHOOL	EFFECTIVE DATE	REASON
Forst, Celeste	Art Teacher	Stafford Middle School	August 24, 2020	Personal

- C. Approval of Unpaid Leave of Absence Request- Certified Staff Member
- D. 19-20 Bills and Grants, 8/25/20, \$102,708.12
- E. 19-20 Bills and Grants, 09/02/2020, \$26,959.61
- F. 20-21 Bills and Grants, 8/25/20, \$829,765.13
- G. 20-21 Bills and Grants, 9/02/20, \$2,000.00
- H. 20-21 Bills and Grants, 9/02/20, \$63,365.33

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, 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. **Student Representative’s Report**
Miss Curtin provided an update on the status of student athletics.

Item VII. Superintendent's Reports

A. Update Regarding Convocation and the First Week of School

Mr. Moccio provided the following update to Board members via the portal- As you all are aware, on August 24, 2020, all staff members of the Stafford Public Schools assembled for our annual convocation exercises. This year's events were anything but typical as staff assembled in various classrooms within their individual buildings to maintain social distancing guidelines and attended via Zoom. While different, convocation remains the kick-off to a new school year and included the typical welcoming, celebrations, and speeches from the Board of Education, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, and Director of Pupil Services. The district Paraeducator and Teacher of the Year provided inspiring remarks, and I reviewed the progress we made last school year and shared my vision for the upcoming school year.

Following convocation, all staff attended building level faculty meetings that were held either virtually, or in the case of West Stafford School, outside. The day ended with all staff being trained on COVID-19 safety protocols and procedures. The next three days and four days of the following week were centered on professional development for teachers and final preparations for the buildings so that we were ready to welcome students back on September 8, 2020. A copy of the complete professional development agenda has been included for your information. As you can see, staff were provided time for mandated trainings, self-selected academy style workshops, and content area professional learning. Many of the workshops and trainings were facilitated by our own staff, and I am grateful for those that were willing to share their knowledge with their colleagues.

On the first day of school, Mr. Steve Autieri, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, and I visited each school and greeted students and staff. The same was done on Thursday, September 10, 2020, as Cohort B students entered the schools for the first time. Staff members appear to be excited and to understand all of the process and procedural changes that were required. Many have remarked that they are happy to return and that it is wonderful for students to again be in the buildings. Other than a few small technical issues that required some troubleshooting, the first week of school was very successful.

Countless hours were spent planning to ensure schools would open as smooth as possible and I am incredibly thankful to everyone that assisted. I am optimistic that by working together, the positivity and flexibility that was evident during the first week of school will continue throughout the upcoming school year.

Mr. Moccio added that staff completed a survey to provide their feedback regarding the professional development that they received prior to the start of school. He said the responses were overwhelmingly positive, with 95% of staff indicating that the topics could be translated to teaching / learning for students.

Mrs. Davis asked if Mr. Moccio was considering anything different with regard to student schedules surrounding the Thanksgiving and winter breaks. Mr. Moccio stated that he will continue to monitor the metrics, but nothing has been changed at this time. He said that he will be reevaluating the learning model at the end of the month and if a change is warranted, it most likely would take place after Columbus Day.

Ms. Bachiochi asked about the current enrollment numbers. Mr. Moccio stated that there are currently 1,362 students enrolled. Of those students enrolled, 284 are participating via the fully remote model. He also noted that the district has 76 students currently being homeschooled, an increase of 30 students as compared to last year. Ms. Bachiochi asked how many students are in each classroom. Mr. Moccio stated that there are approximately 8 – 12 students in each classroom, depending on grade level.

Mr. Delano stated that his child is a freshman at the high school, and he has only heard great things about the start of the school year and the remote learning day.

Ms. Lybarger asked if Mr. Moccio had a breakdown by grade level of the homeschooling numbers. Mr. Moccio said that he believed most of the students are elementary age. He said that he would provide Board members with the exact breakdown. Ms. Lybarger stated that her child is participating in the remote model at the high school and has done very well and feels involved in her classes.

Miss Curtin stated that she thinks the teachers are doing really well with the new plan.

Ms. Mike said that the teachers deserve the credit for the smooth opening.

B. Financial Report, July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020

Ms. Peters, Business Manager, presented the financial report from July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020, sorted by object code.

The total budget for the 2019-2020 school year was \$28,052,217.40. The unspent, unreserved amount of the budget is \$6,544.23. Any remaining encumbrances are for the purchasing of items in the 2019-2020 fiscal year that were removed from the 2020-2021 budget in order to meet the Board of Finance budget reduction. The school closure, distance learning, and the 2020-2021 budget reduction each played a part in the 2019-2020 fiscal year's expenditures.

Ms. Peters stated that the 2019 – 2020 financial report was submitted to the State by the September 1, 2020, deadline. She also noted that she is waiting to hear when the audit will begin.

There were no questions.

C. Self-Funded Insurance Update through June 2020

Ms. Peters, Business Manager, presented a report she prepared regarding the status of the district's self-funded health and dental insurance programs for the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Ms. Peters reported that the dental insurance fund reflects a balance of \$68,767.61, as of June 30, 2020, and has a balance adequate to cover nine months of claims. She reported that at this time last year, the dental insurance fund reflected a balance of \$51,204.37.

Ms. Peters reported that the health insurance fund reflects a total unadjusted balance of \$1,018,158.28, as of June 30, 2020, and has a balance adequate to cover over two months' worth of claims. She reported that at this time last year, the health insurance fund reflected a balance of \$2,169,009.77. Due to the large balance of the fund in recent years, in consultation with the Town Treasurer, premiums were not raised in either 2018-19 or 2019-20, and the employer share of the health savings accounts for

employees was paid from the fund. During the 2020-21 budget process, in reaction to increasing medical claims in the winter and spring, premiums were raised and the employer portion of the health savings accounts was paid from budgeted funds. With the return of teachers in September, the fund balance is anticipated to increase, as premiums are not collected in the summer months.

Ms. Peters noted that only one member went over the stop loss limit, which means that more of the fund balance is being used to cover some high cost claims. She also noted that pharmacy costs are up 54%, which is likely to continue. She also noted that the district will be meeting with One Digital, the district's insurance agent, next week to review the claims.

Mr. Moccio stated that the Board would be provided with quarterly updates regarding the status of the fund.

D. Food Service Program Update

Ms. Peters, Business Manager, reported that the district recently received approval for Stafford Elementary School to participate in the Connecticut State Department of Education's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). The CEP is a voluntary meal service option for schools or districts that are identified as high poverty. To qualify for the CEP, districts or individual schools must have a minimum identified student percentage of 40 percent or greater in their population. Stafford Elementary School was the only school that qualified for CEP with a percentage of 41.79%, with all other schools falling below the 40% threshold. The CEP permits eligible schools to provide meals to all students at no charge, regardless of their families' economic status, for four successive years. The district's participation in the CEP will increase student access to healthy meals, reduce the administrative burden of collecting household applications from SES families, while also increasing the amount of reimbursement received by the district for meals served at SES.

Ms. Peters also reported that on August 31, 2020, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) released waivers to extend flexibilities for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) of the National School Lunch Program through December 31, 2020, or until USDA funding has been depleted. Stafford was officially granted approval as of September 8, 2020, to extend free meals to anyone 18 years of age or under, meaning all students in the Stafford Public Schools will receive a breakfast and lunch free of charge. Board members were provided via the portal with a copy of correspondence that was sent to all parents explaining the student meal program changes.

Ms. LaPane stated that today was the third serving day following the announcement that free meals are available for all students. She said that she anticipates that the number of students taking advantage of the free meals will increase as more families become aware. Mr. Moccio said that a letter was sent to all families last week notifying them of the availability of the free meals.

Ms. Peters and Ms. LaPane were available to respond to questions.

III. Public Comment

There were no questions or comments.

Item IX. Old Business

There was no Old Business.

Item X. New Business

A. Discussion and Possible Approval of Webster Bank Resolution

Mr. Moccio reported that the Board of Education was notified at a Board meeting on April 6, 2020, that the Town Chief Financial Officer, Lisa Baxter, was in the process of identifying a new bank to handle the town's various accounts due to a continual increase in fees charged to the town accounts. Webster Bank has been identified as the new bank. Board members were provided via the portal with a memorandum and a resolution providing authorization from the Board of Education to designate them as the official bank for the Board of Education. The resolution identifies Sonya Shegogue, Board of Education Chairperson, and Steven Moccio, Superintendent of Schools, as designated signers for the account; along with Diane Peters, Business Manager, and Sharon Ouellette, Paymaster, as delegated authorities for information and inquiry purposes only.

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Melnick, that the Board of Education authorize Sonya Shegogue, Board of Education Chairperson, and Steven Moccio, Superintendent of Schools, as designated signers for the Webster Bank accounts. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Delano, that the Board of Education authorize Andrea Locke, Secretary, to certify that this action has been taken at its meeting on September 14, 2020. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Melnick, to move item XI.A.- **Superintendent's Evaluation (Executive Session Anticipated)**, into executive session. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

Item XI. Personnel Matters

A. Superintendent's Evaluation (Executive Session Anticipated)

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Delano, to enter executive session. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried. The Board entered executive session at 7:40 p.m.

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Delano, to return to regular session. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried. The Board returned to regular session at 8:00 p.m.

No action was taken.

Item XII. Student Matters

There were no Student Matters.

Item XIII. Adjournment

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Melnick, 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 8:03 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,
Christine C. Marinelli, Recording Secretary
(In Person)**

Sonya Shegogue, Chairperson

Andrea Locke, Secretary

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