

Somers Board of Education Regular Meeting
Somers Board of Education Chambers
Monday, November 24, 2025
7:00 PM

(The recorded livestream may be viewed on SPS' YouTube channel on the school website)

Present BOE Members: Anne Kirkpatrick, Mike Briggs, Dr. Ed DePeau, JT Galloway, Dr. Sharon Goulet, Shane Manning, Gina Olearczyk, Kim Radziewicz, Derek Zelek

Others: Dr. Sam Galloway, Jaime Rechenberg, Lisa Horan, Julie Hinkley, Jan Martin, Jim Barile, Dr. Philip Goduti, Bill Meier, Dave Marti, Carl Stebbins

1. CALL TO ORDER

The unofficial meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by Chair Kirkpatrick at 7:02 p.m. in the Board of Education Chambers. Three officially seated Board of Education members were present, along with six newly elected members who had not yet been sworn in.

Town Clerk Dave Marti was scheduled to swear in new BOE members prior to the meeting; however, the timing required an unexpected adjustment. The order of the meeting agenda was modified to ensure all newly elected board members could vote.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

3.1. Superintendent Update

Superintendent Galloway attended the CABA CAPSS Convention on 11/21/25 with Board Members Gina Olearczyk, Sharon Goulet and Anne Kirkpatrick. Superintendent Galloway congratulated Coach Rick Kelley for leading the boys' soccer team to a victory in the Class S CIAC State Tournament. The team last earned this title in 2015.

A combined Veterans Day ceremony was held for SHS and MBA students in the SHS auditorium. SHS students did a great job running the ceremony. Board members Mike Briggs, Jan Martin, and Ed DePeau were in attendance. A ceremony was also held at SES.

A shortened school week is ahead. Superintendent Galloway wished students and families a restful break and encouraged everyone to pause, hug, laugh, and eat well.

3.2. SHS Student Representatives

SHS Student Representatives Aiden Ritch, Jessica Chen, and Aja Drammeh presented to the Board, providing updates on recent school events. They

highlighted activities such as the Veterans Day ceremony, the POPS Concert, and Broadway Night. They also noted that a Work-Based Learning Panel, featuring two SHS alumni, offered students insights into life after high school. The panel included representatives from marketing and real estate as well as commercial photography.

Additional recent events included the NCCC Band and Chorus Festival, No Shave November, and the Annual Food Drive hosted by the Interact Club. The Class of 2028 will host an upcoming can and bottle drive, and the Class of 2027 recently concluded a Jersey Mike's fundraiser. Two students received the Act of Kindness Award. All SHS music students were accepted into the Eastern Region Musical Festival at Granby Memorial High School. Two student representatives also attended the CABA Conference.

Will Accorsi was named MVP of the boys' soccer state championship game, and Jon Breton qualified for the cross-country state competition. The boys' soccer team won the CIAC Class S State Championship, with strong support from families who held a tailgate before the game and filled the stands.

A variety of fall field trips took place, including a French class trip to Sur La Table for a French cooking lesson, visits to Aerospace Alley, Rockville Superior Court, and a virtual conference with actuaries from Travelers.

The Board also received notice of several upcoming events:

- Winter sports begin on 12/1/25
- Makerspace ornament-making on 12/3/25
- NHS Induction Ceremony on 12/10/25
- CCMC Pajama Day on 12/12/25
- Winter Break from 12/24/25 through 1/2/26
- A Work-Based Learning Public Health Forum on 1/7/26

SHS was named a Connecticut School of Distinction for its strong academic performance and growth during the 2024-25 school year. The school rose from #63 in 2022-23 to #17 in 2024-25, placing Somers High School in the top 10% of schools statewide.

Board Member Mike Briggs asked the student representatives how the Board can better support students. In response, Aja Drammeh advocated for expanding course offerings beyond traditional academics to include more life-skills electives, particularly culinary arts. Jessica Chen encouraged SHS to deepen its inclusivity around cultural holidays by increasing awareness and recognition of the diverse celebrations observed by students in Somers.

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.1. 2026 Washington D.C. Trip

Rationale: Phil Goduti, SHS History Teacher, will present the 2026 Washington, D.C. trip to the Board.

Discussion: Dr. Philip Goduti presented to the Board about the Washington D.C. Trip for UConn ECE United States History class. The itinerary is still being updated

as plans are solidified. Dr. Goduti shared photos from past trips, highlighting the many sites visited. Sites for this trip will likely include the Lincoln Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, the American History Museum, African American History Museum, and Iwo Jima, in addition to many others. It is also possible the group will visit the Holocaust Museum.

This year 48 students are eligible to attend. A double decker bus will be utilized to accommodate all students. The Courtyard Marriott just outside D.C. in Alexandria will serve for lodging. Six chaperones will be stationed on each floor of the hotel. The cost of the trip this year is about \$540.

Board Member Gina Olearczyk commended Dr. Goduti for coordinating the trip, stating that the experience is invaluable for students.

***The meeting was paused for the swearing in of the new Board of Education members
by Town Clerk, Dave Marti, and Election of Officers at 7:26 p.m.:***

Superintendent Galloway introduced the Election of Officers and opened nominations for Board Chair.

Chair Kirkpatrick nominated Mike Briggs for the position of Board Chair, and the nomination was seconded by Kim Radziewicz. Mr. Briggs expressed that he was honored to be nominated and to serve as Chair. He noted his pride in the work accomplished over the past four years under Ms. Kirkpatrick's leadership, emphasizing that the hiring of Dr. Galloway, following a thorough superintendent search, significantly strengthened the district and changed its trajectory. Chair Briggs stated that he will continue the Board's mission of keeping students first in Somers.

Chair Briggs then opened nominations for Board Vice Chair. He nominated Anne Kirkpatrick, and Gina Olearczyk seconded the nomination. Ms. Kirkpatrick publicly thanked Kim Radziewicz for her dedicated service as Vice Chair, acknowledging that Ms. Radziewicz consistently went above and beyond the responsibilities outlined in the bylaws. Ms. Kirkpatrick noted that her leadership was instrumental in ensuring the Board operated efficiently. Ms. Radziewicz thanked Ms. Kirkpatrick for the opportunity and experience.

Board Member Anne Kirkpatrick nominated Sharon Goulet for the position of Board Secretary, and Derek Zelek seconded the nomination. Ms. Goulet shared that she is looking forward to serving in this role.

Board of Education meeting resumed

Motion to approve the 2026 Washington D.C. trip. This motion, made by Mike Briggs and seconded by Gina Olearczyk, Carried. **Yea: 9, Nay: 0**

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5.1. Approval of the November 10, 2025 BOE Meeting Minutes

Rationale: The Board to review and approve the minutes from the November 10, 2025 Board meeting.

Motion to approve minutes of November 10 Board of Education Meeting. This motion, made by Shane Manning and seconded by JT Galloway, Carried. **Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Abstain: 2 (Sharon Goulet, Gina Olearczyk)**

6. OPPORTUNITY TO ADD/DELETE AGENDA ITEMS

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to approve Consent Agenda. This motion, made by Anne Kirkpatrick and seconded by Kim Radziewicz, Carried. **Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Abstain: 2 (Sharon Goulet, Gina Olearczyk)**

7.1. Warrant of November 24, 2025

Rationale: The Board to review and consent to the warrant of November 24, 2025.

7.2. 2nd Posting DBS Code 1312.3 - Library Material Review

7.3. 2nd Posting DBS Code 1312.4 - Library Collection/Development

7.4. 2nd Posting DBS Code 1312.5 - Library Display

7.5. 2nd Posting DBS Code 5114 - Suspension/Expulsion

7.6. 2nd Posting DBS Code 5131.911 - School Climate Regulation

7.7. 2nd Posting DBS Code 5144.5 - Restorative Practices Response

7.8. 2nd Posting DBS Code 6159 - Individualized Education Program

7.9. 2nd Posting DBS Code 6171 - Special Education

7.10. 2nd Posting DBS Code 6171.2 - Preschool Special Education

8. OLD BUSINESS

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1. Leave of Absence Extension Request

Rationale: Courtney Suttle, 8th Grade Language Arts Teacher, is requesting an extension of her leave of absence to the end of the school year. She was originally scheduled to return in January.

Motion to approve Leave of Absence for Courtney Suttle (8th Grade Language Arts Teacher). This motion, made by Gina Olearczyk and seconded by Shane Manning, Carried. **Yea: 9, Nay: 0**

Discussion: Board Member Gina Olearczyk inquired about whether the current substitute will continue coverage through the end of the year. This is still being determined.

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS

10.1. Curriculum

This committee is on hold.

10.2. Policy

The next meeting will be held in January.

10.3. Planning/Finance (next meeting 12/1/25, 5 p.m.)

The committee will meet on 12/1/25 at 5 p.m.

10.4. Salary & Negotiations

This committee is on hold.

10.5. Building

The Building Committee met last Tuesday. A team is working on the grant application, which will be made available on 12/1/25 and must be submitted by 12/10/25. The committee will meet again on 12/2/25 to determine the cost estimate to include on the grant application. The target date to start the project is in June 2026.

11. CIP/CREC/SEF

There are no reports for CIP or CREC. The Board is looking for a new CREC representative. The group meets once per month. SEF had a meeting to review grants. All grants were approved. Mr. Shane Manning highlighted the SHS Robotics program grant.

12. ADVANCE CALENDAR

The BOE team photo scheduled for 12/8/25 will be rescheduled. The NHS Induction Ceremony will take place on 12/10/25. Board members are invited to attend. Capstone Presentations will take place on 1/13/26.

13. AUDIENCE TO CITIZENS/STAFF/STUDENTS

Mr. Jim Barile, a Somers citizen and SPS substitute teacher, congratulated the new BOE members. He also thanked all 9 members for serving, highlighting the extensive time commitment required.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 p.m. This motion, made by Sharon Goulet and seconded by Shane Manning, Carried. **Yea: 9, Nay: 0**

Sharon Goulet, BOE Secretary Date

Jenna McDermott, BOE Recording Secretary