

**Regular Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Stafford Elementary School Cafetorium
Limited In-person Meeting and Electronic Meeting- via Zoom
January 25, 2021, 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

Absent: Miss Allie Curtin, Student Representative

Also Present (virtual, except as noted):

- Mr. Steven Moccio, Superintendent of Schools
- Mr. Steven Autieri, Director of Curriculum and Instruction (in-person)
- Mr. Jonathan Campbell, Assistant Principal, Stafford Middle School
- Mr. Ryan Duffy, Student Representative
- Mrs. Peggy Falcetta, Principal, Staffordville School
- Mr. Dean Fortin, IT / Network Coordinator (in person)
- Mr. Damian Frassinelli, Director of Athletics and Recreation
- Ms. Anna Gagnon, Principal, West Stafford School
- Ms. Caroline Hargraves, Assistant Principal, Stafford Elementary School
- Mr. Timothy Kinel, Assistant Principal, Stafford High School
- Ms. Beth LaPane, Supervisor of Building Services
- Ms. Trish Lustila, Director of Pupil Services
- Ms. Mary Claire Manning, Principal, Stafford Elementary School
- Ms. Susan Mike, Principal, Stafford Middle School
- Mr. Marco Pelliccia, Principal, Stafford High School
- Ms. Diane Peters, Business Manager

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 is available on the district website.

Item I. Call to Order- Establishment of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 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, 01/11/2021

Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Davis, that the Board approve the Secretary's Report for the regular meeting held on 01/11/2021. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

Item IV. Consent Agenda

A. Obsolete Equipment- Pupil Services Materials

Ms. Trish Lustila, Director of Pupil Services, requested permission to destroy materials dating back to 1965, which have been replaced with new editions or are no longer in publication.

According to Board of Education policy 3260-*Sales and Disposal of Books, Equipment, and Supplies*, such obsolete equipment must be returned to the Town of Stafford prior to disposal. Should they decline the materials, the district will assume responsibility for proper disposal.

B. Cafeteria Profit and Loss Report for July 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020

The Cafeteria Profit and Loss report for July 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020, reports a year to date net loss of \$30,705.08.

The district has served 59,738 meals through December 30, 2020, a decrease of 9,805 meals as compared to this time last year. Included within the meal total, are the 1,824 meals that were picked up by families with children 18 years or younger. Meal counts are well below previous years due to the district utilizing the hybrid model at the secondary level and continuing the Wednesday remote learning day.

Stafford continues to provide all students in the Stafford Public Schools with a breakfast and lunch free of charge and is reimbursed per meal at a slightly higher rate than would normally be received through the National School Lunch Program. The United States Department of Agriculture has extended the free meals program through the end of the academic year.

Ms. Lybarger asked if the year-to-date loss included the reimbursement that the district received from the State, if the deficit will continue to increase, and how the food service program will recover from that loss. Ms. Peters said that the State reimbursement is included in the final total, and the program is eating into their reserve fund balance at this time. She said that it is likely that the program will continue to operate at a loss. Ms. LaPane said that she is investigating ways to offset the loss, such as adding a la cart items at the middle school and adding the option of weekend meals. Ms. LaPane said that the State may provide some assistance to school food service programs, as all are having a very difficult year financially.

- C. 19-20 Bills and Grants, 01-13-2021, \$13,748.40
- D. 19-20 Bills and Grants, 01-20-2021, \$994.93
- E. 20-21 Bills and Grants, 01-13-2021, \$39,386.69
- F. 20-21 Bills and Grants, 01-20-2021, \$190,268.89

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Melnick, 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.

B. Curriculum Committee Reminder

Ms. Shegogue read the Curriculum Committee meeting reminder that was posted on the agenda.

Item VI. Board Reports

A. Student Representatives' Report

Miss Curtin was absent. Mr. Duffy provided updates from each of the schools, as well as the athletic and music departments.

B. Curriculum Committee (Chairperson- George Melnick, Laura Lybarger and Kathy Bachiochi)

Mr. Melnick reported that the Curriculum Committee members reviewed two proposals during the meeting held prior to the Board meeting. The first was to add an Italian I course at the high school. Mr. Melnick said that quite a few students have expressed interest in the course, and it is already in the budget for next year (\$700). He noted that each student at the high school must take at least one year of a language.

The second proposal addressed adding a State-required course covering African American and Latino studies (each a half-year course). Mr. Melnick said that the courses are required by 2023, but there may be a chance that the district can pilot the courses sooner and that the State will fund the coursework.

The committee also discussed the matrix utilized to apply for a new course and the timeline to add a new course. Finally, the committee members reviewed the 2020 – 2021 Technology Integration Action Plan.

Item VII. Superintendent's Reports

A. Update Regarding Learning Model and District COVID-19 Cases

Mr. Moccio provided the Board with an update via the portal regarding the number of students attending in-person vs. full-remote, as well as the number of cases of COVID-19 the district has experienced to date.

The table below was included with the information posted in the portal and details the number of students attending in-person vs. full-remote, as well as the number of cases of COVID-19 the district has experienced to date.

Location	Total Enrollment		In-Person		Remote		Chronically Absent %		Total Cases as of Jan 21
	Jan 11	Jan 22	Jan 11	Jan 22	Jan 11	Jan 21	Hybrid	Remote	
Staffordville	116	115	102	101	14	14	10.9	14.3	3
West Stafford	129	130	111	112	18	18	22.3	5.6	4
Stafford Elementary	373	377	301	304	72	73	15.8	27.4	15
Stafford Middle	344	343	265	264	79	81	14.8	19.8	11
Stafford High	386	385	258	262	128	123	8.4	8.9	17
District	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4

Mr. Moccio said that since October the district has had 54 cases of COVID-19, with an additional two cases since the information was published for the Board meeting. He said that across the state the numbers of new cases of COVID-19 identified for students and staff have dropped drastically in the schools (600 fewer students and 100 fewer staff) potentially due to the distance from holiday break. Mrs. Davis noted that Tolland County has the lowest number of cases in the State of Connecticut at this time.

Mr. Moccio reminded the Board that he sends a notification to the entire school community every time a positive case has been identified. In addition, the school nurses speak with those associated with the positive case in an attempt to determine where the exposure occurred. Most cases have been associated with community transmission / exposure.

Mr. Moccio said that he plans to again send the survey to staff regarding the learning model and provide an update at the next Board meeting.

B. Financial Report, July 1, 2020, through January 18, 2021

Mr. Moccio stated that he provided via the portal a financial report that is broken down by budget line item. He said that the district is still awaiting official communication regarding an additional round of federal funding through the CARES ACT II.

Mr. Delano asked if the 5.7% left in the budget at this time is what Ms. Peters anticipates being available at the end of the year. Ms. Peters said that the 5.7% is the total amount of the budget remaining at this time, not the projected remaining balance. Mr. Moccio said that he will be providing a financial report with projections in February.

Mr. Melnick asked why so much money has been spent on athletic trips if many sports have been cancelled. Ms. Peters said that Mr. Frassinelli encumbered the money for transportation early in the school year in anticipation of needing it during the year. She said that the money is earmarked for transportation, but if not spent, it will remain in the budget.

C. Review of the Superintendent’s Proposed Paid Leave Provisions

Mr. Moccio stated that he provided via the portal in draft form his proposed leave provisions that will be used as guidelines following the expiration of the paid leave provisions under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), which expired on December 31, 2020. He said that it is his understanding that

President Biden and his administration are investigating an extension to these paid leave provisions. In the meantime, it was necessary for the district to create guidelines for staff. Mr. Moccio said that he tried to cover each type of circumstance and that the draft provisions were provided to the union leadership in advance of the Board meeting.

Mrs. Davis asked for clarification regarding the employee quarantine (school vs. personal exposure). Mr. Moccio said that for an employee that was identified as a close contact at school for which there is no remote assignment available there would not be an impact to earned time during the 10-day quarantine period. He further explained that an employee identified as a close contact is to be PCR tested around day 4-5 with results typically received around day 7-8, which allows the staff member to return after day 10. If the employee is identified as a close contact outside of school, earned time would be used to cover any absence, if there is no remote assignment available.

D. Discussion Regarding the 2021 – 2022 School Budget and Potential Reconfiguration

Mr. Moccio reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that included the Priorities and Assumptions, the 2021 – 2022 Budget Development Process, the Budget Trends, the 2021 – 2022 Preliminary Budget Summary (below), and the Detailed Budget Summary with Variance that assumed that Staffordville School was closed. This version of the budget represents approximately a .42 mill increase. Mr. Moccio noted that this version of the budget includes approximately \$35,000 in funds to help maintain (utilities, liability insurance, etc.) Staffordville School until the district would be able to vacate the building.

	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2020-21</u>	<u>2021-22 Projected</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>% Change</u>
100 Salaries	\$ 16,783,339.01	\$ 16,984,179.40	\$ 16,845,913.90	\$ (138,265.51)	-0.81%
200 Benefits	\$ 4,828,132.14	\$ 4,790,764.67	\$ 5,454,989.22	\$ 664,224.55	13.86%
300 Professional Services	\$ 478,640.00	\$ 420,158.20	\$ 471,373.00	\$ 51,214.80	12.19%
400 Repairs, Rental, Other Property Services	\$ 672,458.00	\$ 601,102.00	\$ 786,188.29	\$ 185,086.29	30.79%
500 Transportation, Tuition, Other Services	\$ 3,702,070.34	\$ 3,913,092.45	\$ 4,218,224.22	\$ 305,131.77	7.80%
600 Utilities, Instructional & Building Supplies	\$ 1,095,471.04	\$ 1,114,390.14	\$ 1,075,593.08	\$ (38,797.06)	-3.48%
700 Equipment and Software	\$ 157,021.29	\$ 210,085.99	\$ 251,431.14	\$ 41,345.15	19.68%
800 Dues and Fees	\$ 335,085.59	\$ 256,025.56	\$ 345,675.46	\$ 89,649.90	35.02%
Total Budget	\$ 28,052,217.41	\$ 28,289,798.41	\$ 29,449,388.30	\$ 1,159,589.89	4.10%
Use of Excess Cost Reimbursement			\$ (327,845.97)	\$ (327,845.97)	
Use of Projected Remaining Balance			\$ (500,000.00)	\$ (237,581.00)	
Grand Total	\$ 28,052,217.41	\$ 28,289,798.41	\$ 28,621,542.33	\$ 331,743.92	1.17%

Board members asked for clarification regarding how much the increase would be if Staffordville School were to remain open. Mr. Moccio said that the budget would represent a 2.94% increase, or \$831,743.92. This amount represents approximately a one mill increase.

Ms. Lybarger expressed her concern with utilizing remaining funds to prepay for items out of the following year’s budget. Rather, she would like the amount placed in the 1% fund for future use and the 2.94% increase should be moved forward to the taxpayers. Mr. Moccio and Ms. Shegogue clarified how the 1% fund is utilized and why the district prepays for items.

Mr. Melnick said that he would like to see a version of the budget where Staffordville School is not closed and exactly what percentage increase that would represent.

After considerable discussion, Mr. Moccio reviewed the list of budgetary implications should Staffordville School remain open. Mr. Moccio said that the list is alphabetical and was created by the leadership team. This list is available on the district website.

Mr. Moccio stated that maintaining Staffordville School keeps two very small community schools (approximately 125 students at each). However, closing the school would still maintain a small pre-kindergarten / kindergarten school with approximately 140 students.

Mrs. Davis asked if a per pupil expenditure for Staffordville School has been calculated. She said that she felt that information would be very helpful.

Board members discussed how turning Staffordville School over to the town would impact the town's budget and had considerable discussion regarding the 2021 – 2022 budget (as summarized below; the full recording is available on the district website).

Ms. Lybarger stated that there are some items on the reduction list that should be considered regardless of whether Staffordville School is closed. She said that those items are the fees for the music program, pre-kindergarten tuition and field trip fees. She said that closing a school is an emotional issue, but needs to be decided on the facts. She said that she doesn't feel that during a pandemic is the time to close Staffordville School. She suggested that the Board move forward with a budget that keeps Staffordville School open and removes the items she mentioned earlier, with the intention that sometime in the near future the Board look at options for combining the two PK – 1 schools- either in one existing building or a new building on campus that would also house the administrative offices. She said that she knows that no one wants to pay for a new school, but both of the buildings were built in the 1950s. Also, she noted that the 2013 NESDEC report states that any of the new configurations would max out the capacities at West Stafford School and Stafford Elementary School, and she doesn't feel those numbers have changed enough to make her comfortable that there will be enough space.

Mrs. Davis noted that the data for the State of Connecticut is more recent than the NESDEC report and many families are leaving the state. She asked if data could be gathered from the town hall that shows how many families have moved in / out of the town. Ms. Lybarger noted that census data should be available soon, which is another reason she'd prefer to hold off on deciding to close the school.

Mrs. Davis said that she feels that the Board of Finance will ask the Board of Education if they plan to close Staffordville School, especially now that everyone is talking about it. She said that she doesn't believe that the education budget will be given any increase, due to the current economic situation. Mr. Melnick and Ms. Lybarger stated that they think the Board of Education has an obligation to present a budget that they feel is appropriate and request the amount of money that is necessary to provide what the students need. Mrs. Davis said that she understands the trauma the pandemic has caused for students and families. However, she thinks that the Board of Finance will also look at the economic situation caused by the pandemic, and they will not want to pass on any increase to families in our community that are struggling due to lost jobs, etc.

Ms. Shegogue stated that she isn't sure if the Board of Finance will even move forward a 1.17% increase, so the Board of Education may have to close a school and eliminate some of the items on the list of reductions. She said that the list of reductions upsets her, especially the impact on a great number of students. She said that no one wants to close a school. She is hopeful that all of the work that the Board has done will not go unnoticed by the Board of Finance, and they will not make further reductions.

Mr. Melnick suggested that maybe this isn't the right year to close a school. He said that it is a consideration that the school stays open. He suggested that additional cuts be investigated, especially in the administrator salary lines. He said that perhaps the Board could look elsewhere for reductions other than what has been provided on the list.

Mrs. Locke said that she loves Staffordville School, she thinks it is a fabulous school, and her children attended that school. However, she said that the Board needs to do what's best for all kids in the district, and the cuts on the list aren't what's best for all kids. She said that the Board needs to look at the big picture. Many students come to school just because of the music and athletic programs.

Mrs. Davis said that making the reductions on the list is where the district is headed if the Board doesn't close Staffordville School, which is detrimental and will impact more than 120 students; the reductions impact all the students in the district. She said that there is no way the town can lose the Unified Program at the high school and middle school, regardless of what happens with the budget. Closing a school and seeing empty buildings that used to be a school is sad, but it is the Board's charge is to figure out what's best for our district and our students.

Mr. Melnick asked about the procedure for closing a school and if it could be sent to referendum. Mrs. Davis said that the district has not done so in the past.

Mr. Moccio said that he will continue to update the Q&A document, which has been shared with the entire school community several times. He said that the document is posted on the district website as well.

Mr. Delano asked if Mr. Moccio would be answering some of the questions during Public Comment for which the response would be quick, or if the questions will just be added to the document and answered there. Ms. Shegogue stated that the Public Comment portion of the meeting is a platform for the public to comment, not to have questions answered, which is why the informational sessions / forums were held. Also, the Board members and Mr. Moccio are available to respond to questions outside of the meeting.

VIII. Public Comment

A member of the audience reiterated his comments from the last couple of meetings regarding closing Staffordville School and that it needs to be a collaborative effort with the Board of Selectmen who really don't have any plans or ideas for the building (as of their last meeting). He said that the Board of Selectmen don't know how to incorporate the potential costs into their own budget, and it feels like the building is being shoved on to the town. He would like to know what it will cost the town to float the building. What are the true savings to the taxpayer? He said that it is moving a little too fast in that regard. He would still like to see an overall plan and vision for the town and how closing the school fits into that. How many years down the

road will it be before we will need a new school, and how much will it cost? He also asked why the cost savings of closing Staffordville School is the benchmark for the budget. The presentation was either close Staffordville School or completely decimate all the programs. He's not sure why that approach was used, that it feels like a scare tactic, and there has to be other options in there, especially when you look at a couple of the one-timers in the budget, like the 15% insurance increase.

A member of the audience said that she hopes that the Board considers keeping Staffordville School open and looking at other areas of the budget, like reducing administrative coverage / costs and putting the instructional specialists back into the classrooms. She also asked what is included in "Other Professional Services" and could some of those expenditures be reduced by having our own staff give professional development. Could travel expenses be reduced drastically since people aren't really traveling right now? Has the Board considered an audit to ensure that monies are being spent on the items that they were allocated for?

A member of the audience said that she would like to thank Ms. Lybarger for her well-researched comments. She said that she was with Ms. Lybarger the last time that Staffordville School was slated to be closed, and the parents worked to get the vote out and passed the budget so that the school could stay open. She said that the list of cuts is terrifying, and she would be sad to see the programs on the list cut, but sport programs are still available in town, and she would be willing to pay for music and drama at the high school. She said that she would suggest looking at the World Language Program for reduction as she isn't sure that they are as well organized or producing the results they should be. She said that her daughter has taken four years of a language and isn't nearly bilingual. She said that the district should continue to support the programs that we do well (pre-kindergarten / early childhood, drama and music) and spend money on the programs that we have the right resources to support. She said she will be at the Board of Finance meetings and put out the "Vote Yes" signs to try to get the budget passed, but let's do what's best for all of our kids. She said that she doesn't begrudge the Board members and the decisions necessary surrounding this budget and the configuration decisions. She said that if we can get 1,000 people out to vote "yes", we should be able to get what we need for our kids, and we should mobilize in that way.

A member of the audience said that she is a SVS and SES parent and a SVS PTO member. She wanted to be sure that everyone was aware that a petition was sent to the Board members with 122 signatures from people who believe in keeping Staffordville School open, along with photos of children enjoying the school. She said that personally she feels it would be a shame to close a school, but she understands how budgets work. She said that she has worked in a school that was as large as Stafford Elementary School and there wasn't an assistant principal, and the principal did a perfectly acceptable job of taking care of the whole school, so perhaps that position could be eliminated. She said that she doesn't begrudge the Board's decision. She said it is a very hard decision and very passionate for many people. She said thank you very much for all you do for our town.

A member of the audience said that she has a child at Staffordville School, which is fantastic and she's not trying to take away from that. However, she also has children at Stafford Elementary School, and wanted to point out that the principals are outside every day and greet the children by name. They happily wave to her and her husband, as well as the smallest in the car. When she goes into the office she is greeted by name by the office staff, and they only been in town for a short time. The office staff have also learned the names of everyone in the family. She said that one of her children sometimes has difficult drop-offs, and Ms. Manning

has built such an amazing rapport with her daughter in a short time, that sometimes her daughter won't get out of the car unless Ms. Manning is there. She has a hard time understanding how others can feel that the school isn't "small town" enough for them. She said that she would be sad to see Staffordville close, but the other budget cuts are scarier. She thinks it is about the teachers, administrators and office staff and not the size of the building.

Questions and Comments as Submitted through the Zoom Chat Feature:

I'm going to have to jump off before public comment happens, but I'm hoping that my question gets answered. Doesn't it make more sense, in regards to Staffordville School, that we wait until we have a solution to fill the building? We don't need another school in town left vacant with no plan to refill it appropriately. Not to mention it does not seem like a good idea to rush this sort of thing before COVID is fully situated. We need to be concerned about the health of our kids. This is a multi-faceted issue that needs to really be dissected that goes beyond just school budgetary issues & the full town effect needs to be considered. Said my piece... thanks :)

Are these programs being utilized now anyway because of COVID? don't anticipate field trips anytime soon. Sounds to me they have already made the decision to close the school. Does anyone on the board have a child that goes to either svs or wss? I don't think during a pandemic we should be closing a school or adding more to SES where they have the most students in the district. Keep staffordville open. There talking about making cuts to programs that are not being utilized now during this pandemic. My daughter was in select choir and drama could not put on their play they worked all year for.

It's the largely populated building with the youngest students, yet you want to to add more to it? Isn't that concerning? What happens when there is a baby boom and more space is needed? SES gets overcrowded? How will a new school be built in the future when there is no money now? Things will not get cheaper. That's still 38% of a multi-million dollar project and we can't come up with \$500,000 now. Can't students interested in band seek lessons elsewhere? Maybe not popular opinion but.... We have a music school in town, right? They are NOT listening to parents concerns. So maybe that means DON'T CLOSE IT if there's never been a good year. Listen to the people you represent! Consider admin cuts. You can get another job. Our children can't get their school years back. How many admins are needed with 6 figure incomes? Why does the 10 month need to be 12 month? They should be able to share admins between schools and not hire another principal. Our children deserve better!

They want to save money by closing Staffordville. What happens in a few years when they want to build a new building because West Stafford is not big enough!! You are asking one school and it kids to give up everything so that other school can have almost everything!!!! Why do they keep referring to Staffordville as that school!!

Kids would not go without as a PTA president. Thank you, Lynn! We appreciate all that you and our PTA do! putting kids into a larger, tighter classroom is not the best way either, This is to little time to much of a short period and a bad time for many.

Can't afford to keep Staffordville open!! Can we afford to have to build a new school from the ground up in a few years down the road!! I think not!! During a pandemic is not the time to close a school. Who knows how

long this is going to last. Do we need to possibly have larger classes and how will social distancing work!! So in other words they have made up their minds!! No matter what they want to get rid of Staffordville!! It is not right and not fair and down the road they will want a whole new building!!!

I agree it sounds like they have already made up their minds. A pandemic is not the right time. My son has not been to West Stafford School since he was 4 years old in Pre-K and now he's supposed to be emotionally ready to go to Stafford Elementary for 1st? These poor children need some normalcy in their lives. Academics should come first

admin cuts? how does that help our kids?

There should be three budgets. one w/staffordville closed, one with all the cuts, and one w/staffordville open and some cuts. No the first step is to decide if the board wants to close the school - then once that is determined you build a budget around that fact - the way they are doing it now it is sort of like Sophie's Choice - the lesser of 2 evils and does not give an opportunity to look at making cuts in other places that would allow Staffordville school to remain open.

I don't appreciate board members making assumptions on what the board of finance would do or not do I think George is presenting some great points and is really the only one keeping an open mind to both sides. A new building down the road means a lot more in tax dollars and a bigger budget!!!

the responses to his questions seem to be met with condescension. The whole point of this is to figure this all out not try to keep him quiet. he has valid concerns. the annoyance on her face because we are trying to get options is crazy. This isn't cut and dry. we understand it takes a lot. Mr. Moccio is doing amazing. .I just don't think everyone is on the same page. This isn't an easy subject for anyone.

I am a West Stafford School parent and I would hate to see West Stafford close. I think keeping Staffordville open right now is very important. We all know eventually a combined school will be needed. As Linda said - the current buildings have no room for expansion. So we will spend money shifting things as a stop gap for a few years and then what. Then ask the community to tell the board of finance to support the budget. no. keep svcs open with the higher budget and ask the community to lobby the board of finance.

The current proposal with Svcs closing still is operating at a 1.17% increase. The possibility that the Board of Finance will reject even that size increase is quite real normally if history serves, especially during the pandemic. Realistically, if they push back on the 1.17% we could end up with Svcs closing AND some of these cuts. This is undesirable on all fronts, and terrible timing, but there will never be a good time to do this, and every year we wait, the chasm will continue to grow. The year of adjustment will hurt no matter when we do it. it's awful, but if we can close a school and maintain the education and opportunities for all the children in the district, that may be the least awful option.

I can't open the documents linked in the Q&A file. Any tips?

Kids are resilient. They will adjust. I respectfully disagree that the board is going to say no. You can't make assumptions on anything - this year is not normal in any respect - so you cannot assume what the board will do - these are unprecedented times. Why would we not give the board the opportunity to say Yes or No- that is idiotic.

*****End of Public Comment*****

Mr. Melnick asked if there would be a separate vote regarding closing Staffordville School. Ms. Shegogue said that it will be voted on as part of the budget- closing the school will either be in the budget or not. Mr. Melnick said that he would prefer a vote regarding closing the school that is separate from the budget. Ms. Shegogue said that because the school closing is due to the budget constraints, it won't be a separate vote.

Ms. Bachiochi asked when they would be asked to vote on the budget. Mr. Moccio said that the Board will be asked to approve the budget at the meeting on Monday, February 22, 2021.

There was considerable discussion regarding which version(s) of the budget would be presented to the Board of Education at the next meeting, but no final determination.

Item IX. Old Business

There was no Old Business.

Item X. New Business

There was no New Business.

Item XI. Personnel Matters

There were no Personnel Matters.

Item XII. Student Matters

There were no Student Matters.

Item XIII. Adjournment

Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Davis, 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 9:28 p.m.

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

Sonya Shegogue, Chairperson

Andrea Locke, Secretary