Chairman Kathy Yolish called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 6:46 p.m.

Roll Call:
John Fitzgerald  James Orazietti, Vice Chair
Amanda Kilmartin  Carl Rizzo
Kate Kutash  Amy Romano, Secretary
Diana Meyer  Kathleen Yolish, Chair
Patti Moonan

Full Quorum

Board of Education Administration present: Dr. Christopher Clouet, Superintendent of Schools; Kenneth Saranich, Assistant Superintendent; Carole Pannozzo, Human Resources Director; Rick Belden, Finance Director

Also present: Attorneys Frederick Stanek, and Francis Teodosio

(1 tape on file in City/Town Clerk’s office)

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

James Orazietti read the rules to be observed during the meeting.

Approval of Agenda
Diana Meyer moved to approve the agenda, motion seconded by Kate Kutash and passed unanimously.

Public Comment
Erin Wells, 5 Boysenberry Lane introduced her son Henry, age 3, who attends the SPS PreK program, and discussed the negative impact of noncompliance of Shelton’s program, noting that state law requires that PreK students with disabilities receive education together with typical peers. She supplements Henry’s education by paying for private PreK in order to have the interaction with typical peers.

Carly Hajduddy, 24 Golden Hill Lane, student at SHS and ECA, relative to the budget being considered by board members, stressed the importance of city-funded arts programs and stated the programs are essential for students who need an extensive and high proficiency arts education.

Missy Mosher, no address given, stated flat funding does not fully fund the schools. She said the cost of business goes up 1.5-3% per year just like the cost of living. Flat funding just takes away from the budget. She thanked Superintendent Clouet and wished him well.
Suzanne Adan, 23 Colony Street, mother of 4 year-old twins in the Mohegan PreK program, said she is constantly impressed with how much the teachers do with limited allocation of resources. She expressed her dismay with the deterioration of the program, which in no way is a reflection of the Mohegan staff. She said these are our youngest, most vulnerable students who need to be protected and deserve to be in a classroom with neurotypical peers. She asked the board to consider the social and educational consequences to the students by not having the proper ratio.

Erin Cummings, 340 Huntington Street, realtor with children who previously were students in PreK program, talked about public perception of the school system affecting home values. She discussed her positive experience with the PreK program when her children attended between 2015-2019. She discussed the changes toward the end including having to pay for her daughter, who was a typical peer, and much larger class sizes and fewer support staff. Some amazing teachers and paras have been lost. She hopes that we have a program when her eighteen-month old is ready.

Superintendent’s Proposed Budget Presentation
James Orazietti moved to table Item IV. Superintendent’s Proposed Budget Presentation until the next Board of Education Regular Meeting on February 26, 2020; motion seconded by Carl Rizzo; Discussion – Mr. Orazietti said he wants to spend more time reviewing the budget. Board members were advised to email their questions. Motion passed unanimously.

Board Action Items
James Orazietti moved to table Item V.A. Possible motion to approve the Board of Education’s Budget Request for School Year 2020-2021 until the next Board of Education Regular Meeting on February 26, 2020. Motion seconded by Carl Rizzo and passed unanimously.

Attorney Fred Stanek discussed the Freedom of Information pending claim of David Gioiello, Jr., and the Shelton Democratic Town Committee v. Chairman, Board of Education, Shelton Public Schools; and Board of Education Shelton Public Schools, Docket #FIC-2019-0708 pending before the Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission. He shared a statement to be submitted to the Freedom of Information Commission and an additional paragraph was added regarding FOI training session for the full board.

Kate Kutash moved to offer to settle the pending Freedom of Information claim mentioned in the agenda with the statement as read by Counselor with the additional paragraph #8 whereby the board has agreed to undergo an educational training session with a representative of the Freedom of Information Commission. Motion seconded by John Fitzgerald and passed unanimously.

James Orazietti moved to accept the letter of resignation of Superintendent Christopher P. Clouet; motion seconded by Kate Kutash with regret. Discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

James Orazietti moved to appoint Dr. Beth Smith to position of Interim Superintendent; motion seconded by Carl Rizzo. Discussion. Mandy Kilmartin, Kate Kutash expressed the need to retain Beth Smith in her current important position in Special Education, and recommended supporting Kenneth Saranich who has worked alongside of Dr. Clouet for several months and is well versed in what is going on and would be less disruptive to the district. Diana Meyer and Patti Moonan concurred. Kathy Yolish commented that the Interim Superintendent would oversee all departments. Roll call vote to appoint Dr. Beth Smith as Interim Superintendent: Yea – John Fitzgerald, James Orazietti, Carl Rizzo, Amy Romano, Kathy Yolish. Nay – Amanda Kilmartin, Kate Kutash, Diana Meyer, Patti Moonan. Motion passed 5-4.
Dr. Smith was congratulated and stated it is a great honor to be appointed as the Interim Superintendent and she looks forward to working with the Board of Education, with our hard-working and talented staff in the District, with our students, our staff, our parents, our community members and elected city officials to provide the best opportunity for our children in the Shelton Public Schools.

Mrs. Yolish adjourned the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

*Diane Luther*
Secretary to Board of Education
February 27, 2020