

**SHELTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF EDUCATION ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
382 LONG HILL AVENUE
SEPTEMBER 28, 2011**

The Board of Education met at 6:30 p.m. in Conference Room C for discussion of wage and benefits proposal for individual non-bargaining employees; Superintendent's contract/2011-2012 goals; hourly pay rates; Perkins Grant coordinator. Win Oppel **moved to go into Executive Session** at 6:31 p.m.; seconded by Paula Ellis; vote 8-0; motion passed. Present were Arlene Liscinsky, Win Oppel, Thomas Minotti, Paula Ellis, Kathy Yolish, Mike Pacowta, Kate Kutash, Jay Francino-Quinn, Freeman Burr and James Brant. Timothy Walsh arrived at 6:45 p.m. Thomas Minotti **moved to leave Executive Session** at 7:00 p.m.; seconded by Kathy Yolish; vote 9-0; motion passed.

Acting Chair Arlene Liscinsky called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:09 p.m.

Roll Call: (alpha order)

Paula Ellis

John Francino-Quinn

Kate Kutash

Arlene Liscinsky, Acting Chair

Thomas Minotti, Secretary

Win Oppel

Mike Pacowta

Timothy Walsh

Kathleen Yolish

Full quorum of 9 present; 0 absent.

Board of Education Administration present:

Superintendent of Schools, Freeman Burr

Assistant Superintendent, Lorraine Rossner

Executive Director of Curriculum & Support Services, Kathy Bender

Acting Director of Human Resources, James Brant

(1 tape on file in City/Town Clerk's Office)

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Hearing

Cheryl O'Brien, 153 Village Drive, spoke as President of the SHS Girls Cross Country Team Parents Club and relayed information about two fundraisers.

Mark Holden, 275 Soundview Avenue, thanked the Board for inviting candidates to participate in CAFE Lighthouse workshop.

John Niski, 18 Bruce Drive, spoke as Supervisor and Coordinator of Health and Physical Education regarding The Valley Initiative to Advance Health & Learning in Schools (VITAHLS) School-Based Solutions to Childhood Obesity: A Case Study, scheduled October 6, 2011 at Ansonia High School. Mr. Niski noted that area districts are sending representatives and encouraged attendance from Shelton.

Approval of Agenda and Addendum

Win Oppel moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Jay Francino-Quinn; vote 9-0; motion passed. Win Oppel moved to approve the addendum; seconded by Timothy Walsh; vote 9-0; motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Thomas Minotti moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 24, 2011; seconded by Kathy Yolish; vote 8-0-1 (abstention by Timothy Walsh); motion passed.

Presentations

Superintendent Burr expressed appreciation to John Niski and Debi Petrushonis for their involvement in VITAHLS. Mr. Burr thanked Sandi Zuraw and Kathy Riddle for their continuing efforts to encourage staff support for the Valley United Way Campaign. Arlene Liscinsky requested donation forms be sent to Board Members who may wish to participate with a blanket contribution.

Freeman Burr congratulated Board Members who have served ten or more years on the Board of Education, as part of CAFE's recognition to be held at the convention in November:

- Paula Ellis – 25 years
- Timothy Walsh – 12 years
- Arlene Liscinsky – 10 years

Communications to the Board

Thank you cards from principals were acknowledged in appreciation of flower baskets sent to schools on opening day by the Board of Education.

Appointments

Paula Ellis moved to appoint Clark Howell to the position of Math teacher at Shelton High School; seconded by Timothy Walsh; vote 9-0; motion passed.

Win Oppel moved to appoint Tracey Zehar to the position of Music teacher at Elizabeth Shelton School; seconded by Jay Francino-Quinn; vote 9-0; motion passed.

Thomas Minotti moved to appoint John Valus to the position of Family & Consumer Science teacher at Shelton High School; seconded by Timothy Walsh; vote 9-0; motion passed.

Win Oppel moved to appoint Gavriella Ziu-Pires to the position of PT Kindergarten teacher at Mohegan School; seconded by Jay Francino-Quinn; vote 9-0; motion passed.

Jay Francino-Quinn moved to appoint Danielle Lavrey-Buonincontra to the position of PT Kindergarten teacher at Long Hill School; seconded by Win Oppel; vote 9-0; motion passed.

Timothy Walsh moved to appoint Daniel Nazzaro to the stipend position of Drama Club co-advisor at Shelton High School; seconded by Kate Kutash; vote 9-0; motion passed.

Win Oppel moved to appoint Stephanie Ferreira and Catherine Burgholzer to the stipend positions of girls freshman soccer co-coaches at Shelton High School; seconded by Thomas Minotti; vote 9-0; motion passed.

Kate Kutash moved to appoint John Ashcroft to the stipend position of assistant girls soccer coach at Shelton High School; seconded by Paula Ellis; vote 9-0; motion passed.

Timothy Walsh moved to appoint Katie Devonshuk to the stipend position of girls cross country coach at Shelton Intermediate School; seconded by Win Oppel; vote 9-0; motion passed.

Kate Kutash moved to appoint Erica McNeil and Christine Oddo Coffin to the stipend positions of cheerleading co-coaches at Shelton Intermediate School; seconded by Jay Francino-Quinn; vote 9-0; motion passed.

Kate Kutash moved to appoint Lisa Huber to the stipend position of DECA advisor at Shelton High School; seconded by Kathy Yolish; vote 9-0; motion passed.

Resignations

The Board was advised of five resignations:

- John Ashcroft, girls freshman soccer coach
- Sara Callahan, boys assistant swim coach
- Katie Devonshuk, girls soccer assistant coach at SHS
- Rosemary Pagliaro, Drama Club co-advisor
- Thomas Roche, ice hockey head coach at SHS

Instructional Update

Superintendent Burr credited the Board Members for having adopted the calendar with a post-Labor Day start, which worked to our advantage with the inclement weather; professional development was held and school started on time. Mr. Burr reported on staff attendance at Digging Deeper into the Common Core State Standards Conference on September 13-14, as well as Rigorous Curriculum Design Program on September 15. He stated Central Office and school sites have been involved with State of Connecticut School Improvement Unit receiving re-schooling and re-tooling on School Improvement Plans. A thorough report on School Improvement Plans and District Improvement Plan will be given at the November BOE meeting. Superintendent Burr reported on his attendance at the NEASS Conference at which the topic was social media. Mr. Burr acknowledged Fran Goldstein and Mike DeFelice were honored by Best Buddies as 2011 Outstanding Advisors of the Year for the middle school level. SHS staff members Allegra Fitzgerald and Carolyn Finley were acknowledged also by Best Buddies for 14 years of service. Best Buddies' goal is to expand the program to Perry Hill School. Ken Saranich added that the Best Chapter in Connecticut award went to SIS this year. Superintendent Burr discussed the Best Buddies International Leadership Conference 2011 and noted that Shelton High School Chapter President, Matt LaCoursiere, made a guest appearance on the Best Buddies International Facebook page, where he shared his conference experience via video chat.

Approved Field Trip

The Board was informed of an approved field trip to Costa Rica for grade 8 students, which prompted numerous questions. Copies of the trip information will be provided to Board Members.

Items Voted On

Win Oppel moved to approve the following requests to conduct fundraising activities during the 2011-2012 school year; seconded by Thomas Minotti; vote 9-0; motion passed.

**Perry Hill School
SHS Girls Cross Country Parents Club
SHS Robotics Team**

Paula Ellis moved to approve the wage and benefits proposal for the individual non-union employees for 2011-2012, retroactive to the start of school year on July 1, 2011; seconded by Mike Pacowta; vote 9-0; motion passed.

Timothy Walsh moved to approve distribution of the incentive to the Superintendent per the contract for 2010-2011; seconded by Mike Pacowta; vote 7-2 (nay votes Kathy Yolish, Jay Francino-Quinn); motion passed. Kathy Yolish asked that her comments be read into the minutes:

Comment on Vote for Superintendent's Performance Enhancement – I'd first like to state that I take my position on the BOE very seriously. I know that I have a responsibility to the people of Shelton, the children who attend Shelton schools and all of the employees of the Board of Education. In these tough economic times where senior citizens have received no cost of living for more than two years, teacher retirees have received no cost of living for more than three years, higher unemployment rates, higher medical insurance costs, I feel that we all need to have a "shared sacrifice" in this work environment and we definitely need to do "more with less." These two terms are ones which I hear quite often while on the BOE, from the Superintendent and others, and throughout the Shelton School System. In the last year I have served on Negotiations for the bargaining units of Paraprofessionals and Nurses. In each of those contracts they received a zero percent wage increase. They understood that times are tough and accepted this, and they continue to work hard and go above and beyond in their job performance. Though I did not serve on the Teachers' negotiations, I can say that they also received a zero percent wage increase (teachers on top step) and yet they have had to incur additional medical insurance costs – so, essentially, they are making less this year. Yet they too continue to work as diligently and industriously as ever and do the job they are expected to do and more.

Please understand that my vote is not meant to demean the Superintendent's performance or value to the Shelton School System; he is doing his job, just like everyone else – just like those who have accepted the zero percent wage increases.

As I said before when thinking long and hard about this vote, the following words kept going through my mind..."shared sacrifice"... "do more with less"... "no cost of living for our seniors and teacher retirees"... "higher medical premiums"... "higher unemployment rates"... "zero percent...zero percent...zero percent."

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my reason for my vote.

Timothy Walsh moved to extend the Superintendent's contract an additional year through June 2014 and authorize the Chair or his/her designee to finalize the agreement; seconded by Win Oppel; vote 7-2 (nay votes Kathy Yolish, Jay Francino-Quinn); motion passed. Arlene Liscinsky clarified that there is a statute in Connecticut that you cannot extend a Superintendent's contract for more than three years. It is customary throughout Connecticut to extend every superintendent's contract a year, once the evaluation is done. It cannot be extended beyond that. This is more a vote of confidence that we have here; by not extending the contract, you're sending a message of a lack of confidence.

Win Oppel moved to establish a new stipend position of Perkins Grant Coordinator at the rate of \$2,500, to be added to schedule "C" of the teachers' contract, as recommended by the Finance Committee; seconded by Jay Francino-Quinn; vote 9-0; motion passed. Timothy Walsh stated this \$2,500 expense will return over \$25,000 in grants. Arlene Liscinsky mentioned that at one time, the position was full time.

Jay Francino-Quinn moved to increase the hourly pay rates of part-time Custodians, part-time Security Guards, Crossing Guards, Student Technology Interns and Summer Helpers by 3.0%, as recommended by the Finance Committee; seconded by Kate Kutash. Discussion – Paula Ellis said the Crossing Guards are paid a very low wage; most positions in this group are minimum wage and a pay increase has not been given in three years. Vote 9-0; motion passed.

Comments by the Board Chair

Acting Chair Arlene Liscinsky noted it was good to see Mr. Walsh in attendance and looking so well. She reminded Board Members of upcoming back to school nights.

Reports by Standing Committees

Athletics – Paula Ellis reported on fall sports and stated that participation numbers continue to decline, down 5% from last year and down 15% from two years ago. Parents are pleased with the reduced rate but numbers are still down. The meeting on September 15 to discuss the new booster club policy proposal was well attended and had positive response. Baseball and soccer field work is coming along. The next meeting will be October 12 at 6:15 p.m.

Building and Grounds – Win Oppel will schedule a meeting within the next two weeks. On the agenda will be discussion of Fire Marshal's walkthroughs of elementary schools; green cleaning and questions that have been raised; and custodial reviews of each building. Mrs. Ellis questioned when the testing will be done for custodians. Freeman Burr said repeated requests to the City have not resulted in action. He indicated a letter was sent last week to Tom Taylor at City Hall. At the suggestion of Alderman John Papa, a copy of the letter will be sent to John Anglace.

Cafeteria/Transportation – Kate Kutash said the committee met September 13. Two schools are not serving breakfast – Elizabeth Shelton will start in October, and Booth Hill decided to drop it this year. Those principals will be invited to attend the next committee meeting on October 4 to discuss the breakfast program. Mrs. Kutash reported there are three or four buses still having issues, but this year's start was much better than last year's. SIS and Perry Hill are sharing only three buses. Bus 50 is still a work in progress with possible reduced route by the end of next week. In answer to a question from Jay Francino-Quinn, Kate Kutash confirmed that each of our schools has a very clear procedure in place for peanut allergies.

Policy/Curriculum/Technology – Thomas Minotti discussed Proposed Policy #5131.911, Bullying, which will sit for review until the next scheduled Board of Education meeting. Arlene Liscinsky noted the far-reaching impact of this policy is huge because it extends responsibility beyond the school grounds for the Board of Education. Lorraine Rossner discussed the CAS bullying conference attended earlier today by several staff members. Mrs. Rossner stated our school system will be taking on more responsibility for things that happen in and around the school environment. She said we are functioning within the timeframe; and, as we await additional information from the State, we are making our policy as public as possible so everyone understands our commitment to the new regulations. There was discussion about State School Climate Committees and possibly providing additional resources at the schools. Thomas Minotti gave a status report on the Parent Portal System and noted there will be additional sign-up dates in November. In addition, the committee is looking into acceptance of Pay to Participate payments through the Parent Portal System. Mr. Minotti said a draft policy on booster clubs is being sent to BOE attorney for review. Carla Sullivan had presented information to the committee concerning a bequest from Estate of Herbert M. Clark. Thomas Minotti said there were two clarification additions made to the report form for Discrimination and Harassment Policy #51455.5. The next committee meeting will be on October 20 at 4 p.m. Paula Ellis questioned the process followed for the revised report cards and expressed concern that the Board was unaware of the changes, which prompted a lengthy discussion. Freeman Burr said work will continue with the schools and principals, as well as informing parents throughout the process. He said we can also post some frequently asked questions about the standards-based report cards. Lorraine Rossner stated there is a page on the website. Arlene Liscinsky noted it should be a focus at the next PTA/PTO meetings. The Policy Committee will add this item to next month's agenda.

Personnel – Mike Pacowta stated the committee met September 14, and several items raised tonight were a result of that meeting. The committee will meet on October 12 to discuss goals and objectives for the Superintendent, as well as other contractual items.

Finance – Arlene Liscinsky gave a brief report on the last committee meeting held September 21. She noted that during the budget session, it was mentioned that efforts would be made to bring back some of the positions lost with any savings we could garner. She said we have been working diligently to get the SHS media specialist and a few positions at elementary level. Allan Cameron had given a proposal showing where the money came from.

Reports of Special Committees

CES – Arlene Liscinsky gave an update of CES events and passed around a CES calendar and annual report.

CABE – Kathy Yolish distributed a handout of CABE news. She reminded members of the CABE Convention on November 18-19 at the Mystic Marriott.

Arlene Liscinsky mentioned this year's NSBA Annual Conference is in Boston on April 21-23. Registration is open and those interested in attending should notify Diane Luther.

Unfinished Business

Alderman John Papa missed the public portion and was allowed to comment on the new report cards. An invitation was extended to Mr. Papa and any other parents who have concerns about the report cards to attend the next Policy Committee meeting on October 20 at 4 p.m.

Kathy Yolish discussed articles she is working on for the next issue of *Shelton Life*.

Arlene Liscinsky mentioned there will be a presentation of Virtual High School at the next Board meeting.

Paula Ellis questioned some of the class sizes as shown on the enrollment report and discussion followed.

Adjournment

Paula Ellis moved to adjourn at 8:44 p.m.; seconded by Kathy Yolish; vote 9-0; motion passed.

Diane Luther

Diane Luther

Recording Secretary – Board of Education

October 4, 2011