

**SHELTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
Board of Education Administrative Offices
382 Long Hill Avenue
Board Room, 2nd Floor
March 28, 2018**

Chairman Mark Holden called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:04 p.m.

Roll Call:

Mark Holden, Chairman	Jose Goncalves
Thomas Minotti, Vice Chairman	Amanda Kilmartin
Kate Kutash, Secretary	Darlisa Ritter
Anne Gaydos	Kathleen Yolish
David Gioiello	

Full Quorum

Board of Education Administration present: Dr. Christopher Clouet, Superintendent of Schools; Lorraine Rossner, Assistant Superintendent; Carole Pannozzo, Human Resources Director; Ed Drapp, Finance Director

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Kate Kutash moved to approve the agenda; motion seconded by Anne Gaydos and passed unanimously.

Presentations/Recognitions

Innovative Educator – Superintendent Clouet introduced Sunnyside School Library Media Specialist Kari Yawkowich as recipient of this month's Innovative Educator Award. Principal Amy Yost spoke highly of Kari noting she is such an asset to Sunnyside School and the district. She said Kari's creative and innovative ideas spark so much learning. Mrs. Yost stated Kari is a phenomenal collaborative partner with her colleagues and has been helpful in coaching staff to make them more comfortable with technology. Mrs. Yawkowich gave a presentation filled with numerous aspects of the transformation of the Library area into a Learning Commons. She expressed her appreciation for being named an Innovative Educator and thanked the Technology Department, Amy Yost, and Joan Tichy for their support, as well as Shelton Public Schools for embracing the transformation of the Library into a Learning Commons and for making innovation such a priority in the district.

Board Member Appreciation Month – Superintendent Clouet expressed appreciation on behalf of the community and district of Board Members' commitment to serving as volunteers on the Board.

Public Hearing

Justin Hafele, a senior at SHS, discussed the decision to hold graduation at Nolan Field in Ansonia and his online petition with 1005 signatures in support of holding the ceremony at Finn Stadium. Superintendent Clouet stated a walkthrough was held today to look at the field with the contractors that have bid to do the work. He said he had a conversation over a week ago with the architect who is in charge of hiring the contractors and came up with a possible strong plan that would include in the bid specs a three-day shutdown of the work to allow for graduation to take place. While not an absolute guarantee, Dr. Clouet said he is cautiously optimistic.

Approval of Minutes

Kate Kutash moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 28, 2018 and Special Meeting of March 19, 2018; motion seconded by Thomas Minotti and passed with a vote of 8-0-1 (abstention David Gioiello).

Communications to the Board

There were none.

Superintendent's Commentary/Instructional Update

Chairman Holden asked Dr. Clouet to address as part of his report what impact the Mayor's proposed budget might have on the goal of reaching the top quartile for student achievement.

Strategic Plan Update – Dr. Clouet stated work is ongoing and is generating some serious enthusiasm and changes in practice. He announced a huge event will be hosted at SIS on Saturday, June 2, from 3-5 p.m. for the entire school district and the community that will include music, technology, arts and other reflections of the good work of students and teachers in the context of strategic thinking towards the future.

Esports Program – Dr. Clouet introduced SHS/SIS Career Technical Education Curriculum Leader Michael Merati and Doug Williams, two high-energy teachers, to share information about the Esports program at SHS. They explained that Esports are competitive video games that provide some of the same benefits as traditional sports and can become an instructional tool regarding Communication, Collaboration, Creativity and Critical Thinking. They discussed the afterschool Esports Club that has attracted a large number of students who are motivated to keep up their grades in order to participate. Student Kevin Lee talked about his experiences as a member of League of Legends team and explained ways in which students work collaboratively to plan strategy. Mr. Merati talked about creating a bridge between Esports Club and video game design classes at SHS.

Superintendent Clouet said in light of what is happening nationally, he has been working with the IT Department to put together an upcoming community forum on protecting personal data. More information will be shared once details are available.

Relative to the connection between the Mayor's budget proposal and our goal of trying to move Shelton into the top 25% of Connecticut districts, Dr. Clouet stated he will continue to try to be optimistic and work hard to make things happen, no matter what; however, this is a huge challenge. He said over the last decade the school system has been underfunded by over \$15 million in terms of what our request was and what we have received. He said we frequently acknowledge what the City has done to help our district by replacing roofs, helping to create a STEM Lab and other things that merit gratitude; but, with that said, it is not enough. Over the last ten years, our budget has increased in its entirety by about 16% versus 20% on the City side. A \$15 million gap is not helping us to achieve our goal of moving into the top quartile in student achievement. What would we do with the money in order to achieve our goal? We would use it to hire staff to give support that students need for that increased achievement; that is what other districts in our region do. They provide the kind of support for the middle-range achievers to take the extra steps to reach their potential. He noted the positive things going on in each of our schools, which will continue; but, that fiscal gap is big and is weighing on us. He encouraged support to help us to gently and respectfully nudge the decision makers at City Hall to help us get a better allocation. Dr. Clouet stated he is in regular contact with the Mayor and said he expects to maintain their respectful relationship; but, this fiscal gap is real. Those who claim it is not real or that it is untrue that we are in the bottom tenth of all spending in terms districts, that is fake news...it is real. He said he will continue working on it with a positive demeanor, but the hill is getting steeper.

Approved Field Trips

Board Members were apprised of approved Worldstrides field trip for grades 6-8 students to visit Alaska in June 2019, to support Next Generation Science Standards. Discussion followed.

Items Voted on

Kate Kutash moved to accept on behalf of Long Hill School a contribution of \$4,325 from the LHS PTO toward the purchase and delivery of a storage container for Long Hill School, as specified; motion seconded by Anne Gaydos. Discussion. Darlisa Ritter and David Gioiello had several questions concerning attractiveness to children on playground; site preparation; and what will be stored that may cause potential mold issues. Dr. Clouet was asked to speak to principals of schools that currently have storage containers and report back to the Board. Dr. Clouet suggested for future meetings that questions be submitted ahead of time in order to respond at the meeting. A motion to table failed. Vote to approve original motion passed 7-1-1 (nay Darlisa Ritter; abstention David Gioiello).

Thomas Minotti moved to accept on behalf of Long Hill School a contribution of \$2,985.58 from LHS PTO for the purchase of four new water fountains for Long Hill School, as specified; motion seconded by Kate Kutash and passed unanimously.

Anne Gaydos moved to approve the Graduation Requirements for Classes of 2022 that have been reviewed; motion seconded by Kate Kutash and passed unanimously.

Kate Kutash moved to approve the Connecticut Seal of Bi-literacy proposal that has been reviewed; motion seconded by Thomas Minotti and passed unanimously.

Thomas Minotti moved to approve the SHS Diploma of Distinction proposal that has been reviewed, motion seconded by Kate Kutash and passed unanimously.

Kate Kutash moved to approve the request of the SHS Girls Lacrosse team to conduct fundraising activities during the 2017-18 season, as presented; motion seconded by Anne Gaydos. Discussion concerning clarification of GoFundMe. Motion passed unanimously.

Comments by the Board Chair

Chairman Holden discussed the budget and the need to make more people aware and interested.

Reports of Standing Committees

Teaching & Learning – Anne Gaydos stated no meeting was held in March due to weather and consensus was to combine agenda items with topics of the next meeting date on April 17 at 4 p.m.

Finance Committee – Thomas Minotti gave an overview of the meeting of March 19 stating that all expenses are running according to budget or within budget. John Calhoun had given a comprehensive report on Facilities. Mr. Minotti commended Finance Director Ed Drapp for the professional and innovative way he prepares, organizes and presents the financial report in booklet format.

Policy Committee – Kate Kutash stated Policy did not hold a meeting in March due to weather. The next scheduled meeting is April 17 following the Teaching & Learning Committee. Agenda topics will include continued discussion of a Social Media policy.

Public Relations & Outreach Committee – Mandy Kilmartin stated the committee did not meet and nothing is scheduled yet for April. She said Anne Gaydos and she are discussing what the structure of the committee looks like. With regards to budget, they are looking at ways to engage the public and bridge communication gaps.

Reports of Special Committees

CES – Thomas Minotti said the March 1 meeting included a legislative report, which indicated CES, like all other cities and municipalities, has felt the impact of the state budget. Additional cuts are forecasted to CES reimbursement for magnet school funding for this school year, another 7% bringing the two-year total to 10% reduction of \$200,000. The CES lobbyist will attend the June meeting to provide a wrap up on current legislative session. CES was awarded a grant under the State School Safety and Security Program in the amount of \$668,209. Mike Regan, CES Director for Division of Special Ed, wrote an article entitled “A False Sense of Security.” Copies will be sent to Board Members.

Unfinished Business

Chairman Holden stated the Superintendent’s mid-year evaluation will be addressed soon.

New Business

There was nothing discussed.

For Your Information

Chairman Holden noted the attachments in the packet including Vacancy Report, Staff and Stipend Actions, and Enrollment Report.

Highlights

Kate Kutash mentioned two former SHS students were featured in television shows. Tom Minotti mentioned the teen tech group visits to Senior Center once a month to assist seniors with technical needs. He mentioned it is unfortunate that no city officials attend our meetings to see firsthand what is going on in our school system. Regarding graduation, Dave Gioiello wishes the community would understand the field project is not a BOE project, and we have no control over the timing. Mandy was impressed with the recent student walkout. She commended the student who presented a petition this evening that he had started. Mark Holden gave a robotics update and discussed a recent percussion event. He had opportunity to read to students at SIS & Mohegan. He said the attendees at the budget presentation at Aspetuck Village were very receptive. Mr. Holden was impressed with the Unified Sports basketball game held in Waterbury and said track will be starting soon. He reminded members of “In Plain Sight” at PHS next week and our budget interview with A&T on April 19 and encouraged attendees to be friendly and respectful to the Aldermen.

Adjournment

Chairman Holden adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

Diane Luther

Secretary to Board of Education

April 3, 2018