Chairman Kathy Yolish called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:05 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

Also In Attendance: Dr. Beth Smith, Interim Superintendent; Kenneth Saranich, Assistant Superintendent; Carole Pannozzo, Human Resources Director; Rick Belden, Finance Director; Daniel DiVito, Technology Director; Attorneys Francis Teodosio and Frederick Stanek, Board Counsel; Dina Marks, SIS Principal; Kathy Riddle, SHS Interim Principal

(There is no audio tape recording of this meeting. It was live streamed on the Shelton Public Schools YouTube channel and is available on the City of Shelton and Shelton Public Schools websites.)

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda
James Orazietti moved to approve the agenda; motion seconded by Patricia Moonan and passed unanimously.

Presentations/Recognitions
Dr. Smith congratulated Athletic Director John Niski for being named CIAC Michaels Cup Athletic Director of the Year. She recognized his contributions to our Unified Sports Program. The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education Student Leadership Award winners were announced and congratulated. SIS Principal Dina Marks recognized students Lilyla Akande and Luke Sanborn; SHS Interim Principal Kathy Riddle recognized SHS students Destiny Haray and Robert Marcinauskis. Both principals spoke of the students’ leadership skills, accomplishments and personal qualities.

Approval of Minutes
James Orazietti moved to approve the following minutes; motion seconded by Amanda Kilmartin and passed unanimously.
- Special Meeting February 19, 2020 @ 6:30 PM
- Special Meeting February 26, 2020 @ 5:15 PM
Communications to the Board
Chairman Kathy Yolish read aloud the attached communications. James Orazietti read aloud a letter from Board of Aldermen President John Anglace addressed to Kathy Yolish and James Orazietti regarding the BOE budget, also attached.

Interim Superintendent’s Reports & Action Items
Dr. Smith stated the $409,587 we are expecting from the CARES Act cannot be used for any budgetary issues and is specifically to provide equitable access that’s transpired during COVID distance learning plan. She discussed the four categories to be followed and noted a small portion of the money goes to Holy Trinity Catholic Academy. Dr. Smith discussed Distance Learning 3.0 and changes made to the program. She stated the summer school program for extended learning and credit recovery will be virtual and planning is underway for a summer distance learning program. Dr. Smith discussed a graduation survey sent out to students and parents, noting that whatever ceremony is decided upon must be consistent with applicable executive orders and must be approved by our local health department. She discussed end of year activities, half days and last day of school date of June 18, procedures for collection of books, Chromebooks, uniforms; distribution of year books, caps and gowns, etc. More information will be forthcoming.

Board Action Items
Kate Kutash moved to approve the proposed changes to Policy 5144.1(a), Physical Restraint and Seclusion, in alignment to the changes required by the CSDE; motion seconded by James Orazietti and passed unanimously.

Carl Rizzo moved to approve a carryover grant proposal for Valley Regional Adult Education – Workforce Readiness Project – ESL; motion seconded by Patricia Moonan. Discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Comments by the Board Chair
Kathy Yolish read the following statement:
"The Shelton school district, like many across the state, is facing an unprecedented amount of challenges as we encounter a flat line budget in which we, the Board of Education, will have to, mitigate 3.1 million dollars. Additionally we will need to plan how to reopen schools safely while following social distancing guidelines and using PPE protocol. As a result cuts will be made across the school system and unfortunately everyone will share in the consequences.

I truly understand that in years past many have heard the threats of severe budget cuts, but it never seemed to come to fruition. I compare it to the famous Aesop Fable, “The Boy Who Cried Wolf”, whereby a bored boy tending to the sheep kept on testing the loyalty of the townspeople until one day the wolf really appeared, the boy cried for help, but nobody came to assist him thinking it was just another one of the boy’s pranks. The result was tragic!"
This year, our cry for help is real. The budget mitigation will have a severe impact on our system as we know it.

I am taking this opportunity to ask every employee in the school system to please reconsider taking a furlough day or two. If everyone does a $300,000-$600,000 amount can help save positions and programs. I cannot guarantee all positions would be saved but I can assure you that we will strive to keep as much as possible intact.

We are Shelton Strong and we need to take care of everyone in our school family. I know that by requesting furlough days will affect many in different ways but in doing so, it will help save positions, save programs, provide assistance to the kids that need it and will need it as a result of distant learning, and unite everyone for the good of our school system.

Please be assured that no matter what is decided, we will continue to provide the best education for the kids as possible with the resources we are given. Hopefully if and when monies are collected we will be able to request additional support from our city fathers.

In conclusion I am not the boy crying wolf- I am just stating that the wolf is here and we really need your HELP!!!"

Reports of Standing Committees
Teaching & Learning – Amy Romano said no meeting was held in May and gave a brief overview of the last meeting of April 21. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 9 at 4:30 p.m.

Finance – John Fitzgerald stated the last meeting was held on April 28. He reviewed topics discussed and said minutes are posted online.

Policy – No report was given.

Reports of Liaisons
C.E.S. – Kate Kutash gave a report on the Representative Board virtual meeting of May 7. She explained the organization and its support/services to the districts they represent. The topics of the meeting were reports on distance learning, the establishment of a sick leave bank for C.E.S. teaching staff, and budget discussion. Mrs. Kutash stated their budget last year of $45,661,327 was increased .08% to $50,828,171. She noted they are totally self-supporting through the revenue from member districts, and they also have what was described as a robust reserve.

CABE – Diana Meyer stated CABE has been sending many emails offering support and assistance. She discussed plans underway to have Nick Caruso hold a training session for board members regarding the roles of members and use of social media.

Unfinished Business
Mrs. Yolish read an additional board communication, which is also attached.

New Business (Note: addressed out of order by consensus)
Discussion of Superintendent Search – Carole Pannozzo referred to the five proposals received from search firms to conduct a search for a new superintendent (provided in board packets) and strongly recommended a board decision be made by mid-June in order to contact the firm and begin the process by July 1. After discussion of cost differential and past positive experience with CABE, the following motion was made:
Kate Kutash moved that Shelton Public Schools engage CABE as a consultant firm to conduct a search for our next superintendent; motion seconded by Diana Meyer and passed unanimously.

Discussion of March Bus Incident, Protocols and Procedures – A lengthy discussion ensued concerning the topic, necessity and appropriateness of an executive session to address it, and whether to address it along with Durham Transportation Lawsuit Against the Board of Education. Upon the advice of Attorney Stanek, the following motion was made:

James Orazietti moved to table Item XII.A. Discussion of March Bus Incident, Protocols and Procedures to a later date pending investigation and board input; motion seconded by John Fitzgerald. Roll call vote: Aye – John Fitzgerald, Amanda Kilmartin, Kate Kutash, James Orazietti, Carl Rizzo, Amy Romano, Kathy Yolish. Abstentions – Diana Meyer, Patricia Moonan. Motion to table passed with vote of 7-0-2.

Discussion of Durham Transportation Lawsuit Against the Board of Education –

Kate Kutash moved to go into Executive Session at 9:00 p.m. to address Item XII.B. Discussion of Durham Transportation Lawsuit Against the Board of Education. The motion was not seconded. Invited to stay were Beth Smith, Kenneth Saranich, Rick Belden, Carole Pannozzo, Daniel DiVito, Attorney Frederick Stanek, and Attorney Francis Teodosio. Diane Luther was asked to leave. Motion passed unanimously.

The board came out of Executive Session at 9:27 p.m. Chairman Kathy Yolish stated there were no votes taken.

For Your Information
Mrs. Yolish noted the attached reports on Vacancy, Staff and Stipend Actions, and Enrollment.

Celebrations
Kathy Yolish thanked everyone at SHS for sharing their recognition of Honor and High Honor students, as well as door decorations and said it brings joy in this difficult time. Kate Kutash thanked the teachers for all they are doing with distance learning and recognized their creativity to instruct their students. Amanda Kilmartin recognized Sunnyside School principal Amy Yost for going above and beyond by engaging the whole community every morning at 9 a.m. with a broadcast from the principal’s kitchen. Kate Kutash was congratulated on her retirement from teaching in Stratford. Carl Rizzo expressed appreciation of the teachers during the pandemic. John Fitzgerald applauded the students and parents for doing learning at home and acknowledged the difficulty.

Adjournment
Kathy Yolish adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Diane Luther
Secretary to Board of Education
June 3, 2020
COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD

From: Angela Donovan <abrooklyn999@gmail.com>
Date: May 24, 2020 at 11:29:38 AM EDT
To: kyolish@sheltonpublicschools.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Education budget

Dear Kathy,

We have come a long way from our days at Ferry School!

I’m sending this to you regarding the upcoming meeting on May 27th. I am extremely concerned with the proposed reduction of funding for education. This reduction would be reflected in the elimination of teaching positions within the school system therefore jeopardizing the quality of education. This disruption in the schools has been an established pattern over the years. The children’s education must be a priority and cannot be jeopardized by budgetary cuts.

The housing market would in turn be affected if our school system is considered to be below standards in comparison to the surrounding towns of Monroe, Trumbull, Fairfield and Westport. This in turn will impact attracting more businesses.

Please consider the ramifications to the educational system based on this proposed decision.

Thank you.

Yours truly,
Angela Donovan

Date: May 24, 2020 at 1:17:00 PM EDT
To: kyolish@sheltonpublicschools.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for quality education

Dear Kathy and fellow Board of Education members,

I strongly urge and encourage you to continue your fight for a high quality city school system. The current economic climate and political lack of support make your job more difficult. It is imperative that teaching positions not be sacrificed for the goal of saving money. Teachers are the lifeblood of a strong, viable, competent school. They are the frontline who fight for the educational and emotional health of all children. If sacrifices must be made, then eliminate individuals from Central Office or Administrative positions. Quality in a school can’t be achieved without teachers but a few less supervisors or assistants to the assistants will not have the same negative impact on the students.

Continue your demands for adequate funding of our schools. A city’s economic health and desirability depend upon the quality and reputation of its educational system. Thank you for your conscientious service to our city and school system.

Sincerely,
Edward Donovan
87 Nichols Ave
Shelton, CT 06484
On May 23, 2020, at 12:38 PM, Elaine Furio <vefurio@juno.com> wrote:

As a retired middle school teacher, I am exceedingly disappointed that the Shelton Board of Education is planning to reduce their budget and eliminate many teaching positions. Children in schools now are entitled to the best education we have to offer. This includes the basics and elective classes. Students of today are the leaders of Shelton tomorrow. It is our duty to provide them with the best skills possible. Please reinstate the funds that will keep the schools operating in a way to provide the best education possible. Thank you.

"Dear Shelton Board of Education,

My name is Eileen Roben. I am a math teacher and the math curriculum leader at the Intermediate school. I am writing today to express my concerns with the current proposed math eliminations for the Shelton Public Schools. As I'm sure you are all aware, math is a shortage area in the state of Connecticut; it has been for many years. Luckily for us, the secondary level of education in the Shelton Public Schools has had the good fortune of not feeling the weight of this shortage area- at least not until this year.

Unfortunately, we felt the effects of said shortage this year in a massive way. At the beginning of this school year, Shelton High School needed two math teachers and the Intermediate School needed a long term math substitute in order to consistently and adequately deliver instruction for the required levels of mathematics in students in grades 7-12. This meant that the district had to find three highly qualified individuals who held secondary mathematics 7-12 certifications and who were not already employed elsewhere. We could only find one. And that one individual broke a contract with another district to come to Shelton. Her previous district, due to state statute, held her to a 30 day “stay” requirement- a requirement that allows districts 30 days to find a replacement if a signed contract is broken. So, while we were lucky to acquire her and attract her to Shelton, students had to wait a month to have her in the classroom.

Aside from filling this one position, there were no other applicants who both held the required certification and were deemed capable of delivering high quality instruction to students of this age group. Our options, then, were to either 1) use uncertified substitute teachers each day (possibly different people each day) to cover these classes or 2) utilize the certified teachers we already had on staff. The latter of these two options proved to be in the best interest of students, as it provided quality and consistent instruction in a very important core content area. Unfortunately, neither option is ideal or inexpensive for the district: paying a substitute each day adds up, and using teachers already teaching a full course load caused our math teachers to take on extra teaching duties, which in turn accrued additional costs for the district in order to comply with the contractual agreement between the SEA and the Board that guarantees “extra pay for extra duties.”

Right now as it stands, we are staying afloat, providing consistent math instruction in grades 7-12 with just enough highly qualified math teachers that we have on staff; I cannot fathom the idea of the proposed elimination of three math positions. We currently are able to offer high school math classes, Algebra 1 and 2, at the Intermediate School. With the proposed cuts, it is very likely that these courses, designed for our advanced 7th and 8th grade math students, will not be able to be offered next year.

As a math department, I do believe we can absorb the elimination of the currently vacant high school math position. However, I also have to advocate on behalf of the students in our district that we hold onto the other two phenomenal, dedicated, and highly qualified 7 - 12 math certified teachers we already possess here at the secondary level. If we let them go, only to need to fill those positions later, we will be very hard-pressed to find comparable educators.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Eileen Roben
SIS Math Curriculum Leader, SIS Math Teacher, BHS Parent, Shelton Tax Payer
3 Horse Stable Circle
Dear Chairman Yolish,

I've been a resident of this City for some 55+ years. I was raised here, worked in the small grocery store my Grandparents had and was educated in the Shelton school system. Outside of my college years and a few of the early years of my marriage, my husband and I always looked forward to moving back and raising our family here. Our children were educated in the Shelton school system and we couldn't have been more pleased with the education they received. I tell you this so you will understand we are not new to the City -- we did not move here because taxes were good -- we came back because this is where our roots are. Deep roots! We care about this city. (Being here for 55+ years might have just given me some insight into the dealings newer people do not have.)

I taught in this city for almost 30 years before retiring. My last few years we were asked(??) "to do more with less"! AND WE DID!! We did it because we cared about the students we taught. Many teachers spent a good portion of their paychecks at the Teacher's Store or the Lakeshore Educational Material Store. We even furloughed days to help augment the budget one year. And as unpopular as this is to say, -- I even understood the municipal skepticism over budget submitted by a few past Superintendents and Boards. (Whether justified or not-- is not my call to make!) However, in watching the budget presentation last week, and watching the faces of the Board members and hearing the anguish and worry in the Superintendent's voice (a Superintendent who has been part of this system and has dealt with previous cuts knowing first hand what will be in store if they happen--- not someone brought in from the outside!), I have to say I am very concerned about our students and how these cuts will effect them and their future plans for college. I'm also concerned how larger class sizes will impact the foundational skills of the elementary children. It is the students throughout the system that will pay the price! Our teachers and staff will find a way to manage-- probably not up to the standards we have grown to expect-- but no doubt they will give 150% and do the very best they can. But, when test scores drop-- as they will for a number of reasons beyond the teacher's control--budget will be one of those things we did have control over and the city will need to take ownership for that. When our future Seniors are not getting into the colleges they want because of programs previously offered that were eliminate because of the forced cuts to the school budget-- that City will need to own their part in this decline!

I believe with the present make-up of the Board of Ed and with this Superintendent the City can trust that the information they are given is factual. Looking at the presentation there is no "fat" left to cut. I think the Superintendent said it best when questioned about the cuts she said-- "...we are now cutting into bone! . That "bone" is the backbone of the school system. I don't envy the Board having to make these cuts-- even loosing 1 or 2 teachers or 1 or 2 programs hurts the system!

I hope the Board of Alderman and the Mayor will recognize these facts and will reconsider their stance and will work with the Superintendent and Board of Ed to find creative ways to restore funds to the budget. No one expects the budget to be fully funded, but the amount having to be cut is unrealistic. It is time to get creative on both sides. We can afford a good, sound educational program in Shelton. Our children and grandchildren deserve that from us. Let this be the year a new partnership is started -- working together for the benefit of our children-- those finishing up and those just beginning. Let's not dig in our heels-- let's not play partisan politics-- there is to much at stake here. I hope and believe it is possible to work together for the good of the students. I strongly support the Superintendent and Board of Education's request for a dialogue to open communications on this budget before the City budget is passed.

Respectfully,
Sandra Zuraw
Good morning Ms. Yolish,

As we are coming to an end to the academic year with distance learning, I am recognizing the typical feelings kids and adults alike are experiencing...in other words, they want the year to end. I commend the teachers and staff and administration for doing all they have done over the past couple months to ensure our children are still learning and being engaged as much as possible.

I do not know the reasons for all the 1/2 days towards the end of the year, but since everything had to be cleared out of schools by June 1st, isn't very possible that we can condense our 1/2 days into full days instead of extending to the final date of June 18th? It is my belief our kids would benefit greatly if they can have the end date be earlier. Full time distance learning has taken a toll on everyone and when I hear my high honors student tell me he is "done" or "can't wait" for school to end, that concerns me b/c he really enjoys school otherwise.

The half days that were also implemented recently on Wednesdays in June are being questioned by many and although I don't have a big issue with it, it seems that instead of counting these days like typical 1/2 days that normally would happen for Professional Development, wouldn't it be better to go forward full days and just shorten our year by 5 days?

It's possible that our teachers would benefit about regrouping and planning for the new academic year AFTER school ends as opposed to the middle of the last month.

My main suggestion is to combine 1/2 days into full days so that everyone ends early and can reflect and see what worked or didn't work in the past couple months in the distance learning process.

Proposed new end date be June 12th.

Thanks for your consideration.
Elisa Uhrynowski
parent to 8th and 9th grader
Good morning.

First I want to thank all of you for your hard work on the budget this year, it definitely isn’t an easy task. Please know it is appreciated.

After the last BOE’s meeting and Dr Smith’s proposed reductions and if no additional monies are allocated it is clear that some drastic cuts to the BOE’s budget will need to be made.

We need to make sure these cuts do not impact the instruction in the classroom for our children, teachers and programs are the DAILY source of education for our children. Reductions need to begin at the top, not the student programs or services. I understand reductions have been made to Central Office but I feel there are still some reconfigurations that can be done. Year after year, parents are asked to rally to protest cuts to the proposed education budget, by stating that programs, staff and extra curricular activities will be eliminated, and we do.

I feel these cuts need to start at the top and the BOE needs to examine the efficiency and effectiveness of Central office and its staff. After all, isn’t the Educational Budget supposed to benefit the students?

As costs increase year after year in the Education Budget, the Shelton Administration must be opened minded to alternatives to keep our student programs and services instead of eliminating them.

Our City and school district need to understand that the more we cut these programs, the more it hurts the students’ learning in the classroom. I believe you all do understand this but you need to make the cuts to show it. And before you ask, yes I have emailed the City as well.

Making cuts to the budget is definitely not an easy task. Since most of the increase comes from employment, perhaps some of these options should be taken into consideration:

- **Reducing and/or consolidating clerical staff,**

- **Changing the responsibilities of Curriculum Leaders to Curriculum Coordinators, which would allow them to teach in the classroom and assist at the schools;**

- **Combining the Teaching and Learning positions into one on the Central Office staff.**

I do not believe that eliminating the Athletic Director position is a good choice. In my opinion, Mr Niski works around the clock everyday of the week and makes that program what it is.
• I don’t feel that closing the elementary schools and PHS is a good choice, if community run sports and school activities are allowed to start up again this will drastically impact Them. Possible alternative could be the relocation of Central Office.

• On the BOE end I’m not sure if CABE membership is still a line item, as well as the BOE workshop fees.

• Now onto one subject that most parents won’t be happy about eliminating extra curricular activities. I believe that extra curricular activities along with education make for the well rounded child. I strongly believe the extra curricular activities should NOT be cut at the high school level. Some students in high school rely on sports scholarships to assist them getting in college. If cuts need to be made they should be made at PHS and SIS where they don’t affect the child’s opportunity for receiving a scholarship.

At the end of the day you need to make sure the cuts to the Education Budget do not impact the instruction in the classroom for our children. The school system is not about employment, but about the kids.

Thank you for your time
Peggy Camp
203-922-2618

From: Jeffrey Camp <jeffrey.camp@ymail.com>
Date: Sun, May 24, 2020 at 11:05 AM
Subject: [EXTERNAL] BOE Budget
To: Beth Smith <bsmith@sheltonpublicschools.org>

I raise this issue admitting full well I do not have complete grasp and knowledge of it and if it would be feasible and actually save money and if so how much.

Having had 4 kids go thru school along with my own experience and that of my siblings Ive long wondered about a better way of teaching our kids different languages. Having worked in many call centers and world wide organizations Im aware of the financial and strategic benefit of being bilingual and also how we are far behind much of the world in our ability to do so. Using my daughter and sister as examples of excellent students who took spanish for many years, did very well but still struggle to speak it conversationally. Also my own struggles and that of my sons who werent great students and struggled mightily with it both grade wise and speaking/understanding wise. Having been exposed to Rosetta Stone and Babel it struck me as a better way both learning wise along with the functionality of speaking/understanding.

Would moving to this type of language platform be feasible with our current technology on a school wise basis? Would it save money? I would imagine it would but I certainly cant say for sure. I do know giving kids the ability to converse in other languages better than they do with the current program would be a great thing. And the way we currently do it is both a waste of resources and a wasted opportunity to give our students an edge. I also believe that organizations that use the current health situation as a catalyst to better streamline and simplify the way they deliver services will excel in the long run

Hope all is well.

Regards-Jeff.
May 27, 2020

To: Kathy Yolish
Jim Orazetti

I was pleased to have met with both of you to discuss BOE budget planning issues and timing.

The current COVID-19 emergency has caused everyone to do things differently this year. There can be no “Business as Usual” budget approach as followed in past years. There are more unknowns than knowns.

For planning purposes, you can expect $409,587 to be received under the CARES Act, and a $300,887 ECS increase. You will also realize savings because of teacher retirements.

The Mayor’s budget address cited that City revenue uncertainties abound and constitute a major budget planning concern. We also noted the adverse General Fund position created by the three-year Special Education Excess Cost issue that caused a $3.1 million audit write off and the long-awaited $4.4 million Education Capital expenditure reimbursements. We are in a tight financial position as a result.

Dr. Miguel Cardona, Commissioner of Education has acknowledged that communities and the State are facing significant declines in revenue and suggests recovery planning which may be unique to the district and most likely include delivering education with a mix of traditional classroom setting along with continuing online, distance learning.

To that point I have recommended to the Charter Revision Commission the recreation of the City-wide Technology Committee. I was pleased to hear your ideas on further expansion to include more collaborative programs and space utilization and I welcome your support of this request.

The revenue side of the budget could brighten if the economy is productive and that may well necessitate further evaluation of our initial budget decisions during the school year.

We understand that your FY 2021 budget is in the process of revision. We also understand that the BOA must adopt a budget no later than June 5th if we are to prepare and get the tax bills out on time.

Your budget needs for FY2021 have been duly noted and understood. We believe that everyone’s interest would be better served if we were to meet after the initial budget is set when we can better evaluate revenue receipts, know more fully the reopening demands put upon the BOE and be better prepared to make factual financial decisions.

John F. Anglase, Jr.