

Seymour Board of Education



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

September 24, 2019
MS Library Media Center
7:30 pm

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 9/30/19
TIME: 11:03 AM
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

James Garofolo
Kristen Harmeling
Jay Hatfield
Peter Kubik
Jennifer Magri
Fred Stanek
Ed Strumello

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Christopher Champagne
Edward Hendricks

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Michael Wilson, Superintendent of Schools
Vonda Tencza, Associate Superintendent
Sherry Holmes, Business Manager
Lee-Ann Dauerty, Board Clerk
Jim Freund, Principal, SHS
Paul Lucke, Assistant Principal, SHS
Ernie DiStasi, Assistant Principal, SHS
Kimberly Opotzner
Thomas Bennett
Fred Dorsey

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Magri called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:33 p.m.

II. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

A. Bennett, Thomas

- Armed Security Officer
- Bungay Elementary School
- Effective October 1, 2019
- New Position

Mr. Stanek said he knows Officer Bennett and finds him to be outstanding. He thought this was an excellent candidate and he welcomed him on board. Ms. Magri echoed Mr. Stanek's comments on Officer Bennett saying she thought this was a home run hire. Mr. Stanek added that he has taught many past Seymour students at the police academy

MOTION: (Mr. Stanek/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to approve the recommendation of the Superintendent to hire Thomas Bennett as the Armed Security Officer for Bungay School

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

MOTION PASSES: 7-0

B. Bus Stop Concern – Mrs. Opotzner

Ms. Magri explained that Mrs. Opotzner had requested a bus stop change at the last Transportation Committee meeting and there was a difference of opinion between her and Mr. Stanek so it was coming to the full Board for a decision. She said that the bus stop was in front of Mrs. Opotzner's house for many years but was moved this year to the corner which is 150 feet away. The bus company evaluates the number of students in the neighborhood and the move was deemed necessary. Mrs. Opotzner is requesting a second stop in front of her house but the bus company explained that there needs to be 200 feet of distance between bus stops. In the packet of information provided to the Board there was a drawing of the bus stop and some pictures of the Brookfield division where kids are not picked up in front of the homes. Ms. Magri asked Mrs. Opotzner to briefly describe her request. Mrs. Opotzner said she has concerns for her son's safety because of the pitch of the road and that the sidewalk is not shoveled in the winter. She said her vantage point from her home is compromised and shared pictures of it with the Board members. She said she understands the need for 200 feet between bus stops but said if they would move the current bus stop to the driveway of the home, the distance would be enough (264 ft) to accommodate a bus stop in front of her home. She reiterated that this request is being made because of her concerns for the safety of her son (who is in grade 5). Ms. Magri explained that the bus stop was moved because there were more children and they were younger. Mr. Kubik asked if there were any safety concerns and Ms. Harmeling said the vast majority of parents cannot see their kids at the bus stop. She also said if the sidewalk is not being shoveled, they should contact the Town as residents are required by law to keep the sidewalks clear.

MOTION: (Mr. Stanek/sec., Mr. Garofolo) to restore the bus stop in front of Mrs. Opotzner's home at 3 Greenwood Circle.

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Stanek

OPPOSED: Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Strumello

MOTION FAILS: 3-4

Because the motion failed, the bus stop will remain as is.

III. **DISCUSSION and POSSIBLE ACTION**

A. Administrator Grievances (Part 2)

1. Personal Days (Grievance #2B)

Ms. Magri explained that the grievances are continuing from the September 9, 2019 BOE meeting. Now that the Board has had time to review the grievances, Ms. Magri said she is perplexed as to why we are hearing these grievances since both seem to have been remedied. She asked Mr. Lucke to explain. Mr. Lucke explained that he felt the grievances were not remedied since Mr. Wilson did not meet with him on two separate occasions as is indicated in the contract. He said grievance 1C was not responded to in a timely manner since it took 13 days before a written response was received. Mr. Lucke said he would like to share a hard copy of the grievance with the Board and present his case again. He was asked if the personal day had been restored and his compensation been made whole because of the discrepancy. Mr. Lucke confirmed that he has been paid in full. He said he would like to start with grievance #2B. Ms. Harmeling asked if he would like the outcome to be a response in a timely manner and follow the contract to meet with him. She said she finds it difficult to restore something like this. Mr. Lucke said he would like an explanation on why two memos were sent to the Administrators from Mrs. Tencza. He said the memos contradicted what was told to him. Mr. Wilson said the memos were not part of the grievance and the grievance was about the denial of a personal day. As far as the meeting, Mr. Wilson said the contract states that the person filing the grievance would set up the meeting. Mr. Wilson confirmed that the personal day was restored.

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Strumello) to deny grievance 2B since the grievance is resolved and the grievance is moot

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

MOTION PASSES: 7-0

Mr. Strumello said, he as a Board member, community member, father, grandfather and former educator has concerns about this situation. He has grandkids coming up through the system and he doesn't want them to be tainted by this. He said it is time for both of them to put this to bed both personally and professionally.

2. Suspension of Pay (Grievance #1C)

Grievance 1C: Mr. Lucke asked to share a hard copy with the Board saying he added a calendar to the end of the packet and numbered the pages at the top right of each page. He reviewed his reasons for this grievance. Mr. Lucke wanted to know why there was a two day discrepancy of his suspension. Ms. Magri said she believed it was because he had returned to work before the financial agreement was finalized. Mr. Lucke wanted to know why this happened. Ms. Harmeling said she felt it could simply be a mistake was made and when it was pointed out it was corrected. She said she felt Mr. Lucke has been made whole and she is not sure exactly what he wants the Board to do. Mr. Lucke said he feels there have been many mistakes made toward him. Ms. Harmeling said all we can do is apologize for the mistake and correct it which was what was done. Mr. Lucke talked about what was said in front of 50 people in the audience and his attorney. Ms. Harmeling responded with she was the one who made the motion and she was very thoughtful when she made the motion; it was 20 days. Mr. Hatfield said he was confused as to why Mr. Lucke worked 2.5 days. Mr. Dorsey said Mr. Lucke would not start back on the next day unless there was a financial agreement made. The Union did not follow up; there was no ambiguity. Mr. Hatfield said he was still confused. Mr. Hatfield said he felt someone dropped the ball and Ms. Magri asked how? Ms. Harmeling asked Mr. Hatfield who should have caught him going to work? Mr. Hatfield said the Board should have been informed that he was in work. Mr. Strumello responded that is far beyond the scope as a Board and it was ridiculous. There was more conversation regarding what happened with this situation and Mr. Lucke wanted to know why it happened. Ms. Harmeling responded to some of the things that Mr. Lucke said saying this is not a trial of our Superintendent. Ms. Magri said she was disappointed that adults cannot get over this and asked what do you want? Mr. Lucke said he wants Mr. Wilson to follow the contract. Ms. Magri said to move past this and he should be thankful for his job. Mr. Lucke said he is thankful. Ms. Magri said that she personally has never once heard an apology or any real remorse for this situation. Mr. Stanek said he was concerned about procedure saying there should be evidence given and then deliberations and he wondered about going into executive session. Mr. Dorsey said they would need to go into deliberations as a Board and the question is was there a violation of the contract? He said this is not a personnel issue so it does not go into executive session. Ms. Magri asked if a motion needed to be made and Mr. Dorsey said if they feel it is moot that would equal a denial. Ms. Magri asked the Board if anyone wanted to put forth a motion.

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Strumello) to deny grievance 1C since the grievance is resolved and the grievance is moot

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

OPPOSED: Mr. Hatfield

MOTION PASSES: 6-1

Mr. Stanek echoed Mr. Strumello's sentiments and said he hoped that they both can work together in the best interest of the children of Seymour.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

*A. Public Officials

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Strumello) move that the Board enter into executive session to discuss public officials. Only those invited by the Board can attend executive session. The Board invites Attorney Fred Dorsey into the Executive Session.

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Strumello

OPPOSED: Mr. Stanek

MOTION PASSES: 6-1

**It is anticipated that the asterisked items will be discussed in Executive Session from which the public will be excluded.*

The Board entered into Executive Session at 8:26 pm

The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:18 pm

V. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Strumello) to adjourn

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

MOTION PASSES: 7-0

The meeting adjourned at 9:18 pm

Submitted by:
Lee-Ann Dauerty
Board Clerk