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Seymour Board of Education REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

June 1, 2020
Zoom
7:30 pm

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Kristen Bruno
Christopher Champagne
James Garofolo
Kristen Harmeling
Jay Hatfield
Peter Kubik
Beth Nesteriak
Fred Stanek
Ed Strumello

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ashley Sirowich, Student Representative
Zachary Braca, Student Representative
Michael Wilson, Superintendent of Schools
Vonda Tencza, Associate Superintendent
Sherry Holmes, Business Manager
Kris Boyle, Director of Special Services
Lee-Ann Dauerty, Board Clerk
Rob Dyer, System Technology Coordinator
Jim Freund, Principal, SHS
Paul Lucke, Assistant Principal, SHS
Ernie DiStasi, Assistant Principal, SHS
Jodie Roden, Principal, SMS
Mary Sue Feige, Principal, BS
Lauren Reid, Assistant Principal, BS
David Olechna, Principal, CLS
Allison Cunningham
Karrie Paz

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Strumello called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:34 p.m.

There were technical difficulties with Mr. Strumello's Wi-Fi and it took several minutes to correct it.

II. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Recognitions

1. Congratulations to Mrs. Allison Cunningham who has been chosen as the 2020-21 Seymour Teacher of the Year – Mr. Wilson

Mr. Wilson announced the 2020-21 Seymour Teacher of the Year, Allison Cunningham and offered his congratulations and thanked her for joining the meeting tonight. Mr. Olechna spoke about Ms. Cunningham and said she is an exemplary teacher who provides her students with engaging lessons in a nurturing environment that fosters self-growth and reflection. A wonderful team player, she collaborates with her colleagues to advocate for what is best for her students. She is actively involved with curriculum, helping to move our district forward with elementary math, science, reading, and writing. Allison is very involved within the CLS community, helping to get this year's CLS Math Olympiads started, as well as volunteering at CLS concerts and PTA meetings. Mrs. Cunningham embodies the CLS Motto – she Cares and teaches her students to Care, her students

Learn, and she and her students Succeed. Ms. Cunningham thanked everyone for this honor.

2. Congratulations to Ms. Karrie Paz who is the 2020-21 Seymour Paraprofessional of the Year - Dr. Boyle

Mr. Wilson introduced the 2020-21 Seymour Paraprofessional of the Year and Dr. Boyle said it was an honor to recognize Mrs. Karrie Paz. Mrs. Paz has worked as an Instructional Paraprofessional for the past four years. In that time, Mrs. Paz has been recognized by her colleagues for her excellence and dedication. Mrs. Paz has had experiences ranging from work within the kindergarten classrooms to working 1:1 with students with significant disabilities in our ABA program. In every interaction with students, Mrs. Paz demonstrates a warmth and caring that is contagious. Mrs. Paz also exemplifies our shared belief that we are all life-long learners. Mrs. Paz is currently taking classes with the intent to continue her work, hopefully here in Seymour, as a certified staff member. This love of learning is evident in everything that Mrs. Paz does. Due to her caring, enthusiasm, and dedication, Chatfield-LoPresti and the Seymour Public Schools are fortunate to call Mrs. Karrie Paz our Instructional Paraprofessional of the Year. Ms. Paz spoke of her appreciation for this honor.

3. Congratulations to the Class of 2020 Top 10 - Mr. Freund

Mr. Freund introduced the Class of 2020 Top 10:

- 10-Rhea Koyambreth
- 9-Faith Rousseau
- 8-Nick Marchetti
- 7-McKenzie Collins
- 6- Nicholas Krzykowski
- 5-Ariana Deljanin
- 4-Zana Imetovski
- 3-Erin Cronin
- 2-Jack Crocamo-Salutatorian
- 1-Ashley Sirowich- Valedictorian

4. Seymour Golden Apple Awards - Mr. Wilson

- BES – Megan Goletz
- CLS – Bonnie Sherman
- SMS – Michael Nimons
- SHS – Judy Taylor
- SpEd – Laura Stec

5. Distinguished Alumnus

Michael Kearney, Seymour High School Graduate 1970

Mr. Stanek spoke about this year's Distinguished Alumnus saying he has been serving as the Commander of VFW post for many years. He has worked with the schools over the years helping to educate students about Veterans Day. He was instrumental in having students attend school on Veterans Day rather than have it be a day when schools are closed. Mr. Kearney is certainly deserving of this honor.

MOTION: (Mr. Stanek/sec., Mr. Hatfield) to add Public Comment to the agenda

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

MOTION PASSES: 9-0

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Email from Michael Starkey, 11 Rimmon Street
Student Body President

To whom this may concern,

I am writing this short letter to illustrate how important an in-person graduation would mean to the class of 2020 at Seymour High School. I, Michael Starkey, am a graduating senior that is very involved with the school in many aspects. As you know, the senior class has been hit the hardest by the news of the COVID-19 Pandemic. After thirteen years of schooling, our senior year was sadly taken away from us. Since we were children we have looked forward to senior activities including: a senior prom, banquet, and picnic. We looked forward to our senior year to make our last memories with our friends before starting a new chapter of our lives. I have been in contact with much of the senior class during the Pandemic and the conclusive word between all the students is that graduation should be in-person on Debarber field. We believe the field and bleachers are big enough to continue the social distancing rules mandated by the state. Even if each student sits a few yards away from each other on the field this should not be a problem. On behalf of the graduating class, we all believe this can be done with the help of our Board of Education.

Sincerely,

Email from Meghan Del Sole, 10 Cross Creek Ln. Seymour
Parent of Bungay Elementary Student,

Dear Seymour Board of Education & Administrators,

This year (2019-2020) was my son's first year in the Seymour School District. He entered Kindergarten at Bungay School and he has had an incredibly positive transition and experience. However, over time I have had growing concerns regarding my son's future experience in the Seymour School District. I attended the Board of Education meeting on March 2, 2020 as an observer and supporter for issues that were brought forth in public comment. After the March 2, 2020 meeting took place our community and the world faced the Covid-19 Pandemic which has forced the focus of our administrators and board to shift. I have participated as a listener to the Board of Education meetings on April 6, 2020 and May 4, 2020 and I have read the meeting minutes for the other 'special meetings' which have taken place throughout April and May, 2020. I am writing to you today because as a result of the pandemic, and the need for virtual meetings, there is no longer an option for public comment at the beginning of the session. I'd like this letter to be considered as public comment so that a parental voice can be heard during such a challenging, uncertain time. There are six areas of concern that I would like to address and have the board take under consideration during tonight's meeting on June 1, 2020. Or, please consider adding these topics to a future agenda for discussion during the upcoming Board of Education meetings and special sessions that will take place over the coming weeks and months.

1. Communication
- 2.
- 3.
4. General Class Size & Combining
of Classes
5. Staff Consistency
- 6.
7.
 - a.
 - b. Unified Arts Teachers
 - c.
 - d.
 - e. Grade Level Teachers throughout
the academic year
 - f.
 - g.
 - h.
 - i. Long-Term Substitutes
 - j.
 - k.

I. Per Diem Substitutes

Distance Learning Experiences and Lessons Learned

Summer Session

Classroom Re-entry for Fall 2020-2021

The initial three topics listed above are something I'm highlighting in this letter as an area that should be revisited from the March 2, 2020 meeting. I will not elaborate extensively on my concerns in each area, as public comment on all three topics was already shared by many parents at the March 2, 2020 meeting. However, I will note that I've been disappointed that these topics have not been addressed further, nor added to the agenda for review in subsequent weeks, as was suggested during that meeting. A motion made by Mr. Garofolo/sec. Ms. Harmeling to discuss the substitute issue occurred at the March 2, 2020 meeting led to a discussion where Ms. Nesteriak asked for more information regarding communication at the elementary schools and Mrs. Harmeling said there needs to be reconciliation between reality and budget. It appeared during that BOE meeting on March 2, 2020 that the BOE was not previously aware of classes being split and shifted mid-year. Mr. Hatfield asked for numbers from Superintendent Wilson identifying how often substitutes were not available and how frequently classes were being split and combined (example: UA at Bungay School). Mr. Hatfield asked that the administrators provide data regarding short-term and long-term sub requirements that were unfulfilled leading to inconsistent classroom experiences (example: 3rd grade at Bungay School). The request of Mr. Hatfield during the meeting was for these data points to be presented at the next meeting. Unfortunately, the request for data to be prepared and presented is not represented in the minutes, nor have I seen or heard of any follow up whatsoever that these topics will be addressed during future board meetings. These three areas of concern: Communication, Class Sizes and the Combining of Classes resulting in 25 - 40 students in a classroom, as well as staff inconsistency, are topics that I strongly feel need to be revisited. From the parent perspective, it appears to me that there may be an issue with administrator communication, and teacher morale. Communication and interaction with staff impacts turnover, and the inconsistency and constant turnover of Unified Arts teachers, amongst other teachers and staff is unacceptable. Additionally, the inability to obtain and retain a long-term staff member for a planned long-term absence (example: Maternity or Surgery) is unacceptable, and the lack of communication of staff changes or challenges in finding qualified substitutes is unacceptable. These are all things that have occurred throughout the entire 2019-2020 school year and have been unaddressed. I can appreciate that Covid-19 has taken precedence and is changing the way we need to look at classrooms, and learning for the 2020-2021 school year, and hence the focus of these BOE meetings has shifted away from those issues raised at the March 2, 2020 meeting. However, these issues are still important. As a parent with three young children, all whom I anticipate will attend Bungay School over the next 10+ years, these are not issues that only impacted the 2019-2020 school year. For me, and many fellow parents our voice and concerns regarding these issues is long-term. I am invested in being a part of the solution, not only for the more pressing and urgent matters at hand as a result of the pandemic but to also find the cause, correlation, and resolution to the broader problems that our schools are facing. I'm respectfully asking that the board of education revisit these first three areas of concern that parents spoke about during public comment at the March 2, 2020 meeting. Please dig into all of the facts and figures, reach out to parents for opinion, and gain a true understanding of the issues and frustrations that currently plague Bungay School, as well as other schools in the Seymour District. As for the topics four through six (4-6) that I've outlined above, I will briefly identify my comment, concern, and provide a personal recommendation to be taken into consideration by the administration and the BOE, as solutions to manage and support teachers and students during the Covid-19 pandemic are explored. In regards to Distance Learning, I'd first like to commend my son's incredible kindergarten teacher Stefanie (Slie) Newman for putting in so much effort to continue to stay connected to her students and help them learn

each and every day. We have been incredibly happy with her relationship both before and after Distance Learning took effect. I also want to thank and applaud all of the administrators, support staff, and especially the technology team for putting a plan in place, and executing on it in only a few short days, to deliver a Distance Learning program for our children. The comments that will follow are not intended to be negative, however there are lessons learned along the way. Given that the reality of the situation is that Distance Learning in some form could be a part of the 2020-2021 school year I would like to offer constructive feedback on the areas which should be improved upon in the future. The most important aspect for students at the elementary grade level is their mental well-being and social interactions with their teachers and fellow-classmates. I can appreciate that everyone is new to utilizing technology and interacting in a virtual world. However, I also believe that to truly “teach” a lesson to a young student, and they need to interact with their peers and educators; virtual classroom learning needs to be incorporated, and not just “suggested”. Daily or multiple days per week, lessons or social activities via Zoom or GoogleClassroom should be structured and incorporated. The days that my son has had these virtual learning experiences by video and especially with live interaction have been his best learning days. Please consider requiring live classroom opportunities to be a part of the future curriculum, if Distance Learning needs to continue. It is also unfortunate that students in grades K and 1st do not have Google Account Email/Logins. Realizing that these are not accounts that were created at the beginning of the school year, nor were they something anyone realized would be necessary, I can understand that it may not have been possible to have this type of GoogleClassroom account available for this initial DistanceLearning circumstance. Going forward this is a must, from my perspective. The login requirement as a “guest” each day is annoying at best, and challenging in certain aspects of the interaction with documents and worksheets. Without this account login, the capabilities on the ChromeBook are limited or in some cases impossible as a guest user. It also limits the teacher’s ability to assign work and interact leveraging the available technology as it is intended, and unfortunately at the K-1 grade level the students don’t have access to these tools. My husband and I have had success in managing the circumstance, but we are computer savvy and operate daily in a professional business environment. Parents that do not have the technical skill set or knowledge of certain software applications, or access from a personal device in addition to the ChromeBook clearly would have struggled with some of the tasks, due to a lack of an assigned GoogleAccount for their K or grade-1 student. I realize that there are many learning experiences that came out of this initial Distance Learning exercise and it is not an ideal circumstance for anyone. I would welcome the opportunity to have parent input accounted for over the summer as curriculum and planning for Distance Learning is put in place, in the case that it becomes necessary for the 2020-2021 school year. In regards to summer and fall re-entry to the classroom, this will be a challenging issue to manage. There will be CDC guidelines, state mandates, local budgets to contend with and a plethora of parent opinion to navigate. I do not believe this is an easy task that the administration and BOE will face. However, there are some very important factors that I will ask you please keep in mind and take into consideration. Please consider our children’s mental health, and well-being taking precedence above even the academic standards and scores. There are children at home that do not have parental involvement, that are living in impoverished circumstances, or perhaps worse, in abusive circumstances. There are children who suffer from mental illness, or are challenged with learning disabilities. I’m not sharing anything you don’t already know, but I do want to ask that everyone remembers these circumstances should all be accounted for when making considerations on how, when, where, and why to reinstate classroom learning environments. I appreciated Mr. Stanek’s suggestion during the May 4, 2020 meeting where he asked the Board to seriously consider schools start 3 or 4 weeks early in the fall with the goal being to catch the kids up during the first month. This suggestion is great, and as with everything there will be pros and cons. There will be challenges due to summer vacation or travel plans, or teacher availability. There is also the concern of two of the schools not having air conditioning, and I can appreciate that is a big issue, since my son does attend Bungay School, one of the two that does not have A/C. I also appreciated Mrs. Harmeling’s suggestion of considering a summer boot camp and her concerns regarding social emotional needs. After significant thought, here I am sharing an idea, as a parent, that combines both suggestions and also provides some flexibility. I would appreciate it if you would take this under consideration as the BOE and administration determine a classroom re-entry plan. In an ideal Covid-19 world it would be incredible if the teachers assigned during the 2019-2020 school year could transition grades as a

classroom-unit with their students for consistency during an unprecedented and confusing time for our children. It's understood that this most likely is not a situation teachers and administrators are prepared to take on, so my follow up suggestion is to have the current teachers of the 2019-2020 school year initially start with their students 3-4 weeks early, as an 'optional' but strongly encouraged summer camp. This summer camp option could be two or three days per week so as to not fully infringe on summer experiences. Or it could be five 'shortened' days, such as mornings only. Students would attend sessions with their current teachers and current classmates in a combination indoor / outdoor 'nature classroom' setting focused on socialization, and the review of skills that were taught via distance learning, to bring kids further along on some of the concepts that perhaps were not fully grasped in the final three-months of school. An outdoor setting for a portion or all of the 'summer camp' would allow for social distancing while the school continues to prepare for re-entry to the classroom, it would also allow for other staff such as guidance counselors to interact with students ahead of the new school year kick-off. These counselors could begin to work through the mental/social concerns that are so prevalent now living in this 'new normal'. They could do so, without the infringing on the demands and expectations that the new school year and new classroom brings. The concept of students participating in a 'summer camp' with their current teacher also allows students moving on to a new class and a new school in 2020-2021 the opportunity to have closure and say good-bye to their teachers and their classmates, especially those transitioning from 5th to middle school and 8th to high school. By presenting these additional 'early weeks' as optional, those parents and students that have demands that do not allow for participation in August are not penalized by 'absences'. Following the Labor Day holiday, the First Day of School would begin with students moving up to the new grade level, in their new classroom, with their new teacher, and the start of the 2020-2021 school year commences, inside the building. Realizing that in-classroom instruction brings with it its own set of challenges due to class sizes needing to be reduced inside of the building per CDC / State guidelines I would like it to be known from the parent perspective that a two-day-on, and three-day-distance learning schedule or some other form of combination learning on a rotating basis is not a solution that will have a positive experience at the Elementary level. Young learners thrive on routine, and learners in grades K-3rd clearly cannot learn effectively via a computer, many of them are in the early stages of reading and cannot fully grasp the directions or instruction via online learning. Older students at the middle school and high school level are more suited for computer based learning. So my request and recommendation is to consider providing a Distance Learning platform for older students on a rotating basis and leverage available space throughout the town in other schools such as the middle school or high school to reduce the classes sizes and spread out the elementary school students, so they can attend classes five days a week. In this scenario perhaps one (grade level) teacher could support two classrooms of 8-10 students each, with the help of support staff monitoring and guiding students with an activity and lesson in one room, while the teacher presents a lesson in the other room, and then the support staff and grade level teacher switch places. I realize it is an incredible amount of work for the grade level teacher to present the same lesson, twice in the same day, or even in the same hour, in two classrooms, but these are unprecedented times. With this scenario, grades K-5 would attend classroom based lessons inside of a school building, daily. The combination of rotating weeks and/or fluctuating daily schedule, that incorporates both Distance Learning and Classroom Learning is an option better suited for the upper grade levels. My suggestion is that grade levels 6-12 leverage the high school space and switch on-off rotating each week for distance learning / classroom learning. This would provide the opportunity for the SMS building space to be used to accommodate spreading out elementary students who would attend classroom learning five, full-days per week. In addition, it may make sense to take into consideration for the 2020-2021 academic year the idea of combining grade levels at each school, so existing support staff familiar with particulars grade levels can float and help with the multiple classroom set up that would be required to accommodate smaller groups of students in each classroom, without needing to hire on significantly more teachers/paras throughout the district. An example of what the suggestion above might look like for the 2020-2021 academic year would be: All K-1 students attend Bungay, all 2-3 grade students attend CLS, and all 4-5 grade students attend SMS, daily. Grades 6-8 attend SHS on week A and Distance Learn on week B. Grades 9-12 attend SHS on week B and Distance Learn on week A. I feel every possible solution for the best outcome for our students needs to be considered, and Distance Learning with fluctuating days, times, and inconsistent routines is not the solution for the Elementary grade levels. Students in grades K-5 are too

young to be able to successfully thrive in an environment that is an inconsistent routine, and is not interactive. I know that the Board encourages community/ parent engagement, so I appreciate your consideration of all of the topics I've brought forth today. Thank you very much for the hard work and the considerations that you are undertaking during these challenging circumstances. I also ask that you please include a copy of my letter and the Board's response in the minutes of your meeting as public comment, in the absence of being able to provide live public comment. Sincerely,

III. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Approval of Minutes

1. ~~Regular BOE Meeting Minutes – May 4, 2020~~ removed by Ms. Harmeling
2. Special BOE Meeting Minutes – May 19, 2020

B. Nutrition Services Financial Report – May, 2020

C. Financial Management Summary – Ending May 31, 2020

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Ms. Bruno) move to approve the consent agenda with Item A1 removed
SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

MOTION PASSES: 9-0

IV. **ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA**

1. V, C1 – Regular BOE Meeting Minutes, May 4, 2020
Change the word overload to overlap

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Kubik) to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of May 4, 2020 with the suggested correction

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

ABSTAIN: Mr. Garofolo

MOTION PASSES: 8-1

V. **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

A. Chatfield-LoPresti Elementary School

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Hatfield) the Seymour Board of Education accepts as complete for educational purposes the Chatfield-LoPresti Elementary School (state building project 124-0054 RNV/E)

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

MOTION PASSES: 9-0

VI. **REPORTS and DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION**

A. Student Representative Report – Ashley Sirowich, Zachary Braca

Mr. Wilson congratulated Miss Sirowich on being the Class of 2020 Valedictorian. She reported that they recently took the AP's online and she had no problems but some students did experience technical difficulties and will be given the opportunity to take them again. The high school will be hosting a virtual awards night. She talked about how much she enjoyed school and being the Board representative and being able to talk to Board members. She said many students have reached out to her regarding graduation. With such a small class they feel they should be able to do it and meet the state guidelines. She felt students would follow any guidelines that were put forth for graduation. She asked the Board to please try. Mr. Strumello wished her the best of luck at UCONN. Mr. Braca read a letter from Michael Starkey regarding the graduation ceremony and also asked the Board to change the policy of not allowing the decorating of the graduation cap. Email from Michael Starkey, 11 Rimmon Street

Student Body President of Seymour High

To whom this may concern,

Hello, My name is Michael Starkey, the Student Body President of Seymour High school and a 2020 graduating senior. Here today, I need to bring up several issues that need to be addressed with the intent of working hand in hand with the board of education, school administration, and

the entire Seymour community. The first matter I would like to discuss is graduation. During the month of March, we left school thinking that we would be back two weeks later. Two weeks turned into four, which turned into a month, and all hopes of returning to finish the year strong to create and enjoy any other possible life long memories came to a jarring halt. Our class was speechless. Words could not begin to describe the sheer unforeseen pain felt by all 164 of us. We have all worked diligently to achieve the accomplishment of a high school graduation. As of right now due to the COVID- 19 pandemic there is an increased level of volatility surrounding this matter, but I want to remain clear that on July 10, 2020, Seymour's seniors should be able to go to DeBarber field to attend their in-person graduation. I am asking here today that all school administration, Board of Education members as well as town officials keep an open mind and strive to find or create the most practical, and safe plan out there that's come close to what a traditional graduation would look like. If we work together, the graduation that this year's 2020 seniors deserve will happen. As all of you know there is never a one size fits all plan in education, especially during times like this. My team and I came up with a creative, safe plan which obeys all CDC, Federal, State, and local guidelines while still offering the most similar graduation experience as done in previous years. I've sent graphics and photos to all of you to offer a visual representation of how we can get this done. As this is only one possible way to do this. The second matter I would like to bring up tonight is Graduation caps. For years, Graduating seniors have not had the opportunity to decorate our caps. As many of you know how we got to this point. Over a decade ago, a rambunctious and out of control class was graduating. The event as many would describe was atrocious. Because of this the BOE decided and voted to take strong swift action to confront this pressing issue at the time. A move, during this time, most thought was appropriate. Flash forward to 2020, we seniors and our families are fighting to just have a traditional graduation. Since March, most of the year's enjoyable activities and events have been canceled and collectively, we think that it is the least the board of education can do to lift the spirits of this class during such a terrible time. By decorating our caps you are giving students the option to showcase their individuality and personal success during their academic career at Seymour high. All students during such a trying time like this need a chance to relax and pick something that represents who they are. And to address concerns those may have about inappropriately decorating their caps with insensitive content is extremely low. No one is going to risk the chance to walk because of what they put on their cap. Like this and the other matter discussed, we have made a plan to ensure that this is done in a respectful way. As of now, from June 8-17, seniors will be getting their caps, gowns, etc. From the 17th to July 3rd will be when students are able to send a picture of their cap for approval. Tonight, after all of the discussion, we all hope that both matters can be voted on and approved. Families throughout this town would appreciate it. Lastly, I just want to thank all the teachers and staff that have been with us throughout our last 12 years in the Seymour educational system for all they have done, and what they will continue to do. Thank you,

B. High School Graduation

Mr. Strumello said he did not believe the Board voted on the decorating of caps. That is something that would have been decided by the Administration and the Superintendent at the time. Mr. Stanek confirmed that he did not remember the Board voting on this issue although he did recall a committee was formed after the graduation of 2006 to set protocols for graduation. Mr. Freund confirmed this and said the protocols have not been changed since 2007. Mr. Freund said he would be hesitant to change the graduation protocols without having that committee reconvene. He said we have the most formal graduation in the valley and would not want to do anything that would take away from that. Mr. Strumello said he understood but we are short on time to make a decision about decorating caps. Ms. Harmeling said if we are able to pull off graduation, the kids should be able to decorate their caps. Mr. Garofolo said he was not adverse to kids decorating their caps. Ms. Bruno said the ceremony will be different and thanked the students for their input into how we may be able to have a ceremony. Mr. Kubik said he agreed with everyone with regard to the caps as long as they are respectful he is ok with it. Mr. Freund said after hearing everyone's opinion he would be willing to make an allowance for this year to not be as formal. Mr. Wilson said the high school seniors received notification that July 10 will be the graduation date and we are waiting for state guidelines regarding large gatherings. They are leaning toward a drive up

ceremony because as of now even with the updated guideline of 150 people at a gathering, we cannot accommodate a class of 160. He said he really understood the disappointment because he is also the father of a class of 2020 graduate who will not get the ceremony they want. Mr. Freund said graduation is weighing heavy on his mind. With a class of 160, we are over the cap set by the governor making it impossible to do the traditional ceremony. Also microphones would not be able to be shared. They have been looking at a drive up ceremony where each senior can drive to the front of the school, get out of their car walk up the steps and receive their diploma and then walk down the steps as a graduate. Staff would be able to view this with social distancing being observed. Ms. Harmeling said she is having difficulties with the guidelines, saying 150 is stupid. DeBarber Field is large enough to social distance. She thinks we can pull this off. Mr. Garofolo said the governor has to make difficult decisions and 150 is capricious and he was not sure how the number was chosen. He said the Superintendent and Administrators need to figure this out, students want to experience a graduation ceremony. He suggested they collaborate and come up with a plan that they could submit to the governor to ask for an exception or get approval. Mr. Hatfield said the Big Y has a sign that 200 people can be in the store. He wondered what the drop dead date was to make this happen. Mr. Wilson said the date is July 10 but there is no way to have a gathering with the current limit of 150. If something changes, we can go forward which would be great to do. Safety and concern for our staff and students is our number one concern and following the Commissioner of Education guidelines provides for the safety of our students and staff. He noted however, this is an ever-changing situation and we should wait and see what happens. We are all on the same page, we want graduation to happen. The change to 150 was to help with graduations, unfortunately it does not help with Seymour's graduation. Mr. Strumello reminded the Board that this is not a decision of just the governor or Mr. Wilson, Naugatuck Valley Health has been involved all along. Mr. Garofolo said we cannot wait and hope that plans/numbers might change. Ms. Nesteriak said this is a great motion and said the Administration should work expeditiously as possible; she stressed that the plan should get done quickly so the governor can get it quickly. Mr. Strumello requested a special meeting for June 15 which he felt would be sufficient time for a plan to be developed. Mr. Freund expressed concerns with the gathering before the procession, practices, and adhering to social distancing. Parents come early and reserve seats on the bleachers, it's difficult to control people coming in from the church, the back entry and the front entry. He asked what happens after the ceremony; it's the largest gathering of the year. Even if we limit guests, how do we enforce? Mr. Wilson said we will work together to see if the Governor and Education Commissioner will allow us to do a 520 person gathering. We can have a plan together in two weeks. Naugatuck Valley Health would be brought in to consult along with the police department. He said a letter will be put together and submitted to the governor. We will have something to share with the Board. Mr. Stanek said if something were to happen we could be held liable. Ms. Harmeling said we have 2 or 3 different areas we could designate. She said we are talking about why it won't work instead of talking about how we can make it work. Mr. Garofolo asked if the Valley TV Channel 10 could possibly Livestream to people in their homes this might reduce the number of people in attendance.

MOTION: (Mr. Stanek/sec., Ms. Harmeling) move that the Board of Education submit a graduation plan to the Governor and the State Commissioner of Education to be developed by the Administration with input from the Seniors seeking approval to allow a live graduation on DeBarber Field on July 10, 2020.

AMENDED MOTION: move that the Board of Education submit a graduation plan to the Governor, the State Commissioner of Education and the Director of Health, Naugatuck Valley Health District to be developed by the Administration with input from the seniors seeking approval to allow a live graduation on DeBarber Field on July 10, 2020.

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

MOTION PASSES: 9-0

Miss Sirowich said she really appreciates the Board trying to get them a graduation ceremony and she said she felt students would follow the guidelines because they all just want to have the ceremony. Mr. Hatfield said the plan will be reviewed and approved by the BOE and as of right now no decision has been made. Ms. Harmeling said the BOE will approve the plan on June 15 but in reality, the governor might not review it.

C. Summer School 2020

Mr. Wilson said there are various components to summer school this year. Credit recovery classes are offered to grades 6-12 utilizing the Edgenuity platform, summer literacy program is being offered with an online platform, and the ESY summer program with a virtual platform that will offer direct interaction between teachers/students. All summer programs will be distance learning. Ms. Harmeling asked if we have enough Edgenuity licenses for those students who will participate and she asked if others can join in. Mr. Wilson said there are enough licenses and he offered to have a discussion regarding the second part of her question. Ms. Harmeling asked about the cost of the licenses. Ms. Tencza said she didn't have the exact cost but felt it was about \$100 per student. She said we charge students for credit recovery. She said students are offered credit recovery based on their performance over the entire year not just because of the 4th quarter. Ms. Harmeling asked why our littlest learners can't come into a classroom to learn; saying the public library is open so why can't we do this? She understands we would need more adults. Mr. Wilson said we need to ensure the safety of all students and staff. We have provided for more interaction between students and staff online. It doesn't replace the classroom but it is the next best thing. Ms. Harmeling said the governor approved summer school for July 6 and wondered why Seymour can't make it work. Mr. Wilson said most area superintendents are doing summer school virtually, we checked with SCASA and with Dr. Boyle's professional group. Ms. Harmeling said she vehemently disagreed she said she was all for safety but didn't understand. She said it was disappointing. Ms. Bruno acknowledged the difficulty of implementing summer school this year. Doing summer school over video may be more advantageous than teaching with social distancing and masks. She has appreciation of this difficult decision. Mr. Hatfield asked if charging students will recoup the cost of purchasing licenses. Mr. Wilson reminded the Board that typically charging for credit recovery has been done in the past and the cost of licenses is not a problem. He said this is not a money making situation.

E. Proposed 2020-21 Budget

Mr. Wilson said the Board of Finance approved a 1.5% budget increase and Ms. Holmes has shared the document that shows the changes due to the budget being reduced to 1.5%. Ms. Harmeling said we do not know what we need, we will need to cut items and asked if we will still be able to do this if we approve the budget. Ms. Holmes said the Board has a right to make budget line item changes. Ms. Bruno said she felt there has not been as much transparency with these documents; we have had no public comment and she finds this concerning. Ms. Holmes said the Board of Finance has the ultimate power to give us 1.5% and that is what it is. If the Board chooses not to approve the budget it will not make a difference. She said she has to move forward. She said she has given the Board all of the information and she doesn't know how much more information she can give. Mr. Hatfield said he felt he has not had enough time to make a decision. Ms. Harmeling said Ms. Holmes has provided the information many times already and has told us what we cannot get. She said this is the meeting that we would normally approve the budget and we need to vote.

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Kubik) to approve the Superintendent's proposed reduced education budget of \$34,670,409 (1.5% increase) as presented

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

OPPOSED: Mr. Hatfield

MOTION PASSES: 8-1

Ms. Bruno noted that she would like a more transparent process in the future.

- F. Seymour Schools Survey
 Mr. Strumello proposed a special committee that would include Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Strumello, a Central Office staff member, administrators (upper level), administrators (lower level), and four teachers (one from each school).
MOTION: (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Champagne) to establish a special committee for the survey
SO VOTED
AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello
MOTION PASSES: 9-0
 Ms. Harmeling asked that there be parent representatives on the committee and proposed the president of the parent association of each school be asked to make this move smoothly. She asked for clarification on who would receive the survey; Mr. Strumello said this survey should go to parents and teachers.
MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Garofolo) to add to the agenda use of the 2% education funds
SO VOTED
AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello
MOTION PASSES: 9-0
MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Stanek) that any unexpended education funds from the 2019-2020 school year, be placed into a non-lapsing account, not to exceed 2% of the BOE overall budget, per Conn Gen Statute 10-248a, due to potential, unexpected savings as well as anticipated and unanticipated expenses related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on teaching and learning.
SO VOTED
AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello
MOTION PASSES: 9-0
- G. Board of Education Report
 1. Chairperson Comments
 Mr. Strumello said there will be three contracts (two administrative assistants and the Director of Security) to be reviewed and approved at the special meeting on June 15. Mr. Wilson said there will actually be four contracts as he also needed to add the Director of Nutrition Services to the list. Point of order; Ms. Bruno asked if Item D was tabled. Mr. Strumello said no it was not.
- D. Reopening of Schools Fall 2020
 Mr. Wilson said he can speak to this in generic terms. We are anxious and excited at the prospect of schools opening. There is a panel that includes the head nurse, the director of security, the facilities manager, Ms. Tencza, Ms. Holmes, administrators, and Naugatuck Valley Health. He said he will be receiving additional information from the Commissioner of Education. The panel will meet and discuss and share their findings with the staff and the Board. He said there are a lot of moving parts and conversations have been happening. Safety is paramount. Ms. Nesteriak asked that the Board have an opportunity to see the plan and provide transparency to the parents. Mr. Wilson said the Board will be invited to have input explaining that we want to be open. He said he is waiting for guidance from the state. He anticipates being able to present a plan at the July meeting.
 2. Board Member Comments
 Mr. Stanek asked if a decision was made to confer the Brumer, Gallagher, Kobasa, and Petruny awards. Mr. Wilson said we can move forward with a virtual Awards Committee meeting to determine these. Ms. Bruno said we need to take notice of what is happening in the world around us. Take notice of the hurt and outrage that's being experienced by members of our community. Recognize that we do our work for Seymour but also in a larger context. We as educators and community leaders live with those uncomfortable truths. She said we need to hold each other accountable, vote with our values, hold ourselves accountable and do the learning and listening to address racism. We can make

the world better for our students. Mr. Champagne asked if anything will be done about the petition regarding the weighting of the fourth quarter. Mr. Wilson said the petition was not shared and he has not seen it however, he stands by the Administration's decision for the grading policy and he is confident in that decision.

H. Superintendent Report – Mr. Wilson

1. Thank you to all of our staff

Mr. Wilson said we know that we have two more weeks of distance learning, but we would like to thank all of our staff for a wonderful school year. Their hard work and dedication are much appreciated. Mr. Wilson also thanked the Board of Education for their support.

2. 25 Years of Service

We have not done this in a few years and at this time I would like to take a moment to recognize our staff who have reached 25+ years of service and dedication to our students in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school year Congratulations to: Meagan Krushinski, Michele Scarpa, Deborah Schietromo, David Celello, Paul O'Connor, Janice Randolph, Greg Spath, and Lisa Stowe.

3. Mr. Wilson congratulated Ashley Sirowich on her achievement as the Class of 2020 valedictorian and thanked her for her service to the Board for the last two years as student representative. He wished her the best of luck at UCONN.

VII. INFORMATION

A. Retirement

1. Ewaskie, Sharon

- Secretary
- Bungay School
- Effective: August 14, 2020

Mr. Strumello congratulated Ms. Ewaskie on her upcoming retirement and said that she was the best secretary he worked with. He said he was sure Bungay Elementary School will miss her. Ms. Harmeling said she agreed with everything that Mr. Strumello said and Ms. Bruno said she was sure Ms. Feige will miss her as she is the best of the best.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

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

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

The meeting adjourned at 10:41pm

Submitted by:
Lee-Ann Dauerty
Board Clerk

Please note: If you would like to have a public comment read into the minutes, please email your brief comment along with your full name and address to ldauerty@seymourschools.org by no later than noon on Monday, June 1, 2020.

The Public is invited to participate in a listen only mode using the link below:

<https://youtu.be/ropr700lxeU>