

Seymour Board of Education REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

August 3, 2020
7:30 pm

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 8/13/20
TIME: 1:30pm
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ed Strumello
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
Lauren Reid, Assistant Principal, BS

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Pledge of Allegiance

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

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Yesenia Simeone, 10 Lorraine Ave - When will a decision of our return to school plan be made? I work for our local community hospital and if a full distance learning option is the final decision, I will need to make the appropriate arrangements for childcare as I have 3 elementary children currently enrolled. I have to be able to give my employer enough notice for coverage.

Jennifer Magri, 16 Union St - I am writing to ask that the board seriously contemplate whether or not they approve item V - E Pandemic Guidelines which appears on the board agenda for this evening. While I can appreciate that the COVID situation requires flexibility as it is ever-changing, it concerns me if the Board were to approve providing ALL decision making authority to the Superintendent. The Board's primary responsibility is policy making and it is important that the Board be part of any decisions of that nature. The return to school plan was reluctantly approved due to the deadline imposed by the state. I heard clearly that the Board was very interested in further dialogue to refine and enhance the plan. I worry that this proposed motion will impede that work. I'd ask you to work together with the Superintendent and the policy committee to address these needs in a more structured manner.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular BOE Meeting Minutes – July 6, 2020
2. Special BOE Meeting Minutes – July 23, 2020

B. Nutrition Services Year End Report

MOTION: (Mr. Kubik/sec., Mr. Champagne) move to approve the consent agenda as presented

SO VOTED

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

ABSTAIN: Mr. Garofolo, Mr. Hatfield

MOTION PASSES: 6-0-2

IV. ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA

None

V. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- A. Policy 6141.327
MOTION: (Mr. Garofolo/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to adopt policy 6141.327 that was approved by the Board of Education on July 6, 2020
SO VOTED
AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek
MOTION PASSES: 8-0
- B. Policy 6141.321
MOTION: (Mr. Garofolo/sec., Mr. Champagne) to adopt policy 6141.321 that was approved by the Board of Education on July 6, 2020
SO VOTED
AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek
MOTION PASSES: 8-0
- C. Policy 6141.322 Form
MOTION: (Mr. Garofolo/sec., Mr. Champagne) to adopt policy 6141.322 Form that was approved by the Board of Education on July 6, 2020
SO VOTED
AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek
MOTION PASSES: 8-0
- D. District One to One Device Protection Plan
MOTION: (Mr. Kubik/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to adopt the District One to One Device Protection Plan that was approved by the Board of Education on July 6, 2020
SO VOTED
AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek
MOTION PASSES: 8-0
- E. Pandemic Guidelines
MOTION: (Mr. Champagne/sec., Mr. Garofolo) to move item VE Pandemic Guidelines out of order on the agenda
SO VOTED
AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek
MOTION PASSES: 8-0
- F. Revised School Calendar 2020-2021
Mr. Wilson explained the rationale is to have professional development days early on before the students return. There will be 179 student days. There is a possibility that we can have snow days be distance learning days but are waiting for a determination on this.
MOTION: to approve the recommendation of the Superintendent to revise the 2020-2021 school calendar
MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Champagne) to add a discussion of the school calendar on the Back to School Reopening plan
SO VOTED
AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek
MOTION PASSES: 8-0
Ms. Nesteriak asked why this was not added to the agenda as she had requested. Mr. Wilson explained the agenda was already posted so it was not added.
Ms. Harmeling said she appreciates the different levels and all three plans are workable. She suggested the Board meet this week and then again next week and would agree to do all three models. Mr. Champagne asked how the day to day would look like. He would like to see a day from bus stop to bus stop. Mr. Wilson said the hybrid plan is half days in, half days out. Building

administration would work on this. Mr. Champagne asked how classes would be split up, would it possibly be alphabetically. Mr. Wilson said there are different options to talk about with the group and there is no set option at this time. A lot more information is to come but he feels the hybrid model is the path to take. Mr. Champagne asked what the drop dead date would be. Mr. Wilson said things change with every weekly conference call. For example, numbers are creeping up in New Jersey and they may go to distance learning. Right now the hybrid plan is the way to go. He asked the Board if we can agree hybrid is the path but what its form will be is still up in the air. Ms. Harmeling said parents would need to know by August 17 which is two weeks away. There is lots of anxiety. She feels the alphabetic approach is the best way to go. Empowering administration is fine but elementary schools have to be on the same page. Mr. Wilson agreed and said the elementary administrators are working together. He hears her loud and clear. Ms. Bruno asked if the survey results would be shared with the larger group. Mr. Wilson confirmed they would be shared. Mr. Wilson reported that the Question and Answer videos are starting to be posted on the website. Mr. Wilson said the main objective is safety for all. CIAC has come out with their plan but there will be more to come. Ms. Nesteriak said timing is hard but a deadline will help with transparency. Details need to be shared on August 17, 2020. She asked Mr. Wilson if this is enough time and if he has enough resources. Mr. Wilson said August 17 is appropriate and he will be respectful of the date. He wants people to be in the know as well. Ms. Harmeling said she was happy to see we added all teachers and community members who asked to be involved on the committee and asked that the invitations be sent to all Board members as well. Ms. Harmeling asked to explain if distance learning is an option. Mr. Wilson said yes 100%. The next survey to go out is to find out which plan parents want to use for the new school year. Ms. Harmeling said parents need to understand that choosing distance learning means they will be missing out on the hybrid model. Mr. Hatfield said August 17 is a short window to get something in place, what are the next steps? Mr. Wilson said there will be more specificity with the hybrid model and will be sent to the school level who will share with their staff. He envisions some type of Q&A will happen. Mr. Hatfield said a special BOE meeting will be scheduled on August 17, 2020 tentatively. Administration can present the plan. Ms. Harmeling wanted to confirm that parents will be told when students will be in school on August 17. Ms. Nesteriak said the timeline/schedule will be developed by when? Mr. Hatfield said we also need the date for when they can choose whether they are coming back or doing distance learning. Mr. Wilson said this would be done pretty quickly to have a plan for this. Ms. Harmeling said she was confused by the email that was sent on Friday. It seemed definitive that we were going with the hybrid model. Mr. Wilson said the committee would be discussing the other models and will be looking at all the facts. He said the direction from the Governor is the hybrid plan. Ms. Harmeling said it may be helpful to not talk about the plans as options. Mr. Wilson said we can use more than one model. We are going with hybrid but may use all three. Mr. Hatfield said it didn't seem that hybrid was the one and it's possible that it may be changed again. Mr. Wilson said it could be changed again; that anything is possible. Ms. Bruno said in person will be very different for the kids. Distance Learning will be different than it was in March. Mr. Wilson said we are evaluating what worked and what didn't work. Distance learning will look different, in person will look different. Mr. Champagne asked who is making the decision where a child will go if they jump back into classroom learning. Is there a possibility that they will have a new teacher? Mr. Wilson said if a class becomes full, they may not have the same teacher. Ms. Harmeling asked who is going to choose what model. Mr. Champagne asked how we got to the hybrid model. Just want to make sure people know hybrid teacher and distance learning teacher will not be the same. Ms. Harmeling said who is teaching distance learning has not yet been worked out yet and Mr. Wilson confirmed. Mr. Hatfield said the earlier we can make decisions the better. Mr. Garofolo asked about substitute teachers. Mr. Wilson said a decision has been made to hire full time building substitutes in each building. Mr. Garofolo asked if we have checked with our current subs to see if they are available for this year. Mr. Wilson said we will be contacting our subs. Mr. Garofolo said it should be done now to avoid having a void. Ms. Harmeling reminded the Board that there will be a Finance Committee meeting next week to review our savings/expenses. She said the Board will need to approve building subs as these

are new positions. Mr. Hatfield asked if we can combine the Finance Committee and Special meeting. Ms. Harmeling said we cannot wait and the Finance Committee meeting needs to happen on August 11. Ms. Harmeling asked about the transitional days in the beginning of the school year. Some students will start the school year in distance learning. Why not start everyone either on the 2nd or the 8th. We can still bring in reluctant learners and maybe use those days to orient them to school but not be counted as school days. Mr. Wilson said we can start hybrid on the 1st. Mr. Champagne said he is not comfortable approving the calendar. **MOTION:** (Mr. Champagne/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to postpone discussion on the school calendar until the special meeting on August 17, 2020

SO VOTED

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

MOTION PASSES: 8-0

G. Approval of Pay Rates

1. Lunch Program Workers

MOTION: (Mr. Champagne/sec., Ms. Bruno) to approve the 2020-2021 a 2% pay rate increase for the lunch program workers as recommended by the Superintendent and Business Manager

SO VOTED

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

MOTION PASSES: 8-0

2. **MOTION:** to approve the 2020-2021 a 2% pay rate increase for the part time custodians as recommended by the Superintendent and the Business Manager

SO VOTED

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

MOTION PASSES: 8-0

H. Pandemic Guidelines

MOTION: the Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to enact guidelines to be enforced in schools as a result of the restrictions placed on the district because of the pandemic. These guidelines will come from the Board approved return to school plan and will be shared with the Board at our monthly meeting. Some of these will include, but are not limited to masks having to be worn at all times by both students and staff, having no visitors within the buildings, and different procedures for lunch within our schools. While this may in essence have policy implications, these guidelines will only be enforced during the time of this current pandemic.

Mr. Garofolo said guidelines were not discussed as a Board as to whether they are appropriate. Mr. Bruno said she thought the wording was too sweeping. Mr. Garofolo said we should have the plan and once the plan is in place, then develop the guidelines. He feels discussion on this is too soon. Mr. Stanek said perhaps guidelines need to be placed in policy such as everyone needs to wear a mask. He said he understands what CABE is doing but feels it is premature.

MOTION: (Mr. Champagne/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to postpone the discussion of pandemic guidelines to the August 17, 2020 special BOE meeting.

SO VOTED

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

MOTION PASSES: 8-0

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

A. Community Survey

Mr. Hatfield thanked Ms. Harmeling for her work on the Community Survey. Ms. Harmeling did a review of the survey results from parents and students. Staff results were not included because she was unable to get the complete information reviewed in time but of course we value what the staff has to say.

The link to the presentation Ms. Harmeling made to the Board is https://www.seymourschools.org/uploaded/files/District/BOE_Community_survey_topline_result_s.pptx

Mr. Hatfield thanked Ms. Harmeling again and asked if they will be meeting again. Ms. Harmeling said there are no plans for the ad hoc committee to meet again and the results of the survey will be used by the reopening committee.

B. Overview of Fiscal Year 19-20 – Ms. Holmes

Ms. Harmeling did a quick overview of where we are financially and that we are closer to knowing our bottom line for the 2019-20 fiscal year. She said they are honing in on our COVID19 expenditures. A letter has been drafted to the Board of Finance to take up to 2% into a non-recurring fund. This request has not yet been decided. At this point, they will finalize the fiscal year and grants. She will present a more detailed report next week at the Finance Committee meeting. Ms. Harmeling asked about the formal process since this has not been done in Seymour before. Ms. Holmes said she has done this in other districts and writing the letter to ask to set up the account is the first step. The Board of Finance will meet on it and then the Finance Director will set up the account. Funds in the account can only be used for educational purposes. The Board of Finance vote will be to authorize the amount of money to be set aside which can be up to 2%.

C. Board of Education Report

1. Chairperson Comments

Mr. Hatfield thanked the Board for the opportunity to lead the meeting. He reminded everyone that at this point, the Board could only meet virtually as directed by the Governor's executive order and by the Town safety committee restrictions. This was not the Board's decision.

2. Board Member Comments

Ms. Bruno said she wanted to commend Mr. Freund on the graduation and she was happy that the 2020 seniors were able to celebrate. She offered her congratulations to all of them. Mr. Hatfield agreed and said he thought the signs Mr. Roy did were great. Mr. Stanek acknowledged the Distinguished Alumnus Michael Kearney and said he would be presenting his speech at a future in person meeting.

D. Superintendent Report – Mr. Wilson

Mr. Wilson thanked the Board members and said he is looking forward to the Q&A sessions. There are more to come. It was a wonderful opportunity to answer great questions. Mr. Wilson said he is proud of those folks who are participating; they have provided good details and have done a great job. He is looking forward to working with the extended committee. Thank you to those people who have volunteered. He said he is appreciative of all who have volunteered for this endeavor. He is looking forward to hitting the ground running.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Rebecca DeAngelis - If August 17th is an approximate deadline for the reopening plan schedule being released, I would like to suggest the deadline of before and after school care transportation forms (which are due August 10th) being pushed to August 17th (at the least). It is very difficult to figure out before or after school care when we don't know the school schedules yet. Thank you.

Tara Burn, 11 Amber Dr, - To the Members of the Board of Education, Mr. Wilson, and members of the reopening committee, As you consider the hybrid model to reopen schools, please consider the schedule of working parents. Many districts are using a Cohort A (Monday-Tuesday) and Cohort B (Thursday-Friday) schedule. I feel that this is much more conducive for working families, rather than the grade level structure that was in the last plan. Thank you,

Jodi Gerstenhaber, 8 Emma Street - Members of the BOE - I was extremely disappointed to see that we have reverted to a sound only model for the meeting – it was significantly easier to follow along when we could see who was speaking. Additionally, I can hear how frustrated many members of the BOE are about being in the dark about the reopening plan, just like the rest of the community. I am wondering why the BOE members were not asked to participate in the reopening committee meeting on Friday morning. Lastly, while I am pleased to have been included in the reopening committee, the meeting time of 10 am on a Friday morning just supports my ongoing frustration that the district has no

respect for working families. This goes along with the school lunch pick up during the pandemic, the Chromebook pickups/drop offs, the fact that you are asking families to notify the district if you are planning to participate in before or after school care by 8/10 when we don't even know what is going to happen with school until at least 8/17. In fact Bungay schools yearbook pickup overlaps the time as the reopening committee meeting this Friday – I am unsure how we are supposed to do both AND possibly also be at work as well. If this year is going to be successful with the probability of a hybrid and/or distance model where the children will be at home at least half the time or full time, the district NEEDS to start considering working parents in their plans.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

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

SO VOTED

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

MOTION PASSES: 8-0

The meeting adjourned at 9:57 pm

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 (300 words or less) comment along with your full name and address to rdyer@seymourschools.org by no later than **7:15 on Monday, August 3, 2020**. In addition, if you would like to have a public comment read into the minutes at the end of the meeting it must be received by Mr. Dyer (rdyer@seymourschools.org) **prior to the Superintendent's Report** on the meeting agenda.

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

YouTube Link

<https://youtu.be/nMyeVqrZJOA>