

Board of Education Meeting
November 6, 2013

Call to Order

Board Chair, Robert Eccles, called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. in the Suffield High School Media Center. Present: Board members Robert Eccles, Sue Porcello, Mary Lou Sanborn, Mary Roy, Scott Schneider, George Beiter, Lori D'Ostuni and Jeanne Gee; Superintendent of Schools, Karen Baldwin; Assistant Superintendent, Jim Collin, Interim Business Manager, Phil Russell and observers.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognition

The Superintendent congratulated Board of Education members Jeanne Gee, Mary Roy, and Bob Eccles on their re-election to the Board. She also welcomed incoming Board member, Natalie Semyanko. The Superintendent thanked out-going Board member, Sue Porcello, for her many years of service on the Board, including time spent as Board Chair, and presented her with a gift on behalf of the Board and the district. Board member Eccles added his personal thanks to Mrs. Porcello for her assistance as he transitioned to Board of Education Chair during the last few months. Board member Beiter thanked Mrs. Porcello for her welcome and help when he joined the Board. Mrs. Porcello thanked the Board and the Superintendent for the gift and for the Board's dedication to improving education in Suffield.

Public Comment

None

Communications

An email was received by the Chair and forwarded to the Superintendent regarding a non-resident issue.

Approval of Minutes

Sanborn moved, Roy seconded to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2013 Board of Education meeting amended as follows:

- Fourth bulleted item under September 2013 Financial Report sentence amended to read: "The Superintendent assured the Board that while a portion of the supply budget was frozen, we are not withholding funding for items needed, **including textbooks.**"
- Under Subcommittee Reports, Programs and Services – removed the sentence that states: "The faculty meeting at Suffield Middle School began the engagement program in preparing students for college."
- Under Subcommittee Reports, Programs & Services – change "The faculty toured the facility" to "The **Subcommittee members** toured the facility."

The motion passed with one abstention (D'Ostuni).

Consent Agenda

None

Discussion Action Items

- BlumShapiro Report

Chair Eccles gave a timeline of the BlumShapiro study (April – Proposal to combine financial management of town and school due to two retirements, June – Decision to hire Blum Shapiro, August/September – Scope of project defined with completion by the end of October with updates). BlumShapiro representative, Jeff Ziplow, stated that he had met with individuals from the school and the town to learn roles and responsibilities and to document the workflow process. Mr. Ziplow stated that shared services opportunities exist in the area of Human Resources, as well as backup for responsibilities. But there needs to be a full complement of people doing the work for efficiency. Board member D'Ostuni asked when the study results were first shared with the First Selectman and the Board of Education Subcommittee. Mr. Ziplow met with the First Selectman on 10/8 who then asked for time to consider options. Mr. Ziplow then met with the BOE Subcommittee on Shared Services on 10/24. Mr. Ziplow explained that when combined services are being considered it is predicated on cost-savings and/or efficiency being a better outcome. He stated that the Board would not see a cost savings through a shared service model involving a combined Director of Finance and he recommends that all open positions be filled in order to complete the work. Mr. Ziplow also advised the town should move in the direction of creating capacity and overlap in their human resources through thoughtful training and professional support to create a means to have multiple town employees capable of supporting the work in various areas of need. He further explained how having backup for these responsibilities would provide a better outcome, especially on the town side. Currently there is an opportunity to combine Human Resource services as the Human Resource Director position on the town side is vacant. The Town is accepting applications for the position. Several board members responded positively to pursuing shared services with Human Resources. Mr. Ziplow asserted there is a clear deficit on the Education side in the lack of an HR professional and the Superintendent has been filling in the gaps in this area of need. As the school side has more than two thirds of the employees employed by the town, it was stated that the new HR Director would need to have the capacity, motivation and interest to move the goals of the Board of Education. Chair Eccles will contact the First Selectman to discuss this possibility of HR shared services. Board member Sanborn stated that if the Board wants to pursue combining services with Human Resources, the Board should be represented in the interview process. Board member D'Ostuni asked if a document would be made available outlining what steps need to be taken and by when for the HR and backup shared services to be able to begin. Board member Beiter inquired whether Mr. Ziplow will provide a written report relative to the Business Manager vacancy and the results of the shared service study. A report is to be provided by Blum Shapiro. Board member Schneider noted he has been asked by people about the study results and he asked when a communication would be made available. A discussion will need to be held with the First Selectman and the Superintendent before a communication is made available. There was discussion on filling the currently empty Business Manager vacancy in the school district. Chair Eccles stated the importance of the Board taking affirmative action on maintaining the Business Manager position independent of the Town so that all potential candidates are fully informed of the status and apply with confidence.

Board member Zawawi arrived at 6:35 p.m.

MOTION #13-66: Porcello moved, Roy seconded **that the Suffield School District will maintain an office of the Business Manager independent of the Town's office of the Finance Director. The Board encourages the Superintendent of Schools to fill the current Business Manager vacancy on a permanent and full-time basis as soon as practicable.** The motion passed unanimously.

- School Climate Report

The Superintendent gave an overview of the School Climate Report and findings of the School Climate Committees. Spaulding Principal, Scott Dunn, and McAlister Principal, Karen Carpenter-Snow, reported to the Board on the work done in their schools by the School Climate Committees. Included in these reports were the results of a School Climate Survey sent to parents, students and staff. Highlighted in both of these reports were new programs in each school designed to acknowledge students who show respect and good citizenship. Spaulding Stars Care program is part of that school's action plans. The McAlister Way (based on Bucketfilling) program is being expanded to every area of the school including recess. In both schools, certified and non-certified staff are involved, including bus drivers and kitchen staff. Focus is on the social-emotional security of the students. The Board will hear from the middle school and high school principals on this topic at their next meeting.

Board member Beiter left at 7:30 p.m.

Board member D'Ostuni asked about teasing that takes place within friendship groups and how group dynamics and gender issues play a part in this teasing. She wondered if there was small group discussion or education at an earlier age that would prevent much of this type of teasing that takes up much of the guidance counselor's time at the middle school and into the high school years.

Board member Zawawi left at 7:47 p.m.

- Reading Overview K-12

K-12 English Language Arts Supervisor, Sophia Gintoff, presented a report on quality instruction and steps to be taken to assist students who need intervention. The Chair asked about communication with parents for those students are receiving intervention in Tier 2 and are being monitored through the new Individual Student Success Plans. The Superintendent stated that this subject will be discussed in more depth in the Student Programs and Services Subcommittee

- Board of Education Meeting Dates 2014

The Board reviewed a list of proposed meeting dates for 2014. A few changes were made. This list will be corrected and presented for approval at the November 18th Board of Education meeting.

Reports to the Board

- Superintendent's Report

- The first meeting of the Suffield Middle School Continuous Improvement Steering Committee was held on October 26. The next meeting is scheduled for November 19 at 6:30 p.m. in the middle school media center.
- A roofing contractor will be imaging the roof of the Large Animal Facility this week to determine where the leaking problems exist. The punch list for the LAF continues to be worked on. The RFP for the pump house went out on November 4. Bids are due on November 26 with a target date to choose a contractor of December 5.
- Chair's Report
The Board will hold elections for officers in a few weeks. Board members should be considering which subcommittees they wish to serve on. The Chair also welcomes suggestions for the make-up of subcommittees from all Board members. Subcommittees were given as Policy, Budget, Facilities, Personnel, and Student Programs and Services. There are typically 3 members on a committee.

Subcommittee Reports

- Budget – Chair Eccles reported that the Budget Subcommittee met on October 29 and reviewed the reporting of the grants budgets. A grants section has been added to the monthly financial report.
- Policy – Policy 6172.3 “Home Schooling” was placed on the table for 30 days per Board policy. Based on advice from Shipman and Goodwin, home schooling students will no longer be able to participate in extracurricular activities. Subcommittee Chair Sanborn reported that home schooled students who are currently involved in extracurricular activities in the Suffield schools will be grandfathered to be able to complete the current activities they are enrolled in. Board member Gee asked if research was done to obtain information on area schools who allow home schooled children to participate in extracurricular activities. The Superintendent indicated that since the school attorney had advised against this and the policy had been revised to reflect this advice, she had not pursued this but would be happy to do so at the Board's request. Board member Sanborn offered to assist in this project. Also being worked on are policies dealing with credit recovery and pool safety.

Future Business

- Common Core State Standards – Implementation of Smarter Balanced Assessment
- Substitute Service Budget Study Beginning August 2013
- National Honor Society – November/December 2013
- SAT/ACT/AP/PLAN Scores – November 2013
- Gender Gap Writing/SRBI
- PALS Program – 2013/13 student data and parent survey results – June 2014
- Learning Management System status – December 2013
- Educator Evaluation Plan Implementation and Plan Approval
- SRBI/Intervention Statistics
- Board of Education Meeting Dates 2014
- School Improvement Goals

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D'Ostuni
Secretary