

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

January 28, 2020

Ms. Susan Salina called the regular meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. in the Board of Education Conference Room.

Roll Call:

Members present: Mmes. Tara Willerup, Susan Salina, Jen Batchelar and Sharon Thomas. Messrs. Todd Burrick and Jeff Tindall.

Members absent: Mrs. Lydia Tedone and Mr. Brian Watson.

Also present: Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Erin Murray, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Director of Personnel Neil Sullivan, Finance Director Amy Meriwether and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde. BOE Student Representative Calah Huie arrived at 6:55 p.m.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

Public Audience

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Willerup reported on the MLK celebration at First Church. Ms. Lemke reported that the SPIRIT Council met last week. They will be co-sponsoring a program on implicit bias with the Community for Care and will have a presence during the 350th anniversary celebration.

Communications

Mr. Sullivan reported that the Facilities & Enrollment Task Force will meet at the library on Thursday. A draft of the facilities community survey has been shared with the Communications Committee and the task force for review this week. Mr. Sullivan stated that due to the presidential primary on April 28th the early release day on April 29th will be changed to April 28th as four of our schools are voting locations.

Ms. Murray noted the packet of activities for teachers and principals to use while celebrating Black History month at the schools. Ms. Salina reported that as a result of the Communications Committee, the BOE now has a Facebook page.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Approval of Minutes of January 14, 2020

Ms. Thomas: MOVE to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2020 meeting.

Ms. Willerup: Seconded. So moved. Mr. Burrick abstained.

B. Acceptance of Gift from Ensign Bickford

Ms. Murray stated that Ensign-Bickford Aerospace Defense Company (EBAD) is providing funding to support our K-12 STEM program. Joncia Lytwynec, Director of Instructional Technology, thanked Ensign-Bickford for all they have done to help the district with Project Lead The Way, the Robotics team and the STEM lab at SHS.

Approval of
Minutes of
January 14,
2020

Gift from Ensign
Bickford

She noted that EBAD also provides a co-op program for our students. Ms. Lytwynec stated that with the gift we will expand our programs to the middle and elementary schools and funding will be used to enhance our makerspaces. Chad Thompson, EBAD President, spoke about the relationship that EBAD has with the Simsbury school system and the strategic grant from the EBAD Foundation. In addition Craig Boucher, Senior Technical Engineering Director, Edris Raji, Market Segment Director, and Ryan Rigney, Development Engineering introduced themselves to the board.

Ms. Willerup: MOVE that the proposed gift of funds from Ensign-Bickford Aerospace Defense Company to fund STEM programs be accepted.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

C. Approval of SHS Roof Replacement Education Specifications

Mr. Curtis stated that when a grant application for a capital project is filed with the state for reimbursement, the board must approve education specifications that we provide with the application. He noted that this project was approved at referendum last spring.

Ms. Willerup: MOVE that the Board of Education approve the educational specifications for the Simsbury High School partial roof replacement project.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. 2020-21 Budget / Enrollment & Staffing

Mr. Sullivan reviewed historical K-12 enrollment, noting that between 2008-09 and 2019-20 there has been a decrease of 883 students. He reviewed staffing over that same time period during which staffing was reduced by 53.31 FTE. Mr. Sullivan discussed the program enhancements for general and special education that have been put in place over this same timeframe. These occurred in the following areas: Elementary World Language, Math Instructional Coaches, Math Tutors, full day Kindergarten, increased access to SHS Learning Clusters, implementation of the 8 period day at the secondary level, the Simsbury Reading Intervention Program (SRIP), the addition of social worker, preschool support, special education teachers and paraeducators, a Ready, Set, Go Facilitator and co-teaching at HJMS and SHS.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the “roll forward” 2020-21 personnel drivers. The impact of the employee contracts, insurance and OPEB result in a 2.64% increase over the current budget. Factoring in 10 certified staff retirements brings the impact to 2.28%.

Mr. Sullivan provided elementary enrollment numbers and the corresponding classroom teachers. The elementary staffing request is to add a classroom teacher at Latimer Lane and at Squadron Line and a .5 special education teacher at Latimer Lane. The need for 1st grade classroom teachers is due to the increased enrollment at Latimer Lane and Squadron Line. In addition a .5 special education teacher at Latimer Lane is needed to address large special education caseloads.

Approval of SHS
Roof
Replacement
Education
Specification

2020-21 Budget
Enrollment &
Staffing

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the enrollment and corresponding certified staff at HJMS. The projected enrollment over the next 2 years will allow staffing to remain flat at HJMS. There is a request to add a 1.0 PE/Health teacher at HJMS in order to provide a schedule in which students receive either PE or Health instruction on a daily basis. Mr. Sullivan presented the enrollment and corresponding certified staff at SHS. He stated that due to declining enrollment at the high school, the expectation is to reduce staffing by 3 certified teachers through retirements. There is a request to add a 1.0 VoG Capstone Coordinator to lead the implementation of the Capstone state requirement.

Mr. Sullivan provided a district summary of staffing requests and reductions. In addition to the reduction of 3 teachers at SHS, a reduction of 2 non-certified positions is anticipated. The 4.5 certified staff positions requested will be offset by the reduction of 5 FTE, leaving a net total of -.05 FTE. These changes to the personnel budget drivers result in an overall budget increase of 2.25%.

Mr. Sullivan stated that additional staffing which was considered include staffing for elementary specials, instrumental music (Latimer Lane and HJMS), HJMS auditorium support, a few stipend positions and security greeters at the main offices.

B. Quarterly Budget Analysis

Ms. Meriwether reported that in January final restricted state and federal grant award notices for our education grants were received. Estimates on the excess cost grant will be reported in late April. The ECS entitlement reflects an increase of \$3,752 from the Town/BOE revenue budget. Ms. Meriwether stated that the general fund accounts maintain a comparable spending rate compared to last year. There has been a higher pace of spending in the General Control account due to the cost of 3 staff retirements/replacements at Central Office and the need for additional staff in the Business Office. Possible use of non-lapsing funds is being considered to cover a large portion of those additional staffing costs. Additionally the use of \$300,000 in non-lapsing funds, that was projected to be used to address the insurance deficit, has been reduced to \$150,000. Ms. Meriwether noted that out-of-district tuition costs are up over last year due to the additional outplacement of 2 students, and 1 less student eligible for excess cost grant reimbursement.

C. 2018-19 Audit Report

Ms. Meriwether reviewed the results of the 2019 audit performed by Blum, Shapiro and Company. The unassigned general fund balance available for appropriation on July 1, 2019 was \$16,460,519. The BOE budget surplus at the end of the year was \$5,341 which was returned to the general fund. The general fund balance is 17% of expenditures and 15.5% is necessary for the town to maintain a AAA bond rating.

The auditors note again recommends the development of a comprehensive accounting procedures manual for the town and BOE. When the move is made to the Munis financial system the majority of procedures will change. Therefore once implementation is complete procedures for the Town and BOE will mirror each other and one manual will be created for both entities. The auditors also recommend the Town and BOE have a Fraud Risk Assessment performed. The funding request for this is included in year 2 (FY2021) of the town's six year capital plan.

Quarterly
Budget Analysis

2018-19 Audit
Report

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

Public Audience

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to enter Executive Session at 7:46 p.m. to discuss a student matter and include Mr. Curtis and Mr. Sullivan.

Executive Session

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Burrick: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Adjournment

Mr. Tindall: Seconded. So moved.

Jen Batchelar
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary