

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

February 25, 2020

Ms. Susan Salina called the regular meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. in the Latimer Lane School cafeteria.

Roll Call:

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

**Members absent:** Mrs. Lydia Tedone

**Also present:** Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Erin Murray, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Director of Personnel Neil Sullivan, BOE Student Representative Josh Picoult and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

Public Audience

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Picoult reported on activities and events at the elementary schools, middle and high school. Ms. Willerup reported that SHS teacher Jeff Osborne and Jim Martoccio will be giving a presentation at the Simsbury Free Library about their trip studying WWII. Ms. Lemke reported that Unified Theater will have their performance on Thursday in the SHS auditorium. The Spirit Council and Community for Care are co-sponsoring a workshop on Implicit Bias on March 11<sup>th</sup> at the Simsbury Public Library. Mr. Sullivan thanked SCTV for coming on the road to film tonight's meeting.

Communications

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Appointment of Simsbury High School Principal

Ms. Willerup: MOVE that the Board of Education appoint Stephen Patrina to the position of Simsbury High School Principal effective February 26, 2020.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

Appointment of SHS Principal

B. Approval of Minutes of February 11, 2020 Meeting

Ms. Batchelar: MOVE to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2020 meeting.

Ms. Thomas: Seconded. So moved. Ms. Willerup abstained.

Approval of Minutes of February 11, 2020 Meeting

C. Approval of Minutes of February 18, 2020 Meeting

Ms. Willerup: MOVE to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2020 special meeting.

Approval of Minutes of February 18, 2020 Meeting

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

#### D. Adoption of 2020-21 Non-Public School Budget

Mr. Burrick: MOVE that the Board of Education adopt the 2020-21 Non-Public School budget in the amount of \$551,383 which represents an increase of \$4,951 or 0.91%.

Mr. Watson: Seconded. So moved.

#### E. Adoption of 2020-21 Public School Budget

Mr. Curtis pointed out the insurance line item has been updated and increased by \$108,230 based on new information. The budget amount is now a 2.27% increase which is within the BOF 2.5% guideline.

Ms. Willerup: MOVE that the Board of Education adopt the 2020-21 Public School budget in the amount of \$72,493,061 which represents an increase of \$1,612,083 or 2.27%

Ms. Thomas: Seconded. So moved.

#### F. Cancellation of March 10, 2020 Regular Meeting

Ms. Thomas: MOVE to cancel the Board of Education meeting scheduled on March 10, 2020 due to the Board of Education budget presentation to the Board of Finance.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

### INFORMATION AND REPORTS

#### A. Facilities Master Plan Update

Mr. Sullivan stated that the presentation will include a summary of the current options, feedback from the neighborhood meetings, survey results and the schedule of upcoming meetings. He reviewed the process over the past 18 months, and the goal of having a long range master plan by this spring. Mr. Sullivan discussed elementary projections, noting that an increase of 100 students at both Latimer Lane and Squadron Line School is projected over the next 10 years.

Mr. Sullivan presented an updated list of options. These include building a new grade 5-6 school and having 3, 4 or 5 elementary schools. Another option is building a grade 6 addition at the middle school and having either 4 or 5 elementary schools. An additional factor for consideration is whether to equalize the number of students across the elementary schools through redistricting. There is also the option of maintaining the current elementary school structure with or without redistricting. The last option is phased/targeting renovations to each elementary school.

Mr. Sullivan presented the projected cost options for building a new grade 5-6 school; building a 6<sup>th</sup> grade addition at HJMS and renovating Latimer Lane; and keeping the current structure and just renovating Latimer Lane. Mr. Sullivan reviewed the milestone schedule, noting that the earliest construction could begin is 2022.

Adoption of  
2020-21 Non-  
Public School  
Budget

Adoption of  
2020-21 Public  
School Budget

Cancellation of  
March 10, 2020  
Meeting

Facilities Master  
Plan Update

Mr. Sullivan shared the feedback from the 5 neighborhood meetings held at the elementary schools earlier in the month. Ms. Salina noted that there was varied conversation at the neighborhood meetings, including educational questions about moving 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade or 6<sup>th</sup> grade to HJMS, as well as overcrowding concerns. Mr. Tindall stated that there were very different points of view depending on the school community. He noted two themes: keep the neighborhood schools and opposition to a grade 5/6 school.

Mr. Sullivan presented the community and staff survey results, noting that 247 staff responses were received and 1,180 community responses. 80% of staff support a 6<sup>th</sup> grade addition to HJMS and 60% support a new grade 5-6 school. In ranking 1-3, staff ranked keeping the existing structure as #1. 50% of staff responded that the most effective location for 6<sup>th</sup> grade is middle school. With regard to the community survey, more than 55% support a 6<sup>th</sup> grade addition to HJMS and 37% support a new grade 5-6 school. The community also ranks keeping the existing structure as #1. Less than 50% of community members feel grade 6 should be located at the middle school. The community responded by more than 50% that they prefer a phased in approach to any projects.

Mr. Tindall stated that the goal is for the BOE to make a decision/plan in the spring. He noted that parents at Latimer Lane and Squadron Line are extremely concerned about overcrowding at their schools. Mr. Tindall pointed out that the grade 5-6 school configuration does not have support based on the survey and neighborhood meetings. He suggested that this option no longer be considered. Ms. Salina noted that with a grade 5-6 school it would be the board’s fiduciary responsibility to close at least one elementary school. Board members agreed to remove the grade 5-6 school from future consideration.

Mr. Tindall also suggested that the status quo option of simply maintaining elementary schools no longer be considered. Board members stated that continuing as we have in the past does not address the problems brought forward from the study. They agreed to remove this option from future consideration.

Mr. Tindall stated that the board does not take the financial and tax implications of these options lightly. It is clear from the survey that residents prefer a phased in approach to addressing our school buildings.

**PUBLIC AUDIENCE**

**Josh Falco**, 1 Hartland Road, asked if option 2A reducing the number of elementary schools to 4 is off the table. Ms. Salina stated that it is still an option.

**Sarah Lingenheld**, 322 Bushy Hill Road, asked if the board will be getting information out to the public on the educational reasons for moving 6<sup>th</sup> grade to the middle school. Ms. Lingenheld also stated she is glad the board is going to give Latimer Lane School immediate relief.

Ms. Murray responded that information relative to educating 6<sup>th</sup> graders in the middle school environment will be provided at the public forum on March 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Alex Reger**, 34 Latimer Lane, asked how modular classrooms at Latimer Lane were utilized in the past. He also asked if there is still the possibility of redistricting with

Public Audience

option 2 and 3, and if adding a 6<sup>th</sup> grade addition at HJMS would occur at the same time as renovations to Latimer Lane School.

Ms. Salina responded that renovations to Latimer Lane and a 6<sup>th</sup> grade addition would occur simultaneously. Mr. Curtis stated that in the past the modular classrooms at Latimer Lane housed 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Ms. Salina stated that redistricting is a possibility in all options.

**Kate Moriarity**, 1 Crestview Road, asked how schoolwide activities would be handled if modulars were added before renovation. Mr. Curtis responded that when necessary we have divided schoolwide activities into two separate events.

**Becky Mahoney**, 16 Park Road, noted that in the past, in addition to modulars, Latimer Lane kindergarten students were redistricted.

**Lisa Trouren-Trend**, 23 Hildurcrest Drive, stated that her husband attended Latimer Lane School and he says it is the same as when he attended. She noted that her family moved specifically to the Latimer Lane district and because of the K-6 configuration. She requested further information the educational benefits of moving 6<sup>th</sup> grade to the middle school.

**John Nagy**, 71 Winthrop Street, complimented the board and administration for maintaining a professional attitude and offering a democratic approach to this process.

Ms. Salina stated that the Facilities Master Plan Public Forum will be held on March 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the SHS auditorium.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Batchelar: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Ms. Willerup: Seconded. So moved.

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Jen Batchelar  
Secretary

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Katie Wilde  
Recording Secretary

Adjournment