

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Record of Proceedings

Regular Meeting

March 26, 2019

Ms. Tara Willerup called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Education Conference Room.

Roll Call:

**Members present:** Mmes. Tara Willerup, Susan Salina, Lydia Tedone and Jen Batchelar. Messrs. Todd Burrick, Tom Frank, Jeff Tindall and Brian Watson.

**Also present:** Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Business Manager Burke LaClair, Director of Personnel Neil Sullivan, BOE Student Representative Valerie Lee and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

None

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Valerie Lee, reported on activities at the elementary, middle and high schools. She noted the successful Friend of Music fundraiser. Mr. Frank noted the successes of one of our ABC students. Ms. Tedone reported on Day on the Hill and the discussion around shared services. She stated that CABE has released their legislative priorities. Ms. Tedone will be attending the NSBA conference in Philadelphia. Mr. Tindall commended Officer Kushman for his presentation to the HJMS PTO around vaping and social media.

Ms. Lemke stated that the Community for Care held a program on eating disorders. She noted that the Simsbury Unified Basketball Team are the CCC conference champions and played at halftime during the boys and girls state tournament finals. Ms. Lemke stated that SPED Day on Capitol Hill will be held April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Mr. Sullivan reported that the Policy Committee met prior to tonight's meeting and will be bringing policy revisions forward for review at the next board meeting. He stated that the Personnel & Negotiations Committee will meet next week to set goals for NAGE negotiations. Mr. Sullivan noted that in the coming weeks he will be attending 3 recruitment fairs at CREC, CCSC and UConn. Mr. LaClair stated that a bid opening for the HJMS project will occur on Friday with the results forwarded to the Public Building Committee at their meeting on Monday.

Ms. Willerup stated that the town has created a Sustainability Committee and has asked for a representative from the board to sit on the committee. Mr. Tindall has volunteered to sit on this committee. Ms. Willerup noted that there were regionalization bills in committee at the state legislature. She stated that the Simsbury BOE does not support regionalization, but is happy to work with other schools toward shared services.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- A. Approval of Minutes of February 26, 2019 Special Meeting

Ms. Salina: MOVE to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2019 Special

Communications

Minutes of  
February 26,  
2019 Special

<p>Meeting.</p> <p>Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved. Ms. Tedone abstained.</p> <p>B. Approval of Minutes of February 26, 2019 Regular Meeting</p> <p>Mr. Tindall: MOVE to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2019 Regular Meeting.</p> <p>Mr. Frank: Seconded. So moved. Ms. Tedone abstained.</p> <p>C. Approval of Minutes of March 22, 2019 Special Meeting</p> <p>Mr. Burrick: MOVE to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2019 Special Meeting.</p> <p>Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved. Ms. Salina and Ms. Batchelar abstained.</p> <p>D. Personnel</p> <p>Ms. Batchelar: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the retirement of Diane Benson and Judy Trout effective June 30, 3019.</p> <p>Ms. Salina: Seconded. So moved.</p> <p>E. Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Teachers</p> <p>Mr. Burrick: MOVE that the contract of employment of the Julie Anne Brouker, Bethany Franklin, Ryan Gritter, Kevin Huhn, Kelly Myers and Gabe Remillard be non-renewed effective June 30, 2019 and that the Superintendent of Schools is directed to advise such person(s) in writing of this action.</p> <p>Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.</p> <p>F. Acceptance of Eric Dahlin Memorial Scholarship</p> <p>Mr. Tindall: MOVE that the Board of Education approve the Eric Dahlin Memorial Scholarship, to be disbursed beginning in 2019.</p> <p>Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.</p> <p>G. Acceptance of Phase Zero Design Scholarship</p> <p>Ms. Salina: MOVE that the Board of Education approve the Phase Zero Design Scholarship, to be disbursed in 2019.</p> <p>Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.</p> <p>H. Acceptance of Roger Preston Memorial Scholarship</p> <p>Ms. Tedone: MOVE that the Board of Education approve the Robert Preston Memorial Scholarship, to be disbursed in 2019.</p>	<p>Meeting</p> <p>Minute of February 26, 2019</p> <p>Minutes of March 22, 2019 Special Meeting</p> <p>Personnel</p> <p>Non-renewal of Non-tenured Teachers</p> <p>Eric Dahlin Memorial Scholarship</p> <p>Phase Zero Design Scholarship</p> <p>Roger Preston Memorial Scholarship</p>
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Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

I. Acceptance of Gift from Central School PTO

Ms. Salina: MOVE that the proposed gift of book donations from the Central School PTO be approved.

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

J. Approval of Retirement Plan Subcommittee Memorandum of Understanding

Mr. LaClair explained that the memorandum of understanding formalizes the duties of the Retirement Plan subcommittee, as detailed in the Town Charter, and the role of the Board of Finance.

Mr. Burrick MOVE to adopt the Retirement Plan Subcommittee memorandum of understanding.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved.

K. Cancellation of April 9, 2019 Meeting

Ms. Tedone: MOVE to cancel the Board of Education meeting scheduled on April 9, 2019.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

L. Adoption of Revised 2019-20 Public School Budget

Mr. Curtis presented revisions to the previously adopted 2019-20 budget which included a 2.5% increase to the current budget. These include the addition of 2 retirements and the elimination of a new Kindergarten teacher position at Tootin' Hills School. These reductions lower the budget from 2.5% to 2.3%. Additionally, the new insurance consultant is recommending an increase in our health insurance fund. The BOE increase is in the amount of \$273,367. In discussion with the Board of Finance, they requested that the board use non-lapsing funds to offset the health insurance increase.

Mr. Curtis stated that the Board of Finance asked that the board move the budget closer to a 2.0% increase. He presented reductions of \$30,000 to equipment and \$11,950 to memberships that would bring the budget increase to 2.2%. Mr. Curtis stated that to reduce the budget to 2.0% would require the elimination of the additional computer technician at HJMS and delay the hiring of a Director of School Safety until midyear. He noted that if we do not hire a computer technician at HJMS the 1:1 Chromebook program implementation would be delayed a year.

Mr. Frank stated that he is reluctant to remove or delay the school safety position. He said he does not support removing a position to hit an arbitrary 2% number. Ms. Batchelar stated that she believes the 1:1 program at HJMS is more critical with the renovation. Students can no longer borrow computers from classrooms and there

Gift from Central School PTO

Approval of Retirement Plan Subcommittee MOU

Cancellation of April 9, 2019 Meeting

Adoption of Revised 2019-20 Budget

are study halls in rooms with no internet access.

Mr. Tindall asked if we are comfortable leaving just \$80,000 in the non-lapsing account? Mr. Curtis stated if the funds are not used to offset insurance it will be used to balance the budget for the internal service fund at the end of the fiscal year. Mr. LaClair noted that the non-lapsing account is not meant to build each year as a savings account. Mr. Frank suggested the remaining non-lapsing funds be used to for the 2 positions.

Mr. Burrick stated he had hoped to add a position for someone to focus on and coordinate our diversity efforts. Mr. Curtis responded that a formal job description can be developed in order to have further discussion on how the position could be funded. Mr. Watson asked about our current safety and security staff. Mr. Sullivan reviewed the personnel in the district, including the two School Resource Officers. He noted that the capital budget includes \$750,000 for additional safety infrastructure improvements. Mr. Sullivan stated that the Director of School Safety would coordinate the safety work and be a liaison to the schools' safety teams. Mr. Curtis noted that we need someone to analyze the work we have done and advise us going forward. Mr. Burrick questioned whether there is enough work for a full time position and suggested maybe it could be shared with another district.

Mr. Frank: MOVE to accept items 1 through 5 on the reduction list as presented.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded.

Mr. Watson asked if the only thing holding back 1:1 at HJMS is the additional computer technician. Mr. LaClair responded in the affirmative, noting that at SHS the burden has increased on library media specialists and technicians with their 1:1 program at that school. In addition, high school students run a Help desk at SHS. This would not be possible at HJMS.

Mr. Frank withdrew his motion.

Mr. Frank: MOVE that the Board of Education adopt the 2019-20 Public School budget in the amount of \$70,670,269 which represents an increase of \$1,520,717 or 2.20%.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved.

## INFORMATION AND REPORTS

### A. Equity Update

Mr. Curtis stated that a great deal of input and feedback has been provided to the administration and there have been some common themes. These include the need for a curriculum audit, providing diversity based professional development for faculty, staff and administrators, recruitment and hiring of more diverse faculty and involving all students in discussions about diversity. Mr. Curtis noted that the process of improvement is imbedded in the new BOE goals and thereby equity work needs to be embedded within our structure.

Ms. Lemke stated that the district has engaged the Racial Equality Center (RE-

Equity Update

Center) to facilitate work with students and faculty at SHS. Impassioned students and faculty will be trained as facilitators and specialized focus groups will be formed to develop stories and a voice for those groups who feel discriminated against. Facilitators will conduct sessions with all students at SHS utilizing vignettes from the focus groups. This work will take place in April and May.

Ms. Lemke stated that equity based professional development was held on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Between April and June faculty meetings and building based professional development will provide implicit bias training to all K-12 faculty. District leadership implicit bias training took place on February 22<sup>nd</sup> with Deacon Art Miller. On March 19<sup>th</sup> several members of the administration attended a CAPSS conference entitled Leading for Equity during which equity-based activities and next steps were discussed.

Ms. Lemke stated that the Community for Care will hold a program in May for the Simsbury community. This program will be facilitated by a member of the Community Relations Services at the Department of Justice. Ms. Lemke reviewed the process for this program which will form a Spirit Council that will monitor the process and ultimately come out with a plan for equity.

Mr. Frank asked if there are any successful models of this work in CT. Ms. Lemke responded that West Hartford has done similar equity work, as well as Granby. Ms. Salina asked about the plan for HJMS. Ms. Lemke stated that staff has delved into these issues on their own and have participated in professional development. They are now looking toward next steps.

Mr. Burrick stated that we have an incredible opportunity in front of us and he hopes that a year from now Simsbury will be a model district for this work. He suggested that the student handbook include verbiage that we are an accepting community. Mr. Burrick asked that Deacon Art Miller meet with the BOE.

Mr. Tindall noted that we have an opportunity here and it is important that we measure our success. Ms. Salina stated that the facilitators at SHS need to know that the BOE is invested in making sure what we are doing is working.

#### PUBLIC AUDIENCE

**Sean Robatham**, Bloomfield stated that he sat with SHS student leaders and Mr. O'Brien and the students were adamant that they would like a change made to the student handbook. Next week some students will be engaged in a diversity project at SHS. Mr. Robatham asked what we envision as a result of the implicit bias training and how will we know if it is working.

Mr. Curtis stated that an Equity Council will be formed to prepare a cycle of improvement that creates a vision and metrics for this work.

**Sharon Thomas**, 42 Brettonwood Drive, stated that the equity work needs to start with a mission for the Simsbury Public Schools that includes students, teachers, coaches, lunchroom staff, etc. so they know the expectations for school culture. She stated that the equity work needs to be measurable.

**Carl Meyer**, 7 Deep Wood Road, stated that he agrees with Mr. Tindall and Mr. Frank on the importance of safety and security. He noted that being safe is not black

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and white, there are shades of gray. Mr. Meyer noted that security work has been done quietly, behind the scenes, and so much has been done accomplished. He stated that a safety person is necessary to observe what is going on at each of the schools.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Salina: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 9:16 p.m.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

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Todd Burrick  
Secretary

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Katie Wilde  
Recording Secretary

Adjournment