

**Somers Board of Education Meeting
Board of Education Meeting Room
September 9, 2019
7:00 PM**

Attendance Taken at 7:00 PM:

Present Board Members: Jan Martin, Sarah Bollinger, Barbara Capuano, David Palmer, Bruce Devlin, Rick Lees, Jeremy Anderson, Anne Kirkpatrick

Absent Board Members: Kate McLellan

Others: Brian Czapla, Bill Boutwell, Dr. Denise Messina, Dr. Irene Zytka, Barbara Anderson, Jessica Higgins, Patrick Soucy, Gary Cotzin, Suzy Williams, Jackie Nappo

1. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by Chairman Devlin at 7:00 p.m. in the Mabelle B. Avery Board of Education meeting room.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Chairman Devlin presented Barbara Capuano with a gift and thanked her for her service on the Board of Education.

3.1. Recognition of Paraeducator of the Year

Rationale: Mrs. Jessica Higgins, Paraeducator at Somers Elementary School, will be recognized by the Board as the 2020 Paraeducator of the Year.

Discussion: Dr. Denise Messina, Director of Pupil Services, introduced Jessica Higgins to the BOE as the 2020 Somers Paraeducator of the Year. This year, Jessica Higgins, Early Start Pre-K Paraeducator at SES, was nominated by Barbara Anderson and Jackie Shea. She is one of seven finalists for the 2020 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year award. The award is in honor of Anne Marie Murphy, a Paraeducator who lost her life at Sandy Hook Elementary School. On 10/28/19, finalists will be recognized by the State. Denise shared comments from her colleagues: Jessica has a smile for those who are emotionally fragile and need it the most; she has a strong understanding of the preschool curriculum; she uses developmentally appropriate practice through play; she assists with academic subjects but focuses on the whole child; and, she understands diverse developmental ranges of students and values the importance of establishing relationships with students, families, and the team. The BOE congratulated Mrs. Higgins on her achievement. Mrs. Higgins thanked the BOE and is honored. She loves working for Somers and the community.

3.2. Recognition of 2020 Teacher of the Year

Rationale: Mrs. Suzylynn Williams, Somers High School Social Worker, will be recognized by the Board of Education for this year's Teacher of the Year.

Discussion: Gary Cotzin, SHS Principal, presented Mrs. Suzylynn Williams, SHS Social Worker, to the BOE as the 2020 Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Williams educates the students, faculty, and parents. She guides students to persevere in difficult life circumstances. She guides teachers in building trauma-informed classrooms and promotes awareness among faculty. She guides parents in their challenges. Students are comfortable going to her. She has a calming effect which is often needed especially during stressful times. Mr. Cotzin is very proud and honored. Mrs. Williams stated she is honored to work for this district and is linked arm and arm with the best educators and compassionate and capable administrators. She thanked the BOE.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1. Draft of the August 26, 2019 Board of Education Meeting

Rationale: Draft of the August 26, 2019 Board of Education Meeting for the Board to review and approve.

Motion Passed: Motion to approve the 8/26/19 Board of Education minutes passed with a motion by Barbara Capuano and a second by Sarah Bollinger.

8 Yeas - 0 Nays.

5. AUDIENCE TO CITIZENS/STAFF/STUDENTS

6. CORRESPONDENCE

7. OPPORTUNITY TO ADD/DELETE AGENDA ITEMS

8. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion Passed: Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jeremy Anderson. **8 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

8.1. Warrant of September 9, 2019

Rationale: The Board will review and consent to the September 9, 2019 warrant in the amount of \$348,029.82.

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1. 1st Warning for Board of Education Meetings for 2020

Rationale: Discussion about the Board of Education Meetings for 2020.

Discussion: Superintendent Czapla stated that the Board of Education meetings for 2020 follows the same schedule as in previous years.

9.2. 1st Warning for Grade 7 ELA Book - Unbroken

Rationale: 1st Warning for Grade 7 ELA Book - Unbroken by Laura Hillenbrand

Discussion: Jan Martin reported that the attachment described the book as a novel when, in fact, it is a historical biography. Changes will be noted.

9.3. 1st Warning on Grade 8 Book - Woods Runner

Rationale: 1st Warning on Grade 8 book - Woods Runner by Gary Paulsen

9.4. 1st Warning on Somers High School Course: Robotics 2

Rationale: 1st Warning on Somers High School Course: Robotics 2

10. OLD BUSINESS

11. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

11.1. Transportation Report from First Student

Rationale: Mr. Patrick Soucy will present to the Board.

Discussion: Chairman Devlin and Superintendent Czapla introduced Mr. Patrick Soucy, First Student Location Manager, to the BOE. Superintendent Czapla stated that Mr. Soucy is new to Somers this year and is very appreciative of his efforts. He has done a great job meeting the needs of the school system, students, and parents. Mr. Soucy discussed upcoming initiatives that will provide greater transportation information access to parents. Mr. Soucy described three out of four applications that will be going live in Somers:

- District Dashboard--an application that will enable administrators and parents to track each bus route. The application updates the bus GPS every 15 seconds. Data includes run start time, run end time, student stop times, individual stop status, and arrival time to schools. There is also an unlimited number of people who may use the Dashboard per student as well (i.e. mom, dad, grandparent, etc.)
- First Parent App--an application that may be downloaded to any smartphone. This application is secured by the individual student's ID and school code. Once the ID and school code are entered, the parent will receive notification when the bus is scheduled to arrive either by distance or by time (the parent is able to choose). This application will allow instant messaging to parents for any delays or emergency relocation of stops. Each child in the family is color-coded. There are up to six color codes which will display on the map. This application updates every 15 seconds. As soon as the bus passes the pick up or drop off of a student, it will be marked as DONE versus ARRIVED. Once the bus is at the school or at the bus yard, it is then marked as ARRIVED.
- First ACTS--a behavior-reporting software. Currently, each school has a different form they fill out for poor behavior on the bus. This is a web-based system that allows an incident to be created and then emailed to the

administrator. It will tally the number of incidents the student has as well as upload audio and video. It may be accessed automatically. It may allow for customized punishments for each school in the district. All buses have two to three cameras that have been installed which will monitor for fighting, bullying, profanity, vandalism, etc. The cameras automatically turn on when the bus is started and turn off 30 minutes after the bus has stopped. Students have been made aware of the cameras.

11.2. Professional Development Calendar for 2019-20

Rationale: Dr. Irene Zytka will be present to answer questions on the Professional Development Calendar for 2019-20.

Discussion: Dr. Irene Zytka, Director of Curriculum, updated the BOE on Professional Development events that will occur this year. Dr. Zytka provided a Professional Development calendar for the BOE members. There are three major focuses: Fountas & Pinnell (F&P) curriculum at SES, continuing equity and diversity training at SHS and MBA, and focusing on critical thinking for the district as part of the strategic plan. Presenters from F&P and EdLeader21 have been scheduled for various trainings. F&P will be strategically rolled out to enable staff to digest the trainings. EdLeader21 will be returning in October for more training. During that time, staff will be working on rubrics for critical thinking. Curriculum meetings will discuss critical thinking and how it will appear in the curriculum (i.e. using Post It notes to script critical thinking questions when doing F&P interactive read-alouds at SES). Students need to process the information first in order to communicate with other students and come up with answers. Rubrics will include gathering information and discovery, interpretation, constructing arguments, and ultimately will end with self-regulation and discussion. Critical thinking is one of the four C's in the Strategic Plan. Communication, collaboration, and creativity/innovation will be rolled out over the next few years. Dr. Zytka will be working with a consultant. Superintendent Czapla is pleased with the strategic plan. Discussion ensued regarding mandated Professional Development which is now done online.

11.3. 2019-20 Long Range Facilities Plan Update

Rationale: The Superintendent will discuss the LRFP with the Board.

Discussion: Superintendent Czapla provided the BOE with a LRFP update. The track and athletic facilities are underway. Currently, the track has been stripped. Superintendent Czapla has a construction meeting on 9/10/19. The oil tank is in the process of being built. He is anticipating an October/November installation. Video surveillance has been upgraded to increase coverage. More work has to be done, and he is estimating another \$50,000 CIP request. Lighting in the auditorium is complete. The MBA parking lot allowing for a new drop-off/pick-up is complete. The SHS gym floor has been refinished. The science room lintels have been delayed because the vendor stated that new windows will need to be installed. This may be another CIP request. A CIP meeting has been planned for October. Facility improvements are being planned for next summer.

11.4. Superintendent's District Improvement Plan

Rationale: Superintendent Czapla will present the District's Improvement Plan for 2019-20.

Discussion: Superintendent Czapla provided the District Improvement Plan to the BOE for 2019-20. There has been discussion of administrator goals for a number of years. Strategic plan goals include student achievement, professional learning, and accountability. The improvement plan reflects how the three goals will be met by utilizing metrics to measure the effectiveness of strategies, the staff responsible, the resources and learning needed, and a timeline to achieve the goal. Superintendent Czapla stated that this is a roadmap that has been used in previous districts. Jeremy Anderson requested that the Strategic Plan's Four C's be included on the cover page.

11.5. Superintendent's Update

Rationale: The Superintendent will update the Board on other issues.

Discussion: Superintendent Czapla reminded BOE members that the next BOE meeting on 9/23/19 will be held at Somers High School at 6 p.m. as a candidate workshop. He has spoken with a number of BOE members regarding their presentations. Nick Russo from CAFE, members of the BOE, and a student will present their designated topics. Superintendent Czapla also invited the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, the candidates, and the Republican and Democratic Town Committee Chairs to the BOE meeting.

12. COMMITTEE REPORTS

12.1. CURRICULUM

Discussion: Anne Kirkpatrick and Jan Martin stated that the committee met and presented the first warnings under New Business.

12.2. POLICY

Discussion: Anne Kirkpatrick reported that the committee members met prior to the 9/9/19 BOE meeting and will have a few policies to warn in October.

12.3. SALARY & NEGOTIATION

Discussion: No report.

12.4. PLANNING

Discussion: No report.

13. CREC UPDATE

Discussion: Anne Kirkpatrick stated that a meeting will be held next week and that there is nothing new to report.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Motion Passed: Motion to adjourn the BOE meeting at 8:16 p.m. passed with a motion by Jan Martin and a second by Sarah Bollinger. **8 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

Rick Lees, Board of Education Secretary Date

Shannin Burns, BOE Recording Secretary