

**Somers Board of Education Meeting
Teleconferencing on Zoom
August 24, 2020
7:00 PM**

Video of this meeting may be accessed at:
www.somers.k12.ct.us

Attendance Taken at 7:00 PM:

Present Board Members: Bruce Devlin, David Palmer, Jan Martin, Jeremy Anderson, Sarah Bollinger, Krista Cherry, Anne Kirkpatrick, Marissa Marks, Jan Martin

Absent Board Members: Kate McLellan

Others: Brian Czapla, Bill Boutwell, Margot Martello, Dina Senecal, Lynda Thornton, Cynthia DeRoma, Giselle Richards-Genece, DJ Kibbe

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the BOE via teleconferencing on Zoom was called to order by Chairman Devlin at 7:03 p.m.

2. RECOGNITION

2.1. Mrs. Lynda Thornton, Assistant Principal of Mabelle B. Avery Middle School

Rationale: The Board recognizes the addition to Somers Public Schools in Mrs. Lynda Thornton, Assistant Principal of Mabelle B. Avery Middle School.

Discussion: Superintendent Czapla and the BOE recognized Mrs. Lynda Thornton as the Assistant Principal at Mabelle B. Avery Middle School. Mrs. Margot Martello, MBA Principal, introduced Mrs. Thornton who came from Washington Middle School in Meriden, CT after 14 years as a LA Teacher. She was Teacher of the Year in 2015-16 and served in the CT National Guard. She has training in equity, trauma, social-emotional learning, growth mindset, etc. She has worked hard over the summer preparing for the reopening plans and collaborating on social-emotional learning lessons. Mrs. Martello is excited to work alongside Mrs. Thornton as she continues to grow.

Mrs. Thornton thanked Superintendent Czapla, Mrs. Martello, and the BOE and is excited to be a part of the administrative team at SPS. She stated that she can't say enough about the district and is excited to continue collaboration with Mrs. Martello. She stated that she has already learned so much and is embracing the opportunity.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1. Draft Minutes of Special Meeting of August 6, 2020.

Rationale: Board to review and approve Special Minutes of BOE Meeting of August 6, 2020.

Motion Passed: Motion to approve the August 6, 2020 BOE Draft Minutes passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jan Martin.

8 Yeas - 0 Nays.

4. OPPORTUNITY TO ADD/DELETE AGENDA ITEMS

Discussion: Superintendent Czapla will review an email sent by Sarah Bollinger and will respond to the BOE.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion Passed: Motion to approve Consent Agenda passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jan Martin. **8 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

5.1. Childrearing Leave

Rationale: Mrs. Caitlin Heintz, teacher from Somers Elementary, requesting a childrearing leave through December 31, 2020.

5.2. Warrant of July 27, 2020, August 10, 2020 and August 24, 2020

Rationale: The Board to consent to the warrants of July 27, 2020 in the amount of \$403,075.30, August 10, 2020 in the amount of \$353,589.94, and August 24, 2020 in the amount of \$191,921.46.

6. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion: Chairman Devlin announced that starting in September the BOE will go back to in-person meetings and may be held at the Somers High School Library Media Center.

6.1. Approval of Heat/Snow Day Remote Learning (Pending CSDE approval)

Rationale: The Board to approve heat/snow day Remote Learning (pending CSDE approval).

Discussion: Superintendent Czapla expressed his concerns to the Commissioner of Education regarding the mask mandate and having students and staff attend school on hot days. He stated that SPS is in a good position to transition to remote learning on a temporary basis if need be for a heat day. Ultimately, the State BOE has to approve this proposition. The Commissioner recommended that the SPS BOE approve the temporary transition to remote learning on heat/snow days. Superintendent Czapla will report back to the Commissioner on the approval which may be a motivator for the State BOE.

Motion Passed: Motion to approve heat/snow day remote learning pending CSDE approval passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jan Martin. **8 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

6.2. Approval of 2019-20 Budget Transfers

Rationale: The Board to approve the 2019-20 Budget Transfers.

Motion Passed: Motion to approve the 2019-20 budget transfers passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jan Martin. **8 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

6.3. DBS Policy 5118 - Non-Resident Attendance

Rationale: The Board to approve the DBS Policy 5118 on Non-Resident Attendance.

Discussion: This policy is an attempt to bring some relief to the teaching staff who may be experiencing daycare issues. There are two tuition rates depending on date of hire with the potential for a sliding scale if more than one child in the family attends SPS. Superintendent Czapla is unsure of how many staff will take advantage of this policy. Mrs. Mucci, SES Principal, is working on capacity numbers. There may not be a high number offered due to the higher enrollment at SES.

Motion Passed: Motion to approve DBS Policy 5118 as presented passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jan Martin. **8 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

7. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

7.1. Superintendent Update

Rationale: The Board will hear from the Superintendent on updates at Somers Public Schools.

Discussion: Superintendent Czapla stated that SPS is in good shape in planning for the school year. SPS is opening in the hybrid model which has been unpopular and somewhat controversial because the county and town statistics have been low. The ultimate goal is to keep the statistics low going forward. He stated that there needs to be a couple of weeks to see things are done properly as people are returning to school after congregating. There will be a reassessment at the beginning of October. If numbers continue to stay low without surges, Superintendent Czapla may recommend returning to school full time.

Conversely, if there is a surge, he may recommend staying hybrid or transitioning to full remote. As far as for school status, all schools have PPE, tents, sanitizing stations, and four crate storage units have been brought in to hold equipment that was removed from rooms to provide more space. Technology set-ups are in and some are in the process. Each teacher has been set up with a laptop, additional second monitor, and a document camera to project lessons to students at home and at school. Superintendent Czapla will be going through each school this week with custodians and Principals for final inspections. The district is in very good shape in terms of staffing. Some teachers will serve as remote teachers. There have been no requests for leave. He stated that this is a testimony to their dedication to their students. He continues to work with the town and local agencies as well as looking at other daycare options for citizens. He publicly acknowledged Anne Kirkpatrick for coordinating the use of space at the Congregational Church.

Regarding Grant information, SPS has received \$39,000 as part of the Cares Act from the federal government and \$96,000 from the State which he states is not a fair formula based upon Title I numbers. He stated that SPS will be fine, but it will be a tight year. He froze the budget on 7/2/20 with very few requests. During this school year, Mr. Czapla and Mr. Boutwell will be reviewing the budget in order to make better projections by the end of the school year. Discussion ensued.

7.2. Professional Development Report

Rationale: Mrs. Senecal, Director of Curriculum, will be presenting the Professional Development Report.

Discussion: Mrs. Dina Senecal, Director of Curriculum, updated the BOE on Professional Development. PD week is scheduled to start on Monday, 8/31/20. There will be a three-hour session regarding the Covid Experience through in-house facilitators. The latter part will break out into sessions for self-care. This will give teachers tangible things to do with students in the classroom. There will be PD based on technology utilizing in-house presenters as well as self-paced technology PD. A survey was sent out to teachers regarding their comfort level on key tech systems. Since there was a broad range, tech groups will be broken up based on comfort level. There will be PD for livestreaming because teachers will be using a document camera. There will be PD from off-campus resources for the new math program as well as the vocabulary program (Sadler). It is essential to give teachers time next Friday to be in their classrooms and apply the PD. The technology department will be available and assist in troubleshooting.

Mrs. Senecal will be communicating with the families of students who are opting-out on Monday. During the first week of school, off-campus learners will pick up their materials and work on setting up their programs. They will start to livestream on 9/14/20. Three people have been interviewed as substitute teachers. Discussion ensued regarding who will be teaching students who have opted out. SES will not change classrooms during the day. All Specials will occur in classrooms with the exception of PE. Grade 5 opt-out students will livestream with their teachers. There will be a large population of parents who will be driving their children to school. Students will be separated on buses.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

8.1. CURRICULUM

Discussion: Jan Martin asked that Mrs. Dina Senecal, Director of Curriculum, speak about the next steps in curriculum development discussed at the committee's July meeting. She stated that there will be continued discussion about diversity, equity, and education. She is actively working and creating a website for parents, teachers, and students. She will look at Professional Development throughout the school year that will focus on bias and racism. SHS will begin conversations regarding the recent events related to BLM. Suzy

Williams, SHS Social Worker, will hold strict advisory lessons. Mrs. Senecal anticipates meeting with the Curriculum Committee in September.

8.2. POLICY

Discussion: Anne Kirkpatrick reported that the committee is on hold and will await further direction.

8.3. SALARY & NEGOTIATION

Discussion: David Palmer reported that the BOE will be entering into Executive Session to discuss the Nurses' Memorandum.

8.4. PLANNING

Discussion: No report.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Rationale: The Board will invite Mr. Czapla and Mr. Boutwell into the Executive Session to discuss the Nurses' MOU (Memorandum of Understanding).

Motion Passed: Motion to enter into Executive Session at 7:47 p.m. and invite Superintendent Czapla and Mr. Bill Boutwell to discuss the Nurses' contract and MOU passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jan Martin. **8 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

The BOE came out of Executive Session at 7:57 p.m.

Motion Passed: Motion to accept the Nurses' MOU as presented in Executive Session passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jan Martin. **8 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion Passed: Motion to adjourn the BOE meeting at 7:59 p.m. passed with a motion by Jan Martin and a second by David Palmer. **8 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

Jan Martin, BOE Secretary

Date

Shannin Burns, BOE Recording Secretary