

**Somers Board of Education Meeting**  
 Somers High School Media Center  
 October 13, 2020  
 7:00 PM

**Attendance Taken at 7:02 PM:**

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

Others: Brian Czapla, Bill Boutwell, Rob Wilson, Cynthia DeRoma, Melissa Mucci, Christian Loftus

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by Chairman Devlin at 7:03 p.m. in the SHS Media Center.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**3. AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS**

**3.1. The Board will recognize the 2021 Somers Teacher of the Year and the ParaEducator of the Year.**

**Rationale:** The Board will recognize Mr. Christian Loftus, SES Music Teacher, as the 2021 Teacher of the Year and Mrs. Anna Bell, MBA ParaEducator, as the 2021 Somers ParaEducator of the Year.

**Discussion:** Mrs. Melissa Mucci, SES Principal, introduced Mr. Christian Loftus, SES Music Teacher, to the BOE as Teacher of the Year. She stated that the SES community has been blessed with his talent. The music program has grown since his arrival. She described him as creative, comical, caring, and working hard to reach all students. The staff loves his personality, and parents respect him. He is the Team Leader this year and heads the sign-out ukulele program. He has made a CD entitled "Everybody Has a Birthday" which is a compilation of children's songs. He also has a YouTube program, "Everyone's in a Band." Students are eager for his Zoom class. Mrs. Mucci stated that he has an easygoing manner and a love of music. The BOE congratulated Mr. Loftus and presented him with a gift. Mr. Loftus thanked the BOE and stated that last spring presented him with the unique opportunity to spread his wings in a different way with regards to livestreaming.

Chairman Devlin read a letter regarding Anna Bell, ParaEducator of the Year, from MBA. Mrs. Bell was unable to attend the BOE meeting this evening. He stated that Mrs. Bell stands out because of her commitment to the classroom, extracurricular activities, the community as a whole, and as ParaEducator. She

supports growth and development of her students. She arranges the 7th and 8th grade dances and collects canned goods for Champs Place. She organizes the food drive and creates opportunities for the school community. She has been described as patient, flexible, nurturing, dedicated, selfless, humble, committed, etc. The BOE congratulated Mrs. Bell for her accomplishments.

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **4.1. Pension Plan Update and Approval**

**Rationale:** The Forma Group will Zoom into the meeting to give an overview and answer any questions. The Board will then vote on any changes.

**Discussion:** David Palmer introduced Mr. Kevin Nichols from the Centre Harbour Group at Morgan Stanley which is the group retained to manage SPS's pension plan. Mr. Nichols joined the BOE meeting via Zoom. He provided a document listing recommended changes and the reasoning behind the changes to the portfolio.

**Motion Passed:** Motion to approve the recommendations as presented this evening passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jeremy Anderson. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

#### **5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

##### **5.1. Draft Minutes of September 28, 2020 Board of Education Meeting**

**Rationale:** The Board will review and approve the Draft Minutes of the September 28, 2020 meeting.

**Motion Passed:** Motion to approve the Draft Minutes from the September 28, 2020 BOE meeting passed with a motion by Jan Martin and a second by Sarah Bollinger. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

#### **6. AUDIENCE TO CITIZENS/STAFF/STUDENTS**

**Discussion:** Cynthia DeRoma addressed the BOE with concerns regarding Facebook comments involving diversity and inclusion. She read some of the comments to the BOE.

#### **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. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

##### **8.1. Warrant of October 13, 2020**

**Rationale:** The Board is to review and consent to the warrant of October 13, 2020 in the amount of \$278,291.51.

## **8.2. Board of Education Meeting Schedule for 2021**

**Rationale:** The Board to approve the Board of Education Meeting Schedule for 2021.

## **9. OLD BUSINESS**

### **9.1. Approval of Special Board of Education Meeting**

**Rationale:** The Board will vote on having a Special Meeting on November 11, 2020.

**Discussion:** The meeting will consist of a FOI update from CABA as well as discussion on Board performances and issues. It will be held at the Congregational Church.

**Motion Passed:** Motion to direct the Superintendent to warn the Special BOE Meeting on 11/11/20 passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Krista Cherry. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

## **10. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

### **10.1. Somers Public School Organization Chart for 2020-2021**

**Rationale:** The 2020-2021 Somers Public Schools Organization Chart for the Board to view.

**Discussion:** Superintendent Czaplá stated that the SPS Organization Chart is an annual operations chart per BOE policy.

### **10.2. Quarterly Budget Report**

**Rationale:** Mr. Boutwell will be there for any questions on the Quarterly Budget Report.

**Discussion:** Mr. Bill Boutwell, Director of Business Services, updated the BOE on the budget. He stated not to put a lot of stock into this projection since it is very early in the school year and subject to fluctuate due to a number of variables. He and the Superintendent will be constantly monitoring and managing the budget. He reviewed the categories of the budget including salaries, insurance and benefits, tuition, transportation, utilities, maintenance, instructional resources, extracurricular, equipment, and administrative overhead. Some of these categories are more set versus others which may fluctuate. Overall, Mr. Boutwell stated that the budget is in a positive position. He reviewed the 2020-21 Covid-19 expenses and/or grant funds available. Superintendent Czaplá stated that SPS did a lot of purchasing of Covid-19 supplies last spring. He stated we will continue to spend, but we are in good shape.

### **10.3. Superintendent Update**

**Rationale:** The Superintendent will give an update on Somers Public Schools.

**Discussion:** Superintendent Czaplá updated the BOE on recent events. He made changes in opening SES to full in-person learning before opening MBA and SHS after much discussion with administrative teams. He stated the younger students are suffering more academically. It has been working relatively well at this

time. He will continue monitoring the State metrics. Tolland County is in the range of favoring in-person learning. He receives updated numbers every Friday. He will continue to watch SHS and recreational sports which seem to be problematic, especially contact tracing with other towns. He will revisit secondary levels returning to in-person learning at the end of October/early November. There will still be the option of remote distance learning for parents/students. There may be more purchases made to support in-person learning such as dividers, extending tent rentals, masks, etc. Discussion ensued among BOE members.

**11. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**11.1. CURRICULUM**

**Discussion:** No report.

**11.2. POLICY**

**Discussion:** Anne Kirkpatrick stated that the committee is on hold.

**11.3. SALARY & NEGOTIATION**

**Discussion:** David Palmer reported that the committee had their first meeting with the administrators and will exchange proposals on 10/20/20. The following virtual meetings will be held on 10/22/20 and 10/27/20.

**11.4. PLANNING**


**Discussion:** Superintendent Czapla stated that the meeting will be rescheduled.

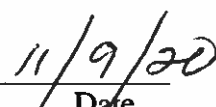
**12. CREC UPDATE**

**Discussion:** Anne Kirkpatrick reported that there is a meeting next week. She also stated that Krista Cherry will be taking her place on CREC Council. Anne Kirkpatrick and Sarah Bollinger will act as back-ups.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion Passed:** Motion to adjourn the BOE meeting at 8:00 p.m. passed with a motion by Jan Martin and a second by Kate McLellan. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

  
Jan Martin, BOE Secretary

  
Date

Shannin Burns, BOE Recording Secretary