

**Somers Board of Education Meeting  
Teleconferencing on Zoom  
January 11, 2021  
7:00 PM**

Video of this meeting may be accessed at:  
[www.somers.k12.ct.us](http://www.somers.k12.ct.us)

**Attendance Taken at 7:00 PM:**

Present Board Members: Bruce Devlin, Anne Kirkpatrick (updated to present at 7:02 p.m.), Jan Martin, Jeremy Anderson, David Palmer, Sarah Bollinger, Krista Cherry, Marissa Marks, Kate McLellan

Others: Brian Czapl, Dr. Denise Messina, Margot Martello, Bill Boutwell, William Meier, Jim Formica, GC IPad

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The regular Board of Education meeting was called to order by Chairman Devlin at 7:01 p.m. via Zoom.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**2.1. Draft Minutes of December 14, 2020**

**Rationale:** Board will review and approve minutes of the December 14, 2020 meeting.

**Motion Passed:** Motion to approve the December 14, 2020 Draft Minutes passed with a motion by Jan Martin and a second by Marissa Marks. **8 Yeas - 0 Nays (David Palmer was present but not visible and inaudible during the motion via Zoom).**

**3. OPPORTUNITY TO ADD/DELETE AGENDA ITEMS**

**4. CONSENT AGENDA**

**4.1. Warrant of January 11, 2021**

**Rationale:** The Board to review and consent to the warrant of January 11, 2021 in the amount of \$570,399.44.

**Motion Passed:** Motion to approve agenda item 4.1 as presented passed with a motion by Jan Martin and a second by Jeremy Anderson. **8 Yeas - 0 Nays (David Palmer was present but not visible and inaudible during the motion via Zoom).**

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

### **5.1. 1st Warning of NEW Policy DBS Code 4000.1 - 5145.44 - Personnel-Student Title IX**

**Rationale:** The Board will review the 1st Warning of NEW Policy DBS Code 4000.1 - 5145.44 - Personnel-Student Title IX. The Policy Committee can answer any questions they may have.

### **5.2. 1st Warning of New Policy DBS 4118.112/4218.112- Personnel – Sexual Harassment**

**Rationale:** The Board will review the 1st Warning of New Policy DBS 4118.112/4218.112- Personnel - Sexual Harassment. The Policy Committee will be there to answer any questions.

### **5.3. 2021-2022 Superintendent's Proposed Budget**

**Rationale:** The Superintendent will present his proposed 2021-2022 Budget Report.

**Discussion:** Superintendent Czapla presented the proposed 2021-2022 budget to the BOE. He reviewed the budget calendar from the winter through the spring as was previously approved by the BOE. Somers Public Schools continue to engage in the Strategic Plan even through Covid. He reviewed the goals of the Strategic Plan with the BOE. In developing the budget, he had reminded the administrators that their budget decisions needed to directly correlate with their goals.

The 2021-2022 budget priorities include increasing student achievement and educational opportunities; providing students with appropriate pupil support services which may address mental health issues that are dramatically rising and impacting mental and academic health; and, continuing to update and maintain safe facilities.

Superintendent Czapla proposed a budget for \$25,715,712 which is a \$1,025,742 or 4.15% increase from the current year's budget. The majority of expenses (92.8%) fall under nondiscretionary or contractual obligations (salaries, insurance and benefits, tuition, transportation, and utilities). Salaries and insurance and benefits account for over \$1,000,000 of the increase in the budget. Superintendent Czapla is proposing to increase salaries by \$659,446. This increase is mainly driven by the contractual increases in the contracts with the 5 bargaining units. He also proposed the following new positions:

- .4 Health/PE Teacher since there are currently only two teachers who provide Health and PE
- 1.0 Pupil Services Coordinator for SES to oversee 504's, Special Education, Specialized Special Education (Smart Start, FAB, ESY program, etc.)

Insurance and benefits are increasing by \$432,038. ConnectiCare is expecting a premium increase of approximately 20%. This proposed budget accounts for an 18% premium increase. In December, SPS placed a bid to a number of insurance carriers. Quotes have been received. SPS is in negotiations with some of the

carriers. There has been a slight reduction in Special Education services. Transportation is increasing by \$31,900 in the final contractual year. Utilities are decreasing by \$38,400 due to locked-in fuel rates.

Other significant budget impacts include discretionary categories which account for 7.2% of the budget. Maintenance will increase by \$23,018. Instructional resources decrease by \$51,362 due to delaying textbook purchases by a year with a 10% reduction in supplies. Administrative overhead will decrease by \$28,189 due to no bargaining sessions. Equipment will decrease by \$8,110.

There are a number of requests from administrators that are unable to be funded at this time:

- PT Kindergarten Paraeducators
- Grade 2 Teacher
- Elementary Special Education Teacher
- Safety and Security Officer
- Pre-K Transportation
- Miscellaneous Capital Outlay
- SES Building Substitute
- Additional Hours for Special Education Staff

Superintendent Czapla presented the PPE (Per Pupil Expenditure) to the BOE. This is the rate at which it costs a town to educate a student. In Somers, the average cost to educate a student is \$17,919. In the State of CT, the average cost is \$18,240. In DRG-C (communities in CT with the same socioeconomic status as Somers), the average cost is \$19,243. Somers is still providing a very good quality education at a responsible price for its citizens. Somers PPE is in the lower half of DRG-C.

Superintendent Czapla reported that the operating budget for Covid-19 2019-20 expenditures totaled \$140,587 towards technology equipment, capital outlay, sanitizing supplies, PPE, custodial equipment, etc. The 2020-21 Covid-19 budget has totaled \$184,333 thus far. He anticipates that this will increase due to PPE supplies, technology equipment, etc. SPS has received grants from the federal government as well as the State. Superintendent Czapla acknowledged the Somers Education Foundation who generously donated \$47,800 for outdoor tents to be used for classrooms.

Future impacts that are not currently in the budget include:

- Interventionists/tutors to assist in developing students' skill sets
- An additional Kindergarten teacher for an anticipated increase in enrollment
- Compensatory and recovery services (Special Education)
- Diagnostics and analytics of students
- Instructional coaches in classrooms
- Social/emotional services

- Professional Development
- Legal costs

After presenting the proposed 2021-2022 budget, Superintendent Czapla highlighted pages 8 and 10 in the budget proposal book with the BOE members. He asked BOE members to review the budget and email questions to him so that he may address them at the next BOE meeting. Krista Cherry asked the superintendent questions regarding health insurance and the Special Education Coordinator. Jeremy Anderson recommended the BOE discuss the Kindergarten enrollment age.

## 6. OLD BUSINESS

## 7. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

### 7.1. Superintendent's Update

**Rationale:** The Superintendent will update the Board on current events.

**Discussion:** Superintendent Czapla updated the BOE on current events. The initial contact tracing from identified positive cases of Covid at SES on Sunday warranted a 5-day remote learning session. Staff was able to gather materials from the school on Sunday for remote learning. They also had the option of teaching from their classrooms as long as they weren't in quarantine. MBA and SHS have remained stable in the hybrid learning model. Superintendent Czapla reported there is anxiety due to the Covid data in Somers. He acknowledged the staff's extremely professional manner.

Superintendent Czapla stated that he has been attending weekly vaccine meetings with the town. He has reached out to the North Central Health District to notify them of our willingness to vaccinate teachers on campus. No details have been released at this time.

CIAC has released sports updates. The Department of Public Health has signed on to allow some winter sports such as basketball and hockey to go forward (wrestling and competitive cheerleading will not go forward). Superintendent Czapla will be meeting with Alan Walker, Athletic Director, on Tuesday, 1/12/21, to discuss how to move forward with the highest mitigation strategies.

Superintendent Czapla discussed the event that took place on Friday and acknowledged Lt. Meier and the Vernon Police Department for their communications and partnership.

Superintendent Czapla acknowledged the administrative staff's hard work with contact tracing as well as supporting teachers and families.

## 8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### 8.1. CURRICULUM

**Discussion:** No report.

### 8.2. POLICY

**Discussion:** Anne Kirkpatrick reported that new policies were presented to the BOE this evening. The committee will then be on hold until the next CABE packet. Jeremy Anderson questioned if the policies were existing policies or new policies. Discussion ensued.

### 8.3. SALARY & NEGOTIATION

**Discussion:** No report.

### 8.4. PLANNING

**Discussion:** No report.

## 9. CREC UPDATE

**Discussion:** Krista Cherry reported that the December meeting was canceled. The Legislative Breakfast will be held virtually on 2/11/21. She will present the Legislative agenda as soon as it's available.

## 10. ADJOURNMENT

**Motion Passed:** Motion to adjourn the BOE meeting at 7:48 p.m. passed with a motion by Jan Martin and a second by Krista Cherry. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

---

Jan Martin, BOE Secretary

Date

Shannin Burns, BOE Recording Secretary