

**Somers Board of Education Meeting
Teleconferencing on Zoom
January 25, 2021
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, Anne Kirkpatrick, Jan Martin, Jeremy Anderson, David Palmer, Sarah Bollinger, Krista Cherry, Marissa Marks, Kate McLellan

Others: Brian Czapla, Bill Boutwell, Melissa Mucci, Dina Senecal, Dr. Denise Messina, Bob Chester, Jim Formica, Elizabeth Guerin, Lindsay Jamgochi..., Ruggiero, Dana Rosenberg, Jeff's iPhone

1. CALL TO ORDER

The regular Board of Education meeting was called to order by Chairman Devlin at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2.1. Draft of Board Minutes of January 11, 2021

Rationale: The Board will review and approve (or change) the Board Minutes of January 11, 2021.

Motion Passed: Motion to approve the January 11, 2021 Draft Minutes passed with a motion by Anne Kirkpatrick and a second by Jan Martin.

9 Yeas - 0 Nays.

3. AUDIENCE TO CITIZENS/STAFF/STUDENTS

Discussion: Chairman Devlin introduced Bob Chester, Jim Formica, and Liz Guerin to the BOE. Mr. Chester is a Somers resident. He acknowledged the new state-of-the-art sports facility, the tremendous improvement in communication from the superintendent, and excellent student support services. He relayed areas of concern involving curriculum and the increase in PPE in relation to test scores. He submitted suggestions to the BOE. Mr. Formica of 48 Franklin Woods Drive voiced his concern of the proposed school budget and performance evaluations. Ms. Guerin of 19 High Meadows Crossing outlined her questions regarding Covid to the BOE and was concerned about the pink signs on educators' cars. She stated that in-person services and learning are a priority and that the district has done a great job with the precautions that are in place.

4. OPPORTUNITY TO ADD/DELETE AGENDA ITEMS

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion Passed: Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented this evening passed with a motion by David Palmer and a second by Jan Martin. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

5.1. Warrant of January 25, 2021

Rationale: The Board will review and consent to the warrant of January 25, 2021 in the amount of \$179,275.95.

5.2. 2nd Warning of New Policy DBS Code 4000.1 - 5145.44 Personnel – Student Title IX

Rationale: The Board will vote to consent to the 2nd Warning of New Policy DBS Code 4000.1 - 5145.44 Personnel - Student Title IX

5.3. 2nd Warning of New Policy DBS 4118.112/4218.1112 Personnel-Sexual Harassment

Rationale: The Board will vote to consent to the 2nd Warning of New Policy DBS 4118.112/4218.1112 Personnel-Sexual Harassment.

5.4. Retirement of Somers High School Special Education Teacher

Rationale: Mrs. Donna Delany, a Special Education Teacher of 22 years at Somers High School, will be retiring on February 1, 2021.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1. 1st Warning on Somers Public School 2021-2022 Calendar

Rationale: 1st Warning on Somers Public School 2021-2022 Calendar for the Board to review.

Discussion: Superintendent Czapla presented the 2021-2022 school calendar to the BOE. He stated that it mirrors last year's calendar with front-loading five Professional Development days at the beginning of the school year. There will be more half days on Wednesdays for Professional Development which is in alignment with the Strategic Plan. Next year, staff will work together in recovery mode and analyze how SPS did this year and determine how SPS makes up for lost skills as a result of this year's hybrid and remote learning models. April vacation is in coordination with surrounding school districts. Discussion ensued among BOE members.

7. OLD BUSINESS

7.1. Ongoing Discussion on Superintendent's Proposed Budget

Rationale: The Board will continue the discussion on the Superintendent's proposed budget.

Discussion: Superintendent Czapla and Bill Boutwell, Director of Business Services, responded to questions from Anne Kirkpatrick and Krista Cherry regarding transportation and fuel costs, secretary and paraeducator line items, and instructional line items. Superintendent Czapla stated that SPS is in final

negotiations regarding the healthcare line item. He anticipates a significantly reduced premium. Negotiations may be finalized by the end of this week. Jeremy Anderson noted that Somers' Per Pupil Expenditure (PPE) has consistently moved from the lower quartile to the median with the current proposed budget. He recommended that potential future positions be made more transparent in regards to the budget. Superintendent Czapla stated that most of the new positions have been focused on mental health and that SPS is at a very good point with sufficient Pupil Services positions in place. He will discuss this recommendation with the leadership team.

8. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

8.1. Superintendent Update

Rationale: The Superintendent will give the Board an update on current events at Somers Public Schools.

Discussion: Superintendent Czapla updated the BOE on recent events. Although Covid numbers in the community are high, positive Covid cases in the schools remain low. All positive cases since December 25, 2020 have been associated with an outside event. There has been no transmission in schools. Mitigation strategies, sanitizing schools, use of hand sanitizer, masking, and awareness are paying off. Superintendent Czapla makes decisions based upon data and consultation.

Sports started last week. The CIAC recommended that no spectators are allowed into sporting events. SPS will follow that recommendation. Currently, livestreaming accounts are being set up in order to watch games virtually.

Superintendent Czapla acknowledged Anne Kirkpatrick, Jan Martin, and the Somers Congregational Church. School desks have been created for students in need of space to work from home. Melissa Mucci, SES Principal, is working on setting up a distribution plan. Kittredge Equipment in Agawam donated a case of desk pad calendars for each desk. Also, each desk will be delivered with a handwritten note from church members.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

9.1. CURRICULUM

Discussion: No report.

9.2. POLICY

Discussion: Anne Kirkpatrick stated that the committee is on hold. The committee received the last CABE packet, but no meeting is needed at this time according to Superintendent Czapla.

9.3. SALARY & NEGOTIATION

Discussion: David Palmer stated that there is no requirement for BOE interaction at this time.

9.4. PLANNING

Discussion: David Palmer stated that there is no requirement for BOE interaction at this time.

10. CREC UPDATE

Discussion: Krista Cherry stated that the CREC Legislative Breakfast will be held on 2/11/21 virtually. Jan Martin stated that she registered on cabe.org for the CABA Area 3 Virtual Legislative Breakfast for Thursday, 2/4/21, from 8 am-9 am. Anne Kirkpatrick stated that she has signed up as well.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

11.1. Board to vote to go into Executive Session for Superintendent's Mid-Year Evaluation

Rationale: Board to vote to go into Executive Session for Superintendent's Mid-Year Evaluation.

Motion Passed: Motion to enter into Executive Session for the Superintendent's Mid-Year Evaluation at 7:38 p.m. passed with a motion by Anne Kirkpatrick and a second by Jan Martin. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

The BOE came out of Executive Session at 8:01 p.m.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Motion Passed: Motion to adjourn the BOE meeting at 8:03 p.m. passed with a motion by Jan Martin and a second by Anne Kirkpatrick. **9 Yeas - 0 Nays.**

Jan Martin, BOE Secretary Date

Shannin Burns, BOE Recording Secretary