



Stratford Board of Education

STRATFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION – OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: August 28, 2017

Meeting Location: Board Room / Admin. Ctr.
1000 East Broadway, Stratford, CT 06615

Approved: 9/25/2017

Recorded By: Teresa Lycoudes/
Secretary to the Board of Education

1 ATTENDANCE

Name	Title	Location	Present
James Feehan	Board Chair		Y
Leonard Petruccelli	Board Vice Chair		N
Theresa Sheehy	Board Secretary		Y
Chris Barnaby	Board Member		N
Maria Buturla	Board Member		Y
Susan Lance	Board Member		Y
Eric Lazaro	Board Member		Y
Dr. Janet Robinson	Superintendent	Central Office	Y
Clarence Zachery	Chief Operating Officer	Central Office	Y
Linda Gejda	Asst. Superintendent	Central Office	Y
Teresa Lycoudes	Recorder / Board Secretary	Central Office	Y
Jack Dellapiano	SAA Representative	SHS Principal	Y
Mike Fiorello, Kristin Record, Robin Julian	SEA Representatives	BHS & VSS - Instructors	Y
Lou Spetrino	Videographer		Y

2 MEETING LOCATION

Building: Administration Center / Board Room – 1000 East Broadway

3 MEETING START

Meeting Scheduled to Start: 7:15 PM

Actual Start Time: 7:15 PM

4 AGENDA

- **Opening Remarks by Chair**

1. Board Chair (James Feehan) opened the August 28, 2017 Board of Education meeting (held in the Board Room / Administration

Center – 1000 East Broadway, Stratford CT) at 7:15 PM. He asked everyone to stand and join **Board Member, Theresa Sheehy**, for the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Feehan informed the public that Mr. Petrucelli is excused from the meeting due to illness in the family. In addition, Mr. Barnaby could not attend due to not feeling well.

- **Executive Session – Workers Compensation Litigation** – A motion was made by Mrs. Lance; seconded by Mrs. Sheehy to enter Executive Session (including all Board members present, Dr. Robinson, Mr. Zachery and the Town Attorney). The time was 7:16 PM. At 7:30 PM, the meeting resumed in Public Session.
- **Possible Action from Executive Session –**
A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. LAZARO; SECONDED BY MRS. SHEEHY TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ATTORNEY MADE IN EXECUTIVE SESSION. THE **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**
- **Presentations** – Recognition for the following occurred.
There were no presentations
- **Public Participation** – There were three public speakers:
 1. **Lea Ann Murphy** – *20 Nutmeg Lane, Stratford CT 06614* – **Chapel Street Elementary School (concerns).**
 2. **Marian Tedesco** – *125 Warner Hill Road, Unit 31* - **Chapel Street Elementary School (concerns).**
 3. **Bob DeLorenzo** - *185 Sheppard Street* - **Bunnell High School Field House**

Mr. Feehan responded to the Public Forum. He let it be known their concerns did not fall on deaf ears. He said the Board will make every attempt to get a better understanding of the concerns/issues; while at the same time, will look to a remedy as well. He encouraged the Public to always feel comfortable and free to reach out to the Board of Education.

- **Student Representatives Report** – There was no report. The Student Representatives for 2017-18 will be introduced at the September Board meeting. The September meeting takes place September 25, 2017.
- **Superintendent’s “Status of the Schools” Report** – Dr. Robinson reported about the following items:

- **Summer PD (Professional Development)** – Dr. Robinson informed the gathering that summer PD has taken place and concerns/issues are being addressed on a continuous basis. She said that all of the district principals are experiencing an increase of disruptive students moving into the district bringing with them a number of concerns/issues. She said this is happening at all of Stratford’s schools. Dr. Robinson said the district is making every effort to train staff to be better equipped to handle the situation.
- **Chapel Teachers get ready for 2017-2018** - Dr. Robinson informed the Board members that several Chapel teachers were in the CT Post preparing their classrooms for the 2017-2018 school year.
- **Consent Agenda**
 - Mr. Feehan entertained a motion for the items contained in the **Consent Agenda** (meeting minutes – July 10th, July 14th, July 31st, August 7th special meetings and June 26th regular meeting - and the request to hire personnel document as of August 25, 2017).
 - Discussion took place after a motion made by Mrs. Sheehy; seconded by Mr. Lazaro. The Board members discussed the requested positions. In addition, the Board members requested the initial Personnel Assignment (listing details) document be reinstated going forward. After hearing no further discussion:

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MRS. SHEEHY; SECONDED BY MR. LAZARO, TO APPROVE AND ACCEPT THE **CONSENT AGENDA (Items 1 & 2). THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.** (5:0)

- **Items for Discussion / Action**
 - **Proposed: District Climate Policy** – The District Climate Policy was referred to the Board (with a favorable recommendation) by the Curriculum Committee at the August 8, 2017 Curriculum meeting.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MRS. SHEEHY; SECONDED BY MRS. BUTURLA TO ADOPT THE DISTRICT CLIMATE POLICY (forwarded by the Curriculum Committee with a favorable recommendation). **THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5:0).**

- **Proposed: Professional Learning Plan / Teacher Evaluation & Growth Plan** – The Professional Learning Plan / Teacher Evaluation & Growth Plan was referred to the Board (with a

favorable recommendation) by the Curriculum Committee at the August 8, 2017 Curriculum meeting.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MRS. SHEEHY; SECONDED BY MRS. BUTURLA TO ADOPT THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PLAN / TEACHER EVALUATION & GROWTH PLAN (forwarded by the Curriculum Committee with a favorable recommendation). THE **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5:0)**.

- **Proposed: Revised Curriculum for Fine Arts, Music and Physical Education** – Revised curriculum for Fine Arts, Music and Physical Education was referred to the Board (with a favorable recommendation) by the Curriculum Committee at the August 8, 2017 Curriculum meeting.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MRS. SHEEHY; SECONDED BY MRS. BUTURLA TO ADOPT THE REVISED CURRICULUM FOR FINE ARTS, MUSIC AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION (forwarded by the Curriculum Committee with a favorable recommendation). THE **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5:0)**.

- **Tabled Items -**

- **Scholarship Opportunities for District Student Teachers / Minority Teacher recruitment**
- **Strategic Plan**
- **Middle School Attendance Policy**
- **Magnet School**
- **Residency Verification (Grade 5)**
- **Audit Status**
- **Enrollment Numbers**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MRS. LANCE; SECONDED BY MRS. SHEEHY, TO STRIKE ITEM #2 (STRATEGIC PLAN) FROM THE TABLED ITEMS. THE **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MRS. LANCE; SECONDED BY MR. LAZARO TO REMOVE ITEM #4 (MAGNET SCHOOL LEGAL CASE) FROM THE TABLE.

An update was given by Mr. Zachery and Mr. Feehan regarding the Magnet School legal case. The lawsuit did not get thrown out. A proper appeal process had to be followed. That process has been followed and at this time all are awaiting the Commissioner of Education's decision.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MRS. LANCE; SECONDED BY MRS. SHEEHY TO PLACE ITEM #4 – MAGNET SCHOOLS BACK ON THE TABLE. **THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5:0).**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MRS. SHEEHY; SECONDED BY MR. LAZARO TO REMOVE ITEM #5 – RESIDENCY VERIFICATION FROM THE TABLE. **THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5:0).**

A brief discussion took place regarding the verification of residency of Stratford students attending Magnet Schools. Mr. Zachery brought to the Board Chair's attention, the fact that some of the Magnet Schools are not providing proof of residency for Stratford students attending their school. Mr. Zachery said that C.E.S. sends an invoice; however, they offer no proof of residency. Mrs. Sheehy informed the Board that she is now the President of the C.E.S. Regional Council. She said she will have that discussion with Mr. Pitkoff, Executive Director of C.E.S.

Mr. Lazaro stated that he wants to see continued diligence of Mr. Imbro, Stratford's Residency Officer. He said he wants to make sure that residency remains a priority of the district.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MRS. SHEEHY; SECONDED BY MR. LAZARO TO PLACE ITEM #5 – RESIDENCY VERIFICATION BACK ON THE TABLE. **THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5:0).**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. LAZARO; SECONDED BY MRS. SHEEHY TO REMOVE ITEM #6 – AUDIT STATUS - FROM THE TABLE. **THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5:0).**

Board Chair, Jim Feehan, said while the Board of Education agreed to do a separate audit, there have been great concerns regarding the cost. He said if the firm selected through the process conducts the audit, the cost lies in the vicinity of approximately \$15,000 to \$25,000. He said the downside of that is all of the questions cannot be answered. Mr. Feehan added that the regular auditors, hired by the Town of Stratford, could do the audit, but the cost (providing answers for the questions) would be approximately \$40,000 to \$50,000. He said the Board now has a decision to make as to what to do to take it forward.

Mr. Lazaro stated that the Board of Education and Town of Stratford do not have a budget, at this point in time. He said the Town of Stratford pays for an annual audit. He said it is the Town Council who is not happy with the audit of the Board of Education; therefore, they should be the ones to pay for a separate audit, if that is what they want to have

happen. He said he will not vote for an audit to be done and paid for by the Board of Education.

Mrs. Buturla stated that she agrees with Mr. Lazaro's statement. She said that amount of money is a salary that could be paid. She said she feels an audit would be taking away from Stratford's students.

Mrs. Lance stated that she echoes the sentiments of Mr. Lazaro and Mrs. Buturla. She said there is no budget, there is a hiring freeze in effect, and the Town should be paying for something this redundant.

Mrs. Sheehy said the Board has made a tremendous effort to be as transparent, as possible. She said the audit has been considered to appease a select few of community members. She said they do not trust the firm in place. Mrs. Sheehy said spending extra monies on an audit is not going to do any good for anybody or the children of Stratford. She said the current auditors should be capable of auditing for not a penny extra. They are licensed and bound to do nothing but give the right answers. She said the Board has no extra money and is facing possible tremendous reductions.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MRS. SHEEHY; SECONDED BY MRS. BUTURLA TO VOTE AGAINST HOLDING A SEPARATE AUDIT.

Mr. Feehan urged the Board members to consider their vote very hard before casting it. He said he believes it would be a mistake to not do a separate audit. Mr. Feehan stated that price cannot be placed on integrity and that reputations are being questioned. Mr. Feehan stated that he believes an audit is the right thing to do. A roll call vote was taken on the motion to not do an audit.

Maria Buturla	No
Susan Lance	No
Eric Lazaro	No
Terri Sheehy	No
Jim Feehan	Yes

THE **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 4:1** IN FAVOR OF NOT DOING AN AUDIT.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MRS. SHEEHY; SECONDED BY MR. LAZARO TO REMOVE ITEM #7 – ENROLLMENT STATUS – FROM THE TABLE. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

A challenging discussion took place regarding the enrollment numbers for October 1st and how the district's numbers differ from the numbers posted by the State Department of Education. Mr. Feehan stated the numbers must match. Mr. Zachery explained the numbers are a snapshot of given time period and it is nearly impossible for them to match the state. He said the state self-selects the numbers they use and we won't know what they've selected until they're posted. In the meantime, there could be students who have left the district that are unknown to administrators, or students still coming in.

Mr. Feehan asked Administration to include a narrative on the enrollment report that explains the numbers and where the students are attending (including outplaced students, magnet students, etc.).

Mr. Lazaro stated the issue is with the transients. He said the general public does not see the behind the scenes dynamics of enrollment. He said Stratford has changed dramatically and the community members need to catch up.

Mr. Feehan directed Mr. Zachery to make sure a detailed list is included when the state's numbers are posted.

A MOTION TO STRIKE ENROLLMENT FROM THE TABLED LIST WAS MADE BY MRS. LANCE; SECONDED BY MR. LAZARO. ***THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.***

▪ **Old Business for Information / Discussion**

There was none.

▪ **New Business for Information / Discussion**

- **Assessment Test Scores** – A presentation was given by Dr. Gejda and the Curriculum Coordinators. They were joined by Jack Dellapiano, Principal at Stratford High School and Dr. Nancy Dowling, Principal at Bunnell High School.

Mr. Feehan stated that there is great concern about the district's test scores. He said the district is still below the state's average numbers. Mr. Feehan said an Action Plan needs to be clearly expressed to the public of what is being done, and the steps taken to do it. Mr. Feehan said the scores should have shown

improvement and should have been above the state's average. Dr. Robinson said the district is still amidst playing a game of catch up. She said it takes time and the district has been strategically trying to build the capacity of the staff. She said some of the ground work and foundation has been laid and she is confident the district is going to get better. She said we've only invested one year. Dr. Robinson stated it takes long term support of the schools. She said it does matter in the long run. Dr. Robinson said there are a lot of teachers in the community that are truly devoted and want to do the best for the kids that's possible. She said they want more and the district is running as best as it can to provide the necessary tools for our teachers. She said the planning has been very strategic.

- **PLC Days** - Mr. Feehan said there have been some complaints from members of the public about the number of PLC days in the district. He said the vast majority of comments have been positive, but there are those who would like to see a reduction in the number of PLC days taken each year. Dr. Robinson said the PLC days are well received by the teachers. She said many high achieving districts take more than 12 days. She said this is one of the fastest ways to improve performance. Stratford currently has 12 PLC days listed for the 2017-2018 school year.
- **\$21 Million Dollar Decrease in State Funding** - Mr. Feehan said losing this type of funding would destroy the district; however, the worst case scenario must be taken into consideration. He said a plan should be drawn up by September 10th. He requested it remain only for the review of Administration and Executive Board. Mr. Lazaro stated that he believes he should be included in that review panel. He said he will be left on the Board when the Executive Board members step down. Mrs. Lance agreed with Mr. Lazaro, and

Mrs. Buturla agreed also. It was the consensus of the Board that all be included.

- **Naming of BHS Field House** – Mr. Feehan asked that the policy be emailed to Bob DeLorenzo for the building to be renamed. He said the Board will accept nominations; but the Board must follow proper policy and protocol. He asked Mrs. Lycoudes to email the policy to Mr. DeLorenzo and also make sure it is posted to the District website in regards to nominations.

▪ **Committee Reports**

- **Athletic Review** – Mrs. Lance reported the Athletic Review Committee met on August 2nd. She said the Committee received a presentation on medical providers. She said the Athletic Directors will make the final recommendation and she will report more in the future.
- 4. **School Plant / Planning Committee** – The School Plant Planning Committee did not meet during the month of August. Mr. Lazaro reported the Nichols Parking Lot project is underway. He said it is also exciting to see the construction begin for Stratford High School. He said there is a tremendous amount of work that goes into building a school. The skywalk is scheduled to be built across King Street sometime in January 2018.
- 5. **Finance Committee** – The Finance Committee did not meet in August. There is no budget, at this point in time to discuss. Mr. Feehan reported there are two positions vacant on this committee. He asked for names to be submitted for volunteers interested in serving on the Committee.
- 6. **Curriculum Committee** – Mrs. Sheehy reported that in addition to the items voted on for action, the Curriculum Committee discussed the convening of a subcommittee to review and research the non-leveling of classes.

▪ **Other Committees:**

- **CABE** – There was no report.
- **CARE** – There was no report
- **CES** – Mrs. Sheehy reported that C.E.S. held their annual Convocation today, as well. She also informed the group that she has been named President of the Regional Council for C.E.S.

- **Town / BOE Liaison** – Mr. Feehan reported the Town / BOE Liaison Committee did not meet during the month of August.
 - **Town Building Needs** – SHS Report.
 - **PTSA** – Mrs. Lance reported the PTSA did not meet in August, but dates should be scheduled soon for the 2017-2018 school year.
- **Committee Appointments / Assignments** – There were no Committee appointments or assignments. Mr. Feehan mentioned the two vacancies on the Finance Committee again.
 - **Board Goals 2016-18** – Given the timeframe, the Board Goals for 2016-18 will be reviewed at a later date.
 - **Good and Welfare** – The following items were reported:
 - **Convocation 2017-18** – Mrs. Lance and Mr. Lazaro spoke about the Convocation that took place at the beginning of the day. Mrs. Lance said the enthusiasm of the teachers was exciting. Mr. Lazaro said seeing and having that many people in one room speaks volumes.
 - **Thursday, August 31, 2017** – First Day of School.
 - **Monday, September 4, 2017** – Labor Day Holiday (Schools and Administration Center Closed).
 - **Open Houses** – A request was made for the information to be made available to Board members.
 - **ADJOURNMENT**
 - The meeting adjourned at 10:55 PM upon a motion made by Mrs. Sheehy; seconded by Mrs. Lance, and carried unanimously.

The next regular monthly meeting of the Stratford Board of Education is scheduled for **Monday, September 25, 2017**. The meeting location will be the Board Room at the Administration Center (1000 East Broadway) and the meeting time will be 7:15 PM.

Meeting recorded and minutes transcribed by:



Teresa Lycoudes, Board Secretary & Executive Assistant to the Superintendent