

Note: Per C.G.S. 10 – 218, Board of Education meeting minutes are provided in a draft format within 48 hours of the date the meeting was held. With the exception of motions and votes recorded, these minutes are unofficial until they have been read and approved by a majority vote of the Board. Should edits be necessary, they will be made at the next regularly scheduled meeting, noted in the meeting minutes, and voted upon.

SCOTLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION
Scotland, Connecticut
Meeting Minutes
May 3, 2022

Chairperson Cassidy Martin called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. Present were Board members Sherry Smardon, Scott Sears, Rod Perry, Clark Stearns and Gracie Martin. Unable to attend was Board member Bill Trudelle. Administrators present were Superintendent Valerie Bruneau, Principal Ann Knowles, Special Ed Director Maggie Courter and Finance Coordinator Tim Smith.

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

- Tara Falck of 74 Kemp Road expressed concerns about recent Board decisions regarding the budget to cut positions (would impact Special Ed students) and raises for the administration. She asked the Board to reconsider the proposed budget.
- Kristin Goyette of 138 Brook Road agrees with the comments from Tara Falck and expressed concerns with focus on doing what can be done for the staff (previous focus was doing what can be done for the kids), and comment from Clark Stearns regarding what parents think from a survey.

3. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD:

A letter of retirement was received from Karen Schenck effective June 14, 2022.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **Regular Meeting of April 5, 2022:**
#1-21/22 Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from April 5, 2022, was made by Sherry Smardon with the following corrections: Item #8H1: The motion should read – Motion for the Board to authorize reduction of paraprofessionals from 11 to 8, was made by Clark Stearns, seconded by Rod Perry and carried with the following vote: YES: S. Sears, R. Perry, C. Stearns, G. Martin. NO: B. Trudelle. ABSTAIN: S. Smardon. Item #8H3: The motion should read – Motion to adopt Draft #1 2022-23 Budget with 0% increase, was made by Clark Stearns, seconded by Gracie Martin and carried with the following vote: YES: S. Smardon, S. Sears, R. Perry, C. Stearns, G. Martin. NO: B. Trudelle. *The motion was seconded by Gracie Martin and carried unanimously.*

5. OPPORTUNITY TO ADD OR DELETE AGENDA ITEMS:

- ***#2-21/22 Motion to add to Executive Session - Discussion regarding Changes to Check Signing Procedure, was made by Scott Sears, seconded by Clark Stearns and carried unanimously.***
- ***#3-21/22 Motion to add to agenda as Item #8H2 - Acceptance of Retirement for Karen Schenck, was made by Sherry Smardon, seconded by Scott Sears and carried unanimously.***

6. CELEBRATIONS:

- There are 29 days left of school with May booked (end of year meetings, field trips, other activities).
- Almost getting back to pre-Covid with visits to the school from authors, American Sign Language for lower grades and therapy dogs.

7. REPORTS

A. Chairperson's Oral Report:

Attended the Board of Selectmen meeting at the Firehouse with a large screen and laptop for Zoom meetings. The Board was asked to consider moving meetings to the Firehouse (would need 30-day notice, requires setup and cleanup of tables and chairs, would allow communication with the audience online, could do a trial run). Sherry Smardon enjoys walking the halls at the school to see stuff hanging (since no longer having children at the school) but suggested revisiting after seeing how communication is with other meetings. Clark Stearns suggested revisiting at the June meeting.

B. Superintendent's Report:

- The Physical Education/Health position will be filled as is at .8 with no changes.
- After today, Tim Smith will be working remotely to assist the staff until his position is filled (currently listed through CT REAP). Clark Stearns suggested contacting CABA. Sherry Smardon suggested posting in the Chronicle. Gracie Martin suggested UCONN (Daily Digest and Facebook Page) and other nearby colleges with recent graduations. Rod Perry suggested checking with the town on applications received for town positions (Valerie will follow up on all suggestions).
- Para negotiations will begin before the next meeting with no dates set yet.
- Presented the proposed budget to the Board of Selectmen at their meeting (they asked for a copy of the Transportation contract for amount of increase) and will present the budget to the town on May 19th with a vote on June 2nd (Valerie will verify the dates). Still looking for the right oil price to lock in for the school and the town.

C. Principal's Report/Enrollment:

- Enrollment is at 103 students.
- Working on applications for incoming students for next year (7 for PreK and 2 for Kindergarten). Screening dates are available before the end of the school year.
- Celebrated Teacher/Educator Appreciation Week with gifts presented to teachers and paras by the PTO and treats throughout the week.
- The Curriculum Team (administrator, 5 teachers, 2 teachers that work with Special Ed) worked on finding literacy and math programs (selected math program that will roll out next year).
- Students have been practicing for SBAC that begins the week of May 16th with a schedule spread out over two weeks.
- Professional Development is ongoing with PMT training in Middletown.
- School Readiness Grant has been submitted and working with liaison who will visit in May.
- Kindergarten Graduation is June 8th and 6th Grade Graduation is June 9th.

D. Special Education Report:

- Participated in state level presentation of Social/Emotional Initiative (universal screening tool) that aligns with the Choose Love Initiative started by the school Counselor for the whole school.
- Continue to look for a Speech Language Pathologist (graduate student through the UCONN program will be in-person in the fall).
- Signed up for CT SEDS expert training (switches from IEP Direct in July).
- Continue to look at grade levels for any adjustments or support needed for IEPs.

E. Financial Report:

The Financial Reports were reviewed. Rod Perry asked about oil (Saveway listed 943 gallons of oil twice and agreed to deliver at the old contract price of \$2.19 gallon); asked what the overall budget will come in at (projected a little lower than \$38,000); and asked if there are any unanticipated expenses (there are none). Need to discuss at the next meeting moving funds to cover shortfalls for items over budget. Sherry Smardon asked about transportation for student at Green Valley School (contracted with Savino per day and shared with other towns for cost savings). Clark Stearns asked

what is done if transportation can't be provided (other districts reached out to private car services and private cab services, offered gas reimbursement to parents using their own vehicles). Rod Perry suggested being prepared for shortfalls with unknown fuel prices (propane was not increased for next year). Checked pricing with 4 oil companies who are not prepared to lock in price right now (Affordable Oil - \$6.09 gallon, Buy Rite - \$6.16 gallon, and Potter's is looking into price – delivered to the school before). The Grants look good and projected to spend all by June 30th (some carry over to next year).

#4-21/22 Motion to approve Financial Report dated 4/20/22, was made by Rod Perry, seconded by Gracie Martin and carried unanimously.

F. PTO: No Report

G. Committee Reports:

Inter-district Cost Sharing, CABE/EASTCONN, Readiness Council, Policy Committee, Personnel Committee, Technology, Finance Committee, Facilities and Climate Survey Committee

Inter-district Cost Sharing – The Programming Committee will meet in May. Presentations to the public have been pushed out (almost ready).

EASTCONN – The search continues for a new Director with a temporary Director for now. Staffing issues continue making it challenging to find drivers for the buses and vans.

Readiness Council – The grant was submitted and is being reviewed. The Policy Sub-Committee has a little more work to do.

Personnel Committee – will be meeting within the next 2 weeks.

Technology – A meeting will be held with Savage via Zoom later on the agenda.

8. BOARD BUSINESS

H. Items for Discussion & Actions

1. Item: Savage Updates (Discussion via Zoom):

Eric Gold from Savage Systems presented update with recent tickets taken care of and 0 tickets open except one ticket opened this afternoon for an after-hours operating system upgrade. Rod Perry asked if any hardware/software needs to be considered for next year's budget (just need refreshing for the Chromebooks - desktops done last year). Gracie Martin asked to work on better access for Zoom (working with the Town Hall and looking at solutions based on Microsoft Teams – need live transcription for ADA compliant). There is a product from Owl Labs that looks like a Bluetooth speaker with a 360-degree camera, speaker and microphones that you put into the center of the room that helps with audio challenges (cost is about \$1,000). Rod Perry asked if refreshing the Chromebooks is in next year's budget (budget includes regular refreshing, looking at E-Rate for anything additional). Valerie Bruneau commented about looking for grant opportunities with grant funding received this year for 2 Touchvision (one for 5th grade, one for the Art Room). Cassidy Martin commented about previously giving 6th graders their Chromebooks as Graduation gifts (looking at refreshing – Valerie will check on).

2. Item: Acceptance of Retirement from Karen Schenck:

The Board thanked Karen Schenck for everything she has given to the school. She touched every person in a positive way that came to her classroom and will be sorely missed.

#5-21/22 Motion to accept with great regret Retirement from Karen Schenck, was made by Sherry Smardon, seconded by Clark Stearns and carried with the following vote:

YES: R. Perry, S. Sears, S. Smardon, C. Stearns, G. Martin.

NO: C. Martin.

I. Old Business updates

- **Rose Khourie Scholarship:**

#6-21/22 Motion to try to amend the Rose Khourie Scholarship to be able to give \$500 each year until the fund is exhausted, was made by Scott Sears, seconded by Sherry Smardon and carried unanimously.

Sherry Smardon will present the Scholarship at Parish Hill Graduation and asked that Darcy Baran at Parish Hill be updated (Valerie will follow up).

- **A/C Project:**

The board was presented with 3 drawings of areas for the AC project (originally a 2 phase plan) with slight changes for better airflow to avoid hot pockets (difficult for floor wax to dry in the summer) keeping the costs the same. Watching 3 projects for additional funding: Raised Bill 423 - Air Quality funding (would allow finishing the remainder of classrooms); School Infrastructure by the Harris Plan - Capital Improvement Projects including airflow and ventilation; Propane Laws & Incentives through DEEP on a municipal level – work with the town on propane for school buses.

9. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Judy Benson-Clarke echoes a lot of the concerns from parents that spoke tonight (consistency with Special Ed paras affects student achievement) and predicts the needs will be greater for next year.

The Board took a 5-minute recess.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION – BOE Goals and Discussion of Changes to Check Signing Procedure:

#7-21/22 Motion to enter into Executive Session (8:27 PM) for the purpose of discussing BOE Goals and changes to Check Signing Procedure and invite the Superintendent and Principal to attend, was made by Sherry Smardon, seconded by Clark Stearns and carried unanimously.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:31 PM.

11. OTHER ACTION ITEMS: None

12. UPCOMING MEETINGS

- **Regular Board Meeting June 7, 2022**
- **Items for Next Meeting and Assignments:** Discussed agenda items.

13. ADJOURNMENT:

#8-21/22 Motion to adjourn (9:35 PM) was made by Sherry Smardon, seconded by Scott Sears and carried unanimously.

***Respectfully submitted by Kathleen Scott
Recording Clerk***