

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Monday, January 25, 2010 7:00 PM Eastern

Stafford Elementary School Cafetorium
16 Levinthal Run
Stafford Springs, CT 06076

- I. Call to Order- Establishment of Quorum
- II. Secretary's Report- Approval of Minutes
 - II.A. Regular Meeting Minutes, January 11, 2010
- III. Treasurer's Report
 - III.A. Board Bills
 - III.A.1. January 13, 2010- \$114,894.08
 - III.A.2. January 19, 2010- \$811,646.68
- IV. Correspondence
- V. Board Reports
- VI. Superintendent Reports
 - VI.A. Proposed 2010 - 2011 Budget for the Stafford Public Schools
 - VI.B. Audit Report for Fiscal Year July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009
- VII. Public Forum
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
- X. Personnel Matters
 - X.A. Authorization of Superintendent of Schools to Give Written Notice of Non-Renewal
- XI. Student Matters

**Regular Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Pinney Administration Building
Monday, January 11, 2010**

Board Members Present: Mr. Mark Fontanella, Chairperson
Mrs. Sandy Fowler, Secretary
Mrs. Lisa Bradway
Mrs. Lisa Finch
Mrs. Tracy Rummel
Ms. Julie Stafford
Mr. Stephen Szymanski

Absent: Mrs. Meg Devlin, Financial Analyst

Also Present: Dr. Thérèse G. Fishman, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Marcia Elliott, Principal, West Stafford School
Mr. Doug Minich, Data Control Manager, Town of Stafford
Mr. Thomas Szymanski, Student Representative

ITEM I. Call to Order- Establishment of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. A quorum was established.

ITEM II. Secretary's Report- Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting, December 7, 2009
Special Meeting, December 21, 2009
Special Meeting, January 4, 2010

A consensus of the Board approved the Secretary's Report for the regular meeting held on December 7, 2009, and the special meetings held on December 21, 2009, and January 4, 2010, as presented.

ITEM III. Treasurer's Report

Board Bills:

December 2, 2009	\$254,573.23
December 29, 2009	\$ 96,788.04
January 6, 2010	\$512,427.43

A consensus of the Board approved the Board bills, as presented.

ITEM IV. Correspondence

Mr. Fontanella read a letter that Dr. Fishman wrote to the town clerk regarding the contract between the Stafford Board of Education and the Stafford Education Association, effective 7/1/10, which was filed in the town clerk's office on December 23, 2009.

Mr. Fontanella read a letter from First Selectman Krol regarding replacing the underground oil tank located at the Pinney Administration Building. Ms. Stafford made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bradway, to add this item to the meeting agenda under New Business. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Rummel, Ms. Stafford and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried.

Dr. Fishman noted that the Board members were sent copies of letters from Senator Guglielmo and Representative Bacchiochi that they wrote in response to a letter from Dr. Fishman regarding preserving the after school programs in Stafford.

ITEM V. Board Reports

Mr. Thomas Szymanski, Student Representative, reported on the following topics:

- ✓ Mid-terms will be administered on January 19 – 22, 2010
- ✓ Stafford's Got Talent, which is sponsored by the Rotary Club, will take place on February 13, 2010, with a top prize of \$500
- ✓ Sports Update
- ✓ Drama will be performing *Beauty and the Beast* on April 29, 30, and May 1, at 7 p.m.

Mr. Szymanski reported that the Building Committee met to discuss the field at Stafford Elementary School. He said that they are working on defining the options, so that they can get cost estimates associated with each option. He said that Kaestle Boos Associates held a meeting with the company that did the soil analysis, and that Kaestle Boos should have the plans drawn up by the end of the week. Mr. Szymanski said that once the plans were drawn up, the building committee would meet with Kaestle Boos to discuss the plans. He said that at this time, he doesn't have any information on the possible cost of the project. He also said that the Stafford Elementary School project could probably be closed out, even though the field project isn't complete, because it wouldn't be reimbursable anyway.

Mr. Szymanski noted that the bleacher project is still on track for a March completion, and that the financing will have to be extended for another year.

Mrs. Bradway said that she attended the faculty breakfast at Stafford High School, which was sponsored by PIE. She also noted that she attended Mrs. Reedy's Twittering Workshop.

Mrs. Rummel said that she was notified that the two female exchange students would like to make a presentation to the Board toward the end of the school year. Dr. Fishman said that she would work with Mr. Kennedy to put it on a May or June Board agenda.

ITEM VI. Superintendent's Reports

A. Head Start Report through December 2009

Dr. Fishman presented the Head Start report through December 2009, as prepared by Mrs. Meg Devlin, Financial Analyst. She said that the report shows that through December 2009, the district has expended / encumbered \$23,576 of our total grant of \$50,233. Dr. Fishman

also noted that included in the Board packet was a report on the non-federal share of Head Start funding, which details in-kind services supplied by Stafford.

B. Cafeteria Profit and Loss through November 2009

Dr. Fishman presented the cafeteria profit and loss report through November 2009, as prepared by Mrs. Mary Folker, Food Services Coordinator, and reviewed by Mrs. Susan Linder, Director of Building Services, and Mrs. Meg Devlin, Financial Analyst. She said that through November 2009, there is a year-to-date profit of \$10,088.

Dr. Fishman said that more students are purchasing breakfast. She also noted that the funds from the State were received and credited in November.

C. Financial Update through December 2009

Dr. Fishman reported that with all of the essential elements of the budget expended or encumbered through June 30, 2010, she anticipates a budget shortfall of approximately \$61,611, if there are no unexpected expenditures. Dr. Fishman stated that this number includes the mitigation of the transportation costs this year given to the district by First Student. She said that on the other end, there are additional special education costs that involve a student moving back to the district.

Dr. Fishman also discussed the projected 30% decrease in the monies in the Excess Cost grant. She said that right now the State is funding at a 22% decrease in Excess Cost, so if the funding stays at that level, the 8% difference will help to make up some of the budget shortfall this year. Dr. Fishman stated that due to the lack of concrete numbers from the State, next year's budget will be presented with a 30% decrease in funding in the Excess Cost grant. If it ends up being funded at a higher level, the difference will help the district to begin to rebuild the passbook account, which has been used the past few years to make ends meet.

Dr. Fishman said that the hot water tank at the high school had to be replaced, which cost \$10,000, even after the warranty coverage.

Dr. Fishman said that should the budget deficit continue to increase, she and Mrs. Devlin will come forward with plans to address the shortfall.

Dr. Fishman reviewed the financial report in detail and answered questions from Board members. Mr. Szymanski asked if the district took advantage of early payment discounts. Dr. Fishman said that we do take advantage of discounts and gave the examples of the transportation contract and textbooks. Mrs. Fowler had a question about the 600 code. She asked if the textbooks in this account are those that were approved by the Board of Education. Dr. Fishman said that the approved texts are in the account and that this year the district has cut the orders much closer, so there are no extra books. Mr. Fontanella asked about the ACT Magnet school increase. Dr. Fishman said that it was an increase allowed by the State. Board members asked about the transportation costs for the students at ACT magnet school. Dr. Fishman said that the district is only paying for the transportation for three of the students.

D. Early Head Start Grant Presentation

Dr. Fishman stated that recently EASTCONN was awarded \$600,000 by the federal government to expand Early Head Start services in northeast Connecticut. Stafford was invited to join in EASTCONN's proposal for these funds, and was awarded \$11,000 in start-up funds and about \$80,000 in yearly operating expenses to provide pregnant women, infants and toddlers with services in early education and parent education, comprehensive health, nutrition and mental health services, and parent support groups and one-on-one help. Dr. Fishman said that transportation for participants in this program will be provided by EASTCONN.

Dr. Marcia Elliott, principal of West Stafford School, spoke about the program, which will be housed at her school and is part of the federal stimulus program. She said that research shows that a child's first three years are a period of growth and development, where a child develops thinking and reasoning skills. She said that this determines a child's future success in school.

Dr. Elliott said that she is excited to be providing a home based program for twelve families, with socialization visits at West Stafford School and free transportation provided by an EASTCONN van. She noted that this program will also be providing services to pregnant women with referrals to other social services agencies. Mrs. Bradway asked how the families would be identified. Dr. Elliott said that they are currently recruiting families using many avenues, including connections with Ms. Gorman from DCF, families that already participate in the Head Start program, WIC, doctors, HS guidance counselors, etc.

Dr. Elliott said that the management structure that they have for Early Head Start is the same as for the Head Start program, so they will be using the same personnel for the most part, but will be adding a family and child development specialist, who will also be functioning as the education and early childhood development services manager. Dr. Elliott said that she is hoping to start the program on January 19. She said that she has already ordered some materials and had done some renovations in a room at West Stafford School, making an office for the new staff person.

Dr. Elliott stated that currently the program is supported by ARRA Funding, but she hopes that after that funding is no longer available, it will become part of our regular Head Start funding. She said that this program should decrease the number of referrals to DCF, and increase knowledge, so that children are more ready to enter school.

E. Dropout Prevention Grant Report

Dr. Fishman said that the district has received a \$5,000 Dropout Prevention Grant, which will help us in our efforts to organize and develop a plan for addressing this issue in Stafford. She said that this information was shared at the Dropout Conference that she, other administrators, town officials and Board members attended at the beginning of the school year.

Dr. Fishman reported that a committee will be developed that includes faith based community leaders, adult education and business leaders, parents and Board members. She noted that there will be evening meetings (with a light supper provided) to discuss the district's vision and

goals, and to begin to develop a plan to address the issue of dropouts in Stafford. Dr. Fishman said that the entire community needs to be involved and part of the solution.

Dr. Fishman said that she will be letting the Board know when she has a schedule of meetings, and she will be asking for representatives from the Board. She is hopeful that a plan will be developed and in place for the start of next school year. She said that she was told that more money may be available in grants to fund some of these initiatives, once a plan has been developed.

Mrs. Fowler asked if the basic members of the committee detailed in the grant proposal will be expanded or changed. Board members asked if former students should be included on the committee. Dr. Fishman said that she thinks that former students should be involved; she is trying to determine the best way to include student input.

Item VII. Public Forum

The reporter from the *Journal Inquirer* asked questions regarding the new electronic Board meetings.

Mr. Fontanella informed the Board that Mrs. Rummel will be the new representative on the EASTCONN Board. He thanked Mrs. Rummel for volunteering.

Item VIII. Old Business

- A. **Review and Possible Approval of Revised / New Board Policies 1316 (a)-(b)-Conduct on School Property (new policy); 1316.1 (a)-(b)-Public Conduct at School Activities (new policy); 4118.112, 4218.112, 5145.5 (a)-(b)-Harassment with accompanying Regulation (a)-(c) and Forms 1, 2, and 3; 4118.21 (a)-(b)-Academic Freedom; 4118.22-Code of Ethics with accompanying Codes of Ethics (a)-(n) (new policy); 5118-Nonresident Attendance; 5125 (a)-(d)-Student Records-Confidentiality and accompanying Regulation (a)-(y); 5131.911 (a)-(c)-Bullying with accompanying Regulation (a)-(h), Form, and Appendix; 5132-Dress and Grooming; 5145.15 (a)-(b)-Directory Information and accompanying forms 1 and 2; 6141.321 (a)-(b)-Technology and Instruction/Acceptable Use of the Internet with accompanying Forms 2a, 2b**

Dr. Fishman said that these policies represent new and revised Board policies and regulations, as reviewed and revised by a committee of administrators and the Board of Education policy sub-committee. She reminded Board members that the policies were presented for the first reading at the Board meeting on December 7, 2009.

Ms. Stafford made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Finch, that the Board of Education approve **Revised / New Board Policies 1316 (a)-(b)-Conduct on School Property (new policy); 1316.1 (a)-(b)-Public Conduct at School Activities (new policy); 4118.112, 4218.112, 5145.5 (a)-(b)-Harassment with accompanying Regulation (a)-(c) and Forms 1, 2, and 3; 4118.21 (a)-(b)-Academic Freedom; 4118.22-Code of Ethics with accompanying Codes of Ethics (a)-(n) (new policy); 5118-Nonresident Attendance; 5125 (a)-(d)-Student Records-Confidentiality and accompanying Regulation (a)-(y); 5131.911 (a)-(c)-Bullying with**

accompanying Regulation (a)-(h), Form, and Appendix; 5132-Dress and Grooming; 5145.15 (a)-(b)-Directory Information and accompanying forms 1 and 2; 6141.321 (a)-(b)-Technology and Instruction/Acceptable Use of the Internet with accompanying Forms 2a, 2b, as presented. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Rummel, Ms. Stafford and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried.

Item IX. New Business

A. Approval of Extension of Retirement Incentive Plan

Dr. Fishman said that she is proposing that the Board offer the retirement incentive to certified staff again this year. She said that although we do usually have to replace the retired teachers, she is usually able to replace them with a staff member that makes less money. She said that modifications this year included changes in the dates and inclusion of the HSA plan, which is offered in the administrators' contract and will be offered in the teachers' contract, effective 7/1/10.

Mrs. Fowler asked at what point the district becomes concerned with balancing the seasoned teachers with the new teachers. Dr. Fishman said that she does have some concerns at the high school, but it is a difficult time, and cuts had to be made to get the budget down to a zero percent increase last year and may be needed again this year. Dr. Fishman also noted that the district provides good support for new personnel, and that the teachers' contract (effective 7/1/10) will include professional development for teachers that are reassigned to an area that they are certified to teach, but haven't taught for a while. Teachers new to teaching are supported by the BEST program (will be TEAM next year) and the teacher evaluation plan. Dr. Fishman also said that she will be presenting a plan in a couple of weeks where she will be proposing a trade off of programs. She said that last year, this year and next year will be years of consolidation. She is hopeful that this trend won't continue.

Mr. Szymanski asked a question about the calculations, the number of retirements required to "break even" and the cut-off date of 2/19. Dr. Fishman provided clarification.

Ms. Stafford made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, that the Board of Education approve the extension of the retirement incentive plan for certified staff, for one year, as proposed. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Rummel, Ms. Stafford and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried.

B. Review and Possible Approval of Installation of New Oil Tank and Removal of Underground Tank at the Pinney Admin. Bldg. (added 1/11/10)

Mr. Fontanella stated that as discussed at the beginning of the meeting, First Selectman Krol sent him a letter regarding the removal of the underground oil tank that is located at the Pinney Administration Building. Mr. Krol indicated in his letter that this project is a top priority and should be completed as soon as possible. Mr. Fontanella said that the town took the initiative and asked for proposals for installing a new oil tank in the basement and removing the underground tank. Copies of Mr. Krol's letter and of the proposals were distributed to the Board members.

Mrs. Bradway and Ms. Stafford asked why the Board of Education is responsible for paying for this project, and what would happen if the Board didn't do this project right away. Mr. Minich, Data Manager for the town, stated that the building is a Board of Education building, so the Board is responsible for the cost of the project. He also noted that since there was a spill from the underground tank at the historical society, the DEP would not look kindly upon the need for a second remediation in town. Additionally, remediation is much more costly than installing a new tank and removing the underground tank. Mr. Minich said that while other Board of Education buildings (schools) have underground oil tanks, those won't need to be addressed since they are new style tanks and they were installed correctly.

Board members asked if they could wait on the removal of the underground tank, which will cost \$2,500, if they agreed to install the new tank in the basement and transfer the oil to the new tank, which will cost \$2,050. It was stated that once the transition is made to a new tank in the basement, it would be possible to hold off and excavate the underground tank at a later time. It would be necessary to wait until the ground was thawed to remove the tank anyway.

Mrs. Fowler made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rummel, that the Board of Education approve the installation of a new oil tank in the basement of the Pinney Administration Building and to transfer the oil from the underground tank into the new tank. Moved further that the Board approve the proposal submitted by Scotland Heating and Air Conditioning, Willington, CT, in the amount of \$2,050. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Rummel, Ms. Stafford and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried.

It was noted that the cost of the removal of the underground tank would be included in next year's budget.

Item X. Personnel Matters

There were no Personnel Matters.

Item XI. Student Matters

A. Review and Possible Approval of the Contract between the Stafford Board of Education and the Town of Union to Maintain Stafford High School as the Designated High School for Union Students

Mrs. Bradway made a motion, seconded by Ms. Stafford, that the Board of Education ratify the contract between the Stafford Board of Education and the Town of Union to maintain Stafford High School as the designated high school for Union students, as presented. Moved further that the Board of Education authorize Mr. Mark Fontanella, Chair of the Board of Education, and Mrs. Sandra Fowler, Secretary of the Board of Education, to sign the contract on its behalf. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Rummel, Ms. Stafford and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried.

Item XII. Adjournment

Mrs. Bradway made a motion, seconded by Mr. Szymanski, to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Bradway, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Rummel, Ms. Stafford and Mr. Szymanski voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine C. Marinelli, Recording Secretary

Mark Fontanella, Chairperson

Sandra Fowler, Secretary