



## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES (revised)

September 8, 2015

Seymour Middle School

Auditorium

7:30 p.m.

### BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Yashu Putorti, Chairman  
Saundra Gesek  
Kristen Harmeling  
Jay Hatfield  
Jennifer Magri  
Allison Sobieski  
Fred Stanek  
Daniel Robinson, Student Representative

### BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Theodora Klarides  
Ed Strumello

### OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Christine Syriac, Superintendent of Schools  
Vonda Tencza, Assoc. Superintendent  
Rick Belden, Asst. Super., Finance & Op  
Lee-Ann Dauerty, Board Clerk  
Rob Dyer, System Technology Coordinator  
Jim Freund, Principal, SHS  
Tara Yusko, Asst. Principal, SHS  
Bernadette Hamad, Principal, SMS  
Ernie DiStasi, Assistant Principal, SMS  
Mary Sue Feige, Principal, BS  
Kristopher Boyle, Interim Director of Special Services  
David Olechna, Principal, CLS  
Roxanne Melaragno, Asst. Principal, CLS  
Tara Petrino  
Julie Nintzel  
Dawn Adams  
Melissa Gonzalez  
Tricia Vertuccio  
Cindy Dion  
Harvey Catlin  
Elaine Bonaventura  
Christine Kaszeta  
Jennifer Batterton  
Gina Boxleitner  
Allison Cunningham  
Cassandra Banks  
Krista Rossetti  
Shaun Batterton  
Lisa Dadio

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**A. Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Putorti called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and introductions at 7:32 p.m.

**II. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

**A. Recognitions**

1. Congratulations to Mr. Catanese's students who were ranked #1 in the state for Business Management on the CTE Statewide test and to Mr. Perrucci's students who were also ranked #1 in the state for CADD on the CTE Statewide test. Congratulations to Ms. Sardo's accounting students who ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in the state on the CTE Statewide test.
2. All students who took the CTE Statewide Test should be recognized for their fine work; Seymour High School ranked 17 out of 119 high schools that tested in multiple areas. Great job!
3. Congratulations to the high school Business and Technology Department who will be recognized by the State at a luncheon on October 13, 2015.

**B. Correspondence**

1. Thank you Letters
  - a. Letter dated August 25, 2015 from Christine Syriac to the CLS PTA informing them that their donation of a marquee for Chatfield-LoPresti School has been approved by the Board of Education and thanking them for this wonderful addition to the grounds of Chatfield-LoPresti School
  - b. Letter dated August 27, 2015 from the Board of Education to all teachers who conducted a "mini grant" workshop for parents thanking them for their efforts to increase family engagement within our school district
  - c. Letter dated August 27, 2015 from the Board of Education to all Nutrition Services workers to thank them and recognize their hard work and dedication to the student of Seymour
  - d. Letter dated August 27, 2015 from the Board of Education to all temporary summer custodians thanking them for their hard work and dedication over the summer time period preparing our buildings for the opening of schools
  - e. Letter dated August 27, 2015 from the Board of Education to all custodians thanking them for their hard work and dedication over the summer time period preparing our buildings for the opening of schools
  - f. Letters dated August 31, 2015 from Christine Syriac to Teagan Gavin and Marion Matovu for singing the "Star Spangled Banner" at the convocation on August 26, 2015. These students did a great job!

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Cassandra Banks, 11 Patrick Drive, Seymour, CT – Asked if there are checks and balances when a parent makes a suggestion; is there any follow up?

**IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Approval of Minutes**

1. Regular BOE Minutes – August 17, 2015

**B. Finance Committee Meeting – August 17, 2015**

1. Financial Management Summary - ending July 31, 2015  
To approve the recommendation of the Finance Committee meeting to accept the August 31, 2015 Financial Management Summary as presented

**C. Staff Hiring – Non Certified**

1. **Carlson, Amanda**
  - Nutrition Services Worker
  - Bungay School
  - Replacing Gail Fowler

2. **Carew, Jennifer**
  - Nutrition Services Worker
  - Seymour High School
  - Replacing Gloria Meholik

**D. Staff Appointment – Volunteers**

1. **Savrine, Mike**
  - Volunteer Assistant Coach
  - Boys Soccer
  - Seymour High School

**MOTION:** (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Ms. Magri) move to approve the consent agenda with Item C removed

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek

**V. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Hatfield requested Item C be removed from the consent agenda. Mr. Hatfield was confused that some hires were included on the Consent Agenda and other hires were included on the attachment. Mrs. Syriac explained that the hires included on the attachment were the last of the summer hires and the ones on the Consent Agenda were hires that the Board needed to approve.

**MOTION:** (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Ms. Gesek) to approve Item C Staff Hires as presented

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek

**VI. REPORTS**

**A. Chairman's Report**

1. Chairman's Report

Mr. Putorti said school opened almost two weeks ago and he and Mrs. Syriac were on hand to greet students. He said he was disappointed at some of the students' attire. He also talked about the door at the Seymour Middle School that doesn't open/close properly and how he got hit by it and someone might get hurt by it. He asked for it to be fixed and he also thought it would be nice if all the handles matched. He said it was a very busy summer with regard to negotiations of contracts.

2. Board Member Comments

Ms. Harmeling thanked Mrs. Syriac for her very inspirational speech, songs, and videos at the convocation. She said Mrs. Syriac is very authentic with her message. She thanked Mrs. Syriac for inviting the Board Members. Ms. Gesek asked if anyone on the Board was invited to the softball field meeting. No one in attendance said they were invited. Mr. Putorti said he had asked Mr. Miller to invite Board members but it must not have happened. Mr. Stanek said his paralegal was stopped behind one of our buses and she was amazed at the students' attire. He said we might have some work to do on the dress code policy. Mr. Hatfield asked for an update on the SAT test. Mrs. Syriac said she had not received any further information from the State so she has nothing new to report. Mr. Hatfield asked if the Board could have an update on the CABA Legislative Session at the next Board meeting. Mr. Hatfield thanked Lee-Ann Dauerty for her hard work getting the Board's letters out. He said he was approached by a teacher at the grocery store thanking him for the letter.

**B. Superintendent's Report**

Mrs. Syriac said school is going very well as we enter our second week of school. Mrs. Syriac told the Board that she will get her annual goals to them before the October meeting. She reported that she has been asked by a parent to revisit the policy regarding special dietary needs for students and wants to share with the Policy Committee.

**C. Student Representatives Report – Daniel Robinson**

**MOTION:** (Mr. Stanek/ sec., Mr. Hatfield) to add to the agenda the appointment Mr. Daniel Robinson as the Board of Education Student Representative for the 2015-16 school year

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek  
Mr. Hatfield asked how the appointment comes about. Mr. Robinson explained he was one of two volunteers; Mr. Willadsen interviewed and picked him. He got to shadow last year and took over this year. Mr. Robinson said the student representative was no longer elected by the Student Council but asked for students who were interested in being the student representative.

**MOTION:** (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Stanek) to appoint Mr. Daniel Robinson the student representative for the 2015-2015 school year

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek  
Mr. Robinson reported that the opening of school has been smooth despite the heat. Freshman orientation went well, met with the Link Crew, toured the school, and had pizza. Sports have started. Ms. Yusko's sports coaches and parents meeting went well. It's a good start to the year. Mr. Hatfield brought up the subject of having a joint Board of Education/HS Student Council meeting.

**MOTION:** (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Stanek) to add to the agenda a discussion on having a joint Board of Education/HS Student Council meeting.

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek  
Ms. Harmeling asked if the Student Council would be ready to participate in a joint meeting in October. Ms. Syriac reminded the Board that the new staff reception happens at the October meeting so we should schedule the joint BOE/HS Student Council meeting for the November meeting. Mr. Hatfield said he recalled the last joint meeting was not very social and hoped this one would be different. It was decided that the joint meeting would take place before the November meeting from 6:15 pm to 7:15 pm.

**VII. INFORMATION**

**A. Committee Reports**

1. Finance Committee Meeting – August 17, 2015
2. Athletic Committee Meeting – August 18, 2015
3. Facilities Committee Meeting – August 18, 2015

Mr. Hatfield reported that there would be discussion on the policy #7551 update later in the meeting. He said the landscaping was discussed; that is was important and more conversation would take place at the next Facility Meeting in September. Mr. Hatfield was happy to report the large overgrown area near the football field has been taken care of with the renovations. Mr. Belden has been asked to talk to Public Works about having some more help from them. Mr. Hatfield said we should applaud Mr. Natzel and Mr. Belden for the work that they have done with the HVAC situation. Great job! Thank you. Mr. Hatfield asked that Mr. Miller be invited to the Facilities Committee meeting in September.

**B. Smarter Balanced Exams Results – Christine Syriac and Vonda Tencza**

Mrs. Syriac began her presentation saying that she has been reading, getting updated information, and listening to colleagues about the Smarter Balanced Exam results. She said Seymour will use the information from the assessment to inform instruction. We believe in Seymour that we will not put all our eggs in one basket; we will have multiple forms of assessment. It will take at least three years to get the data necessary to do adequate comparisons and identify trends. It is important not to compare our results to other districts or to former assessments. They are two different assessments and should not be compared. Our students have not taken this type of test before. We do not know what other districts have done or what their timeline is. There are higher level standards. The students should be career and college ready. Mrs. Syriac said she is comfortable with the scores but would not be comfortable if she does not see growth in the scores over time.

One part of the test is computer adaptive; and the second part is performance test, given tasks to complete using the knowledge and skills they have been taught. She reminded everyone that Seymour does not teach to the test. We are curriculum driven and our curriculum is driven by standards. We are not looking for ways to bump our scores instead look at what we are doing in the classrooms. Mrs. Tencza distributed a sample student report. She said it is critical that it is understood that this is one snapshot of how our students are performing. We have many ways to measure student achievement even on a daily basis. What is important is that we know the students have learned the material. The broad scores provided are in Language Arts, Math, and some smaller details. She explained the scoring process saying it was very complicated. There was a large amount of participation from educators; 500 educators met in Dallas Texas and they established the scale. A lot of work went into the scoring of 1 (does not meet the achievement level), 2 (approaching the achievement level), 3 (meets the achievement level expected), and 4 (exceeds the achievement level expected). During the Meet the Teachers nights at each school, there will be information sessions about individual student reports. The Administrative Council will review the data and the District Data Team will analyze the data and do action planning.

**C. Turf Committee Report – Ed Strumello**

Mr. Strumello is absent tonight. Mr. Hatfield said he thought the expected turf delivery was this Thursday but as of this meeting it has not yet been delivered. There was a delay at the factory for the field turf. Installation will compensate for the late delivery date. Mr. Putorti added that the track installation is still to come. Mr. Belden said the turf and bleachers are the critical course. The installation of the track is temperature sensitive; it cannot be too hot or too cold. Installation could be deferred to spring depending on the weather. The handicapped assessable areas are moving forward. Mr. Hatfield asked about the Ross Drive gate being open last Monday. Mr. Belden explained that Ross Drive is the access point for heavy equipment and trucks working on the project. Mrs. Syriac also said the Ross Drive gate has been opened due to two accidents that occurred at the entrance to the school and for some road work that was occurring at the front of the school. Ms. Yusko said they are hoping the field will be ready for the October Ansonia game. Mr. Stanek asked if the bleachers were installed. The September 1 deadline was not met and they now have a new target date of October 1. Mr. Stanek asked about the new coating on the track. Mr. Hatfield said it was a new rubberized coating. Mr. Belden said the polyurethane track was too costly. The new resurfacing is guaranteed for ten years. Mr. Hatfield asked about the cost to use Oxford High School's field for Friday's game and Mr. Belden said the expenses were about the same as a home game usually cost. He said we are very appreciative of OHS for use of their field.

**D. Voluntary Corrective Action Plan – Rick Belden**

1. Discussion in regard to the Office of Civil Rights 2011 Review of Seymour High School  
In 2011 Seymour High School was audited by the Office of Civil Rights for deficient areas in the school. A list was developed by them and each year, we must show that the corrective actions have been done. We were notified that they want us to move more quickly. These corrective actions involve significant costs. This needs to be referred to the Town of Seymour Permanent Building Committee to do a Needs Assessment. Mr. Stanek said this is very serious.  
Mr. Stanek said he was not comfortable with relinquishing control to a Board who may not be prepared to discuss this list and felt that a Board of Education member should sit on this board. Mr. Putorti explained that the Permanent Building Committee will evaluate each item on the list as to how it can be done and the cost that will be incurred. Then they will come up with a way to finance the projects. Ms. Magri said the Permanent Building Committee was set up with people who are skilled in the trades. Mr. Natzel is a sitting member of the committee. Board of Education members are not skilled in the trades and do not have a working knowledge of what it will take to get the jobs done. The Permanent Building Committee has a list of every building in this town and is trying to come up with a plan to address issues with them. Mr. Putorti said the ADA requirements were grandfathered and therefore, not discussed at the time of the renovation. Ms. Harmeling said she felt it was perfectly acceptable and smart thing to go to an established town committee with the expertise to evaluate the projects. It should be up to us to follow up with them.

She said their meetings are public so any Board member can attend and make comments under the Public Comments section of their agenda. We shouldn't mess with something that is good. Mr. Stanek said he disagreed and feels that a Board of Education member should sit on this committee while our issue is being discussed. Mr. Putorti will talk to Mr. Miller about this. Mr. Stanek volunteered to be on the committee for our issues only. Mr. Stanek said the letter is asking for more than just a referral to the town committee. Mrs. Syriac said they are looking for firm specific dates. Mrs. Syriac said they would send a letter in response telling them it will be referred to the Permanent Building Committee then we would follow up. They want to see that we are moving forward. Mr. Stanek suggested we ask what sanctions can be imposed if we don't meet the deadlines. Mr. Belden said they will work with us but they want firm dates. We cannot kick the dates down the road any more. They are saying we want you to do something about this. Mr. Stanek said he would like to clarify things with Dr. Wood.

**MOTION:** (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Ms. Magri) to refer the list of voluntary corrective actions to the First Selectman for discussion on the Permanent Building Committee.

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek

**E. Parent Visitation** – Christine Syriac

Mrs. Syriac said that typically in October all schools have parent visitation. She has researched and found there is no policy with regard to parent visitation but it has been a long standing practice. In the past, the elementary schools have two visitations, one in the morning and one in the afternoon; she is changing this to one visitation in the morning. Also, because we have had very low turnout at the high school level, she is discontinuing visitation at the high school level. Ms. Harmeling asked how long the visitation will be for parents who may have more than one child and that we may want to increase the time to accommodate these families. Mrs. Syriac said she would address this with administration.

**F. NEASC Update** – Jim Freund

Mr. Freund informed the Board that the NEASC process would kick off with a welcoming reception at the High School on Sunday, March 13, 2016. The Superintendent of Schools, Board of Education members, community officials, the steering committee, the entire professional staff and students who will be shadowed and their parents are encouraged to attend. This reception is to welcome the visiting committee formally, to provide the chair an opportunity to address the group regarding the overall purpose of the visit and to afford the school one final opportunity to describe the setting and priorities of the community.

**G. Awards** – Jay Hatfield

1. Board member Jay Hatfield would like to discuss adding additional awards from the Board of Education

**MOTION:** (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to table this item and move it to the October 5 Board of Education meeting

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek

**H. VITAHLS Update** – Vonda Tencza

1. The Valley Initiative to Advance Health & Learning in Schools (VITAHLS) is seeking parents who would like to volunteer in a study of child wellness

Mrs. Tencza informed the Board that we will be continuing our partnership with VITAHLS this year and she will be attending her first official luncheon tomorrow. They will be looking for Seymour families who would be interested in participating in a study on child wellness. It is completely a voluntary program.

**I. BOE Retreat**

Mr. Putorti reported that he talked to Mr. Nick Caruso at CABE and he said that he needed to know what we wanted to do at a retreat. Mr. Putorti asked Board members to send him an email of what you would like to do at a retreat. Mr. Caruso said as far as participation from all Board members, it would be dependent upon the subject matter. Ms. Harmeling asked if we can get examples from CABE and Mr. Putorti said he will send examples.

**VIII RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

**A. Out of State Field Trip**

**MOTION:** (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Ms. Magri) to approve the request of Mr. David Willadsen to take members of the grade 9-12 cross country team on an out of state field trip to Warwick, RI on Saturday, September 26, 2015

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek

**B. Criteria to Honor a Retiring Coach**

Ms. Sobieski informed the Board that a coach would not need to meet all of the criteria to be considered for the honor. Ms. Harmeling said she was struggling with “as many as possible”. She said the criteria should be a litmus test; a pass or fail situation. Ms. Sobieski described the situation that was discussed in the committee meeting where a coach may have only coached for a certain number of years and then passes away. She said it was difficult for the committee since there are so many issues. Every circumstance is different. It was hard for the committee to decipher which criterion was more important. The committee needed to have something in the criteria to qualify. None are a definite requirement. Ms. Magri said she felt this was not criteria, with the way this is written, we are honoring all coaches. She feels we need some type of performance criteria. Mr. Putorti said he felt it needed to be more concrete. Ms. Harmeling said she felt there needed to be some type of matrix and it cannot be only winning coaches. This criteria needs to show that the coach was a role model to the students.

**MOTION:** (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Ms. Sobieski) to approve the recommendation of the Athletic Committee to honor all retiring coaches who meet as many of the following criteria as possible: 1) The coach has been a Seymour High School athlete; 2) The coach has taught at Seymour High School and 3) The coach has coached for a minimum of ten years of service or at the discretion of the Board of Education. Coaches selected for this honor will have a framed jersey with their name on it displayed in Seymour High School

**Motion Rescinded**

**MOTION:** (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Ms. Magri) to recommit this item back to the Athletic Committee

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek

**C. Policy #7551 Revision**

Mr. Hatfield said the Facilities Committee discussed this policy over a significant length of time. He felt they had developed a “great little policy”. Mr. Stanek said the language is general and that is how the committee wanted it. It was tough to come up with firm criteria. He said this was more procedural than substantive. Ms. Harmeling said she liked that an investigation of contributions of a person being considered. Ms. Magri asked as a Board member will I be educated on the person’s contributions before I am asked to support the recommendation. Mr. Stanek said yes.

**MOTION:** (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Ms. Gesek) to accept the recommendation of the Facilities Committee to revise Policy #7551 to include the naming of Facility Areas as presented

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek

**D. High School Athletic Handbook Revisions**

There was a lengthy discussion on the Attendance policy for student athletes. There were concerns by Board members as to the excused absence on a Friday before a game. Many were not comfortable with the wording and the consequences. Mrs. Syriac said they are not recommending changes to this, it has been around a very long time, and the high school administration wants to get the policy back into the Athletic Handbook as it disappeared a few years ago.

**MOTION:** (Ms. Sobieski/sec., Ms. Magri) to accept the recommendation of the Athletic Committee to approve the revisions to the 2015-16 Athletic Handbook as presented

**Motion Rescinded**

**MOTION:** (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to recommit this item to the Athletic Committee.

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek

**IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Tara Petrino, 18 Woodcrest Road, Seymour, CT - Asked how are results calculated when students were unable to complete certain sections because of technology issues. Meaning they could not continue, that the computer would not let them go forward.

Cassandra Banks, 11 Patrick Drive, Seymour – Expressed her concerns regarding the elimination of the afternoon session of parent visitation because it will be difficult for parents with multiple students. She also felt that this should not be eliminated because this shows parents are interested. She asked if she heard right that the visitation would be eliminated at the high school level and Mr. Putorti confirmed that this was correct.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Putorti) to adjourn the meeting

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Gesek, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Magri, Mr. Putorti, Ms. Sobieski, Mr. Stanek

The meeting adjourned at 10:17 pm.

(attachment)

Submitted by:  
Lee-Ann Dauerty  
Board Clerk