TOWN OF SIMSBURY
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Record of Proceedings | Regular Meeting | February 8, 2022

Ms. Susan Salina called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Simsbury Public Library Program Room.

Roll Call:
Members present: Mmes. Susan Salina, Tara Willerup, Jen Batchelar, Lydia Tedone and Sharon Thomas. Messrs. Jeff Tindall, Todd Burrick and Brian Watson.

Also present: Superintendent Matt Curtis, Assistant Superintendent Sue Homrok-Lemke, Assistant Superintendent Neil Sullivan, Director of Finance Amy Meriwether, Director of Infrastructure & Technology Jason Casey, BOE Student Representative Alex Picoult and Recording Secretary Katie Wilde.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE — Public Audience

Mr. Curtis framed out the decision making process relative to next steps in unmasking in schools. Governor Lamont has asking the legislature to codify some of his executive orders. The DPH and CSDE have made comments that they support the governor's recommendation. The DPH noted the four things they are thinking about: (1) community vaccination rates, (2) a decrease in hospitalization rates, (3) a decrease in positive cases, (4) and the fact that the Omicron variant is more mild than past variants. As in the past, the district has made decisions based on the recommendations of the DPH and CSDE, in conjunction with the FVHD. Mr. Curtis stated that he expects that the decision relative to masking to be made in the same way, noting that no decision will be made this evening as we are yet to receive anything in writing.

The following community members provided public comment in support of unmasking students in school, such that masks are optional, regardless of vaccination status. These comments can be heard in full at the following link: https://www.simsbury.k12.ct.us/boe/broadcasts

Mike Park, 12 Alder Road
Tara Lucidon
Meghan Pugliese, 181 Hoskins Road spoke on behalf of herself and the ***Ogles***, 24 Alder Road, ***Callahans***, 15 Hallview Drive, and the ***O'Briens***, 462 Firetown Road
Henry Pugliese, 181 Hoskins Road
Stacey Walczak, 35 Banks Road
Micky Kopel, 9 Pinecrest Drive
Helen Sabin, 1 West Mary Drive
Lori Boyko, 15 Oakhurst Road
Jennifer Morrow, 52 Wheeler Road
Susan Hayes, 12 Fairview Street
Kristin Ingram, 11 Village Road
Elle Sparacio, SHS student
Monica Madrid

Comments from the community members listed below were read into the record by board members.

Jason & Avarti von Bartheld, 48 Long View Drive
Michelle Grady, West Simsbury BOE
Jeff Witkowski, 33 Fawnbrook Lane
Erica Maglieri, Weatogue
Megan Myers, 425 Bushy Hill Road
Christine Trificante, 21 North Drive
Baroncelli family
Christopher and Sara Papa

The board recessed at 7:30 p.m. and reconvened at 7:40 p.m.

Communications

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOE COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Picoult reported on Black History Month celebrations at the schools. He noted that SHS course registration will be complete tomorrow. Mr. Picoult reviewed activities happening at HJMS and the elementary schools.

Ms. Thomas reported that she participated in a stakeholders meeting with the CSDE for the review of standards for remote learning. Ms. Batchelar congratulated those at SHS who participated in Pippin. Ms. Tedone reported on the NSBA conference in Washington D.C. and the various programs that were held. She noted that the CREC Legislative Forum will be held virtually on February 17.

Mr. Burrick thanked those who came to speak during public audience, noting his appreciation for the respectful conversation and sharing of thoughts. Mr. Watson also thanked those who came in person and wrote to the board. He pointed out that assumptions as to where board members stand on the wearing of masks should not be presumed. Mr. Curtis stated his appreciation for the public's remarks. He stated that our decision will be made in concert with the CSDE, DPH and FVHD whose direction seems obvious.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Approval of Minutes of January 25, 2022

A. Approval of Minutes of January 25, 2022

Ms. Thomas: MOVE to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2022 meeting.

Ms. Willerup: Seconded. So moved. Ms. Tedone abstained.

Personnel

B. Personnel

Ms. Tedone: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the resignation of Lesley Turner effective February 18, 2022

Mr. Burrick: Seconded. So moved.

Ms. Batchelar: MOVE that the Board of Education accept the retirement of Jan Hanlon effective June 30, 2022.

Mr. Tindall: Seconded. So moved

C. Approval of Six Year Capital Improvement Plan

Approval of 6 Year CIP

Mr. Casey reviewed the items in the first year of the capital improvement plan. This includes district climate control improvements at SHS, partial roof replacement at Central and Tariffville Schools, plumbing improvements at Tootin' Hills and Squadron Line Schools, electrical improvements at Central School, and the biennial request for network infrastructure improvements. Mr. Casey noted that the board has reviewed these items during prior meetings.

Mr. Burrick: MOVE that the Board of Education Six Year Capital Improvement Plan for the period 2023-2028 be adopted.

Ms. Batchelar: Seconded. So moved.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

A. Superintendent's 2022-23 Budget

Superintendent's 2022-23 Budget

Mr. Curtis stated that the budget process is grounded in the district strategic plan and continuous improvement plan. He reviewed the budget development process that began in November and noted that 80% of the budget is related to staffing and enrollment. Mr. Curtis outlined the budget themes and priorities. The superintendent's 2022-23 recommended public and non-public school budgets total $77,030,819, an increase of $2,584,239 or 3.47%.

Mr. Curtis presented a per pupil expenditure comparison with area towns and the state. He noted that 2022-23 enrollment projections districtwide demonstrate a modest increase next year, with reductions at the secondary level and an increase at the elementary level. Mr. Curtis provided a historical comparison of enrollment decreases in conjunction with special education student population increases.

Mr. Curtis discussed the personnel requests which are the major drivers of the proposed budget. These requests include 2 additional social workers so there is 1 at each elementary school; a change in the leadership structure creating 3 special education department supervisor positions at the elementary level; 1 special education teacher to be shared between Squadron Line and Latimer Lane; and 1 speech & language pathologist to address large caseloads in the lower grades. At the secondary level there is a request for a capstone support person and an additional school psychologist.

Mr. Curtis reviewed the 2022-23 budget personnel drivers, pointing out the impact of contractual obligations. The increase due to personnel drivers is 4.73%. This is offset by reductions in certain areas that results in a total impact of 2.99%. Mr. Curtis discussed the other categories that impact operating costs. The increase in textbooks and instructional supplies will true up that budget account. The increase in transportation is a result of the 3% increase in the Salter's contract and the need to hire other providers for extracurricular activities due to the bus driver shortage. Overall these categories result in a .5% budget increase.

Mr. Curtis reviewed the utilization of grant funding to offset the increase in requested FTE. The request for 2 social workers will be funded through ARPA funds. The

additional special education department supervisor and the school psychologist will be funded through the BOE federal ESSER funds, and the special education teacher through BOE ARPA funding. The capstone coordinator will be funded through the BOE non-lapsing account that has a balance of $650,000.

Mr. Curtis reviewed the major budget drivers. The overall additions to the budget reflect an increase of 5.23%. With the incorporation of reductions to the budget the result is a proposed 3.47% budget increase. Mr. Curtis pointed out that the budget supports high academic achievement with no reductions to programs/support/ electives, promoting social and emotional wellbeing, and a balance between excellence in programming and fiscal responsibility.

Ms. Tedone asked if the increase in elementary enrollment will result in redistricting. Mr. Curtis responded that annually projections versus capacity and programming are reviewed. He stated that next year should be okay, but Squadron Line may need to be addressed in the future.

Mr. Curtis pointed out that the town's grand list growth came in extremely favorable. Ms. Salina noted that the BOE has not had a budget over 3% since 2008. Mr. Watson stated his appreciation for all the work that was put into the budget. Mr. Burrick noted that the budget has an additional focus on some of the areas that were mentioned during public audience.

B. Quarterly Budget Report

Quarterly Budget Report

Ms. Meriwether reviewed some of the state grant awards. In January the town received the preliminary Excess Cost Grant award of $1,827,564 which is a decrease of $46,963. Funding to support mandated adult education programs administered by the district received a current year preliminary award of $15,365, an increase of $791. Funding to support private school health services provided by the district resulted in a $20,940 award, an increase of $2,231.

Ms. Meriwether reviewed some of the federal grant awards. Simsbury received its Title II Part A Teacher Quality final award of $56,603, a decrease of $6,951. The Title III Part A English Language Acquisition final award was $9,461, an increase of $1,066. The Title IV, Part A Student Support & Academic Enrichment final award of $10,000 was received with no change from the prior year. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) IDEA final award was received in the amount of $245,128. Ms. Meriwether reviewed expenditures noting that changes related to general control, health services, transportation, student body activities and community services are mainly related to
COVID.

C. Policy Second Reading

Policy Second Reading

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the additions to the 1000 Community Series that is being brought for a second reading. He noted these policies will be presented for adoption at the next board meeting.

Public Audience

<u>PUBLIC AUDIENCE</u>

Lori Boyko, 15 Oakhurst Road, expressed concern with social justice issues being discussed across the curriculum at SHS. She suggested there should be fewer emotionally charged topics on top of everything else.

Executive Session

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Thomas: MOVE to enter Executive Session at 8:46 to discuss a collective bargaining matter and include Superintendent Matt Curtis.

Ms. Tedone: Seconded. So moved.

Adjournment

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Tindall: MOVE to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 p.m.

Ms. Thomas: Seconded. So moved.

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Jennifer Batchelar
Secretary

Katie Wilde
Recording Secretary