

OLD SAYBROOK BOARD OF EDUCATION
50 Sheffield St.
Old Saybrook CT 06475
(860) 395-3157

The Old Saybrook Board of Education met in Special Session on Tuesday, October 4, 2016, at the Old Saybrook Public Schools Central Office, Old Saybrook, CT 06475.

Board Members

Kelley Kennedy
Joanne Sullivan
Eileen Baker
Philip Broadhurst
Karen Brodeur
Alan Hyla
George Chang
Holly King
James Henderson

Others

Jan Perruccio, Superintendent of Schools
Anne Littlefield, Shipman and Goodwin Attorney

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Kennedy called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Board Member King arrived at 5:40 p.m.

II. COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS

Audience of Citizens

No citizens addressed the Board of Education

Correspondence

The following Correspondence was presented to the Board:

- 2016 CABE/CAPSS Convention Agenda
- Donald Kerr Obituary – Mr. Kerr was a former teacher in the district. A moment of silence was held in his honor.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Baker/Sullivan

“Move to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2016, Board of Education regular meeting as presented”

MOTION: CARRIED (9-0-0)

Sullivan/Brodeur

“Move to approve the minutes of the September 27, 2016, Board of Education special meeting as presented”

MOTION: CARRIED (9-0-0)

IV. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

Board of Education Member Handbook

There is a template available to create a Board of Education Member Handbook. The goal is to use the template to create a specific Old Saybrook handbook. This handbook will be a useful orientation tool for new Board members, as well as a resource for existing Board members. The handbook will be available online for easy access and updating. Target completion for this handbook is February 28, 2017.

Special Board Meetings for the Discussion of One Specific Topic

The Board has initiated special meetings for the purpose of discussing one specific topic, which are being held prior to the regularly scheduled Board meetings. For example, the Board held a special meeting on the philosophy of discipline, personalized curriculum for pre-K students, and community conversations. Other possible topics include: Section 504, personalized learning. The Superintendent will create a mechanism for feedback on those sessions (e.g. a post-topic survey) to elicit information about the presentation, so as to improve the presentations and better understand whether more information on these topics is needed. The Board is sensitive to the need to “pace” these meetings so as to enable the administration to prepare for them fully and balance the need to prepare for the presentations with their other responsibilities. A community conversation for strategic planning is planned for November. The Board finds these special meetings to be a helpful tool, and would like to see them continue.

Communications and Public Relations – General Update

The Public relations committee has not met since late winter 2016. Public relations is part of the strategic plan. The website is a viable entity and twitter is in use for celebratory news. The Superintendent reports that the communication efforts have been so robust that her office has received complaints about the volume of communications emanating from district sources. The Superintendent’s office makes conscious decisions about how to communicate urgent messages (so as to make sure that urgent, immediate messages stand out as communications). The Board reviewed the Old Saybrook Public Schools Strategic Communication Plan. The Superintendent expressed that her goal is to improve the “community at large” aspects of the district’s communications.

Board of Education Presence at School Events

The Board has designated specific members as liaisons for each of the schools. As a reminder, Board members are encouraged to attend school events (sports, concerts, plays, ceremonies, etc.). The presence of a Board member at an event sends an important message to the community as a whole about the Board’s commitment. The Board does not currently track attendance rates at specific school events, but Board members are encouraged to share with the Superintendent’s Assistant if they are planning on attending a particular event at a particular school. The Board recognized that its members attend many high school events, and Board members are encouraged to attend elementary and middle school events as well. Events from each school will be added to reminders/highlights for the Board members so that everyone knows what major events are coming up.

Board of Education/Superintendent’s Goals Review

The Superintendent’s goals follow the district’s goals, administrators follow the Superintendent, teachers follow the administrators. The Superintendent reported on her progress and the action steps that she anticipates taking during the 2016-2017 school year. To explain the concept of “nested” goals, the Superintendent used standard based grading as an example, explaining the similarities and differences at the different grade levels. The Board also discussed the format in which the goals were presented, expressing very positive feedback.

Strategic Plan/Progress Reporting

The Superintendent reported on strategic plan progress. The District Leadership Team has prepared voluminous, detailed reports on the progress of the strategic plan, and the Board has received this information and has a great appreciation of the amount of work and level of detail that reporting has entailed. The Board expressed to the Superintendent that the reports could be much more streamlined, presenting a high level view of the “major accomplishments, the risks, the impediments, and what will and will not be accomplished” in the periodic reports of progress.

Convocation Staff Feedback

A survey administered after Convocation yielded generally positive feedback. The Superintendent shared some specific comments made by individuals who responded to the survey. The district had a very inclusive Convocation ceremony with many stakeholders from the community, which the Board members expressed appreciation for.

Budget Development Process

This topic is under discussion based on a desire to examine whether the Board's budget process can be made more efficient and streamlined. In addition, the Board is committed to ensuring that the Board's budget is presented in a clear and transparent manner to the public, and the Board wants to make the budget easily understandable to members of the public. The Connecticut Association of Business Officials ("CASBO") may have resources that could assist the Board in its presentation process. Members of the Board noted that the detailed budget document that is available/presented is understood by Board members (due to their participation in the process), and the Superintendent's presentation is excellent and very accessible to the public. Multiple high level summaries are helpful for the public's understanding. The "Superintendent's budget" (which includes more detailed narrative) can continue to be made available to the public. The Board will refer this issue back to the budget and fiscal committee for review and recommendations.

The Superintendent described the multiple audiences that the budget presentation is targeted towards, and how different audiences can access multiple formats to get the information that they are interested in. The Board recognizes that it is important to maintain and make available a record of what has been removed from the budget to help the community, as well as the Board member, assess the opportunity costs presented by the final budget.

Parent/Student Classroom Feedback

The Board had questions about the use of and/or access to student feedback about teachers in the classroom. The Superintendent described how student feedback is used in the evaluation process. The Board asked how student feedback can be solicited and used by district administrators in an evaluative way.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Baker/Brodeur

"Move to enter into Executive Session at 8:35 p.m. for the purpose of discussing and evaluating personnel and individual Board Members and the Superintendent of Schools"

MOTION: CARRIED (9-0-0)

Superintendent Perruccio and Attorney Littlefield were invited into Executive Session

VI. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

The Board of Education returned to open session at 9:20 p.m.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS

Audience of Citizens

No citizens addressed the Board of Education

VIII. REMINDERS

- OSHS/OSMS Grade 8 Activities Fair/Open House – October 11, 2016 – 6:00 pm
- Board Recognition Reception – October 18, 2016 – 6:45 pm
- Board of Education Meeting – October 18, 2016 – 7:30 pm
- Fall Concert: Chamber Music Small Choruses – October 20, 2016 – 7:30 pm
- National Honor Society Food Drive – October 22, 2016 – 8:00 am
- Goodwin Costume Parade – October 31, 2016 – 10:15 am
- Board of Education Meeting – November 8, 2016 – 7:30 pm

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Baker/Sullivan

"Move to adjourn at 9:25 p.m."

MOTION: CARRIED (9-0-0)

Karen Brodeur, Secretary
Old Saybrook Board of Education

Minutes recorded and typed by:
Trent Gerbers, Executive Assistant

*DRAFT - Subject to approval at the next BOE meeting