

SHERMAN BOARD OF EDUCATION
SHERMAN, CONNECTICUT 06784
REGULAR MEETING, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2014
LIBRARY, THE SHERMAN SCHOOL
7:00 PM

EXECUTIVE SESSION 6:00 PM

The Board met in executive session to discuss confidential matters.

AGENDA AND SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

A regular meeting of the Sherman Board of Education was called to order by the Chairman at: 7:20 PM in the Library at the Sherman School.

1. **PRESENT:**

For the Board:	Mrs. Crowe, Mrs. Enright, Mr. Gamper, Mr. Hanley, Mr. Keneally, Mrs. Lenihan and Mrs. Seeger
For the Administration:	Ms. Boylan and Mr. Fiftal
Other School Staff:	Ms. Barry and Mr. Trinchillo
SPTO:	Mrs. Blake
Town Residents	Three parents and one member of the press

2. **CELEBRATIONS:**
Chairman Bob Gamper noted and welcomed Mrs. Lenihan and Mrs. Seegar, who are now officially members of the Board.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**
No public comments.

4. **ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDS:**
No additions to the agenda.

5. **CONSENT AGENDA:**
Mr. Keneally moved and Mrs. Crowe seconded that the Board approve the consent agenda items, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.
 - 5.1 Minutes – Regular meeting December 4, 2013 (Enclosure 5.1a)
 - Minutes – Budget workshop December 12, 2013 (Enclosure 5.1b)
 - 5.2 Personnel Actions
 - 5.3 Reports – Monthly Enrollment Report (Enclosure 5.2)
 - Monthly Budget Report (Enclosure 5.3 a & b).
 - 5.4 Grants – None

6. **APPROVAL OF CURRENT BILLS:**
Mr. Keneally moved and Mrs. Crowe seconded that the Board approve to approve the current bills as presented, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

7. ORAL REPORTS:

7.1 SPTO: Mrs. Ashleigh Blake, President

- The Student Directories have been distributed. Mrs. Blake gave special thanks to Mrs. Joanna Ribisl for her work on this project.
- The SPTO is planning the SPTO Dance which is tentatively scheduled for March 8, 2014.
- The next project that is coming up is the Book Mark contest for Literacy month.
- Alisyn Hamilton requested \$600.00 for transportation to the New Britain Museum of American Art. This request has been approved.
- The 6th Grade Teachers have requested \$910.00 for a trip to the Ridgefield Playhouse to see a traditional Chinese Acrobat Performance. This request has been approved.

7.2 Sub-Committee

Mr. Joseph Keneally – Facility Update

- The school had minor plumbing and electrical repairs which have been made.
- The school had roof leaks over the Multi-purpose room and Kindergarten wing. These leaks were the result of frozen drains and are a seasonal issue. The roofing contractor will be doing an inspection and providing the committee with a preliminary estimate for replacing the roof over the Multi-purpose room.
- The first round of security enhancements have been completed.
- Mr. Spaziani and Mr. Luchsinger met with Dave Raines, Sherman Emergency Management Director. The goal of the meeting was to discuss possible alignment of communication asset of ESF, the school and possibly the Town Hall. The Fire House has a T1 line which could be beneficial to the school as we continue to research our new communication package with a potential VoIP system (Voice over Internet Protocol). The facility sub-committee is anticipating a total of three quotes with hard numbers for a major upgrade.
- The in-house ticketing system for maintenance and technology is live and working well.
- The school had an oil heating issue on Tuesday (1/7/13). The oil contractor made an error and delivered only 900 gallons of oil, instead of 7,500 gallons. The issue was quickly rectified.
- The Facility Management position is awaiting Board of Selectmen action.
- Mr. Hanley asked Mr. Keneally if Mr. Spaziani and Mr. Luchsinger were aware of the January 27, 2013 Budget Meeting. Mr. Keneally confirmed that they are aware that hard numbers are needed for the multi-purpose roof repair and upgraded communication systems. Mr. Hanley mentioned that consistent proposals are much easier to compare. Mr. Keneally agreed.

Mr. Rowland Hanley – Budget Update

- The budget sub-committee had a budget workshop on 12/12/13. Mr. Hanley mentioned that the budget process continues to improve year after year. Mr. Hanley appreciates the Administration's greater ownership of driving the budget process. The focus of this workshop was to have a preliminary review of the budget and to run through it from a housekeeping perspective. The sub-committee has established a series of workshops:
 - January 13
 - January 27
 - February 10
 - February 24
 - March 10
 - March 24

Each workshop will focus on particular topics which will include:

- Staffing
- Special Education
- Technology
- Security
- Maintenance
- Capital Improvements
- High School Tuition & Transportation
- Student Activities

After the workshops have been completed, additional budget meetings will be scheduled to prepare the budget for the town presentation.

7.3 Chairman

- Mr. Gamper mentioned that the budget sessions that have been established for this year are a great opportunity for the public, in particular concerned parents, to see to overall construction of our school budget in areas of their interests. It will also give tax payers a good look at where the Board is trying to make some savings and where additional costs could be incurred in the coming year. The goal of the Board is to try and make the workshops as public as possible.
- Our Security Consultant, Mr. Robert Johnson, has generated a list of 22 items to increase school security. Due to security, Mr. Gamper cannot discuss the items in specific detail. A tremendous amount of security enhancements have been installed in the school that were not in place a year ago. Several items are still being developed and more projects are anticipated for the future. Mr. Gamper expressed that Mr. Johnson and the Administration have done a very good job so far.

7.4 Superintendent & Administrative Team

Ms. Mary Boylan, Principal

- Ms. Boylan welcomed Mrs. Seeger and Mrs. Lenihan to the Board. She had the pleasure of working with them in the past and looks forward to working with them again.
- Snow Days – Ms. Boylan reported that the school has used 4 snow days to date. The school calendar has been adjusted and the last day of school has been moved to Friday, June 13, 2014.
- Fineline Theatre Art Performance – Ms. Boylan reported that the Nutcracker performance was incredible and a wonderful opportunity for the school. It was held in the gymnasium and it gave the students an opportunity to sit close to the performance. The students from Pre-K to the 8th grade were attentive and mesmerized by the performance.
- Professional Development: Applied Behavior Analysis – Ms. Boylan communicated that much of our Professional Development time has been dedicated to keep up with requirements pertaining to the Common Core Standards and Teacher Evaluations. However, Ms. Boylan stressed the importance for the school to stay on top of other important areas like Autism. The school has hired a consultant, Dr. Missy Olive. She has come in to work and train our Teachers and Para-Professionals that work with children that been diagnosed with Autism. She will return on February 14th (half day) and work with the students in the morning and then the teachers in the afternoon. Dr. Olive is a Certified Behavioral Analyst (ABA – Applied Behavioral Analyst). The focus will be to work with students who have extreme inflexible behaviors by keeping track of data as to what the student does and then training to accompany their behaviors. Ms. Boylan shared that the school is very fortunate to have Dr. Olive and she thanked the Board for allowing the opportunity to work with her.
- The School Performance Report: A guide for Parents (SPI/DPI) – Ms. Boylan reported that the State has released the results from The School Performance Report. This is a Criteria Reference Report for the school to compare its growth, not as a comparison to compare Sherman to other schools. The report is based on the results of the CMT test. The Connecticut Department of Education expects a target score of 88 or better. The Sherman School exceeded the target of 88 and received a score of 89.9 which is classified as "Progressing". 235 schools are in the "Progressing" category. The school was not classified in the "Excelling" bracket because its sub-group (students with disabilities) received a score of 71.1. This score had to be within 10 points or less of our score to achieve the "Excelling" category. Although the school did not reach "Excelling" it continues to improve students with special needs. The results of this report should be used as a baseline to improve over time and continued growth.

With the exception of Science, Sherman will not be taking the CMT; therefore it will not be getting this information next year.

The next test will be a Smarter Balance field test and then the following year the students will be taking the actual Smarter Balance test. Due to the testing change, it will take a few years until accurate data can be used to measure growth and improvement.

Once the district completely moves to the Smarter Balance testing system, it will be a difficult transition and challenge for the educators because everything will be analyzed to look at the data and then rated on each teacher's performance.

Ms. Boylan has been attending workshops pertaining to the set up of the Computer Lab and a potential modified "computer lab" (perhaps using laptops) in order to accommodate and schedule students. In addition, training methods will be communicated to teach to the rigorous expectation of the test (ex. using a keyboard). Websites will also be communicated for school and home use. The websites will not teach to the test, but rather how to take the test on a computer. Learning how to take the test will be a challenge for the students.

Mr. Donald Fiftal, Superintendent

- Mr. Fiftal thanked Ms. Boylan for the overview of this very complex topic. Mr. Fiftal added to Ms. Boylan's comment regarding the challenge that teachers will face regarding the results of the test. Mr. Fiftal mentioned the importance of Teachers coming to terms with an understanding that the scoring system is going to become part of their evaluation. In addition, the Administration, as evaluators of Teachers, must help with the comfort level of teachers. The results of the test will not only score each individual teacher, but as members of the school team and how well the school performs. Mr. Fiftal shared that the same is true for the Administrator's evaluations as it will have in it a dimension of these scores. Administratively it is important to support the integrity of the scores and make it work as a component of growth and improvement for the school. At the same time, teachers will need support transitioning professionally, intellectually and emotionally to a whole new world of assessing their performance. The Administration will work closely with the staff to implement this in a way that does not diminish the strength of commitment that a teacher has towards one's profession because suddenly this evaluation has a certain new component that can be somewhat threatening and unnerving. Mr. Fiftal expressed the need for the teachers to be confident, believe in themselves, work well with students in addition to all of the things that teachers do.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**
No new business at this time.

9. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
No unfinished business at this time.

10. **COMMUNICATIONS**

No additional comments at this time.

11. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Casey Diotte, Hubbell Mountain Road was very concerned regarding the lack of heat at school yesterday. All three of her children attend the Sherman School (ages 3, 5 and 7). Her 3 year old attended school yesterday for the AM session and came home with blue lips. She wanted to know at what point a decision would be made to close school because the temperature of the building is too cold. Also, she expressed concerns on why wasn't some form of communication provided to the parents?

Mr. Keneally stated that he was in the building on Tuesday morning for a meeting. The interior temperature of the building was between 56 and 58 degrees. He also added that at 9:30 AM the heat came on.

Mr. Fiftal shared that guidelines are in place concerning heat and humidity levels, but was not aware of the converse of that concerning interior temperatures being too cold. Mr. Fiftal added that this issue will be discussed administratively regarding alert messages.

12. **BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS**

13. **FUTURE MEETINGS AND TOPICS**

13.1 Budget workshop has been scheduled for Monday, January 13, 2014 at 6:00 PM in the Library Media Center.

13.2 Next regular meeting, Wednesday, February 12, 2014, 7:00 PM

13.3 Policy 6000 Series meeting, Wednesday, January 22, 2014 at 6:30 PM.

14. **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Hanley moved and Mr. Keneally seconded that there being no further business to conduct, to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:20 PM, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Rowland Hanley
Vice-Chairman/Secretary

Prepared by Recording Secretary: Nancy B. Winkler