

SEYMOUR BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
June 22, 2021  
SEYMOUR MIDDLE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM  
7:00 pm

COPY RECEIVED  
DATE: 6/29/2021  
TIME: 8:28 AM  
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

MASKS ARE REQUIRED

**BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Christopher Champagne  
Jay Hatfield  
Peter Kubik  
Beth Nesteriak  
Fred Stanek  
Ed Strumello  
Zachary Braca, Student Representative  
Karyna Weaver, Student Representative

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Kristen Bruno  
James Garofolo  
Kristen Harmeling

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Michael Wilson, Superintendent of Schools  
Vonda Tencza, Associate Superintendent  
David Fiorillo, Interim Business Manager  
Kris Boyle, Director of Special Services  
Lee-Ann Dauerty, Board Clerk  
Derrick Martin, Technology  
Cindy Brooks, Director of Nutrition  
Jim Freund, Principal, SHS  
Ernie DiStasi, Assistant Principal, SHS  
Jodie Roden, Principal, SMS  
Kathleen Freimuth, Assistant Principal, SMS  
Mary Sue Feige, Principal, BS  
Lauren Reid, Assistant Principal, BS  
David Olechna, Principal, CLS

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

A. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Strumello called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:06 p.m.

**II. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Awards Recognitions

1. 2021 Distinguished Alumnus of Seymour High School – Mr. Jim Freund
2. Retiring Staff Members
  - a. Bungay – Ms. Feige
    - Marcelline Slie, BES, Instructional Paraprofessional
    - June Tema, BES, Kindergarten Teacher
  - b. Chatfield-LoPresti – Mr. Olechna
    - Melissa Drozd, CLS, Physical Education Teacher
    - Wendy Sebas, CLS, Instructional Paraprofessional
  - c. Seymour Middle School – Ms. Jodie Roden
    - Linda Brochu, SMS, Instructional Paraprofessional
    - Christine Alcutt, SMS, Social Studies Teacher
    - Ramonita Hernandez, SMS, Instructional Paraprofessional
    - Elaine Roche, SMS, World Language Teacher
    - Linda Souza, SMS, Instructional Paraprofessional

- d. Seymour High School – Mr. Jim Freund
    - Anita Cardona, SHS, School Counselor
    - Eric DeMarco, SHS, Psychology Teacher
    - Jennifer Sardo, SHS, Business Teacher
    - Robert Tkacz, SHS, Night Custodian
  - e. Nutrition Services
    - Jonna Cunniff, SMS, Nutrition Services – Ms. Cindy Brooks
  - f. Central Office
    - Nancy Maglione, CO, Secretary Bookkeeper – Mr. Michael Wilson
  - 3. Golden Apple Awards – Mr. Michael Wilson
    - a. Lauren Reid - Bungay School
    - b. Staci Faria - Chatfield-LoPresti School
    - c. Debbie Baldarelli – Special Education
    - d. Deborah Bennett - Seymour Middle School
    - e. Joe Perrucci-- Seymour High School
  - 4. David A. Brumer Excellence in Education Award – Mr. Fred Stanek
    - a. Jara Ciocca
  - 5. John J. Gallagher Memorial Athletic Award – Mr. Jay Hatfield
    - a. Daniel and Jeannette Marra
  - 6. Vincentena Kobasa Excellence in Teaching Award – Miss Victoria Saracino
    - a. Kathleen Papa-Zinko
  - 7. Thomas J. Petruny Memorial Education and Environment Award – Mr. Ed Strumello
    - a. Noah Blood
  - 8. 2021-2022 Paraprofessional of the Year – Mr. Michael Wilson
    - a. Doreen Garcia
  - 9. 2021-2022 Teacher of the Year – Mr. Michael Wilson
    - a. Deirdre Sponheimer
  - 10. CAFE Student Leadership Award – Ms. Jodie Roden, Mr. Jim Freund
    - a. Brayden Pesantez – Seymour Middle School
    - b. Sam Rodrigue – Seymour Middle School
    - c. Samantha Massie – Seymour High School
    - d. Joseph Orlando – Seymour High School
  - 11. Recognition of Board of Education Student Representative – Mr. Ed Strumello
    - a. Zack Braca
  - 12. Recognition of Awards Committee Student Representatives – Mr. Fred Stanek
    - a. Oleh Stasyuk
  - 13. CAS Governor's Scholar Program – Mr. Jim Freund
    - a. Rebecca Kramer-Earley
  - 14. Top 10 Students – Class of 2021 – Mr. Jim Freund, Mr. Michael Wilson
    - 10. Rounak Uddin
    - 9. Erin Lifrieri
    - 8. Samantha Massie
    - 7. Mia Bronson
    - 6. Erin Smith
    - 5. Dzenita Muhovic
    - 4. Suzana Imetovski
    - 3. Emma Pasnault
    - 2. Kenneth Dong
    - 1. Rebecca Kramer-Earley
- B. Recess 7:56 pm  
Reconvene 8:10 pm

## II. RECOGNITIONS

- A. Seymour Remembers Memorial Day Essay Contest – Mr. Stanek  
Mr. Stanek was a judge and had the responsibility to read all the essays submitted. He said they were all very well written. The topic of the essay written by the contestants was "What Memorial Day means to my Family and me." Since the Parade was cancelled due to inclement weather, the winners were honored at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on June 1, 2021. The winners each received a plaque and a \$50 check from funds donated to the Committee for the Parade.
1. Chatfield LoPresti School:
    - a. Thomas Halligan – First Place
    - b. Joseph LaValley – Runner-Up
    - c. Kiley Umstead – Runner-Up
  2. Bungay Elementary School
    - a. Kiera Glifford – First Place
    - b. Emma Nesteriak – Runner-Up
    - c. Miley Saucier – Runner-Up
  3. Seymour Middle School
    - a. Payton McDaniel – First Place
    - b. Ariel Zedek – Runner-Up

## III. REPORTS Part 1

- A. HS Student Representative Report-Zach Braca, Karyna Weaver  
The student representatives were not present so no report was read.

## IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Please note: "If you would like to make a public comment during this meeting, please complete the "Public Comment Request Form" which can be accessed via the link: <https://forms.gle/ecNornPgigowkFpW7>, which can also be accessed on the Seymour Public Schools homepage under contacting the board.

**Requests must be received no later than 6pm on Tuesday, June 22, 2021."**

Casey Grenier, 29 Maple Street - spoke about the possibility of her children being masked again in the fall and asked the Board of Ed to be the change in the State. Sadie Patrick, 46 Greenwood Circle – Spoke about how her child experienced a near panic attack because he was not wearing a mask after being taken to the Bungay School playground. She quoted some statistic regarding masks and asked the Board of Education to push back for her kids. She said they want things back to normal and we should do what is right for the kids. Deborah Sherman, 25 Dauria Drive – spoke about the mask mandates and how masks are not needed and the virus is less dangerous for children and masks protect the elderly. She asked the Board not to force their children to wear masks. She said she hopes the Board of Education is on the same side and will write to the Governor and the Department of Health regarding kids wearing masks. Stephanie Gehm, 15 Oriole Lane, Spoke about the mask mandate and the statistics regarding Seymour residents testing positive. She said the only reason Seymour is mandating masks is because of money, that Seymour is sacrificing our kids for money. Kids need facial expressions to learn. She indicating there are some towns who will not be mandating masks. She also had questions about religious exemptions for vaccinations. She had questions about children with IEPs. She implored the Board to keep the SROs in the schools and reiterated that there is no need for a mask mandate in the fall. Elena Zhiargra, 140 Mountain Road – said she wanted masks to be optional and masks do more harm than good. She said there are pathogens in the masks. Currently, she said there are only 34 people in the hospital with COVID. She encouraged the Board to look at the facts and petition the State to change the mask mandate. She said science tells us kids run little risks of contracting serious illness.

Public Comment closed at 8:30 pm.

## V. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes
  1. Regular BOE Meeting Minutes – May 3, 2021
- B. Nutrition Services Financial Report – April 2021

- C. Staff Hiring
1. Non-Certified
    - a. Chirgwin, Lauren
      - Nutrition Services
      - Seymour Middle School
      - Replacing Deborah Reyher
    - b. Olah, Elaine
      - Nutrition Services
      - Seymour Middle School
      - Replacing Lisa Sheahan
  2. Certified
    - a. Esposito, Emily
      - Business Teacher
      - Seymour High School
      - Replacing Jennifer Sardo
    - b. Smith Huckabey, Bianca
      - School Counselor
      - Seymour High School
      - Replacing Anita Cardona

**MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION:** (Mr. Kubik/sec., Mr. Champagne) move to approve the consent agenda as presented

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Champagne, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**MOTION PASSES: 6-0**

**VI. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA**

None

**VII. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

A. New Positions

1. Rotating Nurse

**MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION:** (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Champagne) approve the addition of a new position for rotating nurse

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Champagne, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**MOTION PASSES: 6-0**

Donation

1. Ocean State Job Lot – Hand Sanitizer, Wipes, Face Shields

**MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION:** (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Kubik) to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the donation from Ocean State Job Lot for hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, and face shields and direct that the Superintendent determine the placement of this donation.

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Champagne, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**MOTION PASSES: 6-0**

2. The Klarides Family - Memorial Bench

Mr. Hatfield indicated that the Seymour Kickoff Club also contributed to this bench.

**MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION:** (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Stanek) to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the donation from The Klarides Family for a memorial bench inscribed "In Loving Memory of Peter Klarides" and direct that the Superintendent determine the placement of this donation.

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Champagne, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**MOTION PASSES: 6-0**

3. Seymour Lions Club – Cross-Country Track Uniforms

**MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION:** : (Mr. Stanek/sec., Mr. Kubik) to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the donation from the Seymour Lions Club for cross-country track uniforms and direct that the Superintendent determine the placement of this donation.

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Champagne, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**MOTION PASSES: 6-0**

- C. Textbook Approval

1. Approval of *enVision Mathematics 2020* for Bungay Elementary School and Chatfield-LoPresti Elementary School

Mr. Champagne asked if this would come from this year's budget or next year's budget and Mr. Wilson confirmed it would come from next year's budget.

**MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION:** : (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Kubik) to approve the recommendation of the Curriculum and Technology Committee to purchase *enVision Mathematics 2020* for Bungay Elementary School and Chatfield-LoPresti Elementary School

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Champagne, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**MOTION PASSES: 6-0**

**VIII. REPORTS Part 2 and DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION**

- A. Year-end Finances

1. Presentation, discussion and possible action regarding estimated year end finances  
Mr. Fiorillo, interim Business Manager gave a brief overview of the financials. A/C 110-119 Certified Staff. The certified staff salaries continue to be in a favorable position. The balance of the District Learning Teachers' salaries will be covered by the ESSER I and II grants. A/C 210-295 Employee Benefits. The first half of the employees insurance cost shares have been booked against A/C 210 Health Insurance and the Remaining amount will be recorded in June 2021. A/C 260 Workers Compensation has been transferred to the Town as the Board's share for 2020-21 in the amount of \$300,000. A/C 510-519 Transportation. We did receive a credit from All Star Transportation. Account 517- Sped Non Local Transportation, you will see a savings there due to the use of ACES Transportation now. A/C 561-564 Tuition. We have encumbered the Special Education Costs based on student enrollments in specialized programs. Sped /Private Facilities account remains in a deficit situation. We did receive the rest of our excess cost funds that has been applied to our tuition account.

- B. Summary of Professional Learning – Ms. Tencza

Ms. Tencza explained to the Board that teachers keeps logs of their professional developments and she submitted a report to the Board for their review. She said she was proud of the activities that the teachers worked on such as instructional learning strategies, professional learning, and specific learning. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to share this information.

- C. Committee Reports

1. Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – May 3, 2021  
2. Athletic and Health Committee Meeting Minutes – May 18, 2021  
Mr. Champagne reported that there was a discussion regarding uniforms and the committee will try to meet again during the summer.  
3. Curriculum and Technology Committee Meeting Minutes – May 10, 2021

- D. Updates
1. Superintendent Vacancy – Mr. Strumello  
Mr. Strumello reminded the members of the Board that no outside discussions of the work they are doing with regard to the entire interviewing process should occur. This means no discussion of the interviews or the candidates. He reminded them that they have signed confidentiality agreements. He said they are continuing the interviewing and will eventually have two finalists to be considered.
  2. Business Manager Vacancy – Mr. Wilson  
Mr. Wilson said he, Ms. Tencza and Mr. Fiorillo continue to screen applications as they come in and have three more interviews to conduct at the end of the week. He said they would continue to keep the Board informed of the progress.
  3. Grant – Ms. Tencza, Mr. Fiorillo  
Ms. Tencza reported that the ESSER2 grant has been submitted and approved and we are being to make the approved purchases. There will be a third round of grants. Mr. Fiorillo said Ms. Tencza is being modest and there is many legal requirements within the grant. Ms. Tencza confirmed that she had a lot of input from the administrators.
- E. Board of Education Report
1. Chairman's Comments  
Mr. Strumello presented Mr. Wilson with a gift from the Board and thanked him for his service to Seymour. He quoted John F. Kennedy "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future."
  2. Board Member Comments  
Mr. Stanek said the graduation ceremony went very well and he wished Mr. Wilson good luck as he leaves Seymour. He said Mr. Wilson did a fine job during the unprecedented time of a pandemic. He thanked him for his service. Mr. Strumello said he was able to attend all of the graduation ceremonies and said he was impressed by the speeches.
- F. Superintendent Report
1. Graduation Ceremony
  2. End of Year Ceremonies  
Mr. Wilson thanked those Board members who attended the commencement ceremonies last week.
  3. Thank you  
Mr. Wilson thanked his Central Office team Vonda Tencza, Lee-Ann Dauerty, Pat Boyle, Cathy Guerra, Lisa Stowe, David Fiorillo, and Alyse Royal, the students, parents, all staff, and the Board members for their support over his four years in Seymour. Mr. Wilson said he was very proud that Seymour has grown during his four years here and he wished nothing but the best for Seymour Schools moving forward.

## IX. INFORMATION

- A. Special Education Monthly Enrollment Update – Dr. Kris Boyle  
Dr. Boyle indicated that there has been one additional student placed at a therapeutic school since the last meeting. During the month of June, four students attending therapeutic placements graduated, which was not reflected in the data presented. We are starting to see an increase in the overall number of students being identified for special education services in the past several months. Ms. Nesteriak asked about an increase in the amount of Tier II reading supports at CLS since April. It was due, in part, to the decreased need for distance learning teachers. Those distance learning teachers were able to provide interventions for students. More information would be sought from building administration to determine if there were other factors.
- B. Activities and Recognitions
1. Seymour Middle School
  2. Bungay Elementary School
  3. Chatfield-LoPresti Elementary School

- C. Resignations – Non Certified
1. Anderson-Solicito, Kathleen
    - Instructional Paraprofessional
    - Chatfield-LoPresti School
    - Effective May 28, 2021
  2. Cunniff, Jonna
    - Nutrition Services
    - Seymour Middle School
    - Effective June 18, 2021
  3. O'Connell, Chantal
    - Secretary
    - Bungay School
    - Effective June 18, 2021
  4. Teixeira, Lisa
    - Instructional Paraprofessional
    - Chatfield-LoPresti School
    - Effective June 18, 2021

- C. Resignations – Appendix E
1. Blade, Nick
    - Head Coach, Girls Swimming
    - Seymour High School
    - Effective April 26, 2021
  2. Dobas, Nate
    - Advisor, Glee Club
    - Seymour Middle School
    - Effective May 10, 2021
  3. Leahy, Courtney
    - Head Coach, Dance Team
    - Seymour High School
    - Effective May 3, 2021
  4. Manion, Christine
    - Assistant Coach, Cheerleading
    - Seymour High School
    - Effective April 1, 2021
  5. Sponheimer, Deirdre
    - Advisor, Yearbook
    - Seymour Middle School
    - Effective May 6, 2021
  6. Young, Jessica
    - Head Coach, Cheerleading
    - Seymour High School
    - Effective March 31, 2021

**X. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Please note: "If you would like to make a public comment during the second Public Comments section of this meeting, please complete the "Public Comment Request Form" which can be accessed via the link: <https://forms.gle/ecNornPgigowkFpW7>, which can also be accessed on the Seymour Public Schools homepage under contacting the board. **Requests must be received prior to the Superintendent's Report on the agenda on Tuesday, June 22, 2021.**"

Deborah Sherman, 25 Dauria Drive – thanked the parents who came out tonight to speak.

**XI. \*EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION:** (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Stanek) to add to the agenda in executive session, discussion and possible action on the CEA Proposed Settlement agreement

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Champagne, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello  
**MOTION PASSES: 6-0**

\*A. Contracts

\* ***It is anticipated that the asterisked items will be discussed in Executive Session from which the public will be excluded.***

**MOTION:** : (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Kubik) move that the Board enter into executive session to discuss the contracts of School Security Officers, Network Manager, Technology Coordinator, and Facilities Manager. The Board invites Michael Wilson, Vonda Tencza, David Fiorillo, Floyd Dugas, Annmarie Drugonis, and Kevin Pimpinelli into the Executive Session

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Champagne, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello  
**MOTION PASSES: 6-0**

Into Executive Session: 8:58pm

Into Regular Session: 10:45 pm

**XII. POSSIBLE ACTION AFTER EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A. **MOTION:** (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Kubik) to approve the contract of the Network Manager as presented

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Champagne, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello  
**MOTION PASSES: 6-0**

B. **MOTION:** (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Kubik) to appoint Ms. Vonda Tencza as interim superintendent of the Seymour Public Schools effective July 1, 2021

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Champagne, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello  
**MOTION PASSES: 6-0**

C. **MOTION:** (Mr. Stanek/sec., Mr. Champagne) to approve the settlement agreement with the SEA

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Champagne, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek,

**OPPOSED:** Mr. Kubik, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Strumello

**MOTION FAILS: 3-3**

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION:** (Mr. Champagne/sec., Mr. Hatfield) to adjourn

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Champagne, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**MOTION PASSES: 6-0**

The meeting adjourned at 10:52 pm

To listen to this meeting in its entirety, please use the YouTube Link below:

<https://youtu.be/I26kQFUla2A>

Submitted by:  
Lee-Ann Dauerty  
Seymour Public Schools  
Board Clerk