Board of Education Regular Meeting  
August 27, 2019, 6:30 PM  
Dr. Alfred B. Tychsen Administration Building  

I. CALL TO ORDER  

Board Members Present: Deborah Cain (arrived at 7:30 PM), Anita Dempsey-White, Chris Drake, Edward Ford Jr. (arrived at 6:47 PM), Sean King, Lisa Loomis, Cheryl McClellan, and Jonathon Pulino  

Absent: Marilyn Rios  

Others Present: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Conner, Chief of School Operations and Communications, Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Amy Clarke, Director of Innovation and Grants Natalie Forbes, Director of Facilities Peter Staye, Manager of Human Resources Michele DiMauro, Manager of Transportation Mark Langton, Business Office Representatives Cheryl Walcott and Christine Bourne, Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Secretary Marcy Poppel, and ten (10) visitors.

Board Chair Drake called the meeting to order at 6:38 PM.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG  

Board member Cheryl McClellan led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Drake noted tonight’s meeting is being live streamed and asked that Board members, when speaking, to turn their microphone light on and speak directly into the microphone so it may be captured on the streaming.

Chair Drake stated the Board of Education Special Meeting Minutes of June 10, 2019 were added after the packet was distributed and asked that the agenda be amended to include these minutes in the Consent Agenda as Item. VII.L.

MOTION: Move to amend the Agenda to add Consent Agenda Item #VII.L. Minutes of Board of Education Special Meeting of June 10, 2019 passed with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Mr. Pulino – unanimous vote.

MOTION: Move to relocation Agenda Item XLA. Action Item – New Middle School Approval of Phase II Plans and Specifications and Update on Phase I to just before Agenda Item IX. Superintendent’s Report passed with a motion by Mr. Drake and a second by Mr. King – unanimous vote.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA  

MOTION: Move to adopt the Agenda, as amended, passed with a unanimous vote.

IV. DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS  

IV.A. Kindergarten - Grade 3 Summer Literacy Academy Recognition

Dr. Conner recognized Ms. Rosaria (Rosie) Giannetti, Bielefild School EIST, and her team for running a very productive Summer program for students going into first, second and third grades. Dr. Conner acknowledged Amy Mullen and teachers who participated. Ms. Giannetti shared that the Summer program served 241 students, 85% of enrolled students attended daily, 150 breakfasts and lunches were served, students spent 2,500 hours on Footsteps2Brilliance, over 10 million new words were read, over 23,000 books were read and the BOE provided transportation for approximately 240 students.
Chair Drake welcomed everyone back to the 2020 – 2021 school year and noted that he attended the Convocation program at Middletown High School on Monday morning, August 29th to welcome certified staff.

V. PUBLIC SESSION

Chair Drake explained the rules of Public Session.

Molly Unger said she was a student at Woodrow Wilson Middle School (WWMS) and is raising 3 children in Middletown and spoke in support of naming the new middle school after the Beman family, a Middletown family of three generations. She noted that she and Mr. Jesse Nasta gave a presentation in June to the Naming Committee members. She said that feedback she has received from community members has been positive. She stressed the importance of students knowing that Middletown is a diverse city.

Jesse Nasta shared that he was a student at WWMS and Middletown High School (MHS) and currently teaches History at Wesleyan University. He spoke in support of the new middle school being named after the Beman family and provided historical data on the family. He said he was present at the Naming Committee’s last meeting and shared his thoughts of the community’s input. He stated it is his hope that the Board of Education (BOE) will find another way to honor Woodrow Wilson the school.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

As no Student Council meeting has been held there will be no report this evening. Hopefully there will be one in October.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: Move to approve the Consent Agenda, as amended, passed with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Ms. Loomis – unanimous vote.

VII.A. Minutes of June 11, 2019 BOE Workshop (5:30 PM)
VII.B. Minutes of June 11, 2019 BOE Regular Meeting (6:30 PM)
VII.C. Minutes of June 21, 2019 BOE Special Meeting
VII.D. Minutes of June 27, 2019 BOE Special Meeting
VII.E. Minutes of July 11, 2019 BOE Special Meeting
VII.F. Minutes of July 23, 2019 BOE Special Meeting
VII.G. Grants Status Report
VII.H. Grant - Career & Technical Education Secondary Work-Based Learning Enhancement (Carl D. Perkins)
VII.I. Grant - Career & Technical Student Organization Statewide Improvement (CTE) (CTSOs)
VII.J. Grant - Primary Mental Health Program
VII.L. Minutes of the June 10, 2019 BOE Special Meeting (added this evening)

VIII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

VIII.A. Financial Report

Cheryl Walcott stated it is too early in the new school year for a Financial Statement. She will have a Financial document for the BOE at its September meeting.
VIII.A.1. Action on Line Item Transfer Report

Ms. Cheryl Walcott went through each line item transfer and answered questions.

MOTION: Approval of the line item transfer report passed with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Ms. McClellan – unanimous vote.

VIII.B. Facilities Department

Facilities Director Peter Staye distributed his Facilities Report to Board members and summarized major projects done over the summer. He added they will inspect WWMS the first week of September with the building occupied. Mr. Staye responded to a question about flooring at Keigwin and Farm Hill.

VIII.C. Personnel Report

Mr. Gaylord stated that Ms. DiMauro is in the process of hiring staff and will have a full report at the September meeting. Chair Drake stated he welcomed the new teachers at the New Teacher Orientation and attested how busy Ms. DiMauro has been based on the number of new teachers. Mr. Gaylord said there were approximately 46 new teachers. Dr. Conner responded in the affirmative to the question raised are there less study halls at MHS. He also noted the significant number of hires in the areas of Math and Science at MHS.

VIII.D. Transportation Report

Transportation Manager Mark Langton provided an update of Summer busing, including Recreation and the SLA program with approximately 240 students. Mr. Langton noted the actual number of students bused for Ms. Giannetti’s Summer Program was approximately 130 – 140 students, not 240 students as he previously told Ms. Giannetti. He provided an update on road construction projects and noted they are two months behind schedule. There were no questions for Mr. Langton.

This action item was moved up on the Agenda:

XI.A. New Middle School Approval of Phase II Plans & Specifications and Update on Phase I

Chair Drake called up TSKP representative Randall Luther and O & G representative Dan Hetzler. They provided an update on Phase I completion and discussion on Phase II. Chair Drake called for on Phase I which is nearing completion. Mr. Hetzler responded to community concerns on the asbestos abatement that was done. He said all material that needs to be off property will be clear fully by tomorrow morning. There was a discussion about the air quality testing and Mr. Hetzler stated that the building was cleared as of two weeks ago. Chair Drake stated that protocol was followed in that we asking for an extension of time for the additional abatement, however, the work will be done before that deadline. Mr. Gaylord stated that after last removal, another letter will be sent to families. Chair Drake stated there are no safety concerns at this time. Mr. Hetzler said the Fire Marshall has come through several times in the past few weeks. Chair Drake noted we are now at the point where some inconvenience is going to occur. Chair Drake stated that parent and staff complaints should be forwarded to the New Middle School Building Committee Chair Mary Bartolotta or him as Vice Chair of the committee.

Chair Drake said Phase II is the building of the new middle school. Mr. Luther distributed a document and Chair Drake distributed an O&G document dated August 22nd. Mr. Luther noted TSKP is at the 2 and one-half mark on this project and said it is a major milestone point. He
said at this point, construction documents are essentially complete and reviewed by local code officials. As part of the process, this evening the BOE must take action. He explained that on the rolling cart are 2 rolls of drawings (400 sheets each; volume 1 and 2) and two giant binders (2,000 pages) of specifications. He reviewed the distributed summary document noting that no significant design changes are needed to stay in line with the budget. He laid out the next steps stating they have an appointment with the State tomorrow for review of the plans. It is hoped to break ground in November.

Mr. Hetzler provided a summary of the cost document that was distributed. He reviewed the summary pages and the final estimate. He said this is the same document that was presented in the past, except with several columns added. Chair Drake explained that round one of the asbestos abatement has been done already, and additional funds are being held for unforeseen asbestos issues. The project is carrying a healthy contingency which the Building Committee has not spent yet. Mr. Hetzler stated that the project has a strong contingency, at this stage of the game. He said what will supplement that number will be on Bid day. He added that they are hopeful to come in under budget. Chair Drake said it will be bid the end of September and it is hoped all bids will be less than we are thinking. Mr. Hetzler said it is a five-week bid period, noting it will be closer to Halloween and beginning of November after bids are opened. Mr. Hetzler walked the BOE through the bid process and Chair Drake added additional explanations. A Board member requested that Board members receive a Gantt-type chart so they can speak in the community about the status of this building project. Mr. Hetzler responded to questions.

MOTION: Move to approve the plans and specifications for the Phase 2 of the New Middle School dated July 18, 2019, prepared by TSKP Studio, and the associated cost estimate dated August 22, 2019 prepared by O&G Industries, for submission to the Department of Administrative Services, Office of School Construction Grants for Review of Final Plans for Construction Authorization passed with a motion by Mr. Drake and a second by Mr. Pulino – unanimous vote.

IX. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Conner provided an update and noted that Convocation was yesterday, the keynote speaker was LeDerrick Horne and Professional Development was after Convocation, today and tomorrow. Students start the new school year on Thursday. Dr. Conner said our position statement this school year is to “Know Your Why” and how it will carry our students forward. He said last year it was “Think Differently” and now we are building on it.

IX.A. Presentation of 2019 - 2020 Strategic Operating Plan (SOP) Implementation Steps

Dr. Conner said this will support Middletown 2020 – 2021 and asked Board members to review the 2019 - 2020 implement steps in anticipation of BOE action at the September meeting.

IX.B. Strategic Operating Plan (SOP) Early Minds 2022

Dr. Conner said the Board is being asked to vote on this SOP this tonight. He stated he emailed the SOP to BOE members in July/August. He provided the chronology of the diverse committee, consisting of approximately 25 people and summarized the work of the committee from January through June which culminated in the construction of a preliminary draft. He asked BOE members to review. It is his hope that this understudy of Middletown 2021 will be approved at the BOE’s September meeting. This plan is for the three- and four-year old level.
IX.C. Facilities Report on Macdonough School

IX.D. Macdonough School Construction Update

Mr. Gaylord and Mr. Staye provided update on Macdonough School being operationalized this year to avoid further roof problems. Mr. Gaylord noted a report was provided to the Board in July. He added that the district received good news recently in that the estimate came in less. Mr. Staye said tomorrow the roof repairs will continue in the newer section of the school. He said we obtained bids for a repair not a roof replacement and received 2 close bids. He said selected was New England Masonry and Roofing out of Naugatuck, which was the lower bidder. The company will be finishing up the repair tomorrow and repairs should last up to 2 years. He reminded that the roof is still over 20 years old and beyond its normal life expectancy, noting it would be an extensive roof to replace. The school is ready to open and the roof will be water-tight. Mr. Staye responded to a question about a smell in the Library, and added it will be monitored after every rain and ceiling tiles replaced, as needed. He noted that the windows are failing and various masonry areas are failing. There are areas near windows that will leak, but is not hazardous. It will be monitored and we will be diligent when it rains to be sure areas are dry. Mr. Gaylord referenced the indoor air quality report and monitoring. He shared that he and Dr. Conner recently met with Mayor Drew and laid out some options and will continue the conversation in the next couple months. The City will need to renovate Macdonough School or build a new school to house two current schools. Mr. Gaylord added that the district could build an elementary school for $30 or $40 million. Mr. Gaylord and Mr. Staye responded to questions and confirmed that the building is safe to occupy.

IX.E. District News

Chair Drake noted that the 2020 – 2021 school year starts on Thursday.

X. COMMITTEES

Chair Drake stated that committees will ramp up in September.

X.A. Budget Committee

Committee Chair Sean King said the committee has not met since June. He will have a report at next BOE meeting.

X.B. Curriculum Committee

Committee Chair Lisa Loomis said the Curriculum Committee did meet and the minutes are in the packet. She spoke about the new Math instructional model and going to a digital learning lab for World Language. She said it will be a priority for the new Chief Academic Officer (CAO) to find funding for a digital learning lab for World Languages. Ms. Loomis responded to questions.

X.C. Facilities Committee

Committee Chair Deborah Cain reported that the committee’s last meeting was in June and discussions were preparations for new school year, the five-year plan and new schedule. The Facilities Committee’s next meeting will be on September 18th.

X.D. Policy Committee

Committee Chair Cheryl McClellan said the minutes are in the packet from the June meeting and said there will be two policies for September. She spoke about a cell phone policy and asked BOE members to bring their ideas to the September meeting. The Policy Committee’s next meeting is September 17th at 8:30 AM at the IT Annex. Mr. King noted a Public Act passed by the legislature making changes to
the expulsion process. He asked Ms. McClellan if the Policy Committee could review that policy in light of Legislative changes.

**X.E. Representative Reports**

Ms. McClellan shared that next month there will be a Run for the Fallen at the Trees of Honor. She added that a local high school student, Kyle McAuliffe from Troop 41, is raising funds for flags at Veterans Park for his Eagle Project.

Mr. Pulino reminded Board members he has a public television show if anyone wishes to be on it, to please let him know. He also shared he is doing Little League again and encouraged people to come to a game.

**X.F. New Middle School Building Committee**

Board Chair Drake stated he had nothing additional to report.

Chair Drake noted that Naming School Committee Chair Lisa Loomis sent Marcy an email which was forwarded to Board members and distributed this evening. It is a summary report from the Naming Committee.

**X.G. New Middle School Naming Committee**

Committee Chair Lisa Loomis thanked committee members and expressed her gratitude for their seriousness and dedication, noting it was a difficult process. She provided an overview and shared what was learned through the process. They collected a significant amount of testimony which showed deep separation in the community. She noted that all of the testimony is available on the district website under the BOE committee.

She stated that the committee came to a two-fold conclusion: (1) they voted to recommend to the BOE that the name for the new middle School be Beman Middle School and (2) urged the BOE to form another committee to assure the preservation of the Woodrow Wilson and Ida Keigwin names. She recommended a date be set for a Special BOE meeting to hear public comment and then take action. Chair Drake stated he elected not to put this as an action item on this month’s agenda. He said the committee has finished its job and made their recommendation. He supports public comment, however, expressed concern making it an action item at the September regular BOE meeting. He suggested the BOE hold a special meeting for taking public comment and BOE action on the committee’s recommendation. He thanked Ms. Loomis for her efforts on the structuring of public comment from the committee, and suggested the Board might want to follow that. He asked for BOE input. There was discussion. Chair Drake stated he will doodle poll BOE members for availability for a two-fold public hearing and action on the committee’s recommendation. There was a discussion of next steps.

In response to a question if the PowerPoint presentation is on the district website and it is there. Chair Drake encouraged people to view it.

**XI. ACTION ITEMS**

**XI.B. Approval of Strategic Operating Plan (SOP) Early Minds 2022**

Dr. Conner’s recommendation is not to take action this evening.

**MOTION:** Move to table action on this item to the next Board of Education meeting passed with a motion by Mr. Pulino and a second by Mr. King – unanimous vote.
XI.C. Chief Academic Officer (CAO) Search Committee

Dr. Conner said the process is underway for the Chief Academic Officer. It is the former Associate Superintendent position. He said there were 55 applicants and a screening took place on August 21st and Board members Jon Pulino and Sean King participated. He stated that he will present candidate names in Executive Session. He shared the process and format noting that the second round of interviews with BOE members participating will be at Middlesex Community College on September 5th and on September 11th for the final two candidates. He anticipates identifying the individual chosen by September 12th and secure their contract on Sept 13th. Chair Drake asked about the two student participants and Dr. Conner stated that Mr. Carbonella of Youth Services has secured two students to participate. He said Shipman and Goodwin suggested the Board take Dr. Conner’s recommendation and appoint itself as the Personnel Search Committee (PSC). He added, in this case the BOE and community members will be the Personnel Search Committee. There was a discussion. Dr. Conner said BOE members do not attend the interviews on August 28th and 29th. The Community group will make six (6) recommendations for the September 5th and 11th interviews which the Board will participate in and be held at Middlesex Community College. He added that he spoke with Dr. Minkler who offered Middlesex for these final sets of interviews. He said on September 11th it will only be two (2) finalist candidates for forty-five minutes each. Chair Drake said following this process provides more flexibility. The actual appointment will be an action item at a Board of Education meeting in Public Session. Dr. Conner said he is targeting October 8th as the formal appointment date. Chair Drake said this same process was followed when Dr. Conner was hired.

MOTION: Move to appoint a Personnel Search Committee (comprised of Board members and non-board members) for the purpose of recommending to the Board, a candidate for the Chief Academic Officer position passed with a motion by Mr. Drake and a second by Ms. Cain — unanimous vote.

XI.D. Policy #6161.3 Comparability of Services (Revision) - First Reading

Committee Chair Cheryl McClellan explained the revisions to this policy and recommended approval of its first reading. There was discussion

MOTION: Move to approve the first reading of Policy #6161.3 Comparability of Services passed with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Mr. Ford Jr. — unanimous vote.

XII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

XII.A. New Items

Ms. Dempsey-White asked if Ms. DiMauro will be present at the next meeting. Mr. Gaylord said Ms. DiMauro will answer questions at the September meeting. Chair Drake told Ms. Dempsey-White to contact Ms. DiMauro directly with her questions.

Chair Drake clarified that the purpose for going into Executive Session is not to introduce anyone. The Board will do any appointment in Public Session.

MOTION: Move at 8:5 PM to go into Executive Session for the Purpose of Interview of Chief of Administration Candidate (Proposed for Executive Session) and Introduction of Chief of School Operations and Communications and invite Dr. Conner, Mr. Gaylord and Ms. Bourne to participate passed with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Ms. Loomis — unanimous vote.
XIII. INTERVIEW OF CHIEF OF ADMINISTRATION CANDIDATE (PROPOSED FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION) AND INTRODUCTION OF CHIEF OF SCHOOL OPERATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

XIII.A. Executive Session

MOTION: Move at 9:30 PM to return to Public Session passed with a motion by Mr. King and a second by Ms. Loomis – unanimous vote.

XIII.B. Public Session

MOTION: Move to appoint Christine Bourne as Chief of Administration passed with a motion by Ms. Cain and a second by Ms. Loomis – unanimous vote.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Move to adjourn at 9:30 PM passed with a motion by Ms. McClellan and a second by Mr. Ford Jr. – unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cheryl McClellan
Acting Secretary

Christopher Borch
Chair

CM/mp