

**SHELTON BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL MEETING**

**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

**April 30, 2020**

Chairman Kathy Yolish called the Special Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:04 p.m.

Roll Call:

John Fitzgerald  
Amanda Kilmartin  
Kate Kutash  
Diana Meyer  
Patti Moonan

James Oraziotti, Vice Chair  
Carl Rizzo  
Amy Romano, Secretary  
Kathleen Yolish, Chair

Full Quorum

Also In Attendance: Dr. Beth Smith, Interim Superintendent; Kenneth Saranich, Assistant Superintendent; Carole Pannozzo, Human Resources Director; Rick Belden, Finance Director; Daniel DiVito, Technology Director

*(There is no audio tape recording of this meeting. It was live streamed on the Shelton Public Schools YouTube channel and is available on the City of Shelton and Shelton Public Schools websites.)*

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Approval of Agenda**

**James Oraziotti moved to approve the agenda; motion seconded by Kate Kutash and approved unanimously.**

**Discussion and possible adoption of the Shelton Public Schools Distance Learning Alternate Grading Plan for the COVID-19 Health Crisis**

Dr. Beth Smith presented thorough details of the proposed plan, which was vetted through district staff and includes information and guidance gathered from various state and local sources, as well as a parent survey. Of the 18 responses to the parent survey, 12 supported the grading plan with others in favor of pass/fail, a different type of grading, or need for more clarification. Board discussion included possibility of a user-friendly, fillable online submission; importance of an actual parent signature, especially at high school level; accommodations for bilingual ELL students and parents. Once the plan is adopted by the Board, parents of students who would choose the alternate grading option would be instructed to complete the form and email it to building principals by noon on May 29.

**Kate Kutash moved to adopt the Shelton Public Schools Distance Learning Alternate Grading Plan for the COVID-19 Health Crisis; motion seconded by James Oraziotti and passed unanimously.**

### **Discussion on remediation of the 2020-2021 BOE budget**

Chair Kathy Yolish commented the Board has very few options to solve the budget situation. She suggested the Board could possibly keep the budget as voted and roll it over on a monthly basis with hopes of getting extra money as the city taxes come in, but that equals a big gamble and a possible lawsuit. Mrs. Yolish stated there could be board member personal liability for intentionally overspending our appropriation with each member having to come up with \$322,222.22, which is not covered by any homeowner or umbrella policy. Another option is to look for cuts that have the least impact on the learning process. The cuts would have to come from all areas including staffing, programs and extracurricular activities. She welcomes suggestions or solutions from parents, students and members of the community to help remedy this difficult task and asks that suggestions be limited to reductions or how to find extra money. She emphasized that nobody wants any reductions.

Finance Director Rick Belden discussed the Additions/Reductions Analysis of the original approved budget proposal that reflected a need to add \$464,906 due to increased number of special education students entering the district and an anticipated \$650,000 increase for health insurance renewal with Cigna based on a spike in current year claims. Mr. Belden reviewed the reductions to the budget amounting to \$273,353 based on assumptions for replacements for retirements/resignations and firm numbers for natural gas and Adult Education. He stated as of today, in order to meet the budget allocation in the Mayor's proposed budget, which was a zero increase, we would need to reduce our budget by \$2,783,851. He stated there is fluidity in the budget and monitoring is ongoing.

There was lengthy discussion of various remediation options such as a salary freeze, hiring freeze, furlough days, staff reductions, eliminating or consolidating freshman sports, extracurricular activities, and it was stated that everything is on the table. It was clarified that layoffs would include the cost of unemployment compensation. Kate Kutash stated the Board needs to see from the executive committee a list of areas we can cut with a dollar amount to determine how close we are prior to addressing staff layoffs. Consensus was to ask Dr. Smith to meet with the executive cabinet members to come up with recommendations to present to the Board next week in an in-person special meeting in executive session for union negotiations. A separate second special meeting will be needed to discuss the budget.

### **Adjournment**

Kathy Yolish adjourned the meeting at 8:34 p.m.

***Diane Luther***

**Secretary to Board of Education**

**May 6, 2020**