**CAMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS**

**BOARD MEETINGS:**

Are held virtually or in person at the discretion of the CAN President

CAN Board Meetings are open to the public

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS:**

Are held virtually or in person at the discretion of the CAN President

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**ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**

**January 20, 2023**

**MINUTES**

**Board Members Present:** Chuck McFadden (President), Roman Jesien (Vice President), Tom Puglisi (Secretary), Brad Rice, Rick Klepfer, Susan Olsen, Dave Thatcher, and Judd Vickers (8 of 12 members being present, a quorum was achieved).

**Board Members Not Present:** Jane Weeks (Treasurer), Andre Duerinckx, Mary Ellen Jesien, and Sharon Smith.

**Members Present:** Twenty-seven (27) CAN members signed the attendance sheet.

**Guests Present:** New Dorchester County Board of Education President, Dr. Susan Morgan, and new Dorchester County Board of Education Member, Dr. Theresa Stafford.

1. **Opening Comments.** CAN President Chuck McFadden convened the meeting at 6:30 pm in the meeting room of the Dorchester County Public Library, 303 Gay Street, Cambridge, MD 21613. Chuck explained CAN’s mission, welcomed everyone, and invited all those present to introduce themselves. He described CAN’s efforts to get the Police Force fully staffed with officers and to hire social works to liaise with the community. CAN has also worked on a variety of other City issues, including long-term planning for the marina.
2. **Election of Board Members.** CAN President Chuck McFadden introduced the candidates nominated for 2-year terms on the CAN Board beginning in January 2023.
3. Vice President, Roman Jesien
4. Secretary, Tom Puglisi
5. Member at large, Sharon Smith
6. Member at large, Andre Duerinckx
7. Member at large, Rick Klepfer

Nominees were approved *en bloc* by unanimous voice vote of the Members present.

1. **Board of Education Members.** CAN President Chuck McFadden welcomed new Dorchester County Board of Education President, Dr. Susan Morgan, and new Dorchester County Board of Education Member, Dr. Theresa Stafford.
   1. **Dr. Morgan** stated that she ran for the Board of Education because she noticed that in spite of very poor student performance and complaints of disruptive student behavior, Board meetings seemed to include no discussion of curriculum and displayed no sense of urgency about improving the performance of DCPS students. The Board at that time seemed primarily concerned about controlling spending.

Upon joining the Board, Dr. Morgan has focused her efforts in 3 critical areas: Transparency, teacher compensation, and alternate education for disruptive students. (i) The Board and the community need DCPS to provide full and meaningful information about student performance, budget, and staffing in order understand what is going on in our schools and what problems need to be addressed.

(ii) Teacher salaries must be competitive and be adjusted now to meet the requirements of the Maryland Blueprint for Education, under which annual starting salaries for teachers must be raised to $60,00 by July 1, 2026. Of course, salaries for teachers already in the system must be raised accordingly.

(iii) DCPS desperately needs a systemwide, cohesive Alternate Education Program for students with behavioral issues. A viable Alternate Education Program requires 3 coordinated levels of intervention: (a) Intervention within the child’s assigned school, but in a separate classroom for at least part of the day; (b) Full day intervention in a separate building within DCPS; and (c) Intervention through a placement outside DCPS. The Board is currently examining different options for Alternative Education.

Dr. Morgan explained the requirements of the Maryland Blueprint including the requirements related to early childhood education, high quality and diverse teachers, college and career readiness, resources, and accountability. She noted that DCPS currently lacks a system-wide program for teacher training and professional development.

After reviewing current student performance data, the Board has concluded that DCPS is in crisis and must operate in crisis mode. Eighty percent of our students are below grade level in math with some of our students as much as 3 years below grade level. Reading performance is not much better. The Board challenged the Superintendent and his Executive Team to develop and implement a reading and math remediation program without delay.

Finally, Dr. Morgan highlighted the importance of participating in the community planning sessions for local implementation of the Maryland Blueprint for Education. These are primarily listening sessions in which parents and other members of the community identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by DCPS in meeting Blueprint standards.

* 1. **Dr. Stafford** stressed the need to set expectations and be consistent across the entire school system. Currently we have low expectations for some students, inconsistent enforcement of expectations, and different methods of behavioral interventions across different schools. Kids get sent out of class over and over again with no consequences or accountability.

Dr. Stafford noted that the Board was informed that some of the data reported to the State last year were incorrect and indicated that DCPS needs better information technology systems. She has also observed definite staffing disparities between high need, high poverty schools and other schools. She indicated that the Board and DCPS have failed to set clear priorities and provide funding to meet those priorities. Another problem is the union contract which has given away options that require teachers to perform routine teacher duties.

Because the use of contracted services in pervasive within DCPS, Dr. Stafford noted that the Board has now taken the position that no contracts for services will be renewed without specific performance and outcome data. She indicated that professional development for DCPS personnel is inconsistent, unstructured, and has no requirements, and as a result there is no accountability.

Dr. Stafford indicated that DCPS needs to go back to ground zero and work on what the data tell us. We have to own the data, change what needs to be changed, and give the teachers the tools they need to succeed. Teachers need a dress code to inspire respect and create clear expectations that are consistently enforced. Kids need to learn what is acceptable in the school environment versus what is acceptable at home and on the street. A mind shift is needed in this county. We can no longer accept business as usual.

Chuck McFadden thanked Drs. Morgan and Stafford for meeting with CAN tonight and providing their perspectives on our school system. He asked those present to suggest future speakers and topics for discussion.

1. **Treasurer’s Report.** Tom Puglisi reported for CAN Treasurer Jane Weeks that there is currently $3510.67 in CAN’s treasury.
2. **Secretary’s Report.**  CAN Secretary Tom Puglisi reported that CAN membership now numbers 460 individuals.
3. **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.