

Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 24, 2017

A regular meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, April 24, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA.

Members Present: Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, Dr. Brendan R. Walsh, Ms. Mary Manning, Mr. James Fleming, Mr. Patrick Schultz, Ms. Kristine Wilson, and Ms. Deborah Amaral

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Margarita Ruiz, Superintendent, Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent, Margaret Marotta, Assistant Superintendent, Kristin Shaver, Business Manager, Kelley Rice, Chief of Communications and Jill Conrad, Chief of Systems Strategy.

Call to Order

Mayor Driscoll called the Regular Meeting of the Salem School Committee to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Amaral seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

There were no Minutes this evening

Superintendent Report – Margarita Ruiz

Before beginning the FY18 Budget Presentation, Margarita Ruiz briefly announced she is looking forward to the National Honor Society and National Art Honor Society Induction Ceremony tomorrow, April 25, 2017 at 7pm at the Salem High School Auditorium and congratulated all the students and their families.

Presentations and Reports

FY 18 Budget Presentation

Superintendent Margarita Ruiz gave a presentation on the Budget for fiscal year 2018 for Salem Public Schools. Copies of the presentation were made available to all School Committee and members of the audience. Ms. Ruiz's presentation talked about FY2018 Budget Goals and Budget Projected Outcomes, Frameworks and Priorities that Guided FY18 Budget Decisions, District Resources (an overall of the entire operating budget), and Enrollment Trends (2012 through 2018). She talked of the Budget Overview. Ms. Ruiz publicly thanked Mayor Driscoll for her strong support of the Salem schools. Mayor Driscoll's commitment and recognition of how important the success of the students and schools are to the city has resulted in an additional 100,000 to their overall

appropriation. This has enabled them to reinstate key supports to students. Ms. Ruiz's presentation included an FY18 Budget Summary (Personnel and Non-Personnel), provision of a full graph of the Cumulative FTE Changes, and information on FY18 Budget Highlights. Ms. Ruiz finalized her presentation with Additions to FY 18 Budget: the Additional \$100,000 appropriation, Funding for district wide personalized learning models, and Request from the Dominion Funds for one time purchase of social studies curriculum (materials). The presentation concluded with the three main accomplishments of the budget: maintaining and accelerating the trajectory of the district, continue to align resources to enrollment, and setting the stage for the implementation of their strategic plan.

Discussion

Mayor Driscoll announced she had to leave early due to a family conflict and asked that any action to approve the budget please be held off until the next meeting on May 1st. She would like to be present then and it would allow sufficient time to marinate on the information beforehand. There is time to review and make any further refinements as needed. Mr. Fleming did not agree. He said that the meeting was scheduled for this evening. Dr. Walsh said there might be issues that may need discussion and can be brought forward to be considered as part of the final draft of the budget. Ms. Amaral agreed with Dr. Walsh and does not mind putting off votes and having some discussion. Agreement was made to have discussion and forward concerns onto the next School Committee meeting on May 1, 2017. Mr. Fleming referred to Contractual Services and said that in order for this budget to be transparent, he asked for explanation of the four large amounts of Contracted Services that appear on page nine (Budget Summary), ten, fifteen, and sixteen. Kristin Shaver explained that page nine is the Overall District Budget Personnel and the Non-Personnel by Category. Mr. Fleming asked if that number is the total contractual services for next year. Ms. Shaver said that is correct. Page ten is a further breakdown of page nine where they can see additional details on contractual services. That is included in each of the schools and departments. Mr. Fleming asked what those contractual services are. Ms. Ruiz said she had provided examples. Mr. Fleming asked what adds up to One Million Four Hundred Thousand. Mayor Driscoll suggested a follow-up for provision of this information, as it is not committed to memory at this time. Mr. Schultz asked Mr. Fleming if he was inquiring a breakdown of the dollar amounts per vendor for Contractual Services. Mr. Fleming answered 'yes.' This is specific information for parents. Dr. Walsh agreed and asked for an overall budget breakdown of those expenses. Ms. Ruiz clarified they would not have that level of detail for the proposed budget but could provide that detail for the current-year budget as to what is being contracted now. The allocation for next fiscal's year budget is estimated based on spending patterns. This is an estimate of the amount they are allocating for the year. They cannot provide a line-item for every single dollar to be committed for next year because they first have to go through procurement processing with some contracts accordingly. Dr. Walsh said he recalls she did provide that before during their sit-downs with her concerning the budget. He said it would be helpful to have detailed information in light of this year's expenditures. Ms. Ruiz said she would be happy to provide that. Mary Manning referred to four pie charts on the presentation. The first two charts contain Facilities and Buildings and Grounds and the other two are also Facilities and Buildings and Grounds. She wondered if those categories are the same. Kristin Shaver said that Buildings

and Grounds and Facilities are the same. Mr. Fleming asked if they are interchangeable. Kristin Shaver confirmed they are.

During the Budget Highlight section, Mr. Fleming applauded the Administration, Mayor Driscoll, and Ms. Ruiz for getting the Carlton Innovation School's budget back on track, on its original Innovation Plan. Mr. Fleming reported that it seems that the budget is down this year \$380,000 for the Nathaniel Bowditch Elementary School. Ms. Ruiz responded to this concern and said that the balance of the school downsizing with the declining enrollment will help strengthen it. The reduction of the number of staff is due to declined enrollments. They are adding support to the staff that is there to help support their practice. Ms. Ruiz shared more details that included smaller class size and more individualized attention. Mr. Fleming asked if this would be a type of mentoring. Ms. Ruiz said they are seeking coaching. There was discussion on this topic and included further details of the cost of coaching in the classroom. Mr. Schultz asked if class sizes are going to remain low, under 20. Ms. Ruiz said it would. Mr. Schultz shared his understanding that there may have been too many staff members in that school and not in an organized way for effective instruction to students. This is something that they have not actually seen happen and asked that if there are any concerns to please let it be known to them for consideration when voting. Ms. Amaral commented that it is not about the quality of the teachers but that they only have three years experience, a lot of turnover, and a lot of changes within the school. Coaching is a support. Ms. Ruiz added that the school has had a turnover, and members of the community have stood here to talk about those challenges. As a Superintendent, she reminded everyone that many families and children proudly call the Nathaniel Bowditch Elementary School their home. As a Superintendent, she is committed to supporting and ensuring that the Bowditch School have a positive path moving forward. She is very invested in the success of the school and wanted to honor those families. Mr. Fleming addressed Kristin Shaver that the Contracted Services budget for the Nathaniel Bowditch Elementary School is \$186,000 and sought clarification on whether this was Non-Personnel. He asked if this was for Extended Learning? Kristin Shaver responded that it is an addition of \$75,000 this year and the remainder has supported the program at the Nathaniel Bowditch Elementary; the increase from this year to next year is \$75,000. The remainder is holding it steady. Ms. Manning asked if it might be assumed that the staffing changes are going to alleviate the space issues, the crowding - one of the things she has heard from teachers and parents regarding student challenges of the ESL move of the logistics classes and space. Ms. Ruiz said it would definitely alleviate the space. It will help to right size the school so they can support the teachers that are already there without putting unreasonable class sizes in place. Further details on the topic were discussed. Ms. Manning agreed. Ms. Ruiz reiterated her commitment to the Nathaniel Bowditch Elementary School community.

After Ms. Ruiz finished her presentation, Mr. Fleming reported that it had been brought to his attention, by a parent that there appeared to be a large increase in the Central Office Budget by \$750,000 for the present year. He asked if this was correct. Mr. Schultz asked if the referenced increase were personnel increases or general resources to schools that come through the central office. Mr. Fleming said it could be district wide services, he is asking the superintendent what the increase is. Ms. Amaral responded to these concerns. They have a new manager and it may be just a realignment of how the central office is focused. Ms. Amaral commented that the

district would be happy to provide that information with the concerned. He or she is welcomed to send an email requesting the information.

Questions and Comments From the Audience

There were no questions or comments from the audience on the Superintendent's Presentation

Questions and Comments From the Audience on Public Hearing Segment on the Budget

Fawaz Abusharkh of 4 Harrison Road shared his concern regarding how he calculated a possible 40% - 41 % (\$750,000) budget increase for central office. He does not see where the increase comes from and inquired this information. He would also like (thought it more appropriate) to see some of this increase be directed somewhere into the schools.

Beth Kontos, President of Salem Teachers Union, 237 Center Street, Danvers, MA received many telephone calls and emails this week asking where the money is being spent on Contract and Student Services. She also said she had not seen any Minutes for Finance Committee meetings online and wondered if there were any. She wanted to bring that to their attention.

Geoff Millar, 29 Boardman Street had a question on the City Connects program. There are many changes in the budget based on City Connects. He understands that one of the key funding sources for the administrator for City Connects is in agreement with North Shore Medical Center, which has not been agreed to. He is wondering what the plan is if the plan does not finalize. It seems that it is in a stale mate position with the City Council at this time. He wonders what happens next if the deal does not go through.

There being no further questions or comments at this time regarding the FY18 Salem Public Schools budget Mr. Fleming moved to close the public hearing. Ms. Amaral seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Action Item

Deliberation and Vote on the Salem Public Schools FY18 School Budget.

1. Deliberation on the approval of the Salem Public Schools FY18 Personnel Budget
2. Deliberation on the approval of the Salem Public School FY18 Non Personnel Budget
3. Deliberation on the approval of the total FY18 Salem Public School Budget
4. Deliberation on the approval of the total FY18 Bentley Academy Charter School Budget
5. Deliberation and approval of a request for \$100,000 from the Dominion Funds account to support the purchase of Social Studies materials for the Salem Public Schools for the SY 2017-2018.

Discussion

School Committee members continued the deliberation and discussion but said they would table the vote on the Salem Public Schools FY18 School Budget Action Items 1-4 until next Monday, May 1, 2017. Recommendation can be made for further consideration to be included in a vote, or a new altered or amended budget, for next

week. Mr. Fleming has an amendment that he wants to offer. He will forward it for recommendation for consideration in the next meeting.

Ms. Amaral moved to table the votes for Action Items 1-4 regarding the approval of the budget to the next School Committee meeting to be held Monday, May 1st, 2017. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. Mr. Fleming abstained. The motion carried.

Discussion

Action Item number 5 – Deliberation and approval of a request for \$100,000 from the Dominion Funds account to support the purchases of Social Studies materials for the Salem Public Schools for the SY 2017-2018

Mr. Fleming said he has been the gatekeeper of the Dominion Funds and commented that this is an appropriate expenditure. It is a win-win situation. They are taking \$100,000 to help the Bates, the Carleton while improving the Social Studies program.

Ms. Amaral moved to approve the request for \$100,000 from the Dominion Funds account to support the purchases of Social Studies materials for the Salem Public Schools for the SY 2017-2018 school year. Mr. Fleming seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Dr. Walsh moved to open the floor for discussion and recommendations by School Committee members. Ms. Amaral seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Discussion for Recommendation

Mr. Fleming shared his concern on what he termed large-scale inequity of the High School Budget. Last year, in the budget process, three teachers were reduced from Head Teacher to Teacher Leader. These particular former head teachers taught four classes each semester and additionally performed all duties of a Head Teacher (budgeting, scheduling, substitute coverage, and attending all leadership team meetings). They were paid a \$3,500 stipend. As a result of the action budget last year, these three individuals were reduced to what is now called Teacher Leader. Although allowable under the contract, their class schedule was increased from four classes per semester to five classes per semester. In addition, this person still does all of the budgeting, scheduling, substitute coverage, and attendance of all leadership team meetings. This would at least be looked at as in addition to duties. Yet, their stipends were reduced from \$3,500 to \$1,500 (a reduction of \$2,000) to each of these Teacher Administrators. Mr. Fleming said this is not fair. It is inequitable and something should be done; they should not be doing this in the school district to their administrators and teachers. The simple solution to solve the entire problem should be to add \$6,000 to the High School budget. He had asked for their job descriptions for review and hopes to receive it before the next meeting. Mr. Fleming asked that the Agenda for next week include this recommendation. Ms. Amaral asked if this was a grievance item. Mr. Fleming said it was not. He clarified that this is a loss of compensation due to three High School Teacher Administrators. He requested that \$6,000 be added to the budget for the Salem High School. Mr. Schultz discussed that if it was a change in duties, it had to be negotiated and discussed as part of

a Personnel Subcommittee discussion with the union. Mr. Schultz said it would have to be looked into further. Mr. Schultz asked Mr. Fleming if he heard this from one former Head Teacher. Mr. Fleming said he had. Mr. Schultz would also like to see clarification in that.

Ms. Manning would like others to take another look to see if there is any way for more investment into the library system either through training, materials, etc. There is a responsibility to keep the school library going, which should not be called library anymore considering it is no longer about books anymore. It is a resource for so many of the students. She would like to see if there is any way they can give a little more support to the school's library system across the board. Another request is to see if there is any way to give more support to Buildings and Grounds. Every year, Buildings and Grounds seems to get acknowledged for doing a tremendous job and then either cut or level-funded. They have tremendous responsibilities to take care of tremendous amounts of Buildings and Grounds and yet they are sometimes referred to differently such as tonight where they were referred to Facilities. She has no particular number in mind but both the library system and Buildings and Grounds department remain the same status quo.

Ms. Manning said that they still do not have an Organizational chart. They have a list of names, budget pages, but they do not have an Organizational flow of command chart and job descriptions, which would be very helpful.

Ms. Amaral hoped they can vote (at voting time) on the funds for the Dominion studies because that was a focal point of some of the materials that Teaching and Learning needed at some of the investments that were done. Ms. Amaral also talked in favor of City Connects and of the positive results they make in the communities. Ms. Manning and Mr. Fleming agreed. Mr. Fleming asked others to speak to their councilors and emphasize what they can do.

The following recommendations have been entertained for further placement on the Agenda for the next School Committee meeting Monday May 1st, 2017:

- A detailed breakdown of the Contract Services from Business Manager Kristin Shaver
- An answer relative to the alternative financing of City Connects raised by a member of the public
- Discussion and vote on the additional \$6,000 to the High School Budget
- Discussion on additional funds for the Library System and Buildings and Grounds
- Discussion on whether the Central Office Budget up \$750,000 or not?

Mr. Schultz commented some of those questions could be answered beforehand from Central Office in communications long before Monday.

Addressing the concerns of the members of the audience:

- Address the concerns of Fawaz Abusharkh detailed analysis of the budget increase and inquiry of where the increase comes from.

- Beth Kontos inquiry on where the money is being spent on Contract and Student Services. She also said she had not seen any Minutes for Finance Committee meetings online and wondered if there were any. She wanted to bring that to their attention.
- Geoff Millar's question on what will happen if the deal with North Shore Medical Center does not go through.

There being no further comments or recommendations by Committee Members, Dr. Walsh motioned to close the comments by School Committee members. Ms. Amaral seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Finance Report

a. Approval of Warrants

March 16, 2017 in the amount of \$580,418.04

March 23, 2017 in the amount of \$369,592.16

March 30, 2017 in the amount of \$333,209.21

April 13, 2017 in the amount of \$318,123.79

April 20, 2017 in the amount of \$228,269.40

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the warrants as stated. Ms. Amaral seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Questions and Comments from the Audience

A member from the audience, Ms. Andrea French, 7 Cleveland Road, said that she does not have any comments on what was discussed. She informed there is a free event sponsored by Salem SEAPAC Curious Creatures and is a public event on Thursday, April 27, 2017 at 6:30PM at Witchcraft Heights. Everyone is welcomed to attend.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the School Committee this evening. Mr. Fleming entertained the motion to adjourn. Ms. Amaral seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Angelica Alayon, Secretary
Salem School Committee

Meeting Materials and Reports

School Committee Agenda April 24, 2017

Proposed 2018 FY18 Budget

FY18 Salem Public Schools Budget

Social Studies Dominion SY2017-2018

Strengthening Personalized Learning Models Internal Request for Proposals handout