

Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 17, 2017

A regular meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, July 17, 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 Walsh, Mr. James Fleming, Ms. Mary Manning, Mr. Patrick Schultz, and Ms. Kristine Wilson

Members Absent: Deborah Amaral

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 7:10 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Schultz seconded the motion. The Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Discussion

Mr. Fleming commented that he had requested a roll call vote on 4 different raises and those were not recorded in the Minutes. He would like to have the Minutes amended to include them and have the Minutes reviewed at the next regular School Committee meeting.

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the Minutes of the June 19, 2017 regular School Committee meeting. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The Motion carried.

Mr. Fleming moved to table the Minutes of the June 19, 2017 regular School Committee meeting. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion. The Motion carried.

Questions and Comments From the Audience

There were no questions or comments from the audience.

Superintendent Report – Margarita Ruiz

Ms. Ruiz highlighted that the summer session had a very smooth start on Monday July 10, 2017. As part of Salem Summer Meals, they expect to serve free meals to over 530 children this summer, which include breakfast, lunch, and transportation as needed. The program curriculum is unique to each provider, however the summer programs are also designed to strengthen student academic skills through fun, hands-on activities, and field trips. It is also a great time for students to work on their social skills and get together with friends and teachers. Most of the staff of the summer programs are SPS teachers. Witchcraft Heights is hosting the majority of the summer programs this year. The Food and Services program are providing three meals for children under the age of 18, at 15 locations. Salem Summer meals started on Thursday, July 6, 2017 and have already served 5,325 meals in the first set of the program alone. The summer meals program aligns with the 4th pillar of the strategic plan, which is

related to *staffing and community engagement*. It is a positive way for families and the district to interact. Salem teachers engage in a great deal of professional development over the summer. Superintendent Ruiz announced that they are offering 36 different district-sponsored professional development courses over the summer. The courses focus on reading, writing, comprehension, technology, and executive office skills. Much of the summer professional development courses offered responds to feedback in the strategic plan, which relates to pillar number 3: nurturing staff leadership and empowerment and the need for professional development and cultural competence, inclusion, and diversity as well the need for support in teacher practice. Ms. Ruiz reported that they will also be hosting the Annual Summer Leadership Initiative, on the first week of August, for all Directors, Principals, and Administrators in the district. It will be held at The House of Seven Gables, 115 Derby Street, Salem, MA. Ms. Ruiz notified members that the Human Capital office currently have 21 posted openings for Teachers, 3 for Coaches, and Administrators and over 3,000 applicants. Ms. Ruiz reported that they are seeing far fewer resignations this year. Ms. Ruiz asked Bethann Jellison, Principal of the Carlton School and Jill Conrad, Chief of Systems Strategy to present the highlights of the Carlton Innovation School Renewal Plan.

Presentations and Reports

Ms. Conrad introduced the Carlton Innovation Plan Renewal Process with a quick overview of what an Innovation School is. It is a school that operates within a school district with increased autonomy complex abilities that is agreed to within an approved innovation plan. That is the type of school that Carlton has been for the last five years based on their previous innovation plan, and that plan expired June 30th of this year. Ms. Conrad report that in order to continue as an innovation school, they needed to apply for renewal to operate five more years from 2017 through the end of the year 2022. She referred to the Carlton application that was provided to each member.

Ms. Conrad described Carlton's Continuous Progress model, which articulated specific autonomy complex ability within the six possible areas that are outlined in the state's statute governing innovation schools:

1. Curriculum Instruction and Assessment
2. Schedule and Calendar
3. Staffing
4. Professional Development
5. District Policies and Procedures
6. Budget

Ms. Conrad informed members that she and Ms. Jellison would walk them through some of the details of each and take their questions. She asked the Carlton School Principal, Ms. Jellison, to talk about the Progress model and some of the innovative ways they operate. Ms. Jellison thanked the Carlton School teachers for their time, participation, support, and willingness in helping with the work involved for this evening's presentation. She thanked the many supportive parents for their participation. Ms. Jellison also thanked their school council who have been fantastic and Ms. Conrad for making the document come to life and help with highlighting and informing details. Ms. Jellison briefly explained the Continuous Progress Model's instructional delivery system, student-centered instruction, instructional practices, school structure, and trimester enrollment patterns and procedures. She shared summary of the model's autonomies and flexibilities and story examples of their positive outcomes. Ms. Conrad talked about the autonomies of staffing area, district policies, grading and student

enrollment articulation, and budget, including annual lump sum budget allocation among others as presented.

Ms. Conrad and Ms. Jellison completed the presentation. Ms. Conrad informed members that one of the key budget autonomies that will need to be discussed with the city is the opportunity to carry over unspent funds, which is something that is very specific in the Innovation School statute. She knows that Salem has not done that before. They look forward to having those conversations.

Public Hearing

Mr. Fleming motioned to open the public hearing on the Carlton Innovation Renewal Plan hearing for 2017 to June 30, 2022. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion.

Mr. Fleming asked how would this innovation plan prevent possible violation of the budget autonomy. Ms. Conrad responded that prevention would be through an advanced agreement of the expectation of what that process would look like every year. Previously, the process was solely based on a staffing model. This process would be in somewhat of a partnership where one part will be based on a lump sum that the school will have oversight of and will manage, as the school's needs evolve, and the rest of it in terms of staff deployment to the district based on the demographic of the school - a critical piece that the previous innovation plan did not make reference to. On the whole, for any school, the district cannot allocate funds that it does not have; all school allocation depends on the availability of resources. They have put language in the plan related to Title 1. They would have to seek discussion should there be a major change to Title 1 funding allocation, not just for the Carlton school but also for any school.

Members further discussed, and shared feedback and concerns on, the topic of the innovation plan's budget autonomies, and process. Mayor Driscoll wondered, and asked for clarification, on the wording of the 3.5% average staff increase salary section of the innovation plan. Ms. Conrad responded that it was intended to represent the average of all step increases. They begin the budget process in November of each year. They project ahead and do not always know the specific staff members and need a way to calculate an allocation. The school will use its actual salaries against that allocation when they do their actual budget. It is new here, they are proposing this and trying it out. They think that it will not only work but also allow the schools to have savings each year, for the coming years. They are using the actual salary to calculate the allocation, not what the actual budget is. Mayor Driscoll asked if there is an easier way to do that, as it may be confusing. Ms. Conrad stated that this process is used with the Pilot School in Boston. It works well especially when they have a staffing distribution with veterans and younger staff unlike with having all veterans staff. The Pilot Schools have used this model for over 20 years, and it tends to work. Mayor Driscoll said it would be helpful for her if they took this year as the base year. Based on this, they should be able to say view next year's budget than just looking at existing salaries; it may simply be a cleaner way to reference it. Mayor Driscoll asked for clearer language that may be understandable to all readers.

Ms. Manning commented that they are not Boston, do not have several Pilot Schools but one that happens to be the smallest in the district, and asked if they are sure that this formula that works well in other locations will work with Salem's smaller numbers. Ms. Shaver said that she worked very closely with Ms. Conrad. They played out FY19 and shared with Ms. Jellison to make sure that it was going to make sense. The actual step increases varies from 1% to over 4%. She stated that it works out for the school, because the staff is spread out among different steps and columns. It benefits the school for FY19 and will give them additional funding

flexibility. They wanted to make sure that the budget would support higher-grade positions if needed and the 2.5% is the Contractual increase.

Mr. Fleming asked how the lump sum budget (on page 4 shown on the plan) will take increased enrollment into account; how would that lump sum account for the projected 17% enrollment increase next year. Ms. Conrad directed the members to the 'Adjustments for Enrollment' on page 44 'Adjustments Based on Enrollment' section and responded to Mr. Fleming's question. Dr. Walsh said that enrollment projections, based on the methodology, talks about using the average. He firmly believes they need to go to the April 1st date when determining enrollment date, because that will account for all students in the school and the average does not. Ms. Conrad informed that if there is an amendment to be made, they would not be able to vote this evening; it would have to be sent back to the Innovation Plan Committee. Further discussion ensued on the determinant of average enrollments. Ms. Manning asked why they used average instead of the total number of students. Ms. Conrad stated they have used October 1st as the enrollment date for all schools, and all schools generally gain and lose students throughout the year. This plan offers to use the average standard between spring and fall enrollments as other schools, throughout the state, have used as a model. Ms. Jellison informed members on more of the projections and how averages are based.

Members continued discussion on the formula for average projections of student enrollment. Mayor Driscoll asked who will be making the internal budget planning process. Ms. Jellison said she and Ms. Conrad have talked about it and have already added a leadership team to the current one set up at the school that will help with that process. That is included in the plan under District Policies and Procedures section, under Governments.

Mr. Fleming motioned to close the public hearing on the Carlton Innovation Renewal Plan hearing for 2017 to June 30, 2017. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion.

Action Item

Deliberation and Vote on the Renewal of the Carlton Innovation School Plan for a Term of Five Years, 2017 through 2022

Dr. Walsh motioned to approve the Renewal of the Carlton Innovation School Plan for a Term of Five Years, 2017 through 2022. Ms. Manning and Mr. Schultz seconded the motion. The Motion carried.

Deliberation and Vote on the Alumni Lacrosse Facility Use Fee Waiver Request

Discussion

Mr. Fleming moved to take the Deliberation and Vote on the Alumni Lacrosse Facility Use Fee Waiver Request out of order to be taken before the Superintendent's report. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion. The Motion carried.

Ms. Manning motioned to approve the Alumni Lacrosse Facility Use Fee Waiver Request. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The Motion carried.

Finance Report

a. Approval of Warrants

June 29, 2017 in the amount of \$600, 227.04

July 13, 2017 in the amount of \$2, 055.00

July 20, 2017 in the amount of \$279, 923.89

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve all three warrants as stated. Mr. Schultz seconded the motion. The Motion was approved.

- b. **Budget Transfer Requests** There were no budget transfer request this evening

Subcommittee Reports

Policy Subcommittee

Deliberation and Vote on Policy 6406 Voting Method – Tabled from 6/19/17

Policy 6406 remains tabled.

Deliberation and Vote on the Second Reading of the Recommendation of the Policy Subcommittee on the Revisions to the Following Policies in the 3000-Policy Series

Discussion

The third and final reading for the following policies will be at the next regular School Committee meeting on August 21, 2017:

Policy 3101 Budget Planning has no changes and recommended to leave as is.

Policy 3202 has already gone through three readings.

Policy 3206 Revenues and Tax Sources – no changes

Policy 3306 Bond and Police Officers – no changes.

Policy 3401 Purchasing and Purchasing Authority– no changes.

Policy 3403 Corporate Purchasing - shows blank on the spreadsheet but no changes.

Policy 3405 Depository Funds Authorized Signatures – no changes.

The Subcommittee reviewed the following policies, presented for the Second Reading this evening. These are listed below with member discussions, if any. Proposed changes are found in the meeting materials under “track changes”. The third and final reading for the following policies will also be held at the next regular School Committee meeting:

Policy 3102 Financial Reports and Statement – no substantial change, just language change. Dr. Walsh had asked that the Business Manager and not the Superintendent submit all financial reports, as she is the person responsible for those and said he believes Ms. Amaral has made that change.

Policy 3104 Fiscal Year/Budget Deadlines and Schedules

Policy 3201 Funding Proposals and Applications

Policy 3203 Gate Receipts and Admissions

Policy 3301 Accounting and Reporting - no substantial changes

Ms. Amaral had reviewed and made the changes that Mr. Fleming requested on the policy at the last regular School Committee meeting on June 19, 2017. Mr. Fleming’s request was that the wording should be “...*the Superintendent, with the approval of the School Committee, should be responsible for the administration of the budget*”. Dr. Walsh had also stated they could consider adding “...*for administration of the approved budget*”. This is the Second Reading. Mr. Fleming previously stated he would support the First Reading as long as the review of the language was made for the second reading. This is Policy 3301’s second reading. It is scheduled for a Third and Final Reading at the next Regular School Committee meeting on August 21, 2017.

Policy 3302 Audits
Policy 3303 Procedures for Handling Cash Receipts
Policy 3304 Revolving Accounts

Policy 3402 Payment Procedures – to have a new allowance for them to have one signature on the Warrant – each year they would designate someone to approve it. Their suggestion is the Mayor as a designee of the School Committee. They would have to vote on them. The Superintendent and Business Manager would still have to attest to the accuracy of the Warrants – Warrant will remain available at the Business Office and they would vote on them.

Policy 3406 Expense Reimbursements
Policy 3407 Sales Calls and Demonstrations

Ms. Manning motioned to approve the Second Reading of the Policy changes as submitted by the Chairperson Policy Subcommittee. Mr. Fleming seconded the motion. The Motion carried.

Deliberation and Vote on the Second Reading of the Recommendation of the Policy Subcommittee on the Creation of the Salem Public Schools Recyclable Material Policy

Discussion

Ms. Amaral previously reported they do not have a Recyclable Material policy, are seeking an Environmental Protection grant, and need a policy to go with it. The suggestion was that this policy be number 3508, which fits well under Buildings and Grounds. The recommended language they added was to recognize recycling by looking at ways to include composting. Most schools have recycling; this would be a recognition of a District policy in support of recycling. The third and final reading for this policy will be held at the next regular School Committee meeting on August 21, 2017.

Ms. Manning motioned to approve the Second Reading of the Recommendation of the Policy Subcommittee on the Creation of the Salem Public Schools Recyclable Material Policy. Mr. Fleming seconded the motion. The Motion carried.

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

Mr. Fleming said that he is still concerned with the status of the History teacher at the Salem High School. He spoke with several people. He does not know what the administration's position is. He is sure they are going to grievance and appeal it. He would like to know the status of that particular case at this time. Mayor Driscoll asked for clarification. She would be happy to discuss this personnel matter in greater detail over an Executive session in the near future, as not all members were present at the time and to allow others time to prepare. Dr. Walsh asked Superintendent Ruiz what they attribute to significant large number of applicants this year. Ms. Ruiz responded they have reached out with advertisement for openings in the district. They have developed, with the collaboration of Kelly Rice, their Chief of Communications, a great deal of materials to promote the district. The Director of Human Capital and other principals have gone to several job fairs during the sprint term. Much effort has been put into promoting Salem as a great place to teach and it has definitely had a big impact. Dr. Walsh asked to what do they attribute the low number of resignations. Superintendent Ruiz responded that the low number of resignations generally speaks of pleased staff. The atmosphere, kindness, and school improvement makes for a better place for teachers to want to serve.

Dr. Walsh announced that he will be testifying tomorrow, July 18, 2017, on Beacon Hill in favor of a piece of legislation by Senator Joe Lovely which deals with strengthening the laws surrounding sexual abuse children. Some of the more important parts of the law and changes from the past are that it will apply to all schools. Currently, the law applies to public schools. It will apply to all schools, public and independent. It will expand the list of mandated reporters of child abuse to include volunteer, coaches, professional tools and other independent contractors. He will be testifying that on his own and will mention that he is a member of the Salem School Committee. It will be his personal testimony and is not looking for any endorsements this evening. He will be testifying again next Tuesday at the Joint Committee of Education concerning the bill to support the foundation budget. He will be testifying as a member of the Massachusetts Association of School Committee Board of Directors. He does not know if a week would be sufficient time to put together a letter from either the Chair or Superintendent supporting the findings of the foundation budget commission for him to submit as evidence. He asked if that would require a motion. Dr. Walsh asked if it would be fair to include a letter of endorsement. Mayor Driscoll said it would make sense. She was going to say they could support a letter and have the committee members sign on to it as a means to ensure that it was properly noted.

Mr. Fleming moved to support the Committee's findings on the foundation budget. Mayor Driscoll said that Mr. Fleming made a motion for the School Committee to adopt a resolution in support of the recommendation for the foundation budget. Mayor Driscoll entertained a motion in support of the foundation budget via letter/resolution. The Motion carried.

Dr. Walsh referred to something that was brought up during the Carlton School presentation and asked Superintendent Ruiz to please look into the room issue at the Carlton School that is currently occupied by Head Start. He said that he is aware that they have 5th Graders in closets or corridors doing 6th Grade work, because they have no classroom. Superintendent Ruiz said they will look into that.

Ms. Manning inquired about a Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting. All members agreed that it had been confirmed that a COW meeting will be scheduled for Monday, July 31, 2017 at 5pm.

Mr. Fleming announced that there will be a sign up for the Salem Day sports tournament on Thursday, July 20, 2017 at the Recreation Department Head Quarters on Broad Street. It is sports scholarship for Salem Youth. The sign will be up from 4 to 5 for residents and 5 to 7 for non-residents.

Mayor Driscoll asked if there are any updates on the YMCA Child Care Program discussion they had at the last meeting. Superintendent Ruiz said they looked into the question of the Procurement laws and checked the city. Ms. Shaver said they determined there was a process that was not necessarily needed, because there was no exchange of funds. There is no essential value that is being exchanged for the room. Mr. Fleming asked if they are not paying the YMCA to do anything. Ms. Ruiz and Ms. Shaver said that they were not. Mayor Driscoll said they wanted to ensure that the value of the use of the facility does not exceed the threshold. Ms. Shaver said they looked into that.

Questions and Comments From the Audience

There were no questions or comments from the audience.

Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted by:

Angelica Alayon, Secretary
Salem School Committee

Meeting Materials and Reports

- School Committee Agenda July 17, 2017
- Minutes of the June 19, 2017 Regular School Committee Meeting
- Carlton Innovation School Renewal Plan
- Alumni Lacrosse Facility Use Fee Waiver Request
- Policy 6406
- Policies in the 3000-Policy Series
- Recyclable Materials Policy