

**Salem Public Schools
Salem School Committee
FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2023**

On January 17, 2023, the Finance Subcommittee for Salem Public Schools held a meeting in person at 29 Highland Avenue, Rm. 224, Salem MA at 5:30pm.

Members Present: Ms. Mary Manning, Ms. Amanda Campbell, and Ms. Beth

Anne Cornell

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Dr. Zrike, Ms. Elizabeth Pauley, Acting

Mayor Robert McCarthy

Call of Meeting to Order

The meeting is called to order at 5:35pm. Ms. Manning recognizes Ms. Cornell and Ms. Campbell is in attendance.

Ms. Cornell Present

Ms. Campbell Present

Ms. Manning Present

Update on FY24 Budget Planning: timeline and preliminary discussion of selected cost center expenses

Ms. Elizabeth Pauley notes the special ed tuition is estimated to increase by 14% projected increase. Depending on how many students go out to the district. Ms. Pauley notes as of right now we don't know where the city will land with its budgets and we will not know the governor's proposed budget until March. What we do know as of now is we have a settled teachers contract, a para union, and other staff who are non-union who want to be made next year. Ms. Pauley notes we have estimated what the non unions are and at either a 2 or 3% rate, we know Personnel costs will go up next year to \$2.9-\$3 million dollars which is about 4% of our annual budget. Next year we have almost 4% in personnel cost alone.

Ms. Pauley also confirms that Special Ed tuition will not increase due to it being locked in for this year but it is projected to increase next year significantly. The rates at private placements are expected to increase to 14% and collaboratives by 5%.

Dr. Zrike notes we have a lot of kids on the waiting list and it will hit tuition wise if they do get accepted. We will be closer, budget wise, to pre pandemic for district placements. As of now, we have nine kids

waiting for a better placement. There was a huge decline during the pandemic and right before the pandemic as well.

Ms. Manning asks about placements in private schools and the expanding additions.

Dr. Zrike notes the Salem Prep and as of right now we only have 16 students there. Where we have the need is the middle school. We are currently in the process of hiring a Special Education teacher to assist with this problem. The need is for students who require a therapeutic environment to help regulate themselves.

Ms. Cornell asks Dr. Zrike what the numbers are capped at for Salem Prep?

Dr. Zrike confirms Salem Prep is capped at high 20s for space being a huge factor. The design of the school is that it cannot take place in another school. Dr. Zrike notes placing Salem Prep at the possible Salem State University location would be best for all students.

Ms. Campbell notes housing Salem Prep at the Salem High School or New Liberty Innovation School would become problematic.

Ms. Pauley notes the reality of our expenses. One more year of ESER funding. At this moment in time it will look like what the city has done in past years. Ms. Pauley passes out the budget timeline that was also handed out to all principals. Ms. Pauley discusses our goals, maximizing student impact and growth, and empowering our school leaders.

Ms. Campbell notes the shifting of resources and what we have identified as key priorities.

Dr. Zrike notes as of today, schools have to tell us what their emerging budgets are.

Ms. Cornell notes we are supposed to have school councils sign off and we should be very persistent upon this.

Ms. Manning notes a parent meeting should be scheduled as well. Ms. Manning asks if there is anything to gain approaching the budget conversations in another way.

Acting Mayor Robert McCarthy notes the reality of the situation is to level the funds and change of priorities. How to get the community engaged and have a part in the decision making.

Ms. Cornell notes if we can have principals at each school figure out what their priorities are then this would be very beneficial even for the parents to be aware of as well.

Dr. Zrike notes the challenge is to avoid reducing any positions. State obligation should be Early Childhood and we were hoping to be funded by the state by now but we have not. Dr. Zrike notes it would be fair for this subcommittee to ask each school principal to tell us what the family engagement process looks like. Ask to show us what the families had to say about the budget.

Ms. Cornell notes as a parent view she would want all parents to feel engaged in this process and be aware.

Ms. Pauley notes two upcoming Finance subcommittee meetings, March 13th and March 27th. She asks if there should be a third meeting held just in case. Ms. Manning, Ms. Campbell, and Ms. Cornell

agree there should be a third meeting scheduled as well. Two meetings will not be a sufficient amount of time.

Ms. Pauley notes organizing a schedule for the upcoming Finance subcommittee meetings for the month of March. Ms. Pauley notes she will follow up with the third additional meeting for March.

Ms. Manning makes a motion to adjourn and Ms. Cornell seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:43pm.

Ms. Cornell Yes

Ms. Campbell Yes

Ms. Manning Yes

Motion carries 3-0

Respectfully submitted by,

Krista Perry

Executive Administrative Assistant to the Salem School Committee and Superintendent