

Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 16, 2019

A regular meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, December 16, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA.

Members Present: Ms. Mary Manning, Mr. James Fleming, Ms. Kristine Wilson, Ms. Ana Nuncio, Mr. Manny Cruz, Ms. Amanda Campbell, and Mayor Kimberley Driscoll

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Kathleen Smith, Interim Superintendent, Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent, Jill Conrad, Chief of Systems Strategy, and Jillian Flynn, Student Representative

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Driscoll called the regular meeting of the Salem School Committee to order at 7:10 p.m.

Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting held November 18, 2019 (tabled on 12/2/19)
- b. Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting held December 2, 2019
- c. Overnight Field Trip Request from the 24 Students of the Salem High School Harvard Model United Nations Delegation to Participate in a Four-Day Conference in Boston, MA, January 30, 2020 through February 2, 2020
- d. Overnight Field Triq Request for the Carlton Innovation School 5th graders to visit the Farm School in Athol, MA, in two separate groups from February 24, 2020 to February 26, 2020 and from February 26, 2020 to February 28, 2020
- e. Approval of Warrants: 12/5/19 in the amount of \$410,425.96

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the Consent agenda. Ms. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the regular meeting agenda. Ms. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Mr. Fleming also moved to take item #VIIIb, the request from the City of Salem Department of Public Works to install a fiber optic network shelter on Salem High School property out of order. Mayor Driscoll agreed. Mr. Fleming further moved that the item be referred to the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Discussion

Ms. Manning asked if there was a timeframe that this needed to be decided within. Mayor Driscoll responded that early first quarter would be most helpful.

Public Comment #1: Questions and Comments from the Audience

None

Student School Committee Representative Report – Jillian Flynn

None

Superintendent's Report

The Superintendent opened her remarks by explaining the small clay hearts that had been placed at each member's seat. These were made by 2nd graders at Saltonstall and also Horace Mann Laboratory

School who are focusing on spreading kindness through small works of art. They believe that through small acts of kindness, we can change perspectives, minds, and hearts.

“Witch Mix” Presentation

The Superintendent then invited Deborah Connerty, Acting Director of Pupil Personnel Services and Donna Ramsden, a School Adjustment Counselor at Salem High School and Faculty Advisor for the “Witch Mix” program to share information about the program. The “Witch Mix” program connects students who are in the substantially separate special education programs at the high school with students in other clubs and groups. The students come together to participate in structured activities together with the goal of having them form connections and friendships with one another. Parents of students who have benefited from the program spoke and shared how it helped students overcome feelings of loneliness within the school. Ms. Ramsden showed two videos that portrayed the nature of the program and shared more about the benefits of the program. The Superintendent and Mayor Driscoll thanked all of the staff members involved with creating and supporting this wonderful program.

Update on the Salem High School Redesign

Superintendent Smith then summarized the work underway on the high school redesign effort and introduced Dr. Samantha Meier to provide an update on their work. Dr. Meier invited members of her team to join her, including Andrew Bub, Graeme Marcoux, Kim McFarland, and Karyn King Fargo. She began by explaining that the turnaround plan that was developed last year remains a working document for the school, in spite of the fact that the school escaped the requirements of turnaround based on improved results last year. The high school redesign plan has four major practices that guide the work: 1) Leadership, Shared Responsibility, and Collaboration; 2) Intentional Practices for Improving Instruction; 3) Student Specific Supports and Instruction for All Students; and 4) School Culture and Climate. Each area of practice has several indicators within it. Dr. Meier and her team reviewed each of them and highlighted one indicator per practice for the presentation (details available in the presentation). All in all, the work is very much underway with multiple teams and groups working on each area of practice and indicator. Two important community-wide events that are planned include the following. All interested parties are welcome to attend: 1) a Turnaround Monitoring Night on March 25th; and 2) the Spring Convening/Showcase on April 2nd.

Student Assignment and Enrollment Update

The Superintendent invited Dr. Jill Conrad and the Parent Information Center (PIC) Team to share an update on the district’s enrollment information as well as preparations for the upcoming Kindergarten Information Night. Dr. Conrad introduced the team members – Sayonara Reyes, the PIC Manager and Student Assignment Officer and Yari Acevedo, Welcome Services and Outreach Coordinator. Ms. Reyes provided an overview of the services provided at the PIC as well as a summary of the registration and student assignment process that is followed. In addition, she shared information on the number of transactions that the PIC has processed thus far this year (over 900) including the number of new student assignments (over 252) since July.

Dr. Conrad shared the results of the parent feedback form that was distributed with all registration packets over the past year. The survey asked families to rate their satisfaction with the service and information received by the Parent Information Center as well as a few questions about the student assignment process itself. The results were very positive with respect to satisfaction with service and information and also affirmed the community’s preference for maintaining the element of school choice within the student assignment policy, although many families did indicate a preference for having more choices closer to where they live.

Dr. Conrad then provided an update on this year’s enrollment numbers for the district as well as each school. Demographic information was also shared. Information regarding students who are economically disadvantaged comes directly from the state and is not yet available on the state website. As a result, the setting of enrollment targets for Kindergarten registration and assignment is delayed until these data are published on the state’s website. Dr. Conrad reminded the Committee members of

the recent change to the Student Assignment Policy that specifies waiting until these data are available and published before setting the targets (the previous policy required that the targets be set in January). Dr. Conrad also shared information of the preparations underway for the upcoming Kindergarten Information and Expo Night which will be held on January 14th at 6:30 pm in the Collins Middle School cafeteria and auditorium.

Additional Superintendent Report Items

Superintendent Smith shared additional information about events in the community that she recently attended including an event called 50 Plus Years of Service Event for retirees to benefit the marching band attending Carnegie Hall, and the Children's Charity event. The Superintendent also shared information about the Holiday Student Art Exhibit taking place at the Salem High School on December 18-19 from 7am to 3pm.

Deliberation and vote on the Memorandum of Agreement between the Salem School Committee and the School Administrator's Association

Discussion

Mr. Fleming requested a more detailed analysis of information that show rate of increase while the students were at the former Nathaniel Bowditch school. Ms. Campbell echoed Mr. Fleming's request.

Action Items: Old Business – None

Update on the Superintendent Search Process

Mayor Driscoll stated that the item on the agenda would not be ready until January as the timeline was changed due to a snow date. At the January meeting, the search committee will present a candidate profile that the School Committee will vote on. The search committee will use this profile as a framework to identify suitable candidates for Superintendent.

Action Items: New Business

Deliberation and Vote on the Memorandum of Agreement between the Salem School Committee and the School Administrator's Association

Ms. Manning moved this item. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Request from the City of Salem Department of Public Works to install a fiberoptic network shelter on Salem High School Property

This item was taken out of order at the beginning of the meeting. It was referred to the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee.

Policy Subcommittee

Deliberation and Vote on the First Reading of the recommendation of the Policy Subcommittee on the revisions to the following policies:

- 5102.03 Students Experiencing Homelessness
- 5204 Grading and Reports on Academic Progress
- 5206 Promotion, Retention, and Level Change
- 5207 Parent/Guardian Conferences
- 5208 Homework
- 5210 Home/Hospital Bound Instruction
- 5211 Home Schooling

Ms. Campbell motioned to approve the First Reading of the recommendation of the Policy Subcommittee on the revisions to the policies as listed on the agenda. Ms. Nuncio seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Subcommittee Reports

Ms. Nuncio shared that there will be a Policy Subcommittee meeting on Thursday, December 19th.

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

Recognition and Thank You to Kris Wilson, School Committee Member

Mayor Driscoll recognized fellow and outgoing School Committee member, Kris Wilson, for her many years of dedicated service to the Salem Public Schools. This is her last meeting as a School Committee member. Superintendent Smith presented Ms. Wilson with a “golden apple” which is an award that will be used in the future to recognize teachers and other staff members throughout the district. Ms. Wilson is the first to receive the Golden Apple Award.

Public Comment #2: Questions and Comments from the Audience - None

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the School Committee this evening, Mr. Fleming motioned to adjourn the regular School Committee meeting. Ms. Nuncio seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kathleen Smith, Secretary to the
Salem School Committee

Meeting Materials and Reports

School Committee Consent Agenda:

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Update on High School Improvement and Redesign Plan – Dr. Samantha Meier, Interim Principal and SHS Team

Update on 2019-20 Student Enrollment and Demographics – Parent Information Center (PIC) Team (Jill Conrad, Sayonara Reyes, Yari Acevedo, Alma Pimentel)

Deliberation and Vote on the Memorandum of Agreement between the Salem School Committee and the School Administrator’s Association

Request from the City of Salem Department of Public Works to install a fiberoptic network shelter on Salem High School Property