

Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 11, 2019

A regular meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, March 11, 2019 at 7:04 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, Amanda Campbell, and Mayor Kimberley Driscoll

Members Absent: None

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

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Driscoll called the regular meeting of the Salem School Committee to order at 7:04 p.m.

Amended Consent Agenda

- Minutes of the School Committee meeting held February 25, 2019
- Approval of Warrants: 2/28/19 in the amount of \$560,794.14, 3/7/19 in the amount of \$184,108.73, 3/14/19 in the amount of \$278,334.93
- Deliberation and Vote on the request of the Salem High School Jr. R.O.T.C. Out of State field trip to Tolman, Rhode Island on March 16, 2019 from 6:00AM to 4:PM
- Deliberation and Vote on the request of the Salem High School Jr. R.O.T.C. two-day field trip to Halsey High School, Halsey, NJ and New York City on March 22-23, 2019, returning at 9pm.

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

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Public Comment #1: Questions and Comments From the Audience

Jillian Flynn, 3 Becket Street, Student at Salem High School, read her prepared statement aloud to the School Committee explaining the disadvantages and negative impact that the new High School schedule would have on the Salem High School students. Ms. Flynn shared that student input were not included in the decision-making and that they were not informed.

Stella Rowley, 11 Savoy Road, Junior at Salem High School, shared there have been rumors of block changes to student schedules, that students were not aware of the proposed changes, and has caused concern among the student body. Ms. Rowley said she wishes more collaboration between the school and students.

Benjamin Chertok, 7 Phelps Street, announced that the community is presenting its annual musical next Thursday, March 21 and Friday night, March 22, 2019 at 7pm and Saturday, March 23, 2019 at 2pm. Mr. Chertok invited the community and members and said he would send an email to the Superintendent with more information later this week.

Presentation and Reports

Superintendent's Report – Margarita Ruiz

Superintendent Ruiz acknowledged and addressed the concerns expressed by students and parents about the

proposed changes to the Bell Schedule at Salem High School. Ms. Ruiz reiterated that students' voice matters, they want to hear from them, and clarified that no choice has been made at this time.

Members shared concerns, feedback, and engaged in discussion.

Dr. James Flynn, Assistant Principal of Salem High School, spoke on behalf of the Bell Schedule Committee. Dr. Flynn provided insights into what the Bell Schedule Committee has been working on. There was a survey earlier on with a focus group of students, tied to the High School Redesign that also talked about the Bell Schedule. Dr. Flynn explained the goals of the Bell Schedule Committee, what they have done, what they continue to do, and said they continue to collect feedback as this is still in process. Dr. Flynn explained there is no particular model being reviewed for distribution to students at this time.

Discussion on the Salem High School Bell Schedule

Mr. Fleming shared his concern that more student engagement is necessary and should be incorporated into this process as soon as possible. Mayor Driscoll said that Dr. Flynn had explained that the Bell Schedule Committee would be seeking an engaged student body that understands what the impacts are, can offer feedback, and ultimately achieve some consensus on what would work for teachers, students, and school district.

Ms. Campbell said it would help to be informed, by Superintendent Ruiz or Dr. Flynn, of what the next steps are in moving forward and where it is headed. Members engaged in discussion. Superintendent Ruiz said there is no particular model being reviewed for distribution to students at this time. Members shared feedback, asked questions, and engaged in further discussion.

Mr. Cruz suggested the presence and participation of a student representative at School Committee meetings as one way to share student voices.

Members, and Dr. Flynn, agreed to work towards increasing student participation.

Other Reports

Presentation of the Executive Director of PPS Candidate Profile – Dr. John Brackett

Dr. John Brackett, Collins Center of UMASS Boston, presented the profile for the Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) candidate. Dr. Brackett conducted a series of forums and interviews and compiled, for the School Committee, the profile of the ideal candidate. Dr. Brackett shared a brief update of the search itself, walked members through the entire process, and mentioned they have eight candidates they would be looking into. Dr. Brackett continued that they have an eleven-person committee that would be meeting tomorrow and said their next step in the process would be performatives and further interviews. Dr. Brackett continued to update the School Committee. Members asked questions and thanked Dr. Brackett for the successful efforts.

Update on Kindergarten Batch 1 Applications

Dr. Conrad introduced the members of the Parent Information Center team. Dr. Conrad, and members of the Parent Information Center, presented an update of where they are with the Kindergarten Batch 1 application assignments. Dr. Conrad gave an overview of Batch 1 applications and walked members through the presentation, which included an overview of how the assignment process works. Sayonara Reyes, Manager of the Parent Information Center, talked about their outreach work.

Discussion on Enrollment Percentage

Ms. Campbell asked for an update on whether there was any significant shift, since they last discussed the enrollment demographics at the school, within this year. Dr. Conrad responded she does not have that information at this time and would provide that information.

Discussion on School Visitation Opportunities for Families Before Their Selection of School Preference

Mr. Fleming asked if there is a process where families can visit the elementary schools, before they make their selection of preference, as they come in and are not familiar with them. Ms. Sayonara responded that they have tour dates that are scheduled much in advance of the application deadlines and said they encourage families to visit the schools. Mr. Fleming asked for a percentage of families who visited the schools. Dr. Conrad responded they would

provide that information and shared that they are working to be more proactive in helping families become aware of the different options and choices they have. Dr. Conrad continued that all the information that was available at Kindergarten Information night is also made available on the website, including the video of different principals and profile documents. A team, at a School Choice table, was also present at the event to assist families with questions or information or referrals as needed.

Results of the 2019 Survey on School Calendar

Superintendent Ruiz provided a report on the feedback results of the publicized online calendar survey released in February this year. The feedback was for parents, teachers, staff, and students regarding potential changes to school vacation times, Saltonstall vacations and other aspects of the calendar.

- **STEM Career Night**
- **STEM After-School Programming**
- **STEM Vacation Academy (April)**

Ms. Carbone, Assistant Superintendent, provided an update on three STEM programming that will be running this spring. They will be running a STEM vacation academy in April on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8:00am to 1:00pm. Students in grades 5 and 8 are eligible to attend. The program will consist of hands-on and focus on labs and engineering activities. Lunch and transportation would be provided. Each school that serves grades K through 8 will be hosting a six-week after school STEM Magnet program in April. The program will run one day per week for 90 minutes. Days and times would vary and is unique to each school. A brochure would be sent to the homes specifying the details. This after-school program would target grades 3 and 4. The goal is to have fun while exploring STEM, while engaging learning targeted to individual student needs. District data will be used for planning information. Transportation would also be offered for all of these programs at each of the schools. Ms. Carbone continued that they will be hosting their first middle school career night on April 9, 2019 from 5:30-8:00pm to all students in grades 5 through 8, across the district. Ms. Carbone continued to share further information.

Action Items: Old Business

Deliberation and Vote on the approval of facility fee waiver for the previous 2018 bill and subsequent 2019 Easter celebration at the Saltonstall School

Discussion

Mr. Fleming reported that the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee met on February 27, 2019, at 10:30am, and considered the matter utilizing a formula to deal with the Anti-Aid Amendment. Members discussed whether the request fits the individual or the community and found that, because of their hierarchy, the benefits works with the immigration program and burden is met. Mr. Fleming continued that the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee voted 3 to nothing in favor to have the hierarchy pay the past due, and current, custodial fees and waive the facility fee.

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the facility fee waiver for the previous 2018 bill and subsequent 2019 Easter celebration at the Saltonstall School; Mr. Fleming motioned to accept the report of the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee and adopt their report/their recommendations. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Deliberation and Vote on the request by Scarlett Gonzalez Mejia to have the fees waived for the use of the Collins Middle School Auditorium for a Caribbean Film Festival on March 30, 2019

Discussion

Mr. Fleming reported that the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee meeting met on February 27, 2019 and utilized the same formula relative to the Anti-Aid Amendment weighing the benefits of the community to individual benefit. The Subcommittee found this would be good for the community due to interactive informative communications of their history. The Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee voted 3 to nothing in favor.

Mr. Fleming motioned to have the fees waived for the use of the Collins Middle School Auditorium for a Caribbean Film Festival on March 30, 2019 and that Ms. Scarlett Gonzalez pay the custodial fees; Mr. Fleming motioned to accept the report of the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee and adopt their report/their recommendations. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Action Items: New Business

Deliberation and Vote on the approval of the use of the Lower Field at Salem High School as the primary playing field for North Shore Rugby

Mr. Fleming motioned to have the deliberation and vote on the approval of the use of the Lower Field at Salem High School as the primary playing field for North Shore Rugby matter be referred to the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. The motion to refer the matter to the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee carried.

Deliberation and Vote on the Agreement with the Falchek family concerning enrollment at the Carlton Innovation School

Discussion

Mr. Fleming stated he hopes that the School Committee would amend their policy relative to military families.

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the agreement with the Falchek family concerning enrollment at the Carlton Innovation School. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Deliberation and Vote on the request by Salem residents Perla Peguero and Yoleny Ynoa to declare February 27 as a “Day of Dominican Pride” / “El Dia del Orgullo Dominicano” in observance of Dominican Independence Day in Salem public schools

Discussion

Members agreed that correction be made. The ‘*Wednesday*’ wording is not part of the request; that the request is for the February 27 date.

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the request by Salem residents Perla Peguero and Yoleny Ynoa to declare February 27 as a “Day of Dominican Pride” / “El Dia del Orgullo Dominicano” in observance of Dominican Independence Day in Salem public schools. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Finance Report - None

Subcommittee Reports

Mr. Fleming reported that the Buildings and Grounds had also discussed, at their meeting on February 27, 2019, the traffic pattern at the Witchcraft Heights Elementary School, because it has become an issue relative to parent concerns about safety. Mr. Ryan Monks, Director of Buildings and Grounds, and the Salem Police Department investigated and, together with the school principal, developed a preliminary plan. The plan has not yet been accepted. The process is moving along to improve that traffic pattern.

Mr. Fleming said they had a discussion in Capital Planning, and he has a long proposal ready for submission. Mr. Fleming said that one of the questions that arose was the tennis courts at the High School, and Mr. Monks said that it would be done. Mr. Fleming explained that the Buildings and Grounds voted on prioritizing the fassad replacement at Bates Elementary or the Phase II at Salem High School, relative to applications at School Building authority. Mr. Fleming reported that they voted 2 to 1 to prioritize Salem High School Phase II and asked that the School Committee adopt the priority. Ms. Shaver explained that they would submit both but would have to prioritize one school over the other for the CORE program. Mr. Fleming moved to have the School Committee indicate its priority in that respect, between the Bates Elementary fassad and the Salem High School. The School Committee agreed to adopt the recommendation to have the Salem High School Phase II first and the Bates Elementary second.

Discussion

Ms. Manning sought clarification on the fassad wording. Ms. Shaver explained that it would be the renovation of the Bates Elementary including the fassad and other systems that are included.

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve/accept the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee report. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Mr. Fleming motioned to adopt the recommendation of Salem High School Phase II first and the Bates Elementary second. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Mr. Fleming said they talked of the dispositions of several surplus books and desks and said they have not taken any action as of yet until they find whether they have a surplus or not to which they would then report to the School Committee as to whether they can, or cannot, declare it.

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the adoption of the recommendation of the Statement of Interest. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Mr. Fleming reported they had a meeting today, at 6pm, relative to an update of the Bertram Field. They have the final schematic design of that project. The impact at the Collins Middle School is only 5 or less spaces. They have done a great job in terms of adopting that into the plans. The current cost is \$5.6 million. They reached \$400,000.00 in funding to date. They are looking at the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and city bonds for the remainder. Mr. Fleming continued that the one issue they ask staff to seek alternatives is that the track would be closed from December 2019 to December 2020. They would like staff to seek alternative sites during that time if the project goes forward. Mr. Fleming continued that capital planning was discussed and that they would ask for at least \$500,000 from the city's 2020 fiscal year budget for update and rehabilitation of the school buildings. That amount might increase based on necessary project that have not yet been determined.

Ms. Nuncio reported that the Policy Subcommittee met several times. They met last Friday, March 8, would be meeting tomorrow afternoon at 3pm, and on Monday, March 18. They have just about completed a review of the policies in the 4000 category. They need the input of counsel on some of those policies. They will start a review of the policies in the 5000 category tomorrow.

Mr. Cruz asked Mr. Nuncio to provide a quick summary of their discussion on the agreement with the Falchek family. Mr. Cruz commented that Mr. Fleming raised the question on whether or not they would be talking about the policy. Ms. Nuncio reported that the Falchek family matter was brought to their attention at the Policy Subcommittee meeting held in March 8th. There was a letter from the principal, the day before the start of the Carlton School, asking about the possibility of allowing the older sibling to return to the school once the family returned from the father's active duty deployment. Further discussion ensued and School Committee members expressed interest in having the Policy Subcommittee look at a possible amendment to the Student Assignment policy that would address this type of matter with other families.

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

Mr. Fleming said he is quite concerned, to the question regarding the raising of the non-vote of the School Committee in relation to the substitute pay increase to which he maintains that the School Committee is assigned to. Mr. Fleming continued that he sought the opinion of the attorney and stated that she had not mentioned that the union does not represent substitutes but their pay is established in the union contract between teachers and the Committee. Mr. Fleming continued that there has to be a School Committee and a union vote relative to that in order to amend the contract. That legal opinion does not mention that it is where substitute pay is. Mr. Fleming said that he thinks there needs to be a meeting between the union and the School Committee and an agreement would have to be adopted by the School Committee.

Public Comment #2: Questions and Comments From the Audience

Stella Rowley, 11 Savoy Road, Junior at Salem High School, Officer of Student Council, said there was a survey regarding the schedule for Salem High School, and that student council talked about the vacation schedule, had a meeting, and filled out the survey. Ms. Rowley continued she feels that the change that is happening now is within a very short period of time, two weeks. Ms. Rowley shared that she feels the process is being rushed which might lack the inclusion of other student needs. Ms. Rowley continued to share her concerns. Ms. Rowley asked the School Committee how they would consider student voice in the decision-making process of the schedule.

Valantis Christefers, 18 Vista Ave., President of Class 2020-21, Sophomore at Salem High School, spoke on behalf of teachers and students briefly addressing an issue with the waterfall schedule. Mr. Christefers said that the waterfall

schedule prevents teachers and student pep time and believes that meaningful lessons are most important. Students would have no time to complete their homework. Mr. Christefers shared further details, stated that students with disabilities who need to be chronically absent need be considered, and expressed that, as a school district, everyone should be taken into account. Mr. Christefers stated that he was able to work with a group of students during the council meeting, and they proposed several ideas for schedule changes. Mr. Christefers asked the School Committee when would they and other students be able to share ideas.

Erika Conklin, Stella Rowley's mother, 11 Savoy Road, shared that parents began a PTO at the High School towards the end of last year, because they wanted to support the transition with teachers, students, and parents. She joined the school council to become more involved as she knew there would be much transition happening. Ms. Conklin explained that her children were expressing their discontentment with the High School principal, because they as member of the student council were having a difficult time to meet with the school principal. Ms. Conklin continued to share their experiences at the High School in terms of the lack of communication between the principal and the students and school council. Ms. Conklin suggested open communication in order to improve the school.

Paige Pattison, 76 Moffatt Road, Junior at Salem High School, thanked Mr. Fleming and Ms. Manning for advocating for them. Ms. Pattison shared they had a student council meeting last week where they expected 85 students to attend, although three hundred (300) students attended. Ms. Pattison said that the increase in the number of students who attended demonstrated the impact of priority.

Jennifer DeStefano, Principal of Salem High School, addressed some of the concerns of the students. Ms. DeStefano explained why there might have been some confusion and miscommunication and shared information on what has transpired.

Andrea French, 7 Cleveland Road, reminded everyone that CPAK is hosting a Picky Eater Workshop, which was formally rescheduled and will happen this Wednesday, March 13, 2019 at 6:30pm at the Carlton School library located on the 2nd floor. Milly Canela, Registered Nurse and Licensed Dietitian and Nutritionist will present the workshop. The workshop is free and open to the public. Spanish translation and childcare services would be provided.

Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted by:

Angelica Alayon, Secretary to the
Salem School Committee

Meeting Materials and Reports

School Committee Amended Consent agenda March 11, 2019
Minutes of the February 25, 2019 School Committee meeting
Salem High School Junior ROTC Out of State field trip request
Salem High Jr. R.O.T.C. two-day field trip request
Candidate Profile for Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services February 2019
Update presentation on Batch 1 Kindergarten Applications presentation
2019 School Calendar Survey Summary of Results
Overview of Spring 2019 STEM Offerings
High Rock North Shore facility fee waiver request for 2018 and 2019 Easter celebration at Saltonstall School
Fee waiver request for use of Collins Middle School Auditorium for Caribbean Film Festival on March 30, 2019
Request by North Shore Rugby for use of Lower Field at Salem High School
Memorandum of Agreement between Salem School Committee and Falchek Family regarding enrollment
Request letter for observance of Dominican Independence Day in Salem Public Schools