

Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 11, 2018

A regular meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Wednesday, April 11, 2018 at 7:05 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, and Mayor Kimberley Driscoll

Members Absent: Ms. Amanda Campbell

Others Present: Margarita Ruiz, Superintendent, Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Margaret Marotta, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services, Kristin Shaver, Business Manager, Jill Conrad, Chief of Systems Strategy, and Kelley Rice, Chief of Communications

Call to Order

Mayor Driscoll called the Regular Meeting of the Salem School Committee to order at 7:05 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

Deliberation and Vote on the Minutes of the Regular School Committee Meeting Held March 19, 2018 – Tabled From 4/11/18

Discussion

Mayor Driscoll asked to table the Minutes of the Regular School Committee Meeting to allow additional time to review.

Mr. Fleming motioned to table the Minutes of the Regular School Committee Meeting held March 19, 2018. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The Minutes of the regular School Committee meeting was tabled for April 24, 2018.

Questions and Comments From the Audience

Ola Perry, 225 Lafayette Street, shared that she is a parent of a student at the Horace Mann Laboratory School. She and other parents attended a PTO meeting last night. They were told that a 4th grade teacher position was going to be cut due to financial issues and there are not enough students to warrant all 3 teachers. Ms. Carrey asked School Committee members to personally appear and see the 3rd grade at the Horace Mann School, which might change their minds. This has been an awful year for the students at the Horace Mann School. Teachers have come and gone. Ms. Perry explained that she spoke with 10 parents today. Four of those parents have had to get tutors for their child, because they are so far behind due to circumstance. There are regular fistfights inside classrooms. Ms. Perry continued that, although there are not enough students for 3 teachers, many of the students could do without being in the same room with each other for some amount of time. There is also concern of the space in the near future with the upcoming classroom changes.

Mayor Driscoll responded they received a slew of emails from parents at Horace Mann School who expressed concerns about this. Mayor Driscoll explained that they are aware and are looking into poor classroom management, this is something that they want to follow up on and learn more about. The

FY19 budget is being introduced this evening, they will be looking at it for the first time. Mayor Driscoll continued that the information Ms. Perry provided is helpful input and they have their radar on it now.

Superintendent Report – Margarita Ruiz

Superintendent Ruiz announced that she has appointed Ryan Monks as the new Director of Buildings and Grounds. Mr. Monks has recently served as the Assistant Supervisor for Custodial and Maintenance services for the City of Lynn, MA. Mr. Monks was responsible for the management of over 2 million square feet, including city offices, public schools, police, fire stations, and other municipality-owned buildings. In addition, he brings significant management experience, overseeing a budget of 18 million dollars and hiring, training, and managing a staff of 70 employees. Mr. Monks holds a Bachelor of Science in Project Management and a Masters Degree in Facilities, both from Wentworth Institute of Technology. Ms. Monks also holds numerous facilities-related certifications. Superintendent Ruiz continued that he would be joining their leadership team on May 7, 2018.

Discussion

Mayor Driscoll asked of Mr. Paul L’Heureux’s last day in the district to properly thank him for his many years of service, moves, school-building projects, and all he has done. Ms. Driscoll asked to be updated on that information.

Presentations and Reports

Presentation of the Proposed FY19 Budget

Superintendent Ruiz presented the proposed FY19 Salem Public School’s budget. Ms. Ruiz stated this is her 3rd budget presentation, since becoming Superintendent of Salem. The guiding principles they have set out continue to be the same that they used in past years, which is placing students at the center of their decision-making, collaboration and transparency with their school leaders, that they evaluate every expense given their limited resources, and declining enrollment trend. That alignment between enrollment and resources continues to be very important. Superintendent Ruiz continued that their focus on their decision-making centered on their commitment to move the work outline in the strategic plan forward. They continue to invest in the implementation of the plan.

Superintendent Ruiz explained that their top priorities with this budget are that they ensure the support and resources needed to welcome and integrate students transferring from the Nathaniel Bowditch School are secured at incoming schools, that they continue the momentum and investment to reimagine the high school experience, related to their Pillar 2 of the Strategic Plan, and that they empower their leaders to strengthen their schools’ programming and resources, which aligns with Pillars 1 and 3. Superintendent Ruiz continued to walk members through the presentation of the proposed FY19 budget.

Ms. Ruiz concluded that this year’s proposed FY19 budget continues to move the robust implementation they have in place of their strategic plan, helps the welcoming and integration of the Nathaniel Bowditch students (setting up success for students in their new environment), and continue the momentum of the High School redesign.

Request for Additional Information From School Committee Members

Mayor Driscoll mentioned the million dollar increase that the School Committee would be voting on and explained that there is a significantly higher increase, with respect to public education in Salem, of things that are not seen in the general operating budget, but really do impact the bottom line. Ms. Driscoll explained that she thinks that one area that deserves additional discussion in their forum is IT and the digital one-to-one rollout as they think about

that – the sustainability of that at the High School and what policy they would want to have with respect to how they purchase, or how they work with families, to purchase those materials while supporting the necessary tools for teachers, staff, and students. Mayor Driscoll asked that be marked for further discussion.

Mayor Driscoll asked to flag anticipated grants. They sometimes do not see that on the operational side of the budget they are adopting but none-the-less can have an impact, on the operational side. Ms. Driscoll continued that she would love to get a reconciliation of what they anticipate on receiving and where that lies.

Mayor Driscoll asked for an outline of the Capital request, as she knows that those dollars are not insignificant. They should be more mindful of those additional dollars that are not always seen and vote on but yet need to be balanced.

Mayor Driscoll requested information on transportation to get a better understanding of transportation costs, and bussing in particular. Is there a way to create a more efficient system – looking at an intra-city transportation shuttle - are there any overlaps for older students? Are there efficiencies they could bring to field trip transportation?

Mayor Driscoll continued that she would like to put the Bentley turn-back on the table for discussion, because they may not get one but if they do – she is not sure how that money automatically comes back to the schools, it really needs a dialogue.

Mayor Driscoll stated that some of the costs are increasing in relation to E-Rates and changes in E-Rate policies. The digital aspects of phones – any informative information that Superintendent Ruiz can share to better understand those would be helpful.

Mayor Driscoll asked for more information on Aspen and asked if they are accessing it fully and what it means as it has a budget implication and is worthwhile for discussion.

Mayor Driscoll conveyed that another key component she did not see in the proposed FY19 budget is sick leave buy backs and thinks that it has a significant impact on the city budget. Ms. Driscoll said that her last recollection, around retirement, is that they are well over the half million mark. Ms. Driscoll continued that they are going to have many retirements this year, and that is a number they do not see or vote on but certainly has a huge impact on them.

Mayor Driscoll also requested information on class sizes in each school.

Mr. Fleming commented that the proposed FY19 budget looks to have a 1.6% increase, which is the lowest he has seen in the last 14 years, and said he applauds that. Mr. Fleming suggested they look into the situation at the Horace Mann Laboratory School and not just communicate with the parents but to also work to solve the problem. Mr. Fleming commented that he sees a list of contracted services on the proposed FY19 budget but does not see information on busses on that list. Ms. Shaver responded that busses are listed in a different part of the budget and he would be able to see a breakdown on the full budget book.

Mayor Driscoll asked if the Superintendent would have a draft document with a bit more detail than typically received, in addition to the presentation. It would be helpful. Superintendent Ruiz agreed. Mr. Fleming asked if they would have a budget book. Superintendent Ruiz responded they are working on finalizing the budget book, which they would be sharing with

the Committee and posting it for the public in preparation for the Budget Hearing; that would be available as well.

Ms. Nuncio asked to know more information about the Witchcraft Heights Civics teachers and curriculum. Ms. Nuncio explained that the Superintendent's proposed budget talked about giving support in the influx of new students and she curious to know more about that. Superintendent Ruiz clarified that she would provide that on the context of the class.

Action Item

There were no action items

Finance Report

a. Approval of Warrant

March 22, 2018 in the amount of \$476, 929.97

March 29, 2018 in the amount of \$229, 361.12

April 5, 2018 in the amount of \$543, 284.15

April 12, 2018 in the amount of \$277, 748.29

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the warrants in the amount stated on the Agenda. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. The Motion was approved.

b. Budget Transfer Requests

The School Committee approved the following FY18-22 budget transfer recommended by the School Business Administrator, Kristin Shaver. Central Office (Teaching and Learning) has requested that the funds be transferred in order to align the funds with the intended expense as follows:

Account Description/Use	Account Number	Amount From	Amount To
To support additional funding for SHS library books, computers and software licenses:			

Educational Training	13990161-5317	\$43, 461.62	
Instructional Supplies	13570141-5514		\$43, 461.62

To support a district-wide library review:

Dues & Subscriptions	13570141-5730	\$2, 642.80	
Contracted Services	13570141-5320		\$2, 642.80

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the Teaching and Learning transfer request in the amounts stated. Ms. Nuncio seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Subcommittee Reports

Discussion

Mayor Driscoll reported that School Committee members met this evening, as a Committee of the Whole (COW), for a review of the student transfer approach that will be taken by Administration, with respect to the Nathaniel Bowditch School students. Superintendent Ruiz gave a summary of the discussion in that meeting (see 4/11/18 Committee of the Whole minutes for more details).

Mayor Driscoll also reported that the Committee of the Whole (COW) also discussed the formation of the Educational Equity Subcommittee, through the Policy Subcommittee efforts. Ms. Nuncio gave a brief overview of the Policy Subcommittee meeting held on April 2nd, 2018 that also included talk of the Ad-

Hoc Committee that would be formed to consider a potential new name for the Horace Mann Laboratory School. Mr. Fleming added additional information on the topic.

Mr. Fleming moved to accept the report set of the Committee of the Whole (COW) relative to the Assignment policy utilized for the reassignment of the Nathaniel Bowditch School students. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The Motion was approved.

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

There was no School Committee concerns or resolutions

Questions and Comments From the Audience

Lisa Hansen-Damato, 53 Hathorne Street, shared her concern on the amount of expected increase of classroom students assigned per class at the various schools as shown on the proposed FY19 budget presentation, relative to the assignment process. Ms. Hansen-Damato referred to the Fresh Start amendment and expressed concerns related to resources going to Bates Elementary School where they are due to receive 40 students, with no additional resources. Ms. Hansen-Damato talked about the plans for the Saltonstall School who are due to receive 35 students.

Andrea French, 7 Cleveland Road, talked about the challenges that 3rd graders at Horace Mann Laboratory School are facing this year. It is important that they receive the support they need to have a successful 4th grade year. Ms. French conveyed that the students have fallen behind, detailed some of the challenges they face, shared a personal situation as an example, and said she wants to see these cohort of students catch a break. They had a very rough year and are about to go into an unfamiliar space with a completely new leadership team. Ms. French asked the School Committee consider finding room in the budget to keep the current 3 Teacher 4th grade team who are very successful this year to give their 3rd graders a fighting chance next year.

Jamie Naven, 14 Andrea Street, shared she is concerned about the reduction and .2 Math Coach position. She is concerned because many elementary Math School teachers are not comfortable with math. Ms. Naven thinks that the Math coach provides the support that is needed. They only have a .5 now and that it will be reduced. Ms. Naven asked School Committee member to have this flagged for consideration.

Adjournment

Mr. Fleming entertained the motion to adjourn. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Angelica Alayon, Secretary
Salem School Committee

Meeting Materials and Reports

- School Committee Agenda April 11, 2018
- Minutes of the March 19, 2018 Regular School Committee Meeting
- Presentation of the Proposed FY19 Budget
- Budget Transfer