

Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 30, 2018

A Regular meeting of the Salem School Committee and Continuance of Formal Public Hearing was held on Monday, April 30, 2018 at 7:29 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: 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 7:29 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

Discussion

Mr. Fleming motioned to take the deliberation and vote of all three Minutes, as listed on the agenda, off the table. Ms. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion to take the action items off the table carried.

Deliberation and Vote on the Minutes of the Regular School Committee Meeting Held March 19, 2018 – Tabled From 4/23/18

Ms. Campbell motioned to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting held March 19, 2018. Ms. Nuncio seconded the Motion. Mr. Fleming is recorded as present. The Motion carried.

Deliberation and Vote on the Minutes of the Committee of Whole (COW) Meeting Held April 11, 2018 – Tabled From 4/23/18

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting held April 11, 2018. Ms. Nuncio seconded the Motion. Ms. Campbell abstained, was not present at this meeting. Ms. Manning abstained. The Motion carried.

Deliberation and Vote on the Minutes of the Regular School Committee Meeting Held April 11, 2018 – Tabled From 4/23/18

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting held April 11, 2018. Ms. Manning seconded the Motion. Ms. Campbell abstained, was not present at this meeting. The Motion carried.

Questions and Comments From the Audience

Lisa Duffy, 112 Columbus Avenue, School Nurse at Saltonstall School spoke on behalf of the nurses. Ms. Duffy clarified nursing roles and need to ensure they maintain the number of nurses they have. Ms.

Duffy communicated that the reason she said the word ‘maintain’ is because even though a nurse position is being dissolved, with the dissolution of the Nathaniel Bowditch School, they still need that position, which is budgeted for in the budget that the School Committee are voting on for next year, as a float nurse. That person could then fill in time at Witchcraft and throughout the district. Ms. Duffy continued that they have a half-time nurse at two programs: New Liberty and Salem Prep, and she wanted to clarify and encourage School Committee members to maintain what was put forth as a proposed budget.

Lisa Hansen-Damato, 53 Hathorne Street noted her concerns on the appearance of non-teacher positions, included in the district-wide teaching budget line, which makes the percentages of personnel expenses and actual dollar amounts paid to teachers very difficult to discern. Ms. Hansen-Damato said that she was surprised to learn that central office administrative non-student facing positions could be bucketed in the budget, as district-wide teaching, and stated that this budget needs to be more transparent and more accurate before it is passed. Ms. Hansen-Damato continued that this year’s budget percentages need to be re-instated, as the percentage of personnel spending, paid to teachers, is repeatedly called out.

Lynn Mullen, (no address given) shared that she is here for the High School Art teachers and invited everyone to their Arts in the Evening event this Wednesday, May 2nd, 2018 from 6-8:30pm at Salem High School. Ms. Mullen said that the event is free and open to the public.

Superintendent Report – Margarita Ruiz

Superintendent Ruiz reminded everyone of the Annual City Choral Band concert event on Wednesday, May 2, 2018 at 6pm, an event put together by the music teachers and students. Ms. Ruiz provided School Committee members with an update on their search to fill their Principal vacancies and expects to be making an announcement regarding the Saltonstall appointment later this week. The school-based interviews are scheduled this week for Horace Mann. The school-based groups include teachers, parents, a representative from Salem State University, and a School Committee member. Superintendent Ruiz continued that she would be meeting with staff and parents who are interested in learning more about the district’s principal hiring process and how to apply to serve on the school-based focus groups for Bates Elementary. The meetings will be held at the Bates Elementary School. Superintendent Ruiz explained the hiring process and online survey available for the Salem High School Principal vacancy, for anyone who would like to provide feedback on what they would like to see for the upcoming year at Salem High School. Superintendent Ruiz encouraged everyone to use the online survey. The survey is provided in both English and Spanish and can be found in the Salem High School’s web page. Ms. Ruiz reported that they are conducting two parent focus groups at the Salem High School, on May 9, 2018, to elicit feedback. The focus groups will be held in both English and Spanish. Families will have an opportunity to voice their ideas and wishes for the High School. Ms. Ruiz reported that the first group of Salem High seniors will be taking the Seal of Biliteracy test tomorrow. They anticipate 12 students would attempt to take the free test and will receive the seal and recognition at the graduation ceremony in June if they do well. Superintendent Ruiz informed the School Committee that they received confirmation from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education that they have approved the scholars program between Salem State University and Salem Public Schools. Ms. Ruiz shared further details into the scholarship and implementation of early college learning.

Public Hearing Continuation on the Proposed FY19 Salem Public Schools Budget

Mr. Fleming moved to re-open the public hearing on Salem’s Proposed FY19 School Budget. Ms. Nuncio seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Superintendent Ruiz presented an overview of the proposed FY19 Salem Public Schools budget and addressed some of the concerns raised by School Committee members and the public. Ms. Ruiz

explained that the budget achieves the three main goals which are to support and provide resources to the receiving schools to fully support the Nathaniel Bowditch School transition, they continue to invest in Reimagining the High School Experience, and they are empowering their leaders to strengthen the schools' programming and resources. Superintendent Ruiz walked everyone through the overview presentation of the fiscal budget starting with the allocation for the district for FY18 followed by the FY19 contractual obligations and increase in the budget as a result. Superintendent Ruiz provided School Committee members with a Administrative Cost FY18-19 handout in response to a statement that there had been an increase between last year's budget and this year's administration and explained the information in greater detail. School Committee members asked questions and engaged in further discussion. Superintendent Ruiz clarified that Salem State will pay for the Principal's salary at the Horace Mann and addressed other concerns regarding the Horace Mann and Saltonstall Schools and detailed the district's committed support as a result from now until June. Michael Lister, Interim Dean at the Saltonstall School shared additional information and answered questions from School Committee members. Superintendent Ruiz said she would update the School Committee on the amount of work they are doing around the Strategic Plan before the end of this school year. School Committee members provided feedback, requested detailed information, and engaged in further discussion.

Questions and Comments from the Audience

An audience member, who did not disclose her name, clarified that the FY19 Budget Presentation shows to have Cut-and-Paste information, because much of its information has since changed and listed those updates for everyone.

Barbara McLernon, resident of Peabody, MA a paraprofessional at Collins Middle School shared that she is concerned that the paraprofessional salary line item sheet, where each school is listed, on the budget is inflated. Ms. McLernon is also concerned of the projected loss of four paraprofessionals at Collins Middle School and projected reduction of the 16+ paraprofessionals district wide. Ms. McLernon detailed those concerns and said they need more paraprofessionals in the district, not less. Teachers would love to have the extra support in the classroom and are horrified of the cuts and hate the thought of losing supports in the classrooms. Ms. McLernon continued sharing further insight and examples of the need for paraprofessionals in the classrooms.

Donna Fritz, 57 Summit Street shared that she spent time trying to understand the budget as well as compare it to last year's budget. Ms. Fritz shared that she attended a meeting at both Witchcraft Heights and Collins Middle School and was told that the transition of the Nathaniel Bowditch School would not affect class size. She is worried and cautioned that student class numbers are approaching the limit of 25 students per class as this can affect or diminish instruction. She feel while they are holding up to the contractual limits, they may not be holding up to their promise of keeping class sizes low. Ms. Fritz emphasized that the budget is complicated, not easy to understand and highlighted that, despite trying to view it in different ways, it is still hard to tell whether the money is following the students. Ms. Fritz asked they please work to ensure that budget and other presentations become available within reasonable time, asked for budget support for school field trips and bus transportation, and shared her surprise that there is no mention of active support for the families of Nathaniel Bowditch School students who transitioned to the schools - to help them feel supported.

Beth Kontos of Salem Teachers Union, 10 Colonial Drive shared that the district relies on paraprofessionals to serve as substitutes when they cannot get an outside substitute. She is concerned that they may not have adequate help or staffing if the budget cuts the 16 paraprofessionals. Team Chairs are administrators. They evaluate teachers in a different union. They do not teach students, they need an Administrator's license, and should not be listed under the same bucket of teacher salaries. Ms. Kontos continued that she is concerned of who would help during lunch break with less paraprofessionals.

There being no further questions or comments at this time regarding Salem's participation on Salem Public Schools Proposed FY19 School Budget, Mr. Fleming motioned to close the Public Hearing. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The motion to close the public hearing carried.

Action Item

Deliberation and Vote on the Proposed FY19 Salem Public Schools Budget

The vote on the proposed FY19 budget was tabled to May 7, 2018

Deliberation and Vote on the Collins Middle School 8th Grade Field Trip Request to Washington, D.C. on June 11-13, 2018

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the Collins Middle School 8th Grade field trip request to Washington, D.C. on June 11-13, 2018. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Finance Report

a. Approval of Warrants

May 3, 2018 in the amount of \$67, 242.55

Ms. Manning motioned to approve the warrants as stated on the agenda. Mr. Fleming seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Budget Transfers - There were no budget transfers

Questions and Comments from the Audience – There were no questions or Comments

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

Mayor Driscoll announced the meeting next Monday and addressed it would be helpful for Superintendent Ruiz to come back next week and share information on student supports and the acceleration academies with other who might be interested. Ms. Campbell requested an update, within the next two meetings, on the overall transitioning and welcoming process.

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
Salem School Committee

Meeting Materials and Reports

School Committee Agenda April 30, 2018

Minutes of the March 19, 2018 Regular School Committee Meeting

Minutes of the April 11, 2018 Committee of the Whole (COW) Meeting

Minutes of the April 11, 2018 Regular School Committee Meeting

Proposed FY 2019 Budget Presentation

Salem Public Schools (SPS) Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Draft, Revised 4/20/18