

**Salem Public Schools  
Salem School Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
September 29, 2020**

On September 29, 2020 the Salem School Committee held its regular School Committee meeting at 7:00 PM using the Zoom platform.

**Members Present:** Mayor Kimberley Driscoll (entered at 7:57 p.m), Ms. Mary Manning, Ms. Amanda Campbell, Ms. Ana Nuncio, Dr. Kristin Pangallo, Mr. Manny Cruz, and Mr. James Fleming

**Members Absent:** None

**Others in Attendance:** Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone, Mary DeLai, Jill Conrad, Liz Polay-Wettengel, Chelsea Banks, Victoria Masone, and Amber Shomo

**Call of Meeting to Order**

Vice Chair Manning called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

Mr. Cruz read the new Public Participation Policy 6409 and also explained the request for Spanish interpretation for participation.

Vice Chair Manning announced that she would like to acknowledge the passing of retired custodian Anthony Mento, Sr. who worked at the Carlton Elementary. Mr. Fleming added that he would also ask that we recognize the passing of Frank Nolan who was a history teacher at Salem High School for 38 years. A moment of silence was observed.

**Agenda**

Vice Chair Manning requested a motion to approve the Regular Agenda. Mr. Fleming motioned and Mr. Cruz seconded. The Vice Chair called a roll call vote.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes

Motion carries 6-0

**Consent Agenda**

Vice Chair Manning requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Fleming motioned and Mr. Cruz seconded. The secretary called a vote by roll call.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes

Motion carries 6-0

### **Public Comment**

Dr. Conrad announced that there were several public comments that had been submitted in writing and have requested to be read aloud.

Steve Kapantais, 23A Wisteria Street, asked for his comment to be read aloud. Mr. Kapantais thanked Mr. Cruz, Dr. Zrike, Ms. Conrad, and Ms. Marino for their work on creating SPAC (Salem Parent Advisory Council), which has been created as part of a plan to provide 2 way communication and improve transparency between all stakeholders in our school district.

Catherine Miller, 15 Warren Street, asked that her comment be read aloud. Ms. Miller is a parent of a Salem High School student. She voiced her support of the current remote learning plan for the high school and would like to see it continue throughout the winter. In addition, she is also supportive of the Hub Learning Labs, which is a creative example of how to make learning more accessible in a safe environment.

Donna Fritz, 57 Summit Street, asked for her comment to be read aloud. Ms. Fritz would like to express her thanks for the hard work of the School Committee and Dr. Zrike. She is also expressing her support for moving forward with a hybrid learning plan for all grades in November.

Ann Berman, 1401 Crane Brook way, Peabody, requested to speak during public comment. Ms. Berman wanted to thank and commend the SPS educators for the outstanding work they have been doing the past few weeks.

### **Report of the Student Representative Duncan Mayer**

Duncan Mayer reported to the Committee that the Student Advisory Council is continuing their work from last year. He added that Dr. Zrike mentioned that there was funding available for improvements to the bathrooms due to their increased sanitary needs. He also said that they are in the process of planning a potential health town hall for students. This is being coordinated with medical experts so that any questions students may have will be answered. He also said that they will be resuming their regularly scheduled meetings and try to grow the council.

Vice Chair Manning asked if the health town hall would be regarding COVID or broader concerns. Mr. Mayer responded that they initially planned that it would focus on the

coronavirus, but have also discussed trying to bring in a mental health professional so they could field questions regarding other concerns.

### **Report of the Superintendent**

#### **a. Back to School Update**

Superintendent Stephen Zrike wanted to provide a back to school update. He began by thanking the teachers and educators for the hard work they are doing providing remote instruction to a very challenging, but yet successful start of the school year. He has visited several schools and also the Hub Connect at the YMCA in the past few days. He explained that we are now in day 12 of remote learning and there are 569 “Tier 1” students getting in person instruction in the Hub labs. Our total enrollment at this time is 3,825 students, which is approximately a 240 student decline from last year. He said that the teachers are working very hard on engagement with the students, making sure the families and students have all they need to connect. He added that they are taking attendance each period and also review it the next day. Dr. Zrike informed the Committee that home art and physical education materials have been ordered for K-5 students. Also, the Curriculum & Instruction team has been together resources for teachers to use with students celebrating cultural heritage and histories. In addition, a protocol has been developed for safely providing students with access to books from our libraries. The Superintendent announced that 900 Chromebooks were distributed since late August, but were in need for more. An additional 450 have been distributed this past week. All critical needs families have received their device and are now working on replacing older devices. There are an additional 1,000 devices that are on backorder. Also, technology support systems have been set up for families in both English and Spanish. Dr. Zrike explained that they are outreaching to families and surveying how many are interested in returning to schools, as we prepare the plans to bring more students back after the November break. Dr. Zrike said they are planning on focus groups for both staff and families and he added that before they can bring the students back, the HVAC improvements and repairs need to be completed and the transmission rates for COVID-19 needs to remain low. Dr. Zrike will update the Committee with additional information with the plan for returning to school at the next School Committee meeting.

Mr. Fleming asked how the use of masks and the 6” social distancing has been going and the Superintendent said that he has witnessed masks being worn and the social distancing guidelines being followed as best as they can.

Mayor Driscoll entered the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

Mr. Cruz made a recommendation to the Committee members to submit comments regarding Chapter 70 Funding and the Student Opportunity Act to DESE. He added that the submission deadline for the comments is October 16th. Mr. Cruz also explained that the shortage of devices in the district is due to an international shortage and is happy to see the recent donation of devices from Alternative Therapies Group.

Dr. Pangallo echoed the comments from the other members regarding the difficulties with remote teaching and praised the teachers for the remarkable job they are doing. She also commented on the CDC guidance that Dr. Zrike presented and mentioned that she has been in contact with Ms. Banks and they are taking a critical look at the numbers especially regarding back to school.

Ms. Manning also wanted to also thank the teachers, staff, administrators etc. for the great job they are all doing.

### **Old Business**

- a. Deliberate and vote to amend the 2020-2021 School Committee meeting calendar and reschedule the scheduled 10/5/20 meeting to Tuesday 10/13/20.

It was noted that the Committee of the Whole meeting will still be held on 10/5/20 at 6:00 pm. Mayor Driscoll requested a motion. Mr. Fleming made a motion to amend the School Committee meeting calendar as indicated on the agenda. Seconded by Ms. Manning. A roll call vote was called.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes
Motion Carries 7-0	

### **New Business**

- a. Acceptance of donation of 38 devices from Alternative Therapies Group for the Salem School District.

Superintendent Zrike announced that Alternative Therapies Group donated 38 new devices for the Salem Public Schools district to be distributed.

The Mayor asked for a motion. Mr. Fleming made a motion to accept the 38 new devices from Alternative Therapies Group and Mr. Cruz seconded. A roll call vote was called.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion Carries 7-0

- b. Discuss the recommendation of the formation of the Parent Advisory Council.

Dr. Zrike introduced Mr. Cruz who spoke regarding the recommendation of the formation of the Parent Advisory Council. Mr. Cruz explained that their goal is for two way communication with the parents of the district. They want to make sure that there is open dialogue between the School Administration, School Committee Members and parents. Mr. Cruz added that they would like to eventually set up a policy for this Parent Advisory Council similar to what they have set up for the Student Advisory Council.

- c. Deliberate and vote on the appointment of Superintendent Stephen Zrike as Salem Representative to the Northshore Education Consortium Board for 2020-2021.

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion on the appointment of Superintendent Stephen Zrike as Salem Representative to the Northshore Education Consortium Board for 2020-2021. Mr. Fleming made the motion and Ms. Nuncio seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion Carries 7-0

- d. Deliberate and vote on the delegation of authority authorizing Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone to represent the Superintendent in his absence of the District.

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion. Mr. Cruz made a motion for the delegation of authority authorizing Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone to represent the Superintendent in his absence from the District. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion Carries 7-0

e. Presentation on use of outdoor spaces

Superintendent Zrike introduced parents Amber Shomo and Victoria Masone who presented to the Committee how we can utilize outdoor spaces for learning. This presentation began with the plan to provide safe, functional outdoor learning spaces for students and staff in Salem Public Schools. Ms. Shomo explained that many children are experiencing pandemic fatigue and parent's are seeing an increase in emotional, behavioural, and attentional difficulties. Having time outside even for just part of the day has allowed students to have lower anxiety, less aggression, more creativity, and longer attention spans. Ms. Masone explained that they have been meeting with the district and Salem Public Schools has committee \$80,000 in COVID funding that can be utilized for upgrades to outdoor learning space, for example the tents that were purchased. Ms. Masone said that they have agreed on three shared priorities, 1. ensure equity that all elementary students will have access to these upgraded outdoor spaces; 2. that although this project meets the safety needs for the moment, this initiative should be building the foundations for long-term outdoor learning; and 3. curriculum should be enhanced to include hands-on outdoor learning projects. Ms. Masone went on to make recommendations for improvements that would maximize access and learning to outdoor spaces. In addition, she explained the proposed process and timeline and invited anyone who would like to be part of the task force or volunteer in other ways to contact them at [saferoutsideinsalem@gmail.com](mailto:saferoutsideinsalem@gmail.com). Several committee members asked questions and offered their support.

**Finance Report**

a. Budget Transfers

Mary DeLai, interim Business Manager, announced there were three budget transfers. First transfer is for the Horace Mann Lab School. This transfer in the amount of \$40,000 is from contracted services to stipends to cover the stipends of four of the Salem State University Fellows. The second transfer in the amount of \$470 is from dues and membership to insurance - athletics to cover the premium increase for supplemental insurance for student athletes. And the third is requested by the Saltonstall School in the amount of \$2,820 from contracted services to stipends to cover summer stipends associated with additional work for staff.

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the transfer of \$40,000 from contract services to fringe/stipends, a transfer of \$470 from dues and subscriptions to insurance - athletics, and a transfer of \$2,820 from contract services to fringe/stipends. Mr. Cruz made the motion and it was seconded by Ms. Nuncio. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes

Mr. Cruz                      Yes  
Ms. Campbell                Yes  
Mayor Driscoll              Yes  
Motion Carries 7-0

b. COVID-19 Expenditure Update

Mayor Driscoll stated that Ms. DeLai provided a report update on COVID-19 expenditures. Ms. DeLai reported that since March 15th, we have already expended nearly \$1,500,000. This amount does not include the expenses for the HVAC assessment and repair work, we are still awaiting invoices for. We have so far only been invoiced for less than 50% of the required work, which amounts to just under \$110,000. She added that approximately, 75% of expenses incurred to date have been charged to special revenue funds, mostly state and federal grants, but approximately 40% of these funds will be shifted to the state COVID grant, which we have received. Ms. DeLai will provide regular updates to the School Committee.

**Subcommittee Reports**

- a. Policy Subcommittee
  - i. Policies for Third Reading  
5221 Co-Curricular and Extra Curricular Activities

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion for the policies for the third reading for Policy 5221 Co-Curricular and Extra Curricular Activities. Ms. Nuncio motioned and Ms. Campbell seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning                Yes  
Mr. Fleming                 Yes  
Dr. Pangallo                Yes  
Ms. Nuncio                  Yes  
Mr. Cruz                     Yes  
Ms. Campbell               Yes  
Mayor Driscoll              Yes  
Motion carries 7-0

**School Committee Concerns and Resolutions**

Mr. Cruz requested an update on the CTE Program. Ms. Campbell requested an update on the dual language program that began this fall. Dr. Zrike said that he will plan on adding those updates to an upcoming meeting.

**Adjournment**

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fleming motioned and Mr. Cruz seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning                Yes

Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 7-0

Meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

*Nancy A. Weiss*

Executive Assistant to the School Committee  
& the Superintendent