

Regular Session Meetings

June 10, 2020

A meeting of the Swampscott School Committee was held virtually in Swampscott, MA commencing at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present: Ms. Suzanne Wright Vice-Chair, Mr. Delano, Ms. Amy OConnor, and Ms. Carin Marshall, School Committee members. Also Present: Pamela Angelakis, Superintendent of Schools, Jean Bacon, Director of Teaching & Learning, Martha Raymond, Asst. Superintendent of Student Services, Martha Sybert, Business Administrator, and Greg Vinitsker, student rep. Ms. Gargi Cooper, School Committee Chair, and Max McDonough, student rep were absent.

The School Committee was meeting in a virtual setting, fully remote via teleconferencing, practicing social distancing, and in accordance with the Governor's suspension of certain open meeting laws. The meeting was being recorded and broadcast live on the local cable station.

Public Comment: NA

Community Announcements

Greg Vinitsker mentioned that class presidents met with Mr. Kohut to discuss the last few weeks of school and graduation parade. He said students are wondering what the fall will look like.

Ms. Marshall is looking forward to the graduation celebration. She stated that although it will not be traditional, it still can be amazing.

Ms. OConnor commended the woman that organized the Black Lives Matter protest. She discussed the bias quiz on Implicit.harvard.

Mr. Delano thanked the retiring faculty.

Ms. Wright thanked the Love of Swampscott for the graduation banners, and sports boosters for their banners on the fields.

Ms. Wright read a letter from Ms. Cooper wishing a happy Pride month. She thanked the students that organized the George Floyd protest. The letter addressed Professional Development training, isolation in the Suburb, METCO, and congratulations to the class of 2020.

Superintendent's Report: Ms. Angelakis' report will be posted on the Superintendent's Page under the Swampscott Public School's web page. Ms. Angelakis reviewed the DESE Memo from the Commissioner with Guidance on Required Safety Supplies for Reopening Schools. They are using the document for potential planning. DESE hopes to have fall guidance information out to district superintendents the week of June 15th. It will be mandated so that the majority of the districts will be doing the same thing.

Extended School Year Services: Ms. Raymond discussed bringing in the most vulnerable students whose needs are not being met over Zoom. She noted that these are students that may not wear masks, and follow distancing guidelines. They are still waiting for more guidelines. Her Northshore counterparts have determined that they will need to continue remote learning for the summer. They are looking into some programs that will open but need to work out issues such as transportation requirements. Ms. Raymond noted that at this point the focus is to figure out how to get kids in for the fall, and staff trained while keeping staff and kids safe.

Ms. OConnor asked if the money the town is being given for COVID related issues could be used for transportation. Ms. Raymond stated that the issue is more about how to do it rather than a financial issue.

Recognition of Retiring Staff: The principals read the biographies of their retiring staff. Mr. Calichman read the biographies for Bill Andrade, Liz Flynn, and Sandra Moltz. He thanked the three teachers and noted how much they would be missed at the MS. Mr. Andrade thanked the town and said how much he enjoyed teaching and having Mr. Calichman as a student. Ms. Moltz said what an honor it had been to work on the Bridge Committee. Ms. Flynn said that teaching is her life and is only leaving due to the pandemic.

Ms. Bechick honored Ms. Nancy Randall and read her biography. Ms. Randall thanked the parents for sharing their students with her.

Ms. Mary Beth Shea read Ms. Karen Sudbey's biography. Ms. Angelakis spoke about Ms. Sydney and her connection with students. Ms. Sudbey gave a shout to the kids, families, and staff at Clarke.

SHS Student College Acceptance List: Ms. Angelakis showed the slide show of acceptances that may be found on the HS Guidance and Counseling Site. The slides have also been posted on Twitter.

Ms. OConnor said that this was one of the silver linings of COVID and would like to see it continue. Mr. Delano asked if we would be able to show the town meeting members the slideshow. Ms. Wright said that they may be able to have it sent out to people. Ms. Sybert mentioned having it scrolling as people came into the meeting. Ms. Wright will look into the options.

SEF Grant Acknowledgement: There were four grants awarded: National Art Education Association 2020 Conference (J. Douillette), Swampscott Currents (B. Wilbur & L. Rudfield), Wobble Cushions for Chairs (J. McLeod), and Student Led Cafeteria Composting (L. Polizzotti).

Ms. OConnor asked about Dave Ritchie stepping down and if there was a new chair. She suggested that SC connect to them.

School Business Administrator:

A. FY20 Fiscal Update: Ms. Sybert stated they continue to track toward spending appropriated funds, remaining funds will be used to purchase supplies for next school year or prepay OOD tuition, and they continue to close purchase orders.

B. FY21 Budget Update: Ms. Sybert discussed the changes from the February budget. She discussed the experienced hardships associated with the economic impact of the COVID 19 pandemic. The town has taken proactive steps to revise the FY21 Revenue and Expense Budget. As a result of the re-forecast, the School Department Operating Budget was reduced by \$381,000. The new general fund appropriation being presented at town meeting is \$28,602,254.

Ms. Marshall said that no one is surprised about the revenue issues. She was disappointed that the Finance Committee was debating and voting on the numbers at the same time the SC is hearing about them. There was no opportunity for SC to have input in the process. Ms. Marshall is hoping that this is a short term problem. She feels that if ever there is a time to use the Stabilization fund it is now. She expressed her concern with a \$380,000 reduction from an already lean budget.

Mr. Delano stated that his take away from meetings is that the future is a shared endeavor. He sees no other avenue than to advocate for the \$381,000. Mr. Delano asked Ms. Sybert about using the CARES Act funds for as much as possible before advocating for money from the town. Ms. Sybert stated that we are receiving \$149,000 from the CARES Act. Ms. Raymond and Dr. Bacon are working on how to best utilize the funds in FY21. Ms. Sybert discussed the larger pocket of the fund in which the town was allotted 1.4M. Ms. Sybert, Ms. Angelakis, Mr. Mendez, and Mr. Fitzgerald are collaborating on the use of the money on items such as 1 to 1 Chromebooks, PPE and to fund PD staff training prior to getting back into school.

Ms. OConnor talked about the Stabilization fund. She stated the budget was already lean and tight and was concerned with cutting anything from it with 3.4M sitting around. She felt it was premature to cut the budget with funds coming in and new legislation.

Ms. Sybert said that it is a measured approach. She stated that if the state aide comes in higher the budget could be restored in a special November town meeting or advocate for money. Ms. OConnor asked how we should go into the town meeting. Ms. Wright felt there were no items to cut. Ms. Sybert would not recommend advocating at this time since we do not have enough guidance for the fall school year. Ms. Angelakis does not want to backtrack on commitments.

Mr. Delano asked Ms. Sybert to explain the fall time frame. Ms. Sybert discussed the state Chapter 70 funding and timing of state budgets/funds in the fall. At that time, there could be a special November town meeting to revise the budget based on the funding.

Ms. Marshall talked about the presentation format of the warrant. It is not apparent in the warrant that the School budget is being cut by \$381,000. Mr. Delano mentioned the DESE guidance expected on the 15th. Ms. Angelakis would be pleasantly surprised if it came out next week.

Ms. OConnor stated that it feels like distrust that the town would take the money back rather than giving it to the school and the school giving back what they don't need. She feels the only way to make the budget with the reduction is with cuts. She is not OK with that when the budget is lean and there is money in savings. Ms. Angelakis suggested a Budget committee of the whole before the town meeting.

Ms. Wright reiterated that the budget has no fat. She asked if items needed to be cut prior to town meeting. Ms. Sybert said that there is time to figure out how to allocate the money.

Ms. OConnor requested tabling the item and having a Budget committee as a whole meeting. Ms. Marshall will send something out.

C. Revolving Fund Update: Ms. Sybert provided an update on the various revolving funds. The highlights included athletic refunds, money encumbered for the MS drama play which did not occur, and pre-k tuition. Ms. OConnor asked if we paid any coaches stipends. Ms. Sybert said we paid out 20% to varsity coaches as they do a significant amount of work pre-season.

D. Grab and Go Meals: Ms. Sybert said as of June 9th, we had served just under 11,000 meals being prepared by two people (Ms. Kellett & Chartwells FSD). We have seen a dropoff in participation which is happening in other districts as well. Ms. Sybert discussed other food programs that may be the reason for the drop-off.

Ms. Marshall asked if there were sites nearby for summer food. Lynn and Salem have summer sites. Ms. Wright asked about senior meals. Ms. Sybert said the senior centers have their own food provider, the meals from the school were a secondary meal. Ms. Marshall said the senior numbers have dropped off as well. They are coming at it from a lot of different angles.

Director of Teaching & Learning: Dr. Jean Bacon presented a request for Gr 6 & 7 Social Studies textbooks. McGraw Hill-World Geography & Ancient History is the recommendation from the Social Studies teachers at the MS (piloted last year).

Ms. Wright asked about the textbook's representation of history, and diversity. Dr. Bacon said it covers all our state standards. She would not advocate holding up the curriculum until we have a clear direction as a district.

Mr. Delano asked about costs. The pilot was free, and the cost was \$35,000. Dr. Bacon is working with the publisher to amortize costs. The SC role is to say whether they approve of the textbooks as part of the curriculum. Ms. OConnor would like to see samples in the future. Ms. Wright said she trusts the experts and does not want to hold up the order but we need to make some commitment that we are balancing curriculum diversity. Ms. OConnor said she would like to make sure the curriculum is looked at by a group that is sensitive to the materials moving forward.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Delano to approve the purchase of the textbooks & seconded by Ms. OConnor.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 4 to 0 via roll call vote.

Chair:

Orientation for New School Committee Member: Moved to June 24th. Ms. Wright asked that everyone review the handbook.

Summer Meeting Dates: Ms. Angelakis discussed adding two July dates due to all the things going on.

Sub Committee:

School Building Committee (SBC) Updates: Ms. Wright discussed the community forum Tuesday, June 16th at 6:30. There are some drawings of six potential options at three sites. They will also begin cost discussions.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Wright read the purpose of the consent agenda and the items on the agenda.

- A. Regular Session Minutes – May 27, 2020
- B. Executive Session Minutes – April 29, 2020
- C. Warrant W20-49

Motion: It was moved by Ms. OConnor to accept the agenda & seconded by Mr. Delano

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 4 to 0 via roll call vote.

Next meeting to be held on June 24, 2020

Adjournment

Motion: At 9:01 p.m. It was moved by Ms. Marshall to accept the motion to adjourn & seconded by Ms. OConnor.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 4 to 0 via roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela R.H. Angelakis, M.A., M.Ed.

Date: June 25, 2020

Superintendent of Schools

/dmm

Supporting documentation:

 20-21 School Committee Proposed Meeting Dates Rev 1.pdf 

 2019-2020_SEF GRANTS SUMMARY.pdf 

 Agenda June 10, 2020, School Committee Meeting.pdf 

 April 29, 2020 School Committee Executive Minutes DRAFT.docx 

 Copy of April 29, 2020 School Committee Executive Minutes DRAFT.docx 

 May 27, 2020 Regular Session Meeting Minutes Final.pdf 

 RETIREE BIOS 19-20SY 

 SPS FY21 Budget 06.10.2020.pptx 

 Superintendent's Report to SC 6.10.20.pdf 