

Regular Session Meetings

August 26, 2020

A meeting of the Swampscott School Committee was held in virtually in Swampscott, MA commencing at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present: Ms. Amy OConnor, SC Chair, Ms. Suzanne Wright, Mr. Delano, Ms. Carin Marshall, Mr. John Giantis, School Committee members. Also, Present: Pamela Angelakis, Superintendent of Schools, Jean Bacon, Director of Teaching & Learning, Martha Sybert, Business Administrator, and Martha Raymond, Asst. Superintendent of Student Services.

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: Ms. OConnor noted that public comment was limited to ten minutes with two minutes per person.

Becca Bucklin, SEA president thanked the teachers, parents, and students. She mentioned that science needs constant testing, the NBS report, and a new analysis from MIT/Oxford stating that the six-foot social distance rule is outdated. Ms. Bucklin discussed risks and erred on the side of caution for the safety of teachers and students. She stated that teachers want nothing more than to be back with their students when it is safe. She asked for collaboration on Remote Learning and to start with a phased return school to give the best chance to stay there in-person.

Barry stated that 70% of parents chose In-person learning on the survey. He mentioned that kids have been outside all year so why can't kids play sports even if they can't be in school. He appreciates the data supplied but does not support the decision to be Remote Learning. Barry stated that parents and kids want to be in school. They feel the school is making the wrong decision. He spoke about the state's guidance and town data supporting the options of full In-person and Hybrid learning.

Community Announcements: Mr. Delano was happy to see so many participants on the meeting call.

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 ReOpening Updates and overview of the building assessments. She discussed hiring an Occupational Health Nurse, COVID testing, and DESE plan submission. She noted the plan is constantly changing and fluid.

The first day of school will be September 16th as Remote Learning. Ms. Angelakis discussed the challenges of In-Person Learning such as a shortage of staff and limited space due to HVAC issues. There will be a phased-in approach even with High Needs Students. Ms. Angelakis reviewed the staff and the populations of Special Education students that would be in-person on September 16th. September 28th all additional Special Education staff returns. October 15th all students on IEPs begin some in-person instruction.

Ms. OConnor asked about the number of teachers that would be in-person initially. Ms. Angelakis said it would be close to 100 out of approximately 300 educators.

Ms. Angelakis provided a Building Assessment Overview. The report was provided to the SC member. Stanley and Clarke did not have properly operating exhaust systems for part or all of the school buildings. Hadley school ventilation systems were found to be operating properly with only minor modifications needed to office areas without ventilation. SMS ventilation systems were operating properly for the most part and met code required ventilation rates. Ms. Angelakis reviewed the color-coded map for each school which maps out spaces ready to use, avoid use for in-person under current requirements, needs minor modifications, and under further evaluation.

Ms. Wright asked about money for the repairs. Ms. Sybert stated most of the yellow (minor repairs) at Clarke were fixed already. We can use the CARES Act money. Max Kasper along with Ms. Sybert is assessing the scope of the work but there is no dollar amount yet. Ms. Angelakis stated that everything that can be done now is being done now. Ms. Wright asked if the colors are changing because the consultant looks at the work and approves it. Ms. Angelakis stated that the Director of Facilities will be working with contractors to complete the recommended work.

Ms. OConnor commented on the nurses' offices being in orange (under evaluation). Ms. Angelakis stated it is because the spaces have been chopped up and walls were built.

Stanley is the only school with red areas (avoid use for In-Person Teaching). Ms. Huntely told Ms. Angelakis that even though eight class spaces are impacted it only affects four General Ed classrooms. Ms. OConnor asked about music. Ms. Angelakis mentioned creating other spaces in the building to accommodate and “push-in” (specialists will go into regular classrooms).

Ms. OConnor asked about the orange space at the HS. Ms. Sybert said that it was because there were some rooms that they couldn't get in and some they wanted to do a deeper dive. Ms. Sybert stated that the big unknown is what costs to fix ventilation issues at Stanley.

Mr. Delano asked about the hierarchy of facilities work. Ms. Angelakis stated that the building administration will work with their custodians. Max Kasper oversees the facilities and Garret Baker is the intermediary.

Ms. Wright asked if there was any discussion for MS/HS starting earlier since the buildings are ready to go. Ms. Angelakis stated that there were still issues with staffing. Ms. Marshall asked if it was fair to say that building wise we could be opened earlier. Ms. Angelakis said yes.

Mr. Delano asked if HR was hiring the Occupational Nurse. Ms. Angelakis said it was a FT position, there would be assistance with job description and an interview committee. Mr. Delano asked if Dr. Souza could be on the committee. Ms. OConnor mentioned how Dr. Souza's role has changed with COVID.

Athletic Update: Ms. Farley reviewed the 20-21 Season dates which have four seasons (added a float season) rather than the typical three seasons. She spoke about the MIAA guidelines and the removal of the out of season coaching rule, and you must play within your league or ask permission if outside the league. Sport Committees will make sport modifications based on state COVID guidelines such as no contact, masks required, and ejections. Ms. Farley reviewed the challenges such as NEC schools in red that cannot participate, transportation, and protocols if someone tests positive.

Ms. Farley reviewed what Swampscott is doing such as moving Fall sports to the Float season, no MS fall sports, practice schedules and staggered arrivals, no user fees, and self-certifying.

Ms. OConnor asked who was in our league. Ms. Farley noted the twelve schools in the league. Ms. OConnor asked about stipends for coaches. Ms. Farley stated there are no stipends. She stated that many have expressed interest to coach out of season. Ms. Angelakis said if the sport moves to the floating season they would be paid then.

Ms. OConnor asked about the impact of the non-competing season on kids getting ready for college. Ms. Farley responded that college coaches typically come to the postseason which the MIAA has canceled.

Mr. Delano noted he is not sure he 100% agrees with the MIAA no sports ruling and that is the reason many kids come to school. He asked if we pay a fee to MIAA. Ms. Farley said every school pays dues.

Ms. Marshall asked if students need to sign up for a sport the first season to play. Ms. Farley said anyone that wants to play must be registered for the sport. Ms. Marshall mentioned the Department of Public Health not accepting TeleHealth physical exams. She asked how confident we were about the future season. Ms. Farley stated they can not predict with so many unknowns.

Ms. Wright asked if kids have to register to practice or can they register for just the Float season. Ms. Farley said they register for each season they wish to play. Ms. Wright asked if any coach can coach anytime. Ms. Farley noted they can do out of season practice, the difference is the coach can be involved. Ms. Wright asked about indoor use. Ms. Farley said it is outside right now staying within the guidelines. Ms. Wright asked if the MS could use parents as coaches. Ms. Wright would like more discussion on organized MS sports even if school is remote. Ms. Farley said youth sports have already canceled their season. Ms. Farley said XC is not suitable for the modifications needed. Ms. Wright asked about running on the roads and discussed the social-emotional aspect of sports. Ms. OConnor asked about parents reaching out to Mr. Calichman. Ms. Angelakis said they need further discussion offline with athletics and not the principals.

Mr. Giantis asked about other options for MS kids. He asked if rules such as coming within 6 feet of the officials were a recommendation or zero tolerance. Ms. Farley said the official rules haven't been sent out but indications are a penalty to pay for not social distancing.

Ms. Marshall asked if there were any rules against a booster organization paying a coach to do out of season training. Ms. Farley stated that the rule has been lifted so it would be permitted.

School Business Administrator:

FY21 Budget Update (vote requested): The FY21 Town Revenue Budget was reduced by \$1,241,228 (600,000 offset from the Stabilization Fund). The School Department's Operating Budget for expenses (General Fund) was reduced by \$381,000.

Ms. Sybert discussed increased revenue from Chapter 70 funding and local aid. Town Meeting approved a General Fund budget of \$28,602,254 which is \$381,000 less than the School Committee approved budget. Ms. Sybert reviewed the reductions by the five cost centers (Administration, General Education, Special Education, School Facilities, District-Wide Programs). She stated that the majority of savings resulted from reductions and changes to non-compensation related lines of the budget.

Mr. Delano asked if it was the last year on the Nahant tuition. Ms. Marshall stated the contract with Nahant expires June 2022. Ms. OConnor said they are scheduled to start negotiations in September.

Ms. Wright asked about Circuit Breaker savings. Ms. Sybert explained the end of year accumulation spending that didn't happen or came in lower such as transportation. They felt the right thing to do was to put any savings into Special Ed tuition to help next year.

Mr. Giantis asked about grants. Ms. Sybert stated they applied for a \$117K Remote Technology grant, the COVID grant is a \$57K matching grant, and that we have applied to other COVID grants. Ms. Sybert stated that the METCO grant usually carries salaries but they are putting salaries back on the operating budget and keeping transportation on the grant.

Mr. Delano asked about a committee as a whole meeting. Ms. OConnor stated that was up to the Finance Committee chairs (Mr. Delano/Mr. Giantis). Ms. Sybert said it was a bit too early for a FY21 full-blown forecast with so many variables due to COVID. Ms. Marshall asked about a fall town meeting, Ms. OConnor said it was not mentioned at Tri-Chair. Ms. Wright heard there is going to be one in October. Ms. Sybert said the state budget has not been set.

Administration Cost Center

Ms. OConnor entertained a motion to approve the Administration Cost Center revision from the SC approved \$1,364,939 to the Town meeting approved budget of \$1,349,862.

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Marshall to accept the revised Administration Cost Center & seconded by Mr. Delano.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

General Education Cost Center

Ms. OConnor entertained a motion to approve the General Education Cost Center revision from the SC approved \$14,399,893 to the Town meeting approved budget of \$14,253,471.

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Wright to accept the revised General Education Cost Center & seconded by Mr. Marshall

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

Special Education Cost Center

Ms. OConnor entertained a motion to approve the Special Education Cost Center revision from the SC approved \$9,239,463 to the Town meeting approved budget of \$9,206,901.

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Marshall to accept the Special Education Cost Center revision & seconded by Mr. Delano.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

School Facilities Cost Center

Ms. OConnor entertained a motion to approve the School Facilities Cost Center revision from the SC approved \$2,295,202 to the Town meeting approved budget of \$2,181,127.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Delano to amend the School Facilities Cost Center & seconded by Ms. Wright.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

District-Wide Programs Cost Center

Ms. OConnor entertained a motion to approve the District-Wide Programs Cost Center revision from the SC approved \$1,683,756 to the Town meeting approved budget of \$1,610,893.

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Marshall to amend the District -Wide Program Cost Center & seconded by Ms. Wright.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

Total Budget

Ms. OConnor entertained a motion to approve the grand Total FY21 budget revision from the SC approved \$28,983,254 to the Town meeting approved budget of \$28,602,254.

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Marshall to amend the FY21 Total budget & seconded by Ms. Wright.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

Sub Committee:

SBC Meeting Update: Ms. Wright stated they had an excellent format at Tuesday's meeting. They went through all options on the table and weighing district priorities. There is a forum on September 8th that will continue the conversation on options. The SBC needs to narrow to one choice soon. There is a survey on the SBC website and bitly (bitly/choose4swamp).

There is a joint select board SBC meeting on September 3rd to discuss options.

Policy EBC Supplemental:

Interim Policy EBC-S (vote requested): Ms. Wright read the revisions to the policy.

Policy EBC-FA Face Coverings (Vote requested): Ms. Wright read the policy and spoke about the no exemptions policy on face masks.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Giantis to accept Policy EBC-S & EBC-FA & seconded by Mr. Delano.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

Covid-19 Related Health and Safety Practices (vote requested): Ms. Wright spoke about the grouping of health policies which many districts are doing. Ms. Wright read the policy. There was a discussion on adding screening for extra-curricular activities at the HS. Ms. Wright discussed designated isolated space for students with COVID systems waiting to be picked up.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Delano to accept the policy and seconded by Ms. Marshall.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

Covid-19 Screening - (first read): Ms. Wright stated screening needs to happen within 72 hours prior to returning to work. She read the rest of the policy. She discussed the addition of following the MA DPH travel advisory. Mr. Delano asked about HR policies. Ms. Angelakis stated the SC voted to follow DPH and CDC guidance.

Ms. Wright spoke about the School Calendar (IC), Visitors to the school (KI), and the Privacy Policy. Mr. Giantis asked if permission was a reasonable substitute for notification on the Privacy policy. Ms. Wright said kids' pictures need permission. She will discuss this with Darren.

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Marshall to accept Policies IC & KI and seconded by Mr. Delano.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

Response to Positive Covid-19 - first read: Ms. Wright noted it is important to button this up and vote before school starts.

Policy ACAB Harassment (first read): Ms. Wright discussed the change with evidence and complying with due process. She has an Email into the attorney to see if it can be in place of Policy AC Non-Discrimination.

Consent Agenda

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

- A. Regular Session Minutes – August 12, 2020
- B. Warrants #20-55, 21-06, & 21-08

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

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

Next meeting to be held on September 9, 2020

Adjournment

Motion: At 10:07 p.m. It was moved by Mr. Delano to accept the motion to adjourn & seconded by Ms. Wright.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,



Superintendent of Schools
/dmm

Supporting Documentation:

 8.26.20 SPS Reopening Update & Facilities Assessment 

 ACAB Harrassment DRAFT.docx 

 August 12th, 2020 Regular Session Meeting Minutes Final 

 Copy of 08.05.2020 FY21 Revised Budget.pptx 

 Copy of Policy EBCFA Face Coverings.docx 

 Covid Athletics 

 COVID POLICY FOR REVIEW 082620.docx 