

REGULAR SESSION MINUTES

February 8, 2017

A meeting of the Swampscott School Committee was held in room B129 at Swampscott High School commencing at 7:04 p.m. with the following members present: Ms. Carin Marshall, Chairman, Ms. Amy OConnor, Mr. Ted Delano, Ms. Suzanne Wright and Ms. Gargi Cooper. Also Present: Ms. Pamela Angelakis, Superintendent of Schools, and Mr. Evan Katz, School Business Administrator, Anne Marie Condikey, Director of Curriculum, and Student Representatives Tenley Seidel and Gabby LaRiviere.

Ms. Marshall explained tonight's meeting was a regular Committee meeting and different from the last which was a public hearing. She stated there would still be public comment, but explained the Committee would not engage in back and forth with the public. She also stated they would be providing updates to the issues stated in the last meeting which may address some of the questions and concerns of the community. She further stated she would be limiting public comment to 10 speakers, but that any questions or comments may be forwarded to the Committee and Superintendent at any time by email.

Ms. Marshall read a statement regarding the fiscal situation. She spoke about negotiations with bargaining units as well as prior negotiations and salary increases with union and non-union employees. She gave examples of salary increases possible for SEA members through the union contract. She spoke about the work done during negotiations and the fact of the membership failing to ratify contract. She explained the teachers would continue to work under the existing expired contract. She further stated that it was offered for the union to be presented the budget information and hoped the membership reconsiders ratifying the contract.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Allison Norton, a teacher at the Stanley School and SEA member, read a statement in which she expressed concern about the District jeopardizing full day Kindergarten. She also spoke about the concern about the budget difference between \$1.6 million and \$275,000, as well as issues with member's incorrect paychecks and health concerns at the Hadley school. She also explained that the District had seen six different Superintendents, numbers of high school principals all while the students continued to thrive under the teachers. She explained the teachers feel undervalued, not underpaid. She hoped that as the SEA goes back to negotiations, it looks forward to working with the District on proposals that reflect their dedication and quality of work.

Katelyn Shanahan, a resident and teacher at SHS with a preschool child entering Kindergarten next year, spoke about the High School. She explained there had been inconsistencies at SHS with seven principals in 13 years as well as seven vice principals. She also spoke about the teachers addressing the mental health issues of students during their day as well as teaching. She expressed concern of retaining high quality teachers in such an environment.

Irene Dalton, a teacher at SMS and resident, spoke about an issue that concerns not only me and my fellow teachers, but students as well. She thanked Ms. Angelakis for meeting with her on the day that she voiced her concerns regarding a building issue outside of her room at the Middle School. She explained she is concerned about not only her health, but that of other staff and students. She explained that asbestos had been removed over vacation and she was concerned over lack of notification as she had worked in her room during the vacation week. She said she felt that students and staff deserved a clean and safe environment.

Catie Porter came forward and first said she appreciated the elementary school tours that were given and that she knows that the Committee cares equally about the children as the teachers do. She stated the union was not there to be greedy, but because they do care and had trusted the bargaining team and School Committee. She explained most were willing to accept the raise and that the day before ratification the \$1.6 became \$300K. She questioned the change and stated that the proposed raise would not increase the budget by \$900K as published in paper. She stated the teachers felt unsupported and want to trust and believe that money is being handled appropriately. She added they are concerned about payroll amounts being incorrect and the safety of the buildings. She hoped they could move forward with an open dialogue.

Jeffery Kittredge stated he looked at the town budget and noticed that the school budget increases at 4% and town's revenue increases at 2.5% and questioned where that disparity is created and what the plan was going forward. Ms. Marshall stated that was part of the imbalance they looked at and also would be presenting a budget update later in the evening.

Josh McCloy, parent of girl going to Kindergarten, thought it was unfathomable that the Committee would decide that the only option of shaving 1% is to cut Kindergarten for youngest kids in the District. He questioned other ways that savings were looked at and thought the Kindergarten cut was a terrible idea.

Gabby LaRiviere read a statement which gave her perspective on what was discussed at the last meeting. She spoke about half-day Kindergarten and felt that the most important part of Kindergarten was the social aspect. She talked about the variety of things which she has experienced and learned throughout her years in school and felt that none of them were affected negatively by only attending half-day Kindergarten. She spoke about her experience with foreign language and their trip to Montreal and Quebec as well as her participation at the green scholar's class. She ended by saying that she did not see reducing Kindergarten as a set-back as others had implied.

Tenley Seidel also gave her thoughts after the last meeting. She said she thought the outcry over the Kindergarten proposal felt overwhelming, but added that the discussion of the budget didn't happen over the past two weeks, but has happened since September when she and Gabby started attending meetings. She spoke about things that the District would lose, as well as other towns that allowed for part-time Kindergarten. She also spoke about the fundraising for sports teams and clubs that was discussed at the last meeting.

Ms. Marshall thanked the students for their input. She added that the Committee will be having a budget discussion and will be addressing some of the issues that have been brought up.

Ahmed Abusharkh, an alumni from SHS, presented some information from a study regarding early childhood education and the proposed cut to full-day Kindergarten. Ms. Marshall explained they were still pursuing every avenue not to make that cut.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Marshall read a list of the items contained in the Consent Agenda.

MOTION:

It was moved by Mr. Delano and seconded by Ms. OConnor to accept Consent Agenda. The motion was approved unanimously.

SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT

Acknowledgement – Joe Ford

Ms. Angelakis wished to acknowledge a member of the community who has given so much back to the District. She invited Mr. Calichman down as well. She stated that this community member has devoted his time to athletics, he has given so selflessly to the school department, to every school, all under the radar and that the Leadership Team felt it was important to acknowledge this individual. Mr. Calichman added that this community member works tirelessly in youth sports and is the biggest fan of every kid in Swampscott. Ms. Angelakis recognized and introduced Joe Ford. She presented him with a thank you from the District. Mr. Ford stated he did initially want to decline coming, but felt it was important for him to come not only to accept this, but also to support the School Committee. He explained they volunteer their time for the community as well. He added that knowing that what he does makes an impact on the kids and that is why he does it. He thanked the Committee and all who volunteer. He added that if everyone put their personal agendas aside things could be better than they are.

Mr. Delano left at 7:55 p.m.

Ms. Angelakis also recognized Mr. Joe Douillette and Mr. Tom Reid for the work that has occurred in the meeting room. She explained that when the Board of Selectmen and School Committee made the decision to use the room they worked with Michele Karas to secure funds to update and upgrade room B129. She thanked them for their work.

Ms. Angelakis stated she felt she needed to respond to the public comments. She reminded the community that she was a teacher for years and to hear that teachers aren't feeling valued crushes her. She explained that the full day Kindergarten proposal was not a cut that was proposed earlier in the budget discussion. She explained that it was during 11th hour discussions as the Leadership team reviewed cuts. She explained further that other items were discussed, but would have risked accreditation at the High School level and larger class sizes which was something she could not support. She spoke about looking at aligning the Middle and High School schedules, but explained that due to contractual obligations that wasn't able to occur. She outlined the items which made up the reduction in budget from \$1.6 million to \$275,000 which included the 5.2 positions which were reduced, the increases in athletic fees and trying to create a stabilization fund for special education as well as facilities. She also stated the potential agreement with the teachers helped close the gap. She explained that none of the choices were good ones, but something had to be done to close the gap. She also spoke about the issue that Mrs. Dalton raised and explained that Mr. Scola was brought in to discuss the concerns of the leak outside her classroom. She also explained that an air test was completed and negative results were provided to Mrs. Dalton. She also added that there are reports available at each school outlining any asbestos. She stated it was a mistake that it was not communicated to teachers at the Middle School that work would be done over vacation, but that it was reported that work would be done at Hadley over February vacation. She added she needed all to know that the buildings are safe and that the District will continue to abate until something changes with a new school.

Ms. Angelakis also updated on the potential new building project. She stated they were working on submitting two statement of interests, one for Hadley and one for the Middle School. She stated she is working with the K12 Task Force and had recently toured the elementary schools and how impactful it was to see the schools in action and how powerful those visits are.

Ms. Angelakis also reported on today's presentation of the Swift and Harbor programs at the High School. She reviewed the program and how it has been implemented. She explained the presentation was from 1:00 to 3:00 and other communities came to see how the program operated. She added that goal was to bring the program down to the Middle School. She gave kudos to the staff of the program and said she was incredibly proud that other Districts come to view their model.

Joe Ford commented on the impact that Ms. Angelakis has made on student's lives. He also commended the student reps for speaking out.

Review SMS Program of Studies – J. Calichman

Ms. Angelakis called on Mr. Calichman to come forward to review the Middle School program of studies. Mr. Calichman said he felt the document wasn't a true program of studies as there are no electives outside foreign language and that it was more of an informational packet. He further stated there are two documents on the website, one which is SMS 101 which explains the basics of being at SMS and the other is the program of studies. Ms. Angelakis stated the Committee had forwarded questions to Mr. Calichman regarding the POS. Mr. Calichman stated the first was if it was a program of studies. He felt that it was more of an informational packet. He explained that emails are sent home regarding accessing progress reports and report cards through Aspen and that those instructions would be added to the packet. Mr. Calichman referred to the questions regarding math frameworks and stated they were still working of the 2011 frameworks linked to the common core. There was also discussion regarding algebra placement. Mr. Calichman explained how placement is decided. Mr. Calichman stated all curriculum coordinators would be reviewing their sections. There was discussion regarding the specials rotations and Mr. Calichman stated Red, White and You would be deleted and explained the addition of the robotics programs through all four grade levels. Ms. Cooper questioned whether not taking 8th grade algebra would affect the high school track. Gabby LaRiviere stated you could double up at the HS to catch up if it wasn't taken at the Middle School. Ms. Cooper stated she felt the track should be stated more clearly in the program of studies. Ms. Hobbs explained the track which students take who do and do not take algebra. Ms. Cooper stated she understood she felt it should be clearly communicated to parents. Ms. Hobbs stated that could be looked at. Ms. Angelakis stated there needed to be information added about the adjustment counselor and school psychologist. She stated she heard from parents who did not know those services were available and that they should be available during curriculum nights so parents are aware of who they are. Mr. Calichman stated that information could be added in the guidance portion.

SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

FY18 School Budget Update

Ms. Angelakis requested Ms. Raymond come to the table to discuss the research on Kindergarten. Mr. Katz stated the budget remains status quo while waiting for the Board of Selectmen to meet next week and the Committee's vote next week as well. Mr. Katz reviewed the cuts, as well as the increases in revenues which had been presented at the public hearing. Ms. Cooper clarified that the stabilization fund for special education, as well as the increase in facilities have not been approved by the Town and that could be another \$375,000 in deficit. Ms. Cooper added that she was disheartened to hear that people think the Board suddenly found \$1.2 million and that cuts affect each school as well as those monies which are still not approved. Ms. OConnor agreed and stated she had received emails over the past few weeks which were hurtful and wanted people to understand that the decisions have been made through hard work. Ms. Angelakis agreed and added that her entire career has been focused on the kids and that is what she focuses on on a daily basis. Ms. Angelakis also spoke about the research that has been done in regards to the full-day Kindergarten program. She added it as not what she wanted to happen, just a view of how the program would look. Ms. Raymond explained that as a team they sat down to look at how the schedule would change. She added it was possible to run a program until 12:00 noon as most of the curriculum is currently programmed by that time, and that no new curriculum would be introduced between 12:00 and 2:15. Ms. Raymond also reviewed the tuition policy, but added that tonight was to provide information and that there would be decisions in the next week.

Brenda Cassidy, a Kindergarten teacher at Stanley came forward. She stated she felt compelled to clarify that academics are currently taught beyond 12:00. She felt it was important that everyone see what it would look like as well as the teachers. She added she did not have data, but her experience in the classroom. She added that initially she fought the full day program but now is proud to say that she has never known her students as well as she does now, as she is with them, teaching them, all day. She spoke about the curriculum requirements and felt that she would not know how to not teach with shutting down at noon for some students. Ms. Angelakis stated she heard all that was said and appreciated it and that they would be looking more into that as well.

Ms. Wright stated in light of what everyone is saying and not having heard from the Town she would like to make a motion that is adopted as a resolution that acknowledges our resolve to put any extra money allocated towards programming.

MOTION:

It was moved by Ms. Wright and seconded by Ms. OConnor to adopt a resolution that acknowledges our resolve to dedicate any additional money allocated by the Board of Selectman to programming needs. The motion was approved 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

At 8:54 p.m. it was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Ms. Cooper to adjourn. The motion was approved 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela R.H. Angelakis, M.A., M.Ed.
Superintendent of Schools

3/9/17
Date:

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Supporting Documents:

Approved 25-Jan-2017 SC Meeting Minutes.pdf	2/10/2017 1:20 PM
25-Jan-2017 SC Meeting Minutes.pdf	2/6/2017 11:38 AM
Agenda 8-Feb-2017 School Committee Meeting.pdf	2/6/2017 10:30 AM
MS Program of Studies 17-18.pdf	2/6/2017 9:10 AM