

Regular Session Meetings

January 23, 2019

A meeting of the Swampscott School Committee was held in Room B129 at Swampscott High School commencing at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present: Ms. Amy OConnor, Ms. Suzanne Wright, and Ms. Caron Marshall. Also Present: Pamela Angelakis, Superintendent of Schools, Ms. Martha Raymond, Director of Student Services, Ms. Martha Sybert, Business Administrator, and Isaac Green, student representative. Mr. Ted Delano, school committee, and Joseph Varghese, student representative were absent. Ms. Gargi Cooper arrived at 7:20.

Public Comment

Prior to Public comment, Ms. OConnor gave an overview of the procedures for public comment and discussion during the Public Hearings. She reviewed the 2 public hearings that were being presented. Ms. OConnor stated that this was the 1st reading of the budget and not the final yet. She mentioned that all comments will be taken into consideration. Ms. OConnor noted that there was time after the hearing to reach out to the committee with comments. She requested that anyone speaking come to the microphone and state their name.

Ms. Nancy Hanlon, President of the Swampscott Teacher Association and a Speech Language Therapist at SPS spoke regarding the budget. She stated that they were all proud teachers that value education. Ms. Hanlon mentioned the SHS National Blue Ribbon Award. She continued to thank Ms. Angelakis for meeting with the HS staff regarding the 6 HS teacher reductions mentioned in the budget. Ms. Hanlon requested to be advised of any additional total cuts system-wide. She discussed the negative impact cuts have on students, choices of electives, and class size. Ms. Hanlon stated that she looked forward to furthering the conversation and frank discussion regarding the budget and impacts of any cuts to the teaching staff.

Community Announcements

NA

Superintendent's Report: Ms. Angelakis' report will be posted on Superintendent Page under the Swampscott Public School's web page.

Ms. Angelakis mentioned that the USDA sent out a notice to the schools regarding furlough employees applying for free & reduced lunch. A letter went out today to all families, notifying them to fill out a lunch application if they are impacted by the furlough.

Ms. Angelakis announced that Dennis Kohut, assistant principal at Swampscott High School has been named principal at the high school. This appointment will be made effective July 1, 2019. She met with the High School staff on Tuesday to notify them ahead of the announcement.

She spoke to Mr. Kohut's background. He has been with SPS since 2006, served as department chair in 2016, and has been assistant principal since 2017. Ms. Angelakis noted he is well respected by teachers & staff and has a strong curriculum background.

Mr. Kohut thanked the committee and the superintendent. He noted the great schools and community we have in Swampscott. He mentioned NEASC, continuing with the growth mindset goals and building a school culture that students run toward not away from.

Public Hearing on School Choice SY 2019-2020

Ms. OConnor entertained a motion to open the public hearing on School Choice. It was moved by Ms. Wright and seconded by Ms. Marshall. The motion passed 3 to 0.

There was no public comment. Ms. OConnor noted that it was not atypical to have no public comment on School Choice and that the vote was usually quiet.

Ms. Marshall moved to close the public hearing and seconded by Ms. Wright. The motion passed 3 to 0.

Ms. OConnor asked if the superintendent had any input to share. Ms. Angelakis recommended SPS. not participate in school choice.

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Marshall to Not Participate in School Choice and seconded by Ms. Wright.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 3 to 0.

School Business Administrator

Prior to the budget presentation, Ms. OConnor discussed how impressed they were with Ms. Sybert's budget presentation. She noted the importance of the December Financial Summit and building budgets that are operable and sustainable. She was grateful for the 2% increase with most of it being allocated to salaries. Ms. OConnor discussed the need to spend money better and in the right places to support students. She addressed the negative comments on social media (SM) and the need to look beyond SM for facts. We will be staffed differently with changes developed by building leadership. She discussed the Swampscott Education Association (SEA) SM comments stating that Professional Development (PD) for staff would be cut in half which is false and misleading. PD is reflected differently with money coming from a grant. Ms. OConnor noted the cost of the legal line being called out as a negotiation tactic. At the last negotiation, the legal line was higher. This budget aligns with district goals and high standards of education.

Ms. Angelakis held a voluntary meeting with the HS Staff. She explained the PD budget and receiving a \$25,000 grant from the Essex County Learning Community (ECLC). In reality, the PD budget increased by \$25,000. She also wanted educators to understand the legal line item. The legal line is typically budgeted at \$50,000 each year. However, in FY17 which was a SEA negotiation year the legal costs totaled \$75,000. As this is a negotiation year, the legal line was increased to avoid over spending.

FY20 budgeted teaching staff numbers leave an 11.9 to 1 student ratio. We are in good shape per the DESE website. For example, Lexington has a 12.3 to 1 ratio. There were placeholders for positions in last year's budget that were never filled making a year to year FTE to FTE comparison difficult. She discussed the statement about cutting 6.0 positions at the HS. It is about the ability to reallocate resources in the best interest of students. If a 1.0 position at the HS is now a .6 need then they would reallocate the .4 funds where most needed in the district. Ms. Angelakis mentioned Non Professional Status (NPS) Teachers and how they are often unaware they are not guaranteed a position in the district.

FY20 Budget, Special Education, School Facilities, Other District Wide Programs, Grants & Revolving Funds:

Ms. Sybert reviewed the 5 costs centers. She continued the budget presentation with Special Education. Ms. Sybert reiterated that salary lines appear different based on a different methodology than FY19. She discussed the Team Chair Pre-K level position which was vacant for 2 years. Other highlights included the increase of 1.0 for an Occupational Therapist which will reduce our contracted services expenditures. She discussed per diem rates for summer staff which is similar to other districts.

Ms. Sybert noted that Contracted Services has a 9.4% increase due to increasing transportation expense for both in and out of the district.

She discussed the MA Special Education Circuit Breaker Reimbursement Program. The state pays .75 on each dollar spent over the eligibility threshold. The funds may carry over which allows flexibility with budgeting.

Ms. Sybert talked about the School Facilities costs. The larger projects are now funded through the Capital Plan verse the Operating Budget. She noted the increase in electricity and gas consumption.

The District Wide program highlights included a \$20,000 reduction in Technology as it shifts projects to the Capital Plan. A Grant Trends reviewed indicated that 2 grants are no longer being received (SPED 274 & 298).

The 2020 budget will increase to \$29,620,402 a 2% increase or \$580,790 over FY19. It is currently at a 2.1% increase. Ms. Angelakis inquired if Ms. Sybert would have the budget to a 2% increase prior to 2/13. Ms. Sybert indicated she would have a revised budget and needed to hold a committee as a whole meeting prior 2/13.

The next steps include presenting the Revolving Fund Analysis, School Committee questions, and a vote on Wednesday, February 13th.

Ms. OConnor requested Ms. Sybert speak more about the carry forward money and Circuit Breaker. She inquired about Marblehead and how we ensure we do not get in a similar position.

Ms. Sybert could not comment on the Marblehead issue of holding out of district tuition costs over fiscal years. She noted that Circuit Breaker reimburses in the arrears. She stated that there is the ability to go the state to apply for extraordinary relief.

Ms. OConnor inquired about the field contracts. Ms. Sybert has a list of contracts which still need review.

Public Hearing on School Budget 2019-2020

There was a Public Hearing on the School Budget for the year 2019-2020 according to Chapter 71, Section 38n, of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Ms. OConnor entertained a motion to open the public hearing on the budget. It was moved by Ms. Cooper and seconded by Ms. Marshall. The motion passed 4 to 0.

Ms. Keiko Zoll, Precinct 6 who has a kindergarten student at Stanley addressed the committee. Ms. Zoll inquired where the additional crossing guards in Code 5550 would be added. Ms. Sybert explained that along with SPD a Crossing Guard Study was completed 2 years ago. This is the 1st year with the crossing guard points. A number of positions have already been added. Ms. Zoll asked the process to request a crossing guard. Ms. Angelakis said to send requests to her office. Det. Rose Cheever will do a study and watch the intersections.

Ms. Zoll questioned the reallocation of resources to benefit the needs of students. She mentioned that the HS National Blue Ribbon Award indicated that programs were working. She asked the justification to potentially reduce programs. Ms. Angelakis replied that we are avoiding touching programs, she acknowledged the hard working staff and how proud she is of our district. She stated that they are not touching programs but spending money in a way that is most efficient and benefits our students.

Ms. OConnor entertained a motion to close the public hearing on the budget. It was moved by Ms. Cooper and seconded by Ms. Marshall. The motion passed 4 to 0.

Sub Committee:

SBC Meetings Update: Ms. Wright provided updates on the School Building Committee. Prior to the MSBA voting on April 12, the committee has been meeting to educate themselves on the process.

The committee looked at all the enrollment options certified by MSBA and slight variations for feasibility. The options are Rebuild Hadley, District-wide K-4, Two Larger Neighborhood Schools K-5, and District-wide 3-5.

The subgroups include a communication group which is planning an idea exchange in the March timeframe. The group tours are investigating schools to identify ones with characteristics we would like to see in our schools. There is a data & financials group and one looking at the last feasibility studies.

Ms. OConnor requested Ms. Wright talk about configurations and explain how they got them. The MSBA required us to look at renovating Hadley. This is not the 1st choice and was ruled out last time.

A district-wide school addresses the district goals of having all grade levels together. Other priorities are to bring the 5th grade back to the elementary school and having as few transitions as possible.

The District Wide K-4 option solves most problems. Two larger K-5 schools satisfies bringing the 5th grade back. It does not solve educating everyone together. The last configuration with Grade 3-5 consolidated brings the 5th grade back but doesn't solve transition. It also means a new K-2 school down the road. None of the options solve all the problems.

The next SBC meeting is February 11th at 7:30am. Ms. Wright invited the public to come to the meetings. Information may also be found on the SBC website accessed through the town and school's websites.

Consent Agenda

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

- A. Budget Subcommittee Minutes – January 16, 2019
- B. Regular Session Minutes - January 16, 2019

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Cooper to accept the Consent Agenda and seconded by Ms. Marshall

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 4 to 0.

Next meeting to be held on February 13, 2019

Adjournment

Motion: At 8:10 p.m. it was moved by Ms. Marshall and seconded by Ms. Cooper to adjourn.
The motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,



2/13/19

Pamela R.H. Angelakis, M.A., M.Ed.
Superintendent of Schools
/dmm
Supporting Documents:

Date:

 01 - January 23, 2019, School Committee Meeting & Public Hearing Agenda2.... 

 02 - Kohut-Named Principal-1-23-19a.pdf 

 03 - Government Shutdown-F-R Lunch.pdf 

 04 - Budget - Swampscott Public Schools 1.23.18.pdf 

 05 - January 16, 2019, Budget Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.pdf 

 06 - January 16, 2018, School Committee Meeting Minutes.pdf 
