

REGULAR SESSION MINUTES

January 25, 2017

A meeting of the Swampscott School Committee was held in the auditorium at Swampscott High School commencing at 7:00 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.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Wright stated she attended the presentation of the film *If Only* in Marblehead. She added she was happy to hear that it would be shown in Swampscott on March 9th and encouraged all to attend.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Marshall read the items contained in the Consent Agenda.

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Ms. Wright to approve the Consent Agenda.

Ms. Angelakis referred to the boys lacrosse trip and stated it was similar to the football team's trip. Ms. Marshall added that it was over the weekend.

VOTE ON MOTION: The motion passed unanimously.

SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT:

Adopt SHS Program of Studies

Ms. Angelakis invited Mr. Murphy and Ms. Mackey-Knowles forward. She stated they were prepared to answer questions which had been forwarded after the first read. Mr. Murphy stated he appreciated the feedback which would help in moving the document forward. He spoke about the core values listed which was done during the NEASC review and would be removed for now so that it could be changed in the future. Mr. Murphy spoke about AP exams and stated they had reviewed the data concerning the exams and testing and have decided not to opt out of the exams. Ms. Wright questioned honors credit if the AP test wasn't taken and Mr. Murphy stated that would be removed and AP classes would take the exam. Mr. Murphy reviewed the rest of the changes which were outlined in a handout in the Committee's packet.

Mr. Delano left the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING ON SCHOOL CHOICE SY 2017-2018:

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Ms. Cooper to open the Public Hearing on School Choice. The motion passed 4-0.

There was no public comment.

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Ms. Cooper to close the Public Hearing on School Choice. The motion passed 4-0.

Ms. Marshall explained the School Choice process and stated that each year the district has chosen not to participate. Ms. Angelakis stated it was her recommendation not to participate for a variety of reasons, one being the District's commitment to maintaining small class size. Ms. Wright questioned whether the decision affects the agreement with Nahant and Ms. Angelakis stated it would not and was separate.

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Ms. Wright not to participate in School Choice for the '17-'18 school year. The motion passed 4-0.

PUBLIC HEARING ON SCHOOL BUDGET 2016-2017

MOTION:

It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Ms. Cooper to open the Public Hearing on the School Budget 2017-2018. The motion passed 4-0.

Ms. Marshall asked Mr. Katz to present before the hearing was opened to questions or comments. Mr. Katz reviewed the updated PowerPoint and gave an overview of the proposed budget highlights which would maintain all essential and core programs.

Mr. Delano returned to the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Mr. Katz further explained the transition from the January 11th numbers to tonight and stated the gap is currently \$275,000. He spoke about revenue increases, personnel transition savings, program reductions and SpEd. tuition and transportation for known students. Mr. Katz stated they were looking at an increase in athletics user fees at the Middle and High Schools which would generate approximately \$80,000 in funds, and that was a recommendation that the School Committee would need to vote to approve. Mr. Katz also announced that the Gelfand Fund would be providing an additional \$100,000 for next year for the STEM program. He further explained that the Extended Day program could increase its support to the District but that there would be no increase to the families. Mr. Katz reviewed the program and position reductions which would result in a savings of \$314,000.

Mr. Katz further reviewed the assumptions in the budget including a reserve for high-growth programs, the historic underfunding of facilities and explained that the town funding increase will be less than the increase of contractual wages. Mr. Katz then reviewed the three "what if" scenarios including the \$100,000 facilities gap, a proposed Special Education Stabilization Fund and the current \$275,000 gap. He further explained that it has been discussed that transitioning from full day Kindergarten to half-day with the full-day program being tuitioned might be a way to generate revenue to close the deficit.

Ms. Angelakis emphasized the fact that the budget is planned well in advance of the school year and makes the prediction for Special Education difficult. She also spoke to the athletic user fees and stated she would be charging Ms. Farley and the Athletic Council with looking at a tiered user fee system in the future. Ms. Angelakis also stated she was grateful for the additional year funding from Mr. Gelfand which came completely unexpected. Ms. Angelakis recognized and thanked the Leadership Team for their work on the budget. Ms. Angelakis also spoke about possibly having tuitioned full-day Kindergarten and since the beginning of the budget talks the District has been faced with bad choices and that it was not something that she was in favor of and that it was her hope that the gap could be closed in other ways. She did feel that the message was clear that the District needed more help from the Town.

Ms. Marshall thanked Mr. Katz for his work and also Mr. Gelfand for his continued support. She also thanked those who came out to the meeting tonight. She further added that she was focused on trying to close that gap without the Kindergarten tuition.

Ms. OConnor also thanked all for their work and explained the Committee has been working with all of the Town Departments on the budget process.

Ms. Cooper questioned the increase in user fees and hoped that the tiered system would be explored, as well as how much of the budget is covered by the fees. Mr. Katz explained that the fees only cover between 35-40% of the overall budget for the athletic program. Ms. Angelakis stated more would be worked on in the future with Ms. Farley and the Athletic Council. Ms. Cooper also questioned the increase in Extended Day. Mr. Katz explained that was a bookkeeping increase as it was determined last year that the program could provide more support to the District. Ms. Cooper also questioned the cut to reading at the Middle School. Mr. Calichman explained that after looking at the numbers they felt the cut could be absorbed into the current classes. Ms. Cooper also questioned the facilities salary being moved to the town side and if that would affect the agreement. Ms. Angelakis stated it did not and that the reporting would stay the same.

Ms. Wright questioned the elementary health cuts and whether that would continue to meet health requirements. Ms. Angelakis stated that it would and that they were still working on what the model will look like

Ms. OConnor reiterated her comments from the last meeting that the idea that athletic fees are only covering 35-40% and that the Committee is discussing cutting full-day Kindergarten is something she cannot support.

Ms. Marshall stated anyone who would like to speak could come forward and to please state their name.

Jake Slomski had a general funding question and questioned communication with the town side where it was stated that the increase in budget does not meet salary increases. Mr. Katz stated the town side is very aware of the numbers and that communication is very good. Ms. Angelakis spoke about the Tri-Chair meetings where information is shared. Ms. Marshall added there is dialogue back and forth with both sides working on their respective budgets.

Jessica Gahm-Diaz, the world language department chair at the High School, spoke about the loss of the .4 mandarin position and the effect on the size of the other world language classes. She felt that would need to be addressed at some point. Ms. Angelakis stated that conversations would have to happen between now and the beginning of the year to address those issues and said she appreciated Ms. Gahm-Diaz's comments.

Katie Holt spoke about the Kindergarten program and questioned the benefits that will be lost to be going back to the half-day program as well as if it would result in teacher cuts. Ms. Angelakis stated they were questions she had as well and that regressing was not something she wanted to do.

Matt Weinberg stated he moved to Swampscott a few years ago and has twins who are almost two. He wondered if there was any consideration to raising preschool tuition. Ms. Raymond stated preschool tuition has been raised in the past but offers families an option versus private preschools. Ms. Angelakis stated it is being raised this year and has in the past few years as well.

Claire Beckett stated she moved here a year ago for the schools and accessibility to the city. She felt the cut would be a burden on working mothers and felt that we could do better as a town.

Matt Durham, a 7-year resident, stated his wife grew up in Swampscott and attended the schools and that they were looking forward to that experience with their children. He questioned the out of District tuition and requested clarification on what expenses the District is responsible for. Ms. Raymond stated students are entitled to free and appropriate schooling and that some students require out of District placement. She added the District is reimbursed amounts over \$42,000 and that there is no reimbursement for transportation. He also spoke about the full-day Kindergarten issue and whether there was a concrete plan in place for that decision. Ms. Angelakis stated that between now and February 8th plans would become more concrete. Mr. Durham hoped those plans would be communicated to parents.

Ross Dobson, a resident with a five and two year old, stated he moved to Swampscott because of the education. He spoke about the long-term ramifications of cutting full-day Kindergarten. He felt it required more than two weeks of decisions and that the community should be involved. Ms. OConnor stated that while the discussion has been focused on the past two weeks that the decision started when full-day Kindergarten was implemented and that it was not something that the Committee takes lightly. Ms. OConnor stated that Ms. Angelakis is very committed to things that are more than fiscally right and her commitment to the students of the District. She further added that she was thrilled that people came out to the meeting and encouraged involvement at all times not just the 11th hour. Ms. Angelakis clarified that over the next two weeks decisions would become clearer. Ms. Marshall added that she hoped to work with the town towards closing the gap so that they would not need to go down this road.

Steven Oliver thanked all for the transparency in the presentation. He stated that all options should be looked at if cutting full-day Kindergarten was the only option and added that he felt if curriculum was shortened due to the proposed plan that the remainder of the day would simply be day care. He questioned what it would take to maintain the high quality of education that brought him to Swampscott.

Robin Lamphear, parent of a 4th grader, questioned STEM funding and what would happen after this year. Ms. Angelakis stated that it was agreed to be rolled into the budget and would remain.

A resident stated that, as many, they had picked Swampscott because of its quality education and that she works with early intervention students with autism. She expressed concern for meeting the needs of students who have higher needs and how a reduced curriculum would affect them. She questioned what people could do before the next meeting to help

advocate to fill in the gap. Ms. Marshall stated they could express their concerns to the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Angelakis pointed out that there were some Selectmen in attendance so they will have heard the concerns.

Josh McCoy stated he agreed with those who have spoken and expressed his frustration on how the information was put out to the public. He stated he and his wife heard on Facebook. Ms. Angelakis pointed out the information has been available. Ms. OConnor encouraged all to email each Committee member with how they found out about the meeting and the budget information.

An audience member added that she had forwarded her information to the District because her daughter will be starting Kindergarten in the fall and that might be a great place to gather resident information for communication purposes.

Jeff Kittredge stated he moved to Swampscott in April and stated that half-day Kindergarten would be a burden on one of the two earners in his household. He also questioned whether there would be an impact on the potential tax base of the town.

Casey Dewing commented on the health and Phys. Ed. combination and questioned whether the PE teachers were licensed to teach health. Ms. Angelakis stated they were.

Colleen Hitchcock encouraged the Committee to improve how it communicates information and that saying there is an open meeting doesn't explain what will be discussed. She also urged the Committee to look at other programs, such as athletics, before Kindergarten.

Reece Dahlberg said she convinced her husband to move back to Swampscott and she felt that Kindergarten is the foundation and that cut should be looked at more closely.

Sarah Walsh-Lane stated she felt other things should be looked at and it was too drastic of a cut for one group of the population to absorb alone.

Arianne Purdy echoed what was said by other residents. She was concerned that if Kindergarten was spared this year that it could be up again next year. She also spoke about communication and not having heard specifics of the budget until recently. Ms. Angelakis stated she heard what everyone was saying and explained the budget work begins before the District knows what the Town will fund them.

Brooke Gaudet expressed concern that students would be able to do the mandated work in a shortened day. Ms. Angelakis stated that Kindergarten is not mandated by the state.

A Stanley parent questioned the percentage of the athletic budget and whether other towns were looked at to see how it compares.

A resident questioned what the athletes are doing to help out their teams to raise money to meet athletic costs? Ms. Angelakis stated she couldn't answer that without input from Ms. Farley. Ms. Wright stated as a Booster mother the town covers uniforms and that's about it. Boosters for each sport will supply other items. Ms. Wright agreed with the concept of cutting programming over athletics, but commented that even if the fee doubled it still wasn't funding the athletic budget.

Maura Lau thanked the Committee for their work. She stated she has watched the meetings and felt it was up to everyone to take responsibility for themselves in finding out the information. She asked whether retiring teachers were not being replaced? Mr. Katz said they were, but at lower costs.

Ms. Marshall thanked all for coming and reminded all the Committee meets twice a month and would love to see more people at their meetings.

MOTION:

It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Mr. Delano to close the Public Hearing on the School Budget 2017-2018. The motion passed unanimously.

CHAIR REPORT:

There was discussion regarding the creation of the stabilization fund for Special Education. Ms. Wright expressed concern about some of the unknowns of the process from Town Meeting. Mr. Katz stated there was more flexibility in state law with the stabilization fund versus the way it has been going.

Ms. Cooper questioned if the \$275,000 balance that was voted by Town Meeting to be set aside had been released. Ms. Angelakis stated they are looking for the balances to go down before the money is released. Ms. Cooper expressed concern that stipulations are being set that she did not remember at Town Meeting.

There was discussion around information being relayed regarding the budget. Ms. OConnor stated the information has been put out there and if someone doesn't understand the depth or gravity doesn't mean it hasn't been communicated. Ms. Angelakis agreed and stated she felt it was inappropriate to be putting some of the things out on a blog. There was further discussion regarding communications and how things should and can be relayed.

Gabby LaRiviere stated she would pass along her thoughts on the meeting in email. Tenley Seidel stated she respected the speakers' concerns but pointed out people not understanding all the correct information such as not knowing Kindergarten wasn't mandatory.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

At 9:29 p.m. it was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Mr. Delano to adjourn.
The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Supporting Documents:

Document Name	Date/Time
Approved 11-Jan-2017 SC Meeting Minutes.pdf	1/26/2017 1:04 PM
Approved 17-Jan-2017 Executive Session Meeting Minutes.pdf	1/26/2017 12:21 PM
Approved 11-Jan-2017 Executive Session Meeting Minutes.pdf	1/26/2017 12:21 PM
FY18 Budget - Jan. 25 SLIDES.pdf	1/24/2017 12:56 PM
Program of Studies - SC.pdf	1/24/2017 12:44 PM
FY18 Budget - Jan. 25.pptx	1/23/2017 12:20 PM
Field Trip-Boys HS Lax Team.pdf	1/23/2017 12:15 PM
Updated Agenda 25-Jan-2017 School Committee Meeting.pdf	1/23/2017 11:35 AM
FY18 Line Item Jan. 25 SC .pdf	1/23/2017 10:41 AM
17-Jan-2017 Executive Session Meeting Minutes.pdf	1/20/2017 12:14 PM
11-Jan-2017 SC Meeting Minutes.pdf	1/20/2017 12:14 PM
11-Jan-2017 Executive Session Meeting Minutes.pdf	1/20/2017 9:55 AM