

**Salem Public Schools  
Salem School Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
April 25, 2022**

On April 25, 2022 the Salem School Committee held its regular School Committee meeting at 7:00 PM using a hybrid model including in-person congregation and streaming via the Zoom platform.

**Members Present:** Mayor Driscoll, Ms. Mary Manning, Mr. Manny Cruz, Ms. Amanda Campbell, Ms. Beth Anne Cornell, and Mr. James Fleming

**Members Absent:** Dr. Kristin Pangallo

**Others in Attendance:** Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Chelsea Banks, Liz Polay-Wettengel, Marc LeBlanc, Linda Farinelli, Adam Colantuoni

**Call of Meeting to Order**

Mayor Driscoll calls the meeting to order at 7:02pm. She welcomed the community to the in-person meeting and explained the Public Participation Policy 6409 including an electronic and in-person option; and also explained the availability of Spanish interpretation. Ms. Manning requests a moment of silence to remember those lost over the years since the committee began meeting virtually and with the in-person return.

**Attendance**

Ms. Campbell	Present
Ms. Cornell	Present
Mr. Cruz	Present
Mr. Fleming	Present
Ms. Manning	Present
Dr. Pangallo	Not Present
Mayor Driscoll	Present

**Approval of Agenda**

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the Regular Agenda. Mr. Cruz motioned and Ms. Manning seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Campbell	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Ms. Manning	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 6-0

### **Approval of Consent Agenda**

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Fleming motioned and Ms. Manning seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Campbell	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Ms. Manning	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 7-0

### **Public Comments**

Barbara McLernon - 25 Sunset Drive

Good Evening and welcome back to in person. I am Barbara McLernon, I am here tonight representing the Salem Teachers Union Scholarship fund raiser. The raffle calendar, which has a prize for every day in May, went live over the weekend, entries are \$10.00 each. Winners will be announced daily from the first of May until the 31st. All collected funds go toward the four- one thousand dollar scholarships the Union gives to Salem High Seniors. You can venmo money to @STUEvents and I will put an entry in for you, please include your name, address and phone number, or cash or check mailed to Salem Teachers Union, 10 Colonial Rd, Suite 12, Salem, Ma All info and prizes are on the STU Facebook page and hopefully out on ParentSquare soon. Thank you.

### **Educator's Showcase**

#### **Superintendent's Report**

##### ***FY23 Budget Presentation***

Dr. Zrike opens requesting a moment of silence to reflect on the loss of life for the NLIS student, Brian Gomez prior to the April Vacation.

He transitions into the budget presentation for FY23. He opens with the review of the strategic priorities and how they connect to the newly adopted tagline for the district. He provides an overview of how the budget was created among school leaders in connection with their strategic plans and "big rocks."

Ms. Campbell asks about reading and math and wonders if the data is coming in English and Spanish from STAR reporting. Dr. Zrike notes the data is pulled from the English reporting but with STAR there is capability for both languages.

Dr. Zrike continues the review of the budget presentation noting the investments the district has made and what SPS priority they connect to. He notes the need to remember that we need to begin planning for the transition from ESSER funding to using our general funding for specific

budgetary purposes. He turns over the presentation to Ms. DeLai to discuss the components of the FY23 Budget. She reviews the components of the budget building and how the data across the district drives the building of the budget.

Mayor Driscoll welcomes questions and comments. She notes, as presented, it seems to be a bit of a stretch budget when it comes to finances. She notes the value of spending per pupil is ~\$20,000 and notes being the district with the highest per pupil expenditures in Essex County. She notes the importance of finances being allocated to education and how there are other expenditures on the city side that support students within the community. She provides background of the increases by year and the dollar per pupil in previous budgets. She notes we cannot absorb a 4.6% increase with the other things needed to support the city. She makes mention the city budget is still a work in progress in finalizing numbers, noting inflation being a concern in closing the gap with the city finance team. She shares close to 70% of the city budget, is allocated to the needs of education. She notes being honest in the budget process without causing chaos. She shares the city is working closely with Senator Lovely and Representative Tucker to understand opportunities available within the statewide process. She notes the mechanics are reliant on the state finalizing their budget, providing insight to additional funding opportunities for the city budget and knowing the finalized plan from there.

Mr. Cruz notes being a part of conversations prior to the pandemic in regard to SOA and where we landed, he asks if Mayor Driscoll could shed some light on the conversation at the state level are regarding an amendment within the two budgets or if it's more of a different calculation in regard to additional state dollars. Mayor Driscoll notes many gateway cities are receiving a substantial increase, including neighboring towns such as Beverly which is not considered a gateway city. She provides an overview of considerations that would play a part in the funding calculation for the city increase but none have proven to be a concrete reason. She mentions other cities are receiving 7-digit figure increases whereas the projected plan currently for Salem shows about a 1% increase. She notes legislation is very much behind the budget building but it's not within one person's control and there are many factors to consider.

Mr. Cruz notes if there is anything else the committee could be doing to support the ask at-hand, he would love to know if there are ways to help. He asks if there was mention of enrollment with respect to CTE programs within the conversations she's had with the chairs and wonders if that has been weighed as we see such growing numbers.

Ms. Cornell asks about how we meet the basic allocations as a district when it comes to the discussion surrounding the two and a quarter. Ms. DeLai confirms at the two and a quarter we'd be talking about not funding any of the inputs and you would be booking at reducing staffing.

Ms. Cornell also asks to what extent the Recovery Act money the city is sitting on could potentially be applied to the school budget. Mayor Driscoll says the Recovery Act money will be used for various needs but there are two concerns including eligibility, and the concern for creating a budget cliff for next year if we become reliant on that funding. She notes tapping into the levy of the funding but it's not a long term strategy.

Ms. Cornell and Ms. Campbell note one of the things discussed in the finance committee being the unique nature of the funding this year and why some of this is a one time situation and wondering if this could be discussed for the public and the larger committee as well. Ms. DeLai shares looking back in the numbers of the past, the level service budget is within the 2.9% range but the deficit didn't cover the funding in 2022. She notes once taking care of funding this year, you'll see the service level percentages level off. Mayor Driscoll mentions the numbers she has and she's referencing.

Ms. Manning asks the money we are hoping to be provided by the state, what would happen if our budget gets decided on an amount and submitted and then they increase that money or do they think they no longer need those resources? Mayor Driscoll notes it's about the mechanics so it's within the unknown but she doesn't believe they'll say "oh, they don't need funding." Ms. Manning asks if there is a date for budget approval. Mayor Driscoll notes there is no date and could be summer or fall.

Mayor Driscoll flags putting off the vote on May 16th to better understand and confirm where we stand with our ask. Mr. Cruz notes the legislation finishes their budget process the last week of May, the House will be done by Thursday and he wonders if the vote should be pushed closer to the end of May. Mayor Driscoll mentions the process in timing around the discussion with the city side as well. Ms. Manning asks about the date needed to get the budget to city council and Mayor Driscoll says it's typically asked to be submitted for their second meeting in May but there are more conversations to come.

### ***Submission of Statement of Interest to MSBA Core Repair Program for Salem High School renovations***

Dr. Zrike notes there is a vote for the submission of a statement of interest to the MSBA for a core repair program for Salem High School. He thanks Ms. DeLai, the custodial and high school team who did the work in going through the master facility plan for planning. The district is asking for consideration to have a new facility at the high school site. Prior to break the city council voted unanimously in support of moving forward with the statement of interest and the district is asking for a vote from the school committee later on this evening, noting the deadline is Friday.

### ***Instructional Technology Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)***

Dr. Zrike notes an MOU with the update including the District Instructional Technology team will be taking over the responsibility of the staff devices from Matt Killen's team.

Dr. Zrike also notes the mention of coming back to discuss masking for students in Pre-K, those under five. He mentions having a meeting with the health advisory team over break and the recommendation at this time is to continue masking for students under five. He notes it's not up for vote but wants to relay the conversation had with the health advisors.

Mr. Cruz notes in response to the last piece there in regard to Pre-K and his insight still stands and he supports the recommendation. Ms. Manning mentions making the original recommendation to keep the masking through the break and she appreciates the follow-up from the health advisors and thinks it's a good recommendation. She wants to be sure there is a plan to get the word out to the public.

#### **Report from the Student Representative - Hawa Hamidou Tabayi**

There is no report provided, Ms. Hamidou Tabayi is not in attendance.

#### **Old Business**

Ms. Cornell asks about the Student Advisory Group scholarship and noted the policy subcommittee did vote to move the policy for first reading and wants to know the process for the vote and Mayor Driscoll notes putting that on the agenda for the next meeting.

#### **New Business**

Deliberation and vote to authorize submission of Statement of Interest to Massachusetts School Building Association for Core Repair Program for Salem High School. Mayor Driscoll requests a motion. Mr. Fleming makes a motion. Ms. Manning seconded.

Mr. Cruz requests a roll call vote for this and Mayor Driscoll calls the roll.

Ms. Campbell	Yes
Ms. Cornell	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Ms. Manning	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 6-0

Deliberation and vote to approve IT Memorandum of Understanding. Marc LeBlanc provides an overview of what the changes mean for what work will be adopted by the Instructional Technology team. Mr. Fleming makes a motion and Mr. Cruz seconded.

Mayor Driscoll asks: all those in favor, all those opposed, the "I's" have it.

Deliberation and vote to accept \$1600 donation from Toys for Tots Literacy/UPS book drive. Mr. Fleming makes a motion, Ms. Campbell seconded.

Mayor Driscoll asks: all those in favor, all those opposed, the "I's" have it.

#### **Finance Report**

None

#### **Subcommittee Reports**

Discussion regarding Policy 3601 Student Transportation Services

Ms. Cornell provides an overview of the change in language regarding limited access to a walkable route. She also notes another change as a tie-breaker including priority to the greatest distance from the school and the final change is including grade six students with the K-5 population in regard to the language and expectations of the policy. She notes recent discussion about assessing availability of crossing guards, walkable routes, and accessibility for families has been had. Ms. Cornell notes the third reading will be postponed until the next meeting to allow the school community to digest the changes.

Mayor Driscoll asks if there's been thought to a walking or biking incentive. Ms. Cornell notes there are other districts that incentivize those actions and she's looking into those programs.

Ms. Campbell notes School Choice and how we can help families identify the schools they register for when it comes to the walkable route to each school as some families may not be aware of location in terms of the mileage to and from the school and their home. Ms. Cornell notes having transparent mapping of where crossing guards exist and this discussion has been had.

#### **School Committee Concerns and Resolutions**

Ms. Manning acknowledges this being Ms. DeLai's first in-person meeting.

#### **Adjournment**

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to adjourn. Ms. Campbell makes a motion and Mr. Cruz seconded.

Mayor Driscoll asks: all those in favor, all those opposed, the "I's" have it.

Meeting adjourned at 8:51pm

Respectfully submitted by,

*Jensen Frost*

Executive Administrative Assistant to Assistant Superintendent