

Salem School Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, May 1, 2017

A regular meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, May 1, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA.

**Members Present:** Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, Dr. Brendan R. Walsh, Ms. Mary Manning, Mr. James Fleming, Mr. Patrick Schultz, Ms. Kristine Wilson, and Ms. Deborah Amaral

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Margarita Ruiz, Superintendent, Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent, Margaret Marotta, Assistant Superintendent, Kristin Shaver, Business Manager, Kelley Rice, Chief of Communications and Jill Conrad, Chief of Systems Strategy.

**Call to Order**

Mr. Schultz called the Regular Meeting of the Salem School Committee to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Approval of the Agenda**

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the agenda as presented. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the minutes of the April 3, 2017 School Committee Minutes. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2017 School Committee Minutes. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Questions and Comments From the Audience**

Fawaz Abusharkh of 4 Harrison Road addressed the budget. He was unsure if his comments this evening would actually have anything to do with members of the School Committee. He said that Stephen Lovely, Jerry Ryan, and Arthur Sargent held two meetings recently and felt they were withholding from serving the needs of Salem schools and other city matters for political purposes. Mr. Abusharkh shared that the people and students of Salem need to know that there are political obstacles despite current struggles with the School Committee level budget. He emphasized that they need to know of the actual city problems, mentioned Stephen Lovely, Jerry Ryan, and Arthur Sargent as being that cause, and pleaded they take action.

Geoff Millar, 29 Boardman Street, agreed with Mr. Abusharkh's concerns. He spoke in favor of the same topic and asked what the backup plans would be if the City Ordinance are not approved by City Council and if that agreement is not reached with the medical center. He asked the School Committee that if they do take a vote on the budget, they talk about what the plan is; to

consider what the backup plan is if funding for City Connects are not approved. It does not mean there is no City Connects or are we trying to cut other places in the budget in order to take care of it. He suggested that when the budget topic comes up, that a motion be made to amend the budget total to Sixty Million One Hundred Seventy Six Thousand, Two Hundred Sixty Four Dollars, which would add that \$350,000 City Connects funding to the budget and consider passing it that way and allow the City Council to decide what they are going to do with that. Mr. Millar also reported that there is almost Seven Hundred Thousand Dollars in cuts from prior year in the budget, outside of the Personnel realm. He shared that he has brought cleaning wipes and tissues to his students' classroom. He is aware of teachers that are doing a lot more than that in providing supplies to their classrooms. There are teachers who do not have soap in their teacher lavatory if they do not provide it themselves. He reminded School Committee members of his previous request, at the start of the budget, to consider the needs of students, teachers, and families. He asked School Committee members again this be considered.

### **Superintendent Report – Margarita Ruiz**

Ms. Ruiz acknowledged the success of the District's strong Arts program. She thanked all of the Art and Music teachers for their dedication and commitment to inspiring students. Ms. Ruiz invited School Committee members and the public to join them on Wednesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6pm for the Annual Arts All City evening concert at the Salem High School. The evening will showcase choral, band, and string performances by Salem students. Ms. Ruiz commented that the first round of Kindergarten student assignments were mailed on Friday, April 28, 2017 – these are families who have completed their applications as part of Batch 1 and submitted it to the Parent Information Center by March 1<sup>st</sup>. The 2<sup>nd</sup> round of assignments will be mailed out by July 1<sup>st</sup>. The Superintendent shared that Salem's administration of the MCAS 2.0, where 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Graders are taking the test online, for the 1<sup>st</sup> time across the state this year, have gone very well. She said that the IT Department has been very helpful and thanked the principal and all the staff members who did a great deal of work in preparing administration of the MCAS test. Ms. Ruiz said she has asked Jill Conrad to provide the Committee with an introductory background on School Choice. They are not making a full presentation but just giving them some background on the topic and gather member concerns and questions for a more in-depth discussion at their next Committee of the Whole meeting (COW).

### **Discussion**

Mr. Fleming asked if there is assurance of speedier test results and greater efficiency as a result of students taking the test online. Ms. Ruiz said the overall long-term goal is to be able to provide a quick turnaround in the results. Ms. Carbone commented that they are not sure but they will ask and let him know.

With reference to the topic of School Choice, Mayor Driscoll asked what the deadline was for them, to act on this matter. Ms. Ruiz responded that the vote has to be done by June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. That would require a Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting prior to the public hearing, which is scheduled for May 15<sup>th</sup>, during the Regular School Committee meeting. Ms. Ruiz will be proposing they have the Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting on that same day, before the Regular School Committee meeting were

they will hold the hearing. Jill Conrad will provide information and they will gather questions and address them at the COW meeting. Mr. Schultz commented they would have to vote on a specific plan. Both Mayor Driscoll and Ms. Ruiz agreed. Ms. Ruiz said that she would come up with a proposal, with her recommendation.

## **Presentations and Reports**

### **Update on the Proposed FY18 Budget**

Superintendent Margarita Ruiz addressed some issues that came up during the recent Public Hearing on the Budget. One of the questions that came up was in relation to what is included and what is itemized under Contracted Services. She provided School Committee members with a handout that shows a listing of Contracted Services Expenditures for FY17 that will give everyone an idea of services related to contracted expenses. Included in the document is reconciliation to the FY18 budget. Ms. Ruiz addressed another concern that had been brought up regarding a Central Office budget increase of \$750,000. She said that the Central Office remains at 4 percent of the operating budget. The overall district budget increased over a year by 2 ½ percent. As discussed, the majority of the increase went to fund contractual obligations. Any changes to the budget for FY18 have been highlighted. Ms. Ruiz responded to Ms. Manning's previous inquiry to the Schools' library. The District will be auditing their current libraries to ensure they are keeping up with best practices, digital learning, and to ensure that the materials are culturally diverse and inclusive and reflect the demographic changes. In addition, Ms. Ruiz affirmed that they would not have any staff reductions or hours at any of their district libraries. Superintendent Ruiz also addressed Ms. Manning's concerns on the Buildings and Grounds budget and what they plan to undertake to address them. She continued to address other concerns previously mentioned at the prior Regular School Committee meeting. Superintendent Ruiz said she is deeply disappointed that the resources to launch City Connects are stalled at the City Council level. The North Shore Medical Center Community Benefits Agreement was partly earmarked for the launch of City Connects. That would cover the cost of individual training for every school in the program and the assessments, etc. These expenses were not built into the operating budget. If the City Council chooses not to act, they would have to forego pursuing this opportunity. The shift in roles for adjustment councilors would revert back to their previous responsibilities. Ms. Ruiz hopes that a solution or resolution to this would be found. She clarified that those expenses have not been rolled into the operating budget; this budget does not reflect that. She hopes the City Council would allow those funds to be used for the children of Salem.

### **Discussion on the Salem Public Schools FY17 Contracted Services Expenditures**

Mr. Fleming commented that others might not know what the various categories are for. The information shows initials and broad categories such as ELL, Elevation or Medical Consultant. Others will not know what actual expenses are for. For example, others may know of a vendor but do not have a description of what the vendor is going to do. Mr. Fleming suggested that a description of their performance should be added. Ms. Ruiz said they add that. Mr. Fleming said that it can then be posted with the budget for

the public either as an Addendum or on the website as low broadcasting to the general public. Mr. Schultz asked to what level of detail should be included in the itemization. School Committee members continued brief discussion on the topic. Dr. Walsh asked if the amount of \$128,000 on the FY17 Contracted Services Expenditures for Achievement Network (ANET) would be lower on the next fiscal year. Ms. Ruiz said they are in the process of selecting a new District Interim Assessment. It would be a repurposing of this amount, not be a reduction or addition. Dr. Walsh clarified that it would not be specifically going to ANET. Ms. Ruiz agreed. Dr. Walsh said that should be reflective to an extent on the list of Contracted Services Expenditures. Ms. Ruiz said that the reason why it is not reflected on the list is because they are using ANET this year. Dr. Walsh referred to this reflection for the FY18 year. Mayor Driscoll said that the FY18 Budget does not provide specific layout by vendors. It just lays out the category. Dr. Walsh commented that the categories are broad. Mayor Driscoll said she understands that going into the next fiscal year, they may want to delineate the contracted services by what's professional development versus what's officiating and referenced that would take some time. Mayor Driscoll said this list is a snapshot for now. Further discussion of the list of Contracted Services Expenditures ensued. All members agreed that it would progressive to include a bit more detail and transparency in the future. Mr. Schultz asked if this list is already made available to the public. Mr. Fleming said it was not. Mayor Driscoll suggested it be put up on the budget website. Mr. Schultz said it would help as its information on the range of spending provide a lot of clarity on its own. Ms. Ruiz said they would be happy to include more information to the list.

### **Discussion on the FY18 Budget**

Mayor Driscoll and School Committee members discussed the FY18 Budget. Mayor Driscoll commented they should ensure School Committee members are aware of the school-related requests made in the City's capital budget.

Mr. Fleming stated he is dropping his previous request for an additional \$6,000 to the Salem High School budget.

### **Discussion on City Connects**

Dr. Walsh brought up the Questions and Comments from the audience segment to Mayor Driscoll as she was not present at that time. He said that, although he is not suggesting this, one of the commentators did make the suggestion that the Mayor might consider putting more money into the school budget for this purpose. Dr. Walsh acknowledge that she had already added \$100,000 to cover some areas. Mr. Schultz said that the whole council votes on the budget and so all of them would have to vote to reject the budget. It might be nice to have a vote on this by the whole committee. Dr. Walsh commented he just does not know where Mayor Driscoll would find \$350,000 in local funding to do this. Mr. Fleming said he thinks they should send the budget without any additional funds to the City Council and inform them that their vote on that particular Community Benefits Agreement depends on their servicing of children with City Connects. In response to this topic, Mayor Driscoll said they do not have \$350,000. She is still making cuts to the non-city side of the budget to get it balanced

and to prepare it for submission of the council. If the CBA is not adopted, they are not only going to lose funding for City Connects but also monies to benefit police, street improvements, and seniors, among others. It has taken more time than they would have liked. She thanked School Committee members who have been at these meetings and advocated on behalf of the agreement. Mayor Driscoll does not see this council turning their backs on the funds. This is a donation to the city relative to the hospital's growth. There are a lot of positive items contained within it, in addition to the school funding. The vast majority of the councilors want to support it. She hopes they may get this out on May 11<sup>th</sup>. If for some reason it does not move forward, there would not be a City Connects program. Mayor Driscoll talked of the benefits of City Connects. She commented that City Council wanted to see that the School Committee supports City Connects. She stated at the meeting that the vote on the Agenda this evening in support of City Connects should provide them with that assurance.

### **Overview of School Choice in MA and Process Timeline for Salem to Deliberate on whether to accept students under the School Choice option.**

Jill Conrad gave an introduction and overview of Inter-District School Choice in MA and Process Timeline for Salem to deliberate on whether to accept students under the School Choice option. The law assumes that all local districts participate in school choice, unless they vote to withdraw from the program, and the vote must take place by June 1st of each year.

### **Discussion**

Mr. Fleming asked for clarification in that if they vote against School Choice, would that preclude a Salem student from utilizing School Choice in a School Choice District. Ms. Conrad said it does not. A local school district's decision on whether or not to participate in the school choice program does not affect a Salem residents' eligibility to exercise school choice to attend another receiving district. Mayor Driscoll asked if they could target specific grades if they were to consider allowing School Choice students to come from other outside communities, how tailored can it be. Ms. Conrad said that based on last year's feedback, her understanding is that it can be tailored to what they want it to be. The person she spoke with last year retired. She would like to have those questions answered with those who are present before they finalize that. Mayor Driscoll inquired how much it can be tailored and impact Special Education. She was under the impression that the Sending District would still bear some of those responsibilities but she would like to better understand what that is so that they are aware of that, going in. Margaret Marotta said she could answer some of those questions. Mayor Driscoll said they would share it for the 15<sup>th</sup> but asked if there were some risk avoidance, because the sending district is still a contributing factor. Ms. Marotta said they are essentially still responsible to cover the cost of the Special Education program for the students. Ms. Manning asked if they could declare a certain school besides the fact they can declare a certain grade level. Mayor Driscoll said that in other words how targeted could it be. Ms. Manning said yes. Ms. Wilson asked of how transportation works under that program. Mr. Schultz said that is up to the parents to get the kids into the school district. Mr. Fleming said he would like an answer to

that. Ms. Conrad responded with information. School Committee members continued discussion on the topic. Mayor Driscoll said that she would like to know more information if they are to make a recommendation. Mayor Driscoll asked how long are they locked in if they commit to this program, whether the student is there forever or if there is a locked-in timeline that cannot be locked-out. Mr. Fleming said he thinks they have to take a vote every year. There was further discussion on the topic. Ms. Conrad recorded the members' questions and said she would prepare responses for the upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled for May 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Action Item**

#### **Deliberation and Vote on the Salem Public Schools FY18 School Budget.**

Mayor Driscoll entertained the motion to approve the Salem Public Schools FY18 School Budget.

Mr. Schultz moved to approve the Salem Public Schools FY18 Personnel Budget in the amount of \$45,778,563. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. Mr. Fleming opposed. The motion was approved/carried.

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the Salem Public School FY18 Non Personnel Budget in the amount of \$11,029,268. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was approved/carried.

Dr. Walsh moved to approve the total FY18 Salem Public School Budget in the amount of \$56,807,831. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. Mr. Fleming opposed to the Personnel portion of it. The motion was approved/carried.

Mr. Schultz moved to approve the total FY18 Bentley Academy Charter School Budget in the amount of \$3,018,725. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was approved/carried.

#### **Deliberation and approval on the Superintendent's Recommendation regarding the MCAS School Climate Survey**

##### **Discussion**

Ms. Ruiz said she mentioned the survey at their last meeting. The Department of Education is piloting school climate questions as part of their Science MCAS. She will be stating to the Committee (later in May and early June) that much work was done between Salem Public Schools and the Salem Teacher's Union. They reviewed and created, with collaboration from the Curriculum Subcommittee, a School Climate Survey that will be used for self-assessment and goal setting within the evaluation process and for school improvement planning. The survey that was developed here for grades 3 to 5 contains twenty seven questions. It is a survey that was carefully worked on by the district and their union. Ms. Ruiz recommendation to the School Committee is that they do not administer the Pilot Survey questions from the Department of Education as part of the MCAS.

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the Superintendent's Recommendation regarding the MCAS School Climate Survey. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion. The motion carried.

### **Deliberation and Vote on the Resolution in Support of the North Shore Medical Center Community Benefits Agreement and the City Connects program**

#### **Discussion**

There is no resolution language. There is a statement resolution in support of the City Connects Program by the School Committee. There was further discussion on this.

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve a Resolution in Support of the North Shore Medical Center Community Benefits Agreement and the City Connects program. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion. The Motion carried.

### **Approval of North Shore Education Consortium's establishment of a Capital Fund**

#### **Discussion**

Dr. Walsh asked if this may be moved over to the next meeting and get more detailed information before voting. Mr. Fleming agreed. Kristin Shaver provided details.

Dr. Walsh motioned to approve the North Shore Education Consortium's establishment of a Capital Fund. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. The Motion carried.

### **Approval of SHS-JROTC field trip to San Diego, CA May 18-21**

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the Approval of SHS-JROTC field trip to San Diego, CA May 18-21. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. Mr. Schultz and Ms. Manning opposed the field trip. The Motion carried.

### **Approval of Collins Middle School 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Overnight Field Trip to New York City, NY**

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the Approval of Collins Middle School 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Overnight Field Trip to New York City, NY. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The Motion carried.

### **Approval of the Collins Middle School 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Out-of-State Field Trip to Canobie Lake Park in Salem, NH**

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the Approval of the Collins Middle School 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Out-of-State Field Trip to Canobie Lake Park in Salem, NH. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The Motion carried.

## **Finance Report**

### **a. Approval of Warrant**

March 4, 2017 in the amount of \$269,338.48

Dr. Walsh motioned to approve the warrant as stated. Mr. Fleming seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

### **b. Budget Transfer Requests FY17-17, FY17-18, FY17-19, FY17-20**

#### **Budget Transfer Requests**

Business Administrator, Kristin Shaver explained that Horace Mann Laboratory School has requested to transfer \$1,500.00 from Textbooks to Instructional Supplies.

<b>From Account</b>	<b>Account Number</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Horace Mann Laboratory School Textbooks	13570621-5511	\$1,500
<b>To Account</b>	<b>Account Number</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Instructional Supplies	13570621-5514	\$1,500

Dr. Walsh moved to approve the Horace Mann Laboratory School's Budget Transfer request from Textbooks to Instructional Supplies. Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> is Pupil Personnel Services Department request to transfer \$2,000.00 from Equipment to Office Supplies.

<b>From Account</b>	<b>Account Number</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Pupil Personnel Services Department Equipment	13640161-5860	\$2,000
<b>To Account</b>	<b>Account Number</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Office Supplies	13640161-5421	\$2,000

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the Pupil Personnel Services Department Budget Transfer request from Equipment to Office Supplies. Mr. Schultz seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> is the Teaching and Learning Department transfer request of \$34,000.00 to allow for the purchase of instructional materials and online resources.

<b>From Account</b>	<b>Account Number</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Teaching and Learning Department Stipends	13990160-5150	\$34,000



<b>To Account</b>	<b>Account Number</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Instructional Supplies	13570141-5421	\$34,000

Ms. Amaral moved to approve the Teaching and Learning Department Budget Transfer request from Stipends to Instructional Supplies. Mr. Fleming seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

The 4<sup>th</sup> is the Buildings and Grounds Department transfer of \$120,000.00 from Electricity and Gas to Building Maintenance.

<b>From Account</b>	<b>Account Number</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Buildings and Grounds Department		
Electricity	13530121-5211	\$20,000
Gas	13530151-5215	\$100,000
Building Maintenance	13530121-5241	\$120,000

### **Discussion**

Mayor Driscoll asked for an overview. Ms. Shaver gave brief overview. Dr. Walsh inquired as to what accounted to \$100,000.

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the Buildings and Grounds Department transfer of \$120,000 from Electricity and Gas to Building Maintenance. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

## **Subcommittee Reports**

### **Policy Subcommittee**

Deliberation and Vote on a Policy 6406 Voting Method – Tabled from 4/3/17

### **Discussion**

Ms. Amaral requested that this policy remain tabled. She asked this be put on the Agenda for discussion at the end of the Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting.

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

Mayor Driscoll suggested that an update on the Solar Project be added on the next meeting Agenda.

Ms. Amaral referred to the very low roof solar panels at Witchcraft Heights. She said it would be wise to have a barrier.

Mr. Fleming said he has been trying to work on an issue for the last seven days. He is quite upset with the way he was treated by the administration and did not provide him with information he had requested. He felt they did something without his knowledge on that

particular issue. Mayor Driscoll asked if this involved School Committee members. Mr. Fleming said it did not.

Dr. Walsh thanked the Mercy Tavern and its owner Mr. Schultz, on behalf of Salem Children's Charity, for their contribution of a portion of their profits to them and the North Shore CDC.

Mayor Driscoll thanked the members of the Finance Subcommittee and the schools' Finance team for all their hard work. It takes a long time to put together this budget and following up with members of the staff.

### **Questions and Comments from the Audience**

Lisa Hanson Damato, 53 Hawthorne Street, spoke on two things. She added to Mr. Geoff Millar's earlier comment. She herself has contributed two or three gallons of hand soap, 600 antibacterial wipes, and 36 boxes of tissues. She said she does not mind it but considers other classrooms that may not be able to do that. She also spoke regarding testing at the Salton Stall School library that prevents other students from entering and utilizing the library resources.

Fawaz Abusharkh of 4 Harrison Road reiterated his calculation of the difference of \$750,000 to the central office's budget between last year and this year and detailed how he calculated the 40% - 41 % (\$750,000) budget increase for central office. He said that he would be available to discuss this but no one contacted him. Mr. Abusharkh said that he agreed with Dr. Walsh about speaking to the Councilors. He suggested and encouraged parents contact City Councilors Stephen Lovely, Jerry Ryan, and Arthur Sargent and demand attention to the needs of their city, schools, and children.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the School Committee this evening. Dr. Walsh entertained the motion to adjourn. Mr. Fleming seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Angelica Alayon, Secretary  
Salem School Committee

### **Meeting Materials and Reports**

School Committee Agenda May 1, 2017

Minutes of the April 3, 2017 Regular School Committee Meeting

Minutes of the April 24, 2017 Regular School Committee Meeting

Policy 6406

Update on the Proposed FY18 Budget

Salem Public Schools FY17 Contracted Services Expenditures handout