Salem School Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 10, 2015

A regular meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, August 10, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA.

**Members Present**: Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, Ms. Deborah Amaral, Mr. Nate Bryant, Mr. James Fleming, Ms. Rachel Hunt, Mr. Patrick Schultz, and Dr. Brendan Walsh

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present**: Ms. Margarita Ruiz, Superintendent, Business Manager Philip Littlehale and Eileen Sacco, Secretary

**Call to Order**

Mayor Driscoll called the Regular Meeting of the Salem School Committee to order at 7:30 p.m.

**Approval of the Agenda**

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Amaral seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting held on Monday, July 7, 2015 were presented for approval.

Mr. Fleming moved approval. Ms. Amaral seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The minutes of the School Committee Retreat held on Saturday, July 11, 2015 were presented for approval.

Mr. Fleming moved approval. Ms. Amaral seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The minutes of the Special School Committee meeting held on July 27, 2015 were presented for approval.

Mr. Fleming moved approval. Mr. Bryant seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Questions and Comments from the Audience**

Sarah Murphy a parent of a Bates School student addressed the School Committee and expressed her concern that there are three third grade classes at the Bates School and this year the fourth graders will be in two classes. She noted that another fourth grade teacher was requested in the budget and the request was not approved.

Mr. Fleming stated that the Finance Subcommittee will be scheduling a meeting and they intend to consider the request for an additional fourth grade teacher for the Bates School. He stated that they would notify Mrs. Murphy when that meeting will be held.

**Superintendent’s Report**

Superintendent Margarita Ruiz addressed the School Committee and noted that she intends to start each Superintendent Report by highlighting accomplishments and achievements of our schools. She reported that several successful summer programs are going on this summer and noted the Healthy Harbors Program which is in collaboration with Salem Sound Coastal Watch and Salem State University. She also noted the Salem at Sea Program which is run by LEAP for Education and Salem State University. Ms. Ruiz reported that Director of Extended Learning Time Emily Ullman will be make a full report on the summer programs in the Salem Public Schools at a future meeting.

Ms. Ruiz reported that the Salem Public Schools Leadership Institute was held last week and was a success. She noted that Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone will be reporting on this later in the meeting.

Ms. Ruiz announced that Mr. Chad Leith will be the interim Principal at the Horace Mann Lab School. She stated that she is pleased that Mr. Leith will be joining us and notes that she feels that faculty and parents will be pleased and this will strengthen our strong partnership with Salem State University. She also reported that a letter will be going out to Horace Mann parents and a meeting is scheduled for August 27, 2015 for parents and staff to meet Mr. Leith.

Ms. Ruiz reported that many of our staff have participated in district led professional development opportunities this summer.

Ms. Ruiz reported that it has been a busy first five weeks for her and she has hit the ground running. She noted that many people in the community have expressed their desire to seek change that will drive dramatic improvement in our schools. She announced that she has submitted her entry plan to the School Committee and is starting a 100 day Listening and Learning campaign entitled *Listening and Learning to Lead and Understand* is designed to equip her with a deep understanding of the work and context in Salem Public Schools in order to effectively develop a comprehensive strategic plan for the future. She explains that the campaign will involve multiple stakeholders and methods of data collection and will be scheduled from July through November and culminating in a report of findings at the end of the year. She explains that these findings will serve as the basis for a longer-term strategic plan for the future of the district.

Ms. Ruiz explained that the goals of the 100-day listen and learn campaign are to identify:

* What is working well?
* What are the challenges?
* What are the hopes and aspirations for the district?
* What expectations do various stakeholders have of me as the new superintendent?

Mayor Driscoll thanked Ms. Ruiz for her report and noted that she feels that her entry plan is thoughtful and rigorous and she appreciates her efforts to get an understanding of the district.

Mayor Driscoll requested at this time that the School Committee take the agenda out of order and take up the matter of the approval of the Bentley Academy Charter School Memorandum of Understanding.

**Deliberation on the Approval of the Bentley Academy Charter School Memorandum of Understanding**

Ms. Hunt stated that in the interest of full disclosure that she is a member of the Board of Trustees for the Bentley Academy Charter School and although she has no financial interest in the school she will be abstaining from this vote this evening.

Mayor Driscoll reported that the School Committee held a Committee of the Whole meeting earlier this evening to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the School Committee and the Bentley Academy Charter School. She reported that the School Committee has before them the MOU for approval this evening.

Mr. Fleming stated that he has concerns about the finances for the Bentley Academy Charter School, noting that the per pupil cost is high.

Dr. Walsh stated that he voted against the proposal for the Bentley School and will be voting against the approval of the MOU this evening.

Mayor Driscoll stated that the administration and team has been in place at the Bentley School for the past year and she is excited to see the hard working staff moving forward and we should support them.

Mr. Schultz stated that he visited the new Bentley this year and witnessed engaging instruction and caring staff.

There being no further questions or comments regarding the Memorandum of Understanding for the Bentley Academy Charter School at this time, Mayor Driscoll stated that she would entertain a motion at this time.

Ms. Amaral moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Salem School Committee and the Bentley Academy Charter School. Mr. Schultz seconded the motion. Mr. Fleming requested a roll call vote.

Mayor Driscoll called for a roll call vote on the motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Salem School Committee and the Bentley Academy Charter School as follows:

Mr. Schultz Yes

Dr. Walsh No

Mr. Fleming No

Mr. Bryant Yes

Ms. Amaral Yes

Mayor Driscoll Yes

The motion carried (4-2).

Mr. Fleming moved at this time to return to the regular order of the agenda. Ms. Hunt seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Presentations and Reports**

**Update on Salem Public Schools Transportation Plan**

Mr. Littlehale reported that the Business Office is processing 1,200 applications for transportation for the 2015-16 school year. He explained the process and noted that 660 applications were rolled over and there are 500 new applications this year. He also reported that letter have been sent to parents on the transportation plan.

Mr. Littlehale also reported that they are working on the bus routes and the location of bus stops.

Mayor Driscoll suggested that a dry run of the bus routes would be helpful to work out any issues there may be.

**Report on the August Leadership Institute**

Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone addressed the School Committee and reported on the Salem Public Schools Leadership Institute that was held the first week of August. She reported that an important part of the institute was team building and focused on working on a unified set of priorities.

Ms. Carbone explained the agenda for the institute and noted the topics and goals and objectives for each session as follows:

**August 4, 2015 - Learning Together as a Team**

**Session Goals & Objectives:**

* Get to know all members of the new Salem Leadership team
* Share views on what is working well, what challenges need to be addressed, and aspirations for SPS
* Reflect on and assess how SPS currently operates as a learning organization and identify steps to improve the culture of learning across SPS
* Understand the key elements and practices of creating a learning organization within SPS schools

**August 6, 2015 - Digging Into Data**

**Pre-Reading:**

* Chapter 7 from *Great Habits, Great Readers* by Bambrick-Santoyo, Settles, and Worrell

**Session Goals & Objectives:**

* Principals will define and clarify goals, expectations, and supports for data team members, data team meetings and teachers’ use of data in planning day-to-day instruction.
* Principals will develop a “data splash” to launch the year outlining how they will build structures in their schools that support teachers’ capacity to dig into data on an ongoing basis.
* Principals will identify key “look fors” to use in assessing and monitoring the progress of teachers’ use of data to drive instruction.
* Principals will understand district-wide priorities for instruction and data use.

# **August 7, 2015 - Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners**

**Pre-Readings**

“As Diversity Grows, So Must We”- Gary Howard, Originally published in: *Educational Leadership*, March 2007, Volume 64, Number 6, Responding to Changing Demographics, p. 16-22.

**Session Goals & Objectives:**

* Establish that racial/cultural/economic differences are real, they exist in Salem and they make a difference in our educational outcomes.
* Establish the need for professional/personal journey toward greater awareness.

Ms. Carbone noted that there were no external consultants involved in the institute and noted that the sessions were facilitated by Salem Public Schools staff.

Ms. Ruiz thanked Kate Carbone and Margaret Marotta for all of their hard work on the summer institute.

Ms. Ruiz also stated that professional development need to be closely aligned with the work that has been started with the school leaders.

**Finance Report**

**Budget Transfer Request**

**FY16 Budget Transfer Request (1) – Bowditch Partnership with PlayWorks**

Mr. Littlehale reported that Bowditch Principal Johanna Even is requesting the following budget transfer of $30,000 from Paraprofessionals to Contracted services. The transfer is requested to support a partnership with PlayWorks. The Playworks partnership will support the school’s efforts to improve school culture and academic achievement. Through the partnership with Playworks, the school will have a full time coach who will facilitate recess games and activities with the goal of making recess time a productive, safe, fun and engaging time of the school day.

The transfer request is summarized as follows:



Mr. Bryant moved to approve the budget transfer request. Ms. Hunt seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Mr. Fleming stated that he feels that this matter would require impact bargaining with the Paraprofessionals Union.

Dr. Walsh stated that he would like more information regarding the PlayWorks program.

Ms. Amaral stated that the program should be vetted but suggested that the School Committee approve the transfer and let the Superintendent and the Principal handle it.

Ms. Hunt stated that she is comfortable that the Superintendent and the Principal should handle this internally.

Dr. Walsh stated that he feels that an explanation of the organization that will be providing the services should be given to the School Committee.

Mr. Bryant asked if Superintendent Ruiz is familiar with the organization and their program. Ms. Ruiz explained that they will be providing structured games at recess and should result in a significant decrease in behavior issues at recess.

Mr. Fleming stated that he is concerned that this will be taking union work away from staff and it has to bargained with the union.

Mr. Bryant stated that he feels that the Superintendent should have the authority to make a decision on this.

Mr. Bryant moved to approve the budget transfer request in the amount of $30,000 from paraprofessionals to contracted services. Ms. Hunt seconded the motion. The motion carried (4-3).

Mr. Fleming moved to refer the matter to the Personnel Subcommittee for possible collective bargaining. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**FY16 Budget Transfer Request (2) – District Wide Professional Development**

Mr. Littlehale explained that he is requesting a budget transfer of $195,000 from Collective Bargaining Reserve to Professional Development. This amount represents the replacement of the Race To The Top funds. The transfer is requested to move budgeted funds to the appropriate lines for the needed expenses.

The transfer request is summarized as follows:



Mr. Fleming asked what the Collective Bargaining Reserve line is. Mr. Littlehale explained that the line is a place holder that was used for the budget process and he is now requesting that the funds be moved to the appropriate lines for needed expenses.

Ms. Amaral moved to approve the budget transfer request in the amount of $195,000 from Collective Bargaining Reserve to Fringe/Stipends ($20,000) and Educational Training ($175,000). Ms. Hunt seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Approval of Warrants**

The following warrants were presented for approval:

July 16, 2015 in the amount of $728,134.86

July 23, 2015 in the amount of $197,119.15

July 30, 2015 in the amount of $697,148.16

Mr. Fleming moved approval of the warrants in the amounts specified. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Action Items**

1. Deliberation on the third reading of the policy on Accepting Foreign Exchange Students

Mr. Bryant moved approval. Ms. Hunt seconded the motion. The motion carried.

1. Deliberation on the third reading of the policy on Background Checks – Fingerprinting

Ms. Hunt moved approval. Mr. Bryant seconded the motion. The motion carried.

1. Deliberation on the approval of the third reading of the revision to the policy on Children of Non-Resident Teachers Attending the Salem Public Schools

Ms. Hunt moved that the matter be tabled for further review. Mr. Bryant seconded the motion. The motion carried.

1. Deliberation on the approval of the third reading Use of Tobacco on School Property by Staff Members – (Replaces existing policy 4111 Tobacco Free Schools)

Ms. Hunt moved approval. Mr. Bryant seconded the motion. The motion carried.

1. Deliberation on language clarification to the Transportation Policy approved by the School Committee on June 15, 2015

Ms. Hunt recalled that the School Committee approved this policy and that the language allows for the School Committee to review it annually and adjust it as needed.

Mr. Littlehale explained that the previous policy included language regarding children who live less than a mile from their school as being ineligible to purchase transportation and the policy now implies that everyone is eligible.

Ms. Amaral explained that the School Committee discussed this at the last meeting and Ms. Hunt was not present. She suggested that the matter be tabled to the next meeting.

Ms. Hunt moved to table the matter to the next meeting. Ms. Amaral seconded the motion. The motion carried.

1. Deliberation on the approval on the extension of the current Salem Teachers Union Contract, and any other collective bargaining agreements that the School Committee has until such time as new collective bargaining agreements are in place.

Mr. Fleming moved approval. Dr. Walsh seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Subcommittee Reports**

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**Policy Subcommittee**

Ms. Hunt reported that the Policy Subcommittee has met a few times this summer and they are in the process of reviewing the 5000 policy section. She explained that they will be bringing forward several policies with recommendations for revisions during next few months.

**Committee of the Whole Report**

Mayor Driscoll reported that the School Committee held a Committee of the Whole meeting this evening and the Bentley MOU was reviewed which the School Committee approved this evening. She also reported that the School Committee held a discussion regarding Athletics and Student Activities Fees. She explains that the School Committee would like to work towards eliminating the fees and at this time the Committee has recommended that the fees be suspended.

Mr. Fleming moved to suspend the collection of athletics and student activities fees. Mr. Bryant seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**School Committee Concerns and Resolutions**

Mr. Fleming reported that NECHE.com has issued the results of a survey they did on Massachusetts High Schools and Salem is listed in the top 50 at #27 for the best high school faculties.

**Questions and Comments from the Audience Regarding the May 18, 2015 Agenda**

There were no questions or comments from the audience.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the School Committee this evening, Mr. Fleming moved that the School Committee adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining issues and the School Committee will not be returning to open session this evening. Ms. Amaral seconded the motion.

Mayor Driscoll called for a roll call vote as follows:

Dr. Walsh Yes

Ms. Amaral Yes

Mr. Bryant Yes

Ms. Hunt Yes

Mr. Schultz Yes

Mr. Fleming Yes

Mayor Driscoll Yes

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Eileen M. Sacco, Secretary

Salem School Committee

**Meeting Materials and Reports**

Minutes of Regular School Committee Meeting July 6, 2015

Minutes of School Committee Retreat July 11, 2015

Minutes of Special School Committee Meeting July 27, 2015

School Committee Agenda August 10, 2015

Tobacco Policy

Policy on Accepting Foreign Exchange Students

Policy on Background Checks-Fingerprinting

Policy on Children of Salem Public Schools Teachers Attending Salem Public Schools

Policy on Transportation

Superintendent’s 100 Day Entry Plan

Memorandum of Understanding for Bentley Academy Charter School

Summer Leadership Institute Agenda