

**LINCOLN-SUDBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
DECEMBER 8, 2020**

7:00pm

Google Meet

Present

Ellen Joachim, Chair; Carole Kasper, Vice-Chair; Cara Endyke-Doran; Harold Engstrom; Kevin Matthews; Candace Miller

Also Present

Bella Wong, Superintendent/Principal; Kirsteen Patterson, Director of Finance and Operations; Joshua Gilman, Teachers' Association Co-President; Riya Misra, Student Senate

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04pm

Public Comment

There was no public comment

Presentation of the FY22 Budget

Ms. Wong introduced the proposed FY22 Budget noting that the yearly budget provides the backbone for all LS programs and all goals aspired for students. (see attached FY22 Budget). The student population is projected to be 1509 for next year. There will be a projected drop in enrollment in two years. Median class sizes are between 21 and 26 for the current year which is an increase from the year before due to reduction of staff in many departments. The total recommended FY22 Budget is for \$35,329,792 which provides level service including the LS Academy. Budget guidance from the Towns of Lincoln and Sudbury is for a budget of \$34,864,792 resulting in a funding gap of \$465,000.

LS Academy has been a huge benefit to LS students and the ability to keep students within the LS system. The cost avoidance resulting from LS Academy is conservatively \$1,718,000. The cost of running LS Academy is \$1,068,000 (staff, teaching assistants and leasing costs).

Financial assumptions include:

- Level funding for state and federal grants (although the final numbers are TBD due to economic impact of COVID)
- Salaries with no COLA increases
- Decrease in health insurance cost due to change to Harvard Pilgrim Health Group
- Increase to non-MTRS pension funding (5%)
- Increase in transportation costs of 2.89% is offset by corresponding decrease in utility costs

- A projected \$650,000 in out of district tuitions – the most challenging factor in the budget. Ongoing discussions with sending schools to adequately project costs
- A lower Chapter 70 contribution and level funding for OPEB liability
- The Circuit Breaker reimbursement will be \$100,000 less than last year.

Per the regional agreement, capital expenses will be apportioned 87.85% for Sudbury and 12.15% for Lincoln which reflects the relative enrollment of the two towns.

Ms. Wong discussed the Budget Timeline in which a vote to approve the FY22 budget must be made by February 2, 2021, in order to comply with deadlines for the Lincoln Town Meeting on March 27, 2021. Currently, the Public Hearing on the FY22 Budget was to be held on January 18, 2021. However, the Governor's Budget Recommendations will not be released until January 29, 2021. Ms. Wong recommended that the Public Hearing and Vote on the FY22 Budget both be held on February 2, 2021 to permit incorporation of latest figures for an accurate FY22 Budget. Discussion regarding this issued followed. In the best possible world, a separation of Public Hearing and FY Budget vote is preferable but this is anything but a best possible world. Ms. Joachim suggested that there was time to discuss this possibility with the towns' finance committees.

Student Senate Representative

Riya Misra reported on subjects of discussion at student senate meetings. The senate has been discussing methods of fund raising and destinations for the funds raised. One thought was to contribute to paying for COVID testing for students needing financial assistance.

METCO Parent Representative Report

There was no METCO Parent Representative Report

Teachers' Association Report

Joshua Gilman commended fellow teachers who are working with students in new and novel ways to continue working with clubs and activities student groups. The faculty has benefitted from the Professional Development workshops, the most recent on Rainbow Connection information.

Chairperson and Liaison Reports

Ms. Joachim encourages all school committee members to attend the Lincoln Finance Committee meeting on December 9, 2020 as well as the Sudbury Finance Committee Meeting on December 14, 2020.

Ms. Joachim reported that the Sudbury Select Board has been holding discussions on the LS Regional Agreement. Executive Session minutes and the legal opinion regarding this agreement are on the Select Board website. Ms. Joachim shared her understanding that any potential process to update the LS Regional Agreement would best be initiated by the LS School Committee, which inherently consists of membership from both towns. She referred to a MARS (Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools) presentation from the Fall 2019

MASS/MASC annual conference as a helpful resource. She further noted that although updating the LS Regional Agreement would be a timely revision, the District is fully compliant with current rules and regulations. She concluded her report-out by sharing her view that updating the LS Regional Agreement can't be a priority of the Committee for the current 2020-21 academic year given the importance of remaining focused this year on educating our students amidst the challenges of the pandemic.

Ms. Kasper reported on the Strategic Planning Steering Committee which continues to meet, most recently on December 3, 2020. Implementation teams are providing planning for each of four strategic areas and goals. She noted that the LS Strategic Plan provides guidance for the FY22 budgeting process. The next meeting of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee will be on January 14, 2021.

The Safety Council met on Tuesday, December 8, to review safety procedures and protocols as well as the change in traffic flow on campus.

Ms. Kasper noted that it is time to initiate transition planning for 2021 – the transition of students from middle school to LS. Harold Engstrom has joined the Transition Planning team.

Superintendent/Principal Report

Ms. Wong provided a general update on the most recent Professional Development Day which was able to recapture the plans developed for the cancelled Professional Day of last spring semester. Tracie Lopez, Regina Shopiro, Peter Elenbaas, Virginia Blake, Lori Hodin, and Erin Shanahan worked diligently to enlist the services of PFlag and the presentations and panels were remarkably informative for faculty and staff. Ms. Wong commended the faculty for all the efforts made to provide the best education possible for LS students.

There will be no Junior MCAS tests in January.

Ms. Wong provided an update on COVID-19 testing. The first collection of test kits for COVID-19 on December 3-4, 2020, was a great success and was run very efficiently. Thanks to all staff and administrators who worked during the day to scan in students' test kits. Round 2 testing will take place on December 10-11, 2020. We now have 1066 participants including 3 School Committee members. There are 1057 participants out of a possible 1465 in person staff and student population for a 72.15% rate of participation. Ms. Wong thanked the Town of Sudbury for sharing the COVID Relief funds to pay for the December testing. She also thanked the LSPO for fundraising to provide financial assistance for student testing. LS Coaches will be participating in the testing. The testing program is especially important as infection rates in Massachusetts increase.

Information and Discussion

Ms. Joachim introduced the subject of public comment during School Committee meetings and suggested that a change to policy was not necessary but adherence to its parameters in the context of virtual school committee meetings would suffice and, in fact, be

necessary. Comments will be limited to three minutes per person. Ms. Joachim and Ms. Kasper recommend allotting 15 minutes to public comment at the beginning of the meeting and five minutes at the conclusion of the meeting. They encourage the public to send in questions in time for the beginning of the meeting. It will allow for the subject of public comment to be in mind during the remainder of the meeting when relevant subjects may be addressed. Ms. Endyke-Doran supported this approach. Mr. Engstrom felt that questions read at the end of the meeting often had been answered during the meeting. Questions submitted in advance of the meeting, rather than during, could be read by the Committee Members before the meeting. Ms. Joachim reminded all that questions and concerns could be emailed to the School Committee at any time and all members have access to the email address.

Approval of Minutes

Carole Kasper moved to approve the edited Minutes for November 17, 2020. The motion was seconded by Harold Engstrom. There was no further discussion. All were in favor via roll call vote.

Future Agenda

There were no future agenda items.

Public Comment

If you are voting on a change in format for public comment, why don't you consider actually addressing any comments/concerns and ideas from parents and community members rather than just reading them because you have to? A public q&a would be nice. If you say you don't have time for it, make the time. Have a separate meeting day for this, or shorten other topics to allow room for it. This is a time that EVERYONE needs to be heard regarding their students' educations and mental health. **Karen Guderian**

If goal is to keep our school community safe and COVID free, we shouldn't ask Coaches that coach our student athletes but are not LS teachers to pay. Either LS should cover it or perhaps Boosters could. Worst case, perhaps funds raised could cover it. **Lauren Hochberg**

Can you please articulate for the community why there are no responses to the public comments and why nothing is ever done about the comments that are coming in? Sometimes people write great questions and comments, and we never hear feedback from the committee. In addition, you have stated that you will be putting an FAQ up, but it does not appear to be anywhere. Also, minutes have not been updated since 10/16, so it's difficult to keep abreast of what the community is saying. Finally, the SC does not respond to questions that are submitted in between meetings, and it feels like valid concerns are being ignored in both the meeting and in an email. This year, in particular, the questions and comments are extremely prescient and deserve a response. **Claudine Coulon**

I think there is a big disconnect between how the SC feels it is responding to the public and how it is responding. The SC is NOT responsive respectful of valid commentary, or transparent with respect to how they are integrating public comment.

I just sent a public comment, and hopped back online, and this is just ONE of the public comments that is floating out there in response to Ellen's representation:

“As a group, I think we’re pretty accessible and responsive?” This public comment discussion is RIDICULOUS.” I am NOT alone in stating this and it is totally unfair to completely ignore the comments.

Claudine Coulon

Adjourn

Carole Kasper moved to adjourn to Executive Session to review and approve Executive Session Minutes as the Chair has so declared. The motion was seconded by Harold Engstrom. There was no further discussion. All were in favor via roll call vote. The meeting was adjourned to Executive Session at 9:19pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Francy Zingale

To view video of the meeting, please go to: <https://sudbury.vod.cstus.tv/vod>