

Sudbury Public Schools (SPS)
School Committee Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)
November 20, 2017, 6:00 PM
Fairbanks Community Center

Members Present:

Christine Hogan, Chair
Richard Tinsley, Vice Chair
Margaret Helon
Lisa Kouchakdjian
Lucie St. George

Also Present:

Don Sawyer, Director of Business and Finance
Dr. Anne Wilson, Superintendent of Schools
Kimberly Swain, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Eileen Levoy, SEA Representative
Ray Shurtleff, Collins Center
William Lupini, Collins Center

Open Session

Chair Christine Hogan called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

1. FY19 Budget Planning

Don Sawyer updated the Committee on the FY19 budget forecast and the next steps, which will need to occur over the next 4-6 weeks of the budget cycle. Mr. Sawyer noted that the School Committee's proposed FY19 budget should be submitted by December 18th to keep pace with the Town Manager and Finance Committee.

Superintendent Anne Wilson discussed enrollment projections, including current and historical data and also discussed the number of sections for each of the grades and schools. Mr. Sawyer advised the Committee to keep these enrollment projections in mind as they create their proposed budget.

Mr. Sawyer discussed projected Full-Time Employee additions due to mandates. Ms. Hogan would like to see this information broken down, to show what is the mandate, and the position addressing the mandate. Dr. Wilson stated that the majority of the additional positions are based on early childhood education due to the increased need for teaching assistants to support IEP's. Ms. Hogan also asked if Sudbury is unique in Special Education demographics and spending trends. Ms. Hogan requested Special Education budget comparisons with comparable districts. She said if other comparable districts are experiencing similar situations she would be able to justify the costs. She also asked if the increase in services is a trend we anticipate continuing as we need that information for long-term planning.

Sharon McDonald, Principal, Haynes Elementary School, read a statement from the Sudbury Public Schools Principals regarding the reduction of 26.81FTE positions from their schools due to this year's

budget cuts, as well as the loss of programs and resources. They hope the School Committee will consider their budget recommendations.

Dr. Wilson reviewed positions that had been cut and discussed possibly restoring some of these positions and programs. She also discussed the benefits of hiring additional personnel, such as an Assistant Principal and a House Administrator for the Middle School, and increasing the number of hours for certain positions, such as the Early Childhood Director. Lisa Kouchakdjian suggested the possible addition of a STEM coordinator. Dr. Wilson said they will come back with more ideas and will share at the next meeting.

Mr. Sawyer explained that with these new recommended additions and restorations, we are at a 6.6% increase over this year's overall budget at \$38,637,178. The next step is the School Committee's recommendations of positions and programs that they would like to see that are currently not on the list.

Lucie St. George likes what has been proposed and looks forward to seeing how it develops.

Richard Tinsley noted that he doesn't have specific items but would like to see comparables with other districts, he would like to ensure that we are investing properly.

Lisa Kouchakdjian would like to see makerspaces located at all of the elementary schools, although she is unsure of the fiscal burden, it is something she would like to look into, as well as the long term plan.

Maggie Helon appreciates the experts letting the Committee know their needs but asked that they be innovative and creative as they seek additional assistant principals, as this position will require, from a budget standpoint, an individual to be an integral component to the learning and instruction of the students.

Christine Hogan would like to see a grant writer, possibly shared with LS; Dr. Wilson noted that this could possibly be incorporated with the addition of assistant principal position(s).

Long-term projection regarding enrollment was discussed, Mr. Tinsley noted that it was declining and is now leveling off, currently at 2,700, down from 3,232 in 2007.

2. Superintendent Search

Ms. Hogan noted that the Committee voted to work on a permanent superintendent search and will utilize the Collins Center to aid in the search. Ms. Hogan thanked Dr. Wilson for securing two representatives from the Collins Center to attend tonight's meeting to move the process forward.

Dr. Wilson introduced Ray Shurtleff and Bill Lupini from the Collins Center who explained the timeline and discussed the two options for the search process.

Option One would include having the screening committee meet multiple times to discuss the characterizations and create a profile of the position and post the position by January 5, 2018. The application deadline would be February 2, 2018. The Collins Center would be responsible for getting the notice out through School Spring and MASS and other sources, and would prepare and send the resumes to members of the screening committee who will vote on which candidates to interview.

Interviews would begin the week of February 26th. The Collins Center will do the reference checking prior to any final interviews. A site visit and community forums could occur, and a decision could be made by March 23rd and a potential starting date of July 1st. Mr. Lupini noted they have already started to create a pool of candidates who will be of interest. There are approximately 50-60 superintendent positions currently available in Massachusetts.

Option Two said a vacancy notice would be put out on December 8, 2017 with an application deadline of January 12, 2018. Screening Committee members would meet on January 22nd. Interviews would begin the week of February 5th. A set of candidates/resumes would be sent on February 10th, and reference checks would be completed a week later. This allows more time for community forums and site visits, with a decision being made by March 15th.

The Committee agreed that Option Two would be the better option due to the flexibility.

Mr. Tinsley would like to see the Vision Statement created earlier than January 5, 2018.

Ms. Helon prefers the vacancy be put out earlier and then extend the application deadline for another week.

The process of filling the roles of candidates for the screening committee was discussed. The Board reviewed the screening committee roles previously agreed upon and revisited whether an LS School Committee Member should be asked to be part of the screening committee. Ms. Kouchakdjian and Ms. St. George questioned why an LS representative is necessary. Ms. Hogan stated the expectation is that both the superintendents of LS and SPS would be working together, not unlike with the Town Manager. She reminded the Committee Melissa Rodrigues is representing the Town in that role. Ms. Hogan stated since the SPSC will ultimately be deciding who the next superintendent will be, it is important that all Committee members be comfortable with the screening committee. The Committee agreed to include a second parent/community member in place of a LS School that she would work on creating a communication to go out which will include the date ranges potential screening committee members would need to be available.

The Committee thanked Mr. Shurtleff and Mr. Lupini for their attendance. Mr. Shurtleff and Mr. Lupini noted they would compile a list of meeting dates in the next few days.

3. District Reports

a. SEA Report

Eileen Levoy reviewed some of the new learning occurring in the elementary schools. Many classrooms are implementing the Bridges Math Program called Number Corner. Students have been working on Zones of Regulations, a strategy used to help with self-regulation. Students are working on STEMScopes Science Programs. Fourth grade students worked in groups to create their own beaches in buckets to learn about erosion.

b. Assistant Superintendent Report

Assistant Superintendent Kimberly Swain congratulated the eighth grade ELA teachers who received a grant from the Sudbury Education Resource Fund, which will allow the students to attend a production of To Kill a Mockingbird at the Curtis Middle School.

Ms. Swain thanked Robert Carter, team librarian and makerspace coordinator, who met with technology and instruction systems to discuss partnering in the creation of makerspaces, many great ideas came out of this meeting.

c. Superintendent Report

Dr. Wilson thanked Curtis Middle School administration, staff and students for a meaningful Veteran's Day celebration, each of the military branches were represented, it is a nice tradition.

The search for a Haynes principal is progressing, interviews will be held on December 6th and 7th. The Student Services Director position will be posted in the next few days and they will be asking for a School Committee representative.

Dr. Wilson noted that the calendar survey has gotten over 1,000 responses, they will wait for direction from the Committee as to when to close the survey.

4. Email Communication regarding Superintendent Search Firm Selection

The Attorney General's office had advised the Committee to put this item on the next agenda due to a question regarding the absence of a member who could not attend the Friday meeting to discuss the Superintendent search firm but wished to vote. Mr. Tinsley noted that if a meeting is scheduled when a Member cannot attend, there should be a way to proxy a vote. Ms. Hogan noted you can skype or call into a meeting and attend the meeting remotely if arranged prior to the meeting.

5. Schedule Governance Workshop

Ms. Hogan said that this is an important workshop, which could benefit the Committee Members as a refresher course, it is via a webinar and will stream live on December 14th at 4:00 - 5:30 PM. The Committee agreed that, as long as this webinar is recorded, they would all commit to watching it; if it is not recorded, they will discuss bringing someone in to do the workshop. It is believed that all Members have taken this course, but it is important to have a refresher.

6. School Committee Reports (Subcommittee/Liaison Reports)

Lisa Kouchakdjian noted that she and Richard Tinsley attended a FinCom meeting on November 13th, FinCom is asking for the 3-year Plans. FinCom reviewed their budget guidance letter and discussed their revenue projections.

Ms. Kouchakdjian noted that she and Lucie St. George attended the Strategic Planning for Capital Funding Committee meeting, the School Committee considered whether CPC should have a representative on their Committee.

Maggie Helon noted that Haynes Playground Committee is up and running, there are three meetings scheduled over the next few weeks.

Richard Tinsley noted that he and Christine Hogan are part of the Budgetary Task Force, which is a group of different cost centers getting together to start the budget process. This morning transportation was discussed, as this is an unknown at this point. Ms. Hogan added that there was discussion between Anne and Bella on going in on a joint traffic study; Dr. Wilson added that Sherry will speak to Don Sawyer regarding the scope of the study.

7. Open Forum

Resident Maura Carty has three children in the District, she feels sad regarding the decision to dissolve Odyssey. She read a statement regarding her position.

Resident Valerie Friedholm spoke on behalf of the Save Odyssey Group, which includes 650 people. They are not looking to bring back the old Odyssey program, but to save the overnight component. Ms. Friedholm discussed data they have collected and noted Sudbury is the only Town that does not have a curriculum-based overnight experience. Ms. Friedholm read information regarding Nature's Classroom. They are looking forward to meeting with Michael Gilbert from MASC and will provide the information resulting from this and other meetings to the School Committee.

8. Transportation Cost Projections

Don Sawyer noted the Committee has received scenarios regarding changing start times. Number of buses and cost factor was a conservative approach, 22 is a conservative number of buses. Fleet size drives the cost. Mr. Sawyer noted that SPS and this Committee can only control the start times of K-8. Ms. Hogan would like to move forward diligently and carefully on this subject, but not too slowly. Ms. Hogan noted that she wants to ensure it is done in the best interest of the students. Mr. Tinsley expressed concern of the time between schools, and how this works logistically. Ms. Hogan said to gauge the community, we could send out a quick five-question survey regarding the start time. Ms. Hogan said this would be put on an upcoming agenda.

9. Liaison to Finance Committee

Ms. Hogan noted that the Attorney General's office was contacted regarding meeting postings and we were advised to have one liaison to FinCom from the School Committee. Historically there has been two. Ms. Kouchakdjian stated that there was a meeting that she and Richard Tinsley both attended and the question of a possible OML violation arose. Ms. Kouchakdjian said that she contacted the AG's office and it was suggested to either post a meeting or have one representative, she and Richard have agreed that he will go to the meetings. If he cannot attend, she will.

Dr. Wilson said that if two Committee Members attend a meeting as liaisons, the meeting should be posted.

10. District Organization

Nothing to report at this time.

11. Strategic/Transition Plan

Mr. Tinsley noted that, due to Dr. Wilson's retirement, rather than prepare a summative report the Committee, Dr. Wilson would submit a transition plan, adding this should be agreed by a vote of the Committee. Dr. Wilson said this is something she would work on and bring to the Committee to make it public. Ms. St. George made a motion to relieve the responsibility of doing a summative evaluation and make the strategic transition plan take its place for this school year. Ms. Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0. Motion carries.

12. Comparable School Districts

Mr. Tinsley reviewed the data he compiled of comparable school districts in Massachusetts, with K-6 and K-8 districts. Mr. Tinsley noted that you could also combine LS and SPS as a fair way to

compare to K-12 districts. Mr. Tinsley noted that SPS is larger than any other district, and should be a cost advantage.

Dr. Wilson referenced Department of Education and Clear.gov comparables sheets and believes the Committee should focus on SPS's budget by looking at K-8 districts. Dr. Wilson noted that Concord is our best comparable.

Mr. Tinsley believes that looking broader enables us to look deeper into how we are investing our money. Ms. Kouchakdjian says that she would prefer to lead the way rather than follow, but is fine with learning from other districts. Ms. Helon said, as an educator, they would collaborate and help each other to see what other districts are doing and what works. Dr. Wilson agreed that collaboration with other districts is a good practice. Ms. Hogan agrees that we can lead and still learn by looking what is going on around you. This will be put on a future agenda for further discussion.

13. Members' Forum

Lisa Kouchakdjian noted that she had suggested Michael Gilbert speak with the Odyssey group, he is a fantastic resource. Ms. Kouchakdjian suggested if the Odyssey group has something to present, she believes Dr. Wilson would be open to hearing them.

Ms. Kouchakdjian said she appreciates all the work of the staff, administration, families and constituents and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. Other Committee Members agreed.

14. Minutes (10/18, 10/23, 11/17)

10/18/2017 minutes - Some Members noted that they had not yet reviewed these minutes, they will be placed on the next agenda..

10/23/2017 minutes - Ms. Helon made edits to Page 5, it was agreed to look at the recording of the LS meeting to correct.

11/17/2017 minutes - Ms. St. George made a motion to approve the 11/17/2017 Sudbury Public School Committee meeting minutes. Ms. Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0-1. Motion carries. (R. Tinsley abstained due to the fact that he was not at the meeting)

15. Future Agenda Item Discussion

The Committee Members agreed that they would open their meetings at 6:00 PM. Ms. Kouchakdjian would like to put the legislative forum on a future agenda, for guidance.

16. Executive Session

None.

17. Adjournment

Ms. Kouchakdjian made a motion to adjourn. Ms. St. George seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0. Motion carries.

The meeting adjourned at 10:36 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Laura Clifford
Recording Secretary