

Sudbury School Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 16, 2023
Virtual Meeting

Members Present:

Silvia Nerssessian, Chair
Meredith Gerson, Vice Chair
Nicole Burnard
Mandy Sim
Sarah Troiano

Also Present:

Brad Crozier, Superintendent
Don Sawyer, Director of Business and Human Resources
Kim Swain, Assistant Superintendent
Ellen Vedora, SEA Representative

Regular Session Meeting

Chair Silvia Nerssessian opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

1. Opening Statement / Regular Session
 - a. Chair Silvia Nerssessian performed a roll call and made an announcement that the session is being recorded, shared live for the public to see and hear and there should be no expected right to privacy, as this is a public forum. Meredith Gerson, Nicole Burnard, Mandy Sim, Sarah Troiano and Silvia Nerssessian all affirmed in the positive.
2. Public Comment
 - a. Rich Thalmann, 61 Pine Street, expressed his concern about the subject matter of literature in the classroom observed during open house. Additionally, he shared he was pleased to see the passion for learning teachers displayed during open house.
3. Educational and Operational Matters
 - a. SEA Report (Ellen Vedora)
 - i. Ms. Vedora gave an update on district activities including that Noyes fifth graders are taking part in a dehydration project as part of the Bridges math curriculum. By asking students about their favorite books, librarians are better understanding what books to purchase. The Noyes Revitalization Project is underway with the assistance of Ms. Dube and Ms. O'Neil. Lastly, Mr. Gorgone, the music instructor at Noyes, was recently featured by WBZ news for the school-wide videos he creates.
 - b. District Reports
 - i. Director of Business and Human Resources Report
 1. Mr. Sawyer shared that he and Superintendent Crozier recently attended a Select Board Meeting.
 2. He also mentioned that the Occupational Services Division released its inflation report for social service programs for FY25 which set a rate increase of 4.69%.

3. A construction fence is being installed this week around the Curtis Outdoor Wellness Structure and a contractor has been chosen to handle the site work. After the site has been prepared, the structure will be installed.
 4. Clarifying questions from the committee surrounded average increases in OSD prior to the 14% increase, if surveying for the Curtis Wellness project had been finished, what would happen if inclement weather impacts installation and how long the site prep would take.
- ii. Assistant Superintendent Report
 1. Ms. Swain previewed the upcoming ILAP day sharing that middle school will resume its Grading for Equity training, while elementary school teachers will continue their Keys to Literacy training.
 2. Recently, Ms. Swain, Ms. Juriansz, Ms. Vedora and Ms. Reynolds took part in a panel discussion at the Goodnow Library Be Bold Series. She thanked them all for their participation as well as Ms. Sarah Thompson from the Goodnow Library.
 - iii. Superintendent's Report
 1. Superintendent Crozier gave an update on the transition to the new Fairbank building which will take place in mid-December. Staff from the Central Office will be working across the district during the transition.
 2. He also shared that the new Sudbury health director expressed her thanks to him and SPS for their partnership with the Hidden in Plain Sight demonstration during the Curtis Open House as well as keeping staff informed about a recent COVID vaccination clinic.
4. Business and Policy Matters
 - a. Fall Town Meeting Warrant Article Discussion and Updates
 - i. Three articles were submitted by the School Committee for the fall town meeting. Without understanding the intent of the articles, the Select Board changed the articles' wording with town counsel's guidance and those articles were submitted to residents.
 - ii. After that, SPS was requested to meet with Town Counsel to explain the intent of the articles. Options were then presented to best fit the town's budget while also bringing the articles back to the original intent.
 - iii. Each article was reviewed starting with Article 11 - Nixon School Roof Schematic Design Fees. Because the Select Board meets just prior to Town Meeting the Committee highlighted their concerns they wouldn't know exactly what motions were going to be presented.
 - iv. Clarifying questions from the Committee surrounded whether funds would be able to be used as the motion is written if we are not invited into the MSBA program.
 1. Vice Chair Meredith Gerson moves to support the motion for Article 11 Nixon Elementary School Roof Schematic Design Fees as amended to include the sum of \$248,000. Sarah Troiano second the motion.
 - a. ROLL CALL VOTE
 - i. Meredith Gerson: Aye

- ii. Nicole Burnard: Aye
 - iii. Mandy Sim: Aye
 - iv. Sarah Troiano: Aye
 - v. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye
1. **Vote:** 5-0. Motion carries.

- v. The Committee then reviewed Article 12 Increase to FY2024 Sudbury Public Schools General Fund Appropriation for Additional Chapter 70 State Aid. Chair Nerssessian noted that the request in this article is to transfer Chapter 70 funds directly to SPS rather than to request additional funding. Since the funds are earmarked specifically for Sudbury Public Schools, each member of the Committee expressed support for this article.

1. Vice Chair Meredith Gerson moves to support Article 12 Increase to FY2024 Sudbury Public Schools General Fund Appropriation for Additional Chapter Chapter 70 State Aid as presented in the slide deck. Mandy Sim seconded the motion.

- a. ROLL CALL VOTE

- i. Meredith Gerson: Aye
 - ii. Nicole Burnard: Aye
 - iii. Mandy Sim: Aye
 - iv. Sarah Troiano: Aye
 - v. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye
1. **Vote:** 5-0. Motion carries.

- vi. The Committee then reviewed Article 13 Funding of State Approved Special Education Out of District Tuition Cost Increase. Superintendent Crozier confirmed wording on this motion would give the most flexibility on how any monies come to Sudbury through grants and special appropriations.

- vii. Questions from the Committee surrounded the difference between how Articles 12 and 13 are worded when the intent is the same.

1. Vice Chair Meredith Gerson moves to support the Town Council recommended motion for Article 13 Funding of State Approved Special Education Out of District Tuition Cost Increase as presented. Sarah Troiano seconded the motion.

- a. ROLL CALL VOTE

- i. Meredith Gerson: Aye
 - ii. Nicole Burnard: Aye
 - iii. Mandy Sim: Aye
 - iv. Sarah Troiano: Aye
 - v. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye
1. **Vote:** 5-0. Motion carries.

- b. Grant Approvals

- i. Mr. Sawyer shared that entitlement grants need to be accepted on an annual basis and outlined for the Committee what was being considered for approval.

1. Vice Chair Meredith Gerson moves to approve receipt of the entitlement grant funding as presented in the packet. Sarah Troiano seconded the motion.

a. ROLL CALL VOTE

- i. Meredith Gerson: Aye
- ii. Nicole Burnard: Aye
- iii. Mandy Sim: Aye
- iv. Sarah Troiano: Aye
- v. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye

1. **Vote:** 5-0. Motion carries.

c. MASS / MASC Joint Conference

- i. Member Sim and Superintendent Crozier will be attending the annual MASS / MASC Conference. Discussion surrounded what sessions and workshops would benefit the Committee the most.
- ii. Sessions covering policy, funding, MSBA, legal issues and communication and messaging were reviewed and agreed upon.

d. FY25 School Committee Budget Communication

- i. Chair Nerssessian confirmed this is a yearly communication shared with the community. Dates were reviewed and the Committee agreed that once the Finance Committee dates are confirmed, the letter will be sent to the community.
 - 1. Vice Chair Meredith Gerson moves to approve the School Committee Budget Communication as amended. Sarah Troiano seconded the motion.

a. ROLL CALL VOTE

- i. Meredith Gerson: Aye
- ii. Nicole Burnard: Aye
- iii. Mandy Sim: Aye
- iv. Sarah Troiano: Aye
- v. Silvia Nerssessian: Aye

1. **Vote:** 5-0. Motion carries.

e. Future Agenda Items

- i. None

f. Monthly Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants Submission

- i. No further action required by the Committee.

5. Executive Session

a. Motion and vote to convene in executive session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws chapter 30A section 21(a) for the following purposes:

- i. Purpose (2) to conduct strategy sessions in preparations for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel, specifically the Superintendent.

- 1. Vice Chair Meredith Gerson moves to convene in executive session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws chapter 30A section 21(a) for the following purpose, purpose (2) to conduct strategy sessions in preparations for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel, specifically the Superintendent and not to reconvene in open session. Sarah Troiano seconded the motion.

a. ROLL CALL VOTE

- i. Meredith Gerson
- ii. Nicole Burnard
- iii. Mandy Sim
- iv. Sarah Troiano
- v. Silvia Nerssessian

1. **Vote:** 5-0. Motion carries.
2. Chair Silvia Nerssessian confirmed that the Sudbury School Committee will be moving into executive session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws chapter 30A section 21(a) for the following purpose, purpose (2) to conduct strategy sessions in preparations for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel, specifically the Superintendent and not to return to open session.

6. Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted,
Julie Williams
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Documents Reviewed During the October 16, 2023 School Committee Meeting

1. Fall STM Warrant Articles 2023
2. KP-#883846-v1-SUDB-_STM_Motions_Art_11_13.DOCX
3. FY24 Entitlement Grants - Final Approval Pending
4. MASS MASC Conference 2023 Brochure
5. SSC Budget Letter Oct 2023
6. SC Meeting Warrant Summary - 101323