

Salem City Council
Committee on Administration and Finance
Minutes of Meeting
June 22, 2011

A meeting of the Salem City Council Committee on Administration and Finance, Co – Posted with the Committee of the Whole was held on Wednesday, June 22, 2011 at 6:30p.m. in the Salem City Council Chambers, Salem City Hall, 93 Washington Street, Salem, Massachusetts.

Councillors Present: Councillor Paul Prevey, Councillor John Ronan, Councillor Steven Pinto, and Councillor Thomas Furey.

Councillors Absent: Chairman Robert McCarthy

Also present were: Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, Finance Director Rich Viscay, Assistant Finance Director, Nina Bridgeman, Mayors Chief of Staff, Jason Silva and Eileen Sacco, Budget Clerk.

Councillor Prevey called the meeting to order and stated that this meeting is being taped by SATV and is airing live on SATV. Councillor Prevey noted members of the Committee present this evening and noted that Councillor McCarthy has been excused from this meeting on the advice of the City Solicitor as his wife is an employee of the School Department.

Councillor Prevey introduced members of the School Department present at the meeting as follows: School Committee Members Mr. Kevin Carr, Mr. James Fleming, Dr. Janet Crane, and Dr. Brendan Walsh. Also present were Dr. William Cameron, Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Steven O'Brien, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Dr. James Picone, Business Manager.

Salem Public Schools Budget for FY12

Mayor Driscoll addressed the Committee and stated that the School Committee spent a considerable amount of time holding meetings and reviewing the FY12 budget for the Salem Public Schools. Mayor Driscoll explained that the Salem Public Schools was a recipient of ARRA funds last year in the amount of \$3 million dollars. She noted that that the School Committee was mindful of the use of the funds and divided it up in thirds to buy down school department debt, capital improvements, and staffing. She further noted that most of the staffing positions that were funded with ARRA funds are included in the FY12 budget.

Mayor Driscoll also explained that the School Department is opening a new Horace Mann Charter School to reduce the dropout rate for high school students. She explained that the School Department realizes that there is a need for students cannot attend school the traditional way and the program is designed to meet their needs.

Mayor Driscoll also noted that Dr. Jim Picone has been a terrific asset to the Salem Public Schools this past year. She noted that his expertise was invaluable and he will be missed when his contract ends on June 30th.

Dr. Cameron introduced members of the School Department staff who were present at the meeting as follows: Ms. Margaret Marotta, Director of Special Education, Mr. David Angeramo, Principal of Salem High School, Mrs. Nancy Pelletier, Principal of the Bentley School, Mr. Thomas LaValley, Principal of the Bates School, Ms. Jean Marie Kahn, Principal of the Carlton School, Ms. Julie Carter, Principal of the Saltonstall School, Mr. Mark Higgins, Principal of the Witchcraft Heights Elementary School, Mr. Kevin Andrews, Principal of the Horace Mann Lab School, and Mr. Paul L'Heureux, Director of Buildings and Grounds.

Dr. Cameron also noted that members of the Salem Community Charter School Board of Trustees Ms. Lucy Corchado and Dr. Alyce Davis are present at the meeting as well.

Dr. Cameron reviewed initiatives going on in the Salem Public Schools. He stated that the budget proposed is a level of service budget.

Dr. Cameron noted that Mayor Driscoll has mentioned the Salem Community Charter School and he wanted to further that by noting that the primary planning and application process for this school was a tremendous community effort, noting that many contributed their time and expertise to making this a reality.

Dr. Cameron also explained that the Carlton School is in the process of planning for an Innovation School to start in September of 2012.

Dr. Cameron also reported that Advanced Placement classes and classical language offerings have been increased at Salem High School. He also reported that a Newcomer Program is being established for ELL learners and the Carlton, Saltonstall, Witchcraft and Bentley Schools.

Dr. Cameron reported that the new Hydroponics Lab at Salem High School is up and running and explained the program.

Dr. Cameron reported that the School Department is streamlining the standards for evaluating students for Individual Education Plans.

Dr. Cameron reported that this level of service budget eliminates 17 tutor positions that were funded with ARRA funds. He also noted that the School Department has not funded a Library Media Specialist for the Elementary Schools.

Councillor Ronan addressed the Committee and noted that last year he proposed a \$100,000 cut to the School Department budget in the non personnel budget and was unsuccessful. He reviewed the amounts of the Buildings and Grounds budgets that have

been spent this year to date and suggested that he feels that there is room there to cut a total of \$153,000 for the FY12 budget. He noted that Ground Maintenance, Utilities, and Building Maintenance Budgets. Dr. Picone reviewed the most recent year to date spending and noted that there are amount encumbered for those budgets that remain to be paid for this year.

Councillor Ronan addressed the Committee and noted that he is concerned about the funding of positions that were funded with ARRA funds. He noted that some of the positions were not classroom teachers and he is concerned about that.

Councillor Ronan also noted that the position of Superintendent is budgeted for \$159,000, and Dr. Cameron is leaving the district. He stated that he sees no reason to fund the additional \$9,000 which would have been Dr. Cameron's raise for FY12.

Mr. Fleming addressed the Committee and explained that the School Committee is currently starting a search for a Superintendent of Schools and the salary range for the position will be advertised with a salary range of \$140,000-\$170,000. He also noted that there is a possibility if the search is unsuccessful that the School Committee would have to hire an Interim Superintendent for the school year.

Mayor Driscoll explained that the School Committee is hopeful that they can attract a qualified candidate that would be a good fit for Salem and she would like to have the flexibility to offer a salary within the range suggested.

Councillor Ronan stated that he is more interested in keeping classroom teachers. Dr. Cameron explained that the positions that are being eliminated are tutors that were deemed not to be needed after a review of IEP's. He also noted that the elimination of the positions does not mean that people will be laid off. He explained that they will be moving to other positions within the school system.

Councillor Ronan noted that the budget includes a School Resource Officer at a salary of \$50,000. He questioned why a Salem Police Officer is assigned to the schools when he could be better utilized by the Police Department and if there is a problem at the schools the police could be called in.

Dr. Cameron stated that he considered the School Resource Officer to be one of the most important positions in the school system. He noted that the primary responsibility of the schools is to provide a safe environment for students.

Councillor Ronan asked if the SRO has an office at the High School or the Middle School. Dr. Cameron explained that the SRO has a presence at all schools in Salem. He noted that the position is typically held by someone who is well trained in dealing with students. He further noted that there have been situations where families have benefited from this position. He also noted that consistency of presence is extremely important.

Mayor Driscoll stated that what Officer Fecteau prevents is worth it. She also noted that the position is not uncommon in other communities and she cannot think of another community that does not have a SRO.

Bentley School Principal Nancy Pelletier addressed the Committee and explained that she was the Assistant Principal at Collins Middle School and the SRO's are trained to deal with adolescents and young children. She noted that Officer Fecteau follows the kids progress from elementary school through high school and often times keeps them out of trouble. She also noted that on occasions principals have to call the police department as well. Ms. Pelletier further noted that on occasion when at Collins she went on night rides with the SRO to check on kids at night.

Mr. Carr addressed the Committee and stated that he agrees with Mrs. Pelletier. He explained that the SRO mitigates situations before they get out of hand and it is a proactive position that supports students.

Mr. Fleming addressed the Committee and clarified that it is the responsibility of the School Committee to decide what to fund in the school budget. He noted that if the Committee cuts the budget by \$50,000 they do not decide what gets cut from the school budget and he could guarantee that it would not be the School Resource Officer that gets cut.

Salem High School Principal David Angeramo addressed the Committee and stated that the SRO is invaluable at Salem High School. He noted that the day to day interaction with the students and staff an asset. He also noted that he feels more students would drop out if not for this position.

Councillor Prevey noted that the Administration and Finance Committee cannot recommend what to cut from the budget and that is the decision of the School Committee. He asked that the Committee stay focused on that.

Councillor Ronan noted that there are 27.5 ELL positions and he assumes that they were funded with ARRA funds. Dr. Cameron explained that ELL issues are considerable in the district explaining that students are not sufficiently competent enough in English to function in a regular classroom without assistance. He also noted that according to the DESE we are barely providing adequate services to students.

Dr. Walsh addressed the Committee and stated that the School Committee has discussed the School Budget in great detail at several meetings and it is the task of the School Committee to craft a budget. He stated that it is the task of the City Council to review that budget and but not to knit pick it. He stated that the line of questioning this evening is insulting to members of the School Committee and reminded members that they can reduce the bottom line if there are sufficient votes to do so.

Councillor Ronan stated that the City Council Committee on Administration and Finance has a function to review the budget and it is their job to "kick the tires".

Councillor Furey addressed the Committee and stated that the Council gets to approve the bottom line figure. He stated that it is not up to the Council to micro manage the school department.

Mr. Carr addressed the Committee and stated that he encourages dialogue and the council has a fiduciary responsibility to review the budget, but he is a little frustrated that this is the 11th hour and suggested that getting involved in the School Budget process earlier when the School Committee holds their budget hearings would be more beneficial. He stated that it is difficult at this point to explain each and every item in the budget.

Councillor Pinto addressed the Committee and stated that he did not think that people should take this review personally. He noted that the School Committee budget is their budget but he does not see why this legislative body could not ask questions.

Councillor Ronan stated that he wants to be sure that all positions proposed in this budget are essential positions.

Councillor Ronan addressed the Committee and questioned the need for a Nova Net Tutor, when the Nova Net program is an online credit recovery program for students. Dr. Cameron explained that the program requires an adult tutor to supervise students using the program.

Salem High School Principal David Angeramo stated that this has been an unbelievable investment for the high school and has been very successful for some students.

Councillor Ronan addressed the Committee and questioned the additional Adjustment Counselors proposed. Dr. Cameron explained that the positions monitor at risk students as they transition from 8th grade to 9th grade.

Mayor Driscoll addressed the Committee and stated that Salem was one of a few communities that received an additional \$1.1 million dollars in Chapter 70 money from the state to help offset the elimination of the ARRA funds. She urged the Committee to approve the recommended appropriation for the School Department for FY12.

There being no further questions or comments regarding the Salem Public Schools Budget:

Councillor Ronan moved to approve the Salem Public Schools Budget in the amount of \$48,856.00 which would be a reduction of \$30,000. Councillor Pinto seconded the motion.

Councillor Ronan stated that the budget includes \$12,000 for a School Committee raise that the City Council did not approve and the other \$18,000 could be cut from the custodial supplies for a total of \$30,000.

Councillor Prevey called for a vote on the motion. The motion carried (3-1 with Councillor Furey opposed).

General Fund Transfer Out

Finance Director Rich Viscay explained that the General Fund Transfer Out is for the funding of the Salem Community Charter School and the Capital Improvement Plan and the Retirement Stabilization Fund.

Dr. Cameron explained that the operating budget for the Charter School is \$764,000 and it is funded by the school system and grants. He explained that the charter school is eligible for grants that the school department is not eligible for and they would be aggressively pursuing them. He also explained that as the school progresses he hopes that fundraising will be successful and that would help to fund future budgets.

Dr. Cameron introduced SCCS Principal Jessica Yurwicz. Councillor Prevey invited Ms. Yurwicz to address the Committee. Ms. Yurwicz addressed the Committee and stated that they have been very busy getting the school ready to open in September. She noted that there is intense interest in the school by kids ranging in age from 16-21 who want to get their diplomas. She also noted that the enrollment for the school is full and there is a waiting list to get in.

There being no further questions or comments regarding the General Fund Transfer Out Budget:

Councillor Ronan moved to approve the Non Personnel Budget for the General Fund Transfer Out Budget in the amount of \$1,364,000.00 seconded by Councillor Pinto. The motion carried.

Councillor Ronan moved to approve the Total Budget for the General Fund Transfer Out Budget in the amount of \$1,364,000.00 seconded by Councillor Pinto. The motion carried.

There being no further business to come before the Committee on Administration and Finance this afternoon, Councillor Ronan moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councillor Furey.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Eileen M. Sacco
Budget Clerk

City of Salem, Massachusetts



"Know Your Rights Under the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 39 §23B, and City Ordinance Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033."

The City Council Committee on Administration & Finance

met in the Council Chamber on Wednesday, June 22, 2011 at 6:30 P.M.

for the purpose of discussing the matter(s) listed below. Notice of this meeting was posted on

June 16, 2011 at 5:29 P.M.

(This meeting is being recorded.)

ATTENDANCE

ABSENT WERE: C. Mc Carthy - excused

SUBJECT(S)

FY2012 Budget

- School Dept.

Mayor made general presentation of the School budget. Dr. Cameron introduces School Committee and School staff that are present. Dr. Cameron points out improvements in the School Dept through New programs and expansion of existing programs. Dr. Cameron spoke of progress in Special education with respect to developing in house Comprehensive programs. Improvements in Study & Student Assessments. Dr. Cameron identified savings and indicated that the budget is a service level funded budget. C. Ronan identified increases in budget in operations & maintenance under building &

grounds. C. Ronan requests information regarding all positions that were funded by ARRA funds. Dr. Cameron explains each position in particular the school resource officer.

C. Ronan inquires about number of teaching positions for students receiving English language teaching + support. There are 340 students who receive language support service.

Dr. Walsh talks about the School Committee reviewing the budget. Mr. Carp suggests getting involved in the budget early on.

C. Ronan inquires about Novia online teaching position for children needing online tutoring to catch up.

\$1.553 M increase in state funding

C. Ronan moves to approved budget in amount of \$48,856,000 - C. Pinto 2nd

C. Pireny votes in favor C. Furey opposed. Dr. Cameron explains the Charter School Councilor Corchado expressed support for the proposed charter school budget.

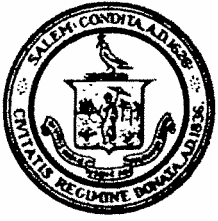
On the motion of C.

Pinto

the meeting adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

P. C. P.

(Chairperson)



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CITY OF SALEM

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City Council

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Dr. Cameron explains the differences
between local charter and Commonwealth
charter schools.