

Sutton School Committee
Sutton, Massachusetts 01590

The Sutton School Committee met in Room 1A of the Sutton Municipal Center on Monday, May 18th, 2009.

School Committee Members present at the meeting were Mr. Paul Brennan (at 7:03 p.m.), Ms. Liisa Locurto, Vice-chair, Ms. Tracey Zuliani, Secretary, Ms. Pam Beaton Graves and Ms. Wendy Mead (left at 8:04 p.m.).

Administrators present at the meeting were Dr. Cecilia Di Bella, Superintendent, Ms. Susan Rothermich, Business Manager, Mr. Goyette, Middle School Principal, Mr. Daigle, High School Principal, and Ms. DiLeo, Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

Others present – Ms. Erin Christiano, School Adjustment Counselor, and Mr. Michael Whittier, High School Social Studies teacher.

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order – Ms. Locurto called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Agenda Item 2 – Citizens Forum – no one wished to speak.

Agenda Item 3 – Consent Agenda

Ms. Zuliani moved and Ms. Mead seconded to approve the Minutes of April 27th and May 4th, 2009 and the Bill Schedule of May 18th, 2009, as presented.

Carried 4/0

Agenda Item 4 – Student Update

None present to provide an update. Dr. Di Bella reported that two students from the upcoming Senior Class of 2010 were recently elected as Student Representatives, Dan Silvio and Adam Wright, and they will be at upcoming meetings for introductions.

Agenda Item 5 – Update on CSL Trip to Camp Sunshine

Three students, Alison Leno, Samantha Ruby, and Rachel Hall discussed their experience with the Community Service Learning (CSL) program as volunteer counselors at Camp Sunshine during the February vacation week. Camp Sunshine is a year-round camp located in Casco, Maine for children with life threatening illnesses and their families. Prior to attending, the students first met with an oncology nurse to help them understand what the campers were dealing with. In all, ten students (juniors and seniors) from Sutton went; they were the biggest group and the only organized student group in attendance. The students had a fantastic experience and gained an appreciation for their own healthy lives. The staff at Camp Sunshine noted that they were very impressed with the group from Sutton; their behavior, perseverance and respect were all exemplary. The students and the Sutton school in turn, hope to continue participating in this program and make it an annual event, even if not through the CSL program.

Agenda Item 6 – Review School Improvement Plans and Handbooks; Middle School and High School

Mr. Goyette and Mr. Daigle highlighted additions and extensions of their respective School Improvement Plans. The Middle and High School handbooks are now combined, which will save on costs. There is a new opening letter in the Middle School book welcoming the students. A noted change in the High School handbook is the new method of Breathalyzer testing at school dances/functions; it must be administered by a trained police officer and only in the presence of a school administrator or designee.

Ms. Mead moved and Ms. Locurto seconded to accept the Improvement Plans as presented and to approve the Handbook as amended.

Carried 5/0

Mr. Daigle and Ms. DiLeo then presented letter from the New England Association of Schools & Colleges, Inc. (NEASC) vote to accept Sutton Memorial High School's Five-Year Progress Report and to continue the school's accreditation. However, the school remains on warning until all of the concerns identified by the Commission have been addressed. 89% of the concerns have been addressed and 3% are in progress. The outstanding issues are related to the building and the facility. The Commission has requested a Special Progress Report by June 1st detailing Sutton's status on the project and funding for the school renovation/building project. The bottom line is that Sutton will stay on warning until the shovel is in the ground to improve the High School facility, and if that does not happen, Sutton will end up on probation and will ultimately lose accreditation. Ms. Mead pointed out that Sutton will have selected an OPM and an architect by the end of June; the Building Committee and the Town and the MBSA have made significant progress toward moving the building project forward.

Ms. Mead left at 8:05 p.m.

Agenda Item 7 – Discuss FY2010 Budget

Ms. Rothermich noted that with the current funding numbers, the budget gap is now zero. Eliminating all departmental priorities and various reductions has filled the previous gap of \$722,238. A vote on the budget will be held until the next meeting. Ms. Rothermich requested that any changes that the Committee would like to bring forward be submitted as soon as possible.

Agenda Item 8 – Approve FY'09 Budget Transfers

Ms. Rothermich proposed the following transfers, as per a memo in the meeting packet: \$60,000 from the Psychologist salaries account to the Substitute Teachers (\$57,335), Psych Supplies and Materials (\$1,958), Psych Contracted (\$707) and Medical Therapeutic – Contracted (\$6,000) and \$6,000 from Instructional Software to Technology – Other Salaries (\$6,000).

Ms. Locurto moved and Ms. Beaton Graves seconded to approve the two budget transfers as presented in the memo.

Carried 4/0

Ms. Rothermich then discussed SPED transportation according to a memo in the packet; the proposal is to replace a high mileage van with a new one and also purchase a regular sedan.

Ms. Zuliani moved and Ms. Locurto seconded to allow Ms. Rothermich to use the money in the revolving account to purchase a van and a small sedan.

Carried 3/1 with Mr. Brennan opposed

Mr. Brennan asked that the Committee be given a summary update of the van acquisition/transportation program at some time in the future.

Agenda Item 9 – Approve FY’09 State Stabilization Grant Application

As per a memorandum in the meeting packet, in light of a 10.52% reduction in Chapter 70 funds, all school districts are encouraged to apply for federal stimulus funds to offset the reduction. Sutton is able to apply for a dollar-for-dollar grant in the amount of \$578,013. The grant application is online and is due by May 22, with awards by mid-June.

Mr. Brennan moved and Ms. Zuliani seconded to approve the application for State Stabilization Funds as presented.

Carried 4/0

Agenda Item 10 – Evaluate School Committee Goals

This item was tabled to a future meeting.

Agenda Item 11 – Report of Subcommittees

This item was tabled to a future meeting.

Agenda Item 12 – Superintendent’s Update

Dr. Di Bella noted the following:

- Congratulations to Kathy Romasco who was recently honored by Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women as an unsung hero in the community.
- Congratulations to teachers Deb Kozik, Sue Hebert and Julie Manley who recently completed the two-year Blackstone Valley Leadership Academy through Worcester State College and have achieved their administrative licensure. Deb and Julie did a fine job recently, standing in as administrators for Mr. Breault and Ms. Dubeau while they were off-site.
- The Art Show was particularly wonderful and special thanks to Mark Bailey, Jean Armstrong, Amy Dziel and Kathy Hehir. The artwork was tremendous both in terms of the variety of media, the quality of the work and the display. Many parents, grandparents and youngsters came through, looking at the many different types of items on display – there were many, many jewels. The pride of both the faculty and students who took so much time to put the display together was very evident. Special thanks to Mark Smith for the terrific “Jazz Café” which played concurrently with the Art Show.
- ‘Survey Monkey’ is now online for both faculty and staff and for parents. Parents can go in multiple times to respond separately for students in different schools. No deadline has been established yet, but there are already 40-50 staff responses. An update will be provided at the next meeting.
- On May 21st at 6 p.m. there will be a CSL “Ice Cream Social” with information from this year’s projects and from past years plus great ice cream.
- Congratulations to Amy Dziel, the new director of the Before/After Care Program. Jill Healy, the current director, is stepping down to serve as a Principal in Northbridge.
- Reminder that the Simonian Center is having a Parent Coffee on the Second Step program on May 27th from 9-10 a.m.

- Reminder that Town elections are on May 26th.
- Finally, a special thanks, recognition, and good wishes to Ms. Pamela Beaton Graves for all of her service on various committees. This is her last full meeting,.

Agenda Item 13 – New Business, Agenda Items, Action Items

- Thank you to Ms. Beaton Graves for all of her service on the Sutton School Committee from the rest of the Committee!
- Reminder to all to vote on Election Day to support approval for funding for the new roof for the Simonian Center.
- Thank you to Mark Smith for the excellent performances by the Band on May 6th and 7th.
- With respect to the search for a Superintendent, Ms. Locurto will arrange for two organizations to present to the Committee at an upcoming meeting.
- Will discuss summer retreat meeting dates at the June 1st meeting.
- The CSL Program is seeking a new School Committee member to participate.

Agenda Item 14 – Adjournment to Executive Session

At 9:00 p.m., Ms. Locurto moved and Ms. Beaton Graves seconded to adjourn to Executive Session, not to return to open session.

Carried 4/0

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol S. Colena,
Recording Secretary