

Sutton School Committee Sutton, Massachusetts 01590

The Sutton School Committee met in Room 1B of the Sutton Municipal Center on Monday, November 9th, 2009.

School Committee Members present at the meeting were Ms. Liisa Locurto, Chairperson, Ms. Tracey Zuliani, Vice-chair, Ms. Kristen Feifert Clark, Secretary, Ms. Wendy Mead, and Mr. Paul Brennan (at 7:02 p.m.).

Administrators present at the meeting were Dr. Cecilia Di Bella, Superintendent, Ms. Sue Rothermich, Business Manager.

Others present – none present.

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

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

Agenda Item 3 – Consent Agenda

Ms. Zuliani moved and Ms. Mead seconded to approve the Minutes of the September 14th and October 5th meetings and the Executive Session Minutes of September 14th, and the Bill Schedule dated November 9th, 2009.

Carried 4/0, with Mr. Brennan abstaining.

Agenda Item 4 – Student Update – Dan Sylvia, Student Representative, provided the following update:

- Report cards were sent home last Friday, November 6th.
- Seniors took the SAT exams on Saturday, November 7th.
- Advisor/advisee program is somewhat different this year; previously, students were paired with teachers to discuss any problems. Now students opt to join specific teacher-led interest groups, such as public speaking, dead poets society, and guitar.
- The High School play, to be presented on November 12, 14 and 15, is Arsenic and Old Lace. Show time is at 7 p.m. on the 12th and the 14th and at 2 p.m. on the 15th.
- The Community Service Learning's recent fall initiative was a 'Haunted House for Hunger', which was a great success, with over 100 children in attendance.
- As a precautionary measure, in light of the current concerns over the spread of the H1N1 flu virus, the High School's Halloween dance was cancelled. Students and staff celebrated by dressing up in costume at school on Friday, October 30th.
- Twenty-five seniors are recipients of the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, which is awarded based on MCAS scores and overall academic achievement.
- On November 20th, students from Rhode Island College will be performing "A Midsummer Night's Dream" for the Sophomore Class, the Shakespeare Class and the Chorus Class.
- The athletic program has had a noteworthy season, with volleyball, boys soccer and girls soccer all competing for district wins.

- A member of the District Attorney's office visited the school to give presentations on computer safety, sexting, cyber bullying.

Agenda Item 5 – Recognizing Adams Scholars

Dr. Di Bella recognized, by reading the names of each of the twenty-five seniors that were recently awarded the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, noting that the district is extremely proud of the students and their parents. The scholarship is awarded based on overall academic excellence, including exceptional MCAS scores.

Agenda Item 6 – Update on FY'10 Budget

Ms. Rothermich noted that it is very early in the year to be attempting to reconcile the accounts. However, the budget has been reduced by \$110,000, as reflected at the October Town Meeting and based on revenue changes from the state. Several departments have reduced their budget to accommodate this loss.

Agenda Item 7 – Review Financial Report on In-house Transportation System

Ms. Rothermich presented a history and overview of the in-house transportation system, which began in FY'07 as a means to not only save the district the expense of transporting students out of the district, but also to generate revenue for the district through charges associated with transporting students in surrounding towns. The district currently owns seven vehicles; a combination of buses, vans and a car. In FY'09, the transportation program generated a savings of \$141,000. Since inception, total savings has been almost \$479,000. By running this program in-house, the district has been able to reduce the school budget by this amount, which has significantly helped to buffer the cuts to the budget. The money saved by this program results in dollars that go directly back to the classroom

Agenda Item 8 – Adopt Schedule for FY'11 Capital Plan and Budget

Dr. Di Bella reiterated the grim fiscal reality that FY'11 will be extremely difficult. The Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee suggested that municipalities prepare budgets with 5, 10, and 15 % reductions. Mr. Smith, Town Administrator, has distributed a timeline, in which Capital Budgets are due on December 11 and budget submission on January 29th. In line with the Town's schedule, the School Committee will review and approve the Capital Plan on December 7th. The administration will also present a sketch of anticipated decreases and increases to the budget at that meeting. On January 4th the preliminary FY '11 budget will be presented with the final budget presentation, including budget books on January 25th.

Ms. Mead moved and Ms. Zuliani seconded to adopt the FY'11 Capital Plan and Budget Schedule as presented, with the public hearing scheduled for March 22nd.

Carried 5/0

Agenda Item 9 – Update on Superintendent's Search

Ms. Locurto presented an update on the search. The brochure has been distributed to the Superintendents throughout the state and New England and other contacts that NESDEC has. There are focus groups scheduled for November 17th, with the one for parents and the community to occur at 7 p.m. in the Elementary School Library. It will be run by Dr. "Bud" Ferris of NESDEC. Details can be found on the Sutton Schools website (www.suttonschools.net); all are encouraged to attend.

The 13-member screening committee is forming, with one parent willing to serve so far. The committee is seeking one other parent to serve and one community member. Anyone wishing to serve on the committee must be able to make a two-week commitment, beginning all day on January 9th for training, followed by reviewing resumes, then participating in 3-4 evening interviews, ending on or about January

23rd). The screening committee will make recommendations to the school committee. Anyone who is interested should contact Ms. Locurto.

Agenda Item 10 – Update on School Building Project

Ms. Mead presented an update on the School Building Project, including an architect's rendering of the proposed design, which is posted on the school building committee's website (http://www.suttonma.org/Pages/SuttonMA_BComm/schoolbuild). The school building committee recently voted to recommend a particular design option to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The timeline for this project is for the final design to be presented to the MBSA on December 17th. They will vote at their meeting at the end of January and, if approved, the finalized plan will be on the Warrant for the May 10th Town Meeting.

Mr. Brennan moved and Ms. Feifert-Clark seconded to endorse Option C (renovation and new construction) for Sutton Middle/High School as presented along with the accompanying space analysis.

Carried 5/0

Agenda Item 11 – Superintendent's Update

- Dr. Di Bella reiterated the information about the Drama Club's upcoming presentation of Arsenic and Old Lace. The cost is \$5 per person, however senior citizens are at no cost and there is a reduction in cost for others with the donation of a food item to the Sutton food pantry.
- SEFT, the Sutton Educational Foundation, made their awards recently and funded six more exciting projects at over \$7,400 total. The awards approved this year include the opportunity to go to the City of Worcester to learn what the city is all about, a biotechnology immersion program, a climbing wall at the Simonian Center gym, an electricity and alternatives program at the high school, increasing play skills for children with autism and an ancient Rome program at the middle school. The district is very grateful to the Sutton Education Foundation.
- Regarding H1N1, attendance has stabilized after some spikes in absences. Information about the different types of vaccines and parental consent were sent home with the report cards. Parents should complete and return paperwork. The first school-based vaccination clinic is expected to be held during the week before Thanksgiving, with a limited supply of vaccines. The 'at risk' population of young children will be targeted first. When dates and times are finalized, messages will be sent via AlertNow.

Agenda Item 12 – New Business, Agenda Items, Action Items

Ms. Locurto presented a draft of the email notifying parents of the superintendent search focus groups which will be sent out.

Agenda Item 13 – Adjournment to Executive Session

At 8:35 p.m., Ms. Mead moved and Mr. Brennan seconded to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations and the high school principal position and not to return to open session.

Carried 5/0

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol S. Colena,
Recording Secretary