

Sutton School Committee
Sutton, Massachusetts 01590

The Sutton School Committee met in Room 1A of the Sutton Municipal Center on Monday, April 26, 2010.

School Committee Members present at the meeting were Ms. Liisa Locurto, Chairperson, Ms. Kristen Feifert Clark, Mr. Paul Brennan, Ms. Tracey Zuliani and Ms. Wendy Mead.

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

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order

Ms. Locurto called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.

Agenda Item 2 – Adjournment to Executive Session

Agenda Item 3 – Return to Open Session – at 7:07 p.m.

Agenda Item 4 – Citizen Forum

No one wished to speak.

Agenda Item 5 – Consent Agenda

Mr. Brennan moved and Ms. Mead seconded to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented.

Carried 5/0

Agenda Item 6 – Student Update

Neither student representatives were present to provide an update.

Agenda Item 7 – Update on School Choice Program

Ms. Rothermich provided an update on the status of this account with respect to the budget; how much is in this account, how the money in it is spent, and the sustainability of the account. The encumbrance of \$480,000 is roughly double the receivable. For the past several years, however, the school department has spent less than half the encumbrance each year. The School Choice is a revolving account and is the last to be used to balance the school budget as year end. At the current rate of spending, the account has a life of approximately two years, so it is important to note that it is not reasonable to expect that this account can fund the budget. It is not possible to lift the cap on the number of school choice students allowed, as there is simply no space for additional students.

Agenda Item 9 – Update on School Van

One of the original vans was recently broadsided while on the way to pick up students and deemed to be a ‘total loss’ by the insurance company. There were no students in the van at the time. The van has been replaced and insurance money will be recovered. The new van was bought out of the Special Education Transportation Revolving Account.

Ms. Mead moved and Ms. Feifert Clark seconded to authorize the School Department to dispose of the said totaled van.

Carried 5/0

Agenda Item 8 – Update on FY’11 Budget

The picture for FY’11 seems to get bleaker all the time. The State’s stated 4% cut in Chapter 70 Funds, is, in reality, a 6% cut. 2% is backfilled with one-time federal stimulus money to bring it back to the 4% cut level. That, coupled with the ARRA grant of \$196,000, which will also go away after 2011, will leave a funding cliff for FY2012 of \$300,000 when these grants are gone. The numbers from the State are still not yet finalized. However, as they currently stand, there is a funding gap of over \$650,000 between the School Committee’s budget and the line item to be presented at town meeting. Once the final numbers come out, cuts will be made, as necessary, to bridge the gap before July 1st, the start of the new fiscal year.

Agenda Item 10 – Update on Building Project

There will be a final town-wide public forum this Thursday, April 29th, at 7 p.m. at the middle school auditorium. There will be a presentation by the project manager, followed by a tour. All town residents, not just parents of students in the schools, should attend, as all will be affected; this is a community project, not a school project. There will be a tax impact to all town residents, whatever the outcome of the vote. If support for this project passes by a 2/3 majority at the May 10th Town Meeting, there will be a ballot vote on May 25th.

Agenda Item 11 – Announce New High School Principal

Congratulations to Lucille DeLeo, who has been unanimously chosen as the new High School principal. As a product of the high school, with expertise with respect to NEASC, knows the faculty and staff, and has been involved in the building project discussions, she was, by far, the perfect candidate for the position; she will be a fabulous principal.

Agenda Item 12 – Review Draft Survey Monkey Questions

The survey has been shortened, in the hopes of getting more and better responses to the survey. There are more opportunities for comments. Discussion ensued with suggestions for additional changes. When finalized, the survey will be available on the web in early May to have the School Committee the opportunity to review the responses ahead of its summer retreat.

Agenda Item 13 – Superintendent’s Update

Dr. Di Bella offered the following:

- Reminder to parents that bus payments are due on May 1st. An email reminder will be sent to parents. Anyone not receiving email alerts who wish to should contact their children’s school office.
- The Community Service Learning at the high school is sponsoring a Hunger Banquet on April 30th, at the Singletary Rod and Gun Club, the purpose of which is to raise money and awareness about hunger. There will be dinner, raffles and information about hunger. The cost is \$10/person or \$30/family.
- Sutton Family Fitness Day will take place on Sunday May 16th at 10 a.m.; ‘Spring into Fitness’. There will be a 5k and 10k walk/run, with a children’s segment. Cost is \$15 or \$2 with a food pantry donation. Those interested must register in advance. Check-in is in the high school cafeteria. The event begins and ends at the Simonian Center. Information can be found on the website.

- The Humanities Scholars program is a special program the high school participates in through the Blackstone Superintendent's Group. Every year, a group of students from each of the member districts participate in lectures and events. The culminating event is a debate and discussion on a timely topic. This year's event is on Wednesday, May 7th at 7 p.m. at the Auburn high school auditorium. Millbury is simulating a school committee meeting and the topic stems from Central Falls, Rhode Island's school district's decision to fire all of the teachers, due to consistently underperforming schools. Debate will focus on the pros and cons of that event. Sutton students will be simulating a town meeting discussion of a new school building. At the end of the event, the audience will vote on the effectiveness of each team's debate and discussion.
- On Saturday, May 8th, the high school PTO is sponsoring an electronics recycling event from 9-2. This is a good way to get rid of old electronics and appliances and donate for a good cause.
- It is Dr. Di Bella's recommendation that the 3-year contract of Michael Breault, Principal of the elementary school, be renewed for three additional years. He has been a wonderful instructional leader of the school who has the support of the faculty, staff, students and parents at the school and his colleagues as well.

Agenda Item 14 – New Business, Agenda items, Action Items

There was nothing for discussion at this time.

Agenda Item 15 – Adjournment to Executive Session

At 8:30 p.m., Ms. Mead moved and Mr. Brennan seconded to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations and not return to open session.

Carried 5/0

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol S. Colena,
Recording Secretary