

REGULAR SESSION MINUTES
March 9, 2015

A meeting of the Swampscott School Committee was held in Room B208 at Swampscott High School commencing at 7:03 p.m. with the following members present: Mr. Ted Delano, Chairman, Ms. Amy OConnor and Ms. Suzanne Wright. Also Present: Ms. Pamela Angelakis, M.A. M.Ed., Superintendent of Schools, and Student Representatives Megan Russo and Ian Crimmins. Ms. Carin Marshall, Vice Chairman, Ms. Gargi Cooper and Lois Longin, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, were absent.

Ms. Angelakis explained that two students were invited to come and lead the pledge of allegiance and read the Mission Statement of the District. She gave the Committee some background on each student and introduced Middle School students Jillian Flanders and Madeleine Foutes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

COMMITTEE COMMENT

Ian Crimmins stated the National Honor Society induction ceremony would be held at the high school on Wednesday.

Megan Russo stated that this Thursday night is STEM night at the high school.

Ms. Wright stated she was excited to receive her invitation as a Committee member to the National Honor Society ceremony and stated she would be attending also for her child. She also added that Together in Harmony will be on Sunday the 22nd at 2:00. Ms. Wright also questioned the formation of a new school Task Force and questioned whether the Committee would have any role on that. Ms. Angelakis stated she would review that in the Superintendent's Report.

Mr. Delano echoed Ms. Wright's comments about the National Honor Society and stated he also had a child receiving the award and would be attending. He also commented on the Together in Harmony event and said he would love to see more things like that. He further stated that he had received an email from Peter Kane who was looking to get a representative from the School Committee to be a member of the Master Planning Committee. He stated he would forward the information to the entire Committee and if anyone had interest they could contact him. Ms. OConnor stated she would like to volunteer for that.

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION:

It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Ms. Wright to accept the Consent Agenda.

Ms. Wright questioned the invoices relating to snow removal. Ms. Angelakis stated the District is currently approximately \$80,000 over and that she believed that Mr. Castellarin had some thoughts on ways to get those invoices taken care of. Ms. OConnor questioned whether the schools are in the best shape we can expect at this point. Ms. Angelakis stated yes. She added there were some issues at Clarke with leaks, but that they have since stopped.

VOTE ON MOTION:

The motion passed 3-0.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Ms. Angelakis requested to add an item relating to the new school Task Force. She stated that she had recently met with a group of parents who would like to help determine why the past plan failed and where to go from here. She added there were many things that needed to be done before submitting a new plan and that she would be relying on the assistance of others in those tasks and felt this Task Force could help move things along. Ms. OConnor suggested being aggressive in making use of those volunteers to hopefully have a goal of having a plan of action by

the end of this year. Ms. Angelakis stated that Mr. Katz would be joining the district on March 23rd after just having completed a new building project in his prior District and that that would be helpful. Mr. Delano spoke about the work of the past Committee and the input from Ms. Marshall and suggested it would make sense to have a member of the Committee on the new Task Force as well for input. Ms. Angelakis was concerned about having too large of a Task Force to be a manageable group and that at this point it was simply to gather information. Ms. OConnor suggested having someone tasked with connecting with people such as Ms. Marshall who had such a large role in the past. Ms. Angelakis agreed that would be helpful and added one of her goals was to reach areas and groups of people that weren't explored in the past. Ms. OConnor stated it was a good idea to get a fresh set of eyes on the project.

Personnel Report

Ms. Angelakis referred to the Personnel Report in the Committee packets and gave an overview of any of the changes including staff who have resigned. She stated she would update the High School Physics and English positions later in the report.

SEF Grant Acknowledgement

Ms. Angelakis explained that SEF provides funding for grants submitted by teachers and thanked them for a recent grant that Mr. Franklin had submitted for yoga mats for mindfulness practice in the amount of \$226.25.

She also explained that SEF had agreed to donate up to \$10,000 for the Light Up Swampscott project. She added that Eastern Bank had committed \$5,000 and that Salem Five had donated \$500 to the project.

Blizzard Bags – Commissioner's Update

Ms. Angelakis referred to the Commissioner's Report as well as comments on the so-called Blizzard Bags. She stated that the Commissioner is questioning the work in the bags and that it wouldn't take the place of an actual day unless it's substantial work. She added that although it seems like a great idea, it doesn't seem as logistically easy as it appeared in the beginning. Ms. Wright referred to her past comments on a District in Indiana which uses iPads and has real time assignments and that it doesn't count as a replacement snow day unless 85% of students submit work. Ms. Angelakis agreed the bags are a great idea, but that it's not as easy as just putting a bag together.

High School Physics Teacher Update

Ms. Angelakis explained that there had been a few staff changes for various reasons at the high school. She explained that the English teacher who had moved on has already been replaced by current teachers within the District. She explained there were some part-time teachers who picked up classes and that the transition was pretty seamless. With the Physics position there was an unexpected resignation from a retired teacher who was the long-term substitute and now currently there is a new sub in that position. She explained that the Department Chair, Mrs. Yanofsky, has been creating lesson plans, but that the administration knows there would be gaps in this year's instruction in that class. Ms. OConnor stated it was distressing that teachers leave in the middle of the school year and felt that the commitment should go both ways. She also questioned what help would be available for the students in that class. Ms. Angelakis stated she was tasking the high school administration to come up with a plan to help those students.

SHS Field Trip – April 2016 - Paris, Versailles – M.Albert/J.Gahm-Diaz and SHS Field Trip – Feb 2016 - Managua, Nicaragua - J.Gahm-Diaz

Ms. Angelakis introduced Jessica Gahm-Diaz who came forward to talk about the two proposed SHS field trips. Ms. Gahm-Diaz gave an overview of the planned trip to Nicaragua and gave an overview of the trip which the group had taken last year. Ms. OConnor questioned whether the trip was only open to Spanish students. Ms. Gahm-Diaz said a French student did attend last year and that the trip was open to everyone in school.

Ms. Gahm-Diaz also spoke about the French exchange program as well and gave the Committee an overview of that program. She stated there were about 15 students who expressed an interest in participating, but that they had not done any serious announcements as they were waiting for approval from the Committee. Mr. Delano stated he would entertain a motion for approval of both trips.

MOTION:

It was moved by Ms. Wright and seconded by Ms. OConnor to approve the April 2016 field trip to Paris and Versailles and the February 2016 field trip to Managua, Nicaragua. The motion passed 3-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

School Committee Norms

Ms. Wright explained that she had made some revisions and added the signature language to the document. Ms. Angelakis stated she liked that Lynnfield’s example had a place for the Superintendent to sign as well to reflect the collaboration between all. Ms. Wright stated she would add that. Ms. Wright stated she had received feedback from Ms. Cooper. It was agreed to be put on the next meeting agenda for signature.

Meeting date for joint meeting with SC & BOS

Mr. Delano stated he had been speaking with Mr. Strauss to coordinate a date and it was suggested to wait until after the April election to have the meeting. There was discussion regarding possible dates and Ms. OConnor suggested the week after Town Meeting. Mr. Delano stated he would follow up with Mr. Strauss for either May 12th or 13th.

2015-2016 School Calendar – Second Read / vote requested

Ms. Angelakis stated there hadn’t been any changes to the draft since Ms. Longin had presented it at the last meeting. She explained it reflected an August 31st start date for teachers and first day for students being Wednesday, September 2nd. Ms. OConnor questioned the consistency of the early release days and whether there was enough time on learning. Ms. Angelakis stated it would still allow the District to be within the time on learning. Megan Russo questioned if the school hours would remain the same and Ms. Angelakis stated they would. Ms. OConnor stated that she would like to formally ask the School Calendar Committee to aggressively look at holidays and what holidays are given off and how many days for those holidays, as well as and the two spring breaks versus one and to actively solicit feedback from parents on their opinions. She stated other communities only give one day for Rosh Hashanah and felt it was worth surveying our parents to see how they feel about that. Mr. Delano stated that he would entertain a motion to approve the calendar.

MOTION:

It was moved by Ms. Wright and seconded by Ms. OConnor to approve the 2015-2016 school calendar. The motion passed 3-0.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Ms. Wright stated that the policy manual was complete and they were waiting on Mike Gilbert to email the electronic version for review. She added as soon as it was complete it would be brought forward for approval.

Ms. Wright stated that she had received permission from the Town Moderator to present at Town meeting and stated that she and Ms. OConnor would meet to talk about what that would look like.

NEW BUSINESS:

Donation – Salem Five / Light Up Swampscott

Ms. Angelakis stated they had received a check from Salem Five for \$500 to go towards the Light Up Swampscott fund. She stated that the Committee needed to accept the donation.

MOTION:

It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Ms. Wright to accept the gift from Salem Five for Light Up Swampscott in the amount of \$500. The motion passed 3-0.

May 5th scheduled as SC Meeting – conflicts with Town Meeting

Mr. Delano stated that the May 5th meeting conflicts with Town meeting. There was discussion on moving the date and it was agreed to reschedule the meeting to May 11th at 7:00.

MOTION:


It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Ms. Wright to move the May 5th meeting date to May 11th. The motion passed 3-0.

ADJOURNMENT


MOTION:

At 8:18 p.m., it was moved by Ms. Wright and seconded by Ms. OConnor to adjourn. The motion passed 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela R.H. Angelakis, M.A., M.Ed.
Superintendent of Schools
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Date: