

Sudbury Public Schools (SPS)
School Committee Meeting Minutes
September 18, 2017, 6:00 PM
Sudbury Senior Center

Members Present:

Christine Hogan, Chair
Richard Tinsley, Vice Chair
Margaret Helon
Lisa Kouchakdjian
Lucie St. George

Also Present:

Don Sawyer, Director of Business and Finance
Dr. Anne Wilson, Superintendent of Schools
Kimberly Swain, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Angela Spirito, SEA Representative
Jim Kelly, Facilities Director
Joe Kupczewski, Supervisor of Facilities
Stephanie Juriansz, Early Childhood Education Administrator
Jean Nam, Play Sudbury

Open Session

Chair Christine Hogan opened the session at 6:00 P.M.

1. FY19 Budget Planning

Don Sawyer noted tonight's meeting will cover regular day transportation, and facilities and maintenance.

Transportation (Regular Day)

- Includes Town buses for Sudbury Public Schools and Lincoln Sudbury H.S. students.
- Discussed added bus at \$60,000 plus additional bus to be added for total of \$120,000 to address transportation issues
- First Student is the contracted provider, with a 3-year contract with option to extend/ 2 one-year option contract.
- FY18 total budget shortfall, after bus fee revenue offset, is \$567,372.
- There are areas of concern that will need to be discussed moving forward regarding number of buses, student bus riders and traffic issues.
- School start time could help the traffic issue.
- Discussed bus transportation fees.
- Will update the long term forecast and solidify services for FY19.

Facilities and Maintenance

- This budget line item includes custodial employees, maintenance, cleaning supplies, vehicle maintenance, and other related expenses.
- There was a reduction in the number of full time employees.
- Richard Tinsley would like to see actual cost for employees to include benefits.
- Discussed cost of supplies, and possible ways to cut expenses, compare vendors.
- Showed the projected FY19 - FY23 Forecast.
- FY18 total budget for Facilities and Maintenance is \$1,550,185.
- Committee wants to ensure budget is appropriate and not under-funded, requires investment.
- Joe Kupczewski expressed concern that with the loss of three employees, eleven custodians are responsible for 500,000 sq. feet of building space.

2.. District Reports

- a. SEA Report, Angela Spirito
 - Wally 'Bells On' 5K Road Race is planned for October 1 at 10:00 a.m. at Curtis Middle School to benefit the Wally Bell Scholarship Fund.
- b. Assistant Superintendent Report, Kimberly Swain
 - First ILAP session worked on implementing three curricular focuses: Workplace Bridges - Mathematics and Exploring; Mathematical Models and Strategies; and, Stemscoopes implementation.
- c. Superintendent Report, Anne Wilson
 - Back to School Nights kicked off with Noyes, Curtis and Haynes, and were very well attended.
 - Enrollment has decreased by two students. K-8 has a total enrollment of 2,653 students; Pre-K has a total enrollment of 58.
 - Cleargov.com should be up and running on the website within 4-6 weeks.
 - Thanked Annalisa Michielli and Don Sawyer for their work in addressing bus issues and concerns, one bus has been added, one more will be added.

3. Odyssey Program - Update

Superintendent Anne Wilson explained that changes have been made to the Odyssey Program over the years based on student learning needs. We are at the juncture where there may be a time for another change to Odyssey. This is an 18-month process. The first draft received from the Odyssey Planning Team on August 30 does not include an overnight component. They will strive to make a final decision on October 2, but may not be ready at that point. Superintendent Wilson noted she appreciates all the feedback received. Superintendent Wilson read a statement, which noted change is not made lightly and will be an educational decision. Details will be finalized over the next year.

Superintendent Wilson noted the program created a deficit of \$16,007.95. Christine Hogan mentioned that residents have volunteered to organize fundraising to address the deficit so there is no cost passed on to the taxpayers and also noted the outpouring from the community regarding the positive impact of the program over many years.

Discussion and questions from Christine Hogan and Maggie Helon addressed confusion as to timeline and cited Dr. Wilson's report is difficult to follow, specifically with regard to "start" date of the process as well as lack of transparency regarding Odyssey Team.

4. School Committee Reports (Liaison / Subcommittee Reports)

Maggie Helon attended the 6th grade Curtis Middle School Open House where she spoke to Principal Jeff Mela who asked her to relay that communication is key: if there are any questions, please feel free to contact him.

Lucie St. George was at Noyes Open House and it was great to see such a good turnout. Lucie St. George said there was discussion at the recent BOS meeting regarding the relocation of the School Administration offices, the BOS are concerned that the Committee has not voted and suggested the Committee have a straw poll. Discussed was fact SPSC rescinded their 3-2 vote to approve Article asking for \$450,000 for design funds specific to adding on to Nixon. Christine Hogan further noted the BOS Article was not a voting item on the BOS agenda last week. Richard Tinsley suggested we indicate to the BOS that the Committee is in favor of an article that moves this process forward, with several options, Nixon being one option.

Lisa Kouchakdjian noted that she and Maggie held a Policy Subcommittee meeting and discussed the Facility Use Policy; they have questions for Don and will be ready to present a draft to the Committee at the October 2 meeting. Lisa Kouchakdjian noted she attended the Back to School Night at Haynes. and it was a great night, she gave a shout out to the teachers who serenaded the parents and is grateful to have such dedicated teachers.

5. Open Forum

Felicia O'Brien, stated she is the parent of 3 children who attend Noyes; she is concerned with shifts in the Odyssey Program and feels that before families should be informed before any big changes are made. Her son, Will O'Brien, discussed his positive experience when he attended Odyssey last year which taught him independence in dealing with his medical condition.

Sean Bevan, 8 October Road, expressed his concern regarding what he feels are limitations in the Odyssey Program for children with disabilities, such as his daughter.

Meredith Gerson, 23 Hilltop Road, agreed that we should strive for excellence and we have to be open to change. She further stated we should keep an open mind and know that the plan the administration and staff come up with will be a good, solid learning experience.

Kathleen McConnell, 448 Dutton Road, spoke in support of Odyssey, stating she feels the committee put together to study the program should have included parent involvement and that it should be tabled until a new Superintendent is in place. 588 people have signed an Odyssey petition to keep it the way it is.

Jane Stevenson, Peakham Road, noted she started the Odyssey petition. She distributed copies to the Committee and commented that Odyssey is part of what makes Sudbury special, stating further this was the standout for many current and former students and part of what made growing

up in Sudbury meaningful to people who ranging in age from school-age to former students now in their 50's.

Meaghan Bowers, as a former Sudbury 5th grade teacher and parent, noted that Odyssey is worth fighting for and stated parents are owed to be a part of the decision.

Mia Hayes, Dutton Road, stated that her son went through Odyssey last year and they were heartbroken to hear about the potential changes to the program. Odyssey left a huge impact on her son. She will fundraise, and said other parents will too.

Christine Daniel and her son Owen spoke about how important the Odyssey trip was to Owen during a difficult year. Ms. Daniel said she would like to volunteer to work with administrators to try and come up with solutions, and feels Fourth grade is a good year and a good introductory experience. Owen said he feels bad for kids like his brother who won't have this experience.

Alicia Grey, Board Road, stated that she moved to Sudbury for the community, neighborhoods and school system. Ms. Grey stated that both of her sons have special needs; her older son, a first grader, does not have proper access to adequate playground equipment, they are old and not in compliance. Her son does not want to go to recess, he cannot interact with his peers. Ms. Grey asked that people support and vote for the Sudbury Public Schools Playground Project.

6. School Playgrounds (Jim Kelly, Stephanie Juriansz and Jean Nam)

- There is a 10-15-year life expectancy for equipment, the current equipment is 16-17 years old and is not ADA/MAAB compliant.
- Play areas had until March 15, 2014 to be in compliance with the ADA/MAAB standards, there is a three year grace period.
- The proposed timeline included upgrading Haynes in Summer 2018; Noyes, Nixon and Loring would be Summer 2019.
- The project will include replacing wood chip surfacing to rubber compounded surface.
- There is a potential cost savings of \$20,000 per year in maintenance costs from the school budget.
- Will include replacing big equipment structures, which are not ADA compliant, and keep standalone equipment, will bring schools up to code at each school.
- Trying to cover 30% of cost through fundraising and grant opportunities.
- Requesting from Town: \$940,000.
- Lisa Kouchakdjian stated that she will request that the project move faster by building two this year, and suggested money be held in escrow to move smoothly.
- Christine Hogan stated that safety and compliance are non-negotiables, and would like to see school playground projects be overseen by the BOS in form of an official committee which would include Park and Rec, FinCom, CPC etc. to examine all playgrounds and be a collective, all-inclusive project. Maggie Helon agreed.
- Discussed was Inspection Report from March 2016 which Committee recently received.
- Jim Kelly and Stephanie Juriansz stated playgrounds safe

- Christine Hogan noted serious concern over the hazards included in the report and inquired if all, specifically the most serious had been fixed. Jim Kelly stated they had.
- Further in the discussion Mr. Kelly clarified his earlier statement to state some repairs ongoing and parts ordered. Christine Hogan stressed her disappointment stating concern over student safety.
- Dr. Wilson stated the playgrounds are safe and if anything needed to be shut down we would have been told so.

Lisa Kouchakdjian moved that we support Article 12 Sudbury School Playgrounds Modernization. Lucie St. George seconded the motion. Discussion continued regarding the fund amount not being included in the Article. Christine Hogan noted she has reservations due to the process and not being a wider, inclusive effort.

Vote: 5-0. Motion carries.

7. Superintendent Resignation

Christine Hogan made a motion to accept the resignation of Dr. Wilson effective June 30, 2018. Richard Tinsley seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0. Motion carries.

Christine Hogan explained that Dr. Wilson has decided to resign, the Committee has voted to accept her resignation and therefore will not be renewing her contract. The Committee met on September 15, 2017 where MASC Executive Director Glenn Koocher presented and has started the recruitment process for recruiting a new Superintendent.

8. Superintendent Search Process

Lucie St. George thought the meeting was informative, but does not agree with the Committee doing it themselves, would rather use an outside professional firm. Maggie Helon disagreed, and noted there are many search engines and associations where we would not have to pay. Richard Tinsley does not see a downside of an RFP, he is willing to entertain the idea; adding that he would prefer a much smaller search committee than what was suggested. Lisa Kouchakdjian inquired if there should be an interim person, or someone be brought up from within while the issue of unionizing the District is being discussed; she also feels that based on the importance of the Committee's responsibility in choosing the right candidate, a consultant should be hired. Christine Hogan agreed that the Committee should keep options open.

Maggie Helon motioned to nominate Chair Christine Hogan and Vice Chair Richard Tinsley to represent the Committee as members of a Superintendent Search Committee. Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0. Motion carries.

9. Long Term Planning

Christine Hogan noted this should remain an ongoing docket item. Christine Hogan would like the Committee to consider hiring a grant writer, Maggie Helon suggested looking at a grant for school maintenance.

10. SPS FY19 Calendar

Christine Hogan had put together a sample survey which was provided to the Committee for review. The Committee discussed proposed modifications to the survey. The purpose of the calendar survey is to get feedback from the community and staff as to our current calendar format and possible changes. The survey will be sent out to the community including families and staff. Angela Spirito commented she would prefer a March vacation rather than February and April vacations, due to snow days, holidays and disruption to the curriculum. The Committee discussed changing the current Wednesday 1/2-day model to a Friday 1/2 day model. Christine Hogan will make the suggested edits to the survey for further review at the October 2 meeting.

11. Review Responses to Legal Counsel / Labor RFP

Richard Tinsley noted that he received a set of standard questions today from Kim Pratt. Committee Members may submit their additional questions to him and he will compile the questions for the labor counsel candidates' interviews. Lisa Kouchakdjian would like to be sure the Committee retains counsel who is respectful to both sides of the process but offered no input as to which counsel she would like to see move to the finalist round except preferring to exclude one firm based upon personal experience, stating she defers this decision to the rest of the Committee. The Committee discussed timeframes for finalist interview. Committee decided on separate meeting date TBD on Committee members' availability.

The Committee narrowed down the selection to three firms, Stoneman, Mirick-O'Connell and Morgan, Brown & Joy, as well as the current firm of Deutsch Williams. Don Sawyer commented that when it comes to labor law, these were all top firms in the Commonwealth.

12. School Committee Norms/Protocols

Lisa Kouchakdjian stated that, as we look at protocols, it is important to note that open forum is useful but it is important that community members coming forward during open forum be respectful stating the School Committee dictates the agenda, and hopes the community understands this. The Committee discussed decorum during meetings.

13. Second Open Forum

None.

14. Members' Forum

None.

15. Minutes - Regular Session (8/30/17)

Christine Hogan noted that the final, edited version of the minutes was not received. The Committee agreed to have one Member review and edit rather than 5 different versions of edits. Christine Hogan will edit the next set of minutes.

16. Future Agenda Item Discussion

Policy review

School Calendar Survey

17. Executive Session

None.

18. Adjournment

Christine Hogan made a motion to adjourn. Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0. Motion carries.

The meeting adjourned at 10:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Clifford