

Sudbury Public Schools (SPS)  
School Committee Meeting  
January 22, 2018, 6:00 PM  
Superintendent's Conference Room

**Members Present:**

Christine Hogan, Chair  
Richard Tinsley, Vice Chair  
Margaret Helon  
Lisa Kouchakdjian  
Lucie St. George (arrived late)

**Also Present:**

Don Sawyer, Director of Business and Finance  
Dr. Anne Wilson, Superintendent of Schools  
Kimberly Swain, Assistant Superintendent of Schools  
Betsy Joseph, SEA Representative

**Open Regular Session**

Chair Christine Hogan called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**1. FY19 Budget**

Don Sawyer noted that the School Committee, at their December 18, 2017 meeting, voted for a budget request recommendation of \$37,459,173. Superintendent Anne Wilson explained that the Administration had submitted their additional budget requests to the Committee and the rationale behind their requests, and now the Committee must decide whether to take action and include these additional funds to their budget recommendation. Ms. Kouchakdjian noted that there are concerning issues that have been put forward by the Administration that the Committee should consider. Ms. Hogan discussed exploring other ways to fund the additional budget items, other than an override.

**Motion:** Ms. St. George made a motion that we vote on an override of \$786,000 for the specific needs designated by our professional educators and administrators so that our schools run properly. Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

Mr. Tinsley said it is important to benchmark and see where we are investing and where we are not, to have a deep understanding of our budget. Ms. Hogan agreed and cannot support an override for a second year as not convinced done all we can including exploring opportunities for efficiencies with LS, having a long-term plan, putting the new superintendent at a disadvantage and this does not include a grant writer which would force district to look at funding beyond taxpayers. Ms. Helon added we are looking at this from all angles, that there is a lot going on in Town as a whole. Ms. Helon noted that funds may be found as we go along, but not in an override.

Ms. Kouchakdjian suggested putting forward an override by taking 9 of the 12 items from the list submitted by the Administration for a total of \$365,381.

**Motion:** Ms. St. George amended her motion to \$400,000. Ms. Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 2-3. Motion failed. Ms. St. George and Ms. Kouchakdjian in favor, Ms. Hogan, Mr. Tinsley and Ms. Helon opposed.

## 2. District Reports

- a. **SEA Report** - Betsy Joseph announced that the fifth-grade teachers are excited to work with the students on Science STEMScopes. Students worked in teams and learned how to allow plants to grow in all seasons. They also worked in teams to investigate how Kutar can reduce their human footprint. First graders have started non-fiction reading and writing.
- b. **Business and Finance Director's Report** - Don Sawyer reported that he has been working on the cost analysis on contracts for cleaning services and should be able to provide that data at the next meeting.
- c. **Assistant Superintendent Report** - Kim Swain mentioned that, as a Member of the 2017/18 Planning for Success cohort, she is looking forward to the third training session this Thursday.

Ms. Swain congratulated Emma Collins who was awarded Rockalingua, a Spanish learning grant, and Rebecca Howard who received a grant called Building Mindfulness.

- d. **Superintendent Report** - Dr. Wilson announced that both finalists for the Director of Student Services position withdrew their candidacies. Dr. Wilson added that Judy Malone Neville is the interim Human Resources Director; both positions will be posted to allow the new Superintendent to be part of the hiring process.

Dr. Wilson noted there will be a Superintendent Chat from 8:30-9:30 a.m. this Wednesday.

## 3. School Committee Reports (Subcommittee/Liaison Reports)

Lisa Kouchakdjian noted that she and Ms. St. George attended the Strategic Financial Planning Committee for Capital Funding meeting. The Committee is looking at new ways to fund capital projects and for cost centers to take over more responsibility for their capital asks. Ms. Kouchakdjian noted that she and Ms. Helon will be holding a Policy Subcommittee meeting on Friday at 9:30 a.m. in the Superintendent's Conference Room, at which they will be discussing general school administration and financial management and invited the public to come and give their input regarding budget. Ms. Kouchakdjian also discussed the SEPAC meeting scheduled for February 8th at the Curtis Middle School Auditorium, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Richard Tinsley noted that he attended the recent FinCom meeting, where he spoke about the School Committee's plan to do benchmarking. Mr. Tinsley also announced that the Fairbank Community Center Consultant's Report will be reviewed on Thursday, February 1st at 7:00 p.m. with tours of the building from 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Christine Hogan expressed her gratitude for the support of State Representative Carmine Gentile, and although SPS didn't get the Efficiency Regionalization Grant this round, Representative Gentile said he will make this a priority for next year's budget. Ms. Hogan thanked the Committee for supporting her request, and Mr. Sawyer for all his time in getting everything done for the grant application and is confident if combine efforts with LS and BOS will be more successful in 2018.

Ms. Hogan announced that the deadline to receive resumes for the open position of superintendent was January 17th, that the Superintendent Screening Committee Members all have copies, and that it is now at the confidential phase of the process, limiting what she can discuss. Ms. Hogan stated that we have many extremely high quality applicants, and it is very encouraging to see so many interested candidates. Interviews will begin in February.

Ms. Hogan noted that she and Kevin Matthews were invited to take part in the School Structure Subcommittee meeting, where areas to address efficiencies with LS was discussed. They agreed to approach the topic as a positive opportunity for Sudbury and its students. That Subcommittee is meeting Wednesday and likely to communicate to Lincoln BOS after which they will report to the

Board of Selectmen who will request that SPS and LS explore options for sharing services where BOS would offer support. The Subcommittee is due to meet again this week on Wednesday. Ms. Hogan added that it was a productive meeting and thanked Dan Carty and Susan Iuliano for the invitation.

#### **4. Open Forum**

Melissa Morabito, teacher at the Nixon School, spoke about possible Friday ILAP days. Ms. Morabito expressed her belief that there is no educational benefit to the proposal, and stated that it would require extra funding. Ms. Morabito stated that on Wednesday ILAP days, educators are able to implement the learning the following day.

Bob Stein, resident, stated that he came before the Committee four months ago regarding redistricting, which he believes could be a cost savings to the Town, and that using Nixon or Haynes as the new administration building could save further costs. Mr. Stein inquired as to whether the Open Meeting Law was broken when three Committee Members attended the FinCom meeting without having a posted meeting.

Meredith Gerson, resident, spoke about the State of the Schools meeting and would like to have heard more about each of the individual schools and what the needs are.

Rachel Heckler, resident, spoke on behalf of people in the Loring community regarding class sizes. Ms. Heckler noted she is concerned with the increase in class sizes.

Maia Proujansky Bell, resident, inquired if the water fountain testing has been completed at the schools, and is glad to see the warrant article on fire alarms at Noyes on the agenda. Ms. Bell has heard that Nixon only has sprinklers in part of the school, and Noyes doesn't have any. She would like to have this information clarified. Ms. Bell said she is confused about the process of the Director of Student Services search. Dr. Wilson will provide the information on the water testing and sprinklers.

Susan Richman, resident and teacher at Curtis, expressed her opposition to possible Friday ILAP days. Ms. Richman expressed her belief that it would be more productive for teachers to attend trainings on Wednesdays, as sometimes teachers can be tired by Friday, and that students may have a less focused attitude on a Friday half-day. She also believes there is no educational benefit for the change.

The Committee took a five-minute break.

#### **5. Open Meeting Law Discussion (Finance Committee 1/11/18)**

Ms. Hogan reminded the Committee Members that if they are not the liaison to a committee, and if it is not a SPSC posted meeting, if a quorum of Members attend that meeting, it is a violation of the Open Meeting Law to speak except during Open Forum. Ms. Hogan read Town Counsel's opinion and stated that in order to protect School Committee Members and the District, going forward we will post a meeting if a quorum is anticipated to attend a meeting.

#### **6. Pilot Friday ILAP Days**

Mr. Tinsley reminded people of the data collected on this issue and reviewed the responses to the survey. Mr. Tinsley noted that of the 237 teacher/staff respondents, 39% were against, 30% in favor. Of the 899 families that responded, 62% were in favor, 18% were against. Ms. Helon said it is concerning that according to the data she reviewed, there have been 392 more absences on a Friday than a Wednesday. Ms. Kouchakdjian noted that she is not in favor due to the cost; Ms. St. George agreed. Ms. Helon stated this may mitigate the absences. Ms. Hogan has heard it can be increasingly difficult for working parents, and that for many parents working from home on a Friday would be

easier than finding daycare for 17 Wednesdays. Ms. Hogan also cited family time as a benefit for children. Mr. Tinsley said there are good arguments on both sides.

**Motion:** Mr. Tinsley made a motion that we pilot for two years, looking at the data after one year, moving the ILAP days from Wednesday to Friday with a specific readout on the absenteeism in the interim. Ms. Hogan seconded the motion.

Ms. Kouchakdjian inquired if Sudbury Extended Day (SED) has been asked if they are willing to help families that access SED, and if there will be an impact. Ms. Hogan left the room due to the discussion of SED. Mr. Tinsley responded that there is not a Wednesday-only, or Friday-only, option for those 17 days, and added that many survey respondents noted Friday would be easier than Wednesday. Ms. Hogan reentered the meeting.

**Vote: 3-2.** Motion carries (Ms. Kouchakdjian and Ms. St. George opposed).

## **7. Vote to Accept Donations**

### **a. Loring Water Bottle Fountain Donation**

Rachel Heckler and Emily Wood came to the Committee on behalf of the Loring PTO to seek approval to purchase water bottles and fountains. Ms. Wood spoke about their fundraising efforts, noting they exceeded their fundraising goal. Ms. Heckler explained that the PTO voted at their November 8th meeting to approve spending up to \$8,000 on the purchase and installation of one outdoor fountain and two indoor fountains/refilling stations.

**Motion:** Mr. Tinsley made a motion to accept the donation for the Loring water fountains. Ms. Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

**Vote: 5-0.** Motion carries.

### **b. Leuder's**

Dr. Wilson explained that this is an annual donation of \$75 from Leuder's to be used in whatever way the Sudbury Schools deems necessary.

**Motion:** Mr. Tinsley made a motion to accept the Leuder's donation. Ms. Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

**Vote: 5-0.** Motion carries.

## **8. Approval of Warrant Article Submissions**

Mr. Sawyer explained that the warrant closes on January 31st and the Committee needs to decide if they would like to take action in sponsoring articles for funding at the May Town Meeting.

- a. Playgrounds** - Stephanie Juriansz updated the Committee on the progress the Haynes Playground Planning Committee has made. Ms. Hogan thanked Ms. Juriansz, Ms. Helon and Mr. Sawyer for all their work on the Playground Planning Committee and clarified that the previous safety concerns have been addressed. Ms. Juriansz noted that \$1,070,482 is the amount needed over multiple years for the three remaining school playgrounds to make accessible and compliant. Ms. Hogan inquired again as to safety and asked how much fundraising has been done to date. Ms. Juriansz explained while they have not raised any funds yet, they are exploring grant opportunities, and that the process of funding the Noyes Playground needs to begin at the May Town Meeting; \$415,000 is the amount being requested for Noyes, and the balance is to remain in Town Capital.

**Motion:** Lucie St. George made a motion to approve the warrant article for submission for \$415,000 for Peter Noyes. Ms. Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

**Vote: 5-0.** Motion carries.

- b. Noyes Fire Alarm** - Mr. Sawyer explained that \$22,000 is the amount required for the fire alarm design at Peter Noyes.

**Motion:** Lucie St. George made a motion to approve the warrant article submission for \$22,000 for the Noyes fire alarm. Ms. Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

**Vote: 5-0.** Motion carries.

- c. ECMS Septic Pumps** - Mr. Sawyer explained that \$40,000 is the amount needed for the ECMS septic pumps, and to include authorization for him to submit all three warrant articles on the Committee's behalf.

**Motion:** Lucie St. George made a motion to approve the warrant article submission for septic pumps for ECMS for \$40,000, and to authorize Don to submit all three warrant articles.

**Vote: 5-0.** Motion carries.

#### **9. Revolving Fund Limits**

Mr. Sawyer explained that the dollar amount for the revolving fund for bus fees and musical instruments must be approved annually.

**Motion:** Ms. St. George made a motion to approve the warrant article for the spending authorization for school instrumental revolving fund of \$120,000.

**Vote: 5-0.** Motion carries.

**Motion:** Ms. St. George made a motion to approve the warrant article for the spending authorization of \$450,000 for the school bus revolving fund of \$450,000.

**Vote: 5-0.** Motion carries.

#### **10. School Committee Office Hours**

Ms. Hogan explained this is something the Committee previously had in place, and the topic has been recently brought up again. Mr. Tinsley discussed possibly holding joint office hours with BOS, LS and FinCom. The Committee discussed possible times. Ms. Hogan suggested this begin on Saturday, February 3rd, from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

**Motion:** Mr. Tinsley made a motion to reestablish office hours with a schedule to be determined. Ms. Helon seconded the motion.

**Vote: 5-0.**

#### **11. Legislative Forum**

Ms. Kouchakdjian asked Committee Members for dates and she will contact the legislators and start the ball rolling. Committee Members agreed available dates are: April 9 and 23, May 21. Ms. Kouchakdjian will report back to the Committee.

**12. Members' Forum - None.**

**13. Minutes-Regular Session Minutes (1/8/2018)**

**Motion:** Ms. Kouchakdjian made a motion to approve the minutes from January 8, 2018. Ms. Helon seconded the motion.

**Vote: 5-0.** Motion carries.

**14. Future Agenda Item Discussion**

Ms. Hogan noted that future agenda items for discussion include: Curriculum Night, Feb. 26th. February 5th: Legislative Forum, SPS Office Space, Update on Facility Use Fees Policy, FY18 Budget Actuals and FY19 Budget Planning, March 12th - Boston meeting, and the Transition Plan is also to be discussed at the second meeting in March.

**15. Executive Session - None.**

**16. Adjournment**

**Motion:** Ms. Kouchakdjian made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Helon seconded the motion.

**Vote: 5-0.** Motion carries.

The meeting adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Laura Clifford