

Sudbury Public Schools (SPS)
School Committee Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)
December 4, 2017, 6:00 PM
Fairbanks Community 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
Colleen Kenosian, SEA Representative

Open Session

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

1. FY19 Budget Hearing

Don Sawyer noted this is the official budget hearing and discussed the timeframe for the School Committee to submit their annual operating budget recommendation. Mr. Sawyer noted that in order to have a balanced budget the dollar figure would need to be at \$37,459,173. Employee benefits are not included in this number, and will be listed under a separate budget.

Mr. Sawyer discussed the administration's supplemental budget of \$844,849. Dr. Wilson noted that many of the positions are restorations of positions that had been cut. Ms. St. George expressed interest in hearing the administration's reasons for wanting these positions being restored. Ms. Swain discussed the benefits of hiring a Humanities Curriculum Coordinator, a STEAM Chair and a Literacy Tutor. Dr. Wilson believes the Early Childhood Director position should be fully restored to reflect 1.0 FTE, noting that the limited hours reduces the time to complete the home visits and assessments. The maintenance positions were discussed. There are currently two Registered Behavior Technician positions and both are almost to capacity. The addition of Assistant Principals was discussed.

Mr. Tinsley stated that he would like to see the equivalent of a Walker Report on acceleration policy. Mr. Tinsley is concerned with the future of the Town if we keep increasing the budget, and would like to see more revenue strategy and a longer term plan.

Ms. Kouchakdjian agreed that Noyes needs its own 1.0 FTE Assistant Principal. She would also like to see makerspaces and any necessary technology programs added to all elementary schools as well as cultural diversity courses in place of Spanish. Ms. Kouchakdjian would like the budget to include math and science teachers for grades 3-5, as well as an expansion to music and art instruction.

Ms. St. George supports the administration's recommendations.

Ms. Helon agrees with an acceleration policy, and noted that a STEM Director is a good consideration, and stated that technology support is critical within the classroom, as is early childhood education. Ms. Helon noted that she supports the wellness, fitness and health needs of the students,

and she recommends an Assistant Superintendent, preferably one with a special education background.

Ms. Hogan noted that she would like to see a grant writer, possibly to share with LS, as well as a Fine Arts Coordinator and to see arts brought into each subject area. At this point, Ms. Hogan is not in support of an override. She referenced Page 6, looking at year over year declining enrollment, but budget and staff increasing. Dr. Wilson explained this can be due to placement of students, and the variability of special education costs. Ms. Hogan asked for special education cost and trend comparisons with other districts. Ms. Kouchakdjian noted the higher increase in diagnoses. Ms. Hogan stated we should expect to see similar trends in other districts as well.

Mr. Tinsley discussed looking at comparable school districts that are high performing with a smaller budget. Mr. Tinsley agreed with having a grant writer and would like to see a Fine Arts Coordinator as well. Ms. St. George also agreed a grant writer could be beneficial. The Committee agreed to include a grant writer position into the budget. Ms. Kouchakdjian would like to see a budget history. The Committee discussed looking at ways to offset costs, and possibly outsourcing janitorial services. Richard Tinsley made a motion to support evaluating the outsourcing and financial costs of janitorial services. Lucie St. George seconded the motion. Ms. Helon said she would be abstaining due to safety concerns. Mr. Tinsley restated his motion. Mr. Tinsley made a motion to evaluate janitorial services- the current model, outsourcing, or a hybrid model, and look at what we can save without sacrificing safety. Ms. St. George seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0. Motion carries.

The Committee agreed to consider items discussed tonight, prior to Friday's meeting, including an official dollar amount for a Grant Writer.

Ms. Hogan asked the Committee members to weigh in on whether they would support an override as it is important for the community and SPS leadership to understand our position(s). Mr. Tinsley, Ms. St. George, Ms. Kouchakdjian and Ms. Helon would consider an override, dependent upon additional information. Ms. Hogan stated she at this point cannot support an override.

2. Open Forum

Maia Proujansky-Bell, resident, spoke about teaching and the education and ongoing training required to be a teacher, she feels it is important to fight for proper funding of our schools.

Dan Carty, resident and Selectman, thanked Don Sawyer for his work and stated that if the Committee looks at neighboring towns they will see that Sudbury and Lincoln are trending up in regards to the Special Education count, adding that it is a huge driver of overall cost.

At 7:50 PM the Committee took a five-minute break.

3. District Reports

a. SEA Report

Colleen Kenosian spoke about 25 Years In Teaching, when SEA gathers to honor teachers who have achieved 25 years in teaching. This year they honored Kelly Chavero, Rex Phung and Eddie

Goode. These three educators demonstrate their enthusiasm for teaching, she said they are happy to be honoring them.

b. Assistant Superintendent Report

Assistant Superintendent Swain discussed meeting with the METCO Director and seven educators on Friday. Ms. Swain noted that they will be releasing elementary report cards tomorrow, they will be released on Aspen. The Middle School report cards will be released on December 15th through the same method.

c. Superintendent Report

Superintendent Wilson noted that the interviews for the Haynes Principal position begin this week, as well as the Student Services Director next week. Dr. Wilson thanked parents and teachers for their cooperation with parent-teacher conferences. Dr. Wilson said there will be no Superintendent chat in December but urged anyone to reach out if they have something on their mind.

4. School Committee Reports (Subcommittee/Liaison Reports)

Lisa Kouchakdjian noted that she attended several meetings last week, FinCom on Monday where the Town Manager presented the three-year plan. Ms. Kouchakdjian congratulated Chris Morley, noting his devotion and commitment to our Town. Curtis PTO was a great meeting, it included a presentation on makerspaces and a tour, it was impressive. The Librarian gave a great presentation as well. The Wellness meeting was equally as wonderful. Ms. Kouchakdjian gave a shout out to Officer Hutch and the Sudbury Police Department, noting we are lucky to have such a collaborative Department who support the students.

Ms. Kouchakdjian noted that she and Lucie St. George attended the Strategic Financial Planning Committee for Capital Funding who put together a great timeline and discussed specific capital funding recommendations. Ms. Kouchakdjian also attended the Park and Recreation meeting, there were issues involving various fields; she also noted that she and Maggie Helon are proceeding forward on updating the Policy Manual.

Richard Tinsley acknowledged the work of Chris Morley, although he wasn't able to attend the event, he thanked the Town for organizing it.

Maggie Helon announced they launched the Haynes Playground Committee today and is very excited about it; she read their communication notice. Maggie gave a shout out to the other Playground Committee Members, they expect completion of the project to be in September.

Lucie St. George congratulated Chris Morley. Ms. St. George noted that she attended a METCO meeting with Dr. Wilson.

Christine Hogan congratulated Chris Morley. Ms. Hogan noted that LS met and discussed shared services with SPS; Kevin Matthews said their focus at this point is supporting us in finding our next superintendent.

5. Superintendent Search

a. Approval of funding for additional focus group

Christine Hogan noted that an email was sent out to the community asking that anyone interested in serving on the Superintendent Search Committee send a letter of interest by Wednesday; they

are looking for two parent volunteers and a SEPAC Member. Ms. Hogan noted that she met with LPS Committee Chair and discussed their process when hiring their current superintendent. Ms. Hogan also contacted Bill Lupino from Collins to discuss central office personnel having their own focus group, the additional cost would be \$500.

Christine Hogan asked for a motion to approve a Central Office focus group. Lucie St. George so moved the motion. Richard Tinsley seconded the motion. Ms. Hogan noted this focus group is important as central office staff has their own, distinct working relationship with the Superintendent.

Vote: 5-0. Motion Carries.

Ms. Hogan announced that the School Committee Focus Group will meet Monday, December 18th at 6:00 PM. Meeting dates screening committee members will be expected to attend are: January 11, January 22, February 5, and a date to be determined during the week of February 10, 2018. Ms. Hogan noted that she has been keeping Bill Lupini up to date with everything.

Ms. Kouchakdjian asked if Ms. Hogan is accepting SEPAC's recommendation for their representative to the screening committee. Ms. Hogan stated she responded to the email and informed them SPSC would be voting on the full slate of screening committee members at our December 18 meeting.

6. Comparable School Districts

Mr. Tinsley had previously discussed the need to determine what our comparable districts are and had compiled a list of schools, some were high performing with a lower cost. Ms. Hogan noted the Committee should agree to come to a decision to have a list we all agree with, to use for budget and other comparative analyses.

Maggie Helon made a motion to adopt this list of comparable districts to use for Sudbury Public Schools. Mr. Tinsley seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0. Motion carries.

7. Calendar Survey Results

Mr. Tinsley noted the survey included ten questions, and they received 1,200 responses. 871 parents, 36 of whom were parent and staff, 186 teachers and 53 SPS staff made up the respondents. Parent respondents picked the weeks of June 15 and June 22 as school year end dates; the majority of teacher respondents chose the week of June 15. Over 55% of parents feel school should start after Labor Day. 51% want to keep winter break status quo. 46% of parents would like to keep the two vacation weeks, rather than one. 62% parents would like to see Friday as an early release day. 8% of parents may be likely to take their child out of school on a Friday.

The Committee discussed a September 4th start date but will wait to receive additional information from LS regarding their calendar and approved start date, as this could overall transportation costs. SPSC will continue this discussion, including ILAP days and possibly reducing ILAP days.

8. Capital Planning Draft Articles

Don Sawyer explained this is a standard process as part of the Town Capital Plan; the Capital Committee is looking for a vote from the School Committee for these items to maintain place on the Town Capital Plan, adding that a vote in the affirmative only keeps it on the Plan.

Ms. Helon made a motion to approve the capital improvement request for playground modernization for Sudbury Public Schools.

Vote: 4-0-1. Motion carries. (Ms. Hogan abstained)

Ms. Hogan made a motion to approve all other capital improvement requests. Mr. Tinsley seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0. Motion carries.

9. Members' Forum

Christine Hogan noted that during the last meeting we discussed whether or not the AG would have made a recommendation regarding liaisons, two emails were received confirming that they did make the recommendation. Copies of those emails were provided.

10. Minutes-Regular Session Minutes (10/18/2017, 10/23/2017, 11/6/2017, 11/14/2017)

11/14/2017 - Lisa Kouchakdjian made a motion to approve the November 14, 2017 meeting minutes. Lucie St. George seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0-1. Motion carries. (Mr. Tinsley abstained)

10/23/2017 - Maggie Helon made a motion to approve the October 23, 2017 meeting minutes. Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0-1. Motion carries. (Ms. St. George abstained)

10/18/2017, 11/6/2017 - Maggie Helon made a motion to approve the October 18, 2017 and November 6, 2017 meeting minutes. Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0. Motion carries.

11. Future Agenda Item Discussion

Ms. Hogan noted that the calendar survey would be on the next agenda, Ms. Kouchakdjian requested five minutes to discuss the legislative forum at an upcoming meeting.

12. Adjournment

Maggie Helon made a motion to adjourn. Lucie St. George seconded the motion.

Vote: 5-0. Motion carries.

The meeting adjourned at 10:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Clifford