

Sudbury Public Schools (SPS)  
School Committee Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)  
December 18, 2017, 7:00 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  
Ben DeMott, SEA Representative

**Open Regular Session**

Chair Christine Hogan called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**1. FY19 Budget Planning & Preliminary Budget Projections**

Don Sawyer explained that, in keeping in line with the Town's budget process, the Committee should take action this evening and submit a budget number. Mr. Sawyer noted the Committee had a previous version of the budget on 11/20/17 which showed a baseline budget of \$37,459,173. This is 3.6% increase from 2017 reflects guidance given from Town Manager so would be balanced. Mr. Sawyer discussed the addition of a Grant Writer, as recommended by the Committee. This position would add \$60,000 to the baseline budget. The additional Administration Recommendations results in a total of \$38,304,620, a 5.94% increase over FY18. The Committee discussed the restoration of custodian positions and overtime costs as well as other supplemental positions, such as a payroll clerk and a permanent substitute program. Mr. Sawyer stated these additions will enhance services.

Mr. Sawyer suggested the Committee could take action on the baseline budget tonight and continue discussions regarding the Supplemental Budget items. Lisa Kouchakdjian asked whether the Committee had taken action on the Grant Writer, noting she is not supportive of it in light of the Administration's recommendations, adding it may be superfluous if the new Director of Student Services can write grants. Christine Hogan stated the Committee had taken action on the addition of the Grant Writer. Ms. Hogan noted she is still waiting for information previously requested regarding comparable school districts and spending as it relates to Special Education and asked if this information was available. Mr. Sawyer noted it was not, adding that the process will continue. Mr. Sawyer stated that all collective bargaining units' contracts expire June 30th, which is a large component of the budget process, and at this point is an unknown.

Lisa Kouchakdjian made a motion to approve a 3.6% budget request in the total amount of \$37,459,173, and instruct Don Sawyer to inform and advise the Town Manager of the same. Lucie St. George seconded the motion.

**Vote: 4-0-1. Motion carries.** Ms. Hogan abstained due to the outstanding information requested, including comparables, which she would like to review before putting a budget number forward.

The Committee continued discussion of the Supplemental Budget items.

Ms. Kouchakdjian again stated she is not in favor of a grant writer at this time, but would like to look at it as a long-term goal, she also feels it is important to listen and support our administrators.

Mr. Tinsley is in favor of a Grant Writer, and believes that this person has a unique skill and frees up other personnel time, he believes it is a good investment.

Maggie Helon asked Kim Swain to explain the amounts and types of grants. Ms. Swain reviewed some of the grants that she has worked on together with other administrators, equalling over \$130,000. Ms. St. George inquired, and Ms. Swain responded, that one area of concern is the capacity of the work it takes to write grants. Ms. Helon and Ms. St. George stated they are not in favor of a Grant Writer at this time.

The Committee took a straw poll of Members on each of the supplemental budget items.

Grant Writer: 2 (yes) – Ms. Hogan and Mr. Tinsley -3 (no) – Ms. Helon, Ms. Kouchakdjian, Ms. St. George.

Various Salary Expense Reductions: 4-0-1. Ms. Hogan abstained.

Humanities Curriculum Coordinator: 4-1. Ms. Hogan voted no.

Out-of-District Coordinator: 2-3.

Early Childhood Director 4-0-1. Ms. Hogan abstained.

Registered Behavior Therapists: 4-0-1. Ms. Helon abstained.

Literacy Tutor: 2-3.

Middle School House Administrator: 3-2.

Team chair at Curtis 3-2.

Establish Permanent Substitute Program: 3-1-1. Ms. Hogan abstained.

Payroll Clerk: 3-2.

Restoration of Custodian: 2-3.

Elementary Assistant Principals: 2-3.

The Committee agreed to have all items remain on one merged list, grouped by the results of the straw poll.

## **2. District Reports**

### **a. SEA Report - none**

### **b. Assistant Superintendent Report**

Ms. Swain discussed the December 13th Tri-District Curriculum Meeting, which she explained was a great way for educators from all three Districts to come together to re-energize each year. Ms. Swain said that the conversations were very productive and expressed her gratitude to all who attended.

### **c. Superintendent Report**

Dr. Wilson noted that the searches for the Principal at Haynes as well as the Director of Students Services are both progressing nicely and there will be some announcements later this week. Dr. Wilson thanked all those who volunteered on the search committee and sent feedback. Dr. Wilson discussed the school cancellation process. A test call was done, if you stay on the line you can opt out of receiving phone calls regarding school cancellations due to inclement weather.

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

Ms. Helon stated that Curtis Middle School has good momentum in their work around social and emotional thinking and are offering a Diversity Club during the school day, the Club created a video which they shared with the sixth grade.

Ms. Helon reported that the Haynes Playground Modernization Program is moving along really well and some thoughtful decisions have been made by the Committee. The Committee is hoping to find the funds through the capital budget, beginning with Noyes in 2019, and in 2020 would be Loring and Nixon.

Lucie St. George discussed attending the Strategic Financial Planning Committee for Capital Funding meeting with Lisa Kouchakdjian. They gave guidance to the CIC in coming up with a funding amount that the CIC can now use when they start going through the requests for funding for capital projects in Town under \$1 Million dollars.

Richard Tinsley discussed attending the Fairbanks Community Task Force meeting; the consulting firm presented what they say was a favorable response by the Town regarding what the new Community Center would do. The Task Force voted to go forward with the \$25 Million construction project. It is expected to go on the May ballot. If this passes, construction would begin August 2019, at which point the SPS offices would need to relocate, and this should be discussed on a future agenda.

Lisa Kouchakdjian discussed attending the FinCom meeting where the three cost centers each presented. Ms. Kouchakdjian noted she also attended the Park and Recreation meeting. Ms. Kouchakdjian gave a shout out to Kim Pratt who did a fabulous job conducting the Haynes Principal interviews as well as candidates for Director of Student Services, and she commended all the search committee members for a very seamless and organized process. Ms. Kouchakdjian and Maggie Helon held a Policy Subcommittee meeting which went very well.

Christine Hogan reported that the Curtis Select Ensemble had their annual Statehouse trip and performance; and Rep. Carmine Gentile spoke to the Middle School Students about the possible change in the school start time, the work at both our community and the State level regarding the initiative and the positive response from the.

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

Sarah Olson Liberman, resident, believes the school budget is a crucial issue. Ms. Liberman shared comparisons of SPS to other school district budgets, and requested there be an analysis of the school structure and budget and asked that the Committee support her request to ensure that the Town is maximizing the school budget in a way that benefits the students the most.

#### **5. Superintendent Search - Screening Committee**

Christine Hogan explained that tonight the Committee will need to vote on the final slate for the Superintendent Screening Committee. The list put forward for consideration based upon previous vote of the School Committee included two SPSC members, Ms. Hogan and Mr. Tinsley as well as Town Manager Melissa Rodrigues. The remaining slots to be filled were one Central Office staff member, three SPS faculty members, one principal, one SEPAC member and two community members. The complete slate put forward for vote:

SPSC Members Christine Hogan and Richard Tinsley

Town Manager Melissa Rodrigues

Central Office staff member Don Sawyer

Curtis Principal Jeff Mela

Three SPS faculty members Ben DeMott, Liz Richter and Abbey Salon

SEPAC Member Jean Nam  
Community/Parent Members Erich Ledebuhr and Jeff Pazak

Ms. Helon made a motion to approve the Superintendent Search Screening Committee. Ms. Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

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

**a. Approval for funding for advertisement in Education Weekly Magazine**

Ms. Hogan explained that it was recommended that the Committee put an advertisement in Education Weekly Magazine to appeal to a broad base of applicants, but there is a fee, this will attract candidates from outside of Massachusetts. The amount is \$395.

Ms. Hogan suggested a motion to approve \$395 to go towards an Education Weekly posting. Ms. Kouchakdjian so moved the motion. Ms. St. George seconded. Discussion continued regarding the timing, cost and contents of ad.

Ms. Hogan asked that the motion be modified to approve the ad. Mr. Tinsley so moved the motion. Ms. St. George seconded the motion.

**Vote: 4-1. Motion carries.** (Ms. Helon was opposed due to the late timing of the advertisement)

**6. Negotiations Liaison**

Ms. Helon made a motion to excuse herself as Negotiations Liaison and for Lucie St. George to replace her. Mr. Tinsley seconded the motion.

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

**7. FY19 District Calendar**

Ms. Hogan explained there are three different calendars, SPS, LS and Lincoln. Dr. Wilson noted that LS has not finalized their calendar but they are confident in their beginning and end dates. Ms. Helon would like to see all three Districts work together earlier in the future. Ms. Hogan stated would be more efficient if shared services. Discussion ensued stating this could be solved by a joint meeting.

Mr. Tinsley is in favor of starting after Labor Day and suggested that if school begins the week before Labor Day, then start earlier in that week or include that Friday. Mr. Tinsley added that only going two days during that week may not be helpful from an educational standpoint.

The Committee discussed the cost differential when the schools are not in alignment. Mr. Sawyer noted the SPS portion would be \$8,700 per day, without splitting the costs for each day our calendar does not align with LS. Ms. Hogan said the majority of respondents to the survey would like to start after Labor Day; Ms. Kouchakdjian noted that they may not be aware of the financial impact.

Ms. St. George made a motion that we start on August 29th, and the 185th day would be June 21, 2019. Ms. Kouchakdjian seconded the motion. Discussion continued regarding separate motions for start and end date, and whether to include the Friday before Labor Day.

Ms. St. George amended her motion that the school start date will be August 29th. Ms. Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

**Vote: 3-2. Motion carries.** (Ms. Hogan and Mr. Tinsley were opposed.)

Mr. Tinsley made a motion that we adjust the calendar and count the (August) 31st into the calendar. Ms. Hogan seconded the motion. Ms. Hogan inquired if LS was to consider also going

the 31st, would the Committee agree to adding the 31st. After further discussion, Ms. Hogan asked to reaffirm voting on the calendar.

Ms. Hogan asked if there is a motion to start school on August 29th. Ms. St. George so moved the motion. Ms. Kouchakdjian seconded the motion. The Committee is waiting upon further information before making a final decision.

**Vote: 2-3. Motion failed.** (Ms. Helon, Ms. Hogan and Mr. Tinsley opposed.)

Ms. Hogan asked if there is a motion to start Tuesday, September 4th. The Committee discussed ILAP days, whether a Wednesday or Friday would be more appropriate.

Mr. Tinsley made a motion to go with the draft calendar as it stands, with the September 4th start date. Ms. Helon seconded the motion. Ms. Helon agreed with Mr. Tinsley that switching the ILAP day to Friday could be a pilot program. Ms. Hogan has heard from families that ILAP Wednesdays negatively impact working families more than a Friday would, she also believes quality family time is important and pointed to the districts work on SEL in this regard, and Fridays seem to be preferable to families based on the survey results. Ms. Hogan stated the Committee has asked for feedback from the community and it is important we listen to that feedback. Mr. Tinsley inquired as to what the educational reason why ILAP days are Wednesdays. Dr. Wilson discussed the professional development that occur on Wednesdays allow teachers to implement the next day, and the collaboration with the LS calendar.

Ms. Hogan asked to table the ILAP days and this will be put on the upcoming agenda.

## **8. Members' Forum**

The Committee wished everyone Happy Holidays. Mr. Tinsley wished Jim Kelly the best in his new position.

## **9. Minutes-Regular Session Minutes (11/20/2017, 12/4/2017)**

### **11/20/2017**

Ms. Kouchakdjian asked that #6, in the second paragraph, second line, add a period after the word "meeting" and change "they" to "the Committee".

Ms. Kouchakdjian made a motion to approve the minutes of November 20, 2017. Mr. Tinsley seconded the motion.

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

### **12/4/2017**

Ms. Kouchakdjian made a motion to approve the December 4, 2017 minutes. Ms. St. George seconded the motion.

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

## **10. Future Agenda Items**

Ms. Hogan mentioned the following future agenda items: Future planning for SPS office spaces, legislative forum, playgrounds, and, as requested by a community member, exploring best possible options for a better educational experience.

## **11. Adjournment**

Richard Tinsley made a motion to adjourn. Ms. St. George seconded the motion.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Laura Clifford