

**REGULAR SESSION MINUTES**  
**February 11, 2014**

A meeting of the Swampscott School Committee was held in Room B208 at Swampscott High School commencing at 7:20 p.m. with the following members present: Mr. Rick Kraft, Chairman; Mr. Ted Delano, Vice Chairman; Ms. Marianne Speranza-Hartmann, Ms. Carin Marshall and Ms. Amy OConnor. Also Present: Ms. Pamela Angelakis, Superintendent of Schools, Garry Murphy, Assistant to the Superintendent, Wayne White, School Business Administrator, Christopher Thomsen and Tristan Smith, Student Representatives.

Mr. Kraft explained that two students were invited to come and lead the pledge of allegiance and read the Mission Statement of the District. He then gave the Committee some background information and introduced Stanley School students Finn O'Connor and Mick Ross.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was none.

**COMMITTEE COMMENT**

Ms. Speranza-Hartmann spoke about the ceremony for the naming of the Field House in honor of Dick Lynch which was held prior to the meeting. She stated it was a very moving ceremony and that she was glad to be a part of it.

Ms. Marshall echoed the comments of Ms. Speranza-Hartmann and added she was impressed to see the emotion involved as well as the turnout.

Mr. Delano welcomed Ms. Angelakis to her first meeting as Superintendent. Mr. Delano also echoed the comments of Ms. Speranza-Hartmann in regards to the dedication and felt it was a great thing.

Chris Thomsen agreed with all regarding the dedication to Mr. Lynch. He also thanked Ms. Angelakis for her recent school visits and commented that she handled some hard questions very well. He added that he thought it was the first time that someone in her position has had those type of forums in a long time and he felt it was a great way to let students know they're going to be listened to and that teachers know they'll be listened to. He further commented on the recent layoff at the Swampscott Patch in which editor Terry Date lost his job. He spoke about the opportunity that Mr. Date gave him to write about Swampscott sports and also that he allowed the SHS Blue Print to publish their stories.

Tristan Smith added that he felt that though he didn't know him personally that Mr. Lynch was very deserving of the honor. He informed the Committee that last week was Wellness Week at the High School and that he felt it was well received by students and that Mr. Rozmiarek would be putting together a presentation for a future meeting.

Mr. Kraft also stated it was a great tribute to Mr. Lynch this evening. He also welcomed Ms. Angelakis to her first meeting as Superintendent.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**MOTION:**

It was moved by Ms. Speranza-Hartmann and seconded by Ms. Marshall to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC HEARING ON SCHOOL BUDGET 2014-2015**

Mr. Kraft stated the Committee had a concern about not having enough time to review the entire budget before the meeting. There was discussion regarding postponing the public hearing to give members as well as the public further opportunity to review the budget documents. Ms. Speranza-Hartmann questioned if the documents the Committee received were available. Mr. White distributed budget documents to the Committee.

Ms. Angelakis said she felt they could speak to the information provided. Ms. Speranza-Hartmann expressed concern on holding the public hearing as the information wasn't available prior to the meeting. She suggested a motion to reschedule the public hearing to Friday. Mr. Delano commented that the delay in the budget documents was due to change in personnel but that the Finance Subcommittee had met earlier with Ms. Angelakis, Dr. Murphy and Mr. White and said he felt that the product before them was much easier to follow and that the felt the Committee would see that there had been a lot of time and effort put into the documents. Mr. Delano further added that if the meeting were to be rescheduled to Friday that while he was unavailable he was comfortable with the product. Ms. Angelakis added to Mr. Delano's comments that while there was a change in personnel she didn't want anyone to miss the work and effort that has been put into the documents and thanked all of the staff who played a part in putting the budget presentation together. She added that she felt that while it was later than normal she thought the Committee would be pleased with the presentation. Mr. Kraft thanked all who participated in the process. He further added that this budget is in a whole new format for this year which is streamlined and more user friendly. There was further discussion on rescheduling the public hearing portion of the meeting. Ms. OConnor suggested making good use of the time while the Committee was together and review the documents presented. Mr. Kraft asked for suggestions from Mr. White and Dr. Murphy on the most efficient way to handle the process. Dr. Murphy suggested beginning with an overview of the budget documents presented. Ms. Speranza-Hartmann added there would need to be a motion to delay public hearing as it was on the agenda. Mr. Kraft stated an item could be added for discussion as a first read for the budget. There was discussion on a schedule time and date for the public hearing. It was agreed to postpone the public hearing to Friday, February 14, 2014 at 5:30 at the High School. Mr. Delano added that as he was unavailable he would like it noted that he would recuse himself from the athletic line item. Ms. Speranza-Hartmann made the motion to postpone.

**MOTION:**

It was moved by Ms. Speranza-Hartmann and seconded by Ms. Marshall to reschedule the public hearing on School Budget 2014-2015 to Friday, February 14, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

There was discussion regarding adding an item to the agenda for discussion of the budget.

**MOTION:**

It was moved by Ms. Marshall and seconded by Speranza-Hartmann to add to the agenda discussion of the budget. The motion passed unanimously.

**2014-2015 SCHOOL BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Dr. Murphy gave an overview of the work that had been done on the budget to convert it to a site based budget and explained the process involved. He explained that it would be difficult to compare prior years budgets to the new format. He explained an overview of the overall budget and explained that 82% of the budget was for personnel. He outlined the section which referred to fiscal management goals as well as a snapshot of some revenue sources available to the District. Dr. Murphy spoke about increases to the budget and stated that while the town had spoke of a 3% increase to the budget the Committee would find as they went through the numbers that the Superintendent is prepared to recommend at a 4½% increase over last years budget.

There was discussion regarding enrollment figures at the Kindergarten level. Ms. Angelakis stated that the town census provided for 158 but that currently there were 127 enrolled. She added that it was still early and typically those numbers will increase. Mr. Kraft questioned how enrollment was advertised to potential students. Ms. Angelakis said Martha Raymond coordinates registration and delivers packets to town pre-schools as well as advertises in local papers. There was discussion on other ways to get the information out to the public. Dr. Murphy also spoke about projected enrollment figures at the elementary, Middle and High Schools and stated that each school provided executive summaries outlining requests for their schools. Ms. Angelakis stated the Leadership Team then met to discuss requests at each level. Dr. Murphy then discussed the proposed additional staff which was outlined at a prior meeting.

Dr. Murphy explained that Mr. White had reviewed the budget and was confident that there would be funds available to use as a pre-paid carry over for the FY14-15 budget. He further added that he expected they would

be able to identify reductions to the current budget which would be able to be applied toward additional staffing going forward. Ms. OConnor questioned if that money had been identified within the budget. Ms. Angelakis stated they were currently looking at the budget to identify those funds. Ms. OConnor questioned the difference in the bottom line figure from this fiscal year to the proposed. Ms. Angelakis stated that it was assumed the town would fund 3% but that she was proposing to request a 4½% increase. Mr. Delano questioned the permanent sub positions and whether they were eligible for health insurance. Ms. Angelakis stated they were. He referred to a recent article regarding substitutes and Ms. Angelakis stated that she had investigated a potential arrangement with Kelly Services as well as utilizing software to make the substitute process more efficient. Mr. Kraft questioned the probability of the 4½% funding increase. Ms. Angelakis stated she would work with the Town to advocate for the students in the District. She explained that as Mr. Delano had stated there was no fluff in the budget and that she would advocate why these requests were brought forward. Ms. Speranza-Hartmann questioned whether the Committee had the ability to request additional staffing and that in reference to the clerical in guidance at the Middle School she felt it should be a full-time position as opposed to part-time. She explained that if guidance staff is unavailable or at meetings that the doors are simply locked and students don't have access to staff. Dr. Murphy stated the Committee could absolutely make that recommendation. Ms. OConnor questioned part-time administrative staff at Clarke School. Ms. Angelakis stated those were wish-list items and not included in this budget proposal. Dr. Murphy added that going through the exercise of finding funds could be increased if they wished to increase the guidance position and that the next refinement of numbers could very well reflect that as a full-time position.

Dr. Murphy stated he was pleased with where the process has come. He added that they had involved the Leadership Team in the process and that a lot had been accomplished through this process and that although it took time he felt it was important to get to a point where Mr. White and Ms. Angelakis had gone through the budget line by line. Ms. Angelakis thanked Dr. Murphy for his coaching and stated she felt very confident with the documents that were produced. She added that she was very comfortable with the figures and in fighting for them. Dr. Murphy reminded the members that it was a recommendation by the Superintendent but that it was the budget of the Committee and was a team effort.

Mr. Kraft questioned the \$235,000 that the District will be looking to cut out of existing operations. Mr. White explained that it would be included just to keep going forward assuming it is found within the existing budget. There was further discussion regarding the \$235,000 and additional proposed positions and how that figure is reflected within the current budget.

Ms. Speranza-Hartmann questioned whether this proposed budget and that which will be voted on Friday would be different. Ms. Angelakis stated no, it would be the same. There was discussion regarding a vote of the bottom line number and Ms. Angelakis added there might be some adjustment to the line items and Mr. Kraft added that from the town's perspective it was just a bottom line figure. Mr. Kraft requested an electronic copy of the budget to be emailed. Ms. OConnor questioned the amount of increase requested and there was a discussion regarding the financial difference between a 3% increase and the requested 4½% increase. Mr. Kraft stated there would be an opportunity on Friday to ask questions regarding line items but expected the questions to be more targeted on certain issues. Ms. OConnor added that she could appreciate the idea and good faith effort that the District was looking for areas to find savings.

Ms. Angelakis thanked Dr. Murphy for his work on the budget.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

### **School Visits**

Ms. Angelakis reported that she went to the High School for the last of her school visits. She said it was a great experience and that she had good dialogue with the juniors and seniors. She added that she also had been back to visit the Clarke School. She added that she felt it was very important to stay around the children and Ms. OConnor thanked her for the visits.

### **District PTO Meeting**

Ms. Angelakis stated that Dr. Murphy had been begun meeting with the District PTO's once a month. She stated she recently held a meeting and that they had a lot of questions regarding the new proposed school building. She added to all that there was a District wide PTO meeting to be held tomorrow evening at 7:00 to address some of the questions regarding the new school building. Ms. Marshall added that the meeting was geared more toward the educational impact of the project.

### **Director of Curriculum and Instruction**

Ms. Angelakis explained that one of the changes she hoped to make in July would be do away do the Assistant to the Superintendent position and to create Director of Curriculum and Instruction which is an area she felt was very important.

### **Personnel Report**

Ms. Angelakis reviewed the personnel report from the Committee's packets.

### **Marblehead/Swampscott YMCA & Marblehead Counseling Center**

Ms. Angelakis informed the Committee that she was working on a plan in the upcoming weeks to partner with two local community organizations. She added that she recently met with the directors of both the Swampscott/Marblehead YMCA and the Marblehead Counseling Center. She added that both were looking to be more involved with Swampscott and added that they could provide services to the town at no cost. She explained that she had contact with the Marblehead Counseling Center in regards to the Chemical Health Policy and stated that she was working with Mr. Rozmiarek in that regard.

### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

Ms. Speranza-Hartmann stated that the Policy Subcommittee is waiting for Mike Gilbert to continue ahead with the policy review.

Mr. Delano stated the Communications Subcommittee was planning to meet after February vacation.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Selection of Legal Counsel for the District**

Mr. Kraft stated that the Committee needs to make a decision for obtaining legal counsel and should discuss the pros and cons between Kopelman & Paige and Deutsch Williams. Ms. OConnor felt that they were both great choices and that Kopelman & Paige had done good work for the town and have been responsive to the Committee. She added that Elizabeth Valerio from Deutsch Williams came well recommended by MASC and she felt that the Committee couldn't go wrong with either choice. Mr. Delano added that Kopelman & Paige has as proven track record with the Town and have proven their responsiveness to the Committee. He added he thought their billing rate was less as well. Ms. Marshall added she was impressed with the work that Kopelman & Paige did last minute and added she wasn't sure of any major disadvantages or conflicts. Mr. Kraft expressed some concern with employing the same firm that represents the Town. Ms. Speranza-Hartmann agreed. Mr. Kraft added he liked the idea of having separate counsel and stated he had some concerns about the independence of the advice if the Committee uses the same firm. Ms. Speranza-Hartmann added that she thought it was good to have a fresh set of eyes and thought that some good could come from the same firm but that she worried about conflict. Ms. Angelakis stated she liked both firms but thought there was something attractive about having the same counsel as the Town and expressed that she would expect they would be professional in keeping things separate. Ms. Speranza-Hartmann questioned if there was a commitment or contract to either firm or if the Committee was unsatisfied could they switch? Mr. Kraft stated if the fit wasn't right it could.

Ms. Speranza-Hartmann questioned whether a vote should be taken. Dr. Murphy stated the Committee should decide who to use as primary counsel and vote.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Ms. Speranza-Hartmann and seconded by Ms. OConnor to choose Elizabeth Valerio of Deutsch Williams as the Committee's primary legal counsel.

Ms. OConnor stated her gut would be to go with Elizabeth Valerio but with that she also thought they would be well represented by Kopelman & Paige and thought that would show good faith in working together with the Town. Ms. Marshall stated she was leaning towards Kopelman & Paige and felt the transition would be easier with them knowing some of the Town's issues. Mr. Delano stated he relied on his prior comments. Mr. Kraft stated he was leaning towards Deutsch Williams and felt there was some value in having separate Counsel. A vote was taken.

**VOTE:** The motion failed 2 - 3.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Mr. Delano seconded by Ms. Marshall to choose Kopelman & Paige as the Committee's primary legal counsel. The motion passed unanimously.

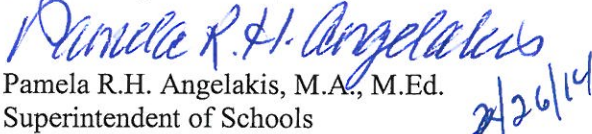
Mr. Kraft stated he would inform each firm of the Committee's decision.

Mr. Kraft stated that although he had received a draft of the teacher's contract that he felt there was nothing to discuss in Executive Session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** At 9:29 p.m. it was moved by Ms. Speranza-Hartmann and seconded by Ms. OConnor to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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

2/26/14

/pan