

REGULAR SESSION MINUTES

September 24, 2013

Amended

A meeting of the Swampscott School Committee was held in room B208 at Swampscott High School commencing at 7:01 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: Dr. Garry P. Murphy, Ph.D., Interim Superintendent, Ms. Pamela Angelakis, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. Ed Cronin, Business Manager..

PUBLIC COMMENT

Melissa DeFilippi questioned whether some parent concerns expressed through the PTA would be discussed. Dr. Murphy stated he would address that in the Superintendent's Report.

COMMITTEE COMMENT

Ms. OConnor commented on a busy week with feedback from parents regarding the School Building Committee.

Ms. Marshall commented on the progress of the School Building Committee and spoke about the unanimous vote held earlier in the day to select a District-wide elementary school at the Middle School site. She added that proposal goes to the MSBA and she would report back with any further information.

Ms. Speranza-Hartmann reminded the community about the upcoming Taste of Swampscott event to be held Sunday, October 13th at the High School. She also reminded with cold and flu season coming to get the flu shot as well as it was okay to keep students home if they aren't feeling well.

Mr. Kraft requested a motion to move up item 7B of New Business.

MOTION:

It was moved by Mr. Delano and seconded by Ms. OConnor to move up in the agenda item 7B under New Business. The motion passed unanimously.

Lori Erlich, State Representative

State Representative Lori Erlich came forward to speak to the Committee. She welcomed Dr. Murphy to Swampscott. Representative Erlich spoke about the issue of Chapter 70 funding within Swampscott. She explained the background of Chapter 70 and gave the Committee an overview of past amounts of funding which the District received. She also added that she had submitted a letter on behalf of the turf grant for Phillips Park and that she was further excited to work with the District through the School Building process. Mr. Kraft questioned a way to enforce the 17.5% funding amount. Ms. Erlich explained the process and how funding carries through the budget process. She also added that it's good to hear from those in support of proposals. There was discussion regarding towns and cities which had joined together in effort to receive funding. Ms. OConnor questioned how and why some towns had received level funding and if there were any commonalities that may be between them. Ms. Erlich explained the different ways the formula is arrived at which included student enrollment and added that you can't make generalizations in determining the funding and stated that funding was on a per student basis and that Swampscott made out better than it could have. Ms. Speranza-Hartmann thanked Ms. Erlich for her efforts on the issue and added that Dave Whelan always spoke highly of her in fighting for Swampscott. Mr. Kraft brought up the issue of Special Education funding in which Ms. Erlich discussed and explained the circuit breaker reimbursement to towns for special education funding. Mr. Delano thanked Ms. Erlich for coming and for her hard work for the town.

Mr. Kraft requested a motion to move up item 7A of New Business.

MOTION:

It was moved by Ms. Speranza-Hartmann and seconded by Ms. OConnor to move up in the agenda item 7A under New Business. The motion passed unanimously.

Kopelman & Paige Interview

Thomas McEnaney and Darrin Klein came forward to present a proposal for legal services. Mr. McEnaney and Mr. Klein gave an overview of their backgrounds as well as the services provided by their firm. They explained that they have experience in contracts, construction issues as well as collective bargaining. Mr. Klein explained that they view themselves as a preventative law firm and provide training to clients to foresee situations which could avoid litigation. Mr. McEnaney stated they represent the town side in Swampscott and come out quarterly to go over issues and address any ongoing projects to bring everyone up to date. Mr. Klein added that they are well versed in different layers of government.

At 7:50 Tristan Smith arrived at the meeting.

Mr. Klein added that their representation of both the town and school sides allows for collaboration between each entity. He further added that contracts work best when they are somewhat uniform throughout. He gave an example with the Town of Burlington in which they represent both the town and School Committee sides. Mr. Delano questioned whether the fee for services would be the same as paid by the town. Mr. McEnaney stated the billing would be at the same rate as billed for town counsel services. Ms. OConnor questioned whether they would ever foresee a conflict of interest in representation of both sides of town. Mr. Klein referred to the Burlington arrangement and explained that one central theme of their firm was to help to advise the client and therefore avoiding a conflict as the decision is up to that of the entity and not their firm. He added that they had been representing both School and town sides in Burlington for close to 13 to 14 years and had not encountered a conflict to date. Mr. Klein added that during meetings or trainings it's their policy to listen before advising which allows them to see potential issues. Mr. McEnaney added that with contracts it is their practice to review them before they go out to bid to eliminate any disputes ahead of the contract. Ms. Marshall questioned the issue of special education law. Mr. Klein stated the firm had attorneys who specialized in special education law and that it was a complicated issue and that some Districts have a separate attorney for special education law. Ms. Speranza-Hartmann questioned the District's representation on that issue. Mr. Cronin stated it had been separate counsel. Mr. Kraft questioned if references could be provided. Mr. Klein pointed out that the firm had worked with Tom Younger in other communities before Swampscott and felt he would be a wonderful reference. It was agreed that other references would be provided through email to Mr. Delano. Mr. Delano and Mr. Kraft thanked Mr. McEnaney and Mr. Klein for their presentation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION:

It was moved by Ms. Marshall and seconded by Ms. Speranza-Hartmann to accept the meeting minutes of September 9, 2013. The motion passed unanimously.

SMS – Field Trip to New York

Mr. Kraft presented for vote the Middle School Field Trip to New York. Ms. OConnor questioned why the approval came before the Committee. Mr. Cronin stated that the School Committee needs to approve all out of state field trips. Mr. Kraft added it was good for the Committee to be aware of what was going on and Dr. Murphy stated it was his recommendation that the field trip be supported.

MOTION:

It was moved by Ms. Speranza-Hartmann and seconded by Ms. Marshall to approve the Middle School field trip to New York. The motion passed unanimously.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Murphy gave the Committee an update on the District over the last two weeks which included operational issues, bussing issues and crossing guard updates. He added that Rose Cheever had been very helpful in making recommendations for crossing guards and also with building security issues. He also discussed staffing issues and stated he was pleased with the building principals' use of sharing staff when available. Dr. Murphy stated he had met with the leadership of the PTA's and stated that meetings would occur on a monthly basis. He stated the group would like open communication with the Committee and that Ms. OConnor and Mr. Delano had agreed to meet to coordinate communication. The group also discussed Chapter 70 funding, the issue of librarians as well as the

Boston Magazine rankings. He added there was great feedback and would like to look at more public forums. Ms. OConnor questioned the issue of public comment at the meetings and Dr. Murphy asked Gargi Cooper for her feedback. Ms. Cooper stated a lot of people don't come to the meetings because they don't feel like they can be heard. There was discussion surrounding having public comment throughout the meeting and Mr. Kraft stated it could be looked into to see how it would work out.

DESE Coordinated Program Review

Dr. Murphy stated the Committee had in their packets notification that the DESE would be conducting a program review. He added that Mona Blumstein would be the site coordinator for the program review and that he would report back once a report is received from DESE.

DESE PARCC Field Test

Dr. Murphy announced that the District was chosen to be part of the DESE PARCC testing which would be in the spring. Ms. Angelakis stated the information provided in the packets outlined the schools and grade levels involved. Ms. OConnor questioned how each school or grade was chosen. Ms. Angelakis stated that it was assigned, not chosen.

Enrollment Information

Dr. Murphy stated the report gave a snapshot of where the District stood and also a history and background of the District's enrollment. He stated the report would be reviewed with staff but wanted to give a preliminary report to the Committee.

SEPACs

Dr. Murphy stated he had received information that the SEPAC representatives were looking for a member of the School Committee to be a liaison to their Council. Ms. Angelakis stated she had met with Kirsten Fagone and Jen Nisbet who had stated they were looking for a liaison to be involved as involved as they could be to attend meetings and events. Ms. Speranza-Hartmann stated she would be happy to volunteer. Ms. Angelakis stated she would report back to SEPAC with Ms. Speranza-Hartmann's name. Mr. Kraft requested a motion for Ms. Speranza-Hartmann's nomination.

MOTION:

It was moved by Mr. Delano, seconded by Ms. Marshall to nominate Ms. Speranza-Hartmann as School Committee liaison to the Special Education Parent Advisory Council. The motion passed unanimously.

MCAS Status

Dr. Murphy reported on the District's MCAS results and stated that he would be meeting with each principal to examine the individual school's results and to develop plans to address what is needed going forward to improve. He also referenced the Boston Magazine rankings which provide information to staff on what needs to be followed up on but also stated he felt energy should be focused on the students and giving them the best possible education and to make sure that instruction is reflective of the standards which in turn would allow the rankings to take care of itself. Ms. Angelakis added that she ran a few reports from the DESE website which gave an overview of the District's results and also explained the standings and how they were reflected at each school. She added that she and Dr. Murphy would report back with information from the principals as well as any plans put in place for improvement.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was none.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Communications Subcommittee Update

Mr. Delano spoke of plans to get the Swampscott Educator up and running. Mr. Kraft questioned the possibility of scheduling a public forum and Mr. Delano stated they would work on getting a date scheduled.

Finance Subcommittee Update

Ms. OConnor stated the group would be meeting next week and Mr. Murphy stated he met with the group along with Ms. Angelakis and Mr. Cronin to come up with a decision on what they would like to see reported on a monthly basis as well as budget format. Mr. Delano also reported that he would look into having Mr. Younger attend a few meetings as well as a representative from the Town Finance Committee.

Policy Subcommittee Update

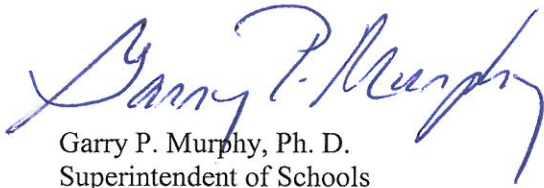
Ms. Speranza-Hartmann stated she had spoken to Mike Gilbert about a November 18th training with the Committee and also discussed the policy review. She further stated she would check in with him on the next step on the policy review. She added that there was a discussion in creating a policy for dedication of school properties which would be in line with a policy that the Selectmen are working on. She explained that keeping them consistent with policies already in place would be easier.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

At 9:14 p.m. it was moved by Ms. Marshall, seconded by Ms. Speranza-Hartmann and voted by roll call vote to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining and also contract issues with non-union personnel. Ms. Marshall – yes; Ms. Speranza-Hartmann – yes; Mr. Delano – yes; Ms. OConnor – yes; Mr. Kraft – yes.

Respectfully submitted,



Garry P. Murphy, Ph. D.
Superintendent of Schools

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