

Swampscott School Committee

Regular Session Meetings

February 10th, 2021

A meeting of the Swampscott School Committee was held virtually in Swampscott, MA commencing at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present: Ms. Amy OConnor, School Committee Chair, Suzanne Wright, Ms. Carin Marshall, Mr. Ted Delano, Mr. John Giantis, School Committee members. Also, Present: Martha Raymond, Asst. Superintendent of Student Services, Jean Bacon, Director of Teaching & Learning, and Martha Sybert, Director of Finance. Services. Myra Diaz, and Tabitha Randell, Student Reps were present. Pamela Angelakis, Superintendent of Schools was absent.

The School Committee was meeting in a virtual setting, fully remote via teleconferencing, practicing social distancing, and in accordance with the Governor's suspension of certain open meeting laws. The meeting was being recorded and broadcast live on the local cable station.

Community Announcements:

Ms. Sybert said that there will be no lunches during the February school vacation. If families need lunch they may go on to the SPS website/Food Services and order a week's worth of meals for pick up on Friday or reach out to Ms. Maureen Kellett, Food Service.

Ms. Diaz brought up mental health issues.

Ms. Wright thanked Ms. Sybert, Ms. Raymond, Ms. Mackey-Knowles, and Ms. Porter-Roberts for all their work on the SBC.

Mr. Giantis spoke about mental health.

Mr. Delano thanked Ms. Raymond & Ms. Ogunbona for inviting him to the METCO meeting.

Ms. Marshall thanked Ms. Wright for all her work on the SBC.

Ms. OConnor asked everyone to be honest in attestations when sending kids to school and sports. She said they are seeing kids come in from homes where someone is sick. She said to consider the teachers and community.

Program of Studies (POS): Mr. Kohut spoke about the Program of Studies (POS). He highlighted some of the changes which included a more user-friendly format, an added section of career clusters, and the Innovation Pathways Program.

Mr. Kohut discussed the various Innovation pathways. SHS qualified for the Advanced Manufacturing pathway. He reviewed the program including courses and internships.

Ms. OConnor asked if there were any limits on participation and what grades were eligible. Mr. Kohut said it is open to all grades. There are no prerequisites or limits on who can participate in the program.

Ms. OConnor asked how the program dovetails with the senior project. Mr. Kohut said they are anticipating the Internship will be at the start of the senior year while the senior project is at the end of the year but they could overlap. Ms. OConnor asked how many other schools offered the program. Ms. Zotto-Barnum said around 10 to twenty. Danvers PS offers four pathways programs.

Mr. Giantis asked about promoting the program to freshmen. Mr. Kohut said there will be virtual open houses and they hope to work with the TV students to produce something. Ms. Barnum-Zotto said that promotion is part of the application process. She said events are built into the process. Ms. Zotto-Barnum spoke of MS collaboration, working with the 8th-grade advisories, and other recruitment efforts.

Ms. Wright asked if the POS advanced course options at NSCC was an informal relationship or if the courses were already outlined. Ms. Zotto-Barnum said it is a formal partnership for an early college track (20 students currently). They have had conversations with NSCC about the pathways program and are working on a more formal agreement.

Ms. Wright asked if pathway was an option for 11th & 12th graders with a full AP load. Ms. Zotto-Barnum spoke about having a dedicated school counselor for the pathways cohort. She discussed support for students no matter where they are at in their course workload. Ms. Wright is appreciative of all the hard work put into the program.

Ms. Wright asked about the Freshman seminar that was added to the POS last year. Mr. Kohut said the feedback has been good. It's a quarter class so they have been through half the freshman class. Mr. Kohut gave a description of the seminar which is required for all 9th graders.

Mr. Delano asked about the financial literacy program. Mr. Kohut said the course had a strong enrollment and is going well. He said they have also grown the DECA program.

Director of Finance: Ms. Sybert said the Town Guidance has been adjusted down to 1.37% cap on expense plus new growth of .88% which allows for General Fund Budget Growth of 2.25%. She said Local Aid and Chapter 70 is less than the revenue model. Ms. Sybert said that they have been asked to reduce the FY22 Budget by \$180,000. Ms. Sybert stressed that they did not reduce the budget. They identified additional expenses that could be moved from the operating budget to the ESSER II grant (\$108K for Technology, \$37K for Endicott Fellows, \$25K for ESY, and \$10K from staff increases).

Ms. Sybert recapped the revenue sources, budget timeline, and five cost centers. Ms. Sybert said the 2022 budget will increase our budget to \$31,084,801 a 2.5% increase or \$754,925 over FY21. The FY22 budget total is \$31,094,801. Grants, Revolving Fund Analysis & FTE Analysis are the final budget items to be presented.

Ms. Sybert spoke about Federal (entitlement) grants. She reviewed Title I, Title IIA, Title III, Title IV, Early Childhood, and IDEA grants over the past few Fiscal years as well as the FY22 projections. She highlighted that expenses for 20 FTE (ESP staff) are being moved over to the ESSER grant in order to transition the change of Out of District (OOD) expenses to the IDEA grant.

Ms. Sybert reviewed State grants (METCO, Innovation Pathways, Comp School Health, Safe & Supportive School). She reviewed Circuit Breaker funds, usage, and reimbursement rates.

Ms. Sybert reviewed the pandemic related grants (ESSER, Remote Learning, CvRF Reopening grant, Summer Vacation Learning, State Coronavirus protection, ESSER II). She discussed deadlines for use of funds as well as some planned uses.

Ms. Marshall asked about the ESSER II grant funding. Ms. Sybert said we know the dollar amount but the grant application is not available until April. However, it is retroactive to when the law was passed.

Ms. Wright asked if we can spend the ESSER II now. She asked about utilizing it for pool testing beyond DESE or other ways to get kids back in school. Ms. Sybert said it could be but some of the money has been earmarked. Ms. Wright asked if it can fund Remote Learning teachers. Ms. Sybert said yes.

Mr. Giantis asked if the summer program would be coming from EESER II. Ms. Sybert said most likely. Ms. Giantis asked about the projected FY22 Federal grants. Ms. Sybert said she is optimistic that they won't be lower. She projected the funding as flat lined.

Ms. OConnor asked about the School Health grant being used for pool testing. Ms. OConnor asked about Title I funding increases due to the growth in free and reduced lunch by 35%. Ms. Sybert said we would not see an increase proportional to the free/reduced increase. She said that everyone is seeing their Free/Reduced rates rise. She said the timing of the FY22 Title I grant is late June.

Mr. Delano asked if the Technology (\$108,000) expenses were in the vote. Ms. Sybert said it would not be part of the vote as it is not part of the Operational budget. Mr. Delano feels we need to commit to a line item each year for Technology to be successful. Ms. Sybert discussed the change of Technology from the Capital to the Operating budget, pandemic revenue losses, and restrictions on budget growth that led to the decision to move the \$108,000 to the ESSER grant for FY22. She said the best tactic was to have discussions for Technology in the FY23 budget.

Ms. Wright asked if we could put half the Technology cost in EESER and \$50,000 in the Operational budget. Ms. Sybert said no matter what we take out we have to put something else back in.

Ms. Wright asked if this is the 1st year we are paying OOD tuition from the IDEA grant. Ms. Raymond said they felt this was a much better predictable use of the grant. She discussed keeping the grants clean and easy for audit purposes. Ms. Wright asked if time and effort is more than someone's pay stub. Ms. Sybert discussed timesheets, certification acknowledgment, and the administrative work related to paying staff from Federal grants.

Ms. OConnor asked if the ESSER grant was tied to students or the town. She asked if the Nahant students were included in the award calculation. Ms. Sybert said it is based on Title I which has a composition tied to the student population including Nahant enrollment.

Ms. Sybert reviewed the Revolving funds (25). She reviewed the Revolving funds that offset the budget (school rental, athletics, PreK tuition, Extended Day, Nahant tuition) and the revenue impacts due to the pandemic. She said the Food Service is projected to lose \$95,000. Ms. Sybert reviewed the FY22 budget assumptions, the remainder of the revolving funds, and the FY22 projections.

Mr. Delano asked about the FY20 Athletic expenses since there were no spring sports. Ms. Sybert discussed the loss of track fees which funds some of the more expensive sports.

Ms. OConnor asked if the cost of Preschool tuition has increased. Ms. Raymond said they have been steadily increasing the tuition. Ms. Sybert said she has been conservative on extended day and preschool revenues.

Ms. Sybert spoke about Full Time Equivalents (FTEs). She stated that position control was implemented in July 2020. Overall FTE budget has been consistent over the last few years. She reviewed FY21/FY22, movement within funding sources, and breakdown by bargaining group. Mr. Delano asked for FTEs to be broken down by each school.

Ms. Wright asked what would happen with teacher headcount next year if we were not full in-person. She asked about flexibility in positions and hiring. Ms. Sybert said that they are going through an MS/HS schedule analysis which may create changes in positions. She said that they are mindful, and always flexible on how to deploy resources. Ms. Sybert said based on what they know right now; we will meet needs for next year. Ms. Raymond said the biggest barrier is how many kids we can get into a building. She doesn't know what DESE will recommend but they may not be running dual platforms. Ms. Raymond said if we are on dual platforms we can reallocate staff.

Ms. Marshall asked about what would happen if families elected to stay remote. She mentioned the need to provide the same equitable instruction. Ms. Raymond said that we want to provide the best education to all our students but DESE hour requirements are based on the instructional model currently in use.

Mr. Delano asked about 3 feet versus 6 feet distance. Ms. Wright said we voted on following the CDC guidelines. Ms. Marshall said we should add to the agenda. Ms. OConnor asked about preschool capacity. Ms. Raymond said we are at 6-foot constraints.

Public Comment was moved up to pre-budget vote- Ms. OConnor entertained a motion to move up and handle it as a Public Comment allowing questions and answers. The motion was approved by a roll call vote.

Mr. Eric Schneider asked about FTEs and enrollment changes if next year is like this year. Ms. Sybert said the budget is a plan at this point in time with the ability to shift plans.

Ms. Stefanie Tucker asked how anti-racism work was incorporated into the school budget. Dr. Bacon provided examples of some of the work which is being done in the district. She said some of the work is being funded by the Title grants. Ms. Tucker asked to make efforts more transparent in budget and line items.

Budget Vote An FY22 Budget vote was requested on the following cost centers for the FY22 Budget: Administration, General Education, Special Education, School Facilities, Districtwide programs. Ms. OConnor entertained a separate motion on each cost center after each prior cost center vote.

Administration: \$1,293,191

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Wright to accept the FY22 Administration and seconded by Mr. Delano.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call.

General Education: \$16,045,582

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Wright to accept the FY22 General Education and seconded by Mr. Delano.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call.

Special Education: \$9,741,528

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Wright to accept the FY22 Special Education and seconded by Mr. Delano.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call.

School Facilities: \$2,442,348

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Wright to accept the FY22 School Facilities and seconded by Mr. Delano.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call.

District-Wide Programs: \$1,592,151

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Wright to accept the FY22 District-Wide Programs and seconded by Mr. Delano.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call.

FY22 School Budget: \$31,094,801

Motion: It was moved by Ms. Wright to accept the FY22 School Budget and seconded by Mr. Delano.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call.

Chair: Ms. OConnor shared a letter that was sent to Governor Baker by the Framingham School Committee regarding Prioritization for the Class of 2021 for COVID-19 vaccination.

Ms. Marshall said she was not in favor of it due to lack of vaccines and populations with higher need/risk. Ms. Wright commented that parents may not want their child vaccinated. She said the resolution to get teachers vaccinated is a more worthwhile effort. Mr. Giantis said the priorities have already been established and we should follow that guidance. Mr. Delano agrees.

Ms. OConnor brought up the letters they are receiving from parents regarding getting kids back to school particularly the younger students. Ms. Marshall said we should have an in-depth talk about distancing with the occupational health nurse and others.

Ms. Wright said that we need to figure out a schedule and have a remote teacher per grade level. She mentioned balancing kids between schools. Mr. Delano spoke about moving forward as an educational community.

Mr. Giantis said we have 80 days left in the school year. He wants to be prepared to act immediately if the CDC rules change.

Ms. OConnor expressed her empathy to parents of young kids. Ms. Marshall said the younger students are more of a burden on parents but the impact is on all ages.

Ms. OConnor had a conversation with Ms. Angelakis regarding communications.

Tri-chair Update (Capital Planning): Ms. OConnor said that Tri-Chair met last Friday. In addition to the Tri Chair the meeting included Mr. Delano, Ms. Fletcher, and Ms. Sybert to discuss the Nahant contract.

Sub Committee:

SBC Updates: Ms. Wright spoke about the last couple of weeks' forums and the community workshop last night on indoor usage. In addition to the public meetings, there have been a lot of other meetings and conversations going on. She said tomorrow the design team is meeting with the DPW, Fire & Police chief.

Ms. OConnor spoke about SC versus SBC. Ms. Wright is reporting back to the SC as the liaison for the SBC.

Consent Agenda: Ms. OConnor read the purpose of the consent agenda and the items on the agenda.

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Motion: It was moved by Ms. Wright to accept the consent agenda & seconded by Mr. Delano.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

Public Comment:

Mr. Schneider said he read the communication from the Marblehead Superintendent. He welcomed something similar from the SPS. He mentioned that bringing up the age of the buildings is an excuse for not having the kids in. He hopes that the new school passes.

Next meeting to be held on February 24th, 2021

Adjournment

Motion: At 9:36 p.m. It was moved by Mr. Delano to accept the motion to adjourn & seconded by Ms. Wright.

Vote on Motion: The motion passed 5 to 0 via roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,





Pamela R.H. Angelakis, M.A., M.Ed.

Date: February 25, 2021



Superintendent of Schools

/dmm

Supporting Documentation:


 SPS FY22 Budget 02.10.2021.pptx 

 Updated Agenda February 10, 2021, School Committee Meeting 

 21-22 POS Presentation 

 Framingham_Vaccine_Resolution.pdf 

 February 3rd, 2021 Regular Session Meeting Minutes Final 

 2021-22 PROGRAM OF STUDIES draft 