

# Swampscott School Committee Regular Session Minutes

March 9, 2023

A meeting of the Swampscott School Committee was held in Room B129 at Swampscott High School in Swampscott, MA commencing at 6:00 p.m. with the following members present: Mr. Glenn Paster, SC Chair, Mr. John Giantis, SC Vice Chair, Ms. Amy OConnor, Ms. Carin Marshall and Ms. Suzanne Wright. Also present: Ms. Pamela Angelakis, Superintendent of Schools. Ms. Cheryl Herrick-Stella, Director of Finance, participated remotely. Afia Bottari and Jessie Goodwin, Student Representatives were not present.

The public will be able to attend virtually in accordance with the Executive Order issued by Governor Baker on March 12, 2020, and extended through March 31, 2023, suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L c. 304, Section 20. The meeting was recorded and broadcast live on the local cable station.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was none.

## **COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Marshall – none

Ms. Wright stated she was excited to get an email from a band student with the fundraising information.

Ms. OConnor stated she had received the band email as well.

Mr. Giantis spoke about the calendars and Ms. Angelakis requested that he forward the email to her office.

Ms. Paster stated that what everyone was referring to was the band was selling fundraiser calendars for their upcoming field trip and if you are so able and you would like to buy them please reach out to help their cause.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Ms. Angelakis spoke about the Together in Harmony show which is a collaboration between Swampscott, Marblehead and Salem which she will be emceeding on Sunday at the High School at 1:00.

Ms. Angelakis stated Ms. Stella would be giving an update on the FY23 budget at the March 23rd meeting.

## **FY24 Budget Update**

Ms. Angelakis stated that there have been numerous meetings and still a lot of work to be done with the FY24 budget but she wanted to thank Mary Ellen Fletcher for taking the time to ask questions and to review the School's request above the amount provided by the Town Administrator. She added that she felt that Ms. Fletcher has taken the time to understand the complexities of our budget and the challenges that we face and she supports the Special Education stabilization fund. She added she was hopeful and grateful that someone took a lot of time to sit with us and look at the adjusted number we were asking for and the reasons for the request. Ms. Marshall stated that she did not remember a time a Select Board member took the time to look into our request. She added she does have a lot of reservations and she requested that as we move forward that we get any agreements in writing so that each side knows what they are getting. She stated she was not comfortable with verbal agreements at this point and that it was too important to the District to leave things up to chance. Ms. Angelakis understood the concern but stated that she felt it was different this time around, and that there was a paper trail. She asked the Committee to trust Ms. Stella and herself to do what they are asking of them. Ms. OConnor stated she had no trouble trusting what they are doing. Ms. Angelakis added this does not solve the District's issues and that there would still be reductions and efficiencies, but that she felt heard on where they were coming from. Ms. Wright stated she was thrilled about the possibility of the stabilization fund. Ms. OConnor agreed but expressed her concern of how that would be funded this year with the 14% increase to out-of-district tuition that will still be part of the operating budget. Ms. Herrick-Stella agreed that a lot of the details and pieces still needed to still be worked out and that

the District is having a conversation with the Town Administrator and Director of Finance tomorrow and there will be continued conversations as we move forward. Mr. Giantis questioned the remainder of the ARPA funds in anticipation of their meeting with town leadership. Ms. Wright also spoke about the deficit due to savings which was returned during Covid. Ms. Angelakis also added that we keep saying that Covid isn't over for education. She referred to data related to mental health and visiting nursing staff as well as calls to 911 and absences. She stated she would have further concrete data to present at a future meeting. Ms. Marshall stated that information shows educational gaps as well which relate back to necessary services. Mr. Giantis stated he would appreciate that data and that he wouldn't want to see things be made worse for our kids but to stabilize services and make them better. Ms. Marshall agreed and said it was important to talk about things now so that we aren't back here next year with a bigger problem. Ms. Angelakis stated the key was to not wait until budget season to have joint meetings. Mr. Paster echoed everyone's comments and stated he had also spoken with Ms. Fletcher on two occasions. He also agreed and said there wasn't a clean or nice way to say that he felt that there wasn't trust between the Committee and the town side but that they need and want this to work but that they've all heard words before and now needed action. Mr. Paster said that the School Committee and Finance Committee will have a joint meeting on the 20th and he agreed that conversations need to happen early and that honest and difficult conversations need to happen. Ms. OConnor added she had looked back at the budget accounting from 1973 and that the budget percentage wise to the school has not kept pace.

## **CHAIR**

### **A. Updates**

Mr. Paster reminded all that the meeting between the Committee and the Finance Committee had been moved to March 20th.

### **B. Tri-Chair Update**

There was no update.

### **C. Policy Subcommittee Inquiry**

There was discussion regarding the Public Comment update and the recent SJC ruling. Mr. Paster stated that he would forward the document he received and requested the Policy Subcommittee to be in contact with legal counsel. Ms. Wright stated she would review it and put it on the agenda for first read at the next meeting.

Mr. Paster said he and Ms. Angelakis would be participating in a Zoom call next week to learn about a Holocaust program in conjunction with Shirat. Ms. Angelakis stated they were just obtaining information at this point on the program.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE - POLICY**

### **A. [Meal Charge Policy](#)**

Ms. Wright stated this was the current policy with the additional sentence relating to graduation requirements. There was a lengthy discussion regarding recouping funds from lunch accounts that remain unpaid. Ms. Angelakis reminded all that food services was an outside vendor so that when accounts need to be paid it comes out of the operating budget which affects all students. Ms. Marshall suggested looking at the accounts in earlier grades such as 4th and 8th rather than waiting to accumulate them to the 12th grade. Ms. Herrick-Stella stated that the district does attempt to recoup funds every year, it does not wait.

Ms. OConnor reported there is another meeting happening tomorrow with the Tutor union and we have asked them to bring along their representative. She said that we want to do everything by the book so we are meeting tomorrow to talk about next steps and she will report back.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

*The consent agenda is designed to expedite the handling of routine and miscellaneous business of the District. The School Committee may adopt the entire Consent Agenda with one motion. At the request of any committee member, any item(s) may be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda for discussion.*

- A. Regular Session Minutes – [February 16, 2023](#)
- B. WARRANT

Mr. Paster read the contents of the Consent Agenda and requested a motion.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Mr. Giantis to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion:** At 6:53 p.m .it was moved by Ms. OConnor to adjourn and seconded by Mr. Giantis. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela R.H. Angelakis, M.A., M.Ed.  
Superintendent of Schools  
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Date: March 23, 2023

Supporting Documents:

 [Agenda March 9, 2023, School Committee Meeting](#) 

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 [Final Minutes February 16, 2023](#) 

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 [Meal charge policy](#) 