

Swampscott School Committee

Regular Session Minutes

May 23, 2024

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: Ms. Suzanne Wright, SC Chair; Mr. John Giantis, SC Vice Chair, Mr. Glenn Paster, Ms. Carin Marshall and Ms. Amy OConnor. Also Present: Ms. Pamela Angelakis, Superintendent of Schools, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services Martha Raymond and Student Representatives Noelle Diehl and Sam Oubala.

The public will be able to attend virtually in accordance with the Executive Order issued by Governor Baker on March 12, 2020, and extended by Governor Healey through March 31, 2025, 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.

FOR LOVE OF LEARNING - (Awards or Presentations)

There was none.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Sam Oubala spoke about the recent Town Meeting vote and commented on opportunities which would be lost by students. He also added that he felt that the pattern was not sustainable.

Ms. Marshall stated she was disappointed by the decision not only to reconsider but also the vote to overturn. She stated she felt that the Committee has been fighting this battle for a long time and felt that we did see a spark of hope that some members are willing to discuss moving forward. She added she would continue to press the town and move forward with discussions. She also said she felt for the teachers impacted and those who feel unsupported.

Mr. Giantis stated he also was disappointed with the outcome but added he was happy with the amount of debate around the subject. He stated that it was a more disappointing discussion every year and that he would take Mr. Thomson at his word to participate in ongoing discussions moving forward.

Mr. Paster stated he was thrilled with the amount of debate the subject received and that he was impressed with the amount of passion and respect as well. He stated he was also looking forward to taking a hard look at how we do things moving forward.

Ms. OConnor apologized to the students and teachers affected. She stated she felt the School Committee let them down and that after another year she felt not much more was accomplished. She added she would continue to make sure the District was better than average and felt as though the chips were stacked against them. She added that she felt those worked against her, even the Chair and that we needed to give our kids better. She apologized for disappointing the students.

Noelle Diehl spoke about the fair the juniors attended which showed them what life was like after college. She reminded all that the band would be participating in the Memorial Day parade in Nahant. She also spoke about Town Meeting and about some of the things which would be missing from next year due to budget cuts.

Ms. Wright stated that she felt that she was being blamed and said she was sorry and that she wanted nothing more than money in the budget but that as fiduciary and Chair of the Committee she had a responsibility to the Town and the District. Ms. Wright stated the Committee signs protocols to work with the town and she felt she

couldn't represent the Committee without being true to the protocols. She also expressed her disappointment that she didn't know about the proposed amendment ahead of time and said she may have been able to speak to FinCom ahead of time to see the effects down the road had she known. She also stated she thought it was unfair to say that Tuesday was a coordinated effort. She felt it was important to know what the long term implications would be versus the short term fix. She stated there would be an expensive contract negotiation coming that money would be needed for. She also said she was sorry that she could not put aside principles and truth in what she believed and that she believed the Committee has a mission and it's to be fiduciary stewards of this District and making decisions on town meeting floor isn't how it's done. She also stated that through the triChair meetings the Select Board and FinComm she understood it might be possible to have a reset, that it's coming and she can't do more than that, that it was a work in progress. She understood it's not ideal and that she was happy to bear the burden.

Ms. Angelakis stated she was frustrated and borderline angry that they had spoken about this a year ago and nothing had changed. She stated that it was very frustrating that we were here a year ago speaking about the need for a financial summit and it didn't occur. Ms Angelakis also expressed that it was unsettling for her that some were making it seem as though she was not advocating for the District. She also said he wished she saw the fire the Committee was expressing earlier and that it shouldn't have come to this point to push this issue. Ms. Marshall stated they did ask for a summit. Ms. Angelakis stated they should have pushed harder. Ms. Wright stated this all brought it to a head and that she owns it that she didn't push for it. Ms. Angelakis said it put the leaders in a difficult position and that it has been a very uncomfortable week and that her frustration should not be a surprise. She felt this should have been a fire that was lit long ago, not now.

Mr. Giantis echoed Ms. OConnor and stated he had the utmost respect for Ms. Angelaskis and her team. He felt that everyone at Town Meeting understood that she did everything she could for the District. He also felt it was unfair to say the Committee didn't have a fire last year but felt that they followed Ms. Wright and the process at her suggestion. Ms. Angelakis stressed again that she felt that for her not to express her frustration would be inauthentic of herself. Ms. OConnor agreed with the Superintendent and apologized. She stated her intention for bringing the amendment as herself was to keep the Superintendent out of it. She added that she hoped the silver lining was that hopefully the meeting will in fact happen. Mr. Paster said he felt there was nothing more Ms. Angelakis could have done. He added he was hopeful the Select Board and FinComm would realize what was at stake and take a more active role.

There was discussion to move forward with public comment.

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Mr. Paster to move up Public Comment. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rebecca Bucklin the President of the SEA read a quote from Washington Irving and spoke about the challenges of the staff and read a list of the reductions that have occurred. Ms. Angelakis clarified some of the language and explained that department chairs and curriculum specialists are not teaching positions and just wished to clarify that for the public.

Sue Comparato, the Vice President of the SEA echoed what Ms. Bucklin said and thanked Mr. Paster, Ms. Marshall, Ms. OConnor and Mr. Giantis. She felt it was important to discuss the ramifications of the cuts and gave a list of some of the things which would be lost due to the cuts.

Jeanne Patz, a parent of a Stanley @ Blaney student and a SMS student, stated it was helpful to hear everyone's perspectives. She stated that she felt conflicted as a Town Meeting member regarding the

amendment and reconsideration due to the fiduciary responsibility but that this discussion has helped her to see the reasoning behind all sides. She added that her reason for attending the meeting was to advocate for the elementary physical education position at Stanley @ Blaney that is proposed to be cut. She wanted to speak on behalf of the students to say that he has been wonderful the past few years at the school and she hoped the District would do everything it could to keep him. Ms. Angelakis commented that he is a rockstar and that she didn't know if the community understood the legally bound process when we do a reduction in force but that we cannot hand pick positions or staff. She added that she couldn't agree more and if there was any way to keep him we would like to do that and she appreciated the comment in support.

Maura Lau stated that she wanted to say she has always had full faith in Ms. Angelakis and that she's sorry to see the way things have been manipulated. She said that in the past when cuts have occurred the holes don't get plugged and she felt that Town Meeting members need to be more informed so that we can rally ahead of time and get things moving in the right direction. She added that as the new school opens she felt overall they are doing whatever they can to take care of the students.

REPORTS & DISCUSSIONS

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Recognition of Student Representatives

Ms. Wright thanked Noelle and Sam for their participation and commented how thoughtful and prepared they have been during meetings. Ms. Angelakis thanked them for all they brought to the meetings and said she couldn't be happier that they will be returning next year.

B. [Field Trip to Costa Rica](#)

The service field trip to Costa Rica was presented by Jayne Barrett who explained that it came before the Committee because it would be going out of the country. Ms. Wright stated they would take a motion on the trip at the end of the agenda.

C. [FY25 Preschool Tuition Increase](#)

Assistant Superintendent Raymond came forward with a proposed recommendation for the FY25 Preschool Tuition increase. She explained that even with an approximate 8% increase for next year it was still lower than private schools which it still should be as it offers different programming. Ms. Raymond felt it was an appropriate increase while still keeping it accessible for people. Ms. OConnor said it is an amazing program and still a bargain and she fully supports the recommendation. Ms. Angelakis stated the field trip, preschool fees and athletic fee increase should be addressed under votes.

D. [FY25 Athletic Fee Increase](#)

Ms. Angelakis brought forward the proposed athletic user fees as recommended by Ms. Wolff. She stated that it represented a nominal increase and that the goal of this Committee was to get to a 50/50 split with the budget and revolving account. Ms. OConnor expressed a concern she had heard about student admission to basketball games being prohibitive for students to decide not to go. She wondered if there was something that could be done that wouldn't impact the budget. Ms. Angelakis stated she would like to see some incentive program or community service piece such as working at the senior center and receive a ticket. She stated this was something that could be looked at and would put the vote on to item seven.

E. [Annual METCO Report](#) - Krista Lynch and Temi Bailey

Ms. Lynch and Mr. Bailey came forward to present the annual METCO report. They reported the 23-24 demographic information on the students within the program. Ms. Lynch reviewed the academic information at the Middle School and Mr. Bailey reviewed the academic info at the High School. They reviewed the enrollment for the 24/25 school year which includes 9 new students with 4 graduating. Ms. Lynch spoke about

NRT bus working on a new technology similar to the Where's my Bus app as parents are concerned about being able to track their students. Mr. Bailey reviewed the tutorial sessions that they offer at the Middle and High school levels. Ms. Lynch spoke about student involvement in Middle School activities and Mr. Bailey reviewed student involvement in sports and activities as well. Mr. Bailey reviewed the Family Friends program and community involvement. Mr. Bailey reviewed the one to three year goals of the program. Sam Oubala commended Mr. Bailey and Ms. Lynch for what they do on a day to day basis and how their impact on the community goes way beyond their job descriptions. Ms. Angelakis said they have both done an outstanding job and thanked them for their presentation.

Ms. Angelakis released the student representatives at 8:25 p.m.

F. [Proposed School Committee Meeting Dates 24-25 SY](#)

Ms. Angelakis presented the proposed dates for the 24-25 SY and stated it could be brought back on June 13th for approval.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIR

A. School Building Committee Update

Ms. Wright stated the building is on track. Ms. Angelakis added they will be scheduling family tours further into the summer.

B. [Election of Chair & Vice Chair](#)

Ms. Angelakis stated they put elections for Committee liaisons on the June 13th agenda and this was just to fill the Chair and Vice Chair positions. Ms. Wright asked if anyone was interested in the Chair position. Ms. OConnor nominated Mr. Paster. Mr. Paster stated he would be interested and that if everybody so chooses he would be happy to accept it. Ms. OConnor stated that she would like to be Vice Chair. Ms. Wright requested a motion.

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Ms. Marshall to nominate Mr. Paster as Chair of the Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. Marshall and seconded by Mr. Paster to nominate Ms. OConnor as Vice Chair of the Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Marshall wanted to add that she sent the Committee an email to apologize for missing so many meetings this winter due to her work schedule and didn't want the other members to feel that she was leaving things to everyone else.

SUBCOMMITTEES

A. Bargaining Updates

There were none.

B. Policy Update

- a. [Cell Phone Policy](#) - First Read
- b. [Transportation Policy](#) - First Read

Mr. Giantis said he looked over both and thought it might be a little premature and they could be put on a future agenda as first read. Ms. Angelakis stated they could be put on for first read on the June 13th agenda.

ACTIONS AND VOTES (Votes and Donations)

There was further discussion regarding charging admission for sporting events and Mr. Paster suggested removing the gate fees from the increase but approving the athletic fees.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Paster and seconded by Ms. OConnor to approve the Field Trip to Costa Rica, the FY25 Preschool Tuition Increase and the FY25 Athletic Fee increase with the removal of the gate fees. The motion passed unanimously.

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 - [April 25, 2024](#)
- B. Regular Session Minutes - [May 9, 2024](#)

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

Daniel Miretsky thanked all for the Parent Square reminder about the upcoming Clarke School memory walk.

ADJOURNMENT



MOTION: At 8:39 p.m. it was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Mr. Paster to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.



Respectfully submitted,







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



Date: June 13, 2024



-  [Swampscott Integrated Preschool Tuition 5.13.24](#) 



-  [Minutes May 9, 2024](#) 



-  [Minutes April 25, 2024](#) 



-  [Improved accessibility- use this one - 24-25 School Committee Meeting Dates-Thursdays](#) 



-  [Costa Rica Field Trip.pdf](#) 



-  [Copy of Swampscott Integrated Preschool Tuition 5.13.24](#) 



-  [Copy of Swampscott Bus Policy-DRAFT.docx](#) 



-  [Copy of Cell phone policy draft](#) 



-  [Approved Minutes May 9, 2024](#) 


-  [Approved Minutes April 25, 2024](#) 

-  [20240523_Agenda_School Committee.pdf](#) 

-  [2024-2025 Committee & Subcommittees blank for reappointments](#) 

-  [2024_2025 Suggested Athletic User Fee_Gate Fee Information.pdf](#) 

-  [24-25 School Committee Meeting Dates-Thursdays](#) 

-  [Agenda - May 23, 2024](#) 