

Swampscott School Committee

Regular Session Minutes

November 30, 2023

A meeting of the Swampscott School Committee was held in Room B129 at Swampscott High School in Swampscott, MA commencing at 6:10 p.m. with the following members present: Ms. Suzanne Wright, SC Chair, Mr. John Giantis, SC Vice Chair, Mr. Glenn Paster, Ms. Amy OConnor and Ms. Carin Marshall. Also Present: Ms. Pamela Angelakis, Superintendent of Schools and Ms. Cheryl Herrick-Stella, Director of Finance and Student Representatives Noelle Diehl and Samuel 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)

A. Stanley Art - Ms. Erin Dilisio

Ms. Dilisio came forward with Stanley students, Lizzy Hamilton, Clara Henry, Matthew Hamilton, Deacon Henry, Layla Lieberman and Olivia Ryan. She explained her use of a gratitude bell at the beginning of every class and how the use assists with the transitions between classes. Each student gave an example of something they presented during their gratitude session. Ms. Dilisio explained this was just a small taste of what she sees from students of what they are grateful for. Ms. Wright thanked all for their presentation and said they look forward to Ms. Dilisio's presentations every year.

B. [Field Trip to Disney](#) - Mr. Edi Rovi

Mr. Rovi came forward and gave an overview of the proposed trip which would take place on December 3 - 7 of 2024. He explained he was bringing this forward so that the group could book the trip and begin fundraising as soon as possible. Mr. Rovi stated the cost of the trip right now is \$2,000 but that could change depending on airfare. Ms. Angelakis said the New York trip was very successful and this trip sounds equally as wonderful. Mr. Giantis suggested some possible fundraising ideas. Mr. Rovi stated if the trip is approved they will have a mandatory parent meeting and ask for volunteers for fundraising. Ms. Angelakis stated that the trip did not make it to the consent agenda for a vote of approval but she would be asking for a vote so that Mr. Rovi can move forward.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Paster and seconded by Ms. OConnor to approve SHS Band & Chorus Field Trip to Disney. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Sam Oubala said that winter sports are beginning. He added that next Friday progress reports close and that tonight is the High School's prospective student open house.

Ms. Marshall - None.

Noelle Diehl was excited that the Disney field trip was approved.

Ms. OConnor stated she was disappointed in the notification from the High School that the Yondr program was in fact moving forward. She stated she felt that it was almost as if no one's voices were heard. She also felt that coming up on what she felt was a budget crisis the idea of spending \$20,000 on pouches is lazy and fiscally irresponsible and she apologized to every student. Ms. OConnor also spoke about what occurred at the Select Board meeting last week and stated she was upset that what the Chair was promised would happen did not happen. She added that the way we are being treated by the Town Administrator and the stories that he is telling the Select Board is unconscionable. She added there has been a multi-year commitment to make us run down the District's Special Ed money and she is disgusted by the stories being told about our fiscal responsibility.

Mr. Paster thanked the Superintendent for her email regarding the budget and added he understood that other members have been dealing with this situation for longer than he has. He added that it was a travesty that we are again dealing with these budget issues. He added that the public needs to be aware of what is going on and something needs to give.

Mr. Giantis stated he appreciated the comments from Mr. Paster and Ms. OConnor and added his comments regarding the Select Board meeting. He said what stood out most for him was the mischaracterizations of the work that has been done by the Superintendent and her team to make this a more collaborative process. He expressed concern about verbalizing that story at Town Meeting that this was not a last minute request. He also expressed his concerns about the Yondr program and spoke about the recent situation where someone attempted to get into a school in Lowell and how that brings those concerns back to the forefront. Ms. Angelakis stated the District had received warning from the FBI which was forwarded to the Principals and security monitors prior to Thanksgiving, so staff was aware and on the lookout. Ms. Angelakis also referred to Yonder and stated it was unfortunate that Mr. Kohut did not put in the mail what had occurred at the High School in his discussions with the School Council. She added she could see both sides and understood the apprehension. She also stated she did send out a survey to High School staff which returned 73% of staff at the High School wanted to give the program a try. She added that the grant is only funded for one year and she would share the staff survey with the Committee. Ms. OConnor added she felt it was another huge lost opportunity for communication.

REPORTS & DISCUSSIONS

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. [Lights, Camera, Action! CUE the Curriculum!](#) - Ms. Priscilla King & Ms. Mollie Metevier
Ms. Angelakis stated the presentation came as a result of Mrs. OConnor asking for updates from the MassCUE conference. She introduced Ms. King and Ms. Metevier who shared an adapted version of the presentation which they shared at the MassCUE event. They gave information about the elementary curriculum which they follow across the District and reviewed their units of study. They presented two of their units and showed how students and educators can make connections between technology and curriculum. They stated they hoped they could inspire educators to have fun with what they teach and said they were excited to be asked to be here. Ms. Wright loved the connections to students' everyday life. Ms. OConnor stated it was stunning to see the lessons happening at these grade levels. Mr. Paster commended the great presentation and asked which each preferred the iPad or Chromebook? Ms. Metevier felt the Chromebook has better options but the touchpad is the biggest challenge for the younger students. Ms. King said the Middle and High School students use them so getting them started as young as possible is best. Mr. Giantis thanked them for their presentation. Ms. Marshall commented they must be excited to get into one building with one media center. Ms. King said they looked forward to the updates and the students are all excited about the move next year.

B. Athletic Director's Annual Update - Ms. Kelly Wolff
Ms. Angelakis asked the Athletic Director to come forward for the annual update. She asked the Committee to keep in mind as it comes into budget season that the operating budget supports 55% of the athletic budget and the revolving accounts supporting 43% and the donations 2%. She added that the Athletic Director was charged with looking at stipends, the booster pamphlet and the registration process. Ms. Wolff gave an overview of numbers of students enrolled in fall and winter sports. She also added that every one of our all sports teams qualified for fall tournaments this year and that it was a wonderful season and she was looking forward to the winter season. Ms. Wolff spoke about stipends and the differences paid to coaches. Ms. Wolff referenced cheer coaches as one of the ones that stood out. Ms. Wolff also mentioned that stipends are within the teacher's contract and would need to be bargained. Ms. OConnor said she was thrilled to hear that and that in the recent round of negotiations coaching stipends was not discussed and spoke about her concerns in the inequity of coaching stipends. There was discussion on negotiation of stipends. Ms. Wolff also spoke about the booster pamphlet and moving forward would meet with booster groups twice a year to review the procedures within the pamphlet. Ms. Wright questioned if there was a process to check on whether things are being followed? She expressed that procedures can be intimidating for some of the groups especially with the turnover of booster participants. Ms. OConnor questioned if there was any guidance around the disparity in the booster groups and referenced a luxury box in which a portion of one team attended a game. Ms. Wolff explained that was a reward for top sellers of a fundraiser and that student athletes are

not mandated to fundraise. Ms. OConnor spoke about the potential of a universal boosters versus team specific and Ms. Wolff said the expectations of each team could be different and the District can put together guidelines but where the boosters are not part of the District there is a fine line and pros and cons to having a single versus separate boosters club. Ms. OConnor said it was difficult for the kids who see the mismatch from team to team. Ms. Wolff said she always tells the students to come see her if they have questions. Mr. Giantis stated the information was very informative and wanted to clarify that we were not going to be expecting the AD to go through the boosters finances. Ms. Wolff said that would not be the case. There was discussion regarding using booster funds toward coaching stipends and how that is vetted. Ms. Wright stated the information was helpful and gives the Committee the confidence that Ms. Wolff is on top of it. Ms. OConnor spoke about the differences in the stipends between football and other sports and that it seemed as though football has an inordinate budget for a normal amount of athletes. Ms. Wolff addressed the time and safety involved in football as well as the specialty coaching. She added that it was similar in other Districts as well. Ms. OConnor stated it was difficult for her to get past all of the other sports being a quarter of the cost of football. Ms. Angelakis stated that the conversation needed to begin with the stipend bargaining. Ms. Wolff added another thing to keep in mind was the revenue which football brings in. Ms. OConnor stated that bringing in money was great but questioned whether we are giving other sports the same opportunities to bring in money. Ms. Wright suggested this might be something worth speaking to the Athletic Council about as well. Mr. Paster commended Ms. Wolff for her attendance at the field hockey game in Foxboro in handling what could have been a volatile situation. Ms. Angelakis thanked Ms. Wolff for her presentation. Ms. Wright asked Ms. Wolff to give the Committee some background information on Jack Hughes for the donation which was further in the agenda. Ms. Wolff reviewed the donation.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

A. Budget Updates and Tri-Chair Updates

Ms. Herrick-Stella gave an update since the prior meeting. She stated they did receive the health insurance reconciliation for the Chapter 70 article which she is still going through and it looks like the article should be increasing the town appropriation by \$186,000. Ms. Wright stated there would be a meeting on the 15th to review the drafts of warrant articles and to discuss looking at General Ed and Special Ed differently and creating a budget which will allow us to deal with the variable expenses. Ms. OConnor questioned why what was agreed upon was not done and Ms. Wright felt that this keeps happening to us and there are delays and then our hands are tied and that's part of why this meeting is happening on the 15th. Ms. OConnor stated she had zero faith that the meeting on the 15th will net us anything. She stated the lies of omission are doing damage to our budget and she was very frustrated. She stated she was frustrated that we've been talking about getting ahead of our budget and twice we've been denied and that it had been five years of the same thing. Ms. Marshall agreed that there have been good Tri-Chair meetings in the past but that what we think will come out of them doesn't happen. Mr. Paster stated he felt that we are at a point where drastic measures need to occur and he felt that things needed to be done in public at this point. Ms. Wright stated that some things are outside of our control. Mr. Paster stated he felt that some things which are happening are going to get the District in trouble down the road. Ms. OConnor stated she wished to be productive and felt that there needed to be a public meeting with all three boards present at a public meeting with a presentation by the Superintendent and Director of Finance. Ms. Angelakis stated that her email was directed to all three Boards. There was discussion on calling for a joint meeting. Mr. Paster stated he would make a motion to call for a joint meeting.

MOTION:

It was moved by Mr. Paster and seconded by Ms. OConnor to direct the Chair of the School Committee to contact the Finance Committee and Select Board for an in person live meeting for sometime in early January. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

SUBCOMMITTEES

A. Bargaining Updates

Ms. OConnor stated they had an internal meeting to open negotiations with the custodial staff and discussed the budget. She gave her kudos to Mr. Kasper for bringing them up to speed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

ACTIONS AND VOTES (Votes and Donations)

A. Donation - The Jauron Family Foundation - [Chairs & Carts in Honor of Jack Hughes](#)

Ms. Wright gave an overview of the donation.

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Mr. Paster to accept the donation from the Jauron Family Foundation. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

B. Donation - Anonymous - [\\$360 for 36 seats on fan bus to Foxboro for Field Hockey Game](#)

Ms. Wright read a description of the donation.

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Mr. Paster to accept the anonymous donation for seats on the fan bus. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

C. Donation - The Weatherspoon Charitable Foundation - [\\$4,600 for SHS Cable/TV Program](#)

Ms. Angelakis explained that the donation was \$4,500 not \$4,600. Ms. Wright read a description of the donation.

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Mr. Paster to accept the \$4,500 donation from The Weatherspoon Charitable Foundation. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

D. Donation - The Weatherspoon Charitable Foundation - [\\$2,500 for SHS Musical or Chorus](#)

Ms. Wright read a description of the donation.

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Mr. Paster to accept the \$2,500 from The Weatherspoon Charitable Foundation for SHS Music or Chorus. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

E. Donation - The Weatherspoon Charitable Foundation - [\\$7,500 for Discovery Point Program by Emily Borden](#)

Ms. Wright read a description of the donation.

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Mr. Paster to accept the \$7,500 from The Weatherspoon Charitable Foundation for the Discovery Point Program. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

F. Donation - The Weatherspoon Charitable Foundation - [\\$500 for SHS Drama Club](#)

Ms. Wright read a description of the donation.

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Mr. Paster to accept the \$500 from The Weatherspoon Charitable Foundation for the SHS Drama Club. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

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 - [November 2, 2023](#)

B. Regular Session Minutes - Budget Subcommittee - [November 16, 2023](#)

MOTION: It was moved by Ms. OConnor and seconded by Mr. Paster to accept the Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT

























MOTION: At 8:58 p.m. it was moved by Mr. Paster and seconded by Ms. OConnor to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela R.H. Angelakis, M.A., M.Ed.
Superintendent of Schools
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Date: December 14, 2024

	Previous
	FINAL MINUTES 16-Nov-2023 Budget Subcommittee-SC of the Whole (1).docx 
	Gratitude Presentation Slideshow of Art 
	20231130_Revised Agenda_School Committee.pdf 
	Agenda - November 30, 2023 - Revised 
	Weatherspoon Donation SHS Drama.pdf 
	Donation - Weatherspoon Foundation SHS Discovery Point.pdf 
	School Committee: MassCUE Presentation 
	Donation - Weatherspoon Foundation 11.21.23.pdf 
	Donation - Weatherspoon Foundation.pdf 
	Donation - Anonymous.pdf 
	Disney Field Trip.pdf 
	Final Minutes November 2, 2023 