

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Monday March 7, 2016 – Regular Meeting

7:00 p.m. - Board of Aldermen's Chambers – Somerville City Hall

Members present: Ms. Palmer, Alderman White (7:04 p.m.), Ms. Pitone (7:05 p.m.), Mr. Roix, Mayor Curtatone, Mr. Futrell, Mr. Green, Mr. Bockelman and Ms. Normand.

Members absent:

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Carrie Normand called a Regular Meeting of the School Committee to order in the Board of Aldermen's Chambers at City Hall at 7:00 p.m., with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America. Ms. Normand asked for a roll call, the results of which are as follows: - Present – 7 – Palmer, Curtatone, Roix, Futrell, Green, Bockelman and Normand and ABSENT – 2 – White and Pitone.

II. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mr. Ojo was not present at this evening's meeting.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- January 4, 2016 Organization Meeting

MOTION: Mr. Roix made a motion, seconded by Mr. Green, to approve the minutes of January 4, 2016.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

- February 22, 2016

MOTION: Mr. Roix made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell, to approve the minutes of February 22, 2016.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

IV. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. Executive Session: Feb. 24 (Ms. Normand)

Mr. Bockelman assumed the Chair so that Ms. Normand could provide her report on actions taken at Executive Session and also on the Long Range Planning meeting, both held on February 24, 2016.

The School Committee met in Executive Session on February 24, 2016. In attendance were all seven School Committee members, Alderman White, Mayor Curtatone, Superintendent Skipper, Attorney Hollender and Mr. William Roche of the City's Personnel Office. On the agenda was a possible opt-out of health insurance for bargaining unit and non-union members. As a result of that discussion, the following actions were taken:

MOTION: To authorize the Superintendent and the School Committee's designated bargaining teams to approach the school unions and to negotiate over the voluntary participation of their bargaining unit members in the City of Somerville Health Insurance Opt-Out Program, as described by the City of Somerville Health Insurance Opt-Out Program Policy for the period from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2019, to the same extent as City employees, with the understanding that the program will be administered by the City at no cost to the School Committee, and provided that the School Committee will have no obligation to continue to provide this benefit to school employees on any terms if the City discontinues this program, reduces the benefits provided thereunder or restricts eligibility therefor.

MOTION: To authorize the voluntary participation of non-unionized school employees in the City of Somerville Health Insurance Opt-Out Program, as described by the City of Somerville Health Insurance Opt-Out Program Policy for the period from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2019, to the same extent as City employees, with the understanding that the program will be administered by the City at no cost to the School Committee, and provided that the School Committee will have no obligation to continue to

provide this benefit to school employees on any terms if the City discontinues this program, reduces the benefits provided thereunder or restricts eligibility therefor.

B. Long Range Planning: Feb. 24 (Ms. Normand)

The School Committee met on February 24th for Long Range Planning at 8 Bonair Street.

In attendance: Carrie Normand, Paul Bockelman, Steve Roix, Dan Futrell, Lee Palmer, Andre Green, Laura Pitone, Superintendent Skipper, Assistant Superintendent McKay, and Communications and Grants Director Susana Morgan.

The meeting was called to order at 7:20 following executive session.

The School Committee's main charge is to set policy and district wide goals. We met to start developing the 2016-2018 goals. These goals are used to develop a comprehensive perspective and long range planning. The School Committee also uses them to evaluate the superintendent each year. The current goals are posted at the top of School Committee agenda and include goals around educating the whole child, academic achievement, innovation, and communication.

Our first step was to frame the goal development process. We agreed that the first step is to develop two-year goals with future discussion about the possibility of establishing longer term district goals.

Next Superintendent Skipper presented her entry report, a comprehensive inventory of what she's learned about our district from meeting extensively with educators, families, community partners, and most importantly students. She outlined five broad categories and reported strengths and opportunities for growth. This will be presented at the next Regular School Committee meeting. The School Committee had many questions and comments about some of the specific areas in the report, special education, social and emotional curriculum and supports, academic achievement, to name a few. The School Committee will use this informative and strategic report to inform the next steps in developing district goals.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm

This Saturday, March 10th, 10:00, at 8 Bonair Street, will be the next meeting of Long Range Planning to further develop district goals.

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell, to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Long Range Planning of February 24, 2016.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

C. Finance & Facilities Subcommittee: Mar. 2 (Mr. Bockelman)

This report was deferred to our next meeting on March 21.

V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

Mrs. Skipper provided the following district report:

- We're gearing up and will be sharing information in the next week or so about upcoming community meetings regarding the Somerville High School Building Project. If you haven't already done so, we encourage you to visit the **Somerville High School Building Project** website (www.somervillema.gov/highschool) for a look at the progress to date on this project. Earlier this month, the 14-member SHS Building Committee voted to send the Preliminary Design Program (PDP) for a future Somerville High School to the MSBA, bringing this important community project closer to reality. A schedule of the remaining Building Committee meetings is available online. The next committee meeting will be held at the Kennedy School Library on Monday, March 14th, 5:30pm. Every building committee meeting includes a public comment period at the end of the meeting. Stop by to learn about the project, and share your comments.
- Congratulations to all the Somerville High School students who participated in the **2016 SHS Science & Engineering Fair** last week. Ninety-six students in grades 9-12 presented 61 independent research projects. Of those 61 projects, 26 are moving on to the Regional Fair, which will be held on Saturday, March 12th right here at Somerville High School.
- The SHS Science Department hosts the 2016 **Region IV Science & Engineering Fair** on Saturday, March 12th from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. We are expecting between 90 - 100 projects to compete in the Region IV Science and Engineering Fair. Of these projects, the top 40 will advance to the Massachusetts State Science and Engineering Fair. Also, the top team and solo projects will advance

to The International Science and Engineering Fair which will be held in Phoenix, Arizona in May. Public Viewing at the Region IV Fair is open from 1pm - 3pm followed by the awards ceremony at 3 pm. Somerville has hosted the Region IV event since the fair's inception and relies on a number of community partners to ensure a successful program. Key partners include Tufts University, Somerville Rotary Club, and Distrigas. Chris Angelli, Science Teacher at SHS, serves as Director of the Region IV Science & Engineering Fair and is assisted by Mike Maloney, Joseph Tarello, and Karen Woods, all members of the Somerville High School Science Department.

- March is **National Nutrition Month**, and Somerville is celebrating with 'kale chips' taste tests throughout the District and the launching of a new Physical Education Program (PEP) grant initiative, 9-5-2-1-0. Look for 9-5-2-1-0 at a variety of upcoming events in our schools and throughout the City. The 9-5-2-1-0 initiative encourages the following healthy daily habits:
 - 9 hours of sleep
 - 5 fruits or vegetables
 - No more than 2 hours of screen time
 - At least 1 hour of physical activity
 - 0 sugary drinks
- Mark your calendars for the **2016 Career & Technical Education (CTE) Fair** at the Somerville High School Atrium. From 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 19th, all members of the Somerville community are invited to stop by the Career & Technical Education center at SHS to learn more about the CTE programs available to all Somerville High School students. This has become one of the most anticipated events of the year. Guests have an opportunity to learn directly from students and teachers about each program, and also have a chance to engage in some hands-on activities at each program. The event is FREE and open to the public. Stop by early for a leisurely guided tour of our programs.
- The **Somerville pre-K Open Houses** will be held next week, March 15, 16 and 17, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Families are invited to visit the Capuano, Argenziano, West Somerville and Winter Hill pre-K programs to learn more about our SMILE preK program. The pre-K registration process for the 2016-2017 school year begins on Saturday, March 19, from 10:00am to 1:00pm at the Parent Information Center.
- The Somerville Family Learning Collaborative will be hosting a workshop at the end of this month called "**Growing Up in Somerville**" that will offer Somerville families with children birth through high school age, information and resources related to health and wellness from a wide range of community partners. The evening begins with information and resource tables as well as light refreshments, followed by two sessions of workshops. Please join us on Tuesday, March 29th, at the East Somerville Community School for a phenomenal evening. Here is what you can expect that evening:

Session 1: 6:30 - 7:30pm

- Flexible, Fearful, Feisty: What is my Child's Temperament?
- Parenting in the Middle School Years
- Raising Children as an Immigrant Parent
- Substance Abuse: Signs, Symptoms, and What Parents Can Do
- Raising Kids in a Digital, Plugged-In Age: No App for Life

Session 2: 7:30 - 8:30pm

- Mindfulness for Parents
- Real Talk: Talking to Kids about Sex and Sexuality
- Raising an Athlete
- Raising Healthy Children: Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds

Following Mrs. Skipper's report, Assistant Superintendent McKay provided the following preview of tomorrow evening's Educational Programs and Instruction Meeting:

Curriculum and Instruction

- MCAS begins in two weeks – encouraged members to review two page summary that provides direction to our teachers' work in supporting a balanced approach to testing.

Early Education

- K Readiness, expanded community partnerships and extended day for PK. Comprehensive report coming in April, updates on the many activities currently underway.

Social – Emotional support curriculum

Summer School Planning – presentation by our new Coordinator, Glenda Soto,

Summer PD – proud of the amazing set of offerings, most of which will be taught by our own talented team of educators from Somerville.

Mr. Futrell asked about the process for hiring the new principal and assistant principal at the Argenziano School. The process includes focus groups for staff, parents, and School Council members. There will also be a resume review committee and also an interview committee made up of various stakeholders. The hope is to interview 7-10 candidates with finalists being interviewed by the Superintendent. Mrs. Skipper would also like site visits to the finalists' current districts to be a part of the process.

Discussion ensued relative to:

Visioning sessions and the development of a leadership profile

How the positions will be advertised

Dates for people to express interest in serving on a committee

When will the leadership profile become public?

Following the discussion regarding the Argenziano hiring process, Mr. Bockelman requested an update on the hiring process and game plan for all senior leadership positions.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Palmer presented the following resolution for the School Committee's consideration and also announced that one of the authors of the resolution, Harris Gruman, is present to answer any questions members may have. Mr. Gruman is a resident of Ward 5.

Proposed Somerville School Committee Resolution In Support of the Constitutional Amendment to Invest In Transportation and Public Education With a Tax On Annual Income Above One Million Dollars

WHEREAS, the best way to help working families and build a stronger economy for us all is to make sure that we have quality public schools for our children, affordable public higher education, and a transportation system that lets people get to work and school; and

WHEREAS, students need a well-rounded education, founded on a rich and varied curriculum that includes science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), music, art, and athletics; and

WHEREAS, from 2002-2013, annual K-12 funding from the state dropped by \$600 million; and

WHEREAS, compared to other states, Massachusetts ranks 33rd in the share of our state's economic resources dedicated to public education; and

WHEREAS, new revenue is necessary to improve our public schools, rebuild crumbling roads and bridges, make public higher education affordable, and invest in fast and reliable public transportation; and

WHEREAS, our highest-income residents, who have been the biggest winners in the economy, pay the smallest share of their income in state and local taxes, and have the ability to pay more for the investments we need to make;

THEREFORE, let it be resolved that the Somerville School Committee supports the proposed constitutional amendment that would create an additional tax of four percentage points on annual income above one million dollars and dedicate the funds raised by this tax to quality public education, affordable public colleges and universities, and for repair and maintenance of roads, bridges, and public transportation.

Discussion ensued which included the following:

- Resolution was passed unanimously by BOA
- History of the resolution
- The MASC resolution committee's vote on this at the November conference
- Ensuring funds are distributed in accordance with the resolution's language
- Future steps

Initially the resolution was to be brought to the next meeting for vote.

MOTION: Alderman White made a motion, seconded by Ms. Palmer, to suspend the rules and move the motion this evening.

The motion was approved via voice.

MOTION: Alderman White made a motion, seconded by Ms. Pitone, to approve the proposed resolution. The motion was approved on a unanimous roll call vote of YES – 9 and NO – 0.

Ms. Palmer announced that, at our next meeting, she will be proposing a resolution regarding raising the cap on charter schools.

VII. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Green

1. Reported on the fact that over 1,000 Boston Public School students had walked out of school earlier this day in protest over budget cuts.

Ms. Palmer reported that a contingent of these students also marched on to the State House to testify regarding the charter school cap and they were invited to testify and were even taken out of turn to do so.

Mr. Bockelman asked what the consequences would be for our students in a situation such as Boston had today.

Mrs. Skipper reported that we are so fortunate that Somerville values education as a priority. It is sad to see the Boston system being decimated. In her experience, there are more constructive ways to help students advocate for issues, such as walk-ins rather than walk-outs, which lets students have a voice while keeping them safe and in school.

Ms. Normand

1. The West Somerville Neighborhood School PTA will hold a coffee hour on Tuesday morning from 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.
2. Spring Sports Clearance and Medical Screenings are this Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at Somerville High School and there are specific times for specific sports.
3. The Healey School will hold a trivia night on Tuesday, March 15th with proceeds benefiting the New York City student trip.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjourning, Mr. Bockelman expressed the School Committee's condolences for the following staff members and family of staff members who recently passed away:

- Donald Buckley, brother-in-law of Patti Marques, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent of Schools
- Christopher O'Neill, son of Martha O'Neill, paraprofessional at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School
- Florence Chisholm, wife of Phil Chisholm, Utility Aide at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School.
- Vincent Chiappini, brother of Linda Yarasitis, secretary at the Special Education Evaluation Center
- Paulo Chaves, brother of Ana Medeiros, paraprofessional at the Capuano Early Childhood Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m. via voice vote.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of January 4, 2016 and February 22, 2016 for approval
3. Resolution regarding Constitutional Amendment creating an additional tax of 4% on annual income above one million dollars
4. Copy of a letter to Mary Skipper re her appointment to the Accountability and Assistance Advisory Council
5. Eight (8) thank you letters for donations
6. One (1) condolence letter