

Present: Mary Skipper, Ellenor Barish, Sarah Phillips, Andre Green, Glenda Soto, Aisha Banda, Dayshawn Simmons, Jessica Boston Davis, Elizabeth Doncaster, Johanne Thomas, Leslie Lartey, Anuj Bardwaj, Matthew Buchanan

There were seven people in the audience. The meeting was recorded and will be available for later viewing.

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm and began with introductions. Chair Green explained that two more people will join the Subcommittee: one teacher and one student. Additionally, two students and one parent were not able to attend this meeting.

Members of the administrative team were present to serve as resources and to lay out topics for the subcommittee to consider when making their ultimate recommendation to the School Committee.

The Superintendent outlined the types of programming that have existed between Somerville Public Schools and Somerville Police Department, explaining that the budgets for the School Resource Officer (SRO) role and other programming lay on the City side and are not currently funded. In addition to the SRO, this includes four Community Officers, the STEPS Program, and the Police Academy. She went on to explain the various roles and programs.

The administration has provided various Memoranda Of Understanding to the subcommittee. The Chair then invited members to ask questions.

The role of the subcommittee was clarified: the subcommittee will make recommendations based on what they believe is the right thing to do, the attorney will provide legal guidance, and the administration will see if they can make it happen.

Chair Green specified that the subcommittee would draft policy with input from the attorney, and bring it to the full School Committee - potentially via the Rules Management Subcommittee. He also stated that there would be at least two weeks of public deliberation before any full School Committee vote, going on to say that this subcommittee might also hold a public hearing.

Chair Green also provided some background on why this work is happening now and in this way, recalling that the School Committee first raised the issue of wanting to look at practice and policies around January of 2020. Then the COVID-19 pandemic happened, followed by a refocusing of attention on race and policing. Given the contentious nature of this work, a special subcommittee with public input and involvement made sense.

Chair Green laid out his idea of how the subcommittee would proceed with the work - grouping questions under categories to consider at each meeting. As the subcommittee comes up with recommendations, they will be put together in a system to propose to the full School Committee. This subcommittee will also create systems to collect information and input from the public. He asserted that there is no preordained outcome.

Superintendent Skipper elaborated, saying that the people on the subcommittee are well poised to know what might be best for students and for our schools.

Chair Green invited subcommittee members to express themselves freely but reminded everyone about their obligations under Open Meeting Law.

After some discussion about establishing a set meeting time, once per month for two hours, Chair Green stated that the subcommittee would take up SROs and CPOs at the next meeting. Superintendent Skipper said that for the next meeting she would have Ms. Tobin provide some information about the SRO and CPO roles and that the district would share their experiences working with people in those roles.

Chair Green requested a dedicated space on the district website where all of the information shared with the subcommittee will be made available to the public.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 pm.