

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Monday, June 22, 2020 - Regular Meeting**

7:00 p.m. – City Council Chambers– City Hall

**Members present:** Ms. Krepchin, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Barish, Ms. Normand, Mr. Green, Ms. Pitone, Dr. Phillips and President McLaughlin.

**Members absent:** Mayor Curtatone

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Normand called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. with a moment of silence, followed by a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

Chair Normand asked the Superintendent to call the roll, results of which were as follows: PRESENT – 8 – Ms. Krepchin, Ms. Pitone, Ms. Barish, Mr. Green, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Normand, Dr. Phillips and Mr. McLaughlin ABSENT – 1 - Mayor Curtatone.

**II. AWARDS AND CITATIONS**

**A. Recognition of Service**

- Retirees for the 2019-2020 School Year

*Paul Barringer*

*Susan Olsen*

*Laura Bonnell*

*Charlene O'Neill*

*Doreen Curreri*

*Yuri Petriv*

*Deborah DiRusso*

*Gail Portine*

*Mercedes Escobar*

*Joan Prisby*

*Margaret Ghirarda*

*Catherine Ray*

*Catherine Hughes*

*Ngaio Schiff*

*Debra Hurley*

*Eithna Sweeney*

*Robert Legrand*

*Joan Shea*

*Victoria Macrokanis*

*Bridget Travers*

*Patricia Messina*

*Anthony Vecchiarello*

*Wadson Michel*

*Bambi Warner*

*Fernanda O'Brien*

Ms. Normand read this year's retirements and thanked the educators for their long service to the School district. Not all retirees were in attendance, she proceeded to call the names of those who were and asked their supervisor to say a few comments.

*Paul Barringer*

Principal Soto said Mr. Paul Barringer has been a member of the Somerville Public Schools Music Department for the last 20 years. Early in his career, Mr. Barringer worked at Somerville high School where he arranged music for the chorus and jazz band, then he became a traveling specialist and taught at the UNIDOS Program. Paul believes that music is a gift for everyone, that music unites us all and transcends generations and cultures. He worked tirelessly in his beliefs and taught so many students and teachers of the beauty that comes through music. He was always able to find a spot for every kid in school performances, we were amazed every single time at the dedication and focus he was able to get from our students. He felt strongly about teaching various cultures, and we saw that do his repertoire selection with the students. When we think of Paul we think of his love and passion for music, but most of all his dedication to his students. Paul it's also the go to piano accompanist and additionally, he is a master Jazz musician. His colleagues shared how they were supposed to have lunch together every day, but often Paul was not there because he was checking in with a homeroom teacher about students and staying behind in the classroom to support student teachers and traveling specialist. In preparation for concerts, he often used his lunchtime to practice

1 to 1 with students.

This is a very difficult time for us to say goodbye! We were not able to celebrate properly the culmination of his career in the years of dedication to the Argenziano community and to our Music program. On behalf of the Argenziano students, parents, Teachers and Staff, we would like to wish him the best in his retirement. Enjoy every day, you deserve it. Viva la musica!

#### *Joan Prisby*

Principal Piccirelli commented that Joan has been a dedicated teacher to Somerville for many years. She's only known her for five years, but knows that Joan brings such experience to her position. When any child enters her classroom, Joan makes sure that they leave her classroom with all of the prerequisite skills for kindergarten and they're ready when they leave. With that experience she has become the go to person for all of the new teachers who have come through, and now she has been informally, a mentor to many, as well as the go to person for materials and resources. The most important part about Joan is that her colleagues describe her as a great friend. She is there to understand and to give advice to all colleagues. And she makes the experience of teaching preschool fun, and the teaching part too, her colleagues really rely on that inside of school and outside of school. Sorry Joan, that you did not get that great traditional sendoff that the Smile teachers usually give in the hallways of the school. We will miss you, your colleagues will miss you, the entire school will miss you. We all wish you the best in your retirement.

#### *Laura Bonnell*

Mr. Morales was honored to offer a few words in regards to his Assistant Principal, Ms. Laura Bonnell. He shared remarks that were given to him by other East Somerville Community School staff offering Ms. Bonnell well wishes and expressing appreciation for all her work throughout the years and how much she will be missed by the entire community. He then thanked Ms. Bonnell for her 28 years of service to Somerville Public Schools and for being a strong person not only for him, but for the students and the community throughout this time. Laura's legacy will last for many generations to come! Enjoy retirement.

#### *Gail Portine*

Mr. Morales also said a few words for Gail Portine of the East Somerville Community School. Ms. Portine has been a valuable member of the Somerville Public School system for 32 years. During the school closure due to COVID-19 Gail has shown dedication and has checked in on every single student in her caseload as a Special Ed specialists. Her peers commemorate her because of her dedication, her heart throughout the years and they send Gail off into a healthy and well deserved retirement. Thank you Gail!

#### *Catherine Hughes*

Principal Hurrie expressed that there is a common theme for all the educators that are retiring this year, the incredible clarity that they helped build a community that's built to last.

When he arrived at the Kennedy School 9 years ago Ms. Hughes had already set a standard on lighting the torch of learning that was on fire at a high quality instruction level. He thanked Ms. Hughes for keeping that fire burning and said that she is the strongest reading educator he has ever witnessed. It has been a privilege to see her relentless efforts every day to stand-by kids, nurturing, firm, positive for high quality instruction. He also thanked her for mentoring several of her Grade One colleagues. Ms. Hughes is incredibly kind, passionate and talented and ran a tight ship. You have made an impact that will benefit the Kennedy School student for generations to come.

#### *Eithna Sweeney*

Ms. Ziulkowski, the Special Education Department Chair at the Somerville High School, said Eithna

Sweeney most recently worked as a Special Education Teacher in the Resource Room class with students with Autism and is retiring after 32 years in the District. She was only at the high school for a year or so, but has worked with many of our students with disabilities in the Somerville Public Schools, in various settings for many years. When students and staff learn she was transferring to the high school the announcement was met with great relief and excitement. She was such a wonderful advocate for the needs of students, and always made sure that they received all the supports that they needed. Eithna is a talented and caring educator and is already greatly missed.

#### *Joan Shea*

Ms. Ziulkowski also honored Ms. Joan Shea, she shared the following remarks.

Joan Shea most recently worked as a Special Education teacher in English and Study Skills classes, and is retiring after 30 years in the district. The picture that most resonates with me of Joan is looking into her classroom, afterschool, well beyond the school day ended, and seeing her working with a student side-by-side at a desk. It was never too late in the day for Joan to take the time needed to help a student finish a paper or get a project done. She went above and beyond to support her students. She was also an informal mentor to staff over the years. She was always willing to lend a helping hand and sympathetic ear to new staff members who are just trying to learn the ropes of special education. Joan, you are going to be greatly missed.

#### *Charlene O'Neill*

Principal Gosselin shared her honor to celebrate Charlene's 35 years of service. In her 35 years, she has brought so much joy, love and learning to all of her students. And she has a very special gift for working with fourth graders. When we think of Charlene, what we think of the most is her excitement and her passion about getting students to love reading. She works tirelessly to find books that are just right for students to engage them and as she gets so excited when she gets that right book and the kids really get into the reading. And she loves to share what our kids are learning, what they're reading, what they're talking about. And it's amazing just to see the kids really engage at that level. She's also a value team member. She's a dear friend and a supportive colleague to her team and beyond, and her colleagues at our staff meeting last week has had amazing things to say about her. We will miss all of your energy and your carrying your warmth and your passion. I'm grateful that I've had three years to work with you a short time, but I'm really appreciative. We're saddened that we're not going to give you a proper send off this year because of the closure, and we know how sad you are not to be able to close out the year with your students, but always remember that you will have a special place in our Wildcat family, and you will always be a wildcat, and we will miss you will.

#### *Victoria Macrokanis*

Ms. Seward then said a few remarks to honor Ms. Vicky Macrokanis for her 35 years of service to the students and families of Somerville. Ms. Macrokanis is retiring from the position of the sixth grade ELA Humanities teacher at the West Neighborhood School. More than one family said they chose West Somerville for their child in sixth Grade, because of the welcome that they got when they visited the school and were welcomed into Vicki's Classroom where she opened the floor to any questions or concerns parents had and addressed them. She has given so much to our students, pushing them to do close reads better and better every time, her CNN ten quizzes engaging kids, on current events and conversations about everything that is happening in the society around us. Right, to the end with remote learning. Although that's not how you expected to spend your final moments as a teacher, you got right on board with figuring out how to do it and how to do it well. Ms. Seward has heard from many families saying the conversations that their kids were able to have regarding racial violence and situations that are going in the country, with Vicky over Zoom really made a difference in the end of the school year. That's not surprising because Vicki is the kind of person who is always learning and trying new things. She has been a leader on the school council and on the instructional leadership team. She's been a formal and informal mentor to so many teachers. And she will be sorely, sorely missed.

This concluded the Retiree celebration. Citations were mailed to all the retirees prior to this meeting.

### **III. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Student Representatives were not present this evening.

### **IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were two students from the Kennedy school present to comment. They submitted their written statement, shown below, prior to the meeting.

**Statement for the public comment at the 6/22/2020 School Committee meeting to be read by  
John F. Kennedy rising 7th-grade students  
Celine Mannion, Ariana Dias, and Kayla Ye - 5 Cherry Street Somerville, MA**

My name is Celine Mannion and my classmates Ariana Dias and Kayla Ye want to speak with you about raising awareness for racial equity. We are a group of rising 7th grade students of color from the Kennedy School who want to spread the word about racism, equality, and diversity around Somerville. We want to educate people of all ages and encourage them to learn more about these topics. This is important because everyone deserves to be treated equally, regardless of their race and background. We have worked together to create a list of ways that we can spread awareness of this important topic in our schools. We will discuss our ideas with you:

- Have a whole-school or whole-district peaceful protest with students and staff to spread the word about racism and equality
- Create Social Justice Clubs in all schools to spread awareness about racism and equality
- Have a zero tolerance policy for racism for students and staff
- Create equitable discipline policies to ensure that teachers and administrators are not punishing students of color unfairly
- Hire more teachers of color who will serve as role models, especially for students of color in every school to help all students feel accepted, included, and safe. Right now, there is a serious disproportionate number of black to white teachers in the whole district.
- Teach all students about racism and how to handle racism
  - Younger students (ages K-3) should also learn about racism to help them understand these topics
  - Students can create skits to describe what to do if they see or experience racism
- Have speeches and assemblies about racism and diversity in all schools given by guest speakers, students, and parents
- Create and hang up posters around schools and other locations in Somerville to spread messages about racism and promote equality
- Hire a social justice educator that will travel to different schools and lead instruction around diversity, equity, and racism. This can be modeled after the Health teacher's model
- Survey all students regularly to gather their experiences about racism in schools and use survey responses to make changes in our schools
- Create buddies with older and younger children in K-8 schools to have conversations about racism and equality

We believe that these policies and ideas will create schools that are equitable and fair for students of color in Somerville. Thank you.

### **V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- March 9, 202
- April 6, 2020
- April 27, 2020

MOTION: There was a motion by Mr. Green, seconded by Ms. Pitone, to approve the School Committee meeting minutes of March 9, 2020, April 6, 2020 and April 27, 2020.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

### **VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

#### **A. DISTRICT REPORT**

Superintendent Skipper asked Assistant Superintendent Mazza to give a brief update in response to inquiries from

School Committee members and district families as we begin planning for school reentry in September. Superintendent Skipper framed the report and said that Mr. Mazza would share a bit about some of the process that we're undergoing. The District eagerly waits for guidance from the state this week to be able to see what the Health Commission and DESE recommendations are.

Assistant Superintendent Mazza talked a little bit about how that will dovetail with some of the processes our district is taking on. This has been such an unusual year and so many of us would love to have all of the information right now, especially for staff. To be fully prepared we need to do what we've been doing all year, which is to take the information and look at it thoroughly and look at it through the survey data of staff and students and families, and be able to come up with the best plan possible as we go into the summer and we do some negotiation with our various unions to ensure that we have a plan for the first day of school.

Mr. Mazza thanked Superintendent Skipper and delivered his report. He began by saying that one of the big things that we are talking about are the processes around the planning of what this might look like at the district level, the classroom level, from a social emotional standpoint, from a health and safety standpoint and from a food service standpoint. Because we have to really take into consideration all of the different aspects of schooling as we think about what it may look like in the fall.

There will be a district team that will plan around district requirements, accommodations and what schools might look like with restructuring. One of the most important pieces is what happens at the classroom level. And so, we are going to be creating cross-sectional teams at different grade spans, for a total of four different grade level teams. Within these teams there will be Principals, Assistant Principals, Teachers, Paraprofessionals, Counselors and parents. For the older grades, students will also be a part of these teams because the student voice is so important. The cross-sectional teams will be discussing what the classroom structure would look like and what instruction looks like as we do start to get back. We also have to keep in mind that we may have a hybrid situation where we have partial remote and partial in person instruction, but we also could be fully remote again at some point. So it all comes down to thinking creatively about what instruction will look like in the Fall. A team of counselors along with the Director of Student Service and her team, the City Health Department and Health workers and District Teachers will be connecting from the social emotional standpoint. They will be looking at social emotional health from a student standpoint, and from the families' perspective.

It is also important to note that the district is going to be working with a consultant along with the City, to look at best practices around safety and what it looks like to re-open schools. A lot of the work happening is in conjunction with the City of Somerville. Mr. Mazza shared that we have been looking at what has been happening in the other states as well as other countries as they re-open. We've had teachers from Germany and France come talk to our Principals and Cabinet about what the re-opening looked like in their various countries because they were vastly different. Again, as Superintendent said, for us a lot of it depends around the timing from the State and their guidance. July will be a busy month as we get plans in place that need to coexist and need to be cohesive. Mr. Mazza feels strongly that we have the best educators and the best thinkers to make a solid plan but admits that there are still many unknowns to figure out.

Superintendent Skipper added that the district has a full slate of professional development that's being lined up for July, which will also include some opportunities for parents around helping them to understand the remote platforms more and how to be able to use them more effectively with their children, depending on the age. She shared that families would definitely be included as part of training opportunities, as well as staff. There are several big buckets that schools will orient around and one of them is to continue the equity work, and the anti-bias work. But another one is around transition and trauma. So that as students and families are coming back, and they've experienced trauma because of COVID-19 and the pandemic, it will be sort of a live nation of what teachers can expect and work with, and then what needs to be available for the counselors. There will also be curriculum teams, working on the grade spans, to be able to identify those critical skills that we want to be able to reinforce. Both as students return in the transition, and we baseline, and then as students go forward into the school year so that they continue to learn.

We want to be able to get the information out to parents as soon as possible for their planning. So, we're really looking forward to getting the guidance sometime this week and beginning that critical work, which is really what will determine things like the classes, the schedule, and what options are there. There are a lot of layers, both on the operational side and on the academic side and we want to make sure that we're managing both at the same

time. Because when you make an academic decision, it always has an operational consequence. So we want to make sure the operations are able to support what you're trying to achieve academically.

Chair Normand then opened the floor for questions.

Ms. Krepchin asked about how students and parents will be chosen for these teams and if Nurses have been involved.

Mr. Mazza responded and said that parents and students will be chosen through recommendations from School Principals. And yes, Nurses are part of the Health staff that are involved in this planning.

Ms. Green asked a clarifying question and wanted to make sure that all students and parents are being considered for these opportunities, some of the most affected families may not have had the opportunity to build principal and staff relationships. Superintendent Skipper replied that all families would be considered and that they would also be working with parent groups to make the selections. If we don't see a solid representation of all populations, we are committed to creating focus groups to get the representation.

#### **B. Personnel Report**

The retirees were announced earlier in the meeting during the awards and citations portion of the meeting.

### **VII. NEW BUSINESS ITEMS C – F (TAKEN OUT OF ORDER)**

#### **C. Participation in National School Lunch and Breakfast Program**

The Superintendent of Schools recommends that the School Committee vote to participate in the national School Lunch and Breakfast Program, and the Commodity Food Distribution Program, in conformity with requirements of the State Bureau of Nutrition Education and School Food Services for the 2020-2021 school year, as in previous years.

MOTION: There is a motion by Mr. Green, seconded by DR. Ackman to participate in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program and the Commodity Food Distribution Program.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

#### **D. Student Insurance – (Recommended action: Receive and place on file)**

The Superintendent advising that the contract for Student Accident Insurance for the 2020-2021 school year has been renewed with Moran Insurance Agency, 23 Spruce St., Suite B, Malden MA 02148, we are waiting on updated rate information, the rates below are from last year:

##### Plan A – Student Insurance

Premium: School Time \$7.50

Premium: 24-Hour Coverage \$49.00

Dental: Extended \$10.00

##### Plan B – ALL-SPORTS, SHOP AND LAB COVERAGE

Premium: Gold Plan \$5,835.00

Catastrophic Cash Benefit \$1,039.50

MOTION: There was a motion by Mr. Green, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to receive the contract for Student Accident Insurance for the 2020-2021 school year.

Mr. Gorski explained for new SC members that this accident insurance with Lauren Insurance Agency is a longstanding relationship between the district and this particular company. This is an exempt agreement, similar to what the classroom photography contract would be, this is a company that we've been very happy with. The catastrophic part of this would cover students on field trips, and then there is an interscholastic sports piece which is for students participating in athletics.

Ms. Santiago clarified that the form in the packet is the updated form for the upcoming school year. The premiums rates match last year and the year prior.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

#### **E. Authorization for Summer Months – (Recommended action: Approval)**

MOTION: There was a motion by Mr. Green, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to Authorize the Superintendent to act on the School Committee's behalf to:

- a. Pay bills on school department accounts for which commitments have been made by bid or purchase order before the close of schools, said bills to be ratified by the committee at the first meeting in September.

- b. Expend from FY2021 Salaries Account funds for payment of salaries of personnel under all federal grants beginning in September.
- c. Expend from the FY21 Salaries Account funds for payment of salaries of personnel as detailed in the FY20 Budget.
- d. Use Salaries Account and School Operations Account funds to pay encumbrances and salaries for summer programs.
- e. Authorize and/or reauthorize school department revolving accounts. To accept all monies received by the School Committee in connection with the conduct of said revolving accounts according to the purposes of the program or programs from which receipts in each account were derived.
- f. Accept all state and federal grant monies awarded through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Department of Early Education and care and to authorize the establishment of separate grant accounts that may be expended by the School Committee without further appropriation for the purposes designated in each grant proposal.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

**F. Acceptance of FY2021 Grant Funds**

MOTION: There was a motion by Mr. Green, seconded Dr. Ackman, to accept all federal entitlement and continuation grants and all state continuation grants awarded to the Somerville Public Schools during FY21 and to authorize the establishment of separate grant accounts that may be expended by the School Committee without further appropriation for the purposes designated in each grant proposal.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

**VIII. REPORT OF SUMCOMMITTEES**

Mr. Green read all three of his reports, then motioned to have all three accepted by committee members.

**A. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities: June 9, 2020 (Mr. Green)**

June 9<sup>th</sup>

In Attendance: A Green, I. Krepchin, E. Ackman, S. Phillips, L. Pitone, E. Barish, C. Normand.

Also in attendance: Superintendent Skipper, Asst. Superintendent Mazza, Finance Director Gorski, Sped Director Trevisone,

Meeting was called to order at 6:01pm

The first order of business was the May Bill rolls. After a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Ms. Pitone, the May Bill rolls were passed unanimously.

We then moved on the presentation of the Superintendent’s budget. In order to give the community and the Committee time to deliberate and review the budget under the abnormal timeline COVID has given us, the Superintendent is releasing her budget 8 days before the hearing. After the explaining the procedure and the timeline going forward, the Superintendent began her presentation.

Highlights are an overall 1.96% increase, allowing for collective bargaining pay increases. Additionally, the Staffing changes include the creation of 3 Dean of Students positions at Somerville High replacing the security monitors which had been a concern raised by students and at least one incident this school year. Additionally, after years of hearing from PTAs as well as groups like the Welcome Project and SEPAC and more recently ELPAC, there is a proposal to make the SFLC Family liaisons fulltime. Enrollment and changing Special ED needs offset the cost with a final budget calling for a reduction of just over 7 FTEs.

Additionally, the Superintendent is calling for an investment to begin a relationship with Becoming a Man at the High School with an eye towards bringing them fully into the High School and Healey.

Questions were raised about extra COVID costs. Things like PPE and COVID infrastructure will be centrally purchased by the City. The Superintendent’s current believes if that all known COVID expenses as of right now can be covered between the School and City CARES Act money as well as money made available from FEMA/MEMA.

Questions were also raised about Special Education staffing levels, particularly at the Kennedy. Director Trevisone

explained that they expect far fewer Students in SEEK and that even with one fewer class the student to teacher ratio should be lower than this year, while reassuring us that if that changed they'd come back to revisit staffing. After explaining the process going forward again and with no further questions, Dr. Phillips moved and Ms. Normand seconded a motion to adjourn that passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:41

**B. Somerville Public Schools FY2021 Public Budget Hearing:** June 17, 2020 (Mr. Green)

June 17th

In Attendance: A Green, I. Krepchin, E. Ackman, S. Phillips, L. Pitone, E. Barish, C. Normand.

Also in attendance: Superintendent Skipper, Asst. Superintendent Mazza, Finance Director Gorski, Sped Director Trevisone, Early Ed Director Kuh, HR Director MacDonald, Director Bertholdo, Director Davila, COS Curley

Meeting was called to order at 6:00pm

The hearing opened with the Chair explaining how the ground rules of the public hearing would go. Attendees would be given 3 minutes to talk and would be encouraged not to repeat prior speakers. School Committee was there to listen, not respond. If there were factual questions the Superintendent may address them with that Superintendent and her team presented her proposed FY11 budget. In order to provide the community and Committee time to deliberate while allowing us to present a budget to the City in a timely manner, the actual budget numbers had been released on Tuesday June 9th. Since then a Tentative Agreement with the STA paraprofessionals unit had been announced. The budget already accounted for the agreement but now it could be announced.

After the Superintendent's report, the public hearing began. 16 people spoke, a majority of whom were STA members. The most common requests for were for more staff in the coming year, particularly more guidance counselors, and more classroom educators. There were also questions particularly about the Responsive Classroom program at the Argenziano (which is still in the budget). Participants also expressed gratitude to the committee for avoiding layoffs and resolving the para contract.

A near universal concern was raised over whether or not the Superintendent's budget adequately covered for COVID costs. Despite the City's commitment to cover expenses like PPE, and the Superintendent's stated commitment to request funds if needed, commenters still expressed great concern about the need for extraordinary investments to handle the uncertainty of the fall and the whole 20-21 academic year.

All attendees having spoken the hearing adjourned at 8:47pm

**C. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of the Whole:** June 18, 2020 (Mr. Green)

June 18th

In Attendance: A Green, I. Krepchin, E. Ackman, S. Phillips, L. Pitone, E. Barish, C. Normand, President McLaughlin, Mayor Curtatone

Also in attendance: Superintendent Skipper, Asst. Superintendent Mazza, Finance Director Gorski,

Meeting was called to order at 6:00pm

The hearing opened with the Chair explaining how the ground rules of the meeting would go. First members would be free to ask informational questions, then the process of amending the Superintendent's budget would begin.

Carrie Normand moved and L Pitone seconded a motion to add \$130,000 to the budget to expand the becoming a man program to the Healey. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Pitone then introduced a resolution, seconded by Dr. Ackman, confirming the Committee's expectations of the Superintendent to report back on any additional budget needs, the Committee's intentions to request supplemental budgets if asked and our expectations of our partners in government to meet those requests.

In addition to friendly amendments over wording from Superintendent Skipper and Chair Green, the committee also voted on two amendments from Dr. Phillips.

The first amendment, seconded by Ms. Krepchin, added a whereas clause stating Mayor Curtatone's expectation to file the requested supplemental budget with the city council. This amendment passed unanimously

The second amendment, also seconded by Ms. Krepchin explicitly stated the need for a public hearing as part of the supplemental budget process. There was general agreement that this wasn't legally necessary as a public hearing is part of the legal process. This amendment nonetheless passed 8-1 with Dr. Ackman as the dissenting vote.

The resolution then passed unanimously.

Ms. Pitone motioned and Ms. Normand seconded a motion to add a district wide social worker position to the

budget at \$74,000. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Green then moved, with Ms. Normand seconding that an amended budget of \$77, 929,431 be adopted for the 2021 fiscal year. Motion passed unanimously

The meeting adjourned at 7:26pm.

MOTION: There was a motion by Mr. Green, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of the Whole of June 9, 2020 and of June 18, 2020, as well as the Public Budget Hearing report of June 17, 2020.

## **IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **A. Resolution in Support of Education Funding in the COVID-19 ERA**

Chair Normand introduced this resolution and asked one of the members to give an update of where we left of on this resolution.

Mr. Green confirmed that this Resolution is back for a second reading and vote. He added that since this committee passed a resolution calling on the Federal Government to step up and do their part for education, this particular resolution is calling on the City and State Government to step up. This resolution calls on the State to fully fund education and to support progressive taxation in order to make it possible.

MOTION: Mr. Green then made a motion to adopt this resolution, and the motion was seconded by Ms. Barish. Mr. Green made a friendly amendment to remove a bullet point at the bottom of the page. The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

## **X. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Report out of School Committee Office Hours**

Each member read their report, which were submitted prior to the meeting and are attached below.

### **B. Planning Process for Returning to School for SY 2020-2021**

Assistant Superintendent Mazza already covered this item during the District Report this evening.

Chair Normand introduced an item of new business and announced that also included in tonight's packet is the MOU between the School District and the Somerville Police department, for informational purposes. There are two models included. She said that like many districts across the country we are starting to really re-examine our policies and our procedures, to see if we are doing enough, or if there are ways to change things up, to continue to work towards becoming an anti-racist district.

She then asked Dr. Phillips to share some background information as she requested for this information to be added to the packet.

Dr. Phillips took this time to make a motion before proceeding to discuss the topic.

MOTION: There is a motion by Dr. Phillips, seconded by Ms. Krepchin, to refer the District's Memorandum of Understanding with the Police Department to the Rules Subcommittee and ask the subcommittee to review it in light of the Attorney General's model MOU in order to identify any revisions we'd like to bring back to the full body for consideration.

Mr. Green clarified that this motion would not need a vote if Chair Normand makes the decision as Chair to forward it to the Rules Subcommittee.

Chair Normand explained that one of the MOUS's originated from the District Attorney while the other is originating from the Attorney General. The Somerville MOU is modeled after the District Attorney's version, and it is actually an MOU between the Superintendent and the Police Department, not the School Committee and the police. She also expressed her appreciation to Dr. Phillips for bringing this to the attention of the Committee. It is topic that we need to learn more about. She struggled with decision of whether to send it to the Rules Subcommittee or keeping it at the full committee but she agreed that it needs to be high on the priority list early on in the fall.

Chair Normand did not make the decision then, but she is fully committed to moving the MOU forward and having it on the first agenda for the first meeting in late August. She then opened the floor for discussion from other members.

Dr. Phillips explained that this all came to her from constituents asking about the role of police in schools and students who have reached out to her asking the same question. She did some research on what School Committee is required to do by law, and found out that by law, the District is required to have at least one School Resource Officer in the schools. The role of this officer is defined by a Memorandum of Understanding between the Superintendent and the Police Department. In her efforts to learn more about our particular MOU, she came across the model MOU developed by the Attorney General's Office. She described that reading the two documents side-by-side, she noticed they were very similar but the Attorney General's MOU differs from the DA's MOU in two key respects. One is that it places greater limits on data sharing, and two, it restricts the acceptable activities of school resource officer in some small, but meaningful ways. Dr. Phillips cares deeply about interrupting the school to prison pipeline and believes these two changes although small are important. She realizes she is only 1/9<sup>th</sup> of the body but looks forward to discussing these issues with committee members at a greater length.

Chair Normand added that in addition to understanding the memorandum of agreement and the two models, they also need more information about what does the Resource Officer do, how much time they spend at schools and what the parameters are. The Steps program and the Cadet program have also been brought, and as a body and a community we all need to fully understand what those actually look like, and how those decisions are made. Chair Normand requested that this information be distributed to Committee members in the fall.

Ms. Pitone thanked Dr. Phillips for addressing this topic and going as far as doing the research and sharing the differences between the two MOU's. She echoed Chair Normand's hesitation on where this should go to next and suggested that it go back to the Superintendent for her administrative review and then she report back to the committee to have a discussion at a Regular meeting.

Mr. Green clarified as a point of order that the fact that the committee has not created a policy instructing the Superintendent on how to handle policing does not mean they could not. This is within their scope of power, if they so choose to behave that way.

Dr. Ackman shared as Chair of the Rules subcommittee that she agrees, if this is something they're going to deliberate on, it is important enough that it be done as a full body.

Chair Normand agreed that the committee needs to work with the Superintendent to find out more about what actually is happening in the district, what the concerns are and what the problem is we're trying to fix specific to our district. And through that lens, look at the two different documents. She reiterated that she is committed to bringing this up and putting it on the agenda when School Committee business resumes.

It was concluded that where this item goes next is at the Chairs discretions, which in turn nulls Dr. Phillip's motion.

## **XI. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

### **Dr. Ackman**

Requested a second reading of file GBBA-R, which is the Gender Identity Support for Staff Policy, as quickly as possible as this policy does not affect anything COVID-19 related. This item is pending from the last in-person meeting before the Pandemic.

### **Ms. Pitone**

Took this time as Chair of the Education Programs Subcommittee to acknowledge that it has been decided each month for the last few months not to have the Educational Program Subcommittee meetings because of the school closure and the physical building closures. It is her intention in collaboration with Assistant Superintendent Mazza to reconvene meetings in the fall.

She also shared that a constituent reached out to her about Juneteenth and making that part of the curriculum and the required learning for all students in our public schools. Ms. Pitone looked at the Civics curriculum and because it

is not an actual holiday it is not listed in the civics curriculum. But she further explained that the intention of civics curriculum is a lot about learning about the population in our City and in the State and anti-racism also seems to be a component of that.

Lastly she requested that the Student Advisory Council be added to the agenda for the Fall. Per MA General Law, all School Committees are required to have a Student Advisory Council that is voted on by high school students, and could possibly include middle school students.

**Ms. Normand**

Announced that there is an Executive Session scheduled on Wednesday June 24<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned via voice vote at 9:43 p.m.

**Related documents:**

Agenda

Personnel Report

Resolution in Supports of Education Funding in The COVID-19 ERA

School Committee Office Hours Reports

Student Accident Insurance Form

Submitted by: K. Santiago