

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

March 22, 2021

7:00p.m.GoToWebinar

Members present: Ms. Krepchin, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Barish, Ms. Normand, Mr. Green, Ms. Pitone and Dr. Phillips. Mayor Curtatone and President McLaughlin. **Present -9- Absent: -0-**

Interpreters Haitian: Gina Miranda, Clark Jean Baptiste
Spanish: Michaela Yen
Portuguese: Elaine Metzker

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Green called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. a moment of silence dedicated to the victims of the horrific hate crimes last week and a salute to the flag of the United States of America. He asked the Superintendent to call the roll, results of which were as follows: PRESENT – 9 – Ms. Krepchin, Ms. Pitone, Ms. Barish, Mr. Green, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Normand, Dr. Phillips and Mayor Curtatone, Mr. McLaughlin

II. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Student Representatives present were Brian Recinos, 10th Grader at SHS, Brian spoke about the following:

- Students received third quarter progress reports on X2 Aspen last week
- Parent Teacher conferences were held last Friday for the high school students
- Staff and Students are invited to attend a community conversation about the native Pacific Islanders stop the hate movement in response to the rise in violence against Asians
- Somerville High School Equity team will present “Women’s History Month Matters” to honor the contributions of women in many different fields on Friday March 26th
- Student forum on Tuesday March 23rd to provide input in choosing the next high school principal. Students may submit their questions on Google form on X2 announcement page.
- Junior class has been able to raise \$500.00 for their Snap fundraiser

Ms. Barish asked what the fundraiser was for, Brian answered it was for future events not anything specific at this time.

III. MAYOR CURTATONE’S UPDATE

Mr. Robert Raiche, Director of Infrastructure & Asset Management gave an update on the building status: (*see below)

- Scope of Work
 - Minimum threshold for occupancy
 - Ventilation-retro-commission air handling equipment, handle additional pressure from filters
 - CO2 Monitoring-Ongoing quality control of ventilation
- Additional Work While Occupied
 - Disinfection
 - Humidification
- Consistent with Harvard School of Public Health
- Wellness room exhaust, humidification & UV process
- 207 Portable units deployed: 61 units staged
- All filters & retro-commissioning inspections complete
- Identified issues
 - Maintenance for Honeywell
 - Capital Improvements
 - Varying percentage of design capacity
- Issue Resolution
 - Honeywell has addressed many of these issues
 - ESCS is waiting for parts & equipment
 - One item open at WHCS

- Number of items under investigation
- Open items at Argenziano & Capuano
- Healey items have been identified and pricing is being obtained
- Same for WSNS as Healey
- Kennedy is complete
- WHCS is a more complicated solution and are obtaining pricing
- Interim occupation -achievement of low-risk
 - Measurable, demonstrable calculations that
 - Central systems deliver 4 air changes per hour
 - If not achieved, supplement with portable air filtration units
- Example of Calculations
 - Space
 - Volume
 - Outside Air Volume
 - Minimum Filtered Air Volume
 - Outdoor Air Changes/Hour
 - Total Air Change/Hour
- Occupancy/Construction schedule
- Ongoing plan reevaluation
 - Overall risk profile
 - testing program
 - physical distancing
 - PPE availability & compliance
 - Building systems/ air handling
 - Vaccinations
- DESE Requirements

Mr. Raiche has a meeting tomorrow with Harvard School of Public Health to go over the information.

Dr. Phillips asked Mr. Raiche if Asset Management would be overseeing the Honeywell maintenance going forward? Mr. Raiche answered that historically DPW has managed the Honeywell contract. Asset management has only been in existence for two years and one of those has included Covid It was created to operate the systems not maintaining the systems and there usually is a division between the two. It would make sense that DPW continue to own that contract. Before Asset Management brought all this to light, the Offices of Sustainability and Environment was working with and assisting DPW in rewriting its scope of work for that program moving forward. Using our expertise, we will assist DPW on a more regular basis moving forward. Dr. Phillips asked who would be overseeing the contract in the future, sure they are doing so with fidelity? Mayor Curtatone answered that they are evaluating not only the contract and who should be the vendor working with the city on this, in addition Mr. Raiche and other members of the team are working on ways to improve oversight. It is common for municipalities to ask a private vendor who manufactured the equipment and then maintained it. It is not a good process; we need to look at another vendor and take a look at their maintenance. Dr. Phillips asked when they would have an answer about the vendor and maintenance? Mayor Curtatone answered that it would most likely during the next fiscal budget.

Ms. Barish asked for the timeline would be for the scope of work on the WHCS mentioned in the presentation? Mr. Raiche said right now they are working on getting quotes for that work, the price, and their schedule. A two month process would be optimistic. He will check back in after next week with a more definitive answer.

Superintendent Skipper added that having the Winter Hill online for a full in-person September opening is a priority. Ms. Barish asked for a timeline for the Brown School and Mr. Raiche stated that the Brown, if a very different evaluation, they could install portable units and add some fans, if the school could accept the electrical load. The Brown is in a very different evaluation program. We want to make sure we are not making any errors in judgement.

Ms. Pitone then asked about the WHCIS, when, if it was necessary, would a contingency plan need to be mobilized? Assuming it would be a change of building or MODS to be used instead of the buildings that are down right now? Mr. Raiche said that it is hoped that occupancy can happen in September. They do not want to open schools now that should remain closed until September and the WHCS is one of them. Many of the students are special needs and it is not fair to move them now only to have to move them again for the summer programs they will most likely attend. Ms. Pitone is looking at the challenges we have right now and wants to know if and when a contingency plan

is needed. How long is it going to take to set it up? Mayor Curtaton said we cannot answer this without a timeline. We want to make sure we are able to get back in the fall and we will be conservative with the plan so we don't have to have a plan "B".

Superintendent Skipper asked Asst. Superintendent Mazza and Dr. Jeff Curley to give their updates on the Covid testing and tracing.

Dr. Curley, Chief of Staff presented:(*seebelow)

- SPS Covid Testing Policies and Pool Testing
- Navigating Covid Screening Testing Webpage
 - General
 - Schedule
 - Videos
 - Dashboard
 - How it Works
 - Post-Test Instructions
 - Positive Results Scenarios
 - Glossary
 - FAQ
- Baseline Schedule
- Baseline Schedule by Cohort
-

Question: Ms. Krepchin asked about the consent form? Dr. Curley said the consent form is required for testing and testing is required to return to in person learning. Only a valid doctor's note would give you an exemption from the testing. We have had full compliance so far.

Ms. Barish through Chair Green asked if teachers would be tested twice per week and students once? Dr. Curley said yes right now the students will test once and teachers twice.

Superintendent Skipper wanted to thank Dr. Curley, Jose Mendez and Doug Kress for all their hard work on the Covid testing and being flexible with all the curves having been thrown at them.

Dr. Curley thanked Community Schools Staff and the Recreation Department for all their hard work and cooperation.

Item A from New Business Taken out of Order

A. School Committee Interpretation Update

Interpretation Services is next and **Dr. Davila** is introduced by **Superintendent Skipper** and **Chair Green**:

Dr. Sara Davila, District Administrator of Programs, ELL is representing SFLC this evening. They are happy and proud with the enhancement with the full time multilingual staff to remove all barriers for multilingual families to participate. She does want to point out a couple of challenges. As seen tonight, simultaneous interpretation is such a specialized skill it takes an incredible amount of concentration to achieve the desired result. It takes quite an amount of training and people also need breaks because of the length of the meetings. We have doubled the amount of interpreters and still find it a challenge.

Also the GoToWebinar format is not the best way to present these meetings for what they are trying to accomplish. It does not have interpretation channels. We are putting our interpreters into separate rooms and it is a barrier to their participation. Our interpreters in two specific cases were not treated with respect. As a leader we would like all of our staff to be treated with respect. A couple of challenges and we have some suggestions for the committee, one is public comment is the unknown and the interpreters want to be as prepared as possible. They would like to have time to review the material beforehand. The topic and subject matter so they can research and be prepared for quality interpretation. Also other forums where the School Committee could provide a two way conversation. It is important for multilingual families to receive information but it is also just as important to share their thoughts, opinions and questions. The awkwardness of the platform and the lengthy agendas may not be getting us to the goals of inclusion and remove all barriers and have all families be able to participate and be inclusive and have two way conversations.

Superintendent Skipper paused for questions.

Chair Green commented by giving his sincere gratitude to the interpreters and jumping in feet first, at the end of a year that no one expected we don't want to hear that these people are not being treated with the respect they deserve. It makes all of our jobs harder by not showing respect to all of the people who help us with our work on a daily basis. We would like to do multilingual office hours in future and would hope that these same people could be a source for us to do so.

Ms. Normand thanked Dr. Davila and her staff for being there and then taking on a long day into the night is much appreciated. Also being so constructive in her remarks and diplomatic and with concrete suggestions, the intent is right but if we are not getting communication back and forth then how can we improve it and make it as easy as possible for people to do these jobs more sustainable and enjoyable and ultimately strengthen our community.

Chair Green wanted the Mayor to speak about the platform of "GoToWebinar" because this was the platform chosen by the city because Zoom hadn't upped their security game.

Mayor Curtatone did not know if there was an alternative, he asked months ago why we had to go to this platform and he did not know the reason why we could not change to another platform.

Dr. Phillips asked if people do need translation, what is her proposal for that? Dr. Davila said you need to think about our audience. Public comment is about speaking to the School Committee and that should mean that people can speak in their own language and that then is translated for you. This platform does not do that for you. Switching to Zoom will do that for you and Dr. Davila agreed.

Superintendent Skipper thanked Dr. Davila and the interpreter and translators that work in our system. They have to go to extra schooling in order to perfect their skills. There are a lot of limitations to technology, one is that there is a lack of personal connection. The people who are on the front line and work hard for all of our students from early morning until late at night are the ones who take the flack and they are the ones who deserve it the least. Thanks to all the interpreters.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Kinga Borondy (Comment was submitted to be included in the minutes and will be added with attachments).

Jeremy Brown - 234 Summer Street is reading a letter from a parent from Somerville High School. This is a parent of a 15 year old daughter who is a freshman at Somerville High. She is extremely concerned that the high school students are not returning to in person learning. Her friends' 15 year old son committed suicide just a few weeks ago and she has not been able to get that out of her head. Her daughter and her friends are 15 and she is afraid this could be one of them too. Virtual learning and isolation is taking a huge toll on the high school students. After checking in with a teacher recently the teacher told her she has never seen so many students failing at the same time and there is a large number of absences. She has yet to see the data on the amount of failures and the absences among the students. Remote learning has affected their mental health and created a learning loss since they are only attending school four days per week and an hour less per day. We need to see this data so we can assess the effect of virtual learning on our children and how we can help lessen the effect of learning loss and stress this year. We need to get our high school students back in school.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- October 5, 2020
- October 19, 2020
- November 2, 2020

MOTION: There was a motion by Carrie Normand, seconded by Ms. Barish to approve the minutes listed above. The motion was approved via roll call vote.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

- **Transition to In-Person Learning**
 - Daily Health Screening
 - Face Covering
 - Physical Distancing
 - Hand Washing
 - Covid-19 Testing
 - Air Quality
 - Public Health Metrics
- Successful Transition of Phases 2A & 2B
 - 2A
 - 2B
- 80 students, 60 staff @ SHS and Cap
- Students & Teachers in highest need programs
- Students attending 4 days per week until transition to full-time 5 day

- 350 students 45 staff, SHS, Arg, Cap, ESCS, Healey
- Additional high need students, SEI 1, Multilingual Learning Lab, some CTE
- Teachers will teach remotely from their classrooms
 - Schedule of Phases (proposed)
 - Phase 1 - February 1st
 - Phase 2A - March 1st
 - Phase 2B - March 15th
 - Phase 3A - March 22nd
 - Phase 4A - April 5th
 - Phase 4B - April 12th
 - Phase 5 - April 27th
 - Testing will occur over April vacation so we will not have a long period between tests
 - In Person Learning Family Survey Results
 - Shows District Totals by School
 - Aggregate Hybrid
 - Responses
 - Response Rate
 - Aggregate 5-Day
 - Responses Response Rate
 - Welcoming Students & Staff in Phase 3A
 - Pre-K & K Week 1: Week of March 22
 - Half Day Phase in Days - Short & intentional phase in to establish routines while adapting and developing stamina
 - Phase 3A includes
 - Phase 3A return week of March 22
 - Includes pre-K & K, SEEK program, Redirect & House Learning Labs (9-12), Next Wave/Full Circle, Somerville Child Care Center
 - Start of hybrid in person model- two cohorts
 - Cohort A attends Mon/Tu remote Th/F starting 3/29
 - Cohort B attends Th/F remote Mon/Tu starting 3/29 & will be adjusted wk of 3/29 to reflect Good Friday holiday
 - Wednesday remains remote until 4/28 full time in person transition
- Pre-K & K Return to School Plan
 - Week 1 (wk of 3//2)
 - Cohort A- March 25 Cohort B- March 26
 - Week 2 (wk of 3/29)
 - Cohort A- March 29 & 30 Cohort-B March 31 & April 1
 - Week 3 (wk of 4/5)
 - Cohort A- April 5 & 6 Cohort- B April 8 & 9
- What will In Person Hybrid Learning Look Like

- In person Learning (2 Days)
 - Breakfast
 - Morning Meeting
 - X-Block
 - Math & Literacy
 - Recess & Lunch
 - Choice Time
 - Structure & unstructured play
 - Daily activities to address social, emotion learning and community building
- Remote Learning (3 day)
 - Prioritizing continuity so students feel connected
 - Morning Meeting
 - X-Block
 - Specialist
 - Small Group Activities
 - Asynchronous work
 - Hands on & exploratory experiences
- Remote Learning
 - Learning Community is not bound by wall of school buildings
 - Any family may keep their student remote
 - Will continue to receive synchronous and asynchronous instruction
 - Will have an opportunity to to enroll in afterschool programming
 - Will continue to receive social-emotional & other supports as needed
 - Will continue to have Grab & Go Meals
- Student/Staff Assignment Process
 - Staff are identified for remote learning assignments based on approval of leaves
 - Collaborative effort between Principals, Directors & Asst. Superintendent
 - Families who keep students remote are indicated through a survey and or outreach
 - Students are assigned to a grade-level teacher
 - Assignment decision are made based on teacher licensure
 - Cohorts are prioritized to remain together
 - Supports are a priority to ensure services
 - Principals communicate to teachers about student assignment changes
 - Principals send parent letters & class lists to teachers
 - Teachers complete remote assignment document & send to receiving teachers
 - New Remote teachers communicate with families assigned to their remote classroom
 - Principals follow up with phone calls to families
- What will my Remote Learning Day Look Like
 - At least 40 hours of synchronous instruction over a 10 school day period averaged

Across grades 1-12 in remote learning (excluding Pre-K & K)

- A Student's school day will reflect the typical school day
- Students will receive 3-4 hours of daily synchronous instruction
- Students will have core classes: math, ELA, science, social studies, Spanish, x-block, specialists and SEL
- ESL students will receive those services daily
- Special education students will receive those services as required by their IEP
- Transition times & breaks will be built in to students schedule
- How will educators know where my child is academically?
 - Assessment Framework
 - Grade of Student
 - English Language Arts
 - Math
 - So teachers can use data to design plans for individual students going forward
- How will we keep remote families informed?

- Translate the presentations
- Personal outreach to continue communication with families, community liaisons & leveraging multilingual resources
- Targeted updates in primary language
- All families continue to receive weekly updates from the Superintendent
- Utilize social media and other communication platforms

Question:

Ms. Krepchin asked if there will be regular specialists working with students? Asst. Superintendent Mazza answered that yes, there will be specialists for the remote students as well. Superintendent Skipper added that we will be doing town halls also to make sure they are communicating with families and making sure families understand they can call her or Mr. Mazza with any questions and they want to make sure we are in good shape starting back with in person learning.

Dr. Phillips asked if there will be access to band or strings along with the other specialists? Mr. Mazza said yes, they will be available to students. In order to keep a flexible schedule they will try to keep the remote schedule to coincide with the in person schedule so it can be fluid to add or subtract things as they need to try to accommodate different situations along the way.

Ms. Normand said she is getting questions regarding evaluating the seventh and eighth grade students and the high school students. Also, what about the MCAS for the students who need to take those exams? How are the eighth graders going to do their course selection sheets for the high school? Mr. Mazza said it was a very good question and he could gather information for a discussion at the next meeting. Superintendent Skipper added that they are actively looking at ways for the eighth graders to get a better sense of what they want to choose for next year. They are working with the health department to see if tours may be a possibility. In a pandemic we need to make sure testing is done and keep track of who is there for contact tracing. The high school is working on Zoom to also help them make a smoother transition. As far as MCAS they are still waiting on the state to make some decisions so they can clarify what should happen when students return to in person instruction.

Ms. Norman also wanted to know about the juniors who could not take the MCAS last year and may not be entitled to important college scholarships because of that. She also asked about SAT's, AP's and all of the other standardized testing that has to take place that didn't because of the pandemic. Superintendent Skipper answered that it is being mapped out right now and will ask Ms. Traci Small, Director of Guidance and Ms. Davila, District Administrator of Programs who can speak to ACCESS testing, to the next meeting to talk about the testing and college counseling that needs to happen for the returning students. Mr. Mazza also wanted to talk about the specialist and seeing what it will look like for the students and teachers. We want to preserve what the students have learned so far in music. They are looking at many different ways for the students to be able to preserve what they know and to continue practicing and progressing especially in music and looking to purchase anything that students need to keep that focus on music.

Ms. Krepchin asked about the students who are staying remote and what we should do going forward to assist them if they wish to continue to stay remote. Superintendent Skipper added that the state is hoping that all students will return in the fall to in person classes. They do recognize that some students may wish to stay remote and they are looking at the application process for remote learning and how they will be able to work with their families.

Ms. Barish wondered if interpretation and translation will be available for the town halls that were mentioned? Would this be an effective way for families to become engaged in the dialog? Superintendent Skipper said because SFLC is involved they would be able to bring in interpretation services and they will talk to the principals to see if this needs to be done on a larger scale. The kinds of questions that are surfacing are really school specific and we want to make sure that school leaders are addressing these items with the parents. If there is a need to do a multilingual town hall around the question of remote verses in person then she would be glad to do that. Ms. Barish asked about the conversation around the eighth grade transition, she wanted to know more about the high school schedule for next year. Superintendent Skipper said yes, she would have Principal Lagambina and Ms. Remington, who has been working on the schedule, to come to a meeting to talk about the schedule.

B. Personnel Report

Superintendent Skipper thanked Patricia Pacheco, Life Skills teacher at the Kennedy School for her 27 years and 155 days of service; and Anne Berkwitz, also Life Skills teacher at the Kennedy School for 30 years of service and congratulated them on their retiring

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. School Committee Meeting for Rules Management: March 8, 2021 (Ms. Barish)

Report of Rules Management Subcommittee

February 8, 2021

Submitted by Ellenor Barish

The Rules Management Subcommittee met virtually on Monday, March 8, 2021. Members present were Ellenor Barish, Emily Ackman, and Ilana Krepchin. Superintendent Mary Skipper, Director of Enrollment Regina Bertholdo, and Director of Student Services Elizabeth Doncaster were also present. There was one audience member.

Ms. Barish called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

There were nine items on the agenda.

1. Approval of Reports from January and February Meetings

Ilana Krepchin moved to approve reports for January and February Rules meetings. Seconded by Emily Ackman. Passed unanimously.

2. Extension of Emergency Intent to Return Policy

Ms. Bertholdo and Superintendent Skipper provided background information and updated numbers on how many students' families have notified SPS of an intent to return. Ms. Bertholdo expressed concern - echoed by Dr. Ackman - around the number of seats that would need to be held, particularly on the west side of town for students who will be in second grade in the 2022-23 school year. Superintendent Skipper noted that she is anticipating an influx of students and as a result does not intend to cut the budget despite a decline in enrollment since the start of the pandemic. She recommended that the policy be extended if SPS cannot guarantee full time in-person school in the fall by August 1, 2021, asserting that full-time in person school is the district's goal and intention.

Dr. Ackman moved to extend Policy EBCFB for an additional year if SPS is unable to guarantee full-time in-person learning by 8/1/2021 for the 2021-22 school year with the request that families let SPS know their intentions for the 2022-23 school year by 12/31/2021. Seconded by Ilana Krepchin. Passed unanimously.

6. File JIE: Pregnant Students was taken out of order.

The idea was to offer similar accommodations to any student who may be a parent or expectant parent, not just to pregnant students and new mothers. With the help of Superintendent Skipper and Ms. Doncaster, the subcommittee worked through the language to make it more inclusive.

Dr. Ackman moved to send the revised policy to the full committee. Ms. Krepchin seconded. Passed unanimously.

5. File JIB: Student Representatives to SC was taken out of order.

Ms. Barish recommended bringing the policy into compliance with current state law by using the language in the MASC reference policy. Given that the proposed policy diverges significantly from current policy, that there will be a new principal at SHS, and that most high school students continue to learn remotely, Superintendent Skipper suggested that the new policy might go into effect during the next academic year. Ms. Barish wondered if the law leaves room for two ex-officio School Committee members as has been the practice in Somerville. Language was added to clarify that the Student Advisory Committee required by law should be representative of the students of SHS and should include one member from Next Wave.

Dr. Ackman moved to bring policy revisions for JIB to the full committee. Ilana Krepchin seconded. Passed unanimously. Ms. Barish said she would request legal review.

7. File GBGF-E: Paid Leave Policy was tabled for a future meeting so that Director of HR Mariana MacDonald could provide input.

8. File BBA: SC Powers and Duties

As the policy states, School Committee needs to review and update policies periodically. Many of our current policies are more than ten years old. In an effort to bring the body of SPS policy up to date, Superintendent Skipper

recommends that the district hire someone to do a deep dive in the summer months. Dr. Ackman expressed her enthusiasm for this plan. Ms. Barish offered to help in whatever way might be appropriate. This work may dovetail well with the effort to put SPS policies on the MASC's searchable website.

4. Review of Policies Concerning Police-School Relationship

Superintendent Skipper started with a question: Do we want to have a MOU with the Somerville Police? - pointing out that we don't know if School Resource Officers will be funded going forward. There are multiple MOU options: the DA version, the AG version, or having something customized. The district had prepared an analysis last year then the pandemic hit. The Superintendent recommends a robust conversation including students, staff and others who interact with SROs.

Ms. Doncaster talked about differences in the types of MOUs, highlighting reportable offenses and the clarity of the language in the different versions. She said would welcome the conversation about SROs and shared her positive impressions of the program and the relationships it fosters.

Superintendent Skipper shared that the arrest rate for students in Somerville is well below the state average. She pointed out that the restructuring of HS security that resulted in the new deans of students positions was about the security guards at the high school, not SROs.

The remaining agenda items: Subcommittee Meetings and Reports and File BEC: Review and Release of Executive Session Notes were tabled for a future meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:39 pm.

Documents used: Report on Rules 1/20/21, Report on Rules 2/28/21, Emergency 1-Year Leave of Absence and School Placement Hold Policy, JIE - Pregnant Students, File JIB: Student Involvement in Decision Making, JIB revised with MASC Language

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Dr. Phillips, to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Rules Management of March 8, 2021.

Chair Green and Ms. Krepchin will be arranging a special School Committee meeting the last week of May to discuss the topic of police in the schools.

B. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of the Whole: March 10, 2021 (Ms. Krepchin)

Finance and Facilities Subcommittee of the Whole March 10th, 2021
Via Remote Participation

Members Present: Emily Ackman, Ilana Krepchin, Andre Green, Ellenor Barish, Carrie Normand, Laura Pitone, and Sarah Phillips.

Also in Attendance: Superintendent Mary Skipper and Director of Finance Fran Gorski
Audience Members: There were 10 audience members

Ilana Krepchin called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm

There were 5 items on the agenda

Bill rolls

Emily Ackman moved to approve the bill rolls, seconded by Sarah Phillips.

It passed unanimously. There was a question about whether school committee members could join some of the district professional development sessions on equity? Superintendent Skipper confirmed- Yes, She will look into it and also plan an update on equity work at a regular meeting soon.

Expenditure update

We have spent 61% at this point - which is less than in a normal school year.

Technology line item - we've spent 40% of budget. This is not unusual as tech spending tends to happen late in the year - licensing, purchasing equipment for use in the next year, etc. Transportation will increase with Special Ed students coming back in person.

Revolving accounts departments have been hardest hit - School Lunch, Community Schools, Daycare Center
We expect this will improve with the return of students in person. Food service and community schools have done excellent work, we want to make sure to support these programs. Daycare hasn't been open but is opening with 12 families in March.

FY22 Budget discussion

We started a little later than usual this year with budget collaboratives.

We are getting a sense of where people are, enrollment, plans for the future. Likelihood is that enrollment will normalize when back full time.

There is a list midyear staff additions - these will be discussed as new positions for the '22 budget.

With new federal legislation there will be an ESSER3 (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund) allocation. We don't have an expiration date or total for this yet. There will be funding on the city side and on the school side, and money set aside for school lunch. The uploading of school committee policies to the MASC site did not happen due to COVID. Something to revisit and try to accomplish in FY '22. We need to sign a new agreement. \$3500 for setup and upload plus \$950 annual fee for hosting and maintenance.

Facilities reduced with movement of communications tech to city budget

Healey - 105K for BAM (Becoming a Man) which would continue in FY '22

SHS - \$25K for BAM would expand to a full program this year; not in budget yet but will likely happen and would be +\$80K.

Argenziano - Continuing Responsive Classroom - there is a segment of teachers who still need to be trained;

Athletics - there was Additional \$ put into athletics due to transportation due to HS construction; we may be able to adjust that this year; some cost savings due to loss of transportation to games; we may be able to take some pressure off FY22 budget by spending now on uniforms, equipment etc, for next year

Library book purchases reduced for FY21 by \$25K - we weren't buying books last year due to COVID; We will revisit this.

Special Ed - First line \$600K reduced because we were able to pre-pay tuitions for the current year and reduced out of district placements with increased in-district. Looking at year-end close one thing we can do is pre-pay tuition to take pressure off special education budget for FY22

Bottom line for FY21 - non-payroll - We cut \$1.09 million, Payroll was a \$3 million increase.

For FY22 we are looking at a 5% increase in payroll, 4% increase overall - which is double what we received from the City last year.

Accelerated academies/transition academies over the summer may be supported by the state. We are also

Investigating which of our partners can contribute to summer programming.

Contract with NRT (Transportation company)-

There was language in the Cares Act which encouraged districts to pay transportation companies to ensure they would be able to survive when we came back in person.

The MA legislature passed legislation that allowed such payment, which we did in June. In late fall, the legislature extended the act to allow this type of payment through June 30, 2021. We negotiated with NRT to draft amendment language to allow payment for remote sessions in March and beyond. We expect them to continue to meet our needs as we expand in-person. The contract includes financing, maintenance, etc - not just drivers and fuel. We asked for additional considerations:

* Affidavit that any federal aid the transportation companies receive would reduce payments from the Somerville Public Schools

* That this contract locks in year 2 contract rates (currently in year 2) rather than moving to year 3 rate, taking some pressure off FY 22 budget

Emily Ackman moved to authorize the Superintendent to sign this contract pending NRT's signing of the

mentioned affidavit. Seconded by Sarah Phillips. Passed Unanimously.

New High School

We have a brand new building; we know there have been issues with building maintenance in the past. How will we keep this building gorgeous? Answer - the city hired a full-time person for the mechanical operations side of the building (separate from DPW). Additionally DPW is working out the plan for the cleaning component - internal custodians and contract services. We will check in with the city about the plan as well as arrange to meet with this new hire at a future Finance and Facilities meeting.

Question- I think as a district we have been at a disadvantage when it comes to our access to buildings - it's hard to be a good client of a service provider (City) when we don't have deep facilities expertise at a district level. Hard to speak to and evaluate maintenance needs when we don't have that expertise in house.

It's an unusual setup. Operationally, there is maintenance - surfaces - and engineering - roofing, windows, air quality, etc. In the City there is DPW (Dept of Public Works) and IAM (Dept of Infrastructure and Asset Management) . We have direct lines to both and it isn't necessarily about phoning in issues. 311 works pretty well to get things addressed. Our challenge is about having a cohesive vision of operations - having some regular mechanism of bringing parties together to have that conversation. That's been happening now because of the pandemic but normally it doesn't. Custodians in the building don't report to principals (though they do what is requested). For example - Heating - is it a DPW issue or is it a IAM issue? Custodians and DPW can't fix the leaking roof, for example. We need to have more operational support. In an ideal world, an Opps person would pull together the two departments (DPW and IAM). We need a comprehensive communications vision. What is the vehicle to communicate issues and maintain buildings? This will be an on-going discussion.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:06 pm.

Submitted by Ilana Krepchin, Chair, Finance and Facilities Subcommittee

Documents used: February 2021 Bill
Rolls
YTD Budget Report 03.04.21

MOTION: There was a motion Ms. Krepchin, seconded by Ms. Normand, to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of the Whole of March 10, 2021.

Both reports were accepted unanimously via roll call vote.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Resolution in Support of Municipal Wifi (Chair Green)

MOTION: in support of Municipal WiFi by Ms. Krepchin and seconded by Ms. Normand (motion passed unanimously by roll call)

Ms. Barish offered a friendly amendment and asked if the intention is to allow remote learning in the intention of the whereas in the motion. Ms. Krepchin accepted the friendly amendment. Chair Green acknowledged the inequities in providing Wifi to all constituents.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

B. School Opening Advisory Group Report Out from January, February and March (Dr. Phillips)

Dr. Phillips read her reports and submitted them to be included as attachments in these minutes.

C. Charter Review Committee (Ms. Pitone)

Ms. Pitone introduced and spoke to the Charter Review Committee and invited member to look further into it.

D. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual

The Following policies are being presented this evening for a first reading as amended:

- File EBCFB: Emergency 1-year Leave of Absence and School Placement Hold
- File JIB: Student Involvement in Decision Making
- File JIE: Pregnant Students

Question: Ms. Krepchin said that there is no reason that they don't think they will be in person in September, no one should worry that they think otherwise.

Ms. Normand commented that nothing is a guarantee, in person, the School Committee in September is not a guarantee. Superintendent Skipper answered that everything she has heard from DESE says that they will not be considering remote learning for next fall, or any conversation about having a hybrid. She was asked if they would extend the emergency waiver and she said yes, she would consider it if there was some imminent emergency, but right now that is not the case. Right now they would not extend it based on what they know from DESE. Ms. Normand stated that with so many variables over the past year she would not like to be put in the position like they were with pandemic again. Also she would like to add to include "at least" one student from the Full Circle community.

Dr. Phillips is concerned with the student involvement in the decision making process, she wants to know precisely what is the purpose of this student committee working with the School Committee? She does not want to see the School Committee micromanaging the principal of the high school. She also is wondering about having a student outreach coordinator and should we put something in the policy that says a coordinator is necessary? Superintendent Skipper added that we are a two district high school, not one as Dr. Phillips suggested, and Full Circle needs to be involved as well. She would like to see the kids taking the lead and doesn't want to see it focused on just the one school. She would like to see someone oversee the committee and likes having a district partnership.

Dr. Phillips asked if any consideration was given to child care as part of the policy? Superintendent Skipper added that the child care center at the high school is not set up for infants. The center starts at approximately 3 years old so in future they may be able to accommodate younger children but for right now the district would be better suited finding vouchers for these young students to help with daycare.

Further discussion will follow next School Committee meeting when these policies are presented for a second reading.

E. Donations (Recommended action: approval)

The Superintendent recommends the acceptance, with gratitude, of the following donations:

Donation	Donor	City, State	Value	Programs Donated to
5,000 Face Masks and 1,000 Units of hand Sanitizer	The TJX Companies Inc.	Somerville, MA	\$7,710	SFLC
78,000 Diapers	Cradle to Crayons	Newton, MA	\$14,820	SFLC - Somerville Diaper Project
8 Hand Constructed Student Desks	Barry Glass	Lexington, MA	\$800	SFLC-ESCS Families

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Krepchin, seconded by Ms. Barish to approve the donations with gratitude. The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Chair Green has represented the city for the last six months on the hiring of the Racial Equity Coordinator and it is his pleasure to let everyone know that a candidate has been chosen and is a fantastic candidate and he is looking forward to presenting this candidate soon.

Ms. Ptione was wondering about the MCAS prep and how much time will be given to our teachers around MCAS prep. She would like to hear more about the preparation in future meetings. Superintendent Skipper answered that MCAS is not a test you can prepare for, usually educators work with students on the format and the standards, they never suggest teachers spend time prepping for the MCAS. It's goal is to give basic information on where students may be.

The assessments given on a daily basis are the ones that show the skills of students and the support they may need. Asst. Superintendent Mazza will speak to that in another meeting.

Superintendent Skipper asked Mr. Mazza to speak about the finalists for the high school principal position. We are in the process of going through a set of forums, first is students, second is parents, third is staff. The grades will then be collected electronically and go to the Superintendent. She will then conduct final interviews leading to a final decision.

Ms. Pitone asked if there was a way for community members or students to find out where the information is to become involved in the process. Mr. Mazza answered that Ms. Morgan sent out an email today to parents and students can find it on X2 the platform they use for information.

XI. CONDOLENCES: Somerville School Committee extends their sincere condolences to Grace Tringale, mother to Joe Tringale, Director of Operations. Eileen Bakey, retired Central Office Secretary, mother to Nancy Bakey, teacher at the Argenziano School

XII. ADJOURNMENT
The meeting adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

Related documents:

Agenda

Submitted by: M. White

