

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

June 21, 2021

7:00 p.m. - GoToWebinar

Members Present: Ms. Krepchin, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Barish, Ms. Normand, Mr. Green, Ms. Pitone and Dr. Phillips.

Members Absent: President McLaughlin and Mayor Curtatone.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Krepchin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with a moment of silence followed by a salute to the flag of the United States of America. She then asked Superintendent Skipper to call the roll, results of which were as follows: **PRESENT** – 7 – Ms. Krepchin, Ms. Pitone, Ms. Barish, Mr. Green, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Normand and Dr. Phillips
ABSENT-2- President McLaughlin and Mayor Curtatone

II. AWARDS AND CITATIONS

Superintendent Skipper announced that there were about 32 retirees altogether this year and that ten to twelve are present today. She thanked them for their service and wished them well on their retirement. The administrators from each school read out the names of the retirees from their schools followed by some congratulatory remarks.

- Obed Morales, ESCS Principal
 - Ann Casavant Special Education Department Chair
- Courtney Gosselin, WHCS Principal
 - Maria Ines Moreira, Paraprofessional
 - Allison Bell, SPED Teacher
- Steve Marshall, Kennedy School Assistant Principal
 - Daisy Monsalve, SPED Paraprofessional
 - Patricia Pacheco, SPED Teacher
 - Anne Berkwitz, SPED Teacher
- John Braga, AFAS Assistant Principal
 - Patricia O'Brien, Grade 2 SEI Teacher
 - Carmen Chagas, Grade 4 SEI Teacher
- Jodi Remington, Somerville High School Associate Principal
 - Paula Keymont, Guidance Counselor

Assistant Superintendent Chad Mazza then read a resolution for Luci Prawdzik, Supervisor of K-12 Art:

Dr. Lucille Prawdzik

WHEREAS, *Dr. Lucille Prawdzik earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Mass College of Liberal Arts, a Master's degree from Notre Dame University, a CAGS from Plymouth State University and in March 2007 a Doctorate of Education from Argosy University and,*

WHEREAS, *Dr. Prawdzik began her career as a Visual Art Educator from 1975 – 2006 in Bedford, NH, Milford, NH and Westford, MA and,*

WHEREAS, *Dr. Prawdzik began her career with the Somerville Public Schools as the District Supervisor of K – 12 Art on September 5, 2006 and,*

WHEREAS, *Dr. Prawdzik served as a member of the MA-DESE Curriculum Committee for Fine arts, Author of DESE MCU titled Cityscapes, developed a Bullying Action Plan at the Elementary Level, presented at National and State conferences and,*

WHEREAS, *Dr. Prawdzik partnered with several Community Partners to create Mural projects at seven schools, displayed yearly Art Exhibits at City Hall and DESE and,*

WHEREAS, *Dr. Prawdzik received the Arts Supervisor of the Year in 2017 from the Massachusetts Art Education Association, The New Hampshire Art Educator of the Year and,*

- WHEREAS,** *Dr. Prawdzik has demonstrated throughout her tenure the highest ethical standards and work ethic in her professional performance, earning the trust and respect of the entire district, and supporting the learning and growth of thousands of Somerville students, therefore be it*
- RESOLVED:** *That the Somerville School Committee, publicly and proudly, expresses its deepest gratitude for her leadership and vision in guiding our city's schools and the safety of our students, and wishes her a long, happy, and healthy retirement with her family; and be it further*
- RESOLVED:** *That this Resolution be recorded in the minutes of tonight's meeting, and that a framed copy be presented to Dr. Lucille Prawdzik.*

Superintendent Skipper mentioned that Sibby LaGambina, Principal of Somerville High School could not be at the meeting because of an emergency at home. She will wait to present her resolution in September so he can be present for the presentation of the citation.

III. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Student Representative Brian Recinos was present and reported on the following:

- Summer School program for recovery and enrichment is being offered at the high school. Registration is located on the Aspen portal
- Students who are taking AP classes next year can view their summer assignments on the Aspen portal as well
- Work permits for summer work for the students can be found at the main office at Somerville High School

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- May 17, 2021
- June 14, 2021

MOTION: to approve the minutes listed above by Ms. Normand second by Dr. Phillips, The motion was approved via roll call vote.

VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

Superintendent Skipper asked Assistant Superintendent Mazza to give an update on summer school. Mr. Mazza reported they are still hiring and are currently hiring floaters for each building to run things smoothly. The team continues to meet on a weekly basis so they can firm up plans for such things as field trips, making sure there are the required number of chaperones. Everyone was told today that while the kids are in the buildings they are required to wear masks since the students under 12 have not been vaccinated. Students and staff need to continue to follow the guidelines. Next week is the final run through and he is looking forward to the amount and variety of programming that are being offered. Mr. Mazza will be back in late August or beginning of September with an update of the numbers and the overall success of the program.

Ms. Barish asked if there would be any Covid testing for the students over the summer? Mr. Mazza said that they will be looking at symptomatic students first and the other students will probably be tested twice over the summer. They will follow the same guidelines over the summer as they have been with contact tracing etc.

B. Personnel Report

Superintendent Skipper read out the remaining names of the retirees who were unable to come to the meeting:

- Marie Santamaria, Senior Clerk Somerville High School, 32 years 9 months
- Maryann Coulombe, Administrative Asst. to Asst. Superintendent Mazza, 17 years
- Maria Costa, MLE Program, Principal Clerk & Administrative Asst. 31 years

Superintendent Skipper also spoke about the moving on ceremonies that took place around the district. She thanked all the school staff, the parents, teachers and PTA's for all their hard work in making these ceremonies very special for all the students.

VII. NEW BUSINESS (Taken out of Order)

A. SHS Building Committee Report (Mr. Raiche and Ms. Pitone)

Mr. Rich Raiche, Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management presented the following:

- June 2021 SHS Project Update
 - Punch List Tracking
 - March 759 items with a Suffolk /contractor action
 - April 378 items with a Suffolk /contractor action
 - May 391 items with a Suffolk /contractor action
 - June 436 items with a Suffolk /Contractor action
 - Notes:
 - Summer punch list push starting 6/21 following completion of academic year
 - All punch list activities with the school coordinated with SHS/DPW
 - Some worklist items are more complicated than others/ trying to be the least impactful as possible
 - Planting and landscaping has started
 - Phase 2A, auditorium and cosmetology wing
 - Exterior windows & masonry substantially complete/storefront doors being installed.
 - Restoration of the original wing
 - Granite cladding of exterior stairs nearing completion
 - Auditorium/Stadium seating framing ongoing, flooring repairs complete
 - Cosmetology & the media lab/paint/ceiling grid complete. Finishes to follow
 - Suffolk is reporting a certificate of occupancy for Phase 2/Mr. Raiche will not give his word that he believes that date. He thinks Cosmetology will be ready but not the auditorium
 - Phase 3-playing field and back entrance to the auditorium/ unforeseen asbestos containing material being removed. This is very slow work almost shovel by shovel. He is unsure of how this will affect the budget.
 - Asbestos found outside the side entrance to City Hall (ACM Soils Removal) (West)
 - Covid-19 Impacts are no positive cases since April with quarantining and contact tracing being done

Ms. Pitone added that she is in agreement with Mr. Raiche about the skepticism of the completion date. She is concerned about the field house, for those who are not aware; there is a compatibility issue between the flooring that was chosen and the design and weight of the bleachers. She is still struggling with the accountability around that. They brought in a third party and were told that they were installed correctly but when they were rolling them out to expand them, there were several instances where they damaged the floor. So somehow, the weight and the rate of movement of the bleachers is too much for the floor to handle. This is one of the reasons the space has not been used. In the interim, they are bringing in pieces of linoleum to cover the floor from damage. The flooring manufacturer has repaired the damage but there does not seem to be a long-term solution to this problem. There has to be some resolution to whether the city or the contractor is responsible for what the cost of repair or replacement may be.

Dr. Ackman asked what the school capacity is. Both the Superintendent and Mr. Raiche said 1450.

B. Approval of Non- Union Administrative Contract

Superintendent Skipper reported that the district is looking to hire a consultant to work with herself, Joe Tringale, Director of Operations and the Human Resources Department to look at the non-union group of employees, which is about 350 employees. They want to figure out how to give different schedules to nonunion staff. This will make future increases that much easier and more transparent to the employees. This year as well as other years, it has looked at as a 3% increase for the large percentage of the unit. That includes food service employees, department heads, directors, liaisons, SFLC and cabinet level employees. In general, that is the standard each year. The exception to that would be if a job description was rewritten or if there was some kind of an organizational review that changed job descriptions. In that case, the district would get a list of the jobs and the duties, get comparative salaries, and make sure we are competitive with external salaries. In this year's case, there were some minor changes in a handful of positions and these are generally absorbed in terms of the dollars into the 3%. Anything beyond that is through the efficiency dollars around salaries. One case in particular is with principals; they try to make sure there is not a compression issue around principals and vice principals which is a typical one to look at. Another is a job that is renewed when a contract is up. When they looked, they found that in some cases the job description was rewritten entirely with additional responsibilities that warranted the increase. Right now, it stands around \$59,000 and that will be absorbed within the organization; it will not touch the \$75,000 that Laura Pitone put into the budget process as a request; that will be used and held on to for the consultant to come in and look at whether we deem some positions to need some retrofitting. That is the basic non-union discussion and it is the committee's practice to usually vote for that general increase across the non-union employees.

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Dr. Phillips, to approve the proposed raises of a 3% increase for non-union employees.

The motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

Superintendent Skipper then introduced Christine Trevisone, Director of Special Education, and said Christine has such a strong student and parent centered vision in the special education department. One of the most difficult challenges she faced when she came to Somerville was that parents wanted their students to remain in Somerville, we did not have the special education programs, and they were forced to go out of district for the services. We originally had about 120 students placed in outside facilities compared to 60 students now being educated outside of Somerville. There has been a lot of deliberate programming that Christine has led her team to develop. Always with students and families in mind and making sure they are always included. The Superintendent would like to offer a new contract for the next three years. Christine also works very closely with the nurses whether it is administering medication or just in terms of servicing our students. The nurses will be coming over to SPS as of July 1st and the lead nurse will report to Christine, which is part of the new contract.

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Normand, seconded by Dr. Ackman to approve a 3-year contract for the Director of Special Education, Nursing and Health Services, Christine Trevisone.

The motion was approved via roll call vote.

C. ACCEPTANCE OF FY 2021 GRANT FUNDS (Recommended action: approval)

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Dr. Ackman to accept all federal entitlement and continuation grants and all state continuation grants awarded to the Somerville Public Schools listed below:

State Grants

DESE FC527-525 Summer Development Grant – \$25,000 (NW/FC)

City Grant

Job Trust Grant – SCALE \$16,200.00

Private Grant

Cummings Foundation Supplemental Grant - \$5,000.00

D. 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 2021-2022 school year, as in previous years.

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Phillips, seconded by Ms. Barish to participate in the National School Lunch & Breakfast program.

The motion was approved via roll call vote.

E. Student Accident Insurance - (Recommended Action: Receive and place on file)

The Superintendent advising that the contract for Student Accident Insurance for the 2021-2022 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

F. Authorization for Summer Months – (Recommended Action: Approval)

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Ms. Barish 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.

G. Acceptance of FY2022 Grant Funds

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Ms. Normand, to accept all federal entitlement and continuation grants and all state continuation grants awarded to the Somerville Public Schools during FY22 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.

H. Donations (Recommended action: Approval)

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

Donation	Donor	City, State	Valu	Programs Donated to
Saxophone W/Mouthpiece and case Circa 1940's	John Currier	Somerville, MA	\$250	Somerville Public Schools Band Program

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Phillips, seconded by Ms. Barish, to accept all donations with gratitude. The motion was approved via roll call vote.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual

The Following policies were presented for a second reading:

- **File EFD: Wellness Policy**

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Dr. Phillips to approve the Wellness Policy as presented at the last meeting.

The motion was approved via roll call vote.

- **File BEDG: Minutes**

MOTION: There was a motion by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Ms. Normand to approve File BEDG: Minutes.

The motion was approved via roll call vote.

IX. REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEES

A. School Committee Meeting for Rules Management: June 10, 2021 (Ms. Barish)

Report of Rules Management Subcommittee

June 10, 2021

Submitted by Ellenor Barish

The Rules Management Subcommittee met virtually on Thursday, June 10, 2021. Members present were Ellenor Barish, Emily Ackman, and Ilana Krepchin. Superintendent Mary Skipper, Director of Student Services Liz Doncaster, and District Wellness Coordinator Caitlin Kelly were also present. There were two audience members.

Ms. Barish called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

There were five items on the agenda.

1. Approve minutes from May meeting

Emily Ackman made a motion to approve minutes from the May Rules Subcommittee meeting. Ilana Krepchin seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Memorandum of Understanding between Somerville Public Schools and Somerville Police Department was taken out of order.

Ellenor Barish stated that her intention at this meeting is to talk about the process - how the work will be accomplished and resources needed.

Work at the state level on a new standard MOU is ongoing. Internally, Liz Doncaster is doing some research. The

Superintendent will meet with Advancing Equity Task Force members next week to determine what work might happen over the summer and what will need to wait until fall.

Ellenor shared a list of possible resources sent by Sarah Phillips.

The Superintendent suggested that we should also get an update from the city about their policing reform work and expressed interest in collaborating with similar districts on this work.

District staff will work on a project plan over the summer.

3. **BEDG Meeting Minutes** was taken out of order.

Laura Pitone did some research on meeting minutes for clarity around what should be included in minutes and submitted the MASC reference policy for our consideration. An important difference from our current policy is that it calls for a summary of each subject.

Emily Ackman moved to approve the proposed policy with all blue changes and with the second yellow section removed. (See documents used.) Seconded by Ilana Krepchin. Passed unanimously.

4. **Teen Empowerment Update**

Ellenor Barish had a conversation with Sean Post after the last Rules meeting and has a better understanding of the structure of Teen Empowerment, specifically noting that the leaders who have been working on proposed policy changes might not be participating in the summer or fall. The Superintendent has not met with Teen Empowerment again but has reviewed the proposals with our attorney. Some portions can't be changed based on state law. Other proposed changes are already district practice and need to be codified.

Liz Doncaster supports revisiting the proposed changes around suspension particularly at the high school level and with respect to the handbook. She clarified that students can bring anyone they want to suspension hearings. The Superintendent suggested a more formal arrangement to ensure that every student will have support. This is something to discuss with the Deans and might be an expansion of the mediation program. Emily Ackman made the distinction between the fairness of the policy and student perception of the process which don't seem to be aligned. The superintendent recommended a focus group over the summer.

5. **Proposed Revisions to File EFD - Wellness Policy** was taken up.

The first change expands the definition of wellness/health. Specifics about lunch and recess were moved to the Procedures section with more general guidelines incorporated into existing guiding principles.

There was a discussion about whether "sufficient time" is too vague with respect to lunch and recess. Catilin Kelly will look for more specific language in the Procedures and let us know.

Emily Ackman moved to pass the revisions out of the subcommittee with the correction of a typo. Ilana Krepchin seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Adjourned at 3:57

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Barish, seconded by Dr. Ackman to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Rules Management of June 10, 2021.

The meeting was approved via roll call vote.

B. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of the Whole: June 16, 2021 (Ms. Krepchin)

Finance and Facilities Subcommittee of the May 26, 2021

Via Remote Participation

Members Present: Ilana Krepchin, Carrie Normand and Sarah Phillips,

Also in Attendance: Ellenor Barish, Superintendent Mary Skipper and Director of Finance Fran Gorski.

Audience Members: There was 1 audience member

Ilana Krepchin called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm

There were 2 items on the agenda

May Bill Rolls

Police Detail at the high school since reopening - this has been about traffic, on-going construction and the fact that the Winter Hill School (with young students) is housed there. Hopefully we won't need this in the Fall.

A large amount of Special Education expenditures related to Sunbelt - tele therapy and direct services Sept-Spring
Carrie Normand moved to approve the bill rolls, Sarah Phillips seconded. Passed unanimously

Revenue/Expenditure

A lot of departments have additional surplus by the nature of remote learning/instruction Additional grant revenues have been helpful for PPE, Chromebooks, etc. that we didn't purchase from general funds

We will end the year in surplus. We will prepay some out of district tuition for next year which will have us in a good position for the SpEd budget

We are in a strong fiscal standpoint for the next few fiscal years, but it will be more challenging as federal dollars and additional state grant money goes away.

8.3 million in ESSER 3 - we will apply those funds through 09/30/24

We are using a team effort determining how these funds will be used - learning loss, Social emotional, etc.

We will be giving regular reports to the School Committee on additional dollars - what, why and how money is being spent.

Going into summer our goal is to get as much programming going as possible.

Is there a way to share the total amounts in grants? That's another thing the district was working on pre-pandemic. We can do regular grant updates - state, federal, private, etc. This will become more important as we tackle weighted student formula. How do we factor in all the funds? How do we report it? It will be helpful to understand when various grants end as well.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:34 pm.

Submitted by Ilana Krepchin, Chair, Finance and Facilities Subcommittee

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Krepchin, seconded by Ms. Normand, to accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of the Whole of June 16, 2021.

MOTION: There was a motion by Ms. Krepchin seconded by Dr. Ackman to approve the May bill rolls.

Both motions were approved via roll call vote.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Normand took the time to thank all the teachers and administrators for getting us through this school year with the pandemic. Also, to thank the Athletics department for bringing back sports for the kids, it has made a huge impact on their social emotional needs.

Ms. Pitone added that she and Superintendent Skipper attended a Meeting of Master Planning and the agenda was about the new high school building and how to best utilize the city buildings. They met today and a few options were put forward. One was to have Scale next to the high school to allow them the ability to use the CTE part of the building and be near public transportation. They will look more into what the district is looking for, kind of putting together a cluster of different departments within the city together to work more cohesively. Superintendent Skipper added that they were surprised, and it is a very complex matter, but there were only a few asks on the district side and one was the adjacency of SCALE to the high school for a number of reasons. One was transportation opening up and having the green line there since the SCALE students are adults and are usually coming back and forth from work. But also for younger SCALE students to have the ability for more permeability between the GOAL Program or students who want to go on to HiSet or even to get their high school diploma through SCALE. We even see with Full Circle/Next Wave even just having the building there and having the use of the building makes a big difference in terms of students openness versus at the Edgerly, which can tend to be isolating. Director Cook and Superintendent Skipper have had a lot of conversations about job readiness and the ability to use and partner with the CTE program and to use these unbelievable facilities at the high school. There are a number of good reasons why SCALE should be up at the high school and not at the Edgerly. Edgerly will leave us with no swing space, there definitely needs to be more conversations around this issue.

Ms. Pitone explained what swing space is and it is a space that could be used for a variety of reasons but also as classroom space. In the event that we have classrooms that have emergencies, these spaces are available. Ms. Barish asked for clarification of Ms. Pitone's comment, the Master Planning meeting did not present SCALE to be located at the high school and did not present any other alternatives.

Chair Green stated that this Thursday from 3:30-6:00 pm there would be a walk- in COVID-19 Vaccine clinic at the Mystic Learning Center. He also added that he would be having office hours this Thursday from 5:30-7:30 with Representative Barber.

XI. CONDOLENCES

Superintendent Skipper and the School Committee expressed their sincere condolences to the family of: **Marsha Monahan Malone**, mother of Gianna Malone Sardella, 2nd Grade teacher at the Argenziano School.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by: C. White