

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Monday, October 2, 2017 – Regular Meeting

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

Members present: Ms. Palmer, Mr. Roix, Ms. O'Sullivan, Ms. Normand, Alderman White, Mr. Green and Ms. Pitone.

Members absent: Mayor Curtatone, Mr. Futrell

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Pitone called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. with a moment of silence and asked that the victims and survivors of the horrendous attack in Las Vegas be remembered this evening. The moment of silence was followed by a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

Ms. Pitone asked the Superintendent to call the roll, results of which were as follows: PRESENT – 7 – Palmer, Roix, O'Sullivan, Normand, White, Green and Pitone and ABSENT – 2 – Curtatone and Futrell.

II. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Student Representative Emily Nash was present, but did not provide a report this evening. She attended to observe and will have a report prepared for our next meeting.

III. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. Educational Programs & Instruction Subcommittee Meeting: Sept. 26 (Ms. Normand)

Members present: Carrie Normand, Paula O'Sullivan, and Lee Palmer

Other School Committee members present: Andre Greene and Laura Pitone

Also in attendance: Assistant Superintendent Almi Abeyta, Vince McKay, Interim SHS Headmaster Sebastian LaGambina, Associate Headmaster/Director of Career and Technical Education Leo DeSimone,

Audience Members: Two

Ms. Normand called the meeting to order at 6:37 pm.

There were two items on the agenda:

1) Approval of June 21, 2017 Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee Minutes

Carrie Normand moved to approve the minutes, Paula O'Sullivan seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

2) Somerville High School Education Program

Mr. LaGambina and Mr. DeSimone gave a detailed presentation on the 21st Century Somerville High School Education Plan, Summer 2017 Pre-construction Plan, and Construction Phasing over the course of the entire building project.

Mr. LaGambina reported that the SHS 21st Century Education Plan is rooted in adjacencies of space that encourage interdisciplinary and project-based learning, classrooms of proper size and appointments that promote flexible and changing use of the rooms, interweaving of some CTV programs with academic teaching spaces, and collaboration between educators and students. Members of the SHS Building Committee have done extensive research including site visits to recently built high schools in Quincy, Winchester, and Essex. Examples of designing the building to support interdisciplinary learning include locating the Performing Arts and Carpentry close to each other so they can collaborate more readily on set design and construction for SHS plays or locating math, science, and CTE near each to better meet the needs of FIRST Robotics, and many other examples.

Integrating of Academic and Student Support Services is a key component of the Education Plan and informed the building design. Currently there are four Administrative Houses, Guidance and College & Career Readiness, Welcome Center, and Health Center are spread throughout the building making it difficult for students and families to access services and for staff to collaborate. The Education Program calls for consolidating student services in one suite to facilitate interdisciplinary work, professional collaboration, and communication between administrative and student support staff, teachers, students, and families.

The listing of items are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair to be discussed at the meeting. Not all items may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Mr. DeSimone reported that the summer 2017 Preconstruction work has already begun. This work includes site work in front of SHS for the 18 modular classrooms, constructing classrooms in the library mezzanine, Gallery 81, weight room, auditorium, and cafeteria.

Somerville's dense urban setting requires careful planning of different construction phases to minimize the impact on learning and the community. Mr. DeSimone presented the current fourteen planned phases of construction with an anticipated completion date of July 21, 2021. Given the ever changing nature of large construction projects, the public is encouraged to go to the new SHS Building Project website at

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Ms. O'Sullivan to approve the report of the Chair of the Educational Program and Instructions Subcommittee meeting of September 26, 2017. The motion was approved via voice vote.

IV. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. District Report

Mrs. Skipper provided her District Report, as follows:

Before I provide a few district updates, I want to take a moment to talk about what it means to be an educator in this day and age. We live in an incredibly complex era. Every day, we are impacted by news – local and from around the world – of tragedies and events that are shaping our world and our communities. Every day, we are faced with trying to determine how best to guide, support, teach, empower, and care for our students, staff members, and families, given the context of what is happening in the world around us. We always come back to the foundation of our work – our responsibilities and values as educators and as a teaching and learning community.

Teaching and learning is relational, and at no time is that more evident than when faced with a challenge, a conflict, disturbing news, or an unknown. This has become even more apparent this week as we lost a grade 5 student to illness and it is close to the time that a student at AFA passed away last year. Teachers and staff have come together to support students, families and each other. I am proud of this community and ask that you keep them in your thoughts. In the last month, there has been no dearth of news of tragedies. Some have more directly impacted our community than others, but all have heightened our awareness of the roles we play as educators and community members in responding to these events.

I continue to be amazed how our community comes together to ensure that the very values that drive our work are never compromised, particularly in times of great need. Our students, teachers, administrators, School Committee members, staff members, partners, families, and friends are always ready and eager to step up to the plate.

I assure you that we will continue to appreciate each day for the tremendous opportunity it offers us to teach, learn from, and help inspire the young people we serve, no matter what the lesson may be. We are grateful for your support and partnership in this work.

District Highlights:

- One of the many long-time partners in our District is the **Medford-Malden Elks**. As they have done for several years now, the Medford-Malden Elks has donated dictionaries for every third grade student in our district. Those dictionaries will be distributed to schools this week. We're very grateful for the Elks' support, and excited to share this wonderful resource with our students.
- The Somerville Family Learning Collaborative invites families new to Somerville to join them on Wednesday, October 4th, from 8:30-10:30am at the Capuano Early Childhood Center for a **Welcome to School workshop** for new families. Attendees will share successes and challenges in creating a supportive home environment, and learn how to develop a strong home-school connection.
- The annual Farm to School **Corn Shucking** event is this Thursday, October 5th. Students and volunteers will be shucking corn at all of our elementary schools starting at 7:30 on Thursday morning. Students at every school in the district will then enjoy the locally-sourced corn as part of their school lunch. A special thanks to our Food & Nutrition Services staff and Farm to School Director for coordinating this event.
- Quick reminder that all schools and district offices will be closed on Monday, October 9th, in observance of **Columbus Day**.

Somerville High School Headmaster Search Update

Mrs. Skipper announced that we have a special feature this evening – an overview of the Somerville High School Headmaster hiring process. Dr. Abeyta is overseeing the process. Mr. LaGambina is doing an

amazing job as interim, along with Mr. DeSimone as Associate Headmaster. Tonight we have representatives from the Search Firm that has been contracted to assist us with this hire. Mr. Ray Shurtleff and Ms. Mary Aicardi, consultants hired to oversee the hiring process for the Headmaster of Somerville High School, presented information relative to their professional backgrounds as well as a report (slides of presentation at end of these minutes) on the planned process which included a month by month overview of the timeline.

Following the presentation, discussion ensued which included the following:

- How will members of the screening/interview committee be selected?
- Concerns that student groups are representative of all students, not just student leaders
- How will the new Headmaster be supported through the construction of the new building?
- What efforts will be made to make sure the committee represents the entire community (diverse)?
- Have plans been put into place for interpretation and translation?

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual

The following policies being presented this evening for second reading, as amended:

- File BEDH: Public Participation at School Committee Meetings
- File BEDB-E: Agenda Format

Mr. Green announced that, back in June, Ms. Normand asked that the topic of public comment be discussed at Rules. Research was done over the summer that led to a draft being discussed in Rules on September 11 where time limits, guidance, etc. were reviewed. Further edits were done in Rules and the policy being presented this evening reflects the work done by the Committee.

MOTION: Mr. Green made a motion, seconded by Ms. Palmer, to approve File BEDH: Public Participation at School Committee Meetings, as amended, for inclusion in the Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual.

Discussion ensued which included the following discourse and motions:

Is this a mechanism to increase participation or will the same people just speak week after week? Might need possible tweaking in the future.

MOTION: Ms. Palmer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Normand, to amend paragraph 6 by removing the words, "longer than three (3) minutes" from the sentence.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roix, to add the following language to paragraph 5, "Individuals may address topics on the agenda or items within the School Committee's scope of responsibility."

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Ms. Palmer, to add the following language to paragraph 4, "Any committee member may direct questions through the Chair in order to clarify speakers' comments."

After discussion by members, the motion was withdrawn by the maker and seconder.

Discussion took place regarding the amendment of paragraph number 9 with respect to public comment at subcommittee meetings. There were many iterations discussed and, after discussion, the following motion was moved:

MOTION: Alderman White made a motion, seconded by Mr. Green, to amend paragraph number 9, as follows, "Public Comment, as defined herein, shall not take place at subcommittee meetings or at public retreats of the School Committee, where no matter being discussed may be finally considered, in that no votes may be taken, however, public participation at subcommittees may be entertained at the discretion of the Chair."

The motion was approved via voice vote.

Discussion took place relative to "spelling out" the process and the development of a blurb to provide instructions to the public which could be left at the podium for speakers to view.

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Ms. O'Sullivan, to add the following language, "Speakers will print their names, address, and identify the item on which they wish to comment on the designated Public Comment sign-up list. The Chair will verbally confirm the sign-up list. When

recognized by the Chair, speakers will identify themselves by name and address. NO one may speak more than once during a single public comment session without permission of the Chair."

After discussion regarding privacy rights, etc., Ms. Normand and Ms. O'Sullivan agreed to withdraw their motion and this topic will be sent back to Rules where that Committee will develop a procedural document to accompany the policy.

MOTION: Mr. Green made a motion, seconded by Ms. Palmer, to add the following language as subsection 10, "Procedures will be periodically established and reviewed they the School Committee. The motion was approved via voice vote.

MOTION: Ms. Palmer made a motion, seconded by Alderman White, to approve the policy, as amended. The motion was approved via voice vote

MOTION: Mr. Green made a motion, seconded by Ms. Palmer, to approve File BEDB-E: Agenda Format, as amended, for inclusion in the Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual. The motion was approved via voice vote.

Mr. Green explained that this policy rearranges the agenda so that the Superintendent's District Report is before the subcommittee reports.

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Ms. O'Sullivan, to remove #10 – Expanded Public Comment from the agenda. The motion was approved via voice vote.

Alderman White questioned why Policy BEDB was included in the packet if it was not an agenda item. Should it be placed on file? Ms. Palmer and Ms. Pitone agreed that the policy should be reviewed and discussed in Rules and reported back at a future meeting.

Send back to Rules:

The creation of more specific procedure for public comment were sent back to rules. Below are items of interest discussed at the meeting and to consider for the Public Comment procedure. Note: there was some dialogue regarding writing or stating addresses - that it should not be required but consider requesting it.

- Speakers will print their names, address, and identify the item on which they wish to comment on the designated Public Comment sign-up list. The Chair will verbally confirm the sign-up list. When recognized by the Chair, speakers will identify themselves by name and address. No one may speak more than one during a single public comment session without permission of the Chair.

- Public Comment is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between citizens and the Committee. It is a citizen's opportunity to express his/her opinion on issues of School Committee business. The Committee and/or administrator's may not be prepared to directly respond to citizen questions posed in this forum but the Chair may request that citizens put the question in writing to the appropriate person or body so that the matter is given the proper consideration.

Development of "blurbs" for the website and to leave at the podium with information for speakers to reference that spells out the "rules".

* In the future, Chair was asked to add to item 5 of the policy a more specific reference to the "chain of command", (there is consideration of an update or new policy to document this -- if that comes to fruition that should be referenced.)

NEW BUSINESS

A. Report on Community Meeting, hosted by Ms. Palmer, re Recess and Food

Ms. Palmer reported on the recent Community Meeting she hosted. Full notes from this meeting have been included in the packet. This was a two-hour, high energy meeting. There were 25 attendees including parents, students and employees from our Food Service Department. A brainstorming session of likes/dislikes took place. Ms. Palmer enjoyed hosting, has received positive feedback from attendees and encourages more, similar meetings – possibly curriculum-related. Ms. Palmer would be happy to host future meetings. She thanked Ms. Pitone and Mr. Green for attending this positive event.

Ms. Pitone thanked Ms. Palmer for hosting and found the meeting to be interesting. She would like the recess topic referred to Ed Programs for further discussion and has made that request to Ms. Normand, as Chair of that Committee.

The food issue will be referred to the Wellness Committee, of which Ms. Palmer is now a representative.

B. Report on Wellness Committee Meeting (Ms. Palmer)

Ms. Palmer reported on her first-time attendance at a Wellness Committee meeting. The meeting was held on September 26 and was a high-energy, one-hour meeting. There were four items on the agenda, but not all we discussed due to time constraints.

Topics discussed included finding funding for programs after the end of the Pep Grant, Farm to School, Special Education field trips, and the Wellness Policy.

Ms. Palmer reported that the Wellness Policy will be discussed by the Rules Management Subcommittee soon and they will be taking a deeper dive into the policy later this year.

The Wellness Committee meets every other month for 60 minutes during the day.

Ms. Palmer is looking to expand input and access to this committee.

Ms. Pitone asked if there was parent representation.

The next meeting will be on November 28 at 1:00 p.m. at the Cummings School. All meeting dates have been set and the public is welcome to attend.

C. Clarendon Tenants' Group request for support (Ms. Normand)

Ms. Normand reported on her attendance at a meeting of the Clarendon Tenants' Group. Many of the tenants have expressed concern regarding being displaced during the renovation process and have asked if the School Committee would provide a letter of support. Ms. Normand and Mrs. Skipper will draft a letter and bring back to a future School Committee meeting. The stability of the enrollment at the West Somerville Neighborhood School is also part of the discussion.

D. MASC Conference Delegate and resolutions - informational

Ms. Pitone announced that, at next week's meeting, members will elect a delegate and an alternate delegate to represent the School Committee to vote on this year's resolutions. Next week, members will also decide how to guide the voting delegate relative to each resolution.

E. Acceptance of Donations (recommended action: approval)

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

Donation	Donor	City, State	Value	Program donated to
Dictionaries	Medford/Malden Lodge of Elks	Medford, MA	\$800	All 3 rd grade students
Monetary	Jennifer Capuano	Somerville, MA	\$200	To purchase loaner instruments
Cornet, King Alto Sax, Clarinet & Trumpet	Gina Long	Somerville, MA	\$350 total	Music Department
Yamaha Trumpet	Adrian Bauer	Cambridge, MA	\$1,000	Music Department
Electric Keyboard	Franz Hover	Somerville, MA	\$600	SHS Band

MOTION: Mr. Green made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roix, to accept the donations, with gratitude. The motion was approved via voice vote.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF NEW BUSINESS**Coordinated Office Hours**

Ms. Pitone reported that Mr. Green has volunteered to coordinate office hours for the week of November 13. It is recommended that any departing School Committee members host these meetings with the newly elected members. Further discussion will take place offline.

Budget Timeline

Ms. Green would like to discuss the creation of the Budget Timeline as Policy DBC states that this timeline should be developed by October 15th and that was not the case last year.

Mrs. Skipper recommended this be discussed at Finance and Facilities and suggested asking Mr. Futrell, as Chair to add to a future agenda.

VI. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**Ms. Normand**

1. The Special Education Parent Advisory Committee will provide a District Update on Monday, October 23, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. on the Somerville High School Library.

Mr. Green

1. Had the pleasure of joining 75 students and staff from the East Somerville Community School, Next Wave/Full Circle and Somerville High School, along with District administrators at the Take the Lead event at Fenway Park on September 28.

2. Also attended the One Somerville meeting on the afternoon of that same day and joined approximately 30 educators working together to address inclusion and the safety and well-being of all students and families.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjourning, Mr. Green expressed the School Committees sympathy to the family of Winter Hill Community Innovation School grade five student Blondjy Bonnet, who passed away last weekend following an illness.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:39 p.m. via voice vote.

Related documents:

Agenda

SHS Headmaster Search presentation

Two (2) policies for second reading and approval

Notes from Ms. Palmer's Community Meeting

Information on the MASC resolutions and delegate selection

Five (5) donation acceptance forms

Somerville Public Schools High School Headmaster Search School Committee Presentation

Ray Shurtleff and Mary Aicardi

October 2, 2017



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Search Timeline

October

Focus Groups:

HS Students: 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm	October 18
HS Staff: 2:45 pm – 3:45 pm (4 Groups)	October 18
Community/Parents: 6:30 - 7:30 pm	October 19
Community/Parents: 6:30 - 7:30 pm	October 23

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Search Timeline

November

Vision Statement Draft Prepared	November 3
Vision Statement/Job Description/Vacancy Notices Posted/Distributed	November 13
Appointment of Screening Committee	November 13
Orientation Meeting – Screening Committee	November 27

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Search Timeline

January

Vacancy Application Deadline	January 5
Applications FedExed to Screening Committee	January 11
Initial Meetings of Screening Committee	January 16-18
Initial Interviews	January 29 – February 1

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Search Timeline

February

Screening Committee Identifies Candidates to be Forwarded to Superintendent	February 1
Reference Checking Process Completed	February 6
Initial Interviews with Superintendent	February 7 - 14
Finalists Identified by Superintendent	February 14
Community Forums with Finalists	February 26 - March 1

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Search Timeline

March

Site Visits for Finalists	March 5 - 8
Decision by Superintendent	March 15

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Questions?

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