

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Monday, December 18, 2017 – Regular Meeting

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

Members present: Mayor Curtatone, Mr. Futrell, Ms. Palmer, Mr. Roix, Ms. O'Sullivan (7:04 p.m.), Ms. Normand, Alderman White, Mr. Green and Ms. Pitone.

Members absent:

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Pitone called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. with a moment of silence a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

Ms. Pitone asked the Assistant Superintendent to call the roll, results of which were as follows: PRESENT – 9 – Curtatone, Futrell, Palmer, Roix, O'Sullivan, Normand, White, Green and Pitone and ABSENT – 0 –.

Mrs. Skipper is not in attendance due to a family member's illness.

Ms. Pitone took a few minutes to mention that this is the first meeting at which there will be opportunity for public comment and read a synopsis of the regulations and procedures.

II. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

- PSAT scores are back and, overall, everyone seems pleased with the results.
- Winter sports are in full swing.

III. AWARDS AND CITATIONS

Steve Roix

Ms. Normand stepped to the podium and asked Mr. Roix to join her. Ms. Normand presented a citation (text at end of these minutes) and plaque to Mr. Roix and thanked him for his wonderful years of service to the School Committee and the community.

Mr. Roix, who wore his best Homer Simpson tie, reflected on becoming an "accidental School Committee member" upon Ms. Bastardi's departure from the Committee and remarked that he enjoyed his time on the Committee as well as the collegiality with the other members of the Committee.

Alderman William A. White, Jr.

Mr. Green stepped to the podium and invited Alderman White to join him. Mr. Green thanked Alderman White for his five years of service to the School Committee and appreciates him being an active member on the Committee. His gift of knowing the past, while looking forward to the future, is invaluable. Mr. Green expressed that he has learned more during 10-minute car rides with Alderman White than in most other situations. Alderman White is dazzlingly intelligent and we are all richer for his presence.

Alderman White shared that he has enjoyed his service over the past five years and is pleased with the positive changes happening. He has served with 14 School Committee members and two Superintendents and our emphasis on the whole child and other initiatives has led us to continue to be the top performing urban district. He is proud to have been part of the selection process for a new Superintendent, but saddened by the passing of Latin from our curriculum.

Laura Pitone

Mr. Green assumed the Chair so that Ms. Pitone could join Ms. Normand at the podium. Ms. Normand thanked Ms. Pitone for her service as Chair of the School Committee for 2017. Ms. Pitone is a systems thinker and has worked hard in public and behind the scenes to make things better. Her focus has been to make information more accessible, to increase student opportunities, to consider the physical and emotional well-being of our students and staff. Thank you for your leaderships and boundless energy, Laura!

Ms. Pitone thanked members for the opportunity to serve and expressed her gratitude to be in a district where there are not battles over funds, but, instead, a Mayor and City delegation who make students a priority.

Following the presentations members shared their thoughts and thanks to the departing members and to Ms. Pitone, who was the 2017 Chair, for all of their good work and accomplishments, etc.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- December 4, 2017 Regular Meeting

MOTION: Mr. Green made a motion, seconded by Ms. Normand, to approve the minutes. The motion was approved via voice vote.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at tonight's meeting.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. DISTRICT REPORT

- 2018-2019 School Calendar

Members were provided with a first look at next year's calendar. Mr. Roix pointed out some necessary editorial changes and Ms. O'Sullivan asked about the start date continuing to be before Labor Day. Calendar will come back for deliberation and approval at a future meeting.

1. New Director of Continuing Education – SCALE

Thank you to Betty Stone who served as our interim SCALE Director until we were able to complete the hiring process for a new Director. Ms. Stone's 32 years of experience allowed SCALE to continue the day-to-day operation of the program without issue. Lisa Cook brings to the Somerville Public School system over 15 years of experience garnered in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. Lisa's diverse management portfolio includes staff training, workforce development, program management, and community engagement projects.

Prior to joining Somerville Public Schools, Lisa served as the Director of Melnea Cass Complex and Roxbury Heritage Park for the Department of Conservation and Recreation. In this role, Lisa oversaw community engagement campaigns that cultivated over 5,000 members and approximately 40 annual partnership agreements serving students, elders and families. Lisa most recently served as an operational leader within YouthBuild USA where she oversaw compliance, construction and capacity building trainings for grantees of the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Trainings Division. Equipped with a range of management experience, Lisa is most proud of her ability to recruit, engage and manage strategic partnerships that increase access to quality programming for diverse populations. Lisa earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Northeastern University and a Masters of Arts degree in Marketing Communications & Advertising from Emerson College.

2. Citizen Schools WOW Showcase at East Somerville Community School (ESCS)

Citizen Schools hosted their first WOW Showcase at ESCS on Wednesday, December 13, 2017. Every semester Citizen Schools students participate in 10-week apprenticeships taught by Citizen Teachers. Students are transformed into website designers, lawyers, financial advisers, and much more, learning how their current academics apply to a future pathway. Citizen Schools design curriculum to connect academic and 21st century standards to careers and real life. Each semester culminates in a WOW! event where students teach and share what they learned. Many parents and teachers came to the WOW! and enjoyed learning about the various projects.

3. Concerts: The SHS Choir and Jazz Band have been touring schools. Their performances have been outstanding. El Sistema performed on Tuesday, December 12th at East. And, our all city middle school concert was held on Thursday, December 14th at SHS. All have been impressive and demonstrate the talent of our music teachers and students.

We wish everyone happy holidays!

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

B. Finance and Facilities Subcommittee: November 15, 2017 (Mr. Futrell)

The Finance and Facilities subcommittee met on Wednesday, November 15 at 8 Bonair Street. Attending were Mr. Futrell, Mr. Roix, and Mr. Green. The meeting began at 6:35pm.

In addition to normal topics of the expenditure report, bill rolls, and facilities updates, we also had a report out from Community Schools, the first time that anyone could remember Community Schools presenting at a Finance & Facilities meeting.

During our review of the expenditure report, we discussed the past practice of encumbrances and how they ebb and flow throughout the year. Specifically, there are several budget lines where a high level of funds are encumbered at the outset of the year and then the district tracks against that. The Finance Department continues working with budget owners to align accounting and encumbrances closer to real time expenditures so that district leadership, including this school committee, has a real-time picture of the district.

Additionally, we talked about the College and Career Readiness budget which is over by nearly \$4000 due to an error, and we talked about the facilities budget at 102% of annual budget this early in the year. The district explained that \$250k from the facilities budget goes to our telecom services with the city, and \$189k covers the lease for the Tufts building, and that the district does not expect this budget line to continue upward. We reviewed and unanimously approved the Bill Rolls, moved by Mr. Green and seconded by Mr. Roix.

There wasn't a large update on facilities in the November meeting, except that we should expect to address playgrounds again in January.

Lastly, Jennie and Rosanna generously presented on Community Schools at my request on behalf of the subcommittee. Funds for Community Schools have always been treated somewhat differently, and with a different amount of accountability and detail reported to the School Committee, because it is self-funded. That said, members of the subcommittee wanted to better understand how the programs were supported in order to ensure that our processes at Community Schools met our larger goals of equity and inclusion, as well as programmatic support for other budget and district goals. Though this was the first time Community Schools presented to this subcommittee, they have increased their partnership and work with the district significantly over the last year.

An example of that increased partnership is an increased effort to ensure that observations of children in community schools is recorded and shared with school-day teachers. Many Community Schools teachers also teach during the day so there's an amount of organic crossover, and the district is working to increase access to our proprietary Student Insights tool so that we can continue maintaining a comprehensive view of each child and the context they bring to learning. The district currently has or is building data sharing agreements with the following partner organizations to achieve this vision: Citizen schools, Greater Boston Breakthrough, and Boston Scholar Athletes, among others.

Back to finances, the Community Schools programs have an enrollment of 716, which has increased modestly by about 2-3% each year for the last five years, with higher enrollment in younger grades (matching enrollment patterns of the district as a whole). Argenziano has the highest enrollment with 121 and Winter Hill has the lowest with 54. The average fee for families is \$70-\$80 per week, which has seen no increase since 2012. The carry forward balance, currently at \$582,000 against an operating budget of \$2.38M (24%), has helped to absorb additional investments in the last two years which has contributed to preventing fee increases. Going forward, the district has expressed an interest in reducing the carry forward balance so that the funds are actually used to improve programming instead of sitting in a bank, and described a 5-year plan that would reduce that carry forward to an appropriate amount. During that timeline, there may be a need to take another look at the fee structure to ensure continued solvency. Since expenses every year are highly sensitive to needs of those children and families that opt in, it's not possible to attain a high level of confidence in budgets 5 years out, so it is my recommendation that future Finance subcommittees review the Community Schools budget annually to ensure that the cost structure continues to represent the values of equity and inclusion that we strive for.

There were no further motions and the meeting adjourned at 7:22pm.

MOTION: Mr. Futrell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roix, to approve the bill rolls.

MOTION: Mr. Futrell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Normand, to accept the report of the Chair of Finance & Facilities Subcommittee for the meeting of November 15, 2017.

C. Educational Programs & Instruction Subcommittee: November 28, 2017 (Ms. Normand)

This report was deferred to our next meeting.

C. Rules Management Subcommittee: December 4, 2017 (Mr. Green)

This report was deferred to our next meeting.

D. Finance & Facilities Subcommittee: December 13, 2017 (Mr. Futrell)

On Wednesday, December 13, 2017 at 6:48pm, the Finance and Facilities subcommittee met at 8 Bonair Street. Attending were subcommittee members Mr. Green, Mr. Roix, and Mr. Futrell. Also attending were Superintendent Skipper and Finance Director Gordon. There were no community members in the audience.

In our review of the expenditure report of November 2017, we spoke at length about Special Education and specifically about out of district placements. The Superintendent shared that there have been several

cases that have required 45-day placements that have impacted the budget.

We spoke about trends in the district and how the district could forecast and adjust resources to address those trends. The Superintendent described, as she has in previous meetings, that she's seeing a surge in autism, including some children who've shown physical violence and which require residential services. From a financial point of view, those expenses are sometimes owned by the district and sometimes owned by the Department for Children and Families, depending on if they're with their parent or not.

The Superintendent additionally shared that DCF is struggling to find specialized foster homes for kids, especially those with special needs. As a former foster child myself, I'm sorry to hear that some of our kids are placed in homes that are 75 minutes away from Somerville. From a financial point of view, this adds to our costs but represents a mandatory obligation in service to our kids. Lastly, the Superintendent noted increases in the number of children with hearing disabilities and with Down's Syndrome.

After reviewing the Bill Rolls, the motion to approve was made by Mr. Green, seconded by Mr. Roix, and passed unanimously.

The Director of Finance then talked through a few facilities issues, including compliance issues with our record keeping at the Edgerly, on which the city holds responsibility. We then briefly discussed moving a section of daycare to the Edgerly, the cable television space to the Cummings, and the tree lot at the Edgerly.

We delayed the enrollment update to January as a result of a scheduling conflict.

Lastly, as has already been announced, our Finance Director will be leaving the district, with a last day of January 10, 2018. Between now and then, Mr. Gordon is working with Joe Tringale and Pat Durette to ensure a smooth transition, and the district has already posted this position. The timing in the school year is not ideal due to potential candidates being locked into their current roles, and given our upcoming start of the FY19 budget process, but Mr. Gordon will work with school leaders to kick off the first step of the budget collaborative so that we minimize the impact of this leadership transition.

Finally, one impact of this transition is on the subcommittee's future agenda. Notably, we're shifting all of our schedule back one month, and we're suspending our planned work on a weighted student formula. The resulting recommended schedule that this Finance Subcommittee makes to the next subcommittee is as follows:

1. Jan - enrollment
2. Feb - Grant funded overview
3. Mar - School fundraising
4. Apr - Homeless transportation/out of district placement
5. May - Fields

The meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.

MOTION: Mr. Futrell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Normand, to approve the bill rolls. The motion was approved via voice vote.

MOTION: Mr. Futrell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roix, to accept the report of the Chair of Finance & Facilities Subcommittee for the meeting of December 13, 2017. The motion was approved via voice vote.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Resolution to Support Senate Bill 308 and House Bill 235

This topic was deferred to our next meeting.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Contract of the Superintendent of Schools

Ms. Pitone reported that the School Committee had reached an agreement to extend the contract of the Superintendent of Schools through 2022. Mrs. Skipper has also received a salary increase to \$230,996.00, effective July 1, 2017. Ms. Pitone announced that Committee members are excited and thankful to have Mrs. Skipper with us for another five years.

B. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual

The following policies were submitted for first reading this evening:

- File: JBD-Gender Identity Support
- File: DBC – Budget Deadlines and Schedules

C. SCALE ADP Diploma (recommended action: approval)

The Superintendent of Schools recommends that the following students, who have successfully completed the requirements for graduation from SCALE, be granted their diplomas:

Brianna Marie Still **Somerville, MA**
Brielle Elizabeth Beasley Peabody, MA

MOTION: Mr. Green made a motion, seconded by Ms. Normand, to approve the SCALE ADP diplomas. The motion was approved via voice vote.

D. Field Trips (recommended action: approval)

January 19-20, 2018

SHS Indoor Track athletes to Yale University, New Haven, CT to attend multi-state track meet. Transportation via school mini bus with only the cost of food and snacks left for students to buy.

January 28, 2018

SHS Outdoor Club to Mount Sunapee, NH to ski and snowboard. Transportation via SHS mini-bus. Cost to students is \$65 for rentals, lesson and lift ticket.

March 8-10, 2018

SHS Indoor Track athletes to New York, NY to participate in the New Balance National Scholastic Track Championships. Transportation via SHS mini bus with the cost to students only being for meals and snacks.

May 11-12, 2018

SHS Spring Track athletes to White Plains, NY to attend the multi-state Glen Locks Games. Transportation via SHS mini bus with the cost to students only being for meals and snacks.

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion to waive the reading of the field trips and approve. The motion was approved via voice vote.

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
Monetary	Bent Electrical Contractors, Inc.	Somerville, MA	\$568.00	To purchase aprons for CTE Electrical students
20 Thanksgiving Baskets	Ryan Harrington Foundation	Somerville, MA	\$TBD	To various families in the Somerville Public Schools
Monetary grant	National Park Foundation	Washington, DC	\$8,887.50	For transportation costs to allow grade 4 students to visit national parks and landmarks
Monetary	Sangwha Hong & Josh McCarthy	Somerville, MA	\$100	Costa Rica Trip

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

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. O'Sullivan

1. Ms. O'Sullivan has received letters from 4th grade Brown School students regarding homework. She will give to Ms. Marques so that she can share the letters with all members, as well as with the Homework Steering Committee.

Mr. Green stated that it is always great to hear from students!

Ms. Normand

1. Congratulations to the Fall All-Scholastic All-Stars that were featured in the Boston Globe this past weekend. She is proud of our student athletes who work hard in and out of school to be the best they can be.

Alderman White announced that he was a member of the first Somerville High School Soccer Team.

Ms. Pitone

1. The Somerville High School concert on Thursday night will feature beautiful music. It starts at 6:30 p.m. in the Somerville High School auditorium.

ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjourning, Mr. Green offered condolences from the School Committee to staff members who have recently lost family members.

- Claire Curry, retired Kitchen Manager from the Winter Hill Community School.
- Mary Sears, mother of Rosemary Sears, teacher in our Music Department.
- Lois Navarro - Library Aide at Capuano Early Childhood Center
- Agnes McAnney, retired secretary from the Somerville Public Schools, and mother-in-law of Susan McAnney, retired Speech Pathologist from the Somerville Public Schools.
- Ellen Durette, mother-in-law of Pat Durette, retired Finance Director for the Somerville Public Schools.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m. via voice vote.

**City of Somerville, MA
School Committee**

Steven Roix

- WHEREAS,** *Steve Roix has been a member of the Somerville School Committee since March 2013, when he filled the vacant seat in Ward 1, and*
- WHEREAS,** *Mr. Roix's service has included serving as Chairman of the Rules Management and Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittees, and*
- WHEREAS,** *Mr. Roix's professional experience as an engineer has made his service on the Somerville High School Building Committee that of someone who sees the process with a professional's eye, thus allowing him to provide thoughtful reports to the full Committee to keep them informed of the process, and*
- WHEREAS,** *During Mr. Roix's four-plus years of service to the School Committee, his personal experience as a parent of two students in the Somerville Public Schools has proven invaluable in his leadership and deliberations. His major areas of focus were those that addressed issues related to the well-being and education of all students. Mr. Roix led with congeniality, analytical skills, a critical, but compassionate view, and great humor, serving as a model and inspiration to his colleagues, and*
- WHEREAS,** *During his tenure on the School Committee, Mr. Roix has served as a champion for all schools and programs in the city, as well as for all students, parents/guardians, and staff, earning the esteem of his colleagues on the School Committee, therefore be it*
- RESOLVED:** *That the Somerville School Committee publicly acknowledge the efforts of Steve Roix, and wish his continued success in his future endeavors, and be it further*
- RESOLVED:** *That these well-earned Resolutions be included in the minutes of tonight's meeting, and that a framed copy be presented to Mr. Roix.*

Somerville School Committee

Laura Pitone, Chair

Dan Futrell

Lee Erica Palmer

Mary E. Skipper, Superintendent

William A. White, Jr., Aldermanic President

December 18, 2017

Andre Green, Vice Chairperson

Paula O'Sullivan

Carrie Normand

Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor