

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Monday, May 18, 2015 – Regular Meeting

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

Members present: Mr. Sweeting, Mr. Roix, Ms. Pitone, Mr. Bockelman, Ms. Normand, Alderman White (7:10 p.m.), Mr. Futrell, Ms. Rafal and Mayor Curtatone (7:38 p.m.)

Members absent:

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Adam Sweeting called a Regular Meeting of the School Committee to order in the Board of Aldermen's Chambers at City Hall at 7:02 p.m., with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America. Mr. Sweeting asked for a roll call, the results of which are as follows: - Present – 7 – Sweeting, Roix, Rafal, Pitone, Normand, Bockelman, and Futrell, and ABSENT – 2 – White and Curtatone.

II. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mr. Ojo was not present this evening.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- April 27, 2015 Regular Meeting

MOTION: Ms. Rafal made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roix, to approve the minutes of April 27, 2015. The motion was approved via voice vote.

- May 4, 2015 Regular Meeting

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell, to approve the minutes of May 4, 2015. The motion was approved via voice vote.

IV. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

Mr. Sweeting announced that the reports would be given out of order and that we would start with Ms. Normand's reports on the Finance and Facilities Meeting and the Budget Hearing:

A. School Committee Meeting for Finance & Facilities May 7 (Ms. Normand)

The School Committee met as a Committee of the Whole for Finance and Facilities on Thursday, May 7, 2015 at 42 Cross Street. Members present were Carrie Normand, Steve Roix, Adam Sweeting, Christine Rafal, and Laura Pitone.

Also in attendance were Superintendent Pierantozzi and Finance Director Durette. There was one member of the audience.

Ms. Normand called the meeting to order at 7:06.

There were four items on the agenda.

- 1) **FY2015 Bill Roll Finance** Director Durette answered a few brief clarifying questions. Mr. Sweeting moved to approve the Bill Roll dated 5/7/2015, seconded by Ms. Rafal. The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.
- 2) **FY2016 Budget Development** Superintendent Pierantozzi reported on budget items added to his proposed budget since the last Finance meeting on April 28th. These additions include: \$3,000 for the incoming Superintendent to participate in the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents induction program, \$40,000 for a mental health partnership with the Home for Little Wanderers, \$12,000 for college financial aid counseling partnership with uAspire and Biogen, \$92,000 for an ELL Department Chair and \$10,000 for a Special Education reorganization. This brings the Superintendent's proposed budget to a total of \$60, 317, 201, a 3.64% increase over FY2015 with no staffing cuts.
- 3) **Facilities Update** Superintendent Pierantozzi and Finance Director Durette described the 2015 Technology Rollout plan dated May 1 that includes the purchase of significant laptop replacement

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.

for instructional support at several schools and the purchase of several carts. More technology purchases are planned for FY2016.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:31.

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rafal, to accept the report of the Chair for the School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of May 7, 2015.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

B. School Committee FY2016 Public Budget Hearing May 13 (Ms. Normand)

On May 13, 2015, the School Committee held a public hearing on the FY2016 budget. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 in the East Somerville Community School auditorium.

Present were: Ms. Normand, Mr. Futrell, Mr. Roix, Mr. Sweeting, Ms. Rafal, Ms. Pitone, Mr. Bockelman and Board of Alderman President White.

Also present: Mr. Pierantozzi, Ms. Durette, Dr. McKay and about fifteen audience members.

The Superintendent presented his FY2016 budget. The budget is posted on the district's website.

The Superintendent's budget totals \$62,512,658, a 3.64% increase over last year's budget. The FY16 Operations budget is relatively flat. The Superintendent's budget includes all negotiated and non-negotiated salary increases. It has no staffing cuts and adds a small number of positions in order to address student need, including students at risk and high achieving. The budget strengthens the delivery of student services and mental health support through a partnership with a community provider for clinical services and a new Assistant Director of Student Services. It implements improvements recommended in the Special Education independent evaluation report including new positions, continued support of inclusion and increased adaptive technology. There is increased support for College and Career Readiness through a partnership with Biogen to provide a part-time counselor from uApsire to assist with the college financial aid application process and support for additional AP classes. Program expansions and supports include: the creation of Department Chair for English Learner Education, expanded Somerville Public Schools/Head Start partnership with limited budget impact, expanded Pre-K Summer Transition Program, implementation of the 2nd year of PEP grant programming including expansion of Farm to School nutrition education and introduction of structured recess programs. The Superintendent's budget maintains online learning/credit recovery alternative program for highest risk student, continued support of Pre-K partnerships, Pre-K classrooms and literacy playgroups, and a complete redesign of District website.

A total of two members of the public spoke. Both spoke about expanding the Unidos Program and noted this year's longer waiting list. One speaker stressed the importance of knowing more than one language in today's global economy. One speaker suggested creating an intensive bilingual afterschool program and expanding the El Sistema program.

The hearing adjourned at 8:20 pm.

MOTION: Ms. Normand made a motion, seconded by Mr. Futrell, to accept the report of the Chair of Finance for the School Committee's FY2016 Budget Hearing of May 13, 2015.

Ms. Normand assumed the Chair so that Mr. Sweeting could provide two reports.

C. School Committee Meeting with Brown School Council May 12 (Mr. Sweeting)

Mr. Sweeting reported on the School Committee's meeting with the Brown School Council on May 12, 2015.

The meeting took place at the West Somerville Neighborhood School in Room 222 and began at 5:05 p.m.

Members in attendance were Mr. Sweeting, Ms. Normand, Mr. Bockelman, Mr. Roix and Ms. Pitone. There were 7-8 members of the Brown School Council and one community member also present. The purpose of the meeting was to have a discussion regarding the process the School Committee will follow relative to space issues at the Brown School. As we all know, space issues have vexed Brown for years. The school is packed with students and it is important to develop a solution to reduce enrollment, sooner than later. At this point, we are seeking a short-term solution. In the future, a more long-term solution will be needed. Mr. Sweeting announced that, later in the meeting, Mr. Pierantozzi will address his recommendations for the Brown. Mr. Sweeting thanked the Brown School Council members and his colleagues for their attendance and input.

MOTION: Mr. Sweeting made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rafal, to accept the report of the Chair for the School Committee Meeting with the Brown School Council of May 12, 2015.
The motion was approved via voice vote.

D. Public Hearing on Massachusetts School Choice May 18 (Mr. Sweeting)

Mr. Sweeting reported that, immediately prior to tonight's Regular meeting, the School Committee conducted a Public Hearing on Massachusetts Interdistrict School Choice Program beginning at 6:50 p.m..

Mr. Pierantozzi stated that according to Massachusetts General Law, prior to June 1st each year, school districts must conduct a public hearing relative to their participation in the Massachusetts Interdistrict Choice Program. Mr. Pierantozzi also provided an explanation of the program.

As there were no speakers in the audience, the School Committee approved the following motion:

MOTION: Mr. Bockelman made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roix, that the Somerville School Committee adopt a resolution withdrawing from its obligation to enroll non-resident students during the 2015-2016 school year.

The motion was approved via voice vote and the hearing was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

V. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

A. Personnel Report

Mr. Pierantozzi announced that the May 2015 Personnel Report is in members' packets. Included in this report is the following:

Five (5) new resignations for the purpose of retirement –

- Lisa Mitrano, Kindergarten Teacher at Argenziano, after 17 years
- Karen Lawrence, French Teacher at Somerville High, after 10 years
- Eduarda Palhinha, ELL Instructional Specialist, after 30 years
- Edith Medeiros, teacher at NW/FC, after 16 years
- Thomas Glannon, teacher at SCALE, after 28 years

The Superintendent wished these retiring staff members health, happiness and a long retirement!

There were also:

- ✓ Four (4) resignations
- ✓ Two (2) Leaves of absence
- ✓ Six (6) new hires (all are replacements)

B. District Report

- The Superintendent happily reported that the next principal of the Brown School has been chosen. Shawn Maguire has been selected and has accepted the position of Principal of the Brown School, starting in July. Thanks to the interview team and to Mrs. Skipper who conducted the finalist interview alongside me. Mr. Maguire has served as Principal of the Rockport Elementary School since 2007, was an Assistant Principal in Groveland for two years, an Assistant Principal in Newburyport for three years, Principal and Assistant Principal in Shirley, MA so he comes to us with outstanding experience, stability, interpersonal and communication skills. These qualities match those brought to light by the focus groups held prior to the interviews. Congratulations to Mr. Maguire.
- The orchestra was scheduled to travel to Washington, DC to perform at the Capitol Building. When the bus arrived, it was deemed unsafe for travel by the Superintendent. Somerville Public Schools staff tried all day to find alternative transportation for the students to no avail. Mr. Pierantozzi apologized to the students, faculty, parents and guardians for the disappointment caused by the cancellation of this much-anticipated trip. The lodging provider has provided a 100% refund and we are working with the City Solicitor to obtain 100% back from the bus company. Steps are also being taken to look for another venue for the orchestra to visit and perform.
- NECN (New England Cable News) captured the outstanding collaborative work of David Fichter, our Arts Department, and students/volunteers at the Healey and the WSNS, in a great feature piece highlighting 2 mosaic mural projects. Just Google "NECN Center Stage Mosaic Murals" to watch the clip.

The Superintendent deferred to Finance Director Patricia Durette for her report on financial matters:

- Finance Office staff are in the process of closing FY2015 accounts and are reviewing orders and encumbering funds so all ordering will be completed in June.
- Staff members are also reviewing grants that end on June 30th to assure that funds have been spent appropriately.

- On May 28 and 29, representatives from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will be in the District to audit our Title IIA grant which is a federal grant to be used towards improving teacher quality. These funds are used for professional development and coaching.

The Superintendent continued his report:

- National Art Honor Society Induction– Tues., May 19th, 3:30pm, SHS Library
- El Sistema 3rd Annual Spring Benefit Concert “A Night at the Movies” – Tuesday, May 19th, 7:00pm, ESCS Auditorium
- SHS Highlander Awards– Tuesday, May 19th, 7:00pm, SHS Field House
- Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee Meeting – 7:00 p.m., Central Office
- SHS Evening of Song – Thurs., May 21st, 7:00pm, SHS Auditorium
- SHS Multicultural Fair – Friday, May 22nd, SHS Atrium/Field House
- SHS Scholarship Awards Night – Wed., May 27th, 6:30pm, SHS Auditorium
- SHS Music Awards Night – Thurs., May 28th, 6:00pm, location TBD
- SHS Class Day – Friday, May 29th, 9:00am, SHS Atrium/Field House
- SHS Graduation – Monday, June 1st at Dilboy Stadium

The “Welcome to Kindergarten” Parent Information Night for parents/guardians of incoming Kindergarten students will be held Wednesday, May 27th, 6:00-7:30pm at the Capuano Center.

Special Olympics Somerville School Day Games will be held Thursday, June 4th, 9:30am-1:00pm at Dilboy Stadium.

The All-City District Track Meet (grades 3-8) is scheduled for Friday, June 12th, at Dilboy Stadium. The meet starts at 6:00pm.

Upcoming Calendar Reminders & Calendar Changes

- Reminder that this Wednesday (May 20th), originally scheduled as a Half Day for all PK-8 students, will be a FULL DAY at the Brown School.
- All Schools and District offices will be closed on Monday, May 25th, in observance of Memorial Day.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Educational Challenges and Space Issues at the Brown School: Superintendent's Recommendation

The Superintendent provided some background information relative to the Brown School facility that dates back four to five decades and highlighted some of the major building repairs done over time. He also referred to the NESDEC Report of 2012 where, on pages 30-33, it cites inequity in school facilities. Mr. Pierantozzi also referenced memos from Principal Kathleen Seward regarding the space issues at the Brown and mentioned that this issue has also been discussed by the School Committee many times. Based on the information reviewed, the Superintendent recommended that, as of September 1, 2016, the Brown School enrollment should be as close as possible to 224 students and should house Kindergarten, First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth grades. The Superintendent recommended taking action as early as possible to be able to inform Brown School families and facilitate communication with the Brown Community. This recommendation eliminates two sections of grade six. Best use of the two empty classrooms that will result from this recommendation can then be decided.

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- This being a short-term grade configuration issue, not a long-term building issue.
- Structural issues will be long-term as building code and accessibility issues are a primary concern and the financial implications would be major.
- The impact on personnel (neutral)
- The Brown School and the MSBA
- Further discussion at Long Range Planning

At this time, the School Committee will not vote on the Superintendent's recommendation. There will be at least two School Committee meetings for Long Range Planning held during the next month. At these meetings, Brown School community members will be allowed an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas relative to this recommendation. Following public input and further discussion, etc., the School Committee will vote on whether or not to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. This will, hopefully, be done prior to the end of the school year.

B. Acceptance of Donations

The Superintendent recommends the acceptance, with gratitude, of a donation of \$100.00 from Shelburne Farms of Shelburne, VT to the Winter Hill School. These funds will be used for a Food Literacy Workshop.

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

C. Field Trips (recommended action: approval)

June 8, 2015	Students from various elementary schools who are participating in the All-City Music Festival to Canobie Lake Park in Windham, NH. Transportation via bus at no cost to students.
June 12-15, 2015	Somerville High School students to Denver, CO to participate in the All-America City competition. Transportation via plane and bus with no cost to students.
June 16, 2015	Next Wave students to Canobie Lake Park in Windham, NH. Transportation via school van. Cost to students is \$20.
June 19, 2015	West Somerville Neighborhood School grade 8 students to Canobie Lake Park in Windham, NH. Transportation via bus. There is no cost to students.
June 25, 2015	Healey School grade 8 students to Canobie Lake Park in Windham, NH. Transportation via bus. Cost to students is \$30.
June 25, 2015	Kennedy School grade 8 students to Canobie Lake Park in Windham, NH. Transportation via bus. Cost to students is \$25.
June 25, 2015	East Somerville Community School grade 8 students to Canobie Lake Park in Windham, NH. Cost to students is \$25.

MOTION: Mr. Roix made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rafal, to waive the reading of the field trips and approve.

The motion was approved via voice vote.

Ms. Pitone questioned why the ratio of adults to students was not consistent on the trips and asked if there was a standard student to teacher ratio and Mr. Pierantozzi explained that the ration should be 10 students to one adult and that, as the trips get closer, more chaperones will be added. Because there is a six-week prior to trip submission rule, these details have not yet been finalized. Mr. Pierantozzi also explained that the principal checks for chaperones, appropriate health information and other details as the trip gets closer.

D. Support for repealing the Unz Initiative (Ms. Rafal)

Ms. Rafal reported that she would like School Committee members to consider supporting legislation currently being discussed by the Massachusetts House of Representatives and Senate regarding the repeal of the Unz initiative and An Act Relative to Language Opportunity for Our Kids (LOOK). Ms. Rafal suggested that perhaps our ELE Director, Sarah Davila, could review the bills and offer her opinion. There are considerations to be made regarding SEI certification implications as well as other educator credentials. Mr. Sweeting suggested that these bills be reviewed, either at Long Range Planning, or at our next Regular Meeting, provided members are able to review the bills and Dr. Davila's opinion on them.

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

1. The Middle School concert last week was incredible and the level of talent exhibited by the students was wonderful. The highlight was the performance of the song, *My Somerville*, by the chorus. Ms. Normand commended the Music Department for a great job.

Ms. Pitone

1. Thanked the Somerville Council of PTAs for a great Dinner Dance last Friday night. Congratulated the honorees and student scholarship recipients.
2. On May 19, Orange Leaf will host a fundraiser to benefit the Kennedy School from noon-9:00 p.m.

3. Also on May 19, Flatbread Pizza will host a fundraiser from 5:00 – 10:00 p.m.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjourning, Ms. Normand expressed the School Committee's condolences for the following relatives of staff members who have recently passed away:

- Esther Gerlach, wife of Chuck Gerlach, Teacher in the Graphic Design and Communication Class at Somerville High School.
- Herbert Gurland, fiancée of Linda Wiegenfeld, teacher at the East Somerville Community School.
- Tony DiSarcina, brother of Joe DiSarcina, retired Housemaster from Somerville High School.
- Helen Herzberg, mother of Anne Herzberg, Counselor at Somerville High School.
- Florence Ciccariello, mother of Tony Ciccariello, Administrator for Leadership, Programs and Planning for the Somerville Public Schools.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m. via voice vote.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

1. Agenda
2. May 2015 Personnel Report
3. Minutes of April 27, 2015 and May 4, 2015 Regular Meetings
4. One (1) Donation Acceptance Form
5. Seven (7) out of state/overnight field trip requests
6. Three (3) condolence letters
7. One (1) donation thank you letter