

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC RECORD

OF

THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

BUSINESS SESSION

OF

MARCH 10, 2014

SUBMITTED FOR THE APPROVAL OF:

THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

AND

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

“AN OPEN MEETING ADVANTAGE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF METHUEN”

**RECORDED BY:
DEIDRE RUNGE, PUBLIC RECORDER**

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METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
BUSINESS SESSION
FEBRUARY 10, 2014

This business part of the meeting of the Methuen School Committee was held in the Great Hall of Searles Building, City Hall, and was posted for immediately following 6:30pm Organizational Meeting.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Stephen N. Zanni, Chairperson
Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm, Vice Chairperson
Ms. Mary Jean Fawcett, Secretary
Mr. Richard P. Beshara
Mr. Dennis D.J. Deeb
Mr. Bryan P. Sweet
Mr. Robert Vogler

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms. Judith Scannell, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Brandi, Kwong, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Frank Antonelli, Interim Business Manager
Ms. Devon Heffernon, Student Representative
Deidre Runge, Public Recorder

1. Call to Order

Mayor Zanni called this meeting to order at 6:30p.m. with a quorum of members in attendance, and listed above.

1a. Flag Salute

Eriana Florentino, student a 4th grade student at the Marsh Grammar School, led the Committee in Opening Exercises of this meeting.

2. Participation by Others

a. SOAR Award

1. Brandon Karmelowicz was the recipient of the S.O.A.R. Award at this meeting. The Foreign Language Department chose Brandon for this Award.

b. Student Advisory Committee

- Brandon Karmelowicz a MHS Senior talked about the 11 students that attended the State level DECA Conference.
- Jenna Cicotelli a MHS Junior updated the Committee on the History National Honor Society's involvement in fund raising for "Ana" a Haverhill girl with Leukemia.
- Jenna O'Malley a Junior at MHS told the Committee about the Best Buddies Beauty Pageant that gave each buddy an award that night. She told the Committee to go on you tube and type in best buddies MHS and they can watch for themselves.

- Devon Heffernon the high school Student Representative told the Committee how they were looking forward to the Matt Ball Tournament tomorrow night with students and staff and the upcoming basketball game.

c. Staff

No Action

3. Approval of Minutes

Transcript of January 27, 2014 Workshop and February 10, 2014 Business Meeting

MOTION: Mr. Vogler moved to adopt the Recorded Transcript of January 27, 2014 and February 10, 2014 as presented and waived the reading; Mr. Beshara seconded the motion to approve as presented.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Deeb asked to correct the spelling of his name in the January 27, 2014 minutes

VOTE: 7-0-0 APPROVED

4. Staff Reports

a. Superintendent's Monthly Report

Superintendents Scannell told the Committee that they should try to attend the "Band Jamboree" and that they would enjoy this huge event. She did tell them it is a District-wide event and the Fieldhouse will be packed.

b. Technology Monthly Report

None

c. Instructional Technology Monthly Report

Ms. Kumm asked if when we receive donations, do we always except them? The Superintendent told her that Ed Lussier does go out to make sure that they are items that we can utilize.

d. Facilities and Grounds Monthly Update

Bryan Sweet asked if removing all the old oil tanks will resolve the leaks at the Marsh. The Superintendent said yes. Mr. Sweet also asked about money savings with "Green Products." Mr. Beshara said he wasn't aware of the issue even though he was an Associate Principal at the Marsh at the time of one of the issues listed. He also stated that he wasn't against green he just wanted paper towels and cleaning materials that clean. The Superintendent said that we are always looking into improving green and we are working to make the high school state of the art and will take what we learn at the high school to the other schools. Mr. Vogler asked what is the cost to remove the oil tanks? The Superintendent said they would get that cost for him. The Mayor told the Committee that "Green Products" were introduced in 2009 and we are always trying to improve products. Mr. Deeb was happy with the savings we make with "Green Products" and if they are working products that is great. The Superintendent finished with "parents are very concerned about products being used in the classrooms. We will continue to improve as we go along."

5. Old Business and Other Pending Matters

None

6. New Business

a. Acceptance of a Gift – Marsh Grammar School – Approval

MOTION: Mr. Vogler moved to accept the Gift
Mr. Beshara seconded the motion
DISCUSSION: The Mayor asked to send a thank you letter.
VOTE: 7-0-0 APPROVED

b. Netherlands Summer Trip – Methuen High School – Approval

MOTION: Mr. Vogler moved to approve the trip
Ms. Kumm seconded the motion
DISCUSSION: Mr. Deeb said this looks like a great opportunity but he didn't see anything about funding. Mr. James Peirce, MHS teacher running the program told the Committee the funding is paid by each student privately. The cost is \$2,300.00. Mr. Sweet asked if they do fundraising, Mr. Peirce said no but we got discounts because of the number of people going. We also keep costs down by staying with host families that came to Methuen and we hosted.
VOTE: 7-0-0 APPROVED

c. FY'15 Budget Calendar - Discussion

Ms. Kumm asked why the June date was to be determined. The Superintendent explained that we don't have a confirmed date or figures from the City yet. The Mayor said hopefully the City will set a date by the beginning of May.

d. Net School Spending Update

Mr. Vogler asked if the committee can get a summary on Net School Spending and where we are at. Mr. Antonelli said that the Superintendent and I met with the Mayor, Mr. Kelly and Legislators. Everyone knows we have a deficiency and the schools have not received the monies we should. Together we worked on a proposal which is a spinoff of what Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is allowing. Since the city has not funded the Chapter 70 can reduce what they give us. The so called retiree health insurance will be counted if the DESE agrees to this proposal. We are in the process of setting up a date to discuss with DESE. Mr. Vogler asked what the proposal is. The Mayor pulled out the legislative update the Committee received. We are looking to have it go through and we can put it away. We want to make sure it is agreed with amongst all. We will go in together to DESE. It is all about the retiree health insurance. Mr. Antonelli said the Commissioner said 400,000 this year and 1.2 million next year needs to be deducted from what we receive. We hope to have them send us, the school department the money directly instead. Mr. Vogler asked are we getting the money this year. Ms. Fawcett wanted to make sure this agreement needs approval by the Committee. The Superintendent said yes it did. And she told Mr. Vogler that is what we want to see happen. She assured the Committee that DESE wants the children of Methuen to get what they deserve. We will work this out for the students. The Mayor said he thinks the Senate side we are doing well with but the House side is not there yet. As soon as we get the information the Superintendent will let you know. Mr. Sweet told the Committee he talked to the legislators and encouraged the rest of the Committee to reach out to them.

7. FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

a. Expenditure Report - Monthly

Business Administrator Frank Antonelli submitted the Monthly Expenditure Report to the Committee.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Antonelli told the Committee as they can see we are in the negative at this time. DESE will be giving us Circuit Breaker monies, approximately 1 million dollar which goes towards this. Also there are some expenses we can take out of the operating budget and place in grants and then we will look better. The Mayor said circuit breaker and grants will make this negative go away. Mr. Antonelli said “that’s my hope. He went on to tell the Committee of the unexpected expenses, weather, unemployment, seven (7) students that entered the district with large expenses.... Mr. Vogler asked can we get the increased cost with special education students and the weather expenses. Mr. Antonelli said he would be happy to and these will be part of the new budget. The Superintendent also told the Committee that the unemployment piece has kicked in and day to day substitutes that put in so many hours according to new laws can claim unemployment. She assured the Committee they were watching this. Mr. Vogler said maybe we should talk to our Representatives about this matter.

No Action

b. Revolving Funds Report – Monthly

Business Administrator Frank Antonelli submitted the Monthly Revolving Report to the Committee.

DISCUSSION:

No Action

c. Grants Report – Monthly

The Grants Department submitted the Monthly Grants Report to the Committee.

DISCUSSION: The Mayor asked about the \$100,000 Gateways Grant. The Superintendent said I have asked Jane Sigillo to come to our next workshop to talk about this grant and the summer work opportunities. Also I have Maria McLaughlin overseeing the \$45,000 Career Academies Planning Grant we just received.

No Action

d. Student Activity Accounts - Monthly

Business Administrator Frank Antonelli submitted the Monthly Student Activity Report to the Committee.

DISCUSSION:

No Action

e. Supervisor of Food Services – Monthly

Direction of School Nutrition Services, Wayne Vespa submitted the Monthly Food Service Report to the Committee

DISCUSSION: The Mayor asked if the Treasurer was aware of the new policy in place. Mr. Antonelli said yes. All monies over the amount allowed through the policy will be switched over to the savings account. You can see the totals clearly for checking and savings right on your reports.

No Action

f. Bid Awards

No Action

g. Contract Approval

No Action

h. Budget Transfers

No Action

8. Notification of Appointments and Other Personnel Matters

a. Personnel Transactions

No Action

b. Professional Staff

No Action

c. Support Staff

No Action

d. Personnel Matters Requiring Committee Action

No Action

e. Notification of Vacancy Postings

(1) Business Administrator Posted on School Spring - Notification

The Superintendent updated the Committee on posting of the Business Administrator position. She told the Committee it will be posted for 3 weeks. She told them she enclosed the SchoolSpring informational packet for them in case they didn't know about it. Mr. Deeb said as the Superintendent noted most school systems are using SchoolSpring and asked what the costs are. The Superintendent said she didn't have that with her but she would get that information for them. The Mayor asked if they had a team together. The Superintendent said yes, business office staff, 1 principal and Mr. Antonelli. The last three candidates will be put through to me and then I will present my pick to you. Ms. Fawcett said at that point we can approve or deny your recommendation but we cannot recommend is that correct? The Superintendent said yes.

9. Superintendent's Reports, including Communications & Recommendations on Financial Matters, Old & New Business

a. Residency Monthly Update

Ms. Karen Lawlor, Attendance Secretary provided the Committee with the Residency Monthly Update Report.

Discussion: Ms. Kumm said in reviewing you can see the CGS had 21 students come in this month. Will this effect class sizes. The Superintendent said no it is across the board and equals out. Ms. Fawcett said she put a chart together and we currently have the same amount of students as October 1 to now. 248 students left and 248 came in. The CGS and MGS did increase and the other 3 schools decreased.

No Action

b. School Resource Officers Monthly Update

A monthly report was given on each of the schools.

10. Business from the Committee

a. Building Committee Update – S.C. and Bldg Committee Member - Bryan Sweet

Bryan Sweet updated the Committee about the Site Walk thru and Auditorium walk thru. He told the Committee that MSBA toured and was impressed with the maintenance of the building and hoped other Communities follow are lead. Also he told the Committee that the project was overall on schedule and budget. On March 26th there will be a tour of phase 2 and he invited the Committee to attend. The Mayor also stated that the

Auditorium is not behind we just want it done properly. He wanted them to know they are working as fast as they can. The superintendent addressed the Student Representative “Devon it is my hope that Seniors get to hold some Senior Activities in the new Auditorium before they leave the Methuen Public Schools. You have all been a part of the whole renovation and I want to see you get something special out of it.”

b. Consolidation Committee Update – S.C. Member –Bryan Sweet

Mr. Sweet told the Committee that the Consolidation Committee held their second meeting on February 27 with Council Members Grayton and Kazanjian along with School Committee Members, Vogler, Kumm and me. We started looking at Insurance for City and Schools buildings, vehicles... the City Auditor says there is a potential for a considerable cost savings. We are also looking at the School and City business office and human resource office functions. He announced that the next meeting was posted for March 13, 2014 at the Quinn lower conference room

c. Ameresco Project Update – S.C. Member Lynne Hajjar Kumm

The Mayor asked Ms. Kumm for the update and she told the Mayor she thinks it is important to keep Ameresco on the agenda so we know what is happening to date. She told the Mayor the memo he gave them at the last meeting indicated everything was on hold. The Mayor said we need to get net school spending (NSS) settled. Once this is resolved we can move on. If NSS is not resolved we are looking at \$100,000 which would come from the school side. He assured the Committee that Ameresco will be a go. I just think it is unfair to see the school system absorb the \$100,000 we would have to pay up front if we start the project before NSS settled.

d. Clubhouse / Turf / Fieldhouse Update – S.C. Member Lynne Hajjar Kumm

Ms. Kumm told the Mayor she put this on the agenda because of the unfair criticism of you and Councilors. I think the facts should be told so we understand where we are at. The mayor said that he and the Superintendent met with the youth group. We left that meeting thinking all understood. We need to get an additional 250,000 which is the matching part of the half a million dollar grant. We got an extension for the grant (for the clubhouse) while we were raising the matching funds. I want everyone to know I was the one that instituted this from the beginning. On Monday at the next City Council meeting we have received a gift for 200,000 that will be accepted and is already on the books. We then will be receiving an additional 300,000 privately funded that will be accepted at the following Council meeting and going on the books. All that money will be in the city coffers. The City will build the clubhouse. We had an architect who will come back for a small fee. I have people from a group that is not happy with the 400,000 square feet that they think it is too small. That project is moving ahead at 400,000 square feet. We raised enough money and the 200,000 is official. We also got as of today \$150,000 city grant to put into maintaining all the fields for this summer. Also we are working with Senator O’Connor Ives and our legislators on another grant for turf, practice field and bleachers. The clubhouse will be done this year that is a promise.

Mr. Vogler said he would like to go back to Ameresco at this time. I’m concerned about the ice rink roof. If it is not done this year I want the roof inspected to review the structure. The Mayor said everything is ready to go after NSS is resolved. Ameresco’s first project will be the ice rink roof which costs about \$1,000,000 dollars. The Superintendent told the Committee it is not a structure problem. We just need to keep the

ice cold. The Mayor said that's why we are closing the rink at the end of the month to remove the chillers. He said over the next year of two you will see all the work we need done done. Mr. Sweet asked if there is a time limit on the Ameresco bid. The Mayor said the bid is all set for this year and hoping we can get it done before it expires. Ms. Fawcett asked the Consolidation Committee "If I understand correctly they are looking at ways to join forced between the city and schools, but the functions and needs are quite different. The superintendent said yes they are. Ms. Fawcett then asked are they a decision making or recommendation making Committee. The Mayor said they are not decision making only recommending to the Superintendent and then School committee for approval.

11. Executive Session

- a. Negotiations**
- b. Litigation**

12. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss at this Business Session, Mayor Zanni entertained a motion to adjourn at 7:40 p.m., thus concluding this Business Session for the evening.

MOTION: Mr. Vogler moved to adjourn this Business Session at 7:40.

Mr. Sweet seconded the motion.

VOTE: 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,
Deidre Runge, Public Recorder
Methuen Public Schools