

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES

OF

THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

WORKSHOP SESSION

OF

JANUARY 23, 2017

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
WORKSHOP SESSION
JANUARY 23, 2017

This Workshop of the Methuen School Committee was held at Central Administration Building, Superintendent's Office and was posted for 6:30 PM.

ROLL CALL:

Mr. Dennis D.J. Deeb – Absent
Mr. Robert Vogler - P
Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm - P
Ms. Joyce Campagnone – P
Mr. Nicholas DiZoglio –P
Ms. Jana DiNatale – P
Mayor Stephen N. Zanni, Chairperson - P

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Robert Vogler
Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm
Ms. Joyce Campagnone
Mr. Nicholas DiZoglio
Ms. Jana DiNatale
Mayor Stephen N. Zanni, Chairperson

MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. D.J. Deeb

CALL TO ORDER:

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

Flag Salute was led by School Committee

Superintendent- Opened the meeting telling the Committee that Tom Kelly has no solid numbers to discuss with Mr. Gosselin and myself yet we are working on the needs from each department right now. As we see things needed we are reviewing them.

Technology:

Mr. Lussier - I will be proposing to the Superintendent that I cannot make any more cuts in staff. I'm replacing teacher's computers not as luxury but a necessity. Mr. Lussier read his memo to the Committee stating that e-rate is in its fourth out of five year plan. He has wireless access points in every other classroom but that won't help during online testing. We are getting away with donated equipment but with cuts in staffing we are out straight trying to keep up with repairs. I would rather get new equipment instead of adding staff to fix old equipment.

Superintendent - I am at that school of thought that Mr. Lussier is.

Mr. Lussier - I think just adding a part time person for 19 hours might help though with the small stuff.

Superintendent – Mr. Lussier can you tell them about the ticket process.

Ms. DiNatale – Can you speak to chrome books and if this plays in to the ticket process.

Mr. Lussier – The ticket process has been fantastic. The staff emails us their issues to an email domain and we can prioritize, appoint a staff member to assist and then repair or do whatever is needed. Our tickets are almost all caught up at this time. Some are small items like “I need ink for my computer”.

Superintendent – As far as Chromebooks I was disturbed though when I hear some are complaining about dirty screens and missing keys. For me teachers can clean their screens.

Dr. Kwong – there is a teacher leader that knows where the chrome book cart is and why are teachers sharing with School Committee member DiNatale and not with us.

Ms. DiNatale – I was at a PTO meeting. That is where I got the feedback. Kids can’t do anything about cleaning screens and replacing keys. At the end of the day my daughter waited 25 minutes for her device to turn on in her math class.

Mr. Lussier – Chrome books are a dummy device they turn right on. In-term assessment had issues not our chrome books. It looks like carts will replace computer labs in the future.

Ms. Campagnone – Why did they wait to tell you but not Mr. Lussier?

Mr. Lussier – Poor judgment on the teachers part.

Superintendent – Ms. DiNatale you brought up typing.

Mr. Lussier – All the teachers meet with kids. They tell the kids about free programs. Teachers have a lot to do with students already so they promote going on the free websites.

Ms. DiNatale – I want to clarify the reason I brought up typing. MCAS 2.0 has 2 grades taking the test on chrome books. I worry that kids are very slow typers.

Dr. Kwong – MCAS 2.0 is untimed and they have a whole day for the tests. Kids do get instruction on typing in technology class and my daughter also does it at home. It is up to the student and parents of 3rd and 4th grades that are sent home with the information on these free typing websites.

Mr. DiZoglio – Every Freshman gets an iPad and it follows them for 4 years, are we thinking of going to lower grades?

Mr. Lussier - it is very expensive to bring it down to lower grades. It would be a huge cost to bring in more carts. We have thought of kids buying them out right but we are never allowed to put in user fees. One way to go would be looking at a 5 year laptop lease.

Ms. Kumm - you understand money is tight.

Superintendent – we are looking at 10,000 dollars.

Mr. Lussier – and teacher’s raises are already in this figure. We would be looking at 12 carts, 30 chrome books per school.

Ms. Kumm – How would you utilize this new position?

Mr. Lussier – I would have them go around district wide as much as possible. 7-9 a.m. take in iPads, than go to the Marsh and CGS schools to handle issues like ink, keys...for a few hours a day.

Mr. Vogler – What’s the cost of a P.C. lease?

Mr. Lussier – I have only had conversations. 700 p.c.’s would cost per unit \$400-\$425 for 8 gigs. I am looking at a lease to purchase or just a lease with replacement and the ability to update them. An iPad lease is \$70,000 as we bring them in I am phasing out the repairs. We are using apple care and its working great.

Mayor – Have you done any bids yet?

Mr. Lussier – Not yet

Mayor – I would suggest doing a 3 year with an option of 2 years you don't get locked in.

Mr. DiZoglio – If you lock in to a 5 year you can ask for escalation for a less cost.

Mr. Lussier – thank you. Next time I will have more solid figures.

Student Services:

Ms. Bozek went over her memo with a breakdown of each department.

Ms. DiNatale – Why are you looking at an Administrator position for the nurse instead of 2 part time nurses?

Superintendent – One of the biggest reasons is the evaluation piece for the medical piece. It needs an administrator. We got a pass from the State but for FY'18 (I think) we have to have the evaluation piece in place.

Mr. DiZoglio – Can we promote from within?

Superintendent – Yes like all positions we would post.

Ms. Campagnone – Hire within and then hire a new nurse at a lower rate.

Ms. Kumm – is the Out of District rates going to go down?

Ms. Bozek – The current Out of District numbers showing is from the last school committee meeting and removing the aging out students. The moving and moving out is the same.

Ms. Kumm – Ms. Kumm – I see 6 councilors at the Tenney and Timony, 3 at the CGS and 4 at the Marsh, did you look at possibility of moving the 6'th to another school? Are we absolutely sure we need full time teachers? Please convince me with hard data.

Ms. Bozek – Yes the Superintendent and I will be looking at this carefully.

Mr. Gosselin – the reason there are 6 at Tenney and Timony is all students from the KEY and St. Anns Homes attend these 2 schools.

Mayor – Who handles all our mental health programs?

Ms. Bozek – Guidance (PBIS). PBIS and mental health programs are 2 different things.

Curriculum and Instruction:

Dr. Kwong reviewed her memo with the Committee. Kids love independent reading and don't want us to take it away.

Mayor – I think the program should continue.

Dr. Kwong – I went in to classrooms unannounced. It was amazing what I saw.

Ms. DiNatale – I have some concerns that kids weren't challenging themselves.

Dr. Kwong – I know after lunch they love it before lunch not as much. Some teachers were reading their professional development books along with the students. It was a nice to see this routine. Of course we will be fine tuning for the few students that we always had reading issues with.

Ms. DiNatale – can you tell me about the math books and about text books?

Dr. Kwong – Social Studies are all set they are using old text books. We are waiting to receive from D.E.S.E. Science supplemental materials and we have a huge inventory of novels.

Mr. Gosselin – the high school only buys A.P. class specialty books all the others on on the iPad.

Ms. DiNatale – I would like to see consumable science bumped up.

Ms. Kwong – Yes, teachers do buy stuff but they buy stuff that they like to use not what we have.

Ms. DiNatale – Do we have a full enriched curriculum in Science.

Dr. Kwong – Yes.

Ms. Kumm – Where would agenda books fall in the budget? And do you think microscopes are a good tool?

Mr. Gosselin – I am looking at agenda book prices now.

Dr. Kwong – Yes microscopes are a good tool.

Ms. Kumm – you should look at getting donations for things like microscopes.

Dr. Kwong – I will look into it.

Mr. Vogler – I have no problem supporting putting in more microscopes into the classroom.

Mayor – I agree get enough for every kid and 50 @ the 8th grade level. I like the triple bean balance. Even if you have to, try to get 30 per school. Are science lab books included in your request?

Dr. Kwong – That curriculum is on line.

Mr. DiZoglio – Science classrooms the students are partnered up in the classroom. I would rather put money towards chrome books.

Superintendent – Dr. Kwong also gave you a copy of the grants. We have seen decreases every year. We will keep you updated.

BUSINESS OFFICE

Mr. Gosselin reviewed hi memorandum. He also read the Director of Facilities memo regarding extraordinary maintenance.

Ms. DiNatale – Under snow removal where are we at right now?

Mr. Gosselin – Districtwide we are average for this time of year.

Ms. DiNatale – Why is the water up?

Mr. Gosselin – Hot summers mean all our coolant systems are up and running using water. Also we have to water the fields.

Ms. DiNatale – What about the vans?

Mr. Gosselin – We had \$45,000 encumbered. We sat down and talked to the Mayor and we got quotes from 4 different vendors. We are looking for used vans. We do have (2) two 2014 vans that were used as rentals. I did go look at them, cost effective but shabby. Moschetto Bros. had two (2) also that were clean bumper to bumper. We decided to go forward with the two Ford 2016 vans. We are very excited.

Mr. DiZoglio – is the capital improvement money covering any of the van costs.

Mr. Gosselin – none the total ended up being \$44,000.

Mr. Vogler – Make sure you look at extended warranty.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Superintendent went over the memorandum. We will be collapsing some positions and combining with other. This is just a starting point. She shared the list of upcoming retirements with the Committee. We will be backfilling these positions with new kids right out of school. I do know that more retirements are coming down. I will speak more to this at our next budget session. We will next be rolling out to you the Fine Arts and Wellness budgets. Ms. Mancini is looking at purchasing a truck also. We are looking at maybe flipping the food service one over to the Fine Arts and Mr. Vespa will purchase a new truck with his funds.

Ms. DiNatale – are they all retiring at the end of this year?

Superintendent – Yes.

***ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further business to discuss at this Workshop Session, Mayor Zanni entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session for Litigation Purposes and adjourn the Workshop at 9:08 pm, thus concluding this Workshop Session for the evening.

MOTION: Mr. Vogler motioned to enter into executive session for the purpose of litigation
Ms. Campagnone seconded the motion

ROLL CALL to go into Executive Session:

Mr. Dennis D.J. Deeb – Absent
Mr. Robert Vogler - P
Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm - P
Ms. Joyce Campagnone – P
Mr. Nicholas DiZoglio –P
Ms. Jana DiNatale – P
Mayor Stephen N. Zanni, Chairperson - P

DISCUSSION: None
VOTE: 6-0-0 APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,
Deidre Runge, Public Recorder
Methuen Public Schools