

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES

OF

THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

WORKSHOP/BUSINESS SESSION

OF

JANUARY 28, 2019

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:

MARTHA SIROIS, PUBLIC RECORDER

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES
METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
WORKSHOP/BUSINESS SESSION
JANUARY 28, 2019

Workshop/Business Session of the Methuen School Committee was held at Methuen High School, Media Center, and was posted for 6:30PM

CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE:

ROLL CALL

Robert F. Vogler (P)
Susan M. Nicholson (P)
Nicholas DiZoglio, Vice Chairperson (P)
Jana DiNatale (P)
Dennis D.J. Deeb, Secretary (P)
Jana Zanni Pesce (P)
Mayor James P. Jajuga, Chairperson (P)

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Robert F. Vogler (P)
Susan M. Nicholson (P)
Nicholas DiZoglio, Vice Chairperson (P)
Jana DiNatale (P)
Dennis D.J. Deeb, Secretary (P)
Jana Zanni Pesce (P)
Mayor James P. Jajuga, Chairperson (P)

MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Brandi L. Kwong, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Lisa Golobski Twomey, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Ian Gosselin, Business Administrator
Danielle Collins, Director of Food Service
Martha Sirois, Public Recorder

Flag Salute

Public Participation- -None

1.Meal Prices for School Year 2019/2020-Approval:

Mr. Gosselin-DESE review suggested we increase our school lunch rates. We cannot charge less than the State reimbursement rate.

Ms. Collins gave her presentation.

Ms. DiNatale-Will they be subsidized next year \$2.55 for each student receiving a free lunch?

Ms. Collins-No. The reimbursement rate for free lunch is currently \$3.43, reduced lunch is \$3.03 and paid lunch is \$0.43.

Ms. DiNatale-She wants to make sure families understand the increase.

Ms. Collins-They figure these prices so they would not benefit from the government reimbursement. Students that are paying full price for lunch are not subsidizing for the free and reduced lunch students.

Ms. DiNatale-This is a government required increase?

Ms. Collins-Yes, it is a government required increase. If we do not do the \$0.15 increase the government will take away their reimbursement.

Ms. DiNatale-She wanted to thank Ms. Collins for providing the nutritional information about the meals to the students.

Mr. Deeb-He has received positive feedback from various schools and would like to thank Ms. Collins. He is not happy with the increase. What is the free and reduced lunch percentages?

Ms. Collins-It depends what school you are looking at.

Ms. Collins-This increase has nothing to do with the free and reduced students. It has to do with the paid students. Every year the free and reduced lunch rates come out from the Federal Government and she has not control over those rates.

Mr. Deeb-You said if we don't increase these rates they will not give us the reimbursement.

Ms. Collins-Correct. We will not be in compliant.

Mr. Deeb-What happens to the surplus money in food service?

Ms. Collins-They are self-funded and not for profit so that money needs to be spent within certain guidelines. She purchases equipment, increases staff, increase programming and gives students better food.

Ms. Zanni Pesce-Will they keep these prices for the next two years?

Ms. Collins-She has increased the prices enough so that it will carry them for two years.

MOTION: Member Vogler Moved to approve Meal Prices for School Year 2019/2020

Member DiNatale seconded the motion to approve as presented.

DISCUSSION: None

ROLL CALL

Robert F. Vogler (Yes)

Susan M. Nicholson (Yes)

Nicholas DiZoglio, Vice Chairperson (Yes)

Jana DiNatale (Yes)

Dennis D.J. Deeb, Secretary (No)

Jana Zanni Pesce (Yes)

Mayor James P. Jajuga, Chairperson (Yes)

VOTE: 6-1-0 APPROVED

S.C. January 28, 2019

Workshop/Business Session

2.Meal Benefits for Furloughed Workers-Update

Mr. Gosselin-District Wide the free and reduced lunch percentage is 48%. Two schools are over that percentage and two schools are under that percentage. Members of the School Committee and the community have reached out to us about families who have experienced a change in family income. There are several reasons this may have occurred. As a district we will be sending (email) out the attached flyer to ALL families in an effort to help those who are in need.

3.FY'20 Budget-Update

Superintendent-They received word last week of the Governor's budget and their information on Foundation budget and Chapter 70 aid. She and Mr. Gosselin sat in on conference calls for two days to hear Superintendents and Business Managers ask questions of the department and funding. There is a lot of movement right now to change the Foundation formula and the Chapter 70 aid formula. There is a handout in the packet from a presentation they attended a few weeks ago. They were happening all over the State to inform districts about what the Foundation Commission was moving forward with and why we need this change. The data is striking as to why they need to change the Foundation formula and the Chapter 70 formula. They have provided a handout with Methuen's numbers compared to some of the other districts. The green handout is the information they received on Friday. This is a critical time for them to be having discussions about the need of the district. They are scheduling meetings with their legislators. It is important to reach out to them in the coming weeks. This district has investment in all areas of the change in the Chapter 70 aid.

Mr. Gosselin gave his presentation

Mr. Vogler-He hopes the committee has a chance to read the handouts. He attending the presentation with Dr. Kwong. He would like a letter send to the House members and Senators encouraging them to look at the formula and revise the formula.

MOTION: Member Vogler Moved to send a letter to the state representatives asking them to implement a revision of the Foundation Budget based on the Committee's review

Member DiZoglio seconded the motion

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Nicholson-She was wondering if the School Committee should meet with state representatives and senator. She likes the idea of a letter but she feels a face to face meeting in small groups would have a bigger and better impact.

Mr. Deeb-He would like to know what Mr. Vogler would like the letter to say.

Mayor-The Superintendent already said she would be meeting with the state representatives and senator. He is not sure they all need to meet with every one of them to hear the same story.

Ms. DiNatale-She has already written letters to their representatives and senator. She has heard back from Senator Diana DiZoglio and Representative Christina Minicucci. They are onboard to work with Superintendents to get additional funding. Maybe the Budget Sub Committee could have some input to the Superintendent to streamline the process. She shared her email with the community and she encourages parents to do two things. To reach out to their representatives and senators and to reject the Governor's proposal, it is not enough. She would like these handouts sent to City Council. Funding that they have to spend on Special Education and Health Insurance makes them 15.6 Million Dollars underfunded. The City contribution is going up 1.7 Million Dollars next year. The City Councilors should be aware of this while they are preparing their budget for next year.

S.C. January 28, 2019

Workshop/Business Session

Mr. Deeb-He agrees with Ms. DiNatale. The chart Mr. Gosselin prepared talks about the 5.3 Million Dollar health insurance gap. He asked the Mayor what is the policy regarding retirees health insurance?

Mayor-Mr. Gosselin took the 2017 numbers of other communities and inserted Methuen's FY'17 numbers which he feels is not a fair representation of what the gap is. There was more money put into the FY'19 budget. He would like to see a true representation of the budget gap, not back from FY'17. He is not aware of what the percentage difference is between the retirees and the active current employees. He will get those numbers to the Superintendent.

Mr. Deeb-Is there anything in the Charter that states how many years you need to be working for the City to be eligible for the health benefit? He feels that is something the City should look into.

Mr. Gosselin-The FY'17 figures were all that was available on the DESE website. It is the actual spending based on the end of the year report. They have not released FY'18 and FY'19 is not complete. This graph is State aid to the schools, not the community contribution. We need more Chapter 70 funds from the State.

Mr. Vogler withdrew his motion

10.Ajournment:

MOTION: With no further business to discuss at this Workshop/Business Session, Mr. Vogler entertained a motion to conclude the Workshop/Business Session for the evening at 7:13 pm.

Member DiNatale seconded the motion

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE:

7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

**Respectfully submitted,
Martha Sirois, Public Recorder
Methuen Public Schools**