

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC RECORD

OF

THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

BUSINESS SESSION

OF

FEBRUARY 11, 2015
(Snow date for Feb. 9, 2015)

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

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC RECORD
METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
BUSINESS SESSION
FEBRUARY 11, 2015

This meeting of the Methuen School Committee was held in the Great Hall of Searles Building, City Hall, and was posted for 4:00 PM.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Stephen N. Zanni, Chairperson
Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm, Vice Chairperson
Ms. Mary Jean Fawcett, Secretary
Mr. Dennis D.J. Deeb (arrived at 4:13 p.m.)
Ms. Jana DiNatale
Mr. Bryan P. Sweet
Mr. Rober F. Vogler

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms. Judith Scannell, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Brandi, Kwong, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Ian Gosselin, Business Administrator
Deidre Runge, Public Recorder

1. Call to Order

Mayor Zanni called this meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. with a quorum of members in attendance, and listed above.

ATTENDANCE

ROLL CALL:

Mr. Dennis D.J. Deeb	NO (arrived @ 4:13)
Mr. Robert Vogler	Yes
Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm	Yes
Ms. Mary Jean Fawcett	Yes
Mr. Bryan P. Sweet	Yes
Ms. Jana DiNatale	Yes
Mayor Stephen N. Zanni	Yes

MOTION: Mr. Vogler moved to accept agenda as presented
Ms. Kumm seconded the motion to accept the agenda

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: 6-0-0 UNANIMOUS

a. Flag Salute

Anya Patel, a 4th grade student at the Comprehensive Grammar School, led the Committee in Opening Exercises of this meeting.

2. Participation by Others

a. SOAR Award

Melanie Marie Conner Myers and Lauren Elizabeth Gagnon were the recipients of the S.O.A.R. Awards at this meeting. The Fine Arts Department chose Melanie and Lauren for these Awards.

b. Student-

1. Superintendent's Academic Excellence Awards

The students were unable to come to tonight's meeting (snow date) they will attend the March 9th meeting.

Mr. D.J. Deeb entered the meeting at 4:13 p.m.

2. Student Advisory Committee

Rosemary Mahoney a Junior at MHS talked about the Senior Play. She did mention they were the first to break in the new auditorium.

Selina DeLeon a Sophomore at MHS update the Committee on the Science Fair

Devyn Whitcomb a Junior talked about the Rangers Band

c. Staff -None

d. Public -None

3. Approval of Minutes -

Transcript Executive Session Declassification

MOTION: Ms Kumm motioned to Declassify the following executive session minutes and made them public record: 1/13/14, 1/27/14, 2/10/14, 2/24/14, 6/23/14 and 8/11/14 as presented and waived the reading; Mr. Vogler seconded the motion to declassify.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Sweet asked if he can the name of the school redacted on the January 27, 2014 minutes since we discussed not disclosing the name of the school. They all agreed. The Mayor asked why we have never done this. Superintendent told the Committee while the S.C. Policy Sub Committee was reviewing policies they saw this and it was the law so we are starting fresh.

VOTE: 6-0-1 APPROVED (Ms. DiNatale was not on the Committee at this time)

Transcript Executive Session Declassification

MOTION: Ms Kumm motioned to Declassify the following executive session minutes and made them public record: March 24, 2014 as presented and waived the reading; Mr. Vogler seconded the motion to declassify.

DISCUSSION:

VOTE: 5-0-2 APPROVED (Mayor Zanni was not present and Ms. DiNatale was not on the Committee at this time)

Transcript Executive Session Declassification

MOTION: Ms Kumm motioned to Declassify the following executive session minutes and made them public record: March 27, 2014 as presented and waived the reading;
Mr. Vogler seconded the motion to declassify.

DISCUSSION:

VOTE: 5-0-2 APPROVED (Ms. Kumm was not present and Ms. DiNatale was not on the Committee at this time)

Transcript Executive Session Declassification

MOTION: Ms Kumm motioned to Declassify the following executive session minutes and made them public record: October 27, 2014 as presented and waived the reading;
Mr. Vogler seconded the motion to declassify.

DISCUSSION:

VOTE: 7-0-0 APPROVED

Transcript Business/Organizational Session of December 8, 2014 Business, January 12, 2015 Organizational and January 12, 2015 Business meeting

MOTION: Mr. Vogler moved to adopt the Recorded Transcripts of December 8, 2014, and two for January 12, 2015 as presented and waived the reading; Ms. Kumm seconded the motion to approve as presented.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

4. Staff Reports

a. Superintendent's Monthly Report

- Superintendents Scannell reviewed her Monthly Report with the School Committee.
- The Superintendent had invited at the request of Mr. Vogler, Mr. Weymouth to speak about money collected for gate receipts. They explained that the gate receipt monies speaks to painting, clean up, security...
- Mr. Vogler said he thought the \$2 increase was supposed to go for improvements?
- Mr. Weymouth said when MIAA's new policy/rules came in it changed our crowd. We are not getting the numbers at the gates.
- Mr. Vogler – shameful we only had six home games. Do we need the 5 police officers that cost \$6600-6800?
- Mr. Weymouth explained that he has asked that same question since I took this position. The answer I got was past practice.
- Mr. Vogler – we have a great group of kids don't believe we should need all that coverage.
- Mr. Weymouth – it is actually more effective if a staff member is seen.
- Ms. Kumm – I am confused on two things the impact testing and cost. Do you see that as an annual cost?
- Mr. Weymouth – basically that \$1,000 will cover it. It covers all our students in athletics. Also Mr. Delano is learning how to get a baseline score so we can test our spring athletes ourselves.

- Mayor – we can look at the officers but during the game they seldom go into the stands where staff is they stand under the stands where kids hang around during the game.
- Superintendent – I have met with the SRO and Sgt. Walsh. We had a very good discussion and this is a contractual piece. He understands our concerns. We had a great plan for officers to transition in and out which would stop the overtime cost.

The Superintendent told the Committee that she received some requests for information and she would like to answer them now. She passed around a memo regarding snow removal. She told the Committee the memo outlines the snow removal process during school vacation. I also want to speak highly about the teachers union for allowing us to start clearing snow off the roof while they are in class.

She also told the Committee about the impact to the budget from the snowstorms. We have gathered information and figures and submitted to MEMA to see if we can recoup some of this money.

- Mayor - \$59,000 was included in the report for the schools
- Superintendent – we try everything in our power to work with our custodial staff shifts to not have to pay overtime.
I want to thank our school service officers who came in early to walk kids up to bus stops that were moved to safer locations.
- Ms. Kumm – Can you tell us about the 8th grade visit to the high school.
- Mr. Giuca – We had department heads, guidance, IT Supervisor on hand. Their eyes were wide open they loved the 9th grade wing. We will plan another open house with parents in April.

b. Instructional Technology Monthly Report

No report this month.

c. Facilities and Grounds Monthly Update

No Action

d. Physical Education, Health, Family Consumer Science & Wellness Monthly Update

No report this month.

e. MHS Update – Redesign of S.A.T.

Mr. Crocker, Guidance Supervisor said that he and Dr. Kwong worked on this together.

- Mr. Crocker – We are looking at ensuring students are ready for college. Remediation is needed not only for 4 year colleges but we are seeing it is needed for 2 year colleges. It is about analyzing critical thinking skills.
- Mr. Vogler – it seems redesign is like PARCC. It looks like a political move.
- Mr. Crocker said absolutely.
- Ms. Kumm – Over the years it is more written answers or suggestive assessment rather than bubble answers.
- Dr. Kwong – Every single assessment in the future will be written with someone assessing. They have three people grade it to be fair.

- Ms. DiNatale – Can you tell me how close our curriculum is to preparing our students for this rigorous standard? And do we need to adjust the curriculum.
- Dr. Kwong – for the past 3 years we have been realigning our curriculum to reach all students. We have been focused and successful on how to accomplish this.
- Ms. DiNatale – whether they take the test or not this is a life skill and I'm glad to hear we are moving in that direction.
- Mr. Sweet – What is the timeline for the implementation of this. And is there an urgency to change our curriculum?
- Mr. Crocker – This will affect our sophomore class.
- Dr. Kwong – High school level even if the adopt PARCC is approved it will only be for grades 3-8. Lots of unanswered questions about PARCC at the high school level. Our 8th graders (2019 graduates) now will still take the current MCAS test.

5. Old Business and Other Pending Matters

a. 2015-2016 MHS Program of Studies - Approval

MOTION: Mr. Sweet moved to approve the 2015-2016 program of studies.
Mr. Vogler seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Vogler – I want to thank you for making the changes to the history exit exam. I can say my students would all of passed it. It would be nice to see the implementation of a citizenship test in the Methuen Public Schools.
- Mr. Deeb – To respond to Mr. Vogler, I can appreciate a history exit exam and I can say my students would all pass it also. I also agree on the implementation of a citizenship test.
- Mr. Sweet – I am glad it is back as an option for kids as an elective.
- Ms. Fawcett – Based on what we heard tonight it was a nice compromise to offer it as an elective.
- Superintendent – Thank roger Lenfest who is here in the audience and worked on this for you.

VOTE: 7-0-0 APPROVED.

6. New Business

a. Newly Adopted S.C. Policy #BEDH–Public Participation–First Read

MOTION: Ms. Kumm moved to approve the first read
Mr. Vogler seconded the motion

DISCUSSION:

VOTE: 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

b. Revise and Readopt S.C. Policy #BF – Annual Report to School Committee – First Read

MOTION: Mr. Vogler moved to approve the first read
Ms. Kumm seconded the motion

DISCUSSION:

VOTE: 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

c. Revise and Readopt S.C. Policy #GAAA – Equal Employment opportunity /Affirmative Action Policy – First Read

MOTION: Ms. Kumm moved to approve the first read
Mr. Sweet seconded the motion

DISCUSSION:

VOTE: 6-1-0 PASSED (Mr. Deeb voted no)

d. Revise and Readopt S.C. Policy #BBC-S.C. Assignments to Committees-First Read

MOTION: Mr. Vogler moved to approve the first read
Ms. Kumm seconded the motion

DISCUSSION:

VOTE: 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

e. S.C. Policy Sub Committee Recommendations of Policies to Eliminate–Approval

MOTION: Mr. Sweet moved to approve the first read
Mr. Deeb seconded the motion

DISCUSSION

- Mr. Deeb – The Sub-Committee met in December and sent you a copy of these polices in your previous packet to review. There are a number of different policies that don't correspond with past practice or current laws. The policy book should reflect the law. All these policies are outdated.
- Ms. Kumm – I want to thank the sub-committee this is a tedious job.
- Mr. Vogler – Most of these are part of Chapter 70 and 30 years old. Ed Reform act made most of these null and void.
- Mr. Deeb – Once these are approved and we are done updating the Superintendent said Dodie will create a new book for us.
- Ms. DiNatale – My concern is while these policies have been in the policy book eliminating them and re-directing people may be complicating. If someone came in and asked they could at least see the policy and not be sent looking for it in M.G.L. I would like to see a citation in its place in the book so it is easy for people to find. I would like to see all of our policies contained in one area so they are easily accessible.

VOTE: 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

f. Government donation of Computer Equipment - Approval

MOTION: Mr. Vogler motioned to approve and send a thank you letter
Mr. Deeb seconded the motion

DISCUSSION

VOTE: 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

7. FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

a. Expenditure Report - Monthly

Business Administrator Ian Gosselin submitted the Monthly Expenditure Report to the Committee.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Gosselin told the Committee we are right now looking at breaking even with circuit breaker monies.

b. Revolving Funds Report – Monthly

Business Administrator Ian Gosselin submitted the Monthly Revolving Report to the Committee.

DISCUSSION:

No Action

c. Grants Report – Monthly

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Brandi Kwong, and Director of Student Services submitted the Monthly Grants Report to the Committee.

DISCUSSION:

- Superintendent – I want to prepare you. Our new Governor has totally cut out the summer school program. We received our second hit of \$54,000 in our kindergarten grant effective immediately. I am sitting with Mr. Gosselin and Ms. McCarthy because we need to pay these salaries.
- Mayor – Have you reached out yet
- Superintendent – I spoke to Senator Ives
- Mayor – I will call Dempsey
- Ms. Kumm – Grants are never guaranteed money correct.
- Dr. Kwong – You are not wrong. But we know we are getting these awards and plan for it by creating positions and paying for these positions with awarded money. As of today they took money away they told us we were awarded so we need to figure out how to cover this.
- Superintendent – You need to remember we do not charge tuition like most communities do for Kindergarten.
- Mr. Deeb – Cuts need to be made. It is nice to offer full day Kindergarten but we are dealing with cuts and maybe we should be looking at ½ day kindergarten or start charging tuition.
- Dr. Kwong – Changing Kindergarten to a ½ day would be a step backwards.
- Superintendent - I would absolutely come to school Committee to look at tuition. I do not want to go backwards.
- Mr. Vogler – I would never vote to charge tuition for kindergarten. Every school system gets a reimbursement from the state.
- Ms. DiNatale – I do not support charging for kindergarten. I want the Methuen Community to know I support the Governor and hope he is making lots of cuts but hope he makes them in the right places. Kindergarten is not the place to make cuts or grants that we rely on to prepare students for high school.
- Dr. Kwong – Our summer school grant that was cut targets 8th graders for readiness.
- Superintendent – We will be moving money from line to line to try to cover all this year. If the Governor continues to cut that will not be good.
- Mayor – A grant is a grant it should be carried out a full year not ½ way through. We did away with user fees many years ago. We have to look at net school spending \$586,000 for next year. We will also have to move above the 5%.

d. Student Activity Accounts - Monthly

Business Administrator Ian Gosselin submitted the Monthly Student Activity Report to the Committee.

DISCUSSION: None

e. Supervisor of Food Services – Monthly

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

DISCUSSION: None

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

Mayor – can we have clarity on how long people have been out?

b. Professional Staff

No Action

c. Support Staff

No Action

d. Personnel Matters Requiring Committee Action

No Action

e. Notification of Vacancy Postings

No Action

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

a. Residency Monthly Update

Ms. Carmen Aguilar Cruz, Records/Residency Secretary provided the Committee with the Residency Monthly Update Report.

- Ms. Kumm – Can you update us where we are with the residency check?
- Superintendent – This was the fifth grade re-check. The Second letter just went out.
- Ms. Kumm – After the second letter are they out?
- Mr. Sweet - Is there a timeline for returning information? And at what point do we say you cannot come to school.
- Superintendent –There is a process. Every letter has a timeline. A third letter will go out and state they need to withdraw their child if they do not bring it in. I have a responsibility to educate children. We do send people to the house but I do work with the parents. The staff does a crackerjack job with this process. Remember it is not as cut and dry as you think it is.
- Mr. Deeb – That is a pet peeve of mine too. I can understand you have an obligation to educate but at the same time it really bothers me that people don't respond. The City sends us a survey we don't send it back you are off the voters' registration.

- Ms. Fawcett – I am concerned that a student receives the consequence because a parent doesn't get the papers in.
- Ms. DiNatale – I don't want kid's education interrupted.
- Superintendent – Kindergarten registration is starting next week. They are not admitted unless they give us the whole registration packet at the end of the summer.

b. School Resource Officers Monthly Update

A monthly report was given on each of the schools.

10. Business from the Committee

a. Consolidation Committee Update by Mr. Vogler

- Mr. Vogler the next meeting it the 25th. I think it is all about the IT departments.

b. Superintendent's Evaluation Sub Committee – Superintendent Goals - Approval

MOTION: Mr. Vogler motioned to approve the goals
Mr. Sweet Seconded the motion

DISCUSSION:

- Ms. Fawcett – Last year was a trial run. The rubric was extensive and hard to follow. We are a little behind schedule I have had the goals since November but we are in a better place this year.
The requirement of SMART goals helps you look at the goals the Superintendent has made and evaluate her on what she does with these goals.
- Mr. Deeb – SMART is State requirements they sound good but it takes away from what you want to do. These go over and above what the Superintendent has to do. As a sub-committee we are trying to stream line the goals. Even though she didn't have to do this last year she set an example by letting us evaluate her with this system. This is a state mandate, it is intensive and there is a ton of work here.
- Mr. Sweet – these are very ambitious goals. Having them will help us evaluate you.
- Mayor – In regards to District Goals Intervention, one of my concerns is our levels. The high school should not be at level 3. The principals need to be held accountable.

VOTE: 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

OTHER

The Superintendent told the Committee she has met with the union. She has a couple of different plans to make up the snow days. As soon as I can move forward I will let you know. We are looking at makeup Saturday, full days, for time on learning. February vacation is just around the corner so that won't work. We are being proactive. I called the union right down after the first blizzard.

The Superintendent told the Committee she has been asked about blizzard bags. She told them she has a strong opinion about them. There is only 1 school system using them and it is a trial run. It does not count for any snow days this year. I am being honest when I say I am not looking at it. Superintendents are up in arms over them. I will not go with blizzard bags.

Mr. Vogler asked when MCAS testing is. The Superintendent said March 23rd. Mr. Vogler hopes some of these days can be used to catch up in preparation for the MCAS exam. The Superintendent said her goal is sooner than later. There are many parties I have to talk to. The direction I want for next year is to start the last week of August. Everyone that did that this year is in a good place.

11. Executive Session - None

12. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss at this Business Session, Mayor Zanni entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 pm, thus concluding this Business Session for the evening.

MOTION: Mr. Vogler moved to adjourn this Business Session at 6:40 p.m.
Mr. Sweet seconded the motion.

VOTE: 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,
Deidre Runge, Public Recorder
Methuen Public Schools