

**TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES**

**OF**

**THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**WORKSHOP/MEETING SESSION**

**OF**

**FEBRUARY 26, 2018**

**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 RECORDED MINUTES**  
**METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**WORKSHOP SESSION**  
**FEBRUARY 26, 2018**

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

**ROLL CALL:**

Robert Vogler - P  
Susan Nicholson - P  
Nicholas DiZoglio –P  
Jana DiNatale – P  
Dennis D.J. Deeb – P  
Jana Zanni Pesce – P  
Mayor James P. Jajuga, Chairperson – P

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Robert Vogler  
Susan Nicholson  
Nicholas DiZoglio  
Jana DiNatale  
Dennis D.J. Deeb  
Jana Zanni Pesce  
Mayor James P. Jajuga, Chairperson

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Judith A. Scannell, Superintendent  
Brandi Kwong, Assistant Superintendent  
Deidre Runge, Public Recorder

**#1 CALL TO ORDER:**

Mayor Jajuga, 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**

**MOTION:** Mr. Vogler motioned to accept the Agenda as presented  
Mr. DiZoglio seconded the Motion  
**DISCUSSION:** None  
**VOTE:** 7-0-0 APPROVED

**#2 SCHOOL SAFETY**

Mayor Jajuga – He spoke to the committee about when he was the Senate Chair on the Public Safety Commission in 1999 and they created the “Commission on School Violence” and how at that time he recommended that there be a police officer in every school. He would like to see in

the FY'19 budget more psychologists in the school system. He wants to continue working with the Superintendent and School Resource Officers "SRO". I think with the initiatives in place and what the Superintendent is going to talk to you about next, we are well ahead of the curve and I am very proud.

Superintendent – We work off the template the Mayor started back in 1999 as the Secretary of Safety. She also held up the School Threat Assessment and Response System Manual "STARS" and told the Committee everything we do in our schools are off of this manual. Each school has an Emergency Procedure Manual that talks about "what if's". We have Emergency teams of Administrators and teachers in every building that revisit our procedures. At the beginning of the year we start with a Districtwide Parent Safety Meeting with Lt. Aiello and many times the Chief in attendance that all parents are invited to so we can roll out the procedures. Since I have been Superintendent we have had a lock down procedure in place which is now known as the ALICE Lockdown that we meet with the police and fire to go over new things they have learned from each incident throughout the country and we tweak our procedure. Every September in every school students and teacher meet with administrators to go over lockdown procedures. We then have throughout the year announced and unannounced Mock Lockdowns. On the team of development with the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Facilities Director, SRO Supervisor, SRO's, Principals and outside agencies that meet with us. All school buildings have cameras and doors are locked down. Remember we cannot lock door downs within the building it is a fire code. There is an armed Resource Officer in every school with an SRO Supervisor that drives around to every school. If parents have any questions please do not hesitate to call the building principal or myself. I was asked by a Committee Member how many calls she received. I received no phone calls and only one email. The mental health piece is where we need to begin.

Ms. DiNatale – Thank you we are leaps and bounds ahead of other Districts.

Ms. DiNatale said she would like to suggest we form a School Safety Sub Committee

Ms. DiNatale stated the following reasons she would like to have the Sub-committee approved:

#1 – whether we could use a second SRO at Methuen High School. I would like t

#2 – how we can increase transparency, like what kind of things are going on in our schools so parents feel comfortable and feel safe

#3 – How we handle visitors being buzzed in I do believe there is some room for improvement

#4 – Work on establishing an MOU that is not in active with the District Attorney's Office. This is a policy issue for us to consider too discuss.

#5 – Active Shooter System and Emergency button that was removed from the teacher's desktops which I think is important. I can't agree more with the Mayor and Superintendent that we need to deal with Guidance and get our students help. I think we need to be prepared for an emergency. I think we are prepared but there is room for improvement.

Mayor – I don't agree, there is no need or necessity to set a Sub-Committee. As far as transparency the Superintendent just told us that not one parent called about a question of safety. I can assure you that everything is being done. I don't understand why you think there is a need for a second SRO or a Sub-Committee. The District Attorney and I have spoken but haven't got together regarding the MOU. I am convinced that button was talked about when I was a member of the Council. You are bringing back initiatives that I don't think is necessary. I think we need to identify students and get them the help they need. I think it's too late and the damage is done when they are in the building. Are you putting that into a form of a motion?

Ms. DiNatale – Yes but I would like to respond to you first. Our Police Chief came before the Committee and said those 2 pieces are important and they are low cost items. We don't even

know if the Council will approve the additional funds we will be asking for. I agree I want to keep a shooter out of our schools but if they do get in I want to be prepared. It bothers me that the Chief of Police not here. He is the expert and he is not here saying he doesn't want those things. Having a Sub Committee is the responsible thing to do to discuss these things. Mayor – I think I can sit down and make a decision as the Mayor as to what we do and don't need. I don't need a Sub Committee and the Council couldn't vote unless I bring it forward and ask for these items the Chief might want. My responsibility as Mayor, as well as the Police Chief, is to protect everyone in the City and the students. I don't want to emphasize on technology I think we should spend the money up front on preventing.

**MOTION:** Ms. DiNatale made the motion for a Sub-Committee  
Mr. Deeb seconded the Motion

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Deeb – I think we should explore having additional armed officers. Or maybe look at armed Marshalls. Gun Free Zones is what needs to be looked at. The Superintendent and her Administration Team have been proactive. No question we are being proactive. I too am not sure we need a Sub Committee.

Ms. Zanni Pesce – I whole heartedly believe in prevention. But I think it works in tandem if someone did get in the building I would like to look into CopSync. My understanding it was a short money item. I also understand it is an easy item to delete. As a mom and School Committee Member if someone did get in to the building, I would want the cops there immediately. I don't think we need a Sub-Committee but is there away the Committee can weigh in with you.

Mayor – I am in everyday you are always welcome to call the office. I feel very comfortable with the safety procedures in place. I don't think Committeewoman DiNatale is off on her concerns either. This Committee is constantly beating the drum about the enormous chargebacks. I am trying to make head or tails over the chargebacks and how they got there. There are other ways to accomplish what we all want accomplished. I am the one that has to advance any requests to the Council. I am not looking at technology. If I think it is not meaningful and there is another way I will look at it. I am going to be less inclined to spend the money when they are in the buildings and it is too late. We need more Psychologists and identifying students that need help and get them the help they need.

Mr. Vogler – I understand everyone's concern. I agree Psychologists' and mental health testing is what is essential. How can you miss with all those red flags out there? We need to bring in more mental health and drug abuse counselors. We have 1 ½ right now. I don't believe we need a Sub-Committee we have a Mayor that headed public safety and a Superintendent that has already improved our security system. I believe we were one of the first communities to put SRO's in our schools. Between the Mayor, Superintendent and Police Chief they can decide what else is needed and come to the Committee. We need to see 3 or 4 more mental health counselors in the budget.

**VOTE:** 2-5-0 Motion for a Sub Committee Fails

Robert Vogler - Nay  
Susan Nicholson - Nay  
Nicholas DiZoglio –Nay  
Jana DiNatale – Yay  
Dennis D.J. Deeb – Yay  
Jana Zanni Pesce – Nay  
Mayor James P. Jajuga, Chairperson – Nay

The Mayor apologized but had another commitment and left the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

### **#3 PROGRAM OF STUDY**

Superintendent – read Principal Barden’s message to the Committee.

Mr. Barden – went through is memo of the changes and additions. CORE value and the rubrics are a new addition we were able to get to this point through our NEASC revision. Our 5 year report is due March 1<sup>st</sup>. Very happy with the changes our NEASC team has brought forward.

Dr. Nicholson – asked where the rubrics are located?

Mr. Barden – they are on our website.

Dr. Nicholson – Said they are mention on page 6 and 7 and asked if they can mention where the rubrics could be located.

Mr. Barden – Yes we can. He then reviewed MASSCORE graduation requirements which are 2 years of F.L. and 1 year of the arts. We don’t have this in our graduation requirement and we are in favor of it. This will raise the bar for our students. This will start for our current 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. We are very proud of this. We are actively pushing the Parent Portal. Honor roll we want to raise the bar. You need to have all A’s for highest honors and mostly A’s very few B’s for high honors and honors would be A’s and B’s. We have changes course levels and we are raising National Honors to a 3.7 average to join.

Mr. Deeb - commended them for listening to the Committees concerns and making some of the changes. He then pointed to page 10 where they talk about A.P. and teacher recommendation being strongly preferred and how Honors classes also say teacher recommendation but not required.

Mr. Barden – said a B- would guide a teacher but a teacher has the ability to know what their kids do daily.

Mr. Deeb – B- or better to begin conversations to get into an Honors class.

Mr. Barden – Yes, no one knows a student better than a teacher.

Mr. Vogler – Thank you I think the B- is a good choice. I am happy with the program of studies. I think dual enrollment is the best think for our kids.

Ms. DiNatale – If kids don’t finish summer work can they continue in the A.P. program?

Mr. Barden – No

Ms. DiNatale – Once a student is in an A.P. class and is struggling can a teacher ask them to move out of the class?

Mr. Barden – Yes, we don’t want to put students in a place to fail.

Ms. DiNatale – when students are deciding on their classes, who is looking over the students? Let’s say a student wants to take four A.P. classes, do parents have a say?

Mr. Barden – That is when we sit together as a group and try to get on the same page.

Ms. DiNatale If a student is over 18 that’s one thing but students under 18 you should listen to a parent. Like a teacher knows their student a parent knows their child.

Mr. DiZoglio – Are we currently mailing report cards?

Mr. Barden – No we are handing them out and encouraging parents to go on Infinite Campus.

**MOTION:** Mr. Vogler motioned to accept the Program of Studies  
Ms. DiNatale seconded the motion

**DISCUSSION:**

**VOTE:** 6-0-0 APPROVED

**\*EXECUTIVE SESSION**

With no further business to discuss at this Workshop/Meeting Session, Mr. DiZoglio entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session for contract negotiations at 7:51 pm, and enter back into the Workshop/Meeting Session to adjourn.

**MOTION:** Ms. DiNatale motioned to enter into executive session for the purpose of contract negotiations and come out to adjourn the workshop/meeting  
Mr. Deeb seconded the motion

**ROLL CALL to go into Executive Session:**

Robert Vogler - No  
Susan Nicholson - Y  
Nicholas DiZoglio –Y  
Jana DiNatale – Y  
Dennis D.J. Deeb – Y  
Jana Zanni Pesce – Y  
Mayor James P. Jajuga, Chairperson – (Left at 7:10)

**DISCUSSION:** None  
**VOTE:** 5-1-0 APPROVED

**\*ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further business to discuss at this Workshop/Meeting Session, Mr. DiZoglio entertained a motion at 8:44 to adjourn the workshop.

**MOTION:** Mr. Deeb motioned to adjourn the workshop/meeting  
Ms. DiNatale seconded the motion  
**VOTE:** 6-0-0 UNANIMOUS

Respectfully submitted,  
Deidre Runge, Public Recorder  
Methuen Public Schools