

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC RECORD

OF

THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

BUSINESS SESSION

OF

MARCH 14, 2016

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
MARCH 14, 2016

This meeting of the Methuen School Committee was held in the Media Center at Methuen High School and was posted for 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

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

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Stephen N. Zanni, Chairperson
Mr. Dennis D.J. Deeb
Ms. Jana DiNatale
Mr. Nicholas DiZoglio
Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm
Mr. Robert Vogler

MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms. Joyce Campagnone

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

1. Call to Order

Mayor Zanni called this meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. with a quorum of members in attendance, and listed above.

a. Flag Salute

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

The Mayor asked for a moment of silence for Mr. Arthur Nicholson and Mr. James Smith.

2. Participation by Others

a. SOAR Award

Salvatore Florio was the recipient of the S.O.A.R. Award at this meeting. The Foreign Language Department chose Salvatore for this Award.

b. Student Advisory Committee

- Angelica Jones a Methuen Junior spoke to the Committee about the Boys Basketball Rangers and how they made it to the MAA championship game. A sophomore had hit a 3 pointer at the buzzer to win the game.
- Nika Nguyen gave an update on the DECA Club winners and how they recognized Mr. Simms for 5 years of service.
- Jacob Greer a MHS Junior updated the Committee on the Mock Trial advancements under Mr. Becker, their advisor, to the competition of only 32 teams.

c. Staff

None

d. Public Participation

(1) Debbie’s Treasure Chest – Presentation by Talia Harvey

- Ms. Linda Harvey – Apologized to the Committee for not being able to show them the presentation they prepared.
- Ms. Harvey a MHS Sophomore gave the Committee an overall view of the project. She told the Committee they collect books, toys, clothing, toiletries... to distribute to those in need both in and out of school.
- Alyssa Fusco – 8th grade Tenney Grammar School said they hadve 2 dedicated staff members as their facilitator and are opening in 30 days.
- Taya Gourley – 7th grade Timony Grammar School said they have a teacher representative and an eager PTO.
- Amanda DiNatale – 7th grade Timony Grammar School, told the Committee that they can help DTC by spreading awareness to teachers, supporting DTC adding their link to the Methuen Public Schools website and visiting them on www.debbiestreasurechest.org
- Annya Quaglietta – 7th grade Marsh Grammar School told the Committee they have a large number of leaders bur are lacking supplies and an area to use.
- Sydney Moda - 6th grade CGS told the Committee they are currently looking for space and a staff member to oversee the project.

Mr. Vogler – I really appreciated the packet it has lots of information.

Mr. DiZoglio – can we get a copy of the power point presentation?

Ms. Harvey – Please send a request to Talia talia@debbiestreasurechest.org and she will share it with you.

3. Approval of Minutes – Transcripts of the January 25, 2016 workshop, February 9, 2016 Business meeting and the February 22, 2016 workshop

MOTION: Ms. Kumm moved to adopt the Recorded Transcripts of January 25, 2016 and February 9, 2016 as presented and waived the reading;
Mr. Vogler seconded the motion to approve as presented.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: 6-0-0 APPROVED

MOTION: Mr. Vogler moved to adopt the Recorded Transcript of February 22, 2016 as presented and waived the reading;
Mr. DiZoglio seconded the motion to approve as presented.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: 4-0-2 APPROVED (Ms. Kumm and Mayor Zanni voted present)

4. Staff Reports

a. Superintendent's Monthly Report

Superintendent Scannell shared some additional announcements with the Committee. She had Mr. Barden come up.

Mr. Barden shared the great news about MHS Cheer Team how they won the 2016 State Championship, this after winning the fall championship.

Mr. Vogler – Please send a thank you letter from the Committee congratulating them and the coach.

Superintendent Scannell highlighted some great events - The Social Studies Dept. had Congresswoman Nike Tsongas come for a tremendous Q&A session for 2 hours with our 9th grade students. Students were great.

U.S. Atty. Ortiz will be coming next. The students already are doing research. Another great event for the students to see was Representative Campbell who hosed the Ways and Means Committee at Methuen High. Coming up is Diana DiZoglio for Young Woman's Career Day. The students made us proud.

Superintendent invited Mr. Lussier down to talk about a Google piece at Marsh Grammar School that just came down today. We were lucky to get this fantastic program.

Mr. Lussier – Our two technology specialists at the Marsh saw this on opportunity on the google website “Pioneer Program” and put in an application. They just found out they were accepted. Staff and specialists are on board and will be setting up a schedule so every 5th - 8th grade student can get involved. It is a card board box that folded carefully becomes a 3D box that the students can go on a virtual reality field trip. We will be having ½ hour sessions all day long.

Ms. Kumm – how can we get this program in the other grammar schools?

Mr. Lussier – we are looking into that. It just so happens they were on tour and going to be in our area when they applied.

Mayor – With the clubhouse opening I hope you have been in touch with the coaches in regards to the drop down from the ceiling.

Mr. Lussier – the Superintendent has been on top of this and we have all the pieces it is just a matter of working out a schedule.

Mr. Deeb – I do have a question on the Superintendents Report. On 3/15 there is going to be a presentation on data for student performance. My question what is being presented and can we get a copy

Dr. Kwong – The Guidance Director is going to the State House to present our research the past several years on our intervention program. He is going with the lead through MICA the Career Readiness and Renee Center. He will be doing a 15 minutes presentation in front of legislators to talk about our research.

Mr. Deeb - What exactly is the data you are sharing?

Ms. Kwong – It's a joint program with BU and the Renee Center on our targeted Interventions; supplemental math, reading plus and academic support programs are doing what they are suppose to do. The partnership is looking at what works and what we do next to keep improving.

Mr. Deeb – Can we get a copy of that report.

Dr. Kwong - Absolutely

Superintendent – There is a 3 year plan we have had in place..

(1) Graduation Update requested by Committee Member DiZoglio

Mr. Stella was called away and will speak to this later. Came back after 6d. See below

b. Instructional Technology Monthly Report

Ms. Kumm – Anymore detail on the ETA for the digital signage?

Mr. Lussier – Mr. Collopy is amending grants to make this possible. We are trying to put all the pieces together and looking at April vacation but in reality it will probably be a summer project.

Ms. DiNatale – I am glad to see the new Coding curriculum. Is this in addition to the curriculum or replacing the current curriculum?

Mr. Lussier – The 6-8 grade students will be working on this and continuing with the Google apps. The kids are learning very quickly and this will help them be ready for high school.

Ms. Kumm – can you also give us an update on the student management system. This is a huge undertaking.

Mr. Lussier – we have been unhappy with the student management system. The parent portal is my biggest headache it is a disconnect and it should be streamlined. We went out to bid, the team reconvened, but we haven't looked at prices yet. There is one vendor we haven't seen before so we are watching a webinar tomorrow to see if they are worth looking into.

Ms. DiNatale – Thank you for moving this along quickly.

Mr. DiZoglio – Who will be running the Alumni site like adding, posting and edit to it?

Mr. Lussier – we met to design, we built it but we haven't finalized the logistics yet.

Superintendent – with all the ideas given to Mr. Lussier he has put it together so far. I have to meet again with the team.

Mr. DiZoglio – I would love to help out if you would like.

c. Facilities and Grounds Monthly Update

None

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

Mr. Vogler – are we allowed to use the rowing?

Mayor – Phillips/Andover has a tremendous dock. They pay us a fee and we want to see if we can work out an agreement with them. Essex Rowing is nice for the kids but we could have teams and get into competitions.

e. Residency Monthly Update

None

f. School Resource Officers Monthly Update

Ms. DiNatale – is ALICE drills still on going?

Superintendent – Yes, they are now working with the after school programs in all the different buildings. Then they will go back into the K-8's and high school.

5. Old Business and Other Pending Matters

None

6. New Business

a. School Calendar for the End of School Year 2015/2016 – Discussion

Superintendent – This is just an FYI that Friday, June 17, 2016 as of today is hopefully the last day of school.

b. School Calendar 2016/2017 DRAFT

Superintendent – This is just a DRAFT. Unit A contract states that when Labor day falls on the 5,6 or 7th of September we start school the last week of August.

Ms. DiNatale – Parents were not happy that children were in school during elections. Can we address this on this calendar?

Superintendent –We will look at the September election but we have to have the minutes of the school day for kids to be in school. That would be a full day out. I am confident with what we have in place. We have 2 to 3 officers on site that day. Certain areas people cannot enter.

Ms. DiNatale – I know they were concerned not only with inside but outside in the parking lot was full while kids were being dismissed amongst the parking congestion. Can we take into consideration a full Professional Development Day that day?

Superintendent – Again we have to look at minutes that the kids are in school. That is what the State looks for.

Mr. Deeb – I happen to like this DRAFT. Happy to see you are being proactive.

c. Motion to Require that public appropriated money for any private test come to the School Committee for a vote requested by Committee Member Deeb

Mr. Deeb – I asked this be put on the agenda because budget time is approaching in as we move forward. I have real concerns of public monies being used for private companies. \$6,000 of our monies was spent on testing. I don't like our tax dollars being back doored for Common core and used to pay for these tests. Ultimately this is the funding of Common Core. Any publically appropriate money for private testing comes to the school committee for a vote. If I see tax payer dollars going to private testing I am going to have a real problem approving the budget.

MOTION: Mr. Deeb motioned for any private test money to be spent come to the School Committee for a vote.

There was no second to the motion

Motion was withdrawn.

4a(1) Mr. Stella – Attached is the price from Home Depot. Seating is going to cost approximately \$20,000 for 700 seats.

Mayor – how many students are graduating?

Mr. Stella - 500 for students, 120 is for the band, and the rest for staff. There is also an additional \$1,000 on there for the platform needed to put the stage on. We need to order soon it is a 4-6 week lead time.

Mayor – I think this was a rash judgment having it at the stadium. I thought it was a magnificent venue last year. I know there have been comments saying this is tradition. It is going to be done this year for a cost and there will be more costs down the road. This is not the end all cure all for the future. We have to look at a rain date if needed and also looking at the venue of grandparents sitting in bleaches with no backing and the Tsongas had great seating. We are moving forward this year. I see there is \$25,000 appropriated for graduation in the budget, was the Tsongas Arena same ball park figure or was it less or more?

Superintendent – It was in the same ball park. The \$25,000 budgeted goes to cap, gowns, diplomas, leather cases, sound system, and flowers. The chairs are an add on. Students walking in on is an add on. We have found no place to rent the chairs. We also have to think about where do we store them but we will figure that out. We only

have \$25,000 budgeted we do not have the add on for chairs or anything else we will need. It is a work in progress.

Mr. DiZoglio – My concern is the longevity here. Are we going to use Nicholson Stadium as a permanent venue or are we allowing students to have a say where they want graduation in the future. We are about to purchase chairs for \$20,000, I would hope that we are making this a permanent place. Is that not the case?

Mayor – These chairs aren't going to be good forever. They will be destroyed need to be replaced. We don't even know if they will still be available. It was my understanding we were going to rent them.

Mr. Stella – I searched everywhere they are just not available to rent.

Mayor – and the \$25,000 goes to what again?

Mr. Gosselin – caps, gowns, diplomas and leather covers the original price for renting chairs, we did not know we would need special chairs, sound system and stage. Those are the things we knew we would need.

Mayor – I can probably get 5 to 10,000 from the City but we would have to look at where we get the rest.

Mr. Vogler – Last year many of us wanted it here and the students wanted it at the Tsongas. We thought we were all set and the media went wild on tradition. Members of the City Council said they can pick up the cost. We are locked in so we have to have it here. Let's go to the Council and let them pick up the cost. If we make this investment we have to have it here the next 3 or 4 years. They wanted it here. Last year was a fantastic event. Some schools hold in the fieldhouse because of the costs. Because it rained two or three days one year we had it in the field house it was horrifically bad.

Mayor – I want you to know when the Superintendent and I made the decision we were going to rent the chairs. They now need to be bought. I will bring this up to the Council next Monday night.

Mr. Vogler - It is an unexpected expense. Thank you.

Ms. Kumm – I would like Dodie to work with the City to get a copy of their minutes. I know there were specific things said and a commitment was made. That 25,000 we budgeted is spoken for. I will not support any money coming out of our budget since a council chair and members went on record. Our facilities director is doing everything to keep the costs down.

Mr. DiZoglio – Superintendent mentioned there was going to be add-ons. Can you give me an estimate on these add-ons? About \$50-55,000 for the graduation

Mr. Stella – about that it could be more.

Mr. DiZoglio – It's for the students. It is their day. This is not about politics or about the City.

Mr. Deeb – I know we need it amazes me \$25 to \$30 for chairs can you speak to why these chairs are needed and what is different about them.

Mr. Stella – They are a full bar chair and rounded so it will no go through the turf. It is so porous.

Mayor – We went the extra step an added a cushion for 200,000 for many reasons like concussions. We are looking at 700 chairs going on the turf and need these chairs to protect the turf. I can raise 5-10,000 on my own. By the next meeting we can hopefully move forward.

Ms. DiNatale – Can we reach out to those that have already bought chairs.

Mr. Stella – We did check no one out there wants to let us use them.

d. District-wide Parent Survey Summary requested by Committee Member DiNatale

Dr. Kwong – At the 2nd week of December parent conferences we got a lot of parent feedback. At MHS we only received 8t from a connect ed call that went out. She went over the baseline district-wide parent survey data in the packet.

Mr. Vogler – Happy to see #6 and #7 were high percentages. Do we have evening parent teacher conferences?

Dr. Kwong – Only at the fall one not at the spring one.

Ms. Kumm - #4 was great you we get a general idea on this one.

Dr. Kwong – Overall all 5 buildings were in the top two responses for all personnel in all buildings. Grammar schools have shared with their teams and some changes you might already be seeing. Some schools might even want to have some focus groups.

Ms. Kumm – will this summary go on the website to show that we used the responses

Ms. DiNatale - #1 – reading the comments it seems parents want that communication.

Since I've been on the Committee there has been even more. I would like to see you share the school specific data with us. I am a little disappointed parent comments were not made available to us. Maybe you can share it in a digital format. Parents took the time to respond and I want to take the time to read them.

Dr. Kwong – absolutely we will make it available to you. But remember if there is only 1 or 2 answers that are the same that is not a trend.

Mr. DiZoglio – Out of the 1200 people can we break down the grade level?

Dr. Kwong – Yes. Why?

Mr. DiZoglio – To see what grade responded the most.

Dr. Kwong – Because it is done at parent conference time you might see a more wide spread range. But I can check at the high school for you.

Mayor – Some parents cant do it during the day. To get more parents involved it should be offered at night time. My feeling parent teacher conferences should be ongoing and should be in the evening.

Dr. Kwong – Teachers are fantastic at working with parents.

Superintendent – Midway progress reports go out and teachers will meet with parents of struggling students.

Mr. Vogler – Does high school do parent conferences?

Superintendent – no that is a contractual piece.

Mr. Deeb – I understand there are a lot of collective bargaining issues here. The time I've been on this board no parent has complained saying they cannot get a meeting with a teacher or administrator.

e. Purchase of a Van for Student Transportation - Discussion

Superintendent – we have had an ongoing discussion the last 3 years about the cost of transportation being over the top. There are price increases that are yearly and are not a part of a contract. Small groups like the mock trial cost \$383 for 20 students.

Mr. Gosselin – This is just a discussion at this point. It would be cost effective for the small groups of 12 or 10. A used 2014 van would cost approximately \$28,000.

Superintendent – Last year \$15,000 was spent on small groups.

Mr. Gosselin – we are already up to \$14,000 this year.

Superintendent – It is time to give this some serious thought.

Mr. Deeb – Who will drive these vans and what about the liability part?

Mr. Gosselin – If we go this road I will then be looking into this.

Mr. Vogler – Great idea. Many school systems own their own. A 15 passenger van may not be enough. I would like the possibility of looking at a larger van or full bus. You are going to have a savings.

Ms. Kumm – This is a great plan.

Mr. Gosselin – Looking at vehicles not needing drivers with different licenses and vehicles the DPW can service.

Ms. DiNatale – Can you look into a lease rather than a purchase it may be more cost effective, we wouldn't have to pay for repairs. If you are thinking one vehicle yes a 15 person bus but I agree with Mr. Vogler getting a bigger bus that can hold a classroom also they can use it for fieldtrips.

Mr. DiZoglio – I think bigger bus also groups like the golf team and the JROTC travel with large equipment.

Mayor – I think we all agree to move ahead with this process.

7. Finance and Operations

a. Expenditure Report - Monthly

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

DISCUSSION:

No Action

b. Revolving Funds Report – Monthly

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

DISCUSSION:

No Action

2. Methuen High School Auditorium Update

c. Grants Report – Monthly

Ms. DiNatale – are all the grade 5-8 teachers taking the courses.

Dr. Kwong – no 15 slots per course for grades 5-8 science teachers.

d. Student Activity Accounts - Monthly

Business Administrator Ian Gosselin 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:

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

No Action

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

None

10. Business from the Committee

a. Building Committee Update by S.C. and Bldg. Committee

Mayor - The top lot finished and Consigli agreed to pay \$31,000 of the \$62,000.

Other Business from the Committee

Mayor - Amerisco is finishing the Police station heat than moving on to the ice rink. The outdoor and indoor track will hopefully than get done.

Mr. Vogler – I am hoping a Capital Improvement Plan is being put together for us.

Superintendent – It is a work in progress. Mr. Gosselin, Mr. Stella and I have been working on this.

11. Executive Session

a. Negotiation

b. Litigation

No Action

12. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss at this Business Session, Mayor Zanni entertained a motion to end the Business Meeting and go into Executive Session 8:48 PM.

MOTION: Mr. Vogler moved to adjourn this Business Session at 8:48 p.m. and enter into Executive Session

Ms. Kumm seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL to enter into Executive Session:

ROLL CALL:

Mr. Dennis D.J. Deeb - Yes

Mr. Robert Vogler - YES

Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm - YES

Ms. Joyce Campagnone – ABSENT

Mr. Nicholas DiZoglio –YES

Ms. Jana DiNatale - YES

Mayor Stephen N. Zanni, Chairperson - YES

VOTE: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,

Deidre Runge, Public Recorder

Methuen Public Schools