

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES

OF

THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

WORKSHOP/BUSINESS MEETING

OF

MARCH 14, 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:
MARTHA SIROIS, PUBLIC RECORDER

MARCH 14, 2018

**TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES
METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
WORKSHOP/BUSINESS MEETING
MARCH 14, 2018**

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

ROLL CALL

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

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Robert F. Vogler
Mr. Nicholas DiZoglio, Vice Chairperson
Mr. Dennis D.J. Deeb, Secretary
Ms. Jana Zanni Pesce

MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms. Susan M. Nicholson
Ms. Jana DiNatale
Mayor James P. Jajuga, Chairperson

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs. Judith Scannell, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Ian Gosselin, Business Administrator
Ms. Martha Sirois, Public Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Nicholas DiZoglio called this Workshop Session to order at 6:30PM with a quorum of members in attendance, and listed above.

Flag Salute-Mr. DiZoglio

Mr. DiZoglio-Ms. DiNatale apologizes for not attending this meeting. She is away and her flight home was cancelled. Ms. Nicholson sends her regards. She is home recovering from a mild heart attack.

FY19 New Proposed Positions

Superintendent-Per the request of Mr. Vogler, she gave a breakdown (handout) of the proposed new positions that have been added to the budget. These are positions that have been put off for a number of years being deleted from previous budgets. She reviewed each position and gave the reasons why she wants these positions added to the budget.

MARSH

Lower School Health Teacher-The Lower School Health teacher was a Pilot program this year. She would like to continue these positions. These positions are helpful with Mental Health Issues, Physical Health, Wellbeing and Drug Use.

Newcomer Reading Teacher (2)-These teachers would teach the students that have issues with taking test due to language barriers or transient. The students would be assigned to these classrooms 4-6 weeks before they are placed in a classroom.

ESL Teacher-Due to demographics another teacher needs to be added.

Psychologist-This school does not have one.

BCBA-Certified Guidance counselor deals with heavy duty issues.

Bilingual Parent Liaison-Help with translation.

Mr. Vogler-Can the Psychologist be a psychologist/social worker, other than a psychologist/guidance counselor?

Superintendent-No. They have different qualifications.

Mr. Vogler-Does a BCBA deal with psychological issues?

Superintendent-Yes. She is trying to do everything she can to keep students in school.

CGS

Lower School Health Teacher-They do not have one.

Newcomer Reading Teacher (2)-This school supports the ELL Program. These teachers would teach the students that have issues with taking test due to language barriers or transient. The students would be assigned to these classrooms 4-6 weeks, before they are placed in a classroom.

ESL Teacher-Excel Program is at this school.

Psychologist-This school does not have one.

Bilingual Parent Liaison-Help with translation.

Intensive Program Nurse, Intensive Integrated PK, Intensive Integrated PK PA (2)-These are all Intensive Pre School jobs. There is space available at this school to add an addition Intensive Pre School. It is cost effective to hire a nurse for this program.

APE Teacher (District)-This is a Physical Education teacher, District Wide to work with students with disabilities. It has been difficult to try and find someone for this position.

Mr. Vogler-We do not have an APE teacher?

Superintendent-No, they resigned.

Mr. Vogler-Will the PK nurse affect Medicare?

Superintendent-Some Medicare money will go towards the PK nurse salary.

Mr. Deeb-The job of the Superintendent is to advocate for optimal services. This is a wish list and we are not going to get all of these positions. We need to be fiscally responsible.

Ms. Zanni Pesce-When they talked about school safety and what transpired in Florida, is hiring these counselors a reflection of issues that have been happening?

Superintendent-Over the past 3-4 years we have added these positions. Due to cuts these positions have been eliminated from those budgets. As we watch the mental health issues accelerate in our schools, this speaks to what we are seeing across the Country.

Ms. Zanni Pesce-Which positions would these be?

Superintendent-The BCBA and the psychologist.

Ms. Zanni Pesce-Do we currently have psychologist in the schools?

Superintendent-Yes, in 2 schools.

Timony

Lower School Health Teacher-The Lower School Health teacher was a Pilot program this year. She would like to continue these positions. These positions are helpful with Mental Health Issues, Physical Health, Wellbeing and Drug Use.

Newcomer Reading Teacher (2)-These teachers would teach the students that have issues with taking test due to language barriers or transient. The students would be assigned to these classrooms 4-6 weeks, before they are placed in a classroom.

ESL Teacher-Demographics.

Bilingual Parent Liaison-Help with translation.

Tenney

Lower School Health Teacher-The Lower School Health teacher was a Pilot program this year. She would like to continue these positions. These positions are helpful with Mental Health Issues, Physical Health, Wellbeing and Drug Use.

Newcomer Reading Teacher (2)-These teachers would teach the students that have issues with taking test due to language barriers or transient. The students would be assigned to these classrooms 4-6 weeks, before they are placed in a classroom.

ESL Teacher-Demographics.

BCBA-Certified Guidance counselor deals with heavy duty issues.

Bilingual Parent Liaison-Help with translation.

Superintendent-There is a Psychologist at the Tenney and Timony. These psychologists go beyond just helping the students. They run programs for the parents and help with the entire family unit.

Methuen High School

Foreign Language Teacher-The classroom numbers are high.

Social Studies Teacher-The classroom numbers are high.

Media Specialist-This position was eliminated a few years ago. We need this to fulfill the needs of students looking for books and references for writing papers.

Part time Teachers Academic Support Lab (4)-They would like to keep the Media Center open 6:00AM until 6:00PM for students. These would be certified teachers and these positions would be split so they would be part time. The teachers would give academic support to the students. They feel this will help with the MCAS scores.

Bilingual Parent Liaison

Guidance Counselor

Nurse-This position had been cut from a previous budget. NEASC, which does the high school accreditation, spoke to this and was not happy about this position not being filled.

Mr. Vogler-How many counselors do we currently have?

Superintendent-5

Mr. Vogler-That is 1 per every 400 students. What is your vision for these counselors' duties?

Superintendent-We are hoping to reconfigure. Mr. Crocker is District Wide and he is stretched every which way. He is working on the entire mental health issue in the District. He also supervises and evaluates every guidance counselor in the District. He also does all the work of a department chair; it is just not meshing together correctly. Principal Barden and Mr. Crocker feel the needs of the students is not being met and that they can do a better job. We need someone to concentrate on the post secondary planning with our students. They also need a lead person to take over the Northern Essex Community College and the Middlesex College partnerships. Salem State University has contacted them about a partnership but she needs someone who has the time to put this together. Salem State University is looking to Methuen as the school in the Merrimack Valley to work with one on one to expand their program and they are looking at us as a Pilot. Mr. Crocker is getting more involved with the K-8 schools and also taking care of the high school and it is not working. They are looking at something to fit their needs.

Mr. Vogler-The only problem with that is the \$58,000.00 salary. John Crocker does a great job. He is glad to hear about being lead with Northern Essex, Middlesex and Salem State. This will be your sixth counselor. He would suggest a bilingual counselor. He would be adverse to a department chair. He agrees with the Bilingual Parent Liaison. He would like to see an expansion of different languages. He does not want this to be an administrative position.

Mr. DiZoglio-There are 8 counselors listed in the budget.

Superintendent-They have different roles. Some deal with Special Education students. When they look at this position it is not much money. MHS has struggled. They deal with every walk of life; students, parents, academic levels, and transient students. How do we fill the needs of these students? Some days the counselors are only dealing with issues. The reporting for these issues is massive.

Mr. DiZoglio-He agrees with a guidance counselor and he hopes they are pushing towards secondary schools. He does not agree with a Department Chair position. Mr. Crocker is doing a great job with mental health.

Districtwide

District Wide Instructional Technology Coach-They decimated the Technology Department in last years budget. Ed Lussier is doing all of our new Technology programs as well as all the Professional Development. He is working until 8:00-9:00 at night to get his regular job done. It is time to look at his department and fill the needs of his department.

FRC Bilingual Parent Liaison and FRC Enrollment Specialist-The numbers going through this department are high. This needs to be a thorough process. This department does constant follow up to get documents.

Maintenance Craftsman-Mr. Gosselin stated that this is a position for a plumber. This position has been vacant the past year.

Mental Health Coordinator (District)-Superintendent Scannell removed this from the list.

Network Operator-They are in need of another one. The Network Operators also come into the buildings in the evening for meetings.

Part Time Maint. Secretary-Mr. Stella does not currently have a secretary. This person would split their time between Mr. Stella and the reception area.

Student Services Bookkeeper-They did not have a secretary last year. Gina Bozek and her secretary have been doing the work.

Ms. Zanni Pesce-She would like the person hired as the FRC Parent Liaison to be bilingual. She would like the person to speak English, Spanish and one other language.

Mr. Vogler-He understands the need for the Technology position. He agrees with the Maintenance craftsman; however he feels the pay is too low and may not attract anyone. What will the part time Maintenance secretary duties be?

Superintendent-She would put this person in the Family Resource Center and they would also work with Bruce Stella.

Mr. Deeb-He has no problem with the Maintenance craftsman. He understands why they need a Technology Coach but he would like to suggest that tech savvy teachers coordinate Professional Development for a stipend. He also wanted to let the Superintendent know she did a great job presenting her case.

Mr. DiZoglio-Do they have a BCBA or a psychologist at the high school?

Superintendent-Yes.

Mr. Vogler-This is a fantastic wish list. He would like to see what the Superintendent feels is essential positions. He can't support 2.3 Million, maybe 1.4 Million.

Superintendent-Two years ago the cuts and layoffs were massive. Last year was also difficult. She will go back to the Leadership Team and look at these positions. She will speak with the Mayor. She feels this is what the District needs. The District cannot keep doing this. Kids have different needs. Teachers work hard and need support staff. She has not come to the School Committee to ask for any Administration positions.

Mr. Gosselin will now speak to the Extraordinary Expenditures.

Mr. Gosselin-Our buildings are good but getting old. This is the list of improvements that need to be done.

Mr. Gosselin reviewed the list of Extraordinary Expenditures.

Superintendent-Additional fencing at the Marsh is not on the list. She will get that information for the Committee. The addition of Rangerland is a positive. We have lots of interest and it is a self sufficient program. A camera security system will be installed in every school building. She will be able to see inside every school on her cell phone. It will be live and recorded. We can work out a payment plan with Meraki cameras.

Mr. DiZoglio-We did a Capital Improvement plan last year, so these repairs are no surprise. He is concerned that as they wait to do these repairs, the prices are going up.

Mr. Deeb-He agrees with Mr. DiZoglio that he and Mr. Vogler have done a lot of work on the Capital Improvement plan. They need to address the majority of items on this list. If not, it will lead to further problems down the road. He thanked the Superintendent and Mr. Gosselin for bringing this forward.

Mr. Vogler-He would like an updated of the previous Capital Improvement Plan excluding work that has been done. He wants security cameras. These items should be in a Capital Improvement plan.

Mr. DiZoglio-He would like better seating at the Baseball Field. We are going to start charging for the games but there is not enough seating.

Superintendent-Our next meeting with the Mayor, his Chief of Staff, Mr. Gosselin and herself working on the Medicaid and Chargeback document is scheduled for next week. Keep in mind the cuts over the past 5 years. She would like to change the date of her parent information meeting scheduled for next week on the 21st. She doesn't think they are ready for that meeting.

Mr. Vogler-He would like to see Budget discussion listed on the agenda for 3/26 and 3/28.

Superintendent-They could use the date of the cancelled parent information meeting as their next Budget Workshop meeting if the Committee would like.

Mr. DiZoglio-He and the Committee agree to make 3/21 a Budget Workshop meeting.

MOTION-Mr. Vogler made a motion to change the meeting on 3/21 from a Parent Information meeting into a Budget/Workshop Meeting and make it known that the meeting on 3/28 will not be for Budget Approval.
Ms. Zanni Pesce seconded

Discussion

Mr. Deeb- Point of Clarification, What is the purpose of the meeting on 3/28? Is it being cancelled?

Mr. Vogler-He believes the Superintendent set up the 3/28 meeting to discuss legal issues.
Superintendent-The meeting on 3/28 was a request by some of the School Committee Members. They asked if legal council could come in to update them on some new Mass General Laws and for the new members to get to know them. They wanted to update the Committee on meeting rules and Robert's Rules. They will answer any questions the Committee may have.

Mr. DiZoglio-He asked Mr. Vogler to restate his motion.

MOTION-Mr. Vogler motioned that there be a Workshop/Business Meeting on 3/26, 3/28 and 3/21. Those meetings will deal with Budget and Legal issues will also be included on 3/28 and they will be posted as such.

Mr. Deeb seconded for discussion.

Discussion

Mr. Deeb-He understands the intent behind what Mr. Vogler is suggesting but he thinks to have a meeting on the Budget on 3/21 and then again on 3/26 may be too many meetings to close together. Mr. Vogler also wants the 3/28 meeting to also include Budget discussions. He does not understand why they would need a meeting on 3/21.

Mr. Gosselin-He has a prior commitment on 3/28 which is why that meeting date was chosen for the Attorney to make the presentation. If they do have a Budget meeting on 3/28 he is not sure he will be available to make the meeting.

Superintendent-The meeting on 3/26 is a regular School Committee meeting. Let's meet on 3/21 and see if there is a need for another meeting.

Mr. Vogler-Can they include an Executive Session at the 3/26 meeting. The School Committee has not given any direct as of yet on certain items in the Budget.

Superintendent-That can be added to the posting.

Ms. Zanni Pesce-She would like to keep the 3/28 meeting strictly legal items since the Business Manager will not be at the meeting.

Mr. Vogler withdrew his motions.

Mr. DiZoglio-Is there any other motions on the table?

Mr. Vogler-No

Mr. Gosselin-You would like to discuss Budget on 3/21 and 3/26. Legal on 3/28. It will all be posted and will include Executive Session on 3/26.

MOTION-Mr. Vogler made a motion to discuss Budget on 3/21 and 3/26. Legal on 3/28. It will all be posted and will include Executive Session on 3/26 if necessary.

Ms. Zanni Pesce seconded the Motion

Discussion-None

VOTE 4-0-0

Mr. Deeb-He has 25 points and notes and some of those questions were answered tonight with some of the information that was passed out to the Committee. He would like to know the numbers from the Mayor. He wished the Mayor was at the meeting to be part of the discussions. He appreciated Mr. Fahey being at the meetings and bring information back to the Mayor. He counted 127 student outplacements. The number he has in mind from a few years ago is 94. Apparently the number of students we are sending out of District has gone up significantly. He would like to see at the meeting on 3/21 a breakdown of the numbers from the past couple of years and possibly any projected numbers. The Out of District tuitions is a huge piece of the Budget. He will hold the remainder of his questions until the meeting on 3/21.

Superintendent-She will get the information Mr. Deeb has requested. She would like the Committee to keep in mind that the Out of District placements go up 3-4% each year in their tuitions. It is difficult to project the numbers from year to year. We cannot project families that will be moving into Methuen. Last year we had a family move into Methuen with 4 children that were all outplacements. The out placed students have significant disabilities and the outplacement is best for these students.

Mr. Fahey-He met with the Mayor today and he wanted to share his thoughts with the Committee. They have scheduled a meeting for next Tuesday on the Chargebacks and Medicaid issues. These issues are a priority for him knowing the impact it will have on the School Budget. The request for additional personnel has not come as a surprise. The expectation that the new Mayor had was that the School Department would submit their desired budget under ideal circumstances and the Committee would fashion something they would submit to the City. The Mayors desire is that the administration prioritized these requests, as they are doing with every City department. One of the Mayor's top priority plans is a Capital Improvement Plan. They have retained the Collins Center to do a comprehensive City Wide Capital Improvement Plan. This will not be complete for the upcoming FY'19 Budget. They will start working with the Collins Center this month and it will take about 6 months to complete. They do not plan on having a Capital Improvement Plan to the City Council until September. All City departments as well as the School Department will be invited to meet with the Collins Center for their input.

***ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further business to discuss at this Workshop Session, Mr. Dizoglio entertained a motion to conclude the Workshop Session for the evening at 8:21 pm.

MOTION: Mr. Vogler moved to adjourn the Workshop Session at 8:21 pm.
Mr. Deeb seconded the motion

VOTE: 4-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Sirois, Public Recorder

Methuen Public Schools