

**TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC RECORD**

**OF**

**THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**BUSINESS SESSION**

**OF**

**MARCH 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**  
**MARCH 9, 2015**

This meeting of the Methuen School Committee was held in the Great Hall of Searles Building, City Hall, and was posted for 6:30 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  
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  
Student Representative was unable to come to tonight's meeting (snow date) had another commitment.

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Zanni called this meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with a quorum of members in attendance, and listed above.

**ATTENDANCE**

**ROLL CALL:**

Mr. Dennis D.J. Deeb	Yes
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:** Mr. Deeb asked to move Item 10b "S.C. Policy Review Sub-Committee Update by S.C. Member Deeb" before Item 5a. The reason being was 10b addresses some of the items in 5-"Old Business".

**MOTION:** Mr. Vogler moved to amend the agenda and move 10b to 4f  
Ms. Kumm seconded the motion to amend the agenda

**VOTE:** 7-0-0 UNANIMOUS to amend the agenda

**VOTE:** 7-0-0 UNANIMOUS to accept the agenda as amended

**a. Flag Salute**

Liam Doherty, a 4<sup>th</sup> grade student at the Tenney Grammar School, led the Committee in Opening Exercises of this meeting.

**2. Participation by Others**

**a. SOAR Award**

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

**b. Student-**

**1. Superintendent's Academic Excellence Awards**

Caroline Mulligan ranked #1 out of 433 students and Shane Godek ranked #2 out of 433 students were honored for their academic achievements.

**c. Staff-None**

**d. Public-None**

The Mayor had a 2 minute recess at 6:45 p.m.

**3. Approval of Minutes -**

**No Action**

**4. Staff Reports**

**a. Superintendent's Monthly Report-**Superintendents Scannell reviewed her Monthly Report with the School Committee. She talked about the JROTC Academic achievement and how proud she was of them. She told the Committee about the "Best Buddies Fashion Show" and how outstanding the students all looked in their gowns and suits. She told the Committee she will be inviting one of our students who won the "Outstanding Young Teen" award next month.

**b. Instructional Technology Monthly Report**

Ms. Kumm asked the Superintendent if she could speak a little on the issues at the MHS T.V. Studio.

- Superintendent – There was a design flaw that we have been working on the last 8 months with the contractors. Right now we have a patch job our technology staff has done so we can at least use the studio. Sometimes we get a picture but no voice or a voice with no picture. The problem seems to be that Comcast and Verizon cannot mesh. I will have Dave Shaheen come to our next meeting and tell you a little more. The good news is we are getting there.
- Ms. Kumm – Since it is a design flaw will they be covering it? And will it affect the credits students would be getting on the courses that were offered?
- Superintendent – Their credits will be all set. Mr. Shaheen tweaked the curriculum so that the flaws would not affect the class credits. Also we will be going to the building committee to try to get money back.
- Mr. Vogler – I toured the high school the other day and I want to commend Mr. Shaheen. He told me the vendor delivered the wrong equipment like brand, older model.... Again I commend Mr. Shaheen and the technology staff they jumped in and have it working some.

- Mayor – I will look at this further tomorrow. We do not finish the payments until we sign off that all is complete.
- Superintendent – I know that the TV channel is down with School Committee contact information but all your information is on our website.
- Mr. Sweet – can you tell us what the process is when an iPad is broken and the turnaround time to get it back.
- Superintendent – We have someone dedicated to this 2 hours a day in the media center. If it is a broken screen or... it is suppose to take 2-4 weeks to get it back. Unfortunately sometimes it takes 6-8 weeks. We have backups that we do give to the children but they do need to return them every day.

**c. Facilities and Grounds Monthly Update**

- Ms. Kumm thanked Mr. Stella and his teams for all the snow removal on the roofs. I was hoping to see the costs for this job.
- Mr. Gosselin – We tried to do the best we could by keeping down costs by working custodians shifts to stay away from overtime. Mr. Stella and I were on the roofs and we were very impressed with the job they did removing the snow and drifts. He handed out a spreadsheet for the Committee to review of the costs the school department submitted to the City to submit to MEMA/FEMA for reimbursement. The Bottom number is the amount we will be asking to be reimbursed. MEMA/FEMA let us request for the four major storms.
- Ms. Kumm – How did this get submitted?
- Mayor – Mr. Gosselin submitted to the City and we submit with our request also. It comes back with a breakdown of what they approve and we will get 75% of the approved charges back. The school gets theirs and the City keeps theirs.
- Ms. Kumm – How are all our roofs?
- Superintendent – Mr. Stella, Seniors and Mr. Gosselin have gone up on the roofs each storm and kept up from day one. We knew from previous years what to expect. We have also contacted the state to come in and check the roofs.
- Ms. DiNatale – I am please we were on top of it. Watching other schools and buildings roofs were concerning.

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

- Ms. Kumm – How are they soliciting to get parent involvement?
- Superintendent – Mr. Osgood has a great website, sending flyers home and working with the Health Teachers.

**e. MHS Graduation Update**

1. Superintendent – Told the Committee to refer to the copy of the survey she placed in their packet. Seniors at Methuen High took the survey. 78% of the students chose the Tsongas as an off-site venue and 72% chose the Field house as an on-site venue. She went on to tell them that Kristen Thomas, Associate Principal at Methuen High School is checking into some of the concerns we have like availability (dates) and prices (some money is budgeted in the budget for an onsite graduation where off site there will be additional charges not budgeted for.)
- Mayor - The Tsongas would allow 5 or so guests per student where the field house would allow only 3 guests.

2. Tsongas parking if other events are going on in Lowell

- Mr. Sweet – How is this being paid for?
  - Superintendent – We will have to come to you if it goes over the budget we have set aside for graduation. The lines are drying up.
  - Mayor – I will have a thought of how to come up with the money.
  - Ms. Kumm – I agree the Tsongas is a great venue but you better make sure there is no events going on that will use the garage. I would hate to have families have to fight for parking and walk a distance to the graduation.
  - Mr. Sweet – This Committee didn't want the project to effect graduation on the field. This class that has given up so much for 4 years.
  - Mayor – The construction starts next month and has to be complete for September. This is a massive project and we cannot hold off any part of it. There is probably not even going to be a slow down on the weekends. I really cannot do it.
  - Mr. Sweet – we are all supportive of this project. No misconceptions it is just we asked for that months ago.
  - Ms. Fawcett – I want to say I am a little sad for this group and whatever the plan should be it should be spectacular for this Senior Class for all their sacrifices.
- f. (10b) – S.C. Policy Review Sub-Committee Update by S.C. Member Deeb**
- Mr. Deeb told the Committee that he, Mr. Vogler, the Superintendent and Dodie Runge (to do minutes) Finished reviewing the policies in the book. We will be voting tonight to eliminate many policies. When all the new policies are finished the Superintendent and Ms. Runge will create a new book minus the old policies and with all new policies.
  - Ms. DiNatale – I was wondering if we could fix the index it is very hard to find things in the policy
  - Mr. Deeb – Yes
  - Mayor – I appreciate the updates.

**5. Old Business and Other Pending Matters**

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

**MOTION:** Mr. Vogler moved to approve the second read  
Mr. Deeb seconded the motion

**DISCUSSION:** None

**VOTE:** 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

**• Revise and Readopt S.C. Policy #BF – Annual Report to School Committee – Second Read**

**MOTION:** Mr. Deeb moved to approve the second read  
Mr. Vogler seconded the motion

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Deeb thanked the Mayor for getting them a copy of the Annual report. He said it was very well prepared and very informative.

**VOTE:** 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

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

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

- DISCUSSION:** Mr. Deeb said he would be voting no on this policy. It is a matter of principal. This affirms state and federal policy which I am against.
- VOTE:** 5-2-0 Approved (Mr. Deeb and Mayor Zanni voted no)
- **Revise and Readopt S.C. Policy #BBC-S.C. Assignments to Committees-First Read**  
**MOTION:** Mr. Vogler moved to approve the second read  
Ms. Kumm seconded the motion  
**DISCUSSION:**  
**VOTE:** 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED
  - **S.C. Policy Sub Committee Recommendations of Policies to Eliminate–Approval**  
**MOTION:** Mr. Vogler moved to approve the second read  
Mr. Sweet seconded the motion  
**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Kumm thanked the sub-committee for hearing Ms. DiNatale’s request and placing the eliminated policies on line.  
**VOTE:** 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

## 6. New Business

- a. **School Calendar for the End of the School Year 2014/2015 - Discussion**
  - Superintendent – I wanted to let the School Committee hear this first hand. There were 4 units this had to go to because of negotiation pieces. I asked them to consider turning some of the ½ days into full days to give our students some needed time on learning. This would not make up any snow days just give our students time on learning. I also asked them to consider two Saturdays in March. Both would have been full days and would have moved our last day of school back to June 24<sup>th</sup>. These were both voted down so I am announcing to the School Committee the calendar will stay the same and as of today the last day of school is June 26, 2015.
  - Mr. Vogler - I am very disappointed. It seems throughout the state time on learning is needed. We lost 7 days of MCAS time. It disappoints me they did not grab the two Saturdays it would have been 2 full days of learning before MCAS testing. I would love to have the Union Presidents come and tell us their views. I also want to say right now that the last week of school better be meaningful.
  - Superintendent – Yes and we were looking for six ½ days for K-8 and four ½ days for the high school to be full days of learning. The Leadership Team is disappointed also but we need to move forward. They think that June 26<sup>th</sup> is OK for the last day of school.
  - Ms. Kumm – As a parent and Committee member I am very disappointed. I think that at least the three ½ days should have been considered. This could have been time to help our kids that are struggling. I want to know how the attendance is the last week of June. I expect exemplar attendance and full buildings.
  - Mr. Deeb – I agree completely with Ms. Kumm on the early release days.
  - Ms. DiNatale – Can we move the early release days to the end of the year?
  - Superintendent – Half days were built into the calendar for the new evaluation tool, rubrics, and professional development. This also allowed for working parents to know in advance to help with daycare... Now that we are getting caught up we can look at them differently.

**b. School Calendar 2015-2016 - Discussion**

- Mayor – I want to thank the Superintendent for giving us options to look at. I think parents should get to see these and voice their opinion. I think we should have a line item in the budget to allow us to go and see what is going on out in other parts of the country.
- Mr. Sweet – I think parent input is important. Is this March vacation week what was put to a vote in Andover, won, and one week later turned over.
- Superintendent – Yes. Parents were not in favor of it.
- Mayor – Taunton does it.
- Superintendent – Yes Mayor they did do it last year but this year they are back to two weeks. All communities that have tried to go to one week vacations have gone back to two weeks. The Superintendent Google survey shows 90% of districts are going with the early start at the end of August instead of the one vacation week. The Athletic Directors asked whatever they do “please” mirror each other to help them work out sport scheduling.
- Mayor – I think we should spear head it. I’m looking at top notch private schools and they do it.
- Mr. Vogler – I agree we should have a survey. But as far as the March vacation that only picks up three days. I have been talking to teachers and parents and students below high school are overwhelmed. They have lots of pressure on them and so much work they need the February and April vacations. Teaching elementary is a tough job. Also teachers from other communities and states would have different vacations then their own children.
- Ms. Kumm – I think this comes down to a survey and what the people want. Does anyone have a March vacation? And what about the ½ professional days?
- Superintendent – No-one has a March vacation. As far as the ½ days we would like to reduce them. We are going to be adding this piece to the survey. I will have it out next Tuesday.
- Ms. Fawcett – I like that we are going to have a survey to see what they are thinking about.
- Superintendent – I believe we will try to build in some Saturday make up dates on the calendar.
- Mr. Deeb – I think surveying the teachers is a great thing this way they get the same information as the parents.

**c. FY’15 Budget Calendar - Discussion**

- Superintendent – We will be using the next two workshops to roll out the budget to you. We can have the March 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Timony Grammar School.
- Ms. Kumm – I would like to see if we could change the April 27<sup>th</sup> workshop I will be away.
- Mr. Vogler – Me too.
- Superintendent – I will have Dodie send out an email.

**d. Timony Grammar School Bully Initiative Buddy Bench Gift/Donation - Approval**

**MOTION:** Mr. Vogler moved to accept the Buddy Bench and send a thank you from the Committee.

Mr. Deeb seconded the motion

**DISCUSSION:**

**VOTE:** 7-0-0 UNANIMOUS

**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 that contractual services are upside down due to snow removal. They have a budget freeze and not approving anything at this time.

**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:**

- Ms. Kumm – Any update on grants?
- Superintendent – No. This will be forefront on budget talks. There are many program assistants positions that will be gone.
- Ms. Fawcett – Are all our kindergartens certified?
- Superintendent – Yes.
- Ms. Fawcett – Does the certification come with class sizes noted on it?
- Superintendent – I do not believe so.

**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 – I had asked if we can get some information on those that are on leave of absences.
- Superintendent – I spoke to legal. He said lots of the information we cannot give out. Also said we give too much information.
- Mayor – I will also have this checked 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.

**b. School Resource Officers Monthly Update**

A monthly report was given on each of the schools.

**10. Business from the Committee**

**a. Chargebacks' Sub-Committee Update by S.C. Member Fawcett.**

- Ms. Fawcett – We just met today. We are very fortunate to have an agreement with the City. We have more knowledge now about what is acceptable and what is not. Some are legit but there are at least 3 areas that are discretionary. These are the areas will be looking at.
- Mayor – Put a list together for me and I will have Tom Kelly weigh in. I think the agreement is a good one.
- Ms. Fawcett – We were going to invite Mr. Kelly to a meeting.

**b. S.C. Policy Review Sub-Committee Update by S.C. Member Deeb**

Was Moved to 4f

**c. S.C. Energy Sub-Committee – Update and Recommendation**

- Mr. Gosselin – Siemens has requested to come in and meet with you. They will be coming to the workshop in March for a 15/20 minute presentation before the budget piece.
- Mayor - We are still going ahead with Ameresco. If you want you can come in I can share with you and look at the overall picture.

Ms. Kumm asked if we could keep all Sub-Committees listed here.

Superintendent told the Committee to contact Dodie if you are interested in sitting on one of the negotiation Committees. We will be sitting with the Administrators, Unit D – Secretaries, Café and custodian.

Mr. Sweet told the Committee that the high school principal search was going well. We had more than thirty applicants nationwide. We have cut it down to eight applicants.  
Superintendent – After we interview they can move forward 3 or 1 or even none.

## **11. Executive Session**

- a. Negotiations**
- b. Litigation**

## **12. Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss at this Business Session, Mayor Zanni entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 pm, thus concluding this Business Session for the evening.

**MOTION:** Mr. Vogler moved to adjourn this Business Session at 8:42 p.m.  
Mr. Deeb seconded the motion.  
**VOTE:** 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,  
Deidre Runge, Public Recorder  
Methuen Public Schools