

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES

OF

THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

PUBLIC HEARING FY'17 BUDGET
ADOPTION OF FY'17 BUDGET

OF

JUNE 13, 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
PUBLIC HEARING AND BUDGET ADOPTION FY'17
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This Public Hearing and Budget Adoption FY'17 of the Methuen School Committee, was posted for 6:00 p.m. in the Media Center at Methuen High School.

ROLL CALL:

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

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

MOTION: Mr. Vogler motioned to accept the agenda and begin the Public Hearing
Ms. Kumm seconded the motion.

VOTE: 7-0-0 APPROVED

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mayor – I had a two hour meeting with the Superintendent we haven't finalized a number yet. I have to get a consensus from the City Council as well. We hold off the vote to adopt the budget until Wednesday, June 15, 2016 so I can digest what we discussed and come up with a budget that is good for the public. I do want to hear from the public tonight.

Donna Gogas, MEA President, 37 Squire Armour Rd., Windham, NH – noted that the budget of \$71 million being presented is shy of level funding. She read her email that she had sent to school staff. She stated the following:

- What happened to fully funding the budget
- Our libraries don't have enough staff for upper schools already
- Please Mayor fully fund our budget. We need more staff not less

Kathy Kelly, 76 Lawrence St., Methuen – the lack of funding is affecting the Fine Arts Dept. She stated the following:

- 15 years ago we had 3 full time art teachers
- We had a \$9,000 budget
- Now we have 2 full time staff and split 2,000-2,500 for 1,200 students
- We order consumables. Paints, crayons, clay.... Once we use them they are gone.

Mary Fran Hayes, 100 Harris St., Methuen – I also want to address Fine Arts cuts. It is a concern along with the following:

- Fine Arts are a passion. They are not extravagant.
- Music alone impacts higher math scores
- Band & Marching students go on to pursue music education and the arts in college
- Band camp is as rigorous as our sport camps

Linda Harvey, 28 Cochrane Cr., Methuen – I urge members to wait until Wednesday to work out the budget.

- Educate all students of Methuen
- There is over 40 Special Needs Pre-K going into Kindergarten next year that is doubled
- We have 129 Out of District placements with tuitions over \$65 thousand not including transportation
- We are hit with mandates with no reserves
- Please consider opening more public meetings

Steve Saba, 15 Chippy Ln, Methuen – Being an active member of Methuen Athletic Improvement Committee, I have a tremendous respect for both the Superintendent and the Mayor. In conversations with parents moving into the Methuen school system they always say it is because of our schools and the high school. Andover doesn't even offer Science Fair programs they send their students to Methuen. I am here to disagree with the budget. We can't stop the momentum. Please put full funding in front of City Council.

Jean Lugg, 76 Ayer St., Methuen – Resident, Parent and out-going PTO President asked not to cut staff and programs. I fear we cut staff behavior problems will rise. There will be safety concern. I would vote for any tax override if needed.

Lauren Miller, 35 Savoian Dr., Methuen – I am a parent and a SEPAC representative. My son is on the spectrum. We need funds to help them achieve this. All our kids need special education and regular education. I am here to disagree with the budget. It is imperative to return the money to the budget. Please wait until Wednesday to make this decision.

Bill Bryant, Methuen, MA - Look at these facilities Methuen has to offer. Also money is needed for the mental health and opiate crisis. Deans know the ins and outs and are vital to the kids. We cannot take a step back we need to move forward.

MOTION: Mr. Vogler motioned to extend the Public Hearing Session
Ms. Kumm seconded the motion.

VOTE: 7-0-0 APPROVED

Laura Hajjar, 5 Arrowwood, Methuen, MA – Band parents supplement costs to the band already. Our concerns are that budget cuts will severely impact the Fine Arts Programs. In 2006 we had 34 teachers in 2015 we are down to 29. Accreditation can be affected.

Carolyn, 195 Oakland St., Methuen, MA – My child has autism and ADHD and is going to the 8th grade at the Tenney. He is in the band. He has been moved from an IEP to a 504 plan. There is progress being made. Progress comes with support and services.

MOTION: Ms. Campagnone motioned to close the Public Hearing Session
Ms. Kumm seconded the motion.

VOTE: 7-0-0 APPROVED

Mayor – Spoke to the public – He said 5 years ago we were at net school spending. I didn't agree with that went to the State and we came up with a plan to add \$586,000 a year for 6 years. That is in place. I am looking at all aspects. The number is not fixed and at the end I think we will come up with a consensus.

MOTION: Ms. Campagnone motioned not to adopt the FY'17 Budget and move the adoption to Wednesday, June 15, 2016 @ 6:00 p.m. at MHS in the Media Center.

Ms. DiNatale seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Deeb – I would like give the Superintendent the opportunity to tell us about the proposed cuts and work that has already been done on the budget. This has been an intense process and until tonight we did not know we would not be voting. I do believe we are in a better place and I am optimistic.

Superintendent – This has been a tough budget season. It is a conservative budget. I went in with a figure of 74 million so we would be able to move forward without eliminating positions. The Mayor gave me a number, we negotiated back and forth and it came to a point where I said I cannot move on this anymore without cuts to staff if we do not move forward. The mayor thought he couldn't make any more movements. It was a good healthy discussion today. Yes there are significant staff cuts. They hit every one of our units. Late this afternoon we had a healthy discussion. I will continue to fight for us. We are in a great place I do not want to go backwards.

Mr. Vogler – Thanked all that came out tonight. We have one of the greatest systems. We received new numbers 5 minutes before the meeting and I believe it is because of you. I know the Superintendent is working diligently. Last Thursday we were presented a ¾% increase. I hope we can get an equitable increase. We are at the bare minimum to survive. With built in special education costs of 2.4 million for tuition. I don't believe in

user fees and will not support that. The Superintendent, staff and us, the Committee, are just looking for a 3% increase. We have great teachers and administrators across the board. Hopefully we will get the next budget 1 or 2 hours before the next meeting.

Ms. Kumm – this is my 5th budget and this has been a very challenging time. The budget on the table for 3% supports the needs of all the students. The Superintendent learned to do a lot for less. Since 2009 a lot of positions have gone away. How didn't I notice, because when it goes away others have picked up the slack and smiled doing it. Mr. Bryant hit it on the head when he talked about the great staff and facilities. Salaries go down, less people and the job gets done. I appreciate everyone from the Superintendent down. I am disappointed you had to come out for this. The Mayor has done a great job for us. He has completed so many projects to make this town better. I am optimistic he will do the right thing. I am going to fight for this budget.

Mr. DiZoglio – I am a 2007 graduate not in this school I was in the other school that had no walls. I came back because of our teachers, officers.... Look at what we have done. I am not going to support cuts of programs, staff, and safety officers or I will support a fair budget increase of 3%. 3% is fair. I respect the Mayor and his hard work. I know the Mayor has the hardest job to balance the whole City budget.

Ms. DiNatale – Thank you all for being here and speaking to us. It is important for us to hear from you and for your support. We have been working on cuts that wont sacrifice the progress made. I hope the Superintendent and Mayor keep the ball rolling forward.

Mayor – Net School Spending came in at 69,632,879. I then came in with 71,330,724 which was last year's number. I'm at 71,830,000. I want you to keep in mind we are at the tax levy.

We are looking at not making cuts.

VOTE: 7-0-0 APPROVED to table FY'17 Budget Adoption

***ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further discussion, Mayor Zanni entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:04 p.m..

MOTION: Ms. Kumm moved to adjourn the Public Participation at 7:04 p.m.

Ms. Campagnone seconded the motion.

VOTE: 7-0-0 APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,
Deidre Runge, Public Recorder
Methuen Public Schools