

**TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES**

**OF**

**THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**ADOPTION FY'17 BUDGET**

**OF**

**JUNE 15, 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**

**TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES**  
**METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**ADOPTION FY'17 BUDGET**  
**JUNE 15, 2016**

This Adoption FY'17 Budget Meeting of the Methuen School Committee was held at Methuen High School, Media Center, 1 Ranger Road was posted for 6:00 pm and actual start time was 6:15pm.

**ATTENDANCE ROLL CALL**

Mayor Stephen Zanni, Chairperson (P)  
Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm, Vice Chairperson (P)  
Mr. Robert F. Vogler, Secretary (P)  
Mr. Dennis D.J. Deeb (Not Present)  
Ms. Jana DiNatale (P)  
Ms. Joyce C. Campagnone (P)  
Mr. Nicholas DiZoglio (P)

**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:** Ms. Kumm motioned to amend the agenda and add Superintendent's Presentation and Public Participation  
Mr. DiZoglio seconded the motion.

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

Superintendent –Thanked the audience for coming. This District has made many improvements and we are moving in a positive direction. Comments from outsiders are “OMG all we hear about is Methuen Public School, Methuen High School, Technology movement in this District.” We have state of the art buildings. I have over the past 2 days met with outstanding staff members delivering them their noticed. I told them this was all about finances not about what they do. I told them they were exemplar and great at what they do. Most letters went out to our bright young and talented teachers that would move us forward. Custodians that we took on 3 years ago under a grant trained them and put them in the field. These letters went out because it is contractual and because of the following timeline:

- 1<sup>st</sup> you have to follow contractual language which means they all had to be told by the close of the day, today, June 15<sup>th</sup>. I do not have a bottom line figure yet. The figure I have from the Mayor does not cover these position cuts.
- This Committee takes a vote tonight on what budget they want to bring forward.
- I go to the City Council workshop tomorrow night to answer questions regarding our budget. They do not vote tomorrow night
- On June 21<sup>st</sup> the Council will vote on the budget.

There are lots of rumors that are not true. The people who received letters will be laid off. We are all here to fight for you. We are discussing two budgets; one has a few layoffs the other has 54 layoffs. This district is up against 3 million dollars next year in Special Education mandates. When we started the budget process this year, I took last year's 71 million dollar budget as a starting point and added 3 million because I have no choice we have to follow mandates, to come up with the 74 million dollar budget that I presented. My role is to educate ALL students from the age of 3 to 22. I kept meeting with Ms. Bozek to work on the mandates. I met with every City Councilor to educate them about the 3 million for mandates. I need to keep all of my staff. The School Committee gets all of this, they were heartbroken, and they are supporting you and fought for you. The Committee is fighting for equality. I did not layoff police officers. My memo to the police was letting them know what was going on, letting them know they were like family to us. This is very hard times for the City of Methuen. The Mayor was working to get more money for us. The Mayor worked until the last minute to see if he could find us more money. 3% is what School Committee wants. They understand we will still have cuts but we will work on it all summer to make this work. Our goal is not to rob the City. We also have the Mayors figure at 1.6% which includes the 54 cuts that went out.

Mayor – Is there anyone that would like to come up for Public Participation?

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Rosemarie Castro – 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher at the Tenney Grammar School – Spoke about the pink slips given to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year teachers that spent their time and money to buy stock, pack it up and go home. We strive each year to stay as a level 2 school. Is Methuen Public Schools moving forward or backwards?

Christian Ramos – Senior Methuen High School – She talked about the Theater Department. We worked extremely hard to bring the theater in a forward direction. We are in fear you are going to cut the theater teacher again. Each year we sign up for theater class and then we don't get the teacher and have to pick some other class.

Maureen O'Neil – Mom that asked the Mayor to please find the funds.

Tony Karmalowicz– Dad – My son got straight A's last year and is #11 in his class. I work in Arlington they ask "where do you live?" I say Methuen they say "that's a great school system."

Bill Bryan – I am part of the MAIC Complex. This is a great community that takes care of their kids. I was on a high and now I am on a low. Cuts are affecting secretaries, teachers, technology... I respect what you said about the City Council but they are not educators. You should present a budget that takes care of the kids. There is a flaw in the process,

Doug Drapeau – Parent – Teachers have been taxed and we are taxing them more with larger classes... it is extremely important this does not happen. A class of 30 will be chaos.

Mr. Deeb – Thanked those that spoke and came. This is a frustrating process. If you do not give students after school activities, sports...they will end up in the courts. I will not vote for the

Mayors number. I will vote for the 3%. We are only asking for a fair percentage. When there are funds there to go around make it fair and equitable.

Mr. Vogler – Thanked them for presenting their case and supporting the Superintendent, Principals and School Committee who speak for the kids. We are asking for 3%. In Methuen we have struggled along with bare minimum funds and have no user fees. We are not asking for the world. We are very close to level 2. We are just asking for equity. With 3% we still have to cut \$326 thousand. We will approve 3% tonight. I do not know what the Mayor will decrease or reject. Let your Councilors know education is important. Schools are good people buy houses and the values go up. Also for every 3 staff members you cut you need to let one go for unemployment costs.

Ms. Kumm – I ran because I am a parent. You all know how fantastic our schools are. This 3% increase is primarily to cover the mandates we have no control over. We wanted to add some new high school teachers. We want our 8<sup>th</sup> graders to want to come to our high school not go to another school. When you see the programs in our high school and the passion behind them you know it's what is inside that pretty building that counts. The building is just the beginning. The Superintendent said the first million that was cut is not going to affect the classrooms. What she meant is staff will be asked to do more and they will do it and not complain. Since 2009 we have already lost 60 or 70 positions. You probably didn't notice a difference but folks are asked to do more and they do it with a smile. The Superintendent doesn't waste our time with things we don't need. What we do with the money we do get is amazing. We are going to do everything to move the City forward. The mayor has done great things, this building alone had problems and he got it to move forward. We need your help we won't stop fighting.

Ms. Campagnone – Thanked all for their support. Being on the Council side, I know what they are going through too. I would ask the Mayor to sit with City Council because I know that they all care. We want students to be safe by keeping resource officers. We have to juggle the books. Security is as important as education is.

Mr. DiZoglio – It has been a lot to hold my composure. I supported the \$74,796,000 budget presented to me. I said I would compromise so I am supporting the 3% budget.

Ms. DiNatale – I am proud of our community coming out to show your support. This is truly a bare bones budget. I will support the 3% budget. I struggled and the Mayor explained to me it's going to be a hard year. Our kids only get to do 5<sup>th</sup>, K, 1<sup>st</sup> grade once they don't get to do it again. I will not support a budget with 54 staff being laid off. It is truly time to break into the rainy day money. I am going to support the 3% budget. Please be at City Council tomorrow night and June 21<sup>st</sup>.

Mayor – Here are the facts:

- This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in 5 years I didn't sleep
- 1<sup>st</sup> time was MHS when it was 6 million over the budget and I got rid of a contractor and waited for 4 months to start up again.
- I don't appreciate social media
- The State gave the City a little over 69 million dollars this year

- School Committee met we brought it back to the 71 million that you got last year
- There are few new positions in the City budget. The new firemen positions are to keep the stations open all year and will help with the Medicaid piece.
- The school is looking for 73,796,000 which is still over 2 million
- The stabilization fund I am proposing to take 1.3 million out of it but still doesn't bring us back there
- The police were taken out of the budget. They will be back in the schools. I will see to that on the other side.
- We reached the tax levy, the only way to reach these figures we would have to do a tax override
- Once I take the 1.3 million out of the stabilization we will have no extra money
- I'm looking at dipping into the stabilization for 1.5 million
- We need a brand new
  - field house rink roof – Ameresco will handle the Ice Rink roof
  - Indoor track
  - Outdoor track
  - Roofs are like 5 million dollars
- We are at the tax levy limit
- Even if I give you the 1.5 million from the stabilization the Council needs to approve that and it only brings us up to the 72,487,503 which is over 1 million short
- My thought, I looked at the budget, to keep teachers in the classroom, we have 40 administrators in the school district I think we should cut 9 of them is \$846,939. I cannot present the \$73,796 million. You will need a tax override.
- Looking at Medicaid money. The ½ million dollars have not come in yet.
- Why not give all Medicaid money to the school side

Mr. Deeb – I can appreciate the predicament you are in and the pressures you're under. You have supported the schools. However, I do not approve of an override. It is my belief we do not need to borrow from the stabilization fund, or an override. The City is 6.25% in non-educational funding. This 3% is fiscally responsible and plenty to cut without layoffs and hurting any other departments in the City.

Mr. Vogler – There is no cutting 9 administrator positions. You asked to cut 6 speech, 6 psychologists and 4 Deans. You sent that request with someone that showed up 10 minutes before the workshop. The Superintendent is the only one that can make cuts. You don't do this. I praised the Mayor last year. UMASS does our Medicaid billing. The previous Mayor verbally said we should get anything over \$500,000. Mr. Vogler then read the Medicaid we received the last few years and stated that all the money over the 500,000 has not come to us yet. Our secretaries are working to get us this money. I appreciate the offer but it has never happened. Since 2010 over 4 million has been returned to the City. Promises are good but we never saw a penny. I want to see a contract. We got fined 3.6 million because this community under funds our schools continuously. Even getting the 3% the Superintendent still has to cut over 360,000 to get there. There are no added benefits in this budget.

Mayor – I met with the Superintendent that Medicaid money we never got. The underfunding started before I was Mayor. I went to the state to work out figures.

Ms. Kumm – Here are the facts:

- Tuesday June 7<sup>th</sup> the Mayor told us he would go back and work on our 73 million budget because we had a glimpse of the City Budget.
- Next day we get a call we need emergency meeting on Thursday, June 9<sup>th</sup>
- We all go, the Mayor nowhere to be found sent a staff member to deliver your suggested cuts.
- I don't want to meet in your office, we are a team and we would have met at anytime as a team.
- I would have expected a level funded budget across the board.
- You say why not cut administrators, I asked you about an unfilled position in your office but you never answered. I am not saying your added positions are not necessary but, I just want equity across the board

Mayor – if I had the money I would put it in. I am taking 1.5 million from the stabilization fund and giving to the school. You are going to have to go for a tax override.

Mr. DiZoglio – if we keep up this budget crisis conversation we are going to lose great teachers and great administrators like Mr. Barden. We are going to lose Dr. Kwong and Ms. Bozek. Our special education program is the way it is because of Ms. Bozek.

Superintendent – Ms. Bozek was handpicked to sit on the board with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to work with State officials on State and Federal unfunded mandates and how it affects all cities and towns across the state. Ms. Bozek was handpicked because she knows law upside down. She keeps this district out of trouble; fines would cost this district so much money if we did not follow the law.

Mr. DiZoglio – I took a tour of 3 schools. I know why speech, psychologists and special education are important, some of these kids can't talk, they are in wheelchairs... Deans take the behavior issues out of the classroom and away from the associate principals so they can work with academic programs and classroom experiences. The average per pupil cost 14,515.00 and the number of students we have we should be looking at over a 75 million dollar budget. We are not asking for that we are asking for 3%. There are other things like Medicaid and chargebacks we can look at. With the Cities 5% increase our chargebacks go up too.

Mr. Vogler – chargebacks went up 1.5 million some is retirement but we are supporting the City budget. We asked the State to come and do an audit. Only direct services should be charge backed that is the law.

Ms. DiNatale – I want to suggest a solution for the 900,000. We need our community leaders to make a cut over the next couple of days so it is an equitable budget.

**MOTION:** Mr. Deeb motioned to approve the \$73,470,000 3% budget  
Ms. DiNatale seconded the motion.  
**VOTE:** 6-1-0 APPROVED (Mayor voted NO)

**3% BUDGET ADOPTION**  
**ADOPTION OF FISCAL YEAR 2017 SCHOOL BUDGET**

**Professional Salaries**

**MOTION** to adopt \$46,649,849 by Mr. Vogler  
Seconded by Mr. DiZoglio

**ROLL CALL:**

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

**VOTE:** 6-1-0 (Mayor voted no)

The Mayor called a recess at 8:20 pm for the public to leave

The Committee was back at 8:25 pm

**Classified Personnel Salaries**

**MOTION** to adopt \$1,903,430- by Mr. Vogler  
seconded by Ms. Kumm

**ROLL CALL:**

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

**VOTE:** 6-1-0 (Mayor voted no)

**Other Salaries**

**MOTION** to adopt \$6,401,574- by Mr. Vogler  
seconded by Ms. Campagnone

**ROLL CALL:**

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

**VOTE:** 6-1-0 (Mayor voted no)

**Contractual Services**

**MOTION to adopt \$16,995,178- by Mr. Vogler seconded by Ms. Campagnone**

**ROLL CALL:**

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

**VOTE:** 6-1-0 (Mayor voted no)

**Supplies and Materials**

**MOTION to adopt \$1,339,988- by Mr. Vogler seconded by Mr. DiZoglio**

**ROLL CALL:**

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

**VOTE:** 6-1-0 (Mayor voted no)

**Other Expenses**

**MOTION to adopt \$182,108- by Mr. Vogler seconded by Ms. Campagnone**

**ROLL CALL:**

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

**VOTE:** 6-1-0 (Mayor voted no)

**OPERATING NET SCHOOL SPENDING**

**MOTION to adopt \$76,683,072 - by Mr. Deeb seconded by Mr. Vogler**

**ROLL CALL:**

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

**VOTE:** 6-1-0 (Mayor voted no)

**TOTAL NON NET SCHOOL SPENDING**

**MOTION to adopt \$5,191,531 to include  
Transportation and Crossing Guards- by Mr. Vogler  
seconded by Mr. DiZoglio**

**ROLL CALL:**

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

**VOTE:** 6-1-0 (Mayor voted no)

**TOTAL OPERATING FY'17 BUDGET**

**MOTION to adopt \$73,472,127 – by Mr. Vogler  
seconded by Mr. Deeb**

**ROLL CALL:**

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

**VOTE:** 6-1-0 (Mayor voted no)

**CITY CHARGEBACKS**

**MOTION: Move to adopt City Chargebacks for \$12,352,205. Let the record reflect  
only until the sub-committee brings forward additional information – by  
Ms. DiNatale  
seconded by Ms. Campagnone**

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Deeb did not agree with 10.4% increase in chargebacks since last year.  
Said it was too high and that is why he would be voting no.

**ROLL CALL:**

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

**VOTE:** 6-1-0 (Mr. Deeb voted NO)

**TOTAL SCHOOL FY'17 BUDGET**

**MOTION** to adopt \$80,630,801- by Mr. Vogler  
seconded by Ms. Kumm

**ROLL CALL:**

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

**VOTE:** 6-1-0 (Mayor voted no)

With no further business to discuss at this meeting Mayor Zanni entertained a motion to conclude the meeting for the evening at 8:20 pm.

**MOTION:** Mr. Vogler moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 pm.

Ms. Kumm seconded.

**ROLL CALL:**

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

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Deidre Runge, Public Recorder  
Methuen Public Schools