

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES

OF

THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

WORKSHOP SESSION

OF

JUNE 9, 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
WORKSHOP SESSION
JUNE 9, 2016

This Workshop of the Methuen School Committee was held at the Central Administration Building, Superintendent's Office and was posted for 6:30 PM.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Stephen Zanni, Chairperson (Not Present)
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)

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm, Vice Chairperson
Mr. Robert F. Vogler, Secretary
Ms. Jana DiNatale
Ms. Joyce C. Campagnone
Mr. Nicholas DiZoglio

MEMBERS IN NOT ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Stephen Zanni, Chairperson
Mr. Dennis D.J. Deeb

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE:

Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm, Vice Chairperson called this Workshop to order at 6:30 p.m. with a quorum of members in attendance, and listed above.

BUDGET

Superintendent – I want to begin with the following; under no child left behind the Superintendent has full authority of who is eliminated. She then went over the School Committee members requested information she provided them copies of:

1. Fiscal Years 2009-2015 eliminated positions
2. Monies owed to the schools by the City
3. Municipal Budget and updated chargebacks

Fiscal Years 2009-2015 eliminated positions discussion

Mr. DiZoglio – RDR in school suspension was that a state issue?

Superintendent – No but the Deans picked up that piece.

Mr. DiZoglio – Have any of these positions been replaced?

Superintendent – No they have been completely cut. There is no more administration to cut into. Their workload is over the top. We are moving forward, I can't go back.

Ms. DiNatale – Who are the Special Education Administrators in the systemwide budget?

Superintendent – that would be the systemwide preschool administrator and the out of district administrator.

Ms. DiNatale – is there any way we can combine that position?

Superintendent – We are down to the bare bones in Administration. The out of district should really have 2 people doing this.

Ms. DiNatale – could we centralize the preschool students?

Superintendent – there is nowhere to put them. Central and P.V. are not up to code. Preschoolers need a bathroom in every classroom...

Mr. Vogler – It is better to integrate them also from the start. As for consultants we brought on one and he cost us \$200 an hour. I think we run a bare boned school system. We historically are always underfunded. There is nowhere else to cut.

Mr. DiZoglio – Can we maybe increase preschool tuition?

Superintendent – I could certainly speak to Gina but I can tell you the fee we charge now is already too high for some parents.

Ms. DiNatale – I just want to make clear that I don't want any of these things cut. I don't like it either. I don't want to change the structure of our Administration but if the Mayor says he has no money I think we have to all work together to find a way. I don't want to be stuck in a battle and not get anything.

Ms. Kumm – I think the 1 million we cut was being very proactive. We felt these cuts wouldn't affect classrooms. I reached out to the chair today begging him to come but instead he sent us a list of cuts through a currier 10 minutes before the meeting.

Superintendent – I did a list of cuts “Plan B” and sent it to the Mayor today knowing he couldn't attend tonight. That is why he had his list delivered to me. She then went over her cut list.

Ms. DiNatale – The phys ed teacher is a low salary why get rid of it.

Superintendent – Per contract low man goes.

Ms. DiNatale – I thought we weren't adding a position and you have “Band Assistant” added.

Superintendent – Mr. Walters's position is going to be different. The Director of Fine Arts 11 month position turned into a 10 month position. We are actually saving money. I am putting in an interim Director of Fine Arts, Cheryl Mancini for 10 months that can jump right into art, chorus... We have asked Brian McGonagle to come in as the Band Director and putting the assistant in to pick up the classes. We will save a little bit of money doing it this way.

The Committee asked the Superintendent to look into security firms to save money if she pulls the School Resource Officers.

Superintendent – I can do that but I want you to know I got two resignations in the last 2 days. I know I can work magic.

Mr. Vogler – I feel bad about 2 more custodians. Also we are trying to be tech savy we need the network operators. Mr. Collopy has done a fantastic job that would be a shame too. The Mayor is anti school budget. The kids are going to suffer. We need to defend our budget on Monday.

Superintendent – The CVTE which is what you all read about is Mr. Collopy he oversees the Little Ranger Program. He also got us the big screen T.V.'s through grants. He is in the process of setting up a mini bank by the Methuen Credit Union. Our District Review saw this. Their expectations are we don't let go of that. I have to inform them of any program, staff... changes it counts against our accreditation.

Ms. Campagnone – I feel we are overcharged on the chargebacks. I like the idea of security guards.

Ms. DiNatale – My first responsibility is to fight for the kids. And be responsible for tax payers. I don't think we are weak to compromise I am just being responsible asking the questions. I don't want any teachers to be cut or SRO's to be cut. I want them well educated and safe.

Superintendent – I was feeling good until I got his reductions.

Mr. DiZoglio – as a Committee we will come together. I don't mind outsourcing security. Why 2 resignations?

Superintendent – one her husband got another job and the other got a better position.

Mr. DiZoglio – I am afraid of losing Dr. Kwong and Ms. Bozek. I support technology it is not going anywhere. I researched the average increase is 3.0-3.7 and we are underfunding our students.

Superintendent – I built our budget off of FY'16 I never expected to get told no you are working on 69 million.

Mr. DiZoglio – The Mayor told me twice Deans were not on his list.

Ms. Kumm – I expected the Mayor to come and be a leader. I see a healthy Municipal budget. This budget makes sense and we are not going overboard.

Mr. Gosselin – I believe the City is supporting themselves on our business. They took \$145,553 out of Circuit breaker. We still don't have that. \$34,899 of the FEMA/MEMA money is ours we never seen that. \$6,745 to fix MHS Frozen pipe from a design flaw we never got reimbursed for. DPW I noticed us paying for them to work on our vehicles at time and a half just for labor. They owe us this. We have not received the overage in Medicaid and \$300,000 of the Before and After school program that supports our kids was taken by them. All the accounts should be open under M.G.L. chapter 71 but the City Council opened them under Chapter 44. I have sent a letter to Mr. Kelley and the Mayor to open them under chapter 71. I asked them to reauthorize the accounts.

Superintendent – I know in my heart the Council thought they were led in the right direction.

Mr. Vogler – I am also asking for an audit of the chargebacks. I think all the money should come back to us.

Ms. DiNatale – in regards to requested money I think you should talk to the lawyer on how to get our money back that is coming to us. It is illegal and unethical.

Ms. Kumm – Thank you all for your input. Ian thank you for all our backup. Superintendent I cannot tell you how much I appreciate you.

***ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further business to discuss at this Workshop Session, Ms. Kumm entertained a motion to conclude the Workshop Session for the evening at 9:20 pm.

MOTION: Mr. Vogler moved to adjourn the Workshop at 9:20 pm.

Ms. Campagnone seconded.

VOTE: 5-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,
Deidre Runge, Public Recorder
Methuen Public Schools