

NEW SALEM/WENDELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (7:00 P.M.) FINAL MINUTES
THURSDAY, September 2, 2021
Via Google Meets

Attending: [Carla Halpern](#), [Beth Erviti](#), Miriam Warner, [Barbara Doyle](#), Elizabeth Devlin, Brian Bauch, [Johanna Bartlett](#), Anna Wetherby (minutes), members; Melinda Hazen (appointed by New Salem Committee during reconfiguration meeting - not sworn in so not a voting member yet), Jennifer Culkeen, superintendent; [Kelley Sullivan](#), principal; [Bruce Turner](#), treasurer

Teachers: Diane Adams, Gosha Spooner, Lisa Aubin,
Public: Anna Seeger

A. Call Meeting to Order - 7:02

B. Reorganization of the Committee – Chair

- Johanna nominates Carla, Elizabeth seconds - passes unanimously
- [Carla Halpern](#) recognizes and publicly appreciates the work [Johanna Bartlett](#) did as chair

C. Public Hearings

- A parent wishing to speak regarding the mask issue- item moved to top of agenda

D. Warrants – Record in minutes with numbers

8050 - 84,742.35; 405- 75,012.22; 805- 25,742.37; 804 - 25,430.72; 404- 65,197.86;
8040- 75,958.96; 803- 26,430.72; 403- 62,692.72; 8030- 74,741.11; 802- 33,737.87;
402- 63,536.46; 8020- 83,640.23; 801- 26,002.44; 401- 74,074.55; 8010- 85,199.53;
8270- 2,115.44; 8261- 34,323.30; 8262-44,256.29; 426- 80,079.41; 826- 30,894.76;
8260- 94,417.86; 2801- 48,237.99; 2802- 13,947.00; 2803- 3,947.63; 2804- 2,118.40;
4001- 135,367.77; 4002- 20,822.37; 4003- 40,143.77; 4004- 1,516.83; 4005- 22,796.72;
4006- 266.45; 4007- 18,789.71; 8022- 45,428.61; 8270- 2,155.44; 8262- 44,256.29;
4057- 1,726.11; 4056- 8,931.41; 4055- 110.35; 4054- 29,893.14; 4053- 13,998.86; 4052-
383.99; 4051- 497.52; 4050- 31,521.39; 2829- 3,125.61; 2828- 5,727.72; 2827- 663.38;
2826- 702.96; 2825- 3,213.82

E. Superintendent's Report

- Nice to welcome back the students
- Wonderful opening day, guest speaker Jonathan Mooney - making learning accessible for all students
- Meeting as leadership team - currently virtually, but looking meeting in person
- Looking at ESSR funding - created committee to review and find programs to support with the money
- Sept 8 - stakeholder meeting for all U28 schools
 - How will to use the input from the stakeholders?
 - How to fit the ideas into the district plan - beyond ESSR funds

- Long-range technology planning
- Looking forward to moving forward with the school year
- Have an amazing group of principals! Working with new director of student learning services

F. Director of Finance and Operations Report

- Wrapping up HVAC system
- Ended the year well. Strong foodservice return - a lot of grant money came in

G. Principal's Report

- Busy summer at Swift River
 - REplaced grease traps in the kitchen
 - Hired new staff including a nurse, 4th-grade teacher, new para
 - Still looking for para
 - Looking for new evening custodian
- Very successful opening day
- Thanks to Anna Seeger and Jennylou Powers for the outdoor platform on the nature trail
- Looking for parent volunteers to build another platform
- Pavilion completed week after school ended - using it every day
- All classrooms have a fresh coat of paint
- Library evolving! Making it accessible for all children -a 21st-century place to learn and build

H. Committee Reports

- Report from Mahar Representatives
 - Still dealing with COVID - masks required indoors to wear masks
 - Under strain with Mahar music program - concern from parents - not having enough teachers and programs
 - Need to figure out how to have blowing and singing under the current circumstances
 - Currently disagreement about the effectiveness of the instrument coverings - looking to move forward with this and get ideas
 - Still figuring out the fall sports season
 - Watching the COVID status
- Collaborative for Education Services
 - No meetings during the summer
 - [Johanna Bartlett](#) is the new rep
- Budget and Personnel – Next Meeting – None
- Joint Supervisory – Next Meeting – Virtual meeting – September 21, 2020 - 6:30 p.m.

I. September Items

- Face Coverings – Discussion/update
 - Anna Seeger - a concern that there is not a school-wide policy regarding masks outdoors. Looking for clarity. Also concerned about eating - what will happen when it rains or gets too cold. What about families that are not comfortable with eating indoors
 - Gosha - appreciates that while students are outdoors, masks can come off.
 - DESE mask requirements: voted August 24 to require masks for all public school attendants indoors through October 1st.
 - Except when eating, drinking, or mask breaks
 - Visitors are required to wear masks
 - Not required to wear masks outdoors
 - Kelley - currently, lunch is outside, the tent is not up yet (will be out next week), some children are eating inside due to bugs
 - Hoping to eat outside until November 1
 - If needing to eat inside, a quiet lunch will be required
 - Currently, no policy to keep masks on when outside
 - There is no need to vote on a policy as it is a mandate
 - Johanna - are teachers required to have masks on in the classroom all the time? Will eating happen in the classroom?
 - Breakfast is up to the teachers, lunch is driven by the principal's decision
 - Every child is masked unless the parent has addressed the need for the exemption
 - Topic to be discussed again in the October meeting

- SRS Water System Update
 - Per and poly alkaline substance PFAS - Swift River is over the limit set by the state
 - Under an order to update the system to filter out the substances
 - Quote on equipment 20k - Housatonic Basin
 - Submitted to DEP the plan - still under review
 - Will total approx. 40,000
 - There is emergency money available (grant/loan combination) - the school district cannot directly borrow money - select boards will need to be involved in the process
 - Bubblers that filter are not the solution
 - Needs the school committee to approve the current process so it can move forward - looking for committee members to go to selectboard and finance committees with him to explain the project need and scope
 - Will there need to be a Special Town Meeting?
 - It probably will
 - What is the state requirement for the timeframe?
 - Critical (6 months to a year) but there is no way to force the matter
 - Anna will attend Selectboard meetings for Wendell, Brian for New Salem
 - Melinda asks about precautions in the kitchen in regards to cooking

- Using bottled water for cooking
 - Wendell board of health will be updated and a part of the conversation
- Critical Race Theory
 - Item tabled to next month
 - Brian asked about what the teaching of it will be
 - The item is not about teaching in the school and not a part of the Social Studies Frameworks for Massachusetts
- Home School Applications –
 - We can vote but the approval does not carry any weight
 - We can vote on all at once but there are concerns regarding 1, 8, and 9
 - Motion to approved 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, and 11
 - Johanna moves, Elizabeth 2nds
 - Review of what the approval process is and what the committee members traditionally look for in the home school application
 - Nothing said by the chair is to disregard the work of the superintendent
 - Vote taken by role - passes with 1 abstention (Erviti)
 - Motion to approve the application for student 1
 - Brian moves to approve the application, Barbara 2nds
 - The application has minimal information regarding the curriculum
 - Vote taken by role - passes with two abstentions (Erviti, Halpern)
 - Motion to approve the application for students 8 and 9
 - Beth moves to approve, Brian 2nds
 - Concerns regarding the lack of curricular information
 - Vote taken by role - passes with 4 abstentions (Erviti, Halpern, Wetherby, Doyle)

Policy Update and Review:

- Final Vote on:
 - CH – Policy Implementation
 - CHCA – Approval of Handbooks and Directives
 - CHD – Administration in Policy Absence
 - DA – Fiscal Management Goals
 - DB – Annual Budget
 - DBC – Budget Deadlines and Schedules
 - DBD – Budget Planning
 - BDG – Budget Adoption Procedures
- [Johanna Bartlett](#) moves to approve policies CH, CHCA, CHD, DA, DB, DBC, DBD, BDG, Barbara 2nds
- Vote taken by role call - passes unanimously

J. Future Business

Next Meeting Date – October 7, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

New Salem/Wendell Policy Committee – October 7, 2021 – 6:30 p.m.

K. Approval of Minutes

June 3, 2021

- Johanna moves to approve the minutes from June 3rd, Miriam seconded
- Vote taken by role call - passes unanimously

L. Adjournment

Johanna moves to adjourn - Elizabeth 2nds - passed unanimously 8:25