

NEW SALEM/WENDELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, April 1, 2021 – 7:00 p.m. FINAL MINUTES
REMOTE MEETING – GOOGLE HANGOUT MEET

Attending: Johanna Bartlett, Barbara Doyle, Beth Erviti, Anna Wetherby (minutes), Melissa Burke, Carla Halpern, Jack Radner, Elizabeth Devlin, members; Bruce Turner, treasurer; Kelley Sullivan, principal; Jennifer Culkeen, superintendent

Teachers: Robyn Vitello, Patty Savage, Gosia Spooner, Christine Morin, Paige Smith

Public: Anan Zorba, Shad, Sarah Bauch, Claire McGinnis

A. Meeting Called to Order: 7:02

B. Public Hearings

· FY22 Budget -

- The biggest drivers are salaries, county retirement up 17k, 2% decrease in health insurance (-22k), outgoing school choice 20k
- Reduced the amount for school choice 10k
- E&D increase 50k
- Wendell 1,159,942 (+54,454)
- New Salem 869,061 (-21,618)
- Overall budget up 3%
 - Any money from the federal government? Yes, ESSER money but not sure how much
 - ESSER 2 money - 10k for social-emotional support, 40k for each school in U28 to hire two additional full-time adjustment counselors to be shared between the four schools
 - ESSER 2 - HVAC system updates
- New money good until FY24 - not clear what the funding level will be

· Other Public Hearings

C. Warrants – Record in minutes with numbers

#2818 3/8/21 \$2,408.63; #2819 3/22/21 \$3,489.99; #4039 3/8/21 \$152.06; #4040 3/8/21 \$17,788.58; #4041 3/22/21 \$420.00; #4042 3/22/21 \$40,069.27; #8190 3/18/21 \$84,541.60; #8200 4/1/21 \$84,709.92; #8210 3/18/21 \$33,874.74; #8211 3/18/21 \$44,158.12; #819 3/18/21 \$26,222.31; #820 4/1/21 \$26,222.31; #419 3/18/21 \$74,557.05; #420 4/1/21 \$74,725.80

D. Superintendent's Report

- We are preparing for the full in-person return on April 5.
- Full-day professional development day Friday, April 2 (moved from May)
- Letters of persuasive essays in support of snow days (not Swift River students, but another U28 school)
- Massachusetts Association School Superintendents - one more attempt to influence the MCAS decision. Excerpts from the letter read to the meeting attendees - wave the ESSA Testing requirements for this year
- Update from the commissioner about MCAS including remote administration of MCAS - extending the window of testing to June 11
- Juneteenth is a recognized holiday in Massachusetts
- Today is International Transgender Day of Visibility

E. Director of Finance and Operations Report

- Winding down the building project - will be finalized before the June meeting (hopefully)
- Freezer to be installed (funding from green communities)
- Weatherization and insulation around the tops of the walls
- Moving forward with the heating system

F. Principal's Report

- Freezer installed yesterday (not up and running yet) - it is within the school building
- Moving to full-day, in-person on Monday, April 5
- 110 returning, 22 will stay remote, anticipated 11 returning in May
- Shifting in the town numbers - New Salem numbers are going up
- Returning to 4 busses
- Nan Mead is retiring
- Besty Burgintino retiring
- Karen Nelson retiring
- Plans to celebrate them are being considered
- Open house on Tuesday night for returning families
- Artwork up feels familiar and feels like home
- 3x3 distance, some classes a little more space
- Big thanks to the staff and families for getting everything ready, being vigilant for health and safety
- Jennifer gives thanks to Kelley for her leadership and flexibility over the past 380 days.

G. Committee Reports

- Report from Mahar Representatives
 - Sent a letter about MCAS
 - Set to return to school full-time April 28th (6 weeks of in school, less for the seniors)
 - Trying to figure out what percentage of students will stay remote - currently 30%
 - Currently no plans for remote/hybrid learning in the fall
 - Wednesday will become full days
 - It seems like all staff who want vaccines have received them.
- Collaborative for Education Services
 - A meeting yesterday - presentation on social justice and equity
 - Work with school districts on how to implement
 - Search for a new director is ongoing
 - Strategic planning ongoing
- Budget and Personnel – Next Meeting - none
- Joint Supervisory – Next Meeting – May 17, 2021, 6:30 p.m.
 - Superintendent mid-cycle report - Jennifer has adjusted all of her goals to respond to the global crisis
 - Has done an excellent job at making the transition and keeping all employees supported
 - More teachers are attending the joint supervisory meetings
 - Looking to see one policy manual for the entire union
 - Make things easier for shared employees
 - More summer programs
 - The leadership team shared goals

H. April Items

- 2020-2021 Reopening
 - No discussion
- 2021 Swift River Community Action Award Recipient – discussion, nomination, and vote
 - Recognition of someone who has gone above and beyond for Swift River: parameters of the nomination (cannot be anyone on school committee [or family member])
 - A concern of not being able to keep the recipient as a surprise
 - Two nominations - request discussion regarding nominations:
 - Michael Cortina - stepped into enormous shoes and moved the music program in his own direction, creating his own legacy, increasing the students' interest and appreciation for music, especially last year when things had to close. A highlight of the week was the virtual Community Sing. Assisting with the graduation. Michael is the U28 arts coordinator.
 - Second nominee (moot as disclosed in the meeting) - Kelley Sullivan - public acknowledgment of how hard she works and is worthy of the Swift River Action

Award

- Carla moves that we give the 2021 Swift River Community Action Award Recipient to Michael Cortina, Beth 2nds - passes unanimously.
 - There will be a talent show (somehow) this year; Carla asks for permission to record the presentation.

· FY22 Budget – Final Adoption of Budget - Vote

- Johanna acknowledges Bruce's work on the budget.
- Beth moves that we accept the budget gross \$3044766 - net to towns \$2797766; Melissa seconded
 - Vote taken by role call - passes unanimously

· School of Choice - Vote

- Each year, each district must vote to be a school of choice by DESE regulation.
 - Anna moves that Swift River remains a school of choice school for the 2022 year.
 - Vote taken by role - passes unanimously.

· Policy Update and Review:

First Reading on:

- BG – School Committee Policy Development
- BGB – Policy Adoption
 - Question regarding the reading of policies out loud at meetings? No.
- BGE – Policy Dissemination
 - How many physical copies are needed? Just one for the district
 - Would like permission to make copies in case there is internet failure - committee members are welcome to make physical copies of approved policies
- BGF – Suspension of Policies
 - Suspended policy review meeting clarification
- BHC – School Committee-Staff Communications
- BHE – Use of Electronic Messaging by School Committee members
 - No texting during meetings! (for committee members)
 - Same for email communications

Second Reading, First Vote on:

- BDB – School Committee Officers
- BDE – Subcommittees of the School Committee
- BDFA – School Councils
- BEDF – Voting Method
- BEE – Procedures for Conducting Public Hearings
- Anna moves to vote in one vote all policies listed above, Beth 2nds - the vote was taken by role call passes unanimously.
- Anna moves to vote on all policies, Carla 2nds - vote taken by role passes unanimously.

I. Future Business

- Next Meeting Date – May 6, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.
- New Salem/Wendell Policy Committee – May 6, 2021 – 6:30 p.m.

J. Approval of Minutes:

- March 4, 2021
 - Jack moves to approve the minutes, Carla seconded - passed unanimously.

K. Adjournment - Anna moves to adjourn, Carla seconded. Passes unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05