

NEW SALEM/WENDELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, October 5, 2023

Swift River School – 7:00 p.m.

Final Minutes

Attending: Miriam Warner, Steven Blinder, Beth Erviti, Kate Woodward, Carla Halpern, Mandy Blackbird, Nancy Slator, Anna Wetherby (minutes), members; Jennifer Culkeen, superintendent; Caitlin Sheridan, Director of Finance and Operations; Kelley Sullivan, principal

Teachers: Jennylou Powers, Michael Cortina, Kate Koonz, Karie Neal

A. Call Meeting to Order at 7:02

B. Public Hearings

- from SREA - Nature’s Classroom trip - traditionally all staff and paraprofessionals are covered. The stipend that was offered last year did not cover the paraprofessional's additional time that is needed to make a living wage. ESPs need to be compensated for the entire time they work (7 am -10 pm)
  - Clarification regarding it was last year
    - Yes - to make up the difference lacking from last year
    - To allocate the correct amount of funds for 2023-24
  - The decision will be on the agenda for the next meeting
  
- Teachers have noticed students are food insecurity
  - Wendell Good Neighbors does a good job providing food for the community but more is needed
  - Create a Food backpack - available on Fridays- 2 breakfasts and 2 lunches for the weekend
  - Food will be able to be prepared by children and packaged to be stable for the weekend
  - Been in contact with Food Bank and Wendell Good Neighbors
  - The current budget for this program is \$0
  - Looking to fundraise and have class competition for bringing in shelf stable foods
  - Have applied for a grant from Western Massachusetts Foundation
  - Carla suggests discussing having Rabbit Run to raise funds
  - Clarification about tactfully connecting with families who will be receiving the food bags
  - Possibly using Mahar volunteers to fill the bags
  - There are an estimated 18-20 students who would benefit from this program
  - There is an informal process in place, this would be formalizing the process

C. Warrants – Record in minutes with numbers

Accounts Payable Union #28

2807	9/20/2023	\$626.37
2808	10/4/2023	\$753.19

406	9/14/2023	\$95,150.46
407	9/28/23	\$95,068.28

Accounts Payable New Salem/Wendell

4015	9/20/2023	\$6,154.75
4016	9/20/2023	\$3,229.41
4017	9/20/2023	\$141,380.80
4018	10/4/2023	\$101.47
4019	10/4/2023	\$42,526.68
4020	9/29/2023	\$1,902.68

806	9/14/2023	\$29,596.48
807	9/28/2023	\$30,457.65

Payroll Union #28

Payroll Monthly/Bi-weekly Deductions

8060	9/14/2023	\$104,039.77
8070	9/28/2023	\$104,834.07
8072	9/28/2023	\$55,699.48

#### D. Superintendent's Report

- Operational efficiency study results back
  - Recommendations - leadership staffing to oversee operational departments, implementing single bargaining unit contracts, unified policy manual
  - The separate schools are facing problems with recruiting and maintaining staff, governing policies, and operating standards
  - Conclusion- individual style of the union will continue to be a hindrance for the schools. Pursuing regionalization would have pros and cons but having cohesive organizational and sufficiently staffed model would strengthen the district
- Professional development
  - Union-wide safety PD with Jim Carmichael from Franklin County Sheriff's Department
- DESE Update
  - Scores showed recovering from pandemic
  - ELA and math improved
  - Slight decrease in science (statewide)

#### E. Director of Finance and Operations Report

- FY23 End of Year Report – Submitted – Vote to allow the Chair to sign the EOY Certification Statement
  - Report submitted on time
  - Beth moves to allow the Chair to sign the EOY Certification statement. Mandy seconds - vote passes unanimously
- Subcommittee looked at the draft budget
- Allocations calculated after 10.1 enrolment numbers were in
- The preliminary allocation for New Salem/Wendell went from 24.88% of the Union 28 budget to 25.30%, an increase of 0.42%

#### F. Principal's Report

- PFAS project still ongoing
  - System problems
  - More information to come
- Pinwheels for peace on 10.20
- All new garden boxes installed
  - Ready to plant garlic and winter crops
- Completed first lock down and fire drills
- Air handler motor failed during the inspection
  - Rebuilt and reinstalled at under \$500
- Completed reading and math assessments
  - Teachers have walked the students along "ladder for literacy"
- Chickens are now self sufficient

#### G. Committee Reports - passed over for this month

- Budget and Personnel
  - Next Meeting – October 10, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.
- Joint Supervisory
  - Next Meeting – October 10, 2023 - 6:30 p.m.

#### H. October Items

- Re-Amend FY24 Academic Calendar (removing PD ½ day/early release for students on November 8) –
  - Returning to a regular early release at 1 pm
  - Steven moves to accept the calendar change, Beth seconds the motion - passes unanimously
- Family Handbook –
  - Fluid document on google drive

- Committee has been asked to review before next meeting
- School Improvement Plan –
  - Literacy and SEL curriculum
  - Question regarding Teachers College Reading Units
  - UFLI for reading k-3
    - Some teachers are using this, other have moved to Framing your Thoughts
      - Framing Your Thoughts for writing has benefits but drawbacks
- Beth moves to approve the School Improvement Plan, Mandy second the motion - passes unanimously

o Policy Update and Review: Tabled until next month

o Next Meeting Date – November 2, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.

o New Salem/Wendell Policy Committee – November 2, 2023 – 6:30 p.m.

I. Approval of Minutes: Tabled until next month

J. Adjournment - Beth moves to adjourn at 7:28, Mandy seconds - passes unanimously