

New Salem/Wendell School Committee Meeting
April 7, 2022; 7 PM
Via Google Meets

Attending: [Barbara Doyle](#), [Beth Erviti](#), [Carla Halpern](#), [Elizabeth Devlin](#), [Johanna Bartlett](#),
Melinda Hazen, Anna Wetherby (minutes),, [Miriam Warner](#), members; Kelley Sullivan, principal;
Caitlin Sheridan, director of finance and operations; Jennifer Culkeen, superintendent

Teachers: Jamie Lefebvre, Gillian Budine, Jennylou Powers, Lisa Aubin, Paige Smith, Rachael
Basdekis, Robyn Vitello, Dara LaPlante, Gosia Spooner,

Public: Sarah Vular, Anna Seeger, Doug Tanner, Chelsia Torchia

Meeting Called to Order at 7:01

Public Hearings

- None

FY23 Budget

- Programs with Other Schools went up over 55k (special education cost) - now at approximately 140k
 - This will be for an anticipated out of district placement as the school cannot meet the needs of the student
- Reimbursement from Windows and Doors project still not certified, using school choice money to hold the place of the funds until the certification takes place and the funds become available from the MSBA

Other Public Hearings

C. Warrants – Record in minutes with numbers

4040 -\$2,144.29; 40413/8/2022\$1,242.13; 4042- \$38,839.66; 2819- \$2,952.44; 419-
\$84,737.05; 8190- \$93,762.47; 4044- \$32,260.53; 2820- \$344.02; 8200- 98,166.67; 420
-\$83,258.68; 8202 -\$43,766.17; 8220 -\$749.07; 4045- \$3,374.74; 4046 -\$995.17; 4047 -
\$29,553.82; 2821 -\$2,562.17

D. Superintendent's Report

- Approved at JSC - .6 curriculum coordinator position posted and the applicants are in. The interviews begin on April 28
- Wrapping up Anti-discrimination to be shared with the schools in the Union
- Looking forward to April break and
- Question regarding the status of regionalization of Swift River School
 - Believes that the towns need to be the ones to start the process

- This is a matter of transportation funding - we will only be guaranteed the money if the school is regionalized. The operating agreement is not enough to guarantee the funding of transportation
 - Regionalization makes the governance of the school change
 - The way School Committee representation would change in the towns
- A regionalized school can borrow money on its own
- The towns did not submit an end-of-year report to DESE - the report has now been submitted. The funding could come through the House Ways and Means committee
- There was a regionalization study committee in the early 2000s, transportation was the biggest issue
- [Carla Halpern](#) will be the rep for New Salem for the Regionalization Committee, Johanna and Elizabeth have experience with the topic and will help start the project

Director of Finance and Operations Report

- Two audits are taking place - FY 21 and end of year audit
- Johanna moves to authorize the Chair to sign the letters to engage the auditors, Beth seconds
- Vote taken by roll call - passes unanimously

Principal's Report

- Parent/Teacher conferences at the end of March; in-person and virtual
- Thanks to the PTCA for providing dinner for the conferences from the New Salem Store
- 6th grade heading to Nature's Classroom in Yarmouth
 - Raised \$2100 from letter-writing campaign to local businesses
- Candy Bar Bingo
- Jennifer Smith (main office) has left to pursue doctoral studies
- Hired Gwenieve Skellie
- Tina Newman took on Books in Action - great success
- Christine Morin is retiring
- Looking for substitutes
- Carla adds appreciation for Tina and Christine

Committee Reports

- Report from Mahar Representatives
 - Rescind mask mandate - masks are optional
 - Reviewing curriculum for cultural biases
 - Interested in Swift River's anti-racism statement
 - Math acceleration academy
 - Celebration of International Women's Day
 - Fish and Game fundraising for a trip to Alaska
 - Deciding whether to continue remote meetings

- Collaborative for Education Services
 - Seemed to have thrived during the pandemic
 - Looking to buy a new facility
 - Moving to be always a hybrid institution, keep operational costs lower

- Massachusetts Association of School Committees
 - The New COVID spending bill has been extended
 - Open Meeting Law extended to July 15
 - Request revise benchmarks on MCAS
 - Riley is talking to Federal Government about not reporting MCAS next year
 - Looking at school lunches

- Joint Supervisory – Next Meeting – May 16, 2022 - 6:30 p.m.
 - Glenn Koocher met with the committee in March, members received a digital handbook

April Items

- FY23 NSW Budget* - Final Adoption of Budget
 - Johanna moves to adopt the FY23 budget of \$2,184,048.00, Barbara seconds
 - Vote taken by roll call - passes unanimously

- 2022-2023 Academic Calendar
 - Beth moves to approve the 2022-23 calendar, Johanna seconds
 - Vote taken by roll call - passes unanimously

- School of Choice
 - Beth moves that Swift River designates itself as a School of Choice, Johanna seconds
 - Vote taken by roll call - passes unanimously

- New Salem/Wendell Treasurer (Jennifer Eichorn)
 - Hired as treasurer of union school district, needs to be voted in by school committee
 - Johanna moves to assign Jennifer Eichorn the duty of the treasurer of New Salem Wendell, Beth seconds
 - Vote taken by roll call - passed unanimously

- Legal Retainer with Dupere Law Offices
 - A slight change from 2010 - advice and daily interaction the same, monthly amount remains, the retainer would not cover district or other appellate courts - would need to pay an hourly fee
 - Elizabeth moves to retain the legal retainer with Dupere Law Offices, Beth seconds

- Vote taken by roll call - passes unanimously
- Amend FY22 Academic Calendar – Change May 27, 2022 to a School Day
 - Union 28 originally had a professional development day on May 27
 - Changing this to a school day moves the last day of school to June 21
 - The professional development day can be moved to the 2022-23 school year
 - Beth moves to change May 27th to a school day and change the last day of school to June 21st , Barbara seconds
 - Vote taken by roll call - passes unanimously
- Voluntary Recognition of Swift River Support Staff to Organize with the Swift River Educational Association/MTA – Discussion and Vote
 - Recognizing the non-certified staff to be allowed to join the SREA teacher’s union
 - Beth fully supports the proposal
 - Jennylou - current SREA supports having one umbrella union
 - Johanna moves to allow Swift River Support Staff to Organize with the Swift River Educational Association, Beth seconds
 - Vote taken by roll call - passes unanimously
- 2022 Swift River Community Action Award Recipient – discussion, nomination, and vote
 - Miriam nominates
 - Anne Martin - on the forefront of the COVID testing
 - Tina Newman - has had a huge impact in the Library
 - Carla nominates
 - Sarah Vular - 100-mile club, looking to start Girls on the Run
 - Gosia Spooner - commitment and care for the students above and beyond her position
 - Melinda nominates
 - Shelley Sylvester
 - Jamie Lefebvre
 - Jill Putala
 - Kelsey Alvarez
 - Rachael Vitello
 - [Kelley Sullivan](#) will send a poll to the school committee, the final vote will be held publicly at the May meeting
- Fair Share Massachusetts - Discussion and Vote
 - Discusses resolution by the school committee to request the “Millionaire’s Tax” be on the 2022 state ballot
 - Beth moves that the Wendell New Salem school committee strongly endorses the Fair Share amendment, Johanna seconds
 - Vote taken by roll call - passes with one abstention

- Home School Applications –
 - No new applications, update on assessment (and lack of assessment) from certain families
 - Plan to notify DCF as to the situation with non-compliance of home school assessment
 - Do not want to interfere with parental rights to educate, but we need to assure the education is taking place
 - Johanna comments that the school committee stands as a whole behind Carla and Jen to proceed (as advised by the legal counsel) with notifying DCF
 - Barbara supports the decision to contact DCF
 - Miriam checks that the families have been notified that DCF will be contacted
 - Elizabeth requests to see the letter that was sent to the families
 - Johanna would like to be sure that the parents understand it is the school committee as a whole that is contacting DCF, not Carla as an individual
 - Carla is not fearless, courage is stronger than fear
 - Letter sent to families read to the committee
 - Beth wondering if the letters have been received - can the next letter be return reply requested
 - Carla proposes to send return receipt requested letters specifically stating if families do not respond within 7 days, DCF will be contacted; an electronic copy will be sent to the school committee
 - Elizabeth asks why this will go through DCF, not truancy
 - Under DCF, this falls under educational neglect
 - Johanna agrees with Carla's proposal
 - Miriam appreciates the wording of the letter that was read

Policy Update and Review:

- First Reading on:
 - IHAMA – Sex Education Curriculum
 - IHBA – Observations of Special Education Programs
 - IJL – Library Material Selection and Adoption
 - GBK – Staff Complaints and Grievances
 - HF – School Committee Negotiating Agents
 - IE – Organization of Instruction
- Final Vote
 - GBEC –Drug Free Workplace
 - GBGF – Family and Medical Leave Act
 - HA – Goals for Negotiations
 - HB – Negotiation Legal Status
- Anna moves to vote on all the above-listed policies in one vote, Beth seconds
 - Vote taken by roll call - passes unanimously

- Anna moves to approve as a first vote the above-listed policies, Beth seconds
 - Vote taken by roll call - passes unanimously

Future Business

- Next Meeting Date – May 5, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.
- New Salem/Wendell Policy Committee – May 5, 2022 – 6:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

- Johanna moves to approve the minutes from March 3, Elizabeth seconds
- Vote taken by roll call - passes unanimously

Johanna moves to adjourn, Beth seconds - passes unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 8:50