

WENDELL/NEW SALEM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14  
IN PERSON AT SWIFT RIVER SCHOOL 7:00 PM  
“Learning is fun!” -B. Erviti

In attendance: Steve Binder, Carla Halpern, Miriam Warner, Mandy Blackbird, Kate Woodward, Barbara Doyle, Beth Erviti, Kelley Sullivan (Principal), Corinna Wcislo (Acting Superintendent), Caitlin Sheridan, director of Finance and Operations

Staff: Mandy Higgins SPED teacher, Jenny Lou Powers, President Swift River Education Association

Public: Richard Ray, Jr.

A. Meeting called to order at 7:04

B. Public Hearings: Ms. Powers read the following submission from the members of the Swift River Education Association:

“As we close the 2022-2023 school year, members of the Swift River Education Association would like to express appreciation for the respectful relationships cultivated with administration, school committee and town committees which support the continued success of our learners.

We value and respect the civility, processes and procedures which allow our Swift River School community to thrive.

We look forward to our continued partnership.”

C. Warrents:

2823	4/24/2023	\$58.24
2824	5/4/2023	\$2,017.94
2825	5/18/2023	\$2,098.41
2826	6/1/2023	\$2,098.41

4055	4/24/2023	\$8,966.40
4056	4/12/2023	\$0.00
4057	4/24/2023	\$4,476.62
4058	5/4/2023	\$407.87
4059	5/4/2023	\$32,452.39
4060	4/28/2023	\$932.05
4061	5/1/2023	\$5.29
4062	5/4/2023	\$4,608.62
4063	5/9/2023	\$300.00
4064	5/18/2023	\$4,895.01
4065	5/18/2023	\$4,700.25
4066	5/18/2023	\$24,855.54
4067	6/1/2023	\$228.27
4068	6/1/2023	\$10,481.27
4069	5/31/2023	\$88.13

821	4/13/2023	\$28,005.40
822	4/27/2023	\$28,028.68
823	5/11/2023	\$28,723.57
824	5/25/2023	\$27,966.78
825	6/8/2023	\$27,869.32

421	4/13/2023	\$87,613.08
422	4/27/2023	\$86,306.14
423	5/11/2023	\$93,300.38
424	5/25/2023	\$89,829.27
425	6/8/2023	\$88,141.15

8210	4/13/2023	\$95,837.13
8221	4/12/2023	\$1,585.70
8222	4/27/2023	\$38,615.65
8223	4/25/2023	\$48,906.19
8220	4/27/2023	\$95,500.52
8230	5/11/2023	\$102,918.82
8240	5/25/2023	\$99,515.81
8241	6/2/2023	\$49,112.27
8250	6/8/2023	\$970,212.83

No gifts or grants presented for vote.

#### D. Superintendent's Report

Acting Superintendent, Corrina Wcislo, expressed her appreciation of the students, staff for their combined efforts to create a resilient and supportive learning community. She is replacing Jennifer Culkeen who is out indefinitely on medical leave.

Carla asked if there is anything the School Committee members can do to support Superintendent Culkeen. Steve asked why the Committee had not been the entity granting the superintendent's leave and was told that this sort of leave is a matter for the HR department. Steve asked if the Superintendent Evaluation should relate specifically to the goals outlined by the Superintendent early in the year or should the responses be more general. Carla and others stipulated that the responses need to be directed at the goals, as outlined in the evaluation form. Kelley explained that the goals are developed beginning in the summer prior to the start of school for a given year, and are addressed and/or amended as the year progressed. Addressing the goals is a matter most commonly done during the collective Joint Supervisory Committee meetings.

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

Caitlin submitted the following report:

The Department of Revenue has certified the Excess & Deficiency as of July 1, 2022 in the amount of \$83,323. The certification process is one of the more challenging parts of a

regional business administrator's job. I received support from Jared Curtis from the DOR, who offered to come out and help with the beginning of next year's process in the fall. He also offered to help other local business administrators if they were interested. So, we found a date and time for Jared and four other interested local business administrators to come to Swift River School and begin the process for next year.

- I recently took the School Project Designers and Owner's Project Managers Certification class and passed the final exam, so I am now MCPPO certified.
- The Wellness Advisory Council met for the fourth and final time this year on May 24. We have some preliminary areas of recommendations, which we plan on finalizing and bringing before the policy committee next year. Some of those ideas include:
  - Increased amount of Physical Education time in the week
  - Increased time for collaboration between PE teachers, nurses, and other staff members across Union #28.
  - Providing resources and promoting community and family involvement in wellness initiatives
  - Tower gardens to promote collaboration between nutrition staff and classrooms
  - Guidance and communication around providing outside food in the school
- We had a number of unbudgeted expenses this year including some contractual changes, new hires, and unanticipated additions to the health insurance. This is why we have a deficit in the general ledger. Fortunately, the district has accumulated \$116,126 in Rural Aid money that I would like to use to pay for some of the staffing expenses we had this year so we will end the year in the positive. The budget for next year reflects these staffing increases, so we should be budgeted correctly for FY24. I am also requesting a transfer of \$11,000 from the Food Service account of the general ledger to the Food Service revolving account.

A motion was made (Steve) and seconded (Beth) to transfer \$11,000 from the Food Service account of the general ledger to the Food Service revolving account. The motion passed unanimously.

#### F. Principal's Report

The work to complete the installation site for the PFAS remediation equipment in the school is nearing completion. Remediation is scheduled to start July 1, 2023.

Reader Theaters are ongoing, with the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade exhibiting a production involving the theme of Animals and the 4<sup>th</sup> grade producing How Do We Treat People.

The 6<sup>th</sup> grade has completed a field trip to Boston, visiting the Aquarium, Freedom Trail Tour, and the Green Dragon, among other sights. They conducted themselves in exemplary fashion and were complimented by the Tour Guide.

Kindergarten and Pre-K orientation was held, showing an increase in new faces from New Salem and a few from Wendell as well.

Classrooms are conducting their end of year benchmark assessments, discovering an increase in reading ability overall since beginning the You Fly program in grades 1 through 6.

Mike Cortina once again produced a fabulous singing show for all to enjoy. Kelley expressed the importance of music and the arts in the grades as a way of bringing joy, confidence, and success to

the learning experience. After all, learning should be fun (my personal sentiment, not specifically expressed at the meeting).

Carla asked if there were noticeable behavioral issues in the 1-6 classrooms as a result of the Covid years. Kelley expressed deep gratitude for the School Adjustment Counselor (Jamie Lefbvre) and School Psychologist (Lynn Ofki) who speak with students both individually and in sharing groups.

Steve complimented the progress in reading and wondered what math learning tool(s) were being used. Kelley responded that the school uses NEWA as an everyday math tool. She said the 6<sup>th</sup> grade was working on How To Spend A Million Dollars including all research into prices of high end items such as homes and vehicles.

#### G. Committee Reports

Mahar: Carla and Kate spoke to the re-emergence of the D.C. Trip, now scheduled to continue in the spring of 2024. Carla spoke highly of a new program to hire upper class students for summer work on buildings/grounds maintenance, affording these students valuable experience, some pocket change, and buy-in for owning the school. The Mahar School Committee will have a table at the next Garlic and Arts Festival, underscoring their bid for better public relations. Carla also mentioned that the Orange Elementary School will open for classes Fall 2023 and that Mahar completed a new 6<sup>th</sup> grade orientation. Their next meeting is scheduled for September 14 at 6 pm.

CES: Carla reported that there will be creation of a new advisory committee for Massachusetts Migrants.

MASC: no reported

Joint Supervisory: The thrust of the meeting dealt with the upcoming Superintendent evaluations. The next meeting is scheduled for September 2023 at 6:30 pm.

#### H. June Items

School Committee Notifications: Kelley outlined the methods of getting word out to the families of SWS students. Beth spoke to her level of frustration as a non-parent who got no Current and had little knowledge of the school activities, so requested that a copy of the Current be sent to school committee members who wished to receive it. Kate agreed. Kelley said the SC can be added to the Current list serve. Thank you!

Proposed SC meeting schedule FY 24: Beth moved having the meetings held the first Thursday of every month as outlined in the handout. Passed unanimously, with the friendly amendment that the meeting in November would address the December meeting where a Thursday falls on a religious holiday and might better be moved to the first Wednesday in December.

Policy Updates:

Second reading, first vote on JIC, GBA, and GCF moved (Beth) and seconded (Steve) to address these as a group. Passed unanimously. No discussion. Vote passed unanimously.

Final vote on DJE, DK-1, and KCD moved and seconded to address these as a group. Passed unanimously. No discussion. Passed unanimously.

I. Approval of minutes of April 6, 2023: Motion to accept (Beth) Second (Steve) Discussion by Carla involved the wording on page 3 under G, having to do with the fact that the discussion on testing occurring during religious holidays was more broad than indicated in the minutes.

Minutes approved unanimously.

J. Beth motion, second Steve to adjourn passed unanimously 8 pm.

Minutes submitted B. Erviti