

NEW SALEM/WENDELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, April 6, 2017
Swift River School

Final Minutes

Meeting called to order 7:02

Kelley Sullivan, Jen Haggerty, Melissa Burke, Dave Briand, Dick Baldwin, Johanna Bartlett, Alyssa Rulf Fountain, Carla Halpern, Amy Palmer
Rachel Vitello; Patty Savage, Barbara Doyle

A. Public Hearings

- FY18 Budget - meeting with the NS and Wendell select boards, finance committees.
Major budget points:
 - Increase in U28 budget 28.1% to 29.5%; the percentage of U28 overall is 2.5%
 - There were teacher and teacher aid salary increases - added a preschool teacher and budgeted for a new $\frac{1}{2}$ time title I and special education teacher. The school is investing in Pre-K - 3 to try to avoid IEPs in later grades. The MA state average of kids with disabilities is 17.5%; the Swift River School rate is 24.1%, resulting in the need for more support staff. Not only is the percentage of kids with disabilities higher at Swift River School than the state average, it is also higher than all of the surrounding schools.
 - The budget shows a \$62k increase for fixed costs - health benefits as a result of an increase in U28 employees who are getting health insurance (93.4%).
 - Another increase is due to the loss of grant funding. The school lost 1/3 of the preschool grant. Over the next three years the school will lose one-third of the funding per year until at which point the preschool grant dollars will dry up.
 - The school also lost the Kindergarten grant. There appears to be a shift in funding away from public school Pre-K and K.
 - Chapter 70 funding is flat. The school was expecting a 2% increase but instead are getting 1.3%
 - The select boards and finance committees were reasonable, asked good questions
 - Community members in New Salem and Wendell are very anxious about the school budget because of broadband - they are competing for funds
 - There was a discussion about moving the town meeting to the SRS to provide child care which will allow more parents to come to town meeting and vote
 - There was also a discussion about creating a visual presentation to show what the budget numbers are looking like relative to student academic progress
- Other Public Hearings - Barbara Doyle was introduced as a potential school committee member

B. Warrants - Record in minutes with numbers

Bill: 4529, 4530, 8516

Payroll: 420, 421, 820, 821, 4200, 4210, 8005, 8200, 8210

- C. Superintendent's Report** - A committee interviewed a number of candidates for finance director. There were three finalists, one was selected who was previously a finance director.

Visited school and thought it was very special. Prudy and Jen have been selected to speak about universal design at the executive institute for MA superintendents - the only speakers invited from western MA

- D. Director of Finance and Operations Report** - there may be some savings in fuel; otherwise everything looks okay.
- E. Principal's Report** -
- During February vacation radiators were repaired - it was determined there are a few rooms not getting heat through radiators (but getting blown hot air).
 - Swift River School hosted a poet for a workshop - it was a great success.
 - Pancake breakfast and 5k run is rescheduled for May 6, 2017.
 - Swift River School is asking to reduce the number of student report cards from three times per year to twice per year. Other local schools only distribute report cards twice each year.
 - The school is in the midst of MCAS - 4th grade is beginning online testing - will report out on this in May. There is a lot of writing involved - Kelley is concerned kids may not be developmentally prepared to type responses.
 - In the National GeoBee, one of the SRS student made it to state semi finals
- F. Committee Reports**
- Collaborative for Educational Services - a lot of time was spent during the meeting on the executive director's evaluation. CES is looking at expanding online PDPs. They are also thinking about expanding special education and adding another building. CES is looking at doing some in-school programs - they are available to help schools with what they need - not predetermined.
 - The school committee asked how much of our budget goes to CES. Their programs are prohibitively expensive for small schools - does it work for SRS?
 - CES is talking about developing Pre-K, K program for kids with emotional challenges.
 - **Budget and Personnel** - Next meeting- Monday, May 15, 2017 6:00 p.m. Swift River School
 - **Joint Supervisory** - Next Meeting - Monday, May 15, 2017 7:00 p.m. Swift River School
 - Joint supervisory and B&P meeting - discussed the new finance director hire the superintendent evaluation process.
 - Updates from sister schools in U28
 - Shutesbury - drama and yoga, librarian won pioneer valley award
 - Leverett - 5th grade did fair on Aztec, Inca, etc, have a maker space
 - Erving is working on strengthening community involvement, science fair, food drive
- G. Report from Mahar Representatives** -
- The committee settled on a calendar for 2017-18.
 - There was a big discussion about the budget - it is very hard to push through in orange, they always need money. Terry covered reasons why budget is going up, similar to us. They have worked hard to cut budget, committee approved but not clear whether town will approve.
 - Mahar, Orange elementary schools, Petersham - developed a union (73). Discussing superintendent and contract. Everyone thinks she's doing a great job. There were

discussions with the teachers - they are decreasing the percent of healthcare to be covered. All agree healthcare is such a problem, the teachers are going to take less.

H. **April Items**

1. FY18 Budget - Vote - motion to approve Fy18 budget for \$2,376,130 - Melissa made motion, Dick second. AIF
2. Community Action Award - Discussion -
Carla has asked for input around the community. One name has come up repeatedly - Nan Meade who is doing the 100 mile club; going above and beyond to help families in need find resources that are elusive. Carla will write narrative for Nan's award. Melissa made a motion to choose Nan Meade for community action award; Dick second the motion. AIF - Carla abstained. Talent show on 6/16
3. Home School Requests * - Isaac and Solana - Melissa made motion to approve home schooling request, Carla second - AIF; Ian - Melissa made motion to approve home school request for Ian; Carla second - AIF
4. School Choice - Identification of School Choice Seats - There may be a few slots, SRS doesn't have to extend invitations
5. Academic Calendar 2017-2018 * - vote on calendar - the big change is shifting the curriculum day from May to March, and early dismissal right before holidays. Carla made motion to approve calendar; Melissa second. AIF
6. Policy Update and Review:
Second Reading, First Vote on:
 - JICH - Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Used by Students Prohibited* - there was a long discussion about details that are not in the policy, there's a difference between the policy and the procedures to carry it out - vote on policy as written. Procedures will be written out for what actually happens on the scene. Procedure will be in the handbook - Carla moved to approve JICH; Melissa second. AIFFirst Reading on:
 - IHAMA - Parental Notification Relative to Sex Education *
 - IJOA - Field Trips *Vote to Delete:
 - IHAMB - Parental Notification Relative to Sex Education *

I. **Future Business**

- Next Meeting Date - May 4, 2017 - 7:00 p.m.
- New Salem/Wendell Policy Committee - May 4, 2017, 2016 6:30 p.m.
- New Salem Town Meeting : TBD - Wendell Town Meeting Saturday June 10, 2017 10am

J. **Approval of the Minutes of February 2, 2017*** - Carla moved to approve minutes; Dave second. AIF

K. **Adjournment** - Carla moved to adjourn; Melissa second. AIF (8:51pm)

Respectfully submitted,

Alyssa Rulf Fountain