

New Salem/Wendell School Committee Meeting
Final Minutes
October 6, 2016

Present: David Briand, Carla Halpern, Alyssa Rulf Fountain, Johanna Bartlett, Dick Baldwin, Jack Radner, Amy Palmer, Melissa Burke

Members: Jennifer Haggerty, Superintendent; Kelley Sullivan, Principal; Aaron Osborne, U28 Director of Finance

Teachers: Trudy Smith; Diane Adams

Johanna called meeting to order at 7:00

- a. Public Hearings
- b. Warrants: Payroll: 407, 408, 807, 808, 1002, 1003, 4080, 8070
- c. Teacher presentation –
 - Trudy presented information about the Dial 4 Student assessment that tests pre-K and K students in identifying objects, rhyming, ability to identify initial sounds (e.g., show a picture – what items in picture start with br). Rachel assesses kids' motor development, Karen assesses concepts (e.g., shapes, colors, counting, sorting). The testing is a predictor for the ease with which students will be able to read/decode, can identify children at risk for learning difficulties, and may need early intervention.
 - Diane presented information about the Wonders Reading Program in which students are presented with picture cards with vocabulary words and pictures. The teacher has conversations about each of the words and discusses what's going on in the pictures – these interactions improve students' vocabulary, verbal capacity.
- d. Superintendent's report – Jenn is visiting the schools on Thursdays. The leadership team is working on a strategic plan – a vision and theory of action (if/then statement). There are four major strategic objectives to drive instruction at each school. Together with principals, they will flesh out goals for the schools (initiatives or projects to bring goals to life). The leadership team had a second meeting with Chip Wood about building community members into schools – practicing mindfulness (a three-minute breathing space activity, thinking about what's wonderful or weighty). The team reviewed meeting norms – practices and protocols, asking open, honest questions – these things are essential to build foundational trust. Jenn is hoping the work at the district level will trickle down to schools. Jenn is finding the work thought-provoking and uplifting.
 - Director of finance report – there are areas where money has been held back (savings accounts) where Aaron tries not to use it unless absolutely necessary. School choice and circuit breaker.
 - Committed to spending \$116k school choice funds on salaries – there is still \$132k to be spent. School choice money is most easily used, the school can spend it on just about anything and it is therefore last to be spent because it is so fungible.

- Circuit breaker funds haven't been spent yet – there is still \$40k.
 - CPC grant (early childhood grant – goes toward early childhood salaries) money hasn't yet been spent. Aaron budgeted for \$16k but ultimately got \$32k so there is still \$16 left to spend and it will be spent it quickly – don't want to hold on to it. Aaron would like to take salary money out of district tuition to save the 9% (that is lost for salary).
 - Looking to use more contract services for physical therapy.
 - Add as an agenda item for next month Melissa's concerns about contract services – inability to become school community member when work is contracted.
 - Aaron is leaving on 10/31/16 – going to the Palmer schools. He and Jenn are actively interviewing for a replacement. If they can't find someone by the time Aaron leaves, they will look to contract someone. They are hoping to hire an interim director of finance to start in November.
- e. Principal's report – Jennifer indicated the principal report is in packet. The school received MCAS and PARCC scores – the few students who took the tests did very well. Swift River School was not assigned a level due to insufficient data; half of the third graders took the test, one fourth grader and two sixth graders tested. Students will take the new MCAS 2.0 test this spring; the 4th grade will take the computerized version.
- f. Committee reports:
- CES held a routine meeting. There are a lot of trainings being offered on social justice and early childhood. The committee wants to make school committees aware of the proud of western mass Facebook page. There was a presentation by the early education team – outreach in communities with immigrants. There are also programs for grandparents raising children. The CES talked about the rural schools movement – Jenn was elected to write a piece on why we should retain small rural schools – they are advocating for sparsity aid. Bill Diehl (director of collaborative) would like to attend a meeting in the near future.
 - B&P – Carla talked about a timeline for this year's budget process – they are working on the Union 28 budget first, then two weeks later the individual schools. The committee reviewed the policy for acting superintendent – a couple of questions came up 1) defining incapacity, 2) would we need majority of joint supervisory to determine incapacity. B&P will next meet on 10/26. The joint supervisory committee approved the schedule for a budget process. School reports:
 - Shutesbury got CPC grant for improving playground and building a track; they accepted two school choice kids but are dealing with declining enrollment.
 - Leverett is up in enrollment and a 3:1 boy/girl ratio in the 3rd grade. The committee discussed International Day of Peace. The committee approved the resolution against raising cap on charter schools (no on 2).
 - Erving schools are doing breakfast in class.
 - U28 additional items:
 - Aaron is leaving his position at the end of October

- Superintendent evaluation was positive
 - B&P reflecting on different evaluative tools/processes.
 - Main office is getting a new security system (it has been installed).
- g. Mahar report – Carla – the committee has not met – there was a tragedy in Orange on 10/5/16 – school was in lockdown (but not called lockdown). There was a home invasion – grandparents of an 8th grader and parents of a Dexter Park staff were involved.
- h. September Items
 1. Swift River School Improvement Plan (SIP) – Carla made a motion to accept the SIP by Carla, Jack second. Discussion – Dick: how will you move toward getting new equipment that will require use of the budget (e.g., white boards)? Kelley responded that at the end of each year, she has been putting in white boards where they are necessary. Kelley hasn't yet put together a capital plan but knows the school will need to start replacing promethean boards as they are becoming obsolete. There are grants out there - it all depends on how Swift River spends their technology line. At the end of the year Kelley waits to see what has gone unspent. School choice money can be spent for equipment needed in the school but they need to be judicious. Melissa asked about social justice programs as part of the SIP – Steps to Respect naturally creates respect but is specific to addressing the differences between people – particularly racial differences. Is there a curriculum about teaching tolerance? Kelly responded the school uses Second Step and Steps to Success which incorporate issues of race. Also the newest teachers just hired have a lot of training in social justice (1st, 3rd, 5th grade teachers). Vote: all in favor.
 2. Johanna added an agenda item – asked about attending 'charting the course' – asking those folks who haven't taken it for best dates – Glenn Koocher will come out to teach it.
 3. Family handbook – vote to approve: Carla motioned to approve the family handbook, Dick second. No discussion. AIF.
 4. New Salem/Wendell Members – both sworn in since last meeting (Amy and Rik).
 5. Charter School resolution – Dick made motion to approve the charter school resolution, Carla second. Discussion – David brought up the movie the Lottery – questioned some of Johanna's write-up about the charter school resolution. Vote: six yes; one no; one abstain.
 6. Home school request – Jenn called Maher family to request more information, received no response. Jenn also looked at the Maher's home school curriculum from last year where there is more information. Motion: Dick moved to approve home school request, Jack second. Discussion – Carla indicated she has concerns but the committee is powerless to do anything. She does support right of parents to educate their kids as broadly as possible – question: do we see in home school records student samples from this family. Jenn responded, yes. If DCF was called based on non-returned calls, it would be screened out due to lack of evidence. AIF

7. Procedure regarding missed school committee meetings. Carla suggested having policy committee work on it (e.g., if you are going to be late or miss a school committee meeting it is your responsibility to contact the chair; if you miss two consecutive meetings without explanation or three with explanation it will warrant a conversation). Jenn will get more information about whether a policy is feasible, whether it would have legal teeth – and if we can, what are the options? We have to be careful... if school committee members leave as a result of a policy, it's possible we won't be able to get quorum. The policy committee will discuss establishing norms and expectations. This item will be added to the November agenda for full committee discussion.
8. Policy update and review:
 - i. Second reading, first vote:
 1. GCF – staff hiring: Carla moved to approve, Jack second. No discussion. AIF
 2. GCDBA – course credit: Carla moved to approve, Dick second. Discussion – Melissa asked why only UMass credit was mentioned. Jenn clarified the contract uses the UMass rate as a standard – you can't take courses at a private college and get reimbursed at a higher rate. AIF
 3. GCFA – staff placement. Carla moved to approve, Dick second. No discussion. AIF
 4. JC – student attendance. Jack moved to approve, Dick second. Jack pointed out there was missing punctuation and any number below 10 should be spelled out – as amended. AIF

Policy Meeting 6:30, next meeting November 3, 2016

Carla moved to approve minutes from 9/8/16, Dick second. Kelley mentioned her name is spelled with 'ey', not just y. AIF.

Adjourn – Jack moved to adjourn, Carla second. 8:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alyssa Rulf Fountain

New Salem/Wendell School Committee member