

Sudbury Public Schools (SPS)
School Committee Meeting Minutes
September 6, 2017, 6:00 PM
Sudbury Senior Center

Members Present:

Christine Hogan, Chair
Margaret Helon
Lisa Kouchakdjian
Lucie St. George

Members Absent:

Richard Tinsley, Vice Chair

Also Present:

Don Sawyer, Director of Business and Finance
Michael O'Brien, Director of Technology
Dr. Anne Wilson, Superintendent of Schools
Kimberly Swain, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Melissa Morabito, President, SEA

Open Session

Chair Christine Hogan opened the session at 6:00 P.M.

1. FY19 Budget Planning

Don Sawyer explained that tonight's discussion will begin the three-month look at the FY18 and FY19 and future years' budget process; tonight will include: Utilities; District-wide Technology and Infrastructure; and, Transportation. The Committee discussed the 1.48% increase to the collective bargaining staff members. Christine Hogan expressed concern that there appears to be a \$534,051 deficit going into the FY19 year; Don Sawyer noted that it's rather an increase to the current operating budget. Lucie St. George stated that schools are a people business. most expenses are salary driven. Christine Hogan agreed and added the Committee is charged with overseeing the most important investment the Town can make, the future.

Utilities

- Don Sawyer noted the FY19 allocation for Utilities is \$666,000.
- Utilities include Electricity, Heating and water expenses.
- Lisa Kouchakdjian would like to see the budget forecasted a couple years out, and also be broken down line by line, this would allow the Committee to evaluate at a greater level of detail.
- Maggie Helon expressed interest in exploring solar panels as a way to offset utility costs, and be more efficient and innovative.

- Christine Hogan will add solar panel discussion as a future agenda item, and clarified she had asked to go through a line by line review of budget transfers last year but no one else on the Committee felt the need; therefore no meeting was scheduled.
- Regarding requests for more detail, Don Sawyer explained that they will see more detail and break down when it comes to technology, inventory, classroom expenses and bus transportation, moving forward as he wants the Committee to work on a multi-year forecast.

District-Wide Technology Infrastructure: (Presented by Michael O'Brien)

Computer Software

- The FY18 allocation for Computer Software is \$205,582.
- All Software titles are subscriptions, most licenses will increase 3-5% annually.
- Computer software increases are also due to shifting many curriculum and assessment titles into this line item. Christine Hogan noted this was a significant increase and would like to see where the savings came from.
- Many software titles have been cut from the FY18 Budget, Lisa Kouchakdjian mentioned that she has received phone calls from parents regarding some of these software cuts. Maggie Helon feels Raz Kids is a valuable tool and would like to see it remain in place for Kindergarten - 1st grade.
- Discussed addition of administrative operational/logistical tools and software for FY19.

Computer Network

- The FY18 allocation for Computer Network is \$31,833.
- Approximately half of this line item includes funding the managed internet service, networking and content filtering.
- Replacements and repairs to local networking hardware are included in this line item.
- In FY24 a new five-year Cisco Meraki license will need to be added at a cost of \$45,000.

New Computer Equipment

- The FY18 allocation for New Equipment is \$184,800.
- This will fund mainly staff and student computers, and approximately \$30,000 for insurance on computers.
- Explained the replacement plan and the shift of 350 new devices to 200 devices where refreshes are needed.
- Explained the benefits of Chromebooks versus iMac.
- This line item is on a downward trend due to prices coming down.
- Explained that there is a long-term need for an additional Network Technician on staff, but is not advocating for this over an instructional position.

- Superintendent Wilson noted what is currently set up is the foundation; the three-year projections will be incorporated after further discussions with the Committee and by our experts in the District.

Transportation

- The FY18 allocation for (regular day) Transportation is \$567,372.
- Currently under a five-year contract, signed last year.
- The Committee discussed whether to table this discussion on Transportation to the next agenda, and whether to have an additional agenda item regarding Transportation (issues) on tonight's agenda. Don Sawyer noted no services were lost. Christine Hogan noted the long-term transportation discussion is important and will be discussed.
- Christine Hogan asked Don about the cost savings with the newer Transportation model, specifically how much was saved by changing the Loring start time as it was presented last December as saving \$1MM+ for the District., She would like to know how that broke down.
- Superintendent Wilson explained the transportation issues that are currently occurring.
- Superintendent Wilson noted a meeting was held today which included the bus company representatives and others. Many items were addressed; an additional bus and driver will be added Monday.
- Lisa Kouchakdjian asked if there is a formal limit on the amount of time a student can be on the bus, and if the Committee should consider developing a policy on this.
- Lisa Kouchakdjian expressed concern regarding the safety issue of overcrowding on the bus, Superintendent Wilson said this is not acceptable and this was made aware to First Student in their meeting today.

FY19 Budget Planning (continued)

Christine Hogan noted that she has questions related to the last meeting's FY19 DOE reconciliation sheet, regarding the Library budget being reduced by 12%. Don Sawyer explained that everything was rolled over as level service - level funded, unless a contractual obligation required an increase. A replacement library media specialist was hired with less steps and warranted a lower budget, this was true for the music and Kindergarten budgets, no positions or programs were cut. She also inquired as to the 12.51% decrease in Music at \$83,998. Lucie St. George stated new hires were paid much less.

2.. School Committee Reports (Liaison/Subcommittee Reports)

Lucie St. George asked which Subcommittee Playgrounds fall under. Christine Hogan asked that Jim Kelly inform the Committee regarding any issues affecting school or school grounds for now.

3. Open Forum

Bob Stein, 7 Thompson Drive, is concerned that after his suggestion last meeting to have space utilization and redistricting studies done, this was not put on the agenda. He referred to comments made by three of the Committee members at the August 30 meeting. Members Lisa Kouchakdjian and Lucie St. George responded and Christine Hogan stated redistricting will be put on a future agenda.

Sarah Lieberman, 17 Hopestill Brown Road, asked if there has been any discussion on school start times as LS has a committee . Christine Hogan noted the School Start Time Committee met last winter and made their recommendations to the School Committee.

Maia Proujansky Bell, 38 Lakewood Drive, inquired whether technology assessment testing is part of the cuts, and with MAP testing cuts, what assessment will be used in its place. She appreciates the need for IT technician but hopes priority is given to hiring staff with direct interaction with students. Ms. Bell inquired which school would receive the extra bus, and the maximum number of students allowed to ride per bus. Superintendent Wilson noted that it depends on the size of the bus, and the width of the seats and bus riders. Assistant Superintendent Kim Swain responded that she and her team are working to put in place a new map assessment system.

Alicia Beneteau, 147 Willis Road, was disappointed to hear that there is a proposal for Odyssey to be changed to a day only program and expressed her support of the current overnight program. She suggested a day only option for students who do not want to stay overnight. Christine Hogan responded that there will be a follow up presentation on October 2nd, and said she has suggested delaying any changes until a new leadership team is in place. Superintendent Wilson has put forth a new program for FY19, parents can go on Let's Talk and submit their feedback. The feedback will be discussed on October 2nd.

Rebecca Zeng, 75 Kato Drive, asked about the overcrowding issue on the buses, and the decrease in the school population, and if it would be beneficial to use the money to improve the teaching quality.

Monica Rogan, 80 Goodnow Road, inquired regarding the funding shortfall of FY18, if this can be broken down. Don Sawyer responded that technology can, but utilities are not because they are not reported to the State that way. Ms. Rogan stated she did not see computer software code in the Munis lineup, and is confused by the Technology moratorium. Ms. Rogan inquired as to how the creative process works when deciding where to put grant money. Don Sawyer responded that grants can be earmarked, and we are always looking for grant resources.

Sarah Lieberman referred back to the Odyssey conversation and asked that a link be put on the website with more information, prior to the October 2nd follow up presentation.

4. Policy Update - Facility User Group

Lisa Kouchakdjian reported that she and Maggie had a great first meeting today and hope to have a draft policy on facility use at the next Policy Sub-Committee Meeting, Maggie Helon noted that they need to look into the cost of user fees, adding that the policy as it stands is antiquated and needs to be more concise. Lisa Kouchakdjian noted this is going to take many meetings.

5. Superintendent Vacancy

Christine Hogan announced that we will be having our meeting with MASC Executive Director, Glenn Koocher on Friday, September 15th, to discuss our options. Lucie St. George has been through this process before and understands what is involved. Maggie Helon noted that she would not want to see funds spent on this search when there are many free search engines available.

6. School Year Calendar FY19

Christine Hogan noted that the Committee has received a draft calendar, and a survey will be going out to the community after the Committee approves one. Maggie Helon suggested that after reviewing the information from Michael O'Brien, the Committee consider looking at Friday rather than Wednesday as a half-day citing the multi-year trend of higher number of student absences on Fridays compared to the other four days of the week. The Committee discussed the survey, and possible vacation weeks. Lisa Kouchakdjian would like to see the survey be more concise. Christine Hogan asked Committee Members to send her suggestions for the survey and she will compile and create a draft survey. She will put this on an upcoming meeting agenda.

7. Sudbury Housing Authority

Steve Swanger, Commissioner, and Sheila Cusolito, Executive Director, spoke to the Committee about the Housing Authority's purpose requested SPS land for their housing needs. Mr. Swanger distributed an outline to the Members, containing a list of sites. There is a .6 acre property that is controlled by the School Committee, located on the corner of Peakham and Pratt's Mill Road which he is asking the Committee to vote to sign over to the Board of Selectmen who would then deed it to the Housing Authority. Christine Hogan noted the Committee will keep this in mind but is not comfortable moving forward without further research as well as possible future needs for SPS, especially in light of the upcoming change in leadership

7. Second Open Forum

Frank Huettig, 54 White Robin Road, organizer for adult recreational volleyball league in Town, read the current use policy agreement regarding property use fees, and noted his group is waiting for clarification.. Maggie Helon noted that the fees most likely will change, there needs to be consistency and does not feel the fees are in line with other towns. Christine Hogan noted this policy needs more work and our goal is to ensure it applies equitably and fairly.

8. Members' Forum

None

9. Minutes - Regular Session Minutes

None.

10. Future Agenda Item Discussion

- Policy Sub-Committee Update
- Budget Planning Update
- Jim Kelly - Playgrounds Update
- Acceptance of Superintendent Resignation
- Superintendent Vacancy
- Budget Presentation (October)
- Odyssey Update (October)

11. Executive Session

Lisa Kouchakdjian moved to go into Executive Session to discuss strategies with respect to negotiations with union and non-union personnel as to do so in open session may be detrimental to the negotiating position of the Committee and to review and to not return to Open Session.

Maggie Helon seconded.

Vote: 5-0. Motion carried.

12. Adjournment: 10:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Laura Clifford