

NEW SALEM/WENDELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, January 4, 2024

Swift River School – 7:00 p.m.

Attending: Carla Halpern, Miriam Warner, Mandy Blackbird, Kate Woodward, Steven Blinder Nancy Slater, Beth Erviti, Anna Wetherby (minutes), members; Jennifer Culkeen, superintendent; Kelley Sullivan, principal; Caitlin Sheridan, director of finance and operations

Teachers: Michelle Wolfe, Tina Newman, Patty Savage

Public: none

A. Meeting called to order at 7:05

B. Public Hearings - none

C. Warrants – Record in minutes with numbers

Union 28 Accounts Payable

2812	11/16/2023	\$2,467.14
2813	12/1/2023	\$685.16
2815	12/14/2023	\$299.00
2816	12/29/2023	\$944.69

New Salem/Wendell Accounts Payable

4030	11/16/2023	\$29,794.63
4031	11/16/2023	\$1,731.86
4032	11/16/2023	\$2,682.25
4033	11/17/2023	\$666.01
4034	12/1/2023	\$300.84
4035	12/1/2023	\$368.20
4036	12/1/2023	\$7,538.91
4037	12/14/2023	\$4,224.32
4038	12/14/2023	\$31,346.09
4039	12/14/2023	\$2,305.75
4040	12/29/2023	\$21,829.13
4041	12/29/2023	\$3,841.57

New Salem/Wendell Payroll

410	11/9/2023	\$94,152.46
411	11/22/2023	\$95,102.49
412	12/7/2023	\$93,460.97
413	12/21/2023	\$95,918.46
414	1/4/2023	\$92,324.09

Union 28 Payroll

810	11/9/2023	\$29,696.75
811	11/22/2023	\$29,696.75
812	12/7/2023	\$29,569.88
813	12/21/2023	\$30,452.73
814	1/4/2023	\$29,235.14

Monthly Deductions

8100	11/9/2023	\$103,568.34
8110	11/22/2023	\$104,460.74
8111	11/22/2023	\$40,619.37
8112	11/23/2023	\$50,679.06
8120	12/7/2023	\$102,417.90
8130	12/21/2023	\$105,617.21
8131	12/21/2023	\$41,034.38
8132	12/27/2023	\$55,376.92
8140	1/4/2023	\$100,829.36

o Gifts: Acceptance Vote - no gifts

o Grants: Acceptance Vote

- TITLE I FC305 – \$28,370
 - TITLE IIA FC140 – \$4,149
 - TITLE IV FC309 - \$10,000
 - IDEA FC240 – \$53,762
 - IDEA FC262 - \$3,060
 - IDEA Part B FC274 - \$6,394
 - MASS LITERACY GRANT FC 583 - \$6,000
- Anna moves to vote on all grants in one vote; Beth seconds - passes unanimously
 - Anna moves to accept all listed grants; Beth seconds - passes unanimously

D. Superintendent's Report

- 2023 Student activity plan
 - The Student Opportunity Act calls for every district and charter school in the state to develop 3-year plans, referred to as SOA plans - on round 2 of Student Activity Plan Act
 - Identify where data reveals disparities and describe how they will utilize evidence-based approaches and strategies to address those disparities
 - Focused on evidence based strategies and outcomes
 - Critical actional, evidence based strategies are focused on rapidly improving outcomes for students with low academic performance
 - Plan must be submitted by April 1
 - Massachusetts Literacy grant meets as an approved
- DESE seeking changes in accountability
 - The increasing weight of chronic absentees
 - Three years of data
 - Details are available in the summary of [district and school accountability for public](#)
 - DESE is seeking feedback
 - The committee can send a letter, but there is no form to complete

E. Director of Finance and Operations Report

o FY25 Draft Budget - Discussion

- The Treasurer has taken on additional roles and responsibilities. Budgeting to reflect this increase in workload. This is reflected in the job audit done on the responsibility of the Treasurer
- Administration lines are set for U28
- Increase in financial audit
- Higher prices of supplies have caused an increase in
- Necessary ELL teacher
- ESSER 1 and 2 funding for adjustment counselor is ending, and salary will move to the general budget
- Need for additional paraprofessional due to IEP
- Request to have the principal included in a longevity stipend - will be

- The new math curriculum approved by the state requires new material
- ESSER money is no longer available for the purchase of Chromebooks
- SNAP is now included in Health Supplies, increase in immunization tracking software
- Increase to the fuel line as has run over many years in a row
- 39.7% \$208,839 - county retirement
- Additional staff opting for life insurance
- New retirees in the central office have increased the amount of Health Insurance Retirees
- Decreasing reliance on some grants, such as the American Rescue plan
- Focusing on grants covering salaries
- Grant-funded supplies to be better tracked
- 7.13% total increase
- 11.94%
- NS 7.79% decrease
- W 11.96% increase
- Increase to the five-year average for Wendell

F. Principal's Report

- Jamie Lefebvre (Mr. J) - school adjustment counselor - ESSER grants have fully funded position in the past
 - Having full-time has been amazing
 - Sees everybody and talks with whatever they need
 - Increase in monthly visits over time
 - Does some counseling services at tier 2 level in 3 groups
 - Tier 3 (IEP) 7, (504) 9
 - Behavioral and crisis response - increases monthly as well
 - Leads classroom discussions around many topics and integrates SEL
 - Works with teachers, outside service providers
 - Works with school refusal students
- Lynn Oski - psychologist
- PFAS - finished everything on January 6
 - The construction team (Ardent) does not want to replace the bladder, although it was part of the original bid and contract
 - The Could this be a legal issue?
 - Believes that is up to the towns
- Winter concert was amazing, with over 200 guests attending
- Class events - preschool gingerbread hunt and 3rd-grade publishing party
- Owen Cody (summer custodial) took over while another person was on paternity leave

G. Committee Reports

o Report from Mahar Representatives

- There was no regular meeting in December
- Resources and Capacity meeting did happen
 - Department of Energy is offering 50 million to replace roof with solar paneling
 - Department of Energy will fund about 75% of the roof replacement cost
- Open house on Feb1 to promote the school
 - Admin feels it is time to showcase the changes at the school
- Junior ROTC placed second in the recent Drill team competition

o Collaborative for Education Services

- HEC Academy - in-house program for students with moderate to severe disabilities
- MT. Tom Academy for students at risk of dropping out
- Training for teachers for SEI
- Early childhood education programs

- Main agency for providing educational services to incarcerated youth
 - Provide needed teacher training for local schools
- o Massachusetts Association of School Committees
- Information about Charting the Course and registration
- o Budget and Personnel – none at this time
- Later this month
- o Joint Supervisory
- Update on Superintendent Search
 - The deadline for applications has passed
 - The committee has received and reviewed applications
 - Scheduling interviews for semi-finalists in executive session
 - Finalist names will be made public after the semi-finalist interviews
 - Public acknowledgment of thanks to the hard work of the committee
 - Next Meeting – January 22, 2023 - 6:30 p.m.

H. January Items

- o FY2025-FY2029 Beacon Mobility/FM Kuzmeskus 5-Year Transportation Contract (July 1, 2023- June 30, 2029) – Vote to Award
- Procurement with many other school districts was under the same bid from the guidance of FRCOG
 - Opened in early December - only Kuzmeskus applied
 - 4 SRS busses - one tier only combined price \$346,752 (approx. 11% increase)
 - With mid-day emergency tier 2,310 (shared with Erving)
 - Maximum 5% yearly increase, minimum 2.5% (fuel, driver salary, etc.)
 - Transportation is handled by each separate town by special town meeting
 - Beth moves to accept the bid; Mandy seconds
 - Will the emergency tier be folded into the general contract if it is not used?
 - Will look into that
 - Will need the chairs from each town to sign due to the timing of the meeting and the bid timeline
 - Transportation Bid passes unanimously
- o Policy Update and Review:
- First Reading on:
- o JH – Student Absences and Excuses
 - o ACA – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex
 - o AC-R – Nondiscrimination Policy including Harassment and Retaliation
- Second Reading, First Vote on:
- o AA-1 Regional School District Legal Status
 - o CHA/CHC Development and Dissemination of Procedures
 - o BDFA-E – School Improvement Plan

o BDFA – School Councils

Anna moves to vote on policies AA-1, CHA/CHC, BDFA-E, and DFA in one vote; Mandy seconds

Anna moves to pass the first vote on above listed policies; Steve seconds - passes unanimously

First Vote on Deletion of Policy:

o JC – Student Attendance Policy

Beth moves to delete policy JC; Mandy seconds - passes unanimously

o Next Meeting Date – February 1, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.

o New Salem/Wendell Policy Committee – February 1, 2023 - 6:30 p.m.

I. Approval of Minutes:

o November 2, 2023

Beth moves to approve; Mandy seconds - passes unanimously

J. Executive Session

o In accordance with Open Meeting Law (Chapter 30A Section 21 (a), move to go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation and possibly to return to open session for a vote

- Meeting with SREA has not happened yet so there is no need move into executive session

K. Adjournment

Steve moves to adjourn; Beth seconds - meeting adjourned at 8:03