

Salem School Committee  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
Monday, June 2, 2008, 2008

A regular meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, June 2, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, Massachusetts.

**Members Present:** Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, Nate Bryant, Kevin R. Carr (8:30 p.m.), Dr. Janet Crane, James Fleming, Mrs. Kerry A. Martin, Dr. Brendan Walsh

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Dr. William Cameron, Superintendent, Alyce Davis, Assistant Superintendent, School Business Manager John Danizio, and Eileen Sacco, Secretary

Mayor Driscoll called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Approval of the Agenda**

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Dr. Crane and approved.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the School Committee meeting held on May 19, 2008 School Committee meeting were presented for approval. Dr. Crane moved approval of the minutes of the May 19, 2008 School Committee meeting as presented. Mr. Bryant seconded the motion. The motion carried. Mr. Fleming abstained.

**Questions and Comments from the Audience**

Deborah Jeffers of 15 May Street addressed the School Committee and explained that the AFSCME union has submitted a proposal for the school lunch program and urged the School Committee to review it and consider it. She notes that what they are proposing could generate \$80,000 in profit.

Marianne Grassia of 8 Cliff Street, a teacher at the Witchcraft Heights Elementary School addressed the School Committee and thanked Dr. Crane for voting against the FY09 budget. She also distributed information to the School Committee that she gathered regarding grants that the district might be interested in.

**Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Cameron reported that the FY09 budget is based on the assumption that additional revenue will be generated from increasing the athletic fees, increasing tuition at the Bentley Early Childhood Center, and instituting a parking fee for students at Salem High School. He requested that a finance subcommittee meeting be held to discuss this so that they can be approved by the School Committee.

Dr. Cameron reported that last Friday, the new Commissioner of Education visited Salem. He noted that he met in the Mayor's with Mayor Driscoll and other officials

and visited the Saltonstall School and held a discussion on issues in education with teachers, parents and it was an impressive discussion.

**Curriculum Report** - Julie Whitehead and Andi Clark, Lead Teachers for the Salem Center for Reading Recovery made a presentation on Reading Recovery in the Salem Public Schools.

### **Finance Report**

**a. Deliberation on the School Department Warrant:**

**May 22, 2008** in the amount of \$244,093.17

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the warrants, seconded by Dr. Crane. The motion carried.

**b. Budget Transfer Request**

There were no budget transfer requests this evening.

### **Old Business –**

#### **Action Items**

- a. Deliberation on the approval of the recommendation of the Superintendent on the food service program for FY08-09

Dr. Walsh suggested that members take the time to review the proposal submitted by the AFSCME Union.

Dr. Walsh moved to refer the matter to the School Committee of the Whole and recommended that a meeting be held on Monday, June 16, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of reviewing the proposals.

Dr. Crane stated that she would like to hear what Dr. Cameron's recommendation on the food service program is and have a discussion about it.

Dr. Cameron explained the process that has taken place thus far regarding the School Lunch program RFP. He noted that the current food service program is running a deficit that is approaching \$650,000 and he is recommending that we privatize the program and award a contract to Chartwells. He noted that given the fiscal problems that we have in the district he cannot run the risk of further deficits, and while the union proposal is in good faith he noted that the private company has the resources to absorb their own losses if there are any

This matter was tabled until the next School Committee meeting on June 16, 2008 at which time a Committee of the Whole meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m.

## **School Committee Reports**

**Buildings and Grounds** –Mr. Bryant reported that a Buildings and Grounds meeting was held this evening and the Committee recommends that a transfer be made from the salary for the Assistant Director of Operations salary to allow for the hiring of temporary help this summer to get the school buildings ready for next school year. He explained that they will be requesting a transfer at the next meeting.

Mr. Carr expressed concern about the use of the funds in this manner after all of the discussion that was held about the position and the need for it during the budget hearings.

Mr. Bryant also reported that there is a need for boiler repairs at the Bates school however no action is requested at this time.

Mr. Bryant reported that the parent survey of After School Programs has been done and the results will be shared with the School Committee when they are compiled. He thanked Alyce Davis for her work in this effort.

## **Special Education Subcommittee**

Dr. Walsh noted that there was a meeting of parents interested in getting the Special Education Parent Advisory Council together again and noted that he was unable to attend the meeting. Mrs. Martin stated that she attended the meeting and stated that it was an information session and was very informative. Katarina Thompson who organized the meeting addressed the School Committee and explained that the group hopes to continue and invited interested parents to attend the next meeting on June 19, 2008.

## **School Committee Concerns and Resolutions**

Dr. Walsh noted that there is a lot of concern about class size and stated that class size is Dr. Cameron's primary concern and should funds become available to reduce class size he will do that.

Mayor Driscoll suggested that a priority list be established for positions to be put back should funds become available.

Mr. Carr requested a report on how the schools would handle the cuts to the School nurses if we lose those positions because of the loss of the state funding.

## **Questions and Comments from the Audience regarding the June 2, 2008 agenda**

Maryanne Grassia addressed the School Committee and reported that there was a partnership with the Glen Urquhart School and the Witchcraft Heights Elementary school that was between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders at WCH and the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders at Glen Urquhart and it was a wonderful experience.

John Robinson addressed the School Committee and urged the School Committee to review the AFSCME proposal.

## Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the School Committee this evening, Mr. Fleming moved that the School Committee adjourn to Executive Session for the purposes of hearing a grievance not to return to open session. Dr. Walsh seconds the motion. Mayor Driscoll called for a roll call vote as follows:

Mr. Bryant	Yes
Mr. Carr	Yes
Dr. Crane	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Mrs. Martin	Yes
Dr. Walsh	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Eileen M. Sacco, Secretary  
Salem School Committee