

**Minutes of the Regular Session
of the Salem School Committee
Monday, September 3, 2024
Rm. 227, 29 Highland Ave.
Hybrid Meeting**

Members Present: Mayor Dominick Pangallo, Vice Chair Manny Cruz, Amanda Campbell, Beth Anne Cornell, AJ Hoffman, Mary Manning, and Veronica Miranda

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Deputy Superintendent Carbone and Assistant Superintendent Elizabeth Pauley

Members Absent: None

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Pangallo called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and informed the public that the docket contains the public participation procedure and how to access Spanish interpretation.

Approval of Agenda

Member Cornell made a motion to approve the agenda. Vice Chair Cruz seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Member Campbell voted YES

Member Cornell voted YES

Vice Chair Cruz voted YES

Member Hoffman voted YES

Member Manning voted YES

Member Miranda voted YES

Mayor Pangallo voted YES

Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Ann Berman, Salem Teachers Union (STU) President

Ms. Berman reflected on the significant milestone that was achieved during the recent negotiations. Ms. Berman added that negotiations is about understanding different perspectives, finding common ground and working towards a shared goal. She continued that last week marked the culmination of that process, a contract that represents not only an agreement but a commitment to collaboration and mutual success. Ms. Berman said that it is a testament to the dedication and hard work of everyone involved that resulted in a contract that reflects the collective effort and vision. Ms. Berman asked that the contract symbolize the spirit of cooperation and the promise of future endeavors, be a reminder of the value of patience and the power of collaboration, and serve as a foundation upon which to continue building our

community. Ms. Berman expressed her sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to the successful negotiation process. Ms. Berman said that the last step would be for the STU membership to ratify the contract on their end. Ms. Berman expressed confidence that the contract marks a beginning of a new chapter filled with opportunities and shared achievements.

Approval of Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes of Regular School Committee meeting held on August 19, 2024
2. Approval of Warrants:
 1. FY24:
 - a. 8/21/24 - \$96,622.15
 - b. 8/28/2024 - \$1,294.98
 2. FY25:
 - a. 8/22/24 - \$269,630.99
 - b. 8/29/2024 - \$181,358.79
3. Approval of the Salem High School Football Overnight Field Trip – Brewer, ME on 9/13/2024

Member Manning made a motion to remove Item #3 from the consent agenda. Vice Chair Cruz seconded.

Member Cornell made a motion to approve the consent agenda with the removal of Item #3. Vice Chair Cruz seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Member Campbell voted YES

Member Cornell voted YES

Vice Chair Cruz voted YES

Member Hoffman voted YES

Member Manning voted YES

Member Miranda voted YES

Mayor Pangallo voted YES

Motion passed unanimously.

Member Manning raised the question of why the approval request was delayed when there is an existing policy that such approvals need to be sought within a certain time frame before the trip. Member Manning also said that this game is held every year and so it is something that could be anticipated in advance. Superintendent Zrike requested Director of Athletics, Mr. Reilly Christie to provide some information.

Mr. Christie explained that Brewer and Salem have a shared history because they both have witch mascots as well as a former Hall of Fame coach, Ken Perrone, for each program. Mr. Christie continued that the game is called the Ken Perrone Witches Classic. Mr. Christie went on to explain that one of the reasons for the delay was because they were awaiting approval from

both Massachusetts and Maine states organizations. Massachusetts had approved it earlier in the summer and Maine had just approved it in August. Mr. Christie said that another reason was because the coach wanted an actual roster to share with the nursing staff and school instead of guessing who would be participating in the field trip.

Member Manning opined that the roster need not be finalized for the School Committee as the student names are redacted anyway. Since it is known that the game would most likely be taking place, Member Manning said that while awaiting approval from the different states' organizations, the matter could have been brought to the School Committee ahead of time for approval.

Member Miranda asked if it was possible for the School Committee to provide provisional approval for similar requests in the future while waiting for approval from other organizations. Mayor Pangallo and Vice Chair Cruz said that the School Committee could provide a conditional approval if a similar situation arises in the future. Superintendent Zrike suggested that it should automatically be on the agenda as it is an out-of-state trip and would require the School Committee's approval regardless of whether they stay overnight. Since the game is held annually and it will be in Maine every other year, Superintendent Zrike said that in two years, the item should be on one of the summer agendas of the School Committee.

In response to Member Manning's question, Mr. Christie responded that the students staying overnight are all those playing on the Varsity roster. Mr. Christie added that the band is not going to Maine but the cheerleaders will be going on Saturday, September 14th.

Vice Chair Cruz made a motion to approve the Salem High School football team overnight field trip to Maine on 9/13/2024. Member Cornell seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Member Campbell voted YES

Member Cornell voted YES

Vice Chair Cruz voted YES

Member Hoffman voted YES

Member Manning voted YES

Member Miranda voted YES

Mayor Pangallo voted YES

Motion passed unanimously.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Zrike welcomed everyone back to school.

1. Back-To-School Update

Superintendent Zrike said that the students at Carlton are already back to school and that the rest of the students will begin the next day, except for the Prek and Kindergarten students who will begin the following week. Superintendent Zrike added that convocation was held on August 27th where Collins Middle School won the Battle of the Schools. Superintendent Zrike proceeded with the slide presentation.

Member Cornell commented that the information about high school students no longer having access to their cellphones during lunch time could have been communicated earlier in order to prepare the incoming freshmen about the new rule.

Superintendent Zrike proceeded to provide information about vacancies in the district, mostly due to late resignations, including a Biology as well as a French teacher position at Salem High School, a Humanities teacher position at Collins Middle School, and paraprofessional positions. Superintendent Zrike mentioned that the middle school enrollment has increased and the district is monitoring the numbers. Superintendent Zrike asked the audience to spread the word about the Biology teacher vacancy in hopes of getting applicants quickly. Superintendent Zrike said that there are already plans in place to support students while a more permanent solution is found.

Director of Human Resources, Dr. Jill Conrad, presented the report on staffing. Dr. Conrad mentioned that she would be presenting a more detailed report later in the year once the numbers for retention, etc are available.

Vice Chair Cruz requested that the follow-up report later in the year included the number of staff who are on waivers or emergency licenses as well as what type of supports are being provided to staff to obtain their licenses. Superintendent Zrike commented that there is a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) satellite office in Salem State College to support staff who are on waivers or have emergency licenses or have questions. It is called the Metro North Regional Center for Educator License Conversion Support (CELCS). Dr. Conrad said that they had an initial meeting and training last week. Vice Chair Cruz also mentioned the work done on the educator diversity bill and hoped that the economic development bill will move forward.

In response to Member Manning, Superintendent Zrike said that all the building substitute vacancies have been filled except the vacancy at Saltonstall. Member Manning also asked about the number of daily substitutes. Dr. Conrad said that there were close to 60 daily substitute teachers in the substitute pool and every summer, the Human Resource Office reaches out to them to check if they were still interested. At the moment, they have removed 13 as they were no longer interested in substituting. The Human Resource Office is trying to hire more substitute teachers.

Superintendent Zrike provided an update about migrant students. As of the previous week, there were 81 students at 20 Harrison Road. Six students received housing in Salem, 14 students were placed in shelters in Salem, 54 students were placed in shelters outside of Salem in Lynn, Haverhill, Beverly, Lawrence and Brockton, after the Harrison Road accommodation was closed. Seven students withdrew at the end of the last school year and left the district. Superintendent Zrike continued that 62 of the 81 students remained enrolled in the Salem Public Schools (SPS) and are transported to Salem for school. Superintendent Zrike said that these numbers do not include other unhoused SPS students who are living in scattered locations. These numbers continue to grow. Superintendent Zrike said that the challenge is that SPS does not get the resources from the state anymore because Salem does not have a site for unhoused students. The transient student population is not fully funded by the state.

Superintendent Zrike concluded his report with district highlights. Mayor Pangallo said that on the transportation front, the City is working with BusPatrol for stop-arm cameras to prevent vehicles from going around buses.

In response to Member Manning, Superintendent Zrike said that he had been in touch with Lt. Tucker from the Traffic Unit of the Salem Police Department about crossing guards. Superintendent Zrike continued that they are still looking for more crossing guards and informed Member Manning that he could provide an update. Superintendent Zrike clarified that the shortage is because there are new places where the Police Department was trying to have crossing guards. There were plans to have cruisers around the next day to help with the first day of school.

2. Summer School Recap

Superintendent Zrike thanked everyone for the Back to School event which was very successful with a great turnout. Director of Out of School Time, Taylor MacDonald, presented the summer school recap which included the summer school programs as well as the extended year programs.

Vice Chair Cruz said that he had the opportunity to visit Expanded Horizons in the summer and that it was good to see the middle school students deeply engaged as this has been one of the struggles faced by the district in recent years. Vice Chair Cruz asked how students qualify for the English Language Summer Academy (ELSA). Ms. MacDonald responded that the program was designed for multilingual students in collaboration with the City Connects team. Ms. MacDonald continued that the multilingual teachers identify students who are in Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to- State (ACCESS) Levels I and II, who are usually newcomers, rising 1st to 5th graders. Ms. MacDonald said that there were some challenges in making sure that the students were attending daily because many of the students and their families at the time of recruitment were unhoused and had moved to a different city.

In response to another question from Vice Chair Cruz, Ms. MacDonald said that the program is funded by Title III. Ms. MacDonald added that the district partners with Camp Fire North Shore so that the students receive academic instruction in the morning and in the afternoon, they go to Camp Fire North Shore for swimming, cooking and STEM based activities. In response to a question from Mayor Pangallo, Ms. MacDonald responded that the district provides transportation to Camp Fire North Shore.

Member Cornell said that it was so impressive that the district has this programming for multilingual students. Deputy Superintendent Carbone thanked Ms. MacDonald for her commitment and innovation such as the internship program, and highlighted that Ms. MacDonald writes a lot of grant applications in order to fund these programs. Deputy Superintendent Carbone said that there are some cutbacks to certain grants and a shortfall for the secondary programming has been forecasted. Therefore, this should be considered during budget season as there might be a need to access some operating budget funds for these programs.

3. Finance and Operations Report

Assistant Superintendent Pauley said that she had emailed the information about the age of the buses to the School Committee members in response to a request from Member Miranda at the last meeting. Assistant Superintendent Pauley continued that the buses range in age between 8-11 years old.

Assistant Superintendent Pauley commented that the other update is about the High School Building Project. Member Cornell said that the project is now at the designer selection phase. There were eight firms who submitted proposals by August 28th. The Designer Selection Subcommittee is scheduled to review the proposals on September 5th. Applications review by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) is on September 24th to determine the shortlist of 3-4 firms. Member Cornell said that Mayor Pangallo, Superintendent Zrike and herself will also be at this meeting. The next School Building Committee meeting would be held on September 19th. Member Cornell added that members of the public can watch the videos online and review the information on their website. Member Cornell added that Ms. Lisa Golden, MSBA Liaison, oversees this project. Superintendent Zrike added that a meeting was held the previous week with the Project Manager to talk about writing the educational plan for the project. This requires the involvement of a small internal team of educators with representation from the high school, academics team and Ms. Golden. Superintendent Zrike said that the designer will be helping with this plan but the Project Manager wanted to get a head start in identifying staff who will be involved. Member Cornell said some discussion around this matter was already held with the Project Manager.

In response to Member Manning, Member Cornell said the Designer is the architect. Member Cornell said that it is fortunate that there are a number of architects from the community who are on the School Building Committee.

Student Representative Report

Superintendent Zrike said that he would reach out to the Advisory Group and select a representative.

Subcommittee Reports

Personnel Subcommittee

Vice Chair Cruz announced that a tentative 3-year agreement has been reached with the STU. Vice Chair Cruz thanked the STU for their dedication, professionalism, openness, willingness to collaborate and mutual respect. Vice Chair Cruz also thanked the Personnel Subcommittee members, Mayor Pangallo, Superintendent Zrike and the school leadership team.

Vice Chair Cruz said that the School Committee will have an Executive Session prior to the next School Committee meeting to review the contract and then take a formal vote at the Regular Session. Vice Chair Cruz said the new contract addresses among other things, compensation, parental leave, consistent school day across levels, extended recess and lunch, as well as prep time.

Policy Subcommittee

1. Policies for Third Reading:
 - a. Policy 2202
 - b. Policy 2500

Motions and Resolutions

1. Motion to Accept Policy 2202 and Policy 2500 for Third Reading
Member Cornell made a motion to approve Policy 2202 and 2500 for third reading. Vice Chair Cruz seconded. A roll call vote was taken.
Member Campbell voted YES
Member Cornell voted YES
Vice Chair Cruz voted YES
Member Hoffman voted YES
Member Manning voted YES
Member Miranda voted YES
Mayor Pangallo voted YES
Motion passed unanimously.

Announcements

Member Manning announced that Salem High School Alumnus Nate Bertone, Class of 2012 will appear at the North Shore Music Theatre for the launch of his new children's book "Nana Nana," September 17 at 6 p.m. followed by other events. Tickets cost \$20. The book helps children have a better understanding of Alzheimer's Disease. Member Manning continued that Mr. Bertone was outstanding in the field of drama both at the middle school as well as high school levels, and went on to a career in the theater/literary world.

Adjournment

Member Cornell made a motion to adjourn at 8:12 pm. Vice Chair Cruz seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Member Campbell voted YES

Member Cornell voted YES

Vice Chair Cruz voted YES

Member Hoffman voted YES

Member Manning voted YES

Member Miranda voted YES

Mayor Pangallo voted YES

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

Shirley Dorai

Executive Assistant to the School Committee & Superintendent