

**Minutes of the Regular Session
of the Salem School Committee
Monday, February 24, 2025
Rm. 227, 29 Highland Ave.
Hybrid Meeting**

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

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Stephen Zrike and Assistant Superintendent Pauley

Members Absent: Veronica Miranda

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.

Member Manning requested a moment of silence for Charles Walsh and Charles Chaurette, Jr., two longtime educators in Salem who passed away recently. Charles Walsh was a teacher and principal in Salem, serving for over 35 years. Charles Chaurette's career in education began as a French teacher at Salem High School (SHS), and then the Principal of Middle School East in Salem, Co-Principal of Collins Middle School as well as Assistant Superintendent for Salem Public Schools.

Approval of Agenda

Member Cornell made a motion to approve the agenda. Member Campbell 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 ABSENT

Mayor Pangallo voted YES

Motion passed with 6 votes in favor and 1 absent.

Public Comment

Steve Kapantais

Mr. Kapantais said that Salem has experienced a 25% decline in state aid share from FY 20 to FY 23. Mr. Kapantais requested the School Committee to show the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) formula and inputs that determine the aid that

Salem receives. Mr. Kapantais questioned the Chair about what has been accomplished and actions taken over the last two years to fix the formula.

Approval of Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes of Special School Committee meeting held on February 3, 2025
2. Approval of Minutes of Regular School Committee meeting held on February 3, 2025
3. Approval of Minutes of School Committee Workshop held on February 11, 2025
4. Approval of FY25 Warrants:
 1. 02/06/2025 - \$452,742.14
 2. 02/13/2025 - \$683,813.86
 3. 02/20/2025 - \$503,433.09

Member Manning made a motion to approve the consent agenda. 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 ABSENT

Mayor Pangallo voted YES

Motion passed with 6 votes in favor and 1 absent.

Student Representative Report

Student Representative Qualkenbush commented that there was some congestion in the lunch line at Salem High School but that the extended time helped.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Zrike said that based on input received about the start and end times that was shared recently, minor adjustments will be made and shared at a later date. The Dominican Independence Day is on February 27th and schools will be recognizing this day given the number of Salem students who are from the Dominican Republic. Teachers have been given resources through the Teaching and Learning newsletter. Superintendent Zrike added that the DESE Commissioner chose not to recommend Salem Academy Charter School's request for expansion to the DESE Board due to the effort of everyone at Salem Public Schools (SPS). Superintendent Zrike mentioned the launching of the Adult ESL classes on February 24th and acknowledged student athletes who participated and won in recent sporting events. Member Cornell suggested that Dominican flags could be displayed during the Dominican Independence Day at schools.

1. Superintendent's Evaluation

Vice Chair Cruz said that this matter will be postponed to the March 3rd School Committee meeting.

2. Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Update

- 1. Education Plan**
- 2. Space Summary**

Superintendent Zrike introduced Ms. Margaret Minor Wood, Anser Advisory, Owner's Project Manager, Ms. Kim Carter from QED Foundation, educational consultant on the SHS Building Project who advised and lead the team in drafting the Education Program and Ms. Brooke Trivas from Perkins&Will, the design team.

Ms. Margaret Minor Wood and Ms. Brooke Trivas presented slides on the MSBA update. Superintendent Zrike and SHS Principal Burns also spoke about the project and education plan.

Member Manning questioned a section in the space summary that only indicated one room for boys and girls lockers. Ms. Trivas said it is actually two rooms instead of one. In response to another question, Ms. Trivas said that the seating capacity for the auditorium is typically 690 or 700. Ms. Trivas said that the space at the front of the auditorium can be further discussed as it has not been designed yet and that the dimensions are like a Broadway stage. In response to Member Cornell about gender neutral spaces, Ms. Trivas said that these spaces will be included but that there will need to be a discussion to look into the details.

In response to Student Representative Qualkenbush, Ms. Trivas explained that the book storage spaces in the new building will be throughout the building in cabinets or shelves such as teacher's rooms, classrooms, library, media center, and others. Ms. Trivas added that the classroom is usually about 900 square feet and science classrooms are 1,440 square feet as per MSBA standard. Superintendent Zrike said that the school currently has large corridors but small classrooms and that the new building will have smaller corridors and larger classrooms. Superintendent Zrike added that more input from students would be sought. Ms. Trivas thanked the students for their overwhelming response to the survey as there were over 550 responses. Superintendent Zrike requested Ms. Trivas to provide the survey results to the School Committee. Member Cornell requested Student Representative Qualkenbush to also acquire feedback from students regarding bathroom spaces.

In response to Mayor Pangallo, Ms. Trivas said that if something is in the new construction program but not reflected in the MSBA guidelines, a narrative should be provided in support of why this new addition is necessary for teaching and learning so that it can be possibly reimbursed. In response to Student Representative Qualkenbush, Ms. Trivas said that the Hydroponics Room is under the Environmental Science and Technology Laboratory.

Member Manning asked for the reason why the auditorium is planned to have only 600 seats when SHS Principal Burns had just informed the School Committee that the SHS

student population would likely increase to almost 1,000 students in the near future. Ms. Trivas said that it is part of the MSBA guidelines. Ms. Trivas said that even in larger facilities, the auditorium is of that size. Ms. Trivas said that if a larger auditorium is needed, the difference will have to be picked by the district. Ms. Manning commented that there will not be any auditorium in the city that would be able to seat more than 600 since the SHS auditorium is always the largest with many school and city events held there. Superintendent Zrike agreed that more discussion is needed about this matter. SHS Principal Burns also agreed that the auditorium should be larger because of how it is utilized. Superintendent Zrike mentioned that some dates would be provided to School Committee members to visit other school buildings which were recently built such as Billerica and Belmont. In response to Mayor Pangallo, SHS Principal Burns said that the schools that the high school team visited did not have career and technical education (CTE) programs but that they are going to visit some schools that do have CTE programs. In response to Member Manning, SHS Principal Burns said that the buildings to visit need not be just buildings that Perkins&Will had designed.

Ms. Wood further explained the process to submit the proposal and the vote for the draft. Ms. Wood said that there will be opportunities for revisions even after the vote on the draft is made. Mayor Pangallo suggested that this topic be on the docket for the March 17th School Committee meeting.

3. Finance and Operations Report

Assistant Superintendent Pauley said as part of the Dominican Independence Day celebration, students will be served a special lunch on Thursday, February 27th. Assistant Superintendent Pauley added that there will be an update on the FY25 budget transfer.

Subcommittee Reports

1. Finance Subcommittee

No report at this time.

2. Personnel Subcommittee

No report at this time.

3. Building and Grounds Subcommittee

No report at this time.

4. Curriculum Subcommittee

No report at this time.

5. Policy Subcommittee

Member Cornell provided more information about the student directory and the process.

Member Cornell added that parents can opt out of having their student's information in

the directory. Superintendent Zrike commented that this form is part of the back-to-school forms and that it will be updated based on the vote taken to revamp this policy.

Motions and Resolutions

1. Policy 5214.01 Graduation Requirements and Competency Determination - Second Reading

Member Cornell made a motion to approve Policy 5214.01 Graduation Requirements and

Competency Determination for second reading. Member Campbell 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 ABSENT

Mayor Pangallo voted YES

Motion passed with 6 votes in favor and 1 absent.

2. Policy 5215.01 Directory of Information on Students - First Reading

Member Cornell made a motion to approve Policy 5215.01 Directory of Information on Students for first reading. Member Campbell 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 ABSENT

Mayor Pangallo voted YES

Motion passed with 6 votes in favor and 1 absent.

3. Superintendent's Evaluation

This matter will be postponed to the March 3rd School Committee meeting.

Announcements

Member Cornell suggested starting a School Committee newsletter and social media presence based on conversations with Superintendent Zrike. Member Cornell added that a broader conversation on this matter is needed but that School Committee counsel had recommended it. Mayor Pangallo said that this could be added to the March 17th School Committee docket. Vice Chair Cruz shared that the Massachusetts Secretary of Education, Patrick Tutwiler, had approached him last week to serve as a non-voting member of the DESE Commissioner search and that he agreed to do so. Vice Chair Cruz invited School Committee members to share their

opinion or priority areas with him on this matter. Superintendent Zrike announced that on February 28th, he would be meeting with NAGLY (the North Shore Alliance for GLBTQ+ Youth), students and families to get input on how the school system can better serve this community.

Adjournment

Member Campbell made a motion to adjourn at 8:24 pm. 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 ABSENT

Mayor Pangallo voted YES

Motion passed with 6 votes in favor and 1 absent.

Respectfully submitted by,

Shirley Dorai

Executive Assistant to the School Committee & Superintendent