

**Minutes of the Regular Session
of the Salem School Committee
Monday, June 17, 2025
Rm. 227, 29 Highland Ave.
Hybrid Meeting**

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

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Stephen Zrike and Assistant Superintendent 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.

Vice Chair Cruz made a motion to take the Recognition of Retirees out of order. 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.

Recognition of Retirees

Superintendent Zrike read the names of all the retirees:

Susan Fair

Ellen Kaslauskas

Beth Kontos

Sally Lincoln-Vogel

Elizabeth Ryan

Luz Villarreal

Kathleen Wood

Judee Davis

Kelly Regan-Miskis

Margaret Russo

Alice Ryan

James Gangi
Maureen Beaudet

Mayor Pangallo provided citations from the City of Salem. The retirees were presented with citations and awards. Mayor Pangallo, Vice Chair Cruz and Superintendent Zrike thanked the retirees.

A brief recess was called at 7:12 pm. The meeting resumed at 7:15 pm.

Approval of Agenda

Member Campbell made a motion to approve the 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 voted YES

Mayor Pangallo voted YES

Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Rauny Batista de la Cruz, Salem High School (SHS) Student

Rauny suggested that one way of dealing with understaffing in schools is to have current students help teachers in a student teacher apprenticeship system. Rauny said it will also help with teacher and student interactions as well as language barriers.

Annie Bednar, SHS Student

Annie spoke about how budget cuts caused Mrs. Napierkowski losing her job. Annie continued speaking about Mrs. Napierkowski's contributions and how she helps students. Annie requested the School Committee to reconsider their decision.

Emma Clark, SHS student read the note submitted by Emi Whitfield

Emi wrote how she got to know Ms. Napierkowski and the impact she has had on students.

Alannah Heenan, former SHS student read a letter from a former faculty member who is also a parent of two SHS graduates, Manna Whitfield

Ms. Whitfield wrote about her experience in Salem and how the performing arts program had a profound effect on students. She also highlighted the contribution of Ms. Napierkowski.

Julia Rebello, former SHS student who read notes from former SHS students, Fiona Bautista and Carla Zoquier-Urbaz

Julia expressed regret that employees were affected by budget cuts. She read notes from Fiona and Carla who wrote about the influence Ms. Napierkowski had on students and the music program.

Brooks Workman, SHS Marching Band Student

Brooks spoke about how Ms. Napierkowski supported him in music.

Anais Acevedo, Salem resident and one of the House of Promise Church leaders

Ms. Acevedo commented on the proposed ban on religious groups using spaces at Salem Public Schools. Ms. Acevedo explained the work that the House of Promise and other churches do for the benefit of the community. Ms. Acevedo asked the School Committee to reconsider this proposal.

Pastor Kendra Key, Calvary Christian Church

Pastor Key said that the proposed policy change for leasing and renting school spaces as it is currently written would violate the first amendment's free exercise clause which ensures that religious organizations receive the same benefits and resources that any other community organization would receive. Pastor Key suggested adding to the policy that Salem Public Schools (SPS) does not endorse, support or assume responsibility for the beliefs, viewpoints or standards of any organization that leases or uses its facilities. Pastor Key continued to explain the partnership that can be cultivated.

Savannah Muasya, SHS Student

Savannah said she was devastated to hear that the Calvary Christian Church might not be able to have meetings at Salem Public Schools as originally planned. Savannah asked the School Committee to reconsider their decision.

Pastor Sterling Key, Calvary Christian Church

Pastor Key works in recovery at the church. Mr. Key said that the churches add value to the school system as they look for ways to help. Mr. Key suggested that his church could bring their equipment such as the sound system and lights, and leave it behind so that students can use them. Mr. Key also suggested that the church could help with the cost of getting new carpets as well as repairs to the seats. Mr. Key elaborated on the work that the church does in the city.

Tracy Philok, House of Promise Church Member

Ms. Philok spoke about her own experience with the House of Promise Church and the importance of the safe space they provide. Ms. Philok requested that the safe space not be taken away.

Juiana Sousa Brbrea, Peabody High School Student

Joanna who is from the House of Promise Church spoke about her work at the church and her personal experience. Joanna requested the School Committee to reconsider their decision regarding rentals to religious groups.

House of Promise Church Member

The member spoke about her experience and how the House of Promise Church has helped her. She asked the School Committee to reconsider their decision regarding rentals to religious groups.

Rahdlen Pena, House of Promise Church Member

Mr. Pena spoke about his personal experience. Mr. Pena asked the School Committee to reconsider their decision regarding rentals to religious groups.

Pedro Fabre, Salem Resident

Mr. Fabre spoke about his background and experience. Mr. Fabre requested the School Committee to reconsider their decision regarding rentals to religious groups.

Denia Bone, Former Salem Resident

Ms. Bone who is one of the leaders at the House of Promise Church spoke about the work of the church and hoped that Salem continues welcoming everyone.

Nayan Sapers, Junior at Harvard and co-founder of the student-led CPR Ambassador Program
Nayan requested the School Committee to support state bills S.447, S.456, H.750, H.556 and H.572, which would require hands-only CPR and AED training for all Massachusetts high-school students.

Wyn Stevick, SHS Student

Wyn spoke about Ms. Napierkowski and her efforts on behalf of the students.

Approval of Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes of Regular School Committee meeting held on June 2, 2025
2. Approval of Field Trip for Salem High School (SHS), Marine Corps JROTC Summer Leadership Camp held at Camp Edwards, Joint Base Cape Cod, 1 Connery Ave, Buzzards Bay, MA from June 30 - July 3, 2025
3. Donation for Transportation
4. Donation from Salem State University for Teacher Stipends
5. Approval of FY25 Warrants:
 1. 06/05/2025 - \$460,301.10
 2. 06/12/2025 - \$692,254.64

Vice Chair Cruz made a motion to approve the consent agenda with the removal of #2 to be voted on separately. 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.

Vice Chair Cruz made a motion to approve consent agenda #2, field trip for Salem High School (SHS), Marine Corps JROTC Summer Leadership Camp held at Camp Edwards, Joint Base Cape

Cod, 1 Connery Ave, Buzzards Bay, MA from June 30 - July 3, 2025. 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.

Student Representative Report

Student Representative Qualkenbush informed the School Committee that he graduated on June 6th and that he will be starting at Boston university in the fall. Student Representative Qualkenbush spoke about his experience being on the School Committee. Superintendent Zrike announced that the Chair of the Student Advisory Group for next year is Sindi Sula and Vice Chairs are Alexia Coleman and Nevin Lebron. Mayor Panagallo and Superintendent Zrike presented Student Representative Qualkenbush with a souvenir and citation. Vice Chair Cruz presented Student Representative Qualkenbush with a recognition from the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Zrike said that he was proud that there were students who spoke on three different topics at the meeting. Superintendent Zrike continued to provide updates on the last week of school, summer reading, community reads, parent survey, Summer Eats Program and North Shore PRIDE festival on June 28th.

1. Recognition of Retirees

This matter was addressed earlier during the meeting.

2. Recognition of Student Representative

This was addressed in the previous section.

3. Summer Work Projects

Assistant Superintendent Pauley said that as part of the Summer Eats Projects, adults who accompany their children can also have a meal at the Mary Jane Lee Park location. Assistant Superintendent Pauley continued providing an update on the summer projects.

In response to Member Miranda, Assistant Superintendent Pauley said that the Bertram track is in need of repairs and that she will follow-up on any track preventative maintenance measures that can be taken as well as the typical lifespan of the track. In response to Member Hoffman, Assistant Superintendent Pauley said that it is normal wear and tear to the field that necessitates the repairs. Superintendent Zrike added that the sound system at the track will also be replaced. In response to Member Campbell,

Assistant Superintendent Pauley said that signage at Bentley will need to be updated and that Member Campbell's suggestion to have signage in dual language will be noted.

4. Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Update

Superintendent Zrike spoke about how the building project started. Mr. Rick Jones, Co-Chair of the Salem High School Building Committee provided a presentation on the work being done.

In response to Student Representative Qualkenbush, Mr. Jones said the library is called the media center. In response to Member Campbell, Mr. Jones said he will find out about the seating capacity for the cafe as well as the proximity of the cafe to the lobby for security purposes. In response to Mayor Pangallo, Mr. Jones said that there will be no loss of parking with the new design and the field house will be the same size as the current field house. In response to Superintendent Zrike, Mr. Jones said the new construction will not be disruptive to students' learning and that the project will be complete in Fall 2030. Construction will begin in January 2028. It was also emphasized that any questions or concerns can still be brought up because the project is not finalized yet.

In response to Mayor Pangallo, Superintendent Zrike said that when construction starts at the Career and Technical Education Program space, the students will be housed elsewhere. Ms. Margaret Wood, Anser Advisory, Owner's Project Manager, responded to a question raised by Vice Chair Cruz stating the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) space was planned to be placed on the second floor of the new high school building because ground floor space was already being utilized for various other purposes. Ms. Wood added that the locker rooms are also located on the second floor. Ms. Wood continued that the longest distance a student travels from one class to the next in the current building is over 800 feet and in the new building, it will be a little over 600 feet. Member Cornell explained that there is still time for certain things in the plan to be changed if something comes to light but that there are other things that might not be able to be changed due to constraints and limitations. Student Representative Qualkenbush asked if the existing ceiling that has student signatures can be preserved. Mr. Jones responded that salvaging the ceiling will not be possible but perhaps it can be memorialized through photo documentation or some other means.

5. Finance and Operations Report

1. Budget Transfer Requests

Assistant Superintendent Pauley explained the two budget transfer requests which were brought to the School Committee for a vote.

Member Miranda made a motion to approve the two budget transfer requests.

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.

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

Vice Chair Cruz said a demand letter was received from the Massachusetts Family Institute regarding Policy 3204: Lease and Rental of School Facilities which is due for the third reading. Vice Chair Cruz continued that the subcommittee will meet on the policy. Vice Chair Cruz added that FOX News and the Boston Herald had also received the letter. Vice Chair Cruz was glad that these news organizations have taken an interest in the Salem Public Schools and hoped that they will balance their coverage by learning more why Salem is the #1 gateway city in the commonwealth for public education. Vice Chair Cruz stated that with regards to policies, the School Committee thinks ahead to the next school year about the impact of policy decisions and practices that affect all students. Vice Chair Cruz went on to explain the process before a policy is adopted and that more meetings will be held to examine this particular policy. Vice Chair Cruz also explained the public comment section of School Committee meetings. Vice Chair Cruz invited community members to reach out and engage with members of the School Committee over matters of mutual interest.

Motions and Resolutions

1. Education Program for Submission to MSBA for New Salem High School Project

Member Cornell made the motion to approve the education program for submission to MSBA for the New Salem High School Project. 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 voted YES
Mayor Pangallo voted YES
Motion passed unanimously.

2. Policy 3204: Lease and Rental of School Facilities - Third Reading

Mayor Pangallo said that this policy will be further deliberated by the Policy Subcommittee.

3. Policy 6402: Time and Location of School Committee Meetings - Third Reading

Member Cornell made a motion to approve Policy 6402: Time and Location of School Committee Meetings for third reading. Member Miranda 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 Miranda highlighted the Juneteenth celebration. Mayor Pangallo provided more information about the celebration.

Adjournment

Member Campbell made a motion to adjourn at 9:29 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 voted YES
Mayor Pangallo voted YES
Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

Shirley Dorai

Executive Assistant to the School Committee & Superintendent