

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

NOVEMBER 30, 2023

A meeting of the School Committee was held at 6:00 P.M. on Thursday, November 30, 2023 at the Central Middle School Media Center with the following members present: Melanie Fiore, Chair, Betty Pryor, Vice Chair, Jaime Wallace, Nicole Nial and Megan Samborski. Also present was David Ljungberg, Superintendent, and Kathy Martin, Assistant Superintendent.

Chair M. Fiore called the meeting of the School Committee to order at 6:00 P.M. and called for a motion to enter into Executive Session.

ACTION: A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by M. Samborski to enter into Executive Session per MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(2): To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the SEA Bargaining Unit, and the chair so declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call.

The Committee returned to open session at 6:36 P.M. and opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

A. Approval of Items by Consensus

ACTION: A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by M. Samborski to approve the minutes of November 16, 2023. The motion was approved 5-0.

ACTION: A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by B. Pryor to approve Warrant #2420 in the amount of \$549,745.97. The motion was approved 5-0.

B. Consideration for Items Withdrawn from Consensus

None

C. Public Comment

None

D. Student Representatives

Daniel Mirick gave an update on National History Day and winter sports and reported that season tickets are now available for all sporting events, conferences will take place tomorrow, the lib dud will be shown tomorrow, the freshman/sophomore semi is tomorrow night and the winter concert will take place on December 20th.

E. Financial

Leia Secor presented the FY24 Budget Report that showed where we are in the budget as of November 30, 2023 and showed an expected year end cash balance of \$169,982. The payroll budget as of November 30, 2023 shows that 31.4% has been expended to date.

F. **Special Education**

Superintendent Ljungberg introduced Marc Kerble and Linda Chase, Co-interim Directors of Special Education, who talked about the priorities they have established:

- Improve upon communication, especially with SEPAC and parents. Have been meeting once a month and upon request with SEPAC co-chairs.
- Tiered Focus Monitoring Review this spring – this is a big review that happens every six years and focuses on special education and civil rights. We have already submitted our self-assessment.
- We will be rolling out training this spring for the new IEP. The expanded form provides and encourages more participation from parents and students; the IEP meetings will also change accordingly. Training will be given to all special education staff, administrators, principals, superintendent and assistant superintendent. It will also be offered to parents and students.
- We will be reintroducing progress monitoring to assess students and check on student progress. More to follow on this.

Superintendent Ljungberg gave an update on WestEd. The surveys are in draft form. We are in the process of setting up focus groups by job alike and expect there will be about two dozen different groups. WestEd has agreed to extend the deadline at no cost until the end of March.

G. **Aramark Client Business Review – Lisa Toumayan**

Tabled to the December meeting.

H. **International Field Trip to Greece and Italy – April 2025 – Kim O'Connor**

Principal Bryan Lombardi and Kim O'Connor requested approval for an international field trip to Greece and Italy in April of 2025. This year Ms. O'Connor is bringing 17 students to Italy – this trip in 2025 would be a similar trip but it would include Greece. The tour is run through EF Educational Tours and their top priority is security and safety. Students can apply for scholarships through EF Tours and also have the option of receiving 3 college credits for an additional \$250.

ACTION: A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by M. Samborski to approve the international field trip to Greece and Italy in April 2025. The motion was approved 5-0.

I. **New Community Organization: Stoneham Music Boosters**

Dave Maurer addressed the Committee with his proposal to organize Stoneham Music Boosters to support the music program. He has applied for a 501c3 tax ID code and is in the process of putting together the bylaws.

J. **Health and Physical Education Framework – Update**

Assistant Superintendent K. Martin reported that in September DESE approved an updated and revised health framework that is inclusive and age appropriate. It is 54 pages long and will take time to review. Districts have discretion to decide what materials they will use. A committee will be appointed to study the frameworks and make recommendations.

Superintendent Ljungberg added that he attended a workshop today and DESE will have a series of trainings in the spring. Staff will need both PE and a health license. The curriculum

frameworks are required to be implemented and are not optional; however, we do have flexibility.

K. Human Resources Update

Superintendent Ljungberg gave an update on Human Resources:

- Several positions were recently posted, including: Preschool Administrative Assistant, Building Systems Manager, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, High School Digital Literacy Science and STRIDE at the High School.
- The Director of Special Education posting only received three applicants so it has been reposted.
- The posting has been closed for the Assistant Superintendent position and there is a strong pool of applicants. We will begin the process next week.

L. Policy Review

B. Pryor gave a second reading of the revised policy on Public Comment.

ACTION: A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by M. Samborski to approved the policy on Public Comment. The motion was approved 5-0.

B. Pryor gave a second reading of the revised policy on Advertising in the Schools.

ACTION: A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by M. Samborski to approved the policy on Advertising in the Schools. The motion was approved 5-0.

The additional policy on advertising in the schools will be on the December agenda.

M. JLMC - MOU Stipend Ratification

J. Wallace reported that earlier in Executive Session, the School Committee voted to ratify the MOU for stipends. The SEA will now need to ratify and sign.

N. December Town Meeting: Warrant Articles

Article 1: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to acquire, for general municipal purposes, by gift, purchase or eminent domain a certain parcel of land and the buildings and improvements thereon known as and numbered 490 William Street, Stoneham, Middlesex County, Massachusetts also known as the Arnold House which said land is shown on Stoneham Assessor's Maps as Parcel 22-0-80 and is more particularly described in a deed recorded in the Middlesex County Registry of Deeds in Book 15422 Page 94; and further, to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or borrow a sum of money for land and building purchase and other acquisition expenses, including all incidental and related costs; and further that the Select Board be authorized to submit on behalf of the Town any and all applications deemed necessary for grants or reimbursements from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the United States and/or any state or federal agency or programs in any way connected with the scope of this article; and further, that the Select Board be authorized to enter into any agreements and execute any and all documents and instruments as may be necessary to effect said purchase; and further, that the Select Board be authorized to submit to the General Court special act legislation in accordance with applicable law including Mass. Gen. L. c. 40 sec. 14 to purchase the foregoing property for a price that is more than twenty-five per cent in excess of its average assessed valuation during the previous three years, or do anything in relation thereto.

The Committee discussed the above Warrant Article that will be presented at the December 11th Special Town Meeting. The Arnold House Advisory Committee voted unanimously for unfavorable action due to building codes and assessment value vs. purchase offer. The Committee agreed not to take action either way on this article because the use being put forward is for municipal purposes and not for the schools so it is not in our purview; however, if it were to pass at Town Meeting and space was offered to the School Department, that would solve a big problem for Central Office space.

O. DESE Teacher Diversification Grant

Assistant Superintendent K. Martin requested acceptance of a grant for \$21,401 that was applied for and received in the fall. The grant will be used toward hiring and retaining staff of color and will also provide incentives to applicants of color.

ACTION: A motion was made by M. Samborski and seconded by B. Pryor to accept the Teacher Diversification Grant from DESE. The motion was approved 5-0.

P. Committee Liaison/Subcommittee Reports

NONE

Q. School Building Committee

N. Nial updated the Committee on the School Building Committee:

- The last meeting was held on November 20th and the School Committee attended to hear the presentation on branding.
- The Time Capsule Subcommittee continues to meet and information is available on the Town website.
- The next Branding Subcommittee meeting will be held on December 8th.
- The next FF&E meeting will take place on December 13th.
- The 1600 sq. feet on the third floor that was previously discussed as potential Central Office space is not doable. It was not built for that and would delay the current project and would not be affordable.
- Any interest in having an event at the old building before tearing it down? Winthrop did this and turned it into a fund raiser.
- Discussions are ongoing around the fields on sod vs. turf and how it could impact schedule and cost. No decision has been made. This would be an expense of the Building Committee, not the School Committee.
- The main structure of the building (Section D Auditorium) is about five weeks behind schedule due to weather delays and steel delays; the main buildings (Sections A, B and C) are about three weeks behind but they are working extra shifts to catch up. Potential pathway for completion could be to open A, B and C while construction is ongoing in Section D.

R. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Ljungberg reported on the following:

- He has met with Stantec on the South School playground design and they will be offering different options to improve the playground and flow of traffic.
- SRO Colotti has been offered and accepted a promotion to Detective. The Police Department will post the position and the School Department will be involved in the process. SRO Colotti will continue until his post begins.

- Update on residency status: We still have about 22 families in Grades 5 and 9 who have not responded to several requests for proof of residency, including certified letters that were sent a few weeks ago. Our next step is to send a final notice that unless the paperwork is received by December 21st we will assume they are no longer living in Stoneham and unenroll the students.
- Elevator update: TK Elevator Company is still trying to find the part and we are being told that the part is obsolete. This leaves us with only one working elevator at the Central Middle School and it is at the end of the building. We continue to work with Mr. McNeil and have also reached out to Help Me Hank on Channel 5 news and to the state elevator licensing board.

S. Discussion/Correspondence/New Items

J. Wallace reported that she met with Megan Samborski, Lisa Gallagher and Tara Lawler to talk about bringing back the all-night party that was previously held after graduation. They are putting together a survey for the junior and senior class to see if there is still interest and if there was a preference for it being held after graduation or after the prom.

J. Wallace also asked about excessive absences that were discussed during the accountability presentation. Is there a way we could take a look at excused absence policy and include our in-house suspension officer and Kristy Vazquez for their opinions? Assistant Superintendent K. Martin said that they are looking at this and reviewing the policies set by the district and the state.

T. EXECUTIVE SESSION

ACTION: A motion was made by J. Wallace and seconded by B. Pryor to enter into Executive Session per MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(2), (3) and (6): To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with STA Bargaining Unit, to discuss pending litigation and to discuss strategy in preparation for negotiation with non-union personnel – and the chair so declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call at 8:30 P.M., not to return to public session.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED
DAVID LJUNGBERG, SUPERINTENDENT**

Documents Reviewed:

Minutes November 16, 2023

FY24 Budget Report

Policy: Public Comment

Policy: Advertising

JLMC – MOU Stipend

December Town Meeting Warrant Articles