

MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING – SEPTEMBER 24, 2018

A regular School Committee meeting was held at the Administration Building on Monday, September 24, 2018

Members Present: Tina Bell, James Carvalho, Eric Graham, Scott Howland, Joseph Salpietro.

Superintendent of Schools John J. Robidoux, Assistant Superintendent Elizabeth White, and Student Representative Chloe Shea were in attendance.

Visitors included: Robert Silveira, Richard Cordeiro, Christine Cestodio, Amy Hubbard, SEPAC Representatives Sonya Barbosa and Craig Warner, Bill Hall of The Spectator, Debbie Kelley (videographer) and others.

Chairman Rowland opened the meeting at 6 p.m.

He announced that in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20(f), any person in attendance who wanted to record any portion of the meeting must notify the Chairman. School Committee meetings are broadcast live and recorded for broadcast on Sunday at 10 p.m., Monday at 6 p.m., Tuesday at 2 p.m., Wednesday at 10 a.m., Thursday at 10 p.m., Friday at 6 p.m., and Saturday at 2 p.m. on Swansea Cable Access Channel 15. Meetings can also be accessed over the internet at swanseacabletv.com.

There was no executive session.

Mr. Graham led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Salpietro offered a moment of silence in memory of Robert Gordon who was a teacher and coach at the high school for over 40 years.

Chairman Rowland established a Consent Agenda consisting of #4 Personnel Items, #5 Correspondence, #6 Informational Items, #8 Approval of Minutes, and #9 Approval of Bills.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Applicant for Vacant School Committee Appointment to Swansea Recreation Commission; Ms. Christine Cestodio

Ms. Cestodio introduced herself. She is secretary of the Case High School Drama group. She wants to be part of Recreation.

School Committee members thanked Ms. Cestodio for coming forward.

Supt Robidoux met her for the first time. He has heard positive comments about her. She will make a great addition to the Recreation Commission. He noted this is for the remainder of a term.

Asst. Supt. White has worked with Ms. Cestodio.

Chairman Rowland thanked her and wished her the best of luck.

Joseph Case High School Marching Band and Trip to Allentown, MA – National Marching Band Competition, November 2, 2018 – November 4, 2018 and Discussion Regarding Enrollment Numbers

Band Director Richard Cordeiro and CHAMPS President Cheryl Cabral were in attendance.

Mr. Cordeiro said the band consists of 9 members from the junior high school and 9 from the high school. The reason for the smaller numbers is because a large number of band members graduated in June and there are a lot of other activities at the high school.

Chairman Rowland thanked them for coming.

Mr. Salpietro questioned if students and chaperons are paying the same amount of \$395. He asked about the money raised by students.

Mr. Cordeiro explained it is used to pay a stipend to music teachers. They are alumni.

Mr. Salpietro noted the number of chaperons and adult staff members equals the number of students going on the trip.

Mrs. Cabral said every parent and relatives are invited to go.

Mr. Salpietro said this should be a learning experience for students. He understands that Mr. Cordeiro wants to have a band that is competitive. He would like to see the band involved in more school activities, such as football games. He would also like to see more students involved.

Mrs. Bell wanted to make sure all adults going on the trip are CORI checked.

Mrs. Cabral said they are.

Mr. Graham asked about the size of the junior high school band.

Mr. Cordeiro said the high 60s.

Mr. Graham would like to see a side band that would be at all athletic events in addition to the complete band.

Supt. Robidoux said he has met with Mr. Cordeiro many times. They need to work together to increase the numbers and let the junior high school students continue to participate.

He said it is great that the band is nationally competitive but he wants to see the band at high school football games – a pep band in the stands. He will continue to talk with Mr. Cordeiro. He has heard a lot about the commitment to the band – the number of hours. He felt it is a high school experience to have the band playing with their fellow students.

Asst. Supt. White said she is willing to do anything she can to support Mr. Cordeiro and the program.

Ms. Shea said she was in the band but it became too much so she had to drop out.

Chairman Rowland asked if CHAMPS is a registered 501C corporation and has bylaws. He would encourage involvement by students at a lesser commitment. He has a huge amount of respect for the kids. A big part of the excitement is having the band in the fields.

Mr. Cordeiro clarified that the band spends about 12-13 hours of rehearsal per week.

Process for Seeking Town Approval for Future School Building

Supt. Robidoux felt they should clarify past discussions. Last year they had gone to town meeting to purchase a parcel of land but it was shot down. He had discussions about the town purchasing an orchard but the owners decided to move forward with solar. He felt they need 35 acres. He is investigating behind the scenes. It doesn't make sense to do a feasibility study since they don't have land.

The district has old buildings that need a lot of work and some of the schools are overcrowded.

Mr. Carvalho said the land they looked at last year would have been idea because it was behind the high school. He will continue to look with the Superintendent.

Mr. Graham said they have to continue the efforts. He asked if the MSBA does an assessment every ten years.

Supt. Robidoux said an assessment was already done. He noted the Luther School has outlived its usefulness.

Mrs. Bell said there is a lot of talk going around that the town doesn't need a school. She said people need to realize how much money would have to be invested to bring schools up to where they need to be.

Supt. Robidoux said the Capital Improvement Plan does include maintenance of the schools.

Mr. Salpietro said the need for a new school will go by the wayside and the ability to obtain funding in the future will be lost. He felt a school should be part of the discussion on a new town hall and library. He said there will be a time when a new school is necessary and they will end up with module classrooms. He would like to ask town meeting to appropriate \$75,000 to do a feasibility study such as was done for the town hall. He felt townspeople do not understand the conditions of the schools.

Mr. Carvalho said it is not right to put the town hall against schools.

Asst. Supt. White said there are issues that are not going away. She felt schools are a priority.

Ms. Shea asked about projections on the population of schools in the future.

Supt. Robidoux said there is a company that projects that. Swansea is OK right now.

Mr. Carvalho said it is a lot of work and it can't be done overnight.

Chairman Rowland said not everybody talked about doing it overnight. It is critical that the town hears the issues the School Committee is facing. It is important to get information out there.

Dartmouth Public Schools Becoming a Member of South Coast Educational Collaborative

Supt. Robidoux advised the School Committee needs to vote on Dartmouth joining the collaborative. It is a good idea. He works very well with the Dartmouth Superintendent.

Request for Observation of Education Program by Parent/Designee for Evaluation Purposes – One Request

Supt. Robidoux explained it is an inclusion piece at Luther School. The principal and he approve it. .

Recognition of Mr. James Carvalho's Selection to the MASC All State School Committee Team for 2018

Supt. Robidoux said that Mr. Ed Hill nominated Mr. Carvalho, and it is supported by the selection committee. He read the letter from MASC to Mr. Carvalho.

The Superintendent thanked Mr. Carvalho for his hard work for the students.

Mr. Salpietro said this is a small recognition. Mr. Carvalho embodies everything right about Swansea.

Mrs. Bell said it is a big commitment to serve others all the time.

Mr. Graham said it is well deserved.

Asst. Supt. White congratulated Mr. Carvalho.

Ms. Shea said he deserves it. She said he better be at the dinner in a suit.

Mr. Carvalho said it means a lot coming from a student.

Chairman Rowland said he has known Jim for such a long time. He congratulated him. It couldn't be more deserved.

Mr. Carvalho thanked everybody involved. He is very thankful for the award. He has enjoyed everything he has done for the town.

Avail the Committee of Upcoming Union Contracts

Supt. Robidoux advised that teachers, secretaries and aides are in the third year of contracts. He has had conversations with Union President David Farrell. It is a great union.

ACTION ITEMS

Vote to Appoint Applicant to the Swansea Recreation Commission

A motion was made by Mr. Graham, seconded by Mrs. Bell, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To appoint Christine Cestodio to the Recreation Commission to complete the unexpired term.

Vote to Approve the Joseph Case High School Marching Band Trip to Allentown, PA National Marching Band Competition, November 2 to 4, 2018

A motion was made by Mr. Carvalho, seconded by Mr. Graham, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the Joseph Case High School Marching Band trip to Allentown, PA on November 2 to 4, 2018.

Prior to the vote, Mr. Salpietro stated that he has issues. He would vote for the trip. However, he felt the money students raise should be used to offset the cost of their trip instead of paying stipends to seven people when the band consists of about 18 students. He felt it is like pay to play.

Mrs. Cabral said that students do not pay to attend regular competitions.

Mr. Graham agreed with Mr. Salpietro.

Vote to Approve Dartmouth Public Schools Becoming a Member of South Coast Educational Collaborative

A motion was made by Mr. Salpietro, seconded by Mr. Carvalho, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve Dartmouth Public Schools becoming a member of the South Coast Educational Collaborative.

Vote to Approve Request for Observation of Education Program by Parent/Designee for Evaluation Purposes – One Request

A motion was made by Mr. Graham, seconded by Mr. Carvalho, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the request to observe educational program –one request.

NEW BUSINESS: FUTURE DISCUSSION BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. Salpietro mentioned that Henry Camara and David Gaudette died this week. They were his classmates. He extended condolences to the family.

Mr. Graham will talk to Supt. Robidoux about a sub-committee meeting.

Mr. Carvalho said the track looks fantastic. A few people asked about the public being able to walk on it.

Supt. Robidoux explained the Athletic Director has tightened up on that. The track was very expensive. People can walk on it but spikes, bikes, and dogs are not allowed.

The ribbon cutting is scheduled for October 13.

Mr. Carvalho said the Friends of the Cardinals did a great job on the building. He congratulated the fall teams.

Chairman Rowland also extended condolences to the Camara and Gaudette families.

He asked about a permanent transition cover for the track.

Supt. Robidoux said they are working on that.

He mentioned that he attended a training on school safety at Stonehill College last week. A mom from Sandy Hook was there to tell her heart-wrenching story.

Supt. Robidoux feels Swansea is in a much better place than others as far as school safety. He intends to have further discussions with police and fire.

He will be sending out a letter to all parents about school evacuations. In the event of full evacuations, students will be brought to the Venus so parents can pick them up there.

He encouraged parents to attend training on vaping on Wednesday, October 6, at 6 p.m. at the high school. Nurse Leslie Stolts put that together.

Supt. Robidoux congratulated theatre company students who participated in a walk to support a fellow student.

His tweets are on the website. He mentioned a lot of awesome stuff happening in the schools.

Mr. Carvalho said Supt. Robidoux has done a great job with regard to school safety.

Ms. Shea said she was one of about 14 students who walked. She mentioned the upcoming play, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, on October 11, 12, and 14. The Superintendent will be part of the cast at the October 11 performance.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular School Committee was scheduled for Monday, October 15, 2018, at 5:30 p.m., prior to the Town Meeting, at Joseph Case High School.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Graham, seconded by Mrs. Bell, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn at 7:43 p.m.

The vote: Mr. Graham – Aye; Mrs. Bell – Aye; Mr. Carvalho – Aye; Mr. Salpietro – Aye;
Chairman Rowland – Aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Gamer
Secretary

School Committee

September 24, 2018

Items Distributed at the School Committee Meeting of September 24, 2018

E-Mail from Christine Cestodio re: position on Swansea Recreation Commission

Memo from Director of Music Richard T. Cordeiro re: Joseph Case High School Marching Band trip to Allentown Pennsylvania

Request for Observation of Education Program by Parents/Designees

Massachusetts Association of School Committees – Selection of James Carvalho as MASC Division III All-Star School Committee 2018 Award

Lucas Pereira, Student at Luther School – Letter to Supt. Robidoux regarding excessive heat and response from the Superintendent

Letter from Students to Principal Brian McCann regarding an incident at the high school and a \$250 donation

E-Mail from Ryan and Kelly Blackburn in appreciation of Supt. Robidoux's response to their concerns regarding transportation

The Herald News – article regarding the legally blind student in Swansea Schools: