

**Salem Public Schools
Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 8, 2024**

On April 8, 2024 the Salem School Committee held its regular School Committee meeting at 7:00 PM using a hybrid model.

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

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Dr. Stephen Zrike, Deputy Superintendent Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent Elizabeth Pauley, Ellen Wingard, Dr. Kimberly Talbot, Laura Assade, Jennifer Doucette-Ly Marc LeBlanc and Natalia Feliz

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Pangallo calls the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and requests a call of attendance. He explained the Public Participation Policy 6409 and also explained the availability of Spanish interpretation.

Mary Manning requested a moment of silence for Eileen Sacco who was a long time school committee secretary as well as worked for the City of Salem. Eileen was a very nice, genuine and caring person.

Attendance

Mayor Pangallo recognizes the attendance with members. Beth Anne Cornell motions for approval and seconded by Veronica Miranda.

Manny Cruz	Not Present
Mary Manning	Present
Beth Anne Cornell	Present
Amanda Campbell	Present
Veronica Miranda	Present
AJ Hoffman	Present
Mayor Pangallo	Present

Approval of Agenda

Mayor Pangallo requested a motion to approve the Agenda. Beth Anne Cornell motions for approval and seconded by Amanda Campbell . A roll call vote is taken.

Mary Manning	Yes
Beth Anne Cornell	Yes
Amanda Campbell	Yes
Veronica Miranda	Yes

AJ Hoffman	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes
Motion carries 6-0	

Public Comment

Marc LeBlanc announced that there were no public comments submitted online.

Paul L'Heureux, 24 Lafayette Place, wanted to remind the committee there was a dedication plaque located at the Broad St building and the plaque has been salvaged and will be saved to place in the new Salem High School.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Mayor Pangallo requested a motion to approve the Agenda. Beth Anne Cornell motions for approval and seconded by Amanda Campbell. A roll call vote is taken.

Mary Manning	Yes
Beth Anne Cornell	Yes
Amanda Campbell	Yes
Veronica Miranda	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes
Motion carries 6-0	

Student Showcase - Witchcraft Elementary School

Principal Sue Carmona introduces the Witchcraft young journalist and they are the editors for the Witchcraft school paper. The Witchcraft Word is student driven and this provides students an opportunity to drive the ship. Some goals from the school paper is to foster student discourse, collaboration, productive struggle, and high expectations. To also cultivate an inclusive environment where everyone feels safe to take chances. Lastly to create goals and attainable steps to complete goals and an end product where everyone includes something they are proud of. Overall student feedback was positive. Several Witchcraft students share their interviews with important community leaders such as a local firefighter. Another student describes her experience interviewing Mayor Pangall and Representative Manny Cruz. They had asked several questions and created a google document so the interview questions and answers could be printed in the newspaper.

Amanda Campbell asked why the students would recommend joining this newspaper club? Students stated that students should join the newspaper club because it is fun and you can choose a topic of your choice. Also, Member Campbell adds how impressed she is with how professionally done the newspaper was.

Superintendent's Report

- A. FY25 Initial Budget Presentation (Priority 4)
- B. Student Opportunity Act Plan Submission (Priority 4)

Dr. Zrike notes Salem was one of 16 communities awarded an expansion grant. Dr. Zrike is seeking a vote for the Student Opportunity Act. Dr. Zrike begins discussing the presentation of the FY 25 Initial Budget Presentation and Discussion. Dr. Zrike notes this year's budget is very complex. The sunseting of ESSER we no longer have the funding to support critical staff. Secondly, we have a substantial increase in personnel expenses such as transportation, utilities, and special education costs. Also, there has been a significant increase in student needs. Dr. Zrike reviews the budget principles noting allocating resources equitably, align funding to strategic priorities and values, work closely to promote stakeholder engagement, partner with school leaders to flexibly and creatively allocate resources, and prioritize positions and programs based on student and family needs, and preserving access to Pre-K.

Ms. Elizabeth Pauley notes student enrollment is growing, state revenue is increasing, Salem's target location contribution is growing rapidly, and the pandemic relief (ESSER) is sunseting: mission-critical positions need to continue to be supported. Rising expenses noted are the increase in students with intensive needs and developmental delays, fixed costs and non-personnel expenses are increasing dramatically, and lastly unknown collective bargaining increases for 73% of employees but a desire to increase employee compensation.

Prioritizing student needs noted in the budget book is adding new positions where needed, adding some ESSER-funded positions onto the general fund, discontinuing positions funded on grants, and 16 positions eliminated on the general funded budget. Again, the rising costs noted are transportation, special education tuition, utilities, and unknown personnel increases. Elizabeth Pauley also notes each school does have a profile page with data from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Also, the budget pages have tables that show budget lines for personnel and expenses. Dr. Zrike notes the newly revised budget book is an effort to be more transparent about the efforts we have made to balance our budget.

Student Representative Report

Natalia Feliz notes the student representative group recently met with Dr. Zrike and Glenn Burns, Salem High School principal. Standards based grading was the topic to be discussed and students are upset due to this being too open ended and the GPA is viewed differently from student to student.

Beth Anne Cornell notes having everyone hear the perspective of the Student Representative Report is very important moving forward and this is the district responsibility to get parents and students to understand. Beth Anne Cornell also requested a Committee of a Whole on this topic in the future to further discuss.

Old Business

none

New Business

A. Presentation on Earth Day and Arbor Day tree plantings

- a. Deliberation and vote on approval of tree planting at the Early Childhood Center on Earth Day, April 22, 2024 - (pending approval from the Parks & Recreation)
- b. Deliberation and vote on approval of tree planting at the Witchcraft Heights Elementary School on Arbor Day, April 26, 2024

Mayor Pangallo requested a motion to approve the Agenda. Member Campbell motions for approval and seconded by Member Miranda . A roll call vote is taken.

Mary Manning	Yes
Beth Anne Cornell	Yes
Amanda Campbell	Yes
Veronica Miranda	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes

Motion carries 6-0

B. Deliberation and vote to approve the superintendent's Student Opportunity Act Plan Submission to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Mayor Pangallo requested a motion to approve the Agenda. Member Campbell motions for approval and seconded by Member Miranda . A roll call vote is taken.

Mary Manning	Yes
Beth Anne Cornell	Yes
Amanda Campbell	Yes
Veronica Miranda	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes

Motion carries 6-0

C. Deliberation and vote to discard elementary literacy materials - Member Campbell notes there is a request for the Policy Subcommittee to take a further look at this request as well.

Member Miranda asks if the trees selected to be planted were selected by DCR. The trees were selected by the tree commissioners so urban appropriate trees were selected.

Mayor Pangallo requested a motion to approve the Agenda. Member Campbell motions for approval and seconded by Member Miranda . A roll call vote is taken.

Mary Manning	Yes
Beth Anne Cornell	Yes
Amanda Campbell	Yes

Veronica Miranda	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes

Motion carries 6-0

Finance & Operations Report

Elizabeth Pauley notes the Special Education transfers moving to the tuition lines. Also, Special Ed transfers to out of district transfer lines and Witchcraft Heights school to emergency stipends lines.

Mayor Pangallo requested a motion to approve the Agenda. Member Campbell motions for approval and seconded by Member Miranda . A roll call vote is taken.

Mary Manning	Yes
Beth Anne Cornell	Yes
Amanda Campbell	Yes
Veronica Miranda	Yes
AJ Hoffman	Yes
Mayor Pangallo	Yes

Motion carries 6-0

Subcommittee Reports

Member Campbell notes the recent discussion at the Curriculum Subcommittee meeting. Topics discussed included the deliberation and vote to discard elementary literacy materials as well as the Math Curriculum at the middle school and high school.

Member Cornell notes the committee does need to schedule a future Committee of the Whole meeting to further discuss naming of schools and renaming parts of schools.

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

Member Manning requests to look at the process of the logos and mascots being used in the School system and who has the approval of such.

Adjournment

Member Campbell makes a motion to adjourn and seconded by Member Miranda.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Krista Perry

Executive Administrative Assistant to the School Committee & Superintendent