

Middletown Public Schools
Middletown, Rhode Island

June 15, 2017

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Michael S. Pinto Conference Room

Members Present: Kellie DiPalma Simeone, Chairman
Theresa Spengler, Vice-Chairman
Douglas Arnold
Liana Fenton
William O'Connell

Also Present: Rosemarie K. Kraeger, Superintendent of Schools
Linda Savastano, Assistant Superintendent
Raquel Pellerin, Business Manager
David Fontes, Director of Facilities/Safety and Transportation

The School Committee Meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m. by School Committee Chair Kellie DiPalma Simeone. All members were present. Administrative staff members present were Beth Hayes, Gail Abromitis, Linda Beaupre, Donna Chelf, and Stephen Ponte.

PROCLAMATIONS/AWARDS

- Retirees - Two teachers were honored for their service to the Middletown School Department. Dana Ramey has been a Foreign Language Teacher for 21 years and Anna Kibble was an English Teacher for 24 years.
- Teacher of the Year - Middletown High School Foreign Language Teacher Kristen Lyon was honored as 2017 Middletown Teacher of the Year.
- Student Awards were presented in the following categories:
 - Newport Daily News Athlete of the Week
 - Foreign Language Awards
 - Division II Championship Boys' Lacrosse Team

A brief recess taken at 6:06 p.m.

INFORMATION

Mrs. Kraeger noted the following items of information:

- NAFIS position paper opposing education budget.
- East Bay Foster Grandparents Program MOU

- Regional Special Education Program invited to State of Education address by Commissioner
- Rough draft of Ramon Arroyo playground area 1st Forest Avenue School
- Donation Letters
- End of Year School Events

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Resident Mr. Payson Fugitt spoke regarding the Nalaxone policy. He suggested having others trained besides nurse/teachers. He also voiced his opinion regarding the Health and Wellness Survey. He feels the name should be changed and that this is not the correct way to gather data from students. Mrs. Spengler said that this is an anonymous way to collect statistical data. Mrs. Simeone said that the survey alerts us as to where students have issues and where supports need to be put in place.

CONSENT AGENDA

- **MOTION:** 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *To approve the Consent Agenda.* Unanimous vote.
- Approval of Minutes
 - Minutes of May 18, 2017 School Committee Meeting
 - Minutes of May 24, 2017 Building Committee Meeting
- Approval of the following vouchers:

May Vouchers		
Voucher	Date	Amount
1254	5/1/2017	\$22,142.96
1253	5/1/2017	\$301,175.60
1250	5/1/2017	\$354,773.62
1252	5/8/2017	\$388,474.48
1267	5/11/2017	\$4,918.14
1266	5/11/2017	\$4,925.26
1265	5/11/2017	\$4,925.26
1264	5/11/2017	\$4,925.26
1263	5/11/2017	\$4,952.40
1268	5/18/2017	\$49,197.89
1278	5/26/2017	\$300.00
1277	5/26/2017	\$353,567.97
Total		\$1,494,278.84

- Approval of Vendors/Purchases over \$5,000
- Approval of Superintendent's Recommendation on Personnel

SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION ON PERSONNEL

APPOINTMENT EFFECTIVE MAY 19, 2017 TO THE END OF THE 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR

Michael Coffey Grade 3 Long-Term Substitute, Aquidneck School

APPOINTMENTS EFFECTIVE JUNE 19, 2017

Ryan Moore Part-Time Seasonal Workstation Technician/Student
Intern

Panagiotis Panoutsouloulos Part-Time Seasonal Workstation Technician/Student
Intern

Benjamin Wood Part-Time Seasonal Workstation Technician/Student
Intern

APPOINTMENT EFFECTIVE JULY 10, 2017

Samantha Hines Capstone Jumpstart Program

REASSIGNMENT EFFECTIVE JULY 5, 2017

Mary Groff District/School Administrative Support Personnel B,
Aquidneck School

NEW BUSINESS

No "New Business" for June 15, 2017.

OLD BUSINESS

No "Old Business" for June 15, 2017.

ACTION ITEMS

NALOXONE POLICY - 2nd READING

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *That the School Committee approve the Naloxone Policy, 2nd Reading.* Unanimous vote.

This is a standard policy that has been vetted by our School Attorney and is a requirement by the R.I. Department of Education. It encompasses everything needed. With regard to a comment by a resident, other individuals will be trained.

FOOD SERVICES ACCOUNT POLICY - 2nd READING

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *That the School Committee approve the Food Services Account Policy, 2nd Reading.* Unanimous vote.

Ms. Pellerin will be attending a webinar soon and there will be revisions to the policy after that. This policy is a required to be developed by July 1st. A fund could be set up to help recover unpaid charges. There was discussion around what the alternate meal will be and what is done after students meet the \$10 overage. There needs to be more discussion on debt collection. Some parents do not realize that they owe funds. Mr. Arnold asked about moving funds between children.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN MPS AND MPD

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *That the School Committee table the motion regarding the Memorandum of Agreement between the Middletown Public Schools and the Middletown Police Department.*

STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS SURVEY

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *That the School Committee approve the Student Health and Wellness Survey.* Unanimous vote.

Ms. Lori Verderosa spoke on the survey. The Middletown Prevention Coalition is a community-based coalition, whose mission is to create a safe and healthy Middletown. The Federal government identifies some of the questions asked on the survey. All parents of students in grades 7-12 receive a letter notifying them that their child will be taking the survey. They have the ability to opt out. The survey has shown that the use of edibles has increased over the last few years because students can be more discreet and the use of vaping has increased. Mr. Arnold would like the word "anonymous" added to the title. Mrs. Spengler agreed that it should be made clearer that this is an anonymous survey. Ms. Verderosa said that the classroom teacher informs the students prior to taking the test that it is anonymous and that they are able to skip a question if they choose to.

FY 2017-2018 BUDGET

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *That the School Committee approve the 2017-18 Budget in the amount of \$42,254,768.* Unanimous vote.

In developing the budget, major concerns include the loss of State Aid through the funding formula, the loss of Impact Aid dollars, funding for contractual agreements, and the increased cost of benefits and operational expenses. Zero-based budgeting was used when the budget process began. All expenditures within the budget had to be justified. Efficiencies were looked at before adding expenditures to the budget. The need and the cost were then reviewed. Administration tried to be creative, exhaust the fund balance, reduce staff away from the classroom, and tried to minimize the impact on students while looking at open positions first to avoid losing staff.

After the adoption of our FY18 budget, the region came forward with an audited fund balance from FY16 estimated to be \$350K. There was discussion with special education administration regarding available funds and also about issues with State and Federal regulations regarding special education maintenance of effort. A plan was developed that can bridge the gap between revenue and expenditures. The law states that the cut-off at age is 21 for special education students to no longer receive services. We identified students that are 18 and 19 that are high cost. These costs will be offset for 4 years. The School Committee will be asked to designate a small amount of regular fund balance in case we have a new student come into the district. Using this plan will reduce the budget by about \$300K. Using the fund balance is not the best practice.

To balance the budget, \$1,049,144 needed to be cut. Additional revenue and the use of the Fund Balance brought that number to \$749,794. Additional reductions include:

- Reduction of professional services - \$30,800
- Reduction of Rental of Equipment - \$23,826
- Reduction of Supplies and other Expenditures - \$7,050
- Reduction from portion of Projected Health Care Savings - \$15,218
- Delay hiring 1 support staff - \$59,699
- Reduction shift in funding percentage of 3 position to grant funded - \$189,907
- Reduction shift in funding 1 position to Regional Special Education - \$111,665
- Reduction of 2 new part-time support staff and 1 open support staff position - \$94,212
- Reduction of 2 instruction/leadership positions - \$217,417

Building Principals spoke about the loss of positions and the impact it will have. Ms. Abromitis, MHS Principal, said supports need to be in place to help the students. The College and Career Readiness position had a big impact on students. The duties of the director include Scholarship and Awards Night, Financial Aid Nights, FAFSA night for parents, goal setting, SAT/PSAT testing, resume writing, and college essay proofing. The services of this staff member and the student assistance counselor kept a number of students from dropping out of high school. Mrs. Spengler expressed support for this critical position and said that it provided a tremendous amount of support for parents and students. She is discouraged that students will be impacted and the community needs to understand this. Ms. Abromitis will meet with staff to determine how the duties will be divided up.

Mrs. Fenton said it took a while to get this position in the budget and it is a shame to lose it.

Beth Hayes, JHG Principal, said the students social emotional needs are interfering with learning. The duties of the two Assistant Principals are increasing. Her biggest concern is communication home to families. Mrs. Spengler said that this is a huge loss and it is not okay to lose this position.

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *To extend the meeting past two hours.* Unanimous vote.

Mr. Fontes spoke about the loss of the custodial position. He said he is confident we can reengineer, reprioritize and get the job done.

APPROVAL OF CONTRACT

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *That the School Committee approve the contract of Gail Abromitis, Middletown High School Principal, until June 30, 2019.* Unanimous vote.

EARLY RETIREMENT

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *That the School Committee open Early Retirement until August 1, 2017.* Unanimous vote.

DESIGNATE FUND BALANCE

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *That the School Committee assign fund balances.* Unanimous vote.

This is required under GASB 54. \$183,125 from the Restricted Fund Balance includes a one-year-only position and contractual agreements/professional development days. This will be revisited at the June 23rd School Committee Meeting.

BID AWARD – FOREST AVENUE SCHOOL HVAC PROJECT

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) William O’Connell. *That the School Committee award the Forest Avenue School HVAC Project Bid Award to Automatic Temperature Controls, Inc.* Unanimous vote.

BID AWARD – FOREST AVENUE SCHOOL SITE WORK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *That the School Committee award the Forest Avenue School Site Work Improvement Project Bid Award to East Coast Landscaping and Construction, Inc.* Unanimous vote.

At last night’s Planning Board Meeting, approval was granted with a few conditions that came out of the Technical Review Committee meeting. A productive meeting was held with residents of Bay Ridge Condominiums.

BID AWARD – MHS AND AQUIDNECK SCHOOL ROOF PROJECT

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *That the School Committee award the MHS and Aquidneck School Roof Project Bid Award to Commercial Roofing and Contracting, Inc.* Unanimous vote.

BID AWARD – SECURITY ALARM SYSTEM REPLACEMENT PROJECT

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *That the School Committee award the Security Alarm System Replacement Project Bid Award to Engineered Securities Systems, Inc. Unanimous vote.*

BID AWARD – AQUIDNECK SCHOOL SHINGLED ROOF PROJECT

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *That the School Committee table the motion regarding awarding the Aquidneck School Shingled Roof Project Bid. Unanimous vote.*

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

- Curriculum – Mrs. Savastano reported that the total CRP is \$1.3M and has been submitted to RIDE, but will still need to be revised and finalized. Summer school information has been sent out to parents. We are hoping that RIDE will approve the grant dollars. Work on unit recovery is continuing. Professional Development Day will be September 29th. Middletown will collaborate with Bristol Warren on October 27th on a digital learning conference.
- Financial – Ms. Pellerin reported that June is the biggest months. On the revenue side, we are slightly exceeding budget on Medicaid. In the General Fund, Impact Aid is below budget by about \$250K. We are slightly under budget in the General Fund for miscellaneous expenses.
- Facilities – Mr. Fontes reported that there are two projects taking place at Forest Avenue School. The site work will begin on July 10th. Demolition has begun on the boilers and is being completed in-house. The shingled roof bid was tabled because only one bid was received. This will be put back out to bid. The security alarm system bid will decrease our operating expenses, but will decrease overtime.

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *That the School Committee receive the Superintendent’s Reports. Unanimous vote.*

REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

No Reports of Officers and Committees for June 15, 2017.

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *To go into Executive Session 42-46-5 (a) 1,2,5,8,9 at 8:20 p.m. Unanimous vote.*

Return from Executive Session.

Mrs. Simeone announced that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

(Minutes of June 15, 2017 School Committee Meeting, Page Eight)

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *To seal the minutes of Executive Session.*
Unanimous vote.

ADJOURN FROM MEETING

MOTION: 1) Theresa Spengler, 2) Liana Fenton. *To adjourn from School Committee Meeting at 9:00 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Rosemarie K. Kraeger
Superintendent of Schools