

EXETER-WEST GREENWICH MARCH 22, 2005

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MINUTES

The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School Committee held a meeting on this date at

7:05 p.m. in the Metcalf Elementary School Cafeteria. Members present were Susan DeSack, Chairperson; Teri Cicero, Vice Chairperson; Bill Clay, Paul McFadden, and William Munroe. Superintendent Roy M. Seitsinger, Jr.; Director of Curriculum Philip D. Thornton; Director of Administration Robert V. Ross; Director of Special Services Maureen DeCrescenzo were present. Gregory Coutcher, Clerk arrived at 7:10 p.m. Student Representative Jaclyn Manchester left early at 8:45 p.m. Member Frank Maher was absent.

ORDER – Chair DeSack called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Member Clay moved to move up agenda item IV. Presentation - B. Metcalf School. Seconded by Vice Chairperson Cicero. Voted 5 – 0.

METCALF SCHOOL – Principal Boyce gave a slide show presentation which highlighted what Metcalf students are learning and gave an overview of Grade 3 and Grade 4 state testing scores/results.

Clerk Coutcher arrived at this time.

Principal Boyce gave an overview of School Improvement Goals, Iowa Testing results, and student programs. She noted that the school has 100% student participation in the Feinstein Good Deeds Program.

Vice Principal Fish presented a three-year comparison discipline report, which illustrated the number of students sent to the office for behavioral issues has declined over the past three years, as well as the number of students suspended from school.

Member Clay asked if the data for each of the three years reflected a time frame to March 1st.

Vice Principal Fish answered affirmatively, noting it was a fair comparison. She explained the school uses positive disciplinary actions and that administration has an open door policy, noting all students are aware they are welcome to meet with both Principal Boyce and/or herself should they need to. She also presented an attendance report which indicated overall improvement in students' attendance. She voiced her concern regarding the number of times parents kept students out of school to go on vacation which equaled 237 days.

Principal Boyce introduced three 6th grade students – Bethany Reinhard, Taylor Hart, and Cutler Peters who read stories they wrote

using the 6-Traits writing program.

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Principal Boyce then introduced music teacher Stacy Place and the members of the 6th Grade advanced jazz band.

Ms. Place spoke about the band program, communicating that Metcalf School has a thriving band program in which over 200 5th and 6th Grade students are involved.

Ms. Place introduced the group of band members that were present, noting them as a group of selected band students who practice after school every Wednesday. The advanced jazz band played two songs for the committee.

Lastly, Principal Boyce introduced a PowerPoint presentation set to music entitled, A Day of Learning at Metcalf which featured pictures of students, faculty and staff.

Chair DeSack expressed thanks to all presenters then stated the meeting would return to Open Forum and asked if anyone had anything to put forward.

There was no reply.

PRESENTATION – Student Member Report - Jaclyn Manchester gave an overview of the various student activities. She mentioned the drama department will be presenting GREASE starting on March 31st and running through April 3rd and SADD, (Students Against Destructive Decisions), is planning SADD week the week prior to prom, in order to encourage students to make wise, healthy choices the night of prom.

ROUTINE ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA – Superintendent Seitsinger gave an overview of the Consent Agenda.

Member Clay requested agenda item D. Building Use Fee Changes be pulled from the consent agenda.

Member McFadden moved to accept the consent agenda. Seconded by Clerk Coutcher. Voted 6 – 0.

The following items were approved:

A. Minutes – Regular Minutes of March 8, 2005

B. Personnel Items

1. Appointments – (As recommended by the Superintendent)

a. Dolleen Lacombe rehired for the position of Teacher

**Assistant/Recess Aid at the Metcalf School effective
March 23, 2005.**

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**b. Rene Boudreault as Head Jr. High Baseball Coach for the
2004-2005 school year effective March 23, 2005.**

**c. Joshua Bednarczyk as Assistant Boys' Volleyball Coach for the
2004-2005 school year effective March 23, 2005.**

**d. Douglas Walker as Assistant Track Coach for the 2004-2005
season, effective March 23, 2005.**

**2. Leaves of Absence – (As recommended by the
Superintendent)**

**a. Request from Sharon Lee to continue her leave of absence from
her**

**High School Science teacher position in order to complete her
experience at RIDE as a High School Reform Fellow Teacher for
the 2005-2006 school year.**

**b. Request from Lawrence Purtil to continue his leave of absence
from his High School History teacher position for the 2005-2006**

school year.

- c. Request from Christine Fiore to continue her parental leave of absence from her position as a Health/Physical Education teacher for the 2005-2006 school year.**
- d. Request from Patrick Cozzolino for a parental leave of absence beginning on or about May 2, 2005 for a maximum of 14 days.**
- e. Request from Lisa Foehr to continue her leave of absence from her High School Foreign Language teacher position in order to continue her experience at RIDE as a Teacher Quality Fellow for the 2005-2006 school year.**

3. Resignations – (As recommended by the Superintendent with Regret)

- a. Letter of resignation from Marcia Melanson for the purpose of retirement, effective June 30, 2005, with regret.**
- b. E-mail of resignation from Rebecca Mellion as Summer School Coordinator as of March 7, 2005 with regret.**

4. Grievances –

C. Bills – In the amount of \$ 213,110.60

End of Consent Agenda

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Superintendent Seitsinger reviewed the correspondence listed below:

E. Correspondence – (1) March 15, 2005 Facsimile from Attorney Gorham to the

Superintendent, (2) E-Mail regarding Regionalized/Shared Services,

(3) Thank you note to School Committee Members from Norm Leveillee,

(4) Newly Adopted Policy #7603, (5) March 17, 2005 Facsimile from Attorney

Gorham to the Superintendent

Chair DeSack asked if any member wanted to pull a correspondence item for discussion.

There was no reply.

NEW BUSINESS – 2004 Audit Report – Superintendent Seitsinger introduced

Pat Boucher of Bacon & Company, CPA's, LLC.

Ms. Boucher gave a brief overview of the district's audited financial

statements, fiscal year ended June 30, 2004, noting that the district finished in the black by \$31,000 and \$50,000 was set aside for a total of approximately \$81,000.

Chair DeSack asked if any member had questions regarding this matter.

There was no reply.

Ms. Boucher then reviewed the auditor committees' letter summarizing their responsibilities and the managers' letter which contained their observations and recommendations.

Chair DeSack asked if any member had questions or comments regarding this matter.

There was no reply.

Ms. Boucher invited members to contact her should they have any questions after reviewing the report.

Member Clay moved to accept the 2004 Audit Report. Seconded by Clerk Coutcher. Voted 6 – 0.

In\$ite Certification – Superintendent Seitsinger introduced District Treasurer Kate LaCroix and explained there are new state

requirements regarding responsibilities of the district.

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District Treasurer Kate LaCroix presented highlights of her In\$ite Certification expenditure report and gave a brief summary of what the In\$ite report entails and its purpose. She also explained the report reflects the fiscal year 2003 – 2004.

Members McFadden and Munroe asked several clarify and probing questions. Member McFadden asked Ms. LaCroix the following question – “If the district were to receive additional revenue after the District Financial Meeting, do you report additional revenue to the towns and inform them their liability has decreased?”

Ms. LaCroix explained the district did not report additional revenue to the towns, as the funds are part of the general fund and are deposited into the balance.

Chair DeSack noted there was an answer to Member McFadden’s question in that night’s School Committee packet. She read part of a facsimile sent to the Superintendent from the district’s attorney

Nicholas Gorham which addressed this question, as Member McFadden had previously asked the question during the February 8, 2005 School Committee meeting and had requested Superintendent Seitsinger seek Mr. Gorham's legal opinion.

Vice Chairperson Cicero moved to accept the In\$ite Certification expenditure report. Seconded by Clerk Coutcher. Voted 6 – 0.

School Calendar – Superintendent Seitsinger explained the school calendar is brought before the committee each year for their input and/or suggestions for revisions. Superintendent Seitsinger gave an overview of the 1st draft of the proposed school calendar for the 2005-2006 school year, noting there were three professional development days proposed and the last day of school would be on June 16, 2006. He explained the proposed calendar used the same plan structurally as the current year, the committee is required to review the proposed calendar a couple of times, and then the calendar will be brought to the RI Department of Education for submittal and approval. RIDE will then validate and return it to the district. Superintendent Seitsinger asked for any suggestions regarding the calendar.

Member Munroe asked if there had been any discussion about increasing the length of the school year/day.

Superintendent Seitsinger said there had been some talk, but nothing

at the state level. He noted that the calendar will be on the next agenda and the committee could then vote to accept it.

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Clerk Coutcher expressed his concern that the month of November shows three consecutive weeks that students will not attend school one or two days of the week, due to holidays, a professional day and a parent conference day.

Superintendent Seitsinger explained that the month of November routinely follows this format.

Member Munroe suggested moving the professional development day to the month of October.

Superintendent Seitsinger recognized that may be a possibility and agreed to look into implementing Member Munroe's suggestion. Superintendent Seitsinger mentioned that another school district had tried cutting back from the customary February and April breaks to a one-week break, but after just one year, reverted back because of issues that arose for families.

Chair DeSack asked committee members to bring any additional feedback concerning the calendar to the next meeting, as this was just the 1st reading.

Political Activities in School Policy # 6215- Revision – Chair DeSack noted there were revisions made to this policy in response to dealings/issues that occurred at this past election time.

Member McFadden expressed his belief that there should be no political leaflets of any kind allowed on school grounds.

Member Munroe expressed his belief that there should be no political groups brought into the schools. He expressed that by allowing political visitors into the schools, the district is entering into politics and may offend community members.

Chair DeSack asked if there was no value in education for our students to hear a senator speak about what his job is.

Member McFadden was concerned with the committee having no control over what political visitors may say to students once in the classroom.

Superintendent Seitsinger explained that Patrick Lynch visits our schools almost every year to speak to students about his roles and does not advocate his political views when he speaks.

Director of Curriculum Phil Thornton asked Member McFadden to think globally – The President visits schools all the time – Would we want to ban the President from visiting our school?

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Chair DeSack noted the policy already exists and asked Members McFadden and Munroe exactly what part of the policy they are questioning.

Member McFadden expressed his belief that the policy should be stronger and should state no leaflets of any kind on school grounds.

Member Munroe expressed his belief that the old policy did not work this past election time and suggested the policy should state, “It will not be allowed – if it does - you will lose your job”.

Member Clay stated that everyone is afforded due process.

Consensus was members will make modifications, give their suggestions/specific wording to Member Clay, (policy committee member), and this item will be put on the next agenda.

Prohibited Demonstrations Policy # 6263 1st Reading – Chair DeSack explained this was the 1st reading.

Member Clay explained he included, along with a copy of the policy, copies of correspondence that had been handed out during demonstrations on school grounds, which is something the committee wants to stop from happening.

Chair DeSack explained this is a brand-new policy, members might want to make modifications, and this item will be on the next agenda for a 2nd reading. She asked if anyone had any questions or discussion.

There was no reply.

Discussion of Legal Council Search – Superintendent Seitsinger explained the committee requested this item be placed on the agenda, gave a summary of the process used to find our current legal counsel, and gave the names of law firms interested in serving as the district’s legal counsel.

Chair DeSack asked if any member had questions regarding this matter.

There was no reply.

Bylaws Discussion – Member Clay explained the supplementary folder contained three pages of the Bylaws with modifications shown

in bold.

Chair DeSack noted the modifications were not bolded so it would be difficult to have a discussion and requested that this item be placed on the next agenda.

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Sub Committee Review and Responsibility – Member Clay noted the policy

sub committee has some changes coming proposing very severe modifications to the School Facility Use Policy #9700. When complete, this policy will be like new.

Superintendent's Recommendation for Support of School Finance and Pension Reform – Superintendent Seitsinger gave an overview of a letter from (SORICO), Southern RI Collaborative, asking the school district, along with the towns, to endorse and submit to the State of RI General Assembly seeking their support for the enactment of pension benefit reform in this legislative session. Superintendent Seitsinger expressed his advocacy to the School Committee to review the letter and send it, with the individual towns, to the Senate Chamber and Representative Chamber asking for their support.

Member Clay noted general assembly groups are writing to petition support to all representatives in the state.

Member Clay moved to sign and send the letter to the State of RI General Assembly asking for their support. Seconded by Vice Chairperson Cicero.

Discussion – Member McFadden expressed his concern as the letter does not state which pension reform it refers to.

Member Munroe suggested the letter needed to be more specific before the School Committee endorses it.

Superintendent Seitsinger highlighted some specific problems with the current system.

Member Munroe conveyed Exeter consensus is they have a proposal for pension reform that they would like to bring before the School Committee.

Chair DeSack conferred the committee would gladly look it over, however the committee should send the SORICO letter now.

Member Munroe communicated the matter should be tabled until the next meeting so that the committee can review the town of Exeter's proposal.

Chair DeSack noted by sending this letter the committee is telling the

General Assembly the committee wants something done. She explained there was a press conference planned for Wednesday, March 30, 2005. She then suggested the committee should vote on the motion on the table which is for the School Committee chairperson to sign the letter as a School Committee representative as it is written and send it to the State of RI General Assembly asking for their support.

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Member McFadden asked, "Once this motion carries, we will not amend the letter, correct?"

Chair DeSack confirmed that was correct.

Member Munroe stated, "I will now make a public statement that the School Committee is divided and I'm against it."

Chair DeSack asked, "Against pension reform?"

Member Munroe answered, "Against rushing in sending the letter, because I told you I have something from the town of Exeter to bring forward."

Member McFadden said he would like to see something along the lines of finding alternate means of revenue, as this letter says the committee will carry on with any pension reform.

Chair DeSack said she did not read a negative in this letter – she reads the committee is urging to enact something be done.

Vote: 4 – 2. Members Munroe and McFadden voted no.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Request to Purchase (3) Three New Cafeteria Tables for Metcalf School – Chair DeSack noted new tables have been ordered. No other discussion took place.

Budget 2005 – 2006 – Chair DeSack asked if anyone requested this item be placed on the agenda and/or if anyone had anything to discuss?

Member Clay explained the item will stay on the agenda until the budget is voted on. Member Clay noted Exeter Town Council member Wayne Cross submitted an amendment letter to the school district regarding the proposed budget.

Superintendent Seitsinger conveyed the school district has received two amendment letters from Mr. Cross and one other from community member Mr. Nataly.

Chair DeSack communicated there are three amendments to be entertained. The proposed amendments are a 2.5%, 3 %, and 4% increase over the 04-05 budget.

Member McFadden noted there are three amendments and the committee's formal budget.

Member Clay inquired if Mr. Ross had brought copies of the amendments with him.

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Mr. Ross responded he had not.

Member Clay mentioned Mr. Cross' letter made reference that his amendment was upon the recommendation of the School Committee and it was not.

Member McFadden noted that such discussion could not be continued as the letter was not included in the packet.

Chair DeSack asked if anyone had anything more to discuss concerning the 05-06 budget.

Member Clay asked when the Public Hearing was being held.

Superintendent Seitsinger answered the Public Hearing would be held on March 28, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in the high school auditorium.

Member Munroe asked if the hearing was an informational meeting.

Superintendent Seitsinger confirmed it was and that voting would not take place at the hearing.

Student Representative Jaclyn Manchester left at this time.

Metcalf Intercom System Update – Director of Administration Robert Ross explained the company hired to install the new intercom system has been contacted, the process is moving forward, and installation will take place during April vacation.

Epi Pen Update – Vice Chair Cicero noted when the bill Senator Breene filed trying to change RIGL 16-21-22 came in front of legislators and it was tabled. Senator Breen spoke with Vice Chair Cicero and Member Clay and told them he will resubmit the bill. He assured them the bill was not dead and will come up again.

A parent asked if it would be possible for the committee to draft a letter to Senator Breen showing their support of the epi-pen bill.

Member Clay moved to have the Superintendent and Chair DeSack draft a letter in support of the epi pen bill - Senator's bill #0269.

Senator Breene is the principal sponsor of this bill. Seconded by Member McFadden. Voted 6 – 0.

Chair DeSack reverted back to the item pulled from the Consent Agenda – Member Clay requested item D. Building Use Fee Changes be pulled from the Consent Agenda, as an amendment to a policy should not be placed under the consent agenda.

Superintendent Seitsinger agreed with Member Clay.

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Member Clay moved to approve the fee changes as an amendment to the policy. Seconded by Vice Chair Cicero. Date of implementation after July 1st for next year. Voted 6 – 0.

REPORTS/COMMENTS –

IMPORTANT DATES AND MEETINGS – Advertise Public Hearing and motions

to change the budget – March 25, 2005, Public Hearing – March 28, 2005, District

Financial Meeting – April 11, 2005

Adjournment – Member Clay moved to adjourn at 8:50 p.m.

Seconded by Member McFadden. Voted 6 - 0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

ROBIN CERIO

CLERK