

EXETER-WEST GREENWICH November 8, 2005

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MINUTES

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

7:00 p.m. in the Jr. - Sr. High School Library. Members present were Susan DeSack, Chairperson; Teri Cicero, Vice Chairperson; Gregory Coutcher, Clerk; Bill Clay, Paul McFadden, Frank Maher, and William Munroe. Superintendent Roy M. Seitsinger, Jr.; Director of Curriculum Nancy I. Daley; Director of Administration Robert V. Ross; and Director of Special Services Maureen DeCrescenzo were present. Student Representative Emily DeCristofano was absent.

ORDER – Chair DeSack called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all and Chair DeSack read the District Mission statement.

OPEN FORUM – None

Chair DeSack recommended moving forward to the Consent Agenda at this time, as Mr. Wallace - Milken Award Winner and Student Member Emily DeCristofano were not in attendance at the meeting as of yet.

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

Vice Chair Cicero moved to accept the consent agenda. Seconded by Member Clay. Voted 7 – 0.

The following items were approved:

A. Minutes – Regular Minutes of October 25, 2005

B. Personnel Items

1. Appointments

2. Leaves of Absence

3. Resignations

4. Grievances

C. Bills – In the amount of \$222,091.17

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D. Home School Approvals – (As Recommended by the Superintendent)

1. Marks – Laurenne, Dawson, Lincoln, Macy

2. Negri - Rachel

End of Consent Agenda

Superintendent Seitsinger read the list of correspondence. He recommended members attend the RIASC Professional Development Session and noted the Jr. High School Trip proposal is enclosed as an F.Y.I. to members and will be brought forward on the next School Committee agenda.

E. Correspondence – (ENCLOSED) - (1) Flyer Regarding RIASC

Professional Development Session, (2) Memo to Superintendent Seitsinger

from Robert Ross Regarding Student Information System Management,

(3) RI Association of School Committees Professional Development on

November 19, 2005 Registration Form, (4) Letter to the Superintendent

from Jr. High School Teacher Benjamin Blackett Regarding 8th Grade

Trip to Quebec Proposal

Monthly Status Reports – Superintendent - Superintendent Seitsinger

explained the enclosed Superintendent's Status Report briefly reports student enrollment figures; the supplemental packet to members includes a much more specific student enrollment data sheet.

Member McFadden, Chair DeSack, and the Superintendent discussed the legality to discuss student enrollment in Open Session rather than Executive Session, due to the fact that student enrollment is a subject matter at a grievance that is forthcoming.

Member McFadden made inquiry regarding student enrollment, as he felt his question regarding the population of the school department was not a matter relating to the Executive Session subject matter - collective bargaining agreement - grievances.

Consensus was Member McFadden could ask clarifying questions with regard to the Superintendent's Status Report.

Member McFadden asked the Superintendent to confirm the student enrollment figures reported in his Status Report, as Member McFadden had thought last years figures were different than those reported.

Superintendent reported the figures shown in his Status Report reflect October 1st enrollment, not end of the year enrollment.

Special Education - Member Clay made inquiry as to whether or not

additional or temporary staff has been hired since the beginning of the school year.

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Director of Special Services Maureen DeCrescenzo reported no additional teaching staff has been hired, other than replacement staff, since September 1, 2005. She reported there has been one temporary substitute teacher working to support a particular student this year.

Consensus was to add this item to the next agenda, as this matter is not legitimately listed as an agenda item.

Budget 2005 – 2006 – Member McFadden requested Director of Administration Robert Ross bring to the committee his routine report which gives a breakdown of each separate article. He asked to see this report going into January.

Mr. Ross communicated he has historically provided that report to the committee in January and then at business meetings each month.

Mr. Ross explained that although his enclosed Status Report asks members to see enclosed projection, an enclosure is not provided, as it is still too soon to accurately project.

Monthly Sub Committee Report – Policy Committee Report – Member Clay referenced the enclosed policy committee report and explained

the policy committee is requesting School Committee consensus to bring forth policies addressing the following issues – Military Recruiters – Access to Students (NCLB requirement), Improper Use of School Property, The Use of Candy and Other Sweets as Student Rewards, Food borne Illness.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the current practices used at the high school with regard to providing the military with a list of names and addresses of eligible students, the laws imposed by the Federal No Child Left Behind Act on the district to provide such information, the current procedure/notification form used at the high school to notify parents/guardians of this matter, and that the district is required by law to notify parents/guardians about this matter through passive consent.

Member Munroe requested Military Recruitment be placed on the next agenda for discussion. Member McFadden requested the current parent notification form also be added to the agenda.

Consensus of the committee was to have the policy committee bring forth policies addressing the following issues – Military Recruiters – Access to Students (NCLB requirement), Improper Use of School Property, The Use of Candy and Other Sweets as Student Rewards, and Food borne Illness.

Member Clay gave a brief overview of other items mentioned in the

policy committee report.

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NEW BUSINESS – 7th Grade Washington, DC Trip Proposal – Superintendent Seitsinger communicated his support regarding this trip and invited Principal Thompson to speak on behalf of 7th grade teacher Craig Main.

Principal Thompson gave a brief summary of the proposed trip and stated this trip runs every year, in his opinion it is a very valid educational trip, all 7th grade students are invited to attend regardless of financial hardship, and no issues have occurred during prior trips.

Member Clay moved to sanction the 7th Grade trip to Washington, DC. Seconded by Vice Chair Cicero.

Member McFadden, Vice Chair Cicero, and Chair DeSack had a brief discussion regarding previous dialogue had by members not to sanction student travel. Vice Chair Cicero explained the committee agreed not to sanction student travel outside of the United States and expressed her support for this trip. She recommended future trip proposals brought before the committee should also include an itinerary for members to review. Member McFadden voiced his

concern that sanctioning student trips, even if domestic, may place the school district in legal responsibility.

Consensus was to add to the next School Committee agenda, the discussion of legal ruling regarding the district's liability for student travel - whether or not sanctioned by the committee.

Chair DeSack restated Member Clay's motion to sanction the 7th Grade trip to Washington, DC. Seconded by Vice Chair Cicero. Voted 7 – 0.

School Health & Wellness Sub Committee Chairperson – Superintendent Seitsinger explained that since a new legislative law came into play, the School Committee is required to select from its committee a chairperson for the School Health & Wellness Sub Committee.

Member Clay moved to appoint Clerk Greg Coutcher as chairperson of the School Health & Wellness Sub Committee.

Superintendent Seitsinger pointed out that at the previous School Committee meeting; Member Maher expressed his interest in serving as chairperson.

Member Maher confirmed his interest.

Chair DeSack suggested appointing both Clerk Coutcher and Member Maher as co-chairpersons to the sub committee.

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Member Clay withdrew his previous motion and stated a new motion - to appoint Clerk Coutcher and Member Maher as co-chairpersons of the School Health & Wellness Sub Committee. Seconded by Vice Chair Cicero. Voted 7 – 0.

Member Clay recommended placing on the next School Committee agenda the need to appoint two parents to serve on the sub committee, one from West Greenwich and one from Exeter.

Superintendent Seitsinger recommended selecting parents that presently serve on the food service committee.

Consensus was Clerk Coutcher will solicit a parent from West Greenwich and Member Maher will solicit a parent from Exeter and bring the respective parent names to the next meeting.

2006 – 2007 Budget Development Timeline & Budget Sub Committee – Superintendent Seitsinger explained the committee has already seen the draft dates of the 2006-07 Budget Development Timeline, which are now in process; he called attention to the need to finalize

two particulars pertaining to this matter - (1) Finalize a meeting date for a Saturday in December, (2) Finalize which members will serve on the 2005-06 budget sub committee. He explained all dates shown match last year's dates and suggested members review the dates listed to be sure there are no significant conflicts. The Superintendent asked members to take note that the proposed Joint Meeting scheduled for December 14, 2005 is not yet listed on the DRAFT 06-07 Budget Development Timeline, as it is not yet finalized.

Chair DeSack expressed her interest in serving as a Budget Sub Committee Member, as did Member Munroe and Clerk Coutcher.

Vice Chair Cicero asked to review the Budget Workshop dates and suggested some modification, as on average there are two meetings per week; however, on one particular week there are three meeting times, because a School Committee meeting is also scheduled.

Consensus of the committee with regard to the Budget Development Timeline dates was to change Budget Workshop date of Thursday, January 26, 2006 to Tuesday, January 31, 2006, to add Saturday, December 10, 2005, and, if confirmed, to add Joint Meeting December 14, 2005. Chair DeSack explained the Saturday, December 10, 2005 workshop meets for however long it takes to complete, usually starts around 8:00 a.m., and suggested members check their personal calendars for conflicts. Consensus was to accept the Budget Development Timeline calendar. No motion was needed.

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Liability Insurance & Building Protection Insurance – Member Clay and Vice Chair Cicero requested this item be placed on tonight’s agenda as they want discussion as to whether or not the district’s liability insurance coverage is adequate. Member Clay asked Director of Administration Robert Ross if \$1,000,000 of liability insurance coverage is adequate for the school district.

Mr. Ross referenced enclosures he provided to the committee which gave specific policy details and he gave a brief overview of each. He reported the district’s liability insurance carrier is not of the opinion that the district is at risk and they feel the district has adequate coverage. He also reported, when considering increasing coverage, the rule of thumb is usually to figure a premium of \$1,200 per each million.

Member Maher voiced concern regarding having more than one town to consider. Mr. Ross assured Member Maher the district is only insuring the district itself.

Member McFadden asked what Beacon is.

Mr. Ross explained Beacon is the district Workers' Compensation Insurance carrier and the Beacon policy covers the district up to whatever the district's liability is.

Members and Administrators had a lengthy discussion regarding the district's property, liability, and workers' compensation coverage, square footage, value of individual buildings, replacement costs, potential tragedy occurrence scenarios, liability coverage per building, personal injury, and umbrella coverage.

Mr. Ross will verify liability coverage per building figures, will look at what other districts are doing, and will verify the size of each building and its contents. Consensus was to discuss this matter further once more detail is obtained. Mr. Ross reported the district does not have anyone on long-term workers' compensation leave through our current carrier Beacon Insurance. He gave an overview of workers' compensation leaves through our previous carrier The Trust; and reported there is one employee on disability retirement and one other about to go on disability retirement.

Superintendent Seitsinger recited the following in order to clarify the square footage of each building for the record:

- Junior – Senior High School 164,000 Square Feet**
- Lineham School 17,600 Square Feet**
- Wawaloam School 28,000 Square Feet**
- Metcalf School 75,000 Square Feet**

- **Administration Building 3,600 Square Feet**

Coverage includes \$34,000,000 to replace building of which it is estimated \$5,000,000 for replacement of contents.

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Workers' Compensation & Disability Insurance – This matter was included in the discussion of the preceding agenda item Liability Insurance & Building Protection Insurance.

Chair DeSack suggested returning to agenda item PRESENTATION – School Committee Apple Recognition Award – Andrew Wallace – Milken Award Winner, as Mr. Wallace is now present at the meeting.

Junior High School principal Mark Thompson proudly introduced Mr. Andy Wallace as an example of one of the district's fine, high quality teachers. He explained that Mr. Wallace is one of two teachers in the state of Rhode Island selected as a recipient of the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award. Principal Thompson gave a brief overview of the award process and reported that Mr. Wallace's dad was also a Milken Award winner. He reported that as a recipient, Mr. Wallace will travel to Washington, DC and receive a tax-free check for \$25,000.

Chair DeSack thanked Mr. Wallace very much and presented him with

a small district award of recognition for his accomplishment. Some members complimented Mr. Wallace on his fine teaching skills and his standing with students.

Mr. Wallace spoke briefly about the notes and emails he has received from former students and thanked everyone for their support.

Student Member Report – None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Patriotic Holiday Observation Policy #8150 – 2nd Reading – Member Munroe asked what literature was found by the policy committee that led them to find Martin Luther King as a patriot. Clerk Coutcher read the definition for patriot as stated in Webster on-line. Member Munroe then referenced American Dictionary and Princeton Education Dictionary and reported, “Both define patriot as one who defends their country; and nowhere does it define a civil rights activist as a patriot.” Members had a brief, passionate discussion regarding this controversial matter.

Member Clay moved to adopt Patriotic Holiday Observation Policy #8150. Seconded by Vice Chair Cicero.

Chair DeSack intervened, reminding members this was only a 2nd reading.

This item will be placed on the next agenda for adoption.

District Financial Meeting – 8:PM or 7:PM – Superintendent Seitsinger reported, to date, there has been no response from either town regarding this matter; and recommended sending a second request letter to both towns.

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Chair DeSack reported there was a short discussion regarding this matter at the previous joint meeting and there was no opposition expressed at that time. She agreed a second letter should be sent to both towns.

Adoption of New Textbooks – Grade 6 – Social Studies – Member McFadden moved to adopt new textbooks – grade 6 – social studies - The Ancient World and Foundations of Geography. Seconded by Vice Chair Cicero. Member Munroe expressed his view that these books were “thin – not very much in depth”. Voted 7 – 0.

2004 – 2005 Money Held Back by Exeter – Superintendent Seitsinger explained this matter will remain on the agenda until settled. He reported there have been no new developments to date, on November 21, 2005 a judge will rule on the district’s request for a summary judgment, and at that time the judge will either direct the town of Exeter to compensate the district or this matter will go to trial. He reported that he anticipates that legal counsel representatives for

each party will be in attendance at that hearing.

REPORTS/COMMENTS – Chair DeSack recommended the committee discuss the upcoming School Committee sanctioned student trip to Paris scheduled for November 18, 2005.

Members and the Superintendent discussed the state of affairs presently existing in France, the committee's resistance to sanction a trip to a country in turmoil, conditions in the district's student travel policy allowing for the monitoring of state department warnings, student safety, and travel agency contract clauses regarding reimbursement.

After discussion and reciting passages from the Bylaws and the Open Meeting Law's handbook, consensus was to address this matter during an emergency meeting at the conclusion of tonight's meeting; citing this matter as an unexpected occurrence and a need to protect the public. It was noted this emergency meeting should take place at the conclusion of the scheduled Executive Session and should have separate notes and a separate agenda.

IMPORTANT DATES AND MEETINGS – Chair DeSack read the important dates and meetings.

November 8, 2005-Professional Development Day, November 18,

2005-Parent

**Conferences, November 22, 2005- School Committee Meeting,
November 24 & 25-**

**Thanksgiving Recess, November 28, 2005-Administration Draft
Budget to Director
of Administration**

**She asked members to add the December 14, 2005 proposed joint
meeting**

**to their notes. She confirmed the joint meeting is scheduled to take
place at 7:00 p.m. in
the Jr. – Sr. High School library.**

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**EXECUTIVE SESSION – Chair DeSack moved to go into Executive
Session at**

**8:37 p.m. in accordance with RIGL 42-45-5(a) (9) for the purpose of
discussion regarding collective bargaining agreement - grievances.
Seconded by Member Munroe. Voted 7 – 0.**

Meeting recessed to Executive Session at 8:37 p.m.

Meeting reconvened to Open Session at 9:47 p.m.

Chair DeSack called the meeting back to order in open session in

accordance with RIGL 42-46-2(b) at 9:47 p.m.

She announced a vote had been taken in Executive Session to support administration's position in grievance regarding administrative covers. Voted 6 – 0 – 1. Member McFadden abstained.

Chair DeSack moved to address an unexpected occurrence that requires immediate action to protect the public and add an emergency agenda item at 9:47 p.m. in accordance with RIGL 42-45-6(c) for the purpose of discussion regarding Foreign Language Overseas Trip. Seconded by Vice Chair Cicero. Voted 7 – 0.

Emergency Agenda Item

Reason:

Removing Sanctioned Foreign Language Field Trip due to Civil Unrest in France

I. Foreign Language Overseas Trip

II. Adjournment

At its meeting on Tuesday, November 8, 2005, the Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District School Committee added an emergency agenda item so that members could discuss pressing concerns regarding an upcoming district sponsored trip to France.

The Committee, after reflection and with serious consideration of international news events and timeliness of notification, determined that the trip would not be safe for our students and voted 7 – 0 to withdraw their sanction of the trip due to the civil unrest in France. They further recommend that no student travel to France at this time. Superintendent Seitsinger will issue a letter to each student affected by this decision.

**Adjournment – Chair DeSack moved to adjourn at 10:05 p.m.
Seconded by Member McFadden. Voted 7 – 0.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

ROBIN CERIO

CLERK