

EXETER-WEST GREENWICH February 24, 2009

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MINUTES

The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District School Committee held a meeting on this date at 7:00 p.m. in the Exeter-West Greenwich Jr. – Sr. High School Library. Members present were Susan DeSack, Chairperson; Gregory Coutcher, Clerk; Valerie Zuercher; and Robert Bollengier. Teri Cicero, Vice Chairperson; arrived at 7:08 p.m. Members Mark Rafanelli and Mary Walsh arrived at 7:09 p.m. Superintendent Thomas J. Geismar; Director of Administration Robert V. Ross; Director of Curriculum Nancy I. Daley, and Director of Special Services Carmella Farrar were present. Student Member Katherine Matook left the meeting 7:26 p.m.

ORDER – Chair DeSack called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all and Clerk Coutcher read the District Mission Statement.

Open Forum (15-minute limit) – None

Recognition/Achievements – Students Selected to All-State Teams – Superintendent Geismar acknowledged senior midfielder Kathryn Prenda as becoming the first girls' soccer player at EWG to earn an All-State selection, as well as a spot on the National Soccer Coaches

Association of America's All-Region I Team. Dr. Geismar said that this is a tremendously high honor. He reported that it is believed that Kat is the first female athlete at EWG to earn a Division I Scholarship. Kat has been accepted to five colleges and has a great career ahead of her as a student and an athlete. Dr. Geismar congratulated Kat and her family members. On behalf of the School Committee, Chair DeSack offered Kathryn congratulations and presented her with a School Committee Recognition Award.

Chair DeSack said that the recognition of a second senior athlete will be put aside until the student arrives. Presently, that student is in the gymnasium attending the basketball game senior night event.

Vice Chair Cicero arrived at this time, (7:08 p.m.).

Presentation – Student Member Report – Student Member Matook gave an overview of various past and upcoming student activities/events at the senior high school.

Members Rafanelli and Walsh arrived at this time, (7:09 p.m.).

Student Member Matook gave details surrounding various senior project fundraising products that are forthcoming.

Chair DeSack reverted back to agenda item, Recognition/Achievements – Students Selected to All-State Teams –

Dr. Geismar called up senior Courtney Theroux. He recognized Courtney and offered her congratulations for her outstanding achievement of

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being selected to the Rhode Island Cheerleading Association First -Team All State Team. Ninety cheerleaders tried out for a spot and Courtney was one of twenty selected to the team. Courtney plans to attend the University of Rhode Island in the fall. She recently raised almost \$500 for the American Cancer Society as part of her senior project product. On behalf of the School Committee, Chair DeSack presented Courtney with a School Committee Recognition Award, offered her congratulations, and thanked her for the manner in which she has represented the District.

NECAP Presentation – Curriculum Director Nancy Daley gave an overview of a PowerPoint presentation highlighting Fall 2008 NECAP Assessment Results – Grades 3 – 8 and Grade 11. The presentation graphs compared proficiency level results in reading, writing, and math representing the past four years of data for grades 3 – 8 and the past two years of data for grade 11.

Student Member Matook left the meeting at this time, (7:26 p.m.).

Ms. Daley talked about what the data tells the District about parts of

its program and its population. She answered members' questions and gave details regarding plans going forward to improve in the subjects of reading, writing, and math.

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

In response to Member Bollengier's inquiry regarding consent agenda item, D. Home School Approvals, Superintendent Geismar said that the student has had a good program and has done well. It was recently discovered that her program had not been approved last year and should be to make things right. Dr. Geismar said that the paperwork was not submitted, however, after speaking with the parent, it has now been received.

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

The following items were approved:

**A. Approval of Minutes - Regular Minutes of February 10, 2009;
Executive Session Minutes of February 10, 2009**

B. Personnel Items

1. Appointments

2. Leaves of Absence

3. Resignations

4. Grievances

5. Non-Renewals

a. Please see attached list

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6. Recalls

7. Sabbaticals

C. Bills – In the amount of \$326,160.65

D. Home School Approvals

1. BARDSLEY – Christiana – (for 2007/08 and 2008/09 SY)

End Consent Agenda

Correspondence – (1) February 15, 2009 Providence Journal Article – John A. Savage – Public education: Can we afford it?; (2) February 18, 2009 Memorandum from Robert Ross to School Committee Regarding Blue Cross/Blue Shield RI Administration Fee; (3) February 12, 2009 Memorandum from Bill Plumley to Superintendent Geismar/School Committee Regarding School Committee Presentation

Budget Discussion/Charter Discussion/Workshop – Chair DeSack advised members that there was some concern at last night's Joint Council meeting with the vote taken at the Special School Committee meeting to approve going forward with the Charter change because the entire School Committee was not present when the vote was

taken. Legal counsel said that the Committee is fine with a majority vote of all members present. It was suggested maybe the Committee might want to engage in a revote of that motion with all members present. Chair DeSack asked for members' comments. Vice Chair Cicero said that she thinks it is a good idea. Member Bollengier said that normally you do not revote on something unless you are revisiting and changing it. He asked if legal counsel is saying that the School Committee is deficient by not having all members present? He expressed that he thought a simple majority vote was necessary. Member Bollengier questioned why the Committee would revisit and vote. Chair DeSack restated that legal counsel said that how the vote was taken is appropriate in that the Charter does not state that all members need to be present. There was concern from some Town Council members that that was not their interpretation and they will challenge the School Committee on the vote if the Committee does not take another vote while all members are present. Attorney Gorham said to restate the motion made at the Special Meeting and to take the vote with all School Committee members present. This is not a new motion. It is to restate a motion and take a vote based on all School Committee members being present. Member Bollengier asked if this item falls under agenda item, VI. F. so that there is not a question that the Committee voted on something that is not on the agenda. Chair DeSack confirmed that this item does fall under agenda item, VI. F. – Budget Discussion/Charter Discussion/Workshop.

Chair DeSack clarified that the Committee will restate the motion to

go ahead with amending the Charter with language provided to the Committee by the attorney based on discussion that the calculation will be based only on the increase and broken out to each community based on student population. Chair DeSack said that the Committee is

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restating the motion that was taken at the Special Meeting because it now has all Committee members present.

Vice Chair Cicero restated the motion taken at the February 17, 2009 Special Meeting:

Construction and operating costs of the regional school district for each fiscal year shall be apportioned to the member towns of the district as follows: to the amount apportioned to each town for the prior year shall be added a percentage of the increase in the budget of the district based on the town's pupil enrollment on October 1 of the prior year.

In the event that there are no cost increases in any fiscal year or there are cost decreases, apportionment shall be on the basis of pupil enrollment on October 1 of the prior year. Seconded by Member Walsh. Voted 5 – 2 in favor. Vice Chair Cicero and Clerk Coutcher

voting no.

Vice Chair Cicero commented that she cannot support this formula. Although she agrees that the District needs to get to the 50/50 in order for the district to be viable and move forward, she is not comfortable with the way the formula is presented.

NEW BUSINESS – Participate in Statewide Out of District Transportation Beginning September 2009 – Director of Administration Robert Ross informed members that the state is seeking a commitment from southern districts to participate in the state plan for transporting out of district students beginning September 2009. A brief discussion followed relating to the committees' unwillingness to commit without first knowing the cost. Mr. Ross answered members' clarifying questions regarding private school transportation and the District's contract agreement with First Student. He said that the state is sensitive to the fact that School Committees will not commit without figures. Mr. Ross reported that he recently received a call regarding participation informing him of a potential \$70,000 to \$100,000 savings to the district. He said that the out-of-district budget could run \$550,000 to \$700,000 depending on enrollment. Consensus of the Committee is to have Mr. Ross engage in conversation with the state regarding participating in statewide out of district transportation beginning September 2009.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – 2009 – 2010 Calendar – Referencing Graduation Day 2010, Superintendent Geismar reported that Principal Boulé advised that the date can be changed to Saturday evening at 7:00 p.m. instead of Friday evening. Chair DeSack expressed her opinion that a Saturday is better for accommodating out-of-towners attending Graduation. Vice Chair Cicero agreed with Chair DeSack that Saturday night is better than Friday night.

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A motion was made by Member Rafanelli to change the calendar to a Saturday night graduation and to approve the [2009 – 2010] calendar. Seconded by Member Bollengier. Voted 7 – 0 in favor.

Capital Project Update – Superintendent Geismar said he spoke with Kevin Flynn of Statewide Planning. Mr. Flynn said that no decisions have been made yet. He provided paperwork and said to get it in as soon as possible. Dr. Geismar advised that it will take a while to complete the paperwork, but he assured the Committee it will be submitted.

Director of Administration Robert Ross said that the Building Committee has a meeting scheduled for Friday, March 6, 2009 at 6:00

p.m.. That meeting spilled out of the School Committees' budget schedule. Mr. Ross advised that presently, indications are that the March 6th meeting will be ill attended. He stressed the importance that the Building Committee meet because the activities at its next meeting will set up the beginning of submittals to the state for approval which are needed prior to the RFP's hitting the street for bids. Chair DeSack suggested rescheduling to March 5th at 6:30 p.m. (instead of 6:00). This will allow Chair DeSack and Member Bollengier to begin at the Budget Workshop, move to the Building Committee meeting, and if necessary return to the Workshop. Member Walsh reminded members of the meetings with teachers on March 4th and 5th.

Mr. Ross advised members about information his office received from Luis Torrado regarding operation prerequisites that the state is looking for as part of the submittals coming from the next Building Committee meeting. He pointed out that two policies need to go to the Policy Subcommittee that will have to be adopted as part of the prerequisites. Mr. Ross expressed his opinion that if these policies have been submitted, it should satisfy the state requirement even though they have not been adopted yet.

Lastly, Mr. Ross reported that at the next Building Committee meeting there will be a full review of the Metcalf gymnasium floor project. Vice Chair Cicero said that she visited Metcalf's gym and she is very disappointed, not only with the finish of the floor, but also with

the unevenness of the wood. She recommended that the entire Building Committee go to take a closer look at the floor because the wood is not level. She also recommended members dialogue with Metcalf staff members who have expressed concerns to her about the floor. Vice Chair Cicero said that she cannot see how the floor will be repaired. She said that the floor is unacceptable and she would not sign off on it. Member Bollengier said that he will speak to the Building Committee about Vice Chair Cicero's concerns. This is the first time that he has heard anyone say that the floor is uneven. Clerk Coutcher said that he agrees with Vice Chair Cicero. He is in the gym four days a week for activities and he saw that the mid section board is cracked away and there is a loose board where a section was repaired. Chair DeSack said that the floor project has not been signed off on yet. She said that the Building Committee Chair is on top of the floor project constantly.

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Reports/Comments – Chair DeSack advised that the Executive Session Meeting scheduled for tomorrow evening, (February 25, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.) is not necessary so that meeting will be cancelled.

IMPORTANT DATES AND MEETINGS – Wednesday, February 25, 2009-Building Committee Meeting; Tuesday, March 3, 2009-Budget Discussion/Charter Discussion/Workshop; Wednesday, March 4, 2009-Budget Discussion/Charter Discussion/Workshop; Wednesday,

March 4, 2009-Building Committee Meeting; Thursday, March 5, 2009-Budget Discussion/Charter Discussion/Workshop; Tuesday, March 10, 2009-School Committee Meeting (Budget Adoption); Wednesday, March 11, 2009-Building Committee Meeting; Wednesday, March 18, 2009-Building Committee Meeting; Monday, March 23, 2009-Public Hearing; Tuesday, March 24, 2009-School Committee Meeting (Metcalf Presentation - @ Metcalf School); Wednesday, March 25, 2009-Building Committee Meeting

EXECUTIVE SESSION – RIGL 42-46-4 and RIGL 42-46-5 – None

ADJOURNMENT – Vice Chair Cicero moved to adjourn at 8:06 p.m. Seconded by Member Zuercher. Voted 7 – 0 in favor. Meeting adjourned 8:06 p.m.

ROBIN CERIO

CLERK