

EXETER-WEST GREENWICH January 4, 2011

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MINUTES

The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District School Committee held a meeting on this date at 5:30 p.m. in the Exeter-West Greenwich Jr. – Sr. High School Library. Members present were Gregory Coutcher, Chairperson; Teri Maia-Cicero, Vice Chairperson; Valerie Zuercher, Clerk; Mark Rafanelli; Theresa Donovan, Paul McFadden, and Claudine Pande. Superintendent Thomas J. Geismar, Director of Administration Robert V. Ross, Director of Special Services Carmella Farrar, and Student Member Matthew French were present.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Member McFadden moved to go into Executive Session at 5:41 p.m. in accordance with RIGL 42-46-4 and RIGL 42-46-5 and in accordance with RIGL 42-46-5(a)(8) for Student Hearing(s), written notice having been provided to the individual(s) informing him/her of the right to hold the hearing in open session. Seconded by Member Donovan. Voted 7 – 0 in favor.

Meeting moved to Executive Session at 5:41 p.m.

Meeting reconvened to Open Session at 6:35 p.m.

No votes were taken during Executive Session.

Member Pande made a motion to convene to Open Session at 6:35 p.m. Member Donovan seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor.

ORDER – Chair Coutcher called the meeting to order in Open Session at 6:40 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all and Chair Coutcher read the District Mission Statement.

Open Forum – None

Recognitions/Achievements – US Cyber Challenge Award Recipient(s) –

Superintendent Geismar reported that Congressman Langevin recently visited the high school to honor two students that participated in the High School Cyber Challenge. Technology teacher Arthur Searle's students took an aptitude test designed to assess cyber security skillfulness and two EWG students placed highly. Dr. Geismar recognized Adam Sowden who placed first and Steven Romano who placed fifth and presented each of them with Recognition Award Certificates and gift cards. Next, Dr. Geismar presented Mr. Searle with an Apple Recognition Award for his outstanding work.

Boys' Soccer Team – Superintendent Geismar recognized Coach Savoie and the boys' soccer team. He said the team had its best record ever in the history of EWG Senior High School. They are the 2010-2011 Division II-South Champions and they came in second in

the state. Dr. Geismar expressed how very proud the school community is of their

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great achievement. Varsity and junior varsity team members were presented with Recognition Award Certificates and gift cards.

Attorney Brad Gorham arrived at this time, (6:40 p.m.).

Division III Soccer Coach of the Year – Matt Savoie – Dr. Geismar presented Coach Savoie with an Apple Recognition Award to recognize his outstanding work with the boys' soccer team and for his accomplishment as Division III Soccer Coach of the Year for the 2010 - 2011 season.

Chair Coutcher adjourned the meeting for a brief refreshments break at this time, (6:49 p.m.). Chair Coutcher called the meeting back to order at 7:05 p.m.

Presentation – History of West Greenwich Project – West Greenwich resident Kathy Swann informed the School Committee that she is writing a book on the history of West Greenwich. The book will be a pictorial history of West Greenwich and is under contract to be released October 2, 2011 at Celebrate West Greenwich Day. Ms.

Swann said that she needs over 200 photographs of West Greenwich.

She is seeking School Committee permission to reach out to the school community through administration for old photographs and for student involvement. She is especially looking for pictures of buildings and people up through 1980. All photos will be scanned on site, returned immediately, and will be identified and credited in the book. All of the book content must be done March 31. At the suggestion of Member Pande, the committee agreed that Dr. Geismar could send out Ms. Swann's electronic project announcement to the school community through the district listserve.

Student Member Report – Student Member Matthew French reported that students are just back from winter break. Exams start in the next two-weeks.

Member McFadden made a motion to move up on the agenda item, IX. C. Unfinished Business - Approved Charter Amendments Discussion. Vice Chair Cicero seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

Unfinished Business – Approved Charter Amendments Discussion –The committee continued its ongoing discussion regarding Attorney Gorham's recommendation to add a provision to the charter describing how to implement the all-day referendum to vote on the School Committees' proposed budget. Attorney Gorham reiterated there is a problem with the language in the reconstituted charter that

he drew up and circulated months ago. Upon review, it is evident that additional language to implement the process of amendments is necessary or it is going to be difficult to have a vote. The provision for filing amendments in the original charter of the school district that was endorsed by the legislature said simply that people on the floor at the District Financial Meeting could file amendments. Attorney Gorham referenced the language he wrote, Provision to Section

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VII (C) 5[1].doc (attached) and offered his opinion that it is a sensible way of implementing the all-day referendum to vote on the budget while maintaining the public's right to propose amendments.

Member McFadden gave his opinion that Mr. Gorham is proposing to modify the charter. He questioned whether this change violates the motion passed at both town financial meetings that any change to the charter must go to all-day referendum for vote.

Mr. Gorham responded that this is not really a change to the charter. When voters approved the all-day referendum process, there was no instruction on how this particular provision of the charter would read.

The School Committee can flesh out the amendment process without violating the question as was voted on at the financial town meetings.

Mr. Gorham verified that the questions that were approved at the respective town financial meetings have not been submitted to the legislature.

Clerk Zuercher raised concern with the majority language. She questioned whether a budget would ever be approved if it has to pass by majority vote. Member Zuercher proposed that the committee discuss further considering changing the word majority to plurality. Member Pande said she has a problem with plurality. She thinks it is very dangerous because it could result with something that minorities of the voters are voting on. Member Rafanelli said that such a change would actually encourage multiple amendment submissions.

Chair Coutcher gave his opinion that Mr. Gorham's language is a clarification on what the voters voted on [to have an all-day referendum]. The committee should approve the provision to know how the vote is going to take place for this April. Going forward, the School Committee can continue the discussion to explore other options. If the School Committee decides to change to no amendments or to do away with the majority language, it will have to put that on this April's all-day referendum for a vote. Chair Coutcher said he does not think the process needs fixing. He believes the process will work.

West Greenwich Town Council Member Paul Kaltschnee offered his view as a member of the original Charter Review Committee involved in the actual wording. He said that when the voters voted on an amendment to change to an all-day referendum with a majority vote

to rule, it also stated in the amendment that procedures could be changed in the charter to accommodate that. It actually addressed certain sections of the charter that would have to be changed in order to implement. Mr. Gorham's language is recommending those changes.

Superintendent Geismar left the meeting at this time, (7:46 p.m.).

Mr. Gorham told the committee this language was adopted by the School Committee back in May to present to the voters of the two towns.

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Superintendent Geismar returned to the meeting, 7:49 p.m.

Member McFadden asked for input from Exeter Town Council members sitting in the audience. President Arlene Hicks said Exeter council did not write the language. It came from the school department. As far as an official council position is concerned, Exeter council members only heard from Member Donovan last night so there has not been an opportunity to discuss it as a council.

Member Donovan made a motion to adopt the language as proposed by Mr. Gorham distributed tonight. Clerk Zuercher seconded the

motion.

Member McFadden said he would like to amend that motion in that the language proposed by Brad Gorham would be used just for the all-day referendum in of 2011. [He said he is going to suggest that this would be temporary just for 2011 because the language may be different for 2012]. Clerk Zuercher second.

Chair Coutcher reiterated his view that it has to go in the charter as is. The School Committee should approve it, not just for 2011. If there are any changes ahead, voters must approve the changes. Member Pande agreed and said she thinks that Mr. Gorham's proposed language to section VII (C) 5 of the charter is not an amendment to the charter right now. It is an addition to the language for a procedure of how to put this on the ballot. The voters voted to have an all-day referendum and have amendments. Once voted this has to go into charter. If in the future the committee wants to change it, it will have to go on the all-day referendum to change it.

Mr. Gorham advised the committee to consider that after trying this out; the committee might decide it wants to keep this method. If so, it will have to go to the legislature after the April vote to ask for approval, which is a simple process.

Chair Coutcher called for a vote on Member McFadden's motion, seconded by Clerk Zuercher to adopt the language with a sunset

clause for 2011 and to revisit it in 2012.

Voted 5 –2 against. The motion to amend failed with Chair Coutcher, Vice Chair Cicero, Clerk Zuercher, and Members Donovan and Pande opposing.

Chair Coutcher called for a vote on Member Donovan’s motion, seconded by Clerk Zuercher to adopt the language as proposed by Mr. Gorham distributed tonight.

Voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

Dr. Geismar informed members that he met with the Board of Canvassers from both towns and it is their recommendation to have one polling place for the all-day referendum. The boards have recommended the fire station on Route 3 in West Greenwich from 7: AM to 8: PM. If the committee agrees to proceed in that manner, the all-day referendum could be held the Monday before spring break on April 11.

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Clerk Zuercher made a motion that the School Committee vote on having the all-day referendum, which the Board of Canvassers are recommending, at the Rt. 3 Fire Station on April 11 from 7: AM to 8: PM. Vice Chair Cicero seconded the motion.

Members debated whether having one polling place in West Greenwich is logistically manageable and/or exclusionary to Exeter voters. Member McFadden said he would like the opportunity to wait until the Exeter Town Council is informed that Exeter voters are being excluded from having a place to vote in Exeter. Chair Coutcher said if the concern is that Exeter residents are not going to come out to vote and the committee would like Dr. Geismar to meet with the Boards of Canvassers again that would be fine. He questioned however, why the committee would need to involve the town council. Exeter Town Councilwoman Arlene Hicks agreed that this is a school department issue and not a town council issue. Clerk Zuercher pointed out that Exeter voters travel now to the high school to vote at financial meetings. She said the committee should follow the recommendation of the Board of Canvassers who are the experts and know the community.

Member Zuercher requested the motion on the floor be read back to the committee.

Vice Chair Cicero called for a vote. Voted: 5 – 2 in favor. Members McFadden and Rafanelli voted no. The motion passed.

Attorney Gorham left the meeting at this time, 8:22 p.m.

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

Vice Chair Cicero made a motion to accept the consent agenda with items, B., 3. a. and b. pulled. Member Rafanelli seconded the motion.

Member Pande requested to pull consent agenda item, A. Regular Meeting Minutes of December 7, 2010. She recommended amending the minutes specifically regarding New Business SORICO Update. The committee agreed to pull the December 7 meeting minutes for modification. The minutes will be brought back to the next regular meeting agenda for acceptance.

Vice Chair Cicero withdrew her motion.

Clerk Zuercher made a motion to accept the consent agenda with items, B., 3. a. and b. and A. Regular Meeting Minutes of December 7, 2010 pulled. Vice Chair Cicero seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

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The following items were approved:

A. Approval of Minutes

B. Personnel Items

1. Appointments

2. Leaves of Absence

3. Resignations

a. Pulled

b. Pulled

4. Grievances

5. Non-Renewals

6. Recalls

7. Sabbaticals

C. Bills – In the amount of \$345,444.05

D. Home School Approvals

1. CAMPOPIANOS – Gian and Dante

End Consent Agenda

Correspondence – (1) Article Submitted by Member McFadden; (2) Food Service Agreement with Greene School

Monthly Budget Projection 2010 – 2011 – Member McFadden asked Director of Administration Robert Ross if the district would make it to the end of the year in the green. Mr. Ross responded in the affirmative.

Budget Update – 2011-2012 – Director of Administration Robert Ross told members the administrative team has been working collectively to have the budget ready for the School Committee on Friday.

Monthly Status Reports – Superintendent – Member McFadden

requested that future Superintendent Status Report's include detailed data relating to accumulation of absenteeism of staff. Vice Chair Cicero requested to show patterns of absenteeism as well. She requested to include this matter/data for discussion during the budget workshops also.

Business

Special Education

Maintenance

Technology

New Business – Approve Consultant Agreement for CRP, PLP's and PD – Superintendent Geismar put forth his proposal to approve Sylvia Blanda as a consultant to assist with the Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP), Personal Literacy Plans (PLP), and Professional Development (PD). Dr. Geismar stressed that he especially needs support with the development of the CRP. Members asked clarifying questions.

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Student Member Matthew French left at this time, (8:36).

Clerk Zuercher proposed only approving the CRP application for \$6,000. Vice Chair Cicero agreed and said if additional time is needed to complete the CRP application a request can be brought back to the committee.

Clerk Zuercher made a motion to approve CRP applicant Sylvia Blanda for CRP application in the amount of \$6,000. Vice Chair Cicero seconded the motion.

Voted: 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

Approve 1.0FTE One-on-One Teacher Assistant for the Remainder of the School Year – Superintendent Geismar informed the School Committee there is an elementary school student who needs a one-on-one teacher assistant for the remainder of the school year. Director of Special Services Carmella Farrar advised the district would receive approximately thirty-three percent reimbursement of the cost from Medicare.

Member Pande made a motion to approve a 1.0 FTE one-on-one teacher assistant for the remainder of the school year. Member Donovan seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

Unfinished Business – Budget Development Timeline - Review – Member Donovan said she informed Exeter Town Council of the two joint meeting dates. Chair Coutcher advised that the timeline would be sent out to all Town Council members.

Approve Dependent Coverage Until Age 26 – Director of Administration Robert Ross gave a brief account of the provision in the new federal healthcare reform law to cover dependents until age

26. The law states that eligible dependents can be enrolled at a special meeting or wait until the plan's open enrollment, which for EWG occurs in July and September. Mr. Ross advised that providing a special enrollment for subscribers in February 2011 would increase the risk to claims by five-months for the district. Any claim experience within the next five months, will probably not affect premiums until 2012 - 2013. Additionally, his office receives one to two calls daily from employees inquiring about when the provision will take affect for EWG. If the committee chooses to wait until July 1 to enroll, it will make a cognitive decision to wait until July 1 even though the government said it takes effect October 2010. Mr. Ross said that he thinks that is worth considering.

Member McFadden made the observation that eventually dependants are going to be covered because it is mandated. For budgetary purposes and for better planning, enrolling sooner will allow the district to see the impact sooner. It will be best to see the budgetary impact going into next year's teacher contract negotiations.

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Member McFadden made a motion to approve the carrying of dependents starting February 1, 2011. Start carrying dependents consistent with 10/10 starting Feb 1, 2011. Member Rafanelli

seconded the motion. Voted 5 – 2 in favor. Chair Coutcher and Member Donovan voted no. The motion carried.

Capital Project Update – Dr. Geismar said there is nothing new to report regarding the security systems. With regard to the new water system project at Metcalf, the contractor began excavation to install the new water tank last Tuesday. He found an order to create a safe work environment, which required him to disconnect the temporary water system. As a result, the project was aborted, the hole was filled in, and asphalt was applied. The project will continue at the end of June. It will take longer than one week to complete. Subsequently, administration was informed these circumstances add \$26,000 to the cost of the project. Administration finds this news displeasing and intends to discuss this matter with the architect and the contractor. Dr. Geismar said he would keep the School Committee abreast on this matter. The work will not be completed until summertime.

Reports/Comments – Chair Coutcher reverted to the two items pulled from the consent agenda. Clerk Zuercher expressed appreciation for Principal Butler’s efforts to manage the FFA matter. She expressed concern that both advisors are resigning their positions and proposed to ask Mrs. Millar to stay on through the transition. Next, she requested to have the FFA financial assets and records examined immediately. Vice Chair Cicero expressed concern as well. She reported that parents have been calling her with concerns that the program will disappear by January 30 if a replacement is not found.

She said she struggles with accepting both of these resignations and questioned if the program could come back if there is a break in the time it takes to find a replacement. Dr. Geismar reported that there is a meeting scheduled for tomorrow night with parents. The teachers' association has agreed to run an expedited posting tomorrow for the position and Principal Butler has a lead on a new advisor. Principal Butler informed the committee that an FFA advisor must be certified in agriculture science. He listed opportunities that are being explored to continue the program without interruption. RI FFA State Advisor Allison Toles is very confident that the advisory committee will make accommodation to get EWG through this year. There are two agriculture science teachers/FFA advisors in other district that do not want to see EWG's program go away who can assist with coming up with a plan. RIDE has been contacted for a list of agriculture science teachers to solicit. There is a possibility to have a figurehead by proxy with a parent in place. Ms. Toles knows of two candidates who are former/retired FFA teachers that may be very interested. Principal Butler said that he could apply for emergency certification. He assured the committee this matter would be clarified by January 31.

Member Donovan made a motion to carry the resignations to the next January 11, 2011 special school committee meeting. Member Rafanelli seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor.

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The following items will continue to the January 11, 2011 Special Meeting agenda for a vote:

- a. Letter of Resignation from Gwynne Millar from her position as Advisor of the EWG-FFA, effective January 20, 2011**
- b. Letter of Resignation from Kathryn Kocab from her position as Advisor of the EWG-FFA, effective December 1, 2010**

Important Dates and Meetings – Tuesday, January 11, 2011-Budget Workshop; Tuesday, January 18, 2011-Budget Workshop; Tuesday, January 25, 2011-School Committee Meeting; Tuesday, February 8, 2011-School Committee Meeting; Thursday, February 10, 2011-Joint Meeting; Tuesday, February 22, 2011-School Committee Meeting; Monday, Tuesday, March 1, 2011-Joint Meeting; Wednesday, March 2, 2011-Budget Workshop; Tuesday, March 8, 2011-School Committee Meeting (Budget Adoption); Friday, March 18, 2011-Deadline for Motions to Change the Budget by More than \$10,000; Monday, March 21, 2011-Public Hearing; Tuesday, March 22, 2011-School Committee Meeting; Tuesday, April 12, 2011-School Committee Meeting; Monday, April 11, 2011-All-day referendum

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

Adjournment – Clerk Zuercher made a motion to adjourn. Vice Chair Cicero seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

ROBIN CERIO

CLERK