

EXETER-WEST GREENWICH August 23, 2011

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MINUTES

The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District School Committee held a meeting on this date at 6:00 p.m. in the Exeter-West Greenwich Jr. – Sr. High School Library. Members present were Gregory Coutcher, Chairperson; Teri Maia-Cicero, Vice Chairperson, (arrived at 6:04); Valerie Zuercher, Clerk; Mark Rafanelli; Theresa Donovan; Paul McFadden, (arrived at 6:05); and Claudine Pande. Superintendent Thomas J. Geismar was present. Director of Administration Robert V. Ross was absent.

ORDER – Chair Coutcher called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all and Member Pande read the District Mission Statement.

Open Forum – None

Member Donovan made a motion that the Consent Agenda items be taken before the Presentation; seconded by Clerk Zuercher; and voted 5 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

ROUTINE ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA- Superintendent Geismar gave an overview of the Consent Agenda. He answered Member Pande's

inquiry regarding the remaining School Nurse Teacher LOA vacancy.

Vice Chair Cicero arrived at this time, (6:04 p.m.).

Member McFadden arrived at this time, (6:05 p.m.).

Clerk Zuercher made a motion to accept the consent agenda; seconded by Member Pande; and voted 7 – 0 in favor.

The following items were approved:

A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Minutes of August 9, 2011

B. Personnel Items

1. Appointments – (As Recommended by the Superintendent)

a. Alisha Blais as .5 FTE Reading Specialist at Wawaloam School, Step 2, Masters, Annual Salary \$21,886.62, (pending review of the Director of Administration) effective August 26, 2011, pending verification of RI Department of Education Reading Specialist Certification and receipt of a non-disqualifying National Criminal Background Check

b. Joelle Cullen as .5 FTE Jr. High School Social Studies Teacher (one-year LOA), Step 5, Masters, Annual Salary \$25,381.62, (pending review of the Director of Administration) effective August 26, 2011

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2. Leaves of Absence

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

a. Letter of Resignation from Deborah Blake from her position as Mentor-Coordinator, effective August 18, 2011

4. Grievances

5. Non-Renewals

6. Recalls

a. Please see attached August 23, 2011 Additional List

7. Sabbaticals

C. Bills – Bills in the amount of \$164,189.26; Accruals in the amount of \$16,622.81

D. Home School Approvals

1. (6) Six Students

End Consent Agenda

PRESENTATION – Grant Writer Presentation – Grant Writer/Consultant Ken Proudfoot gave a brief presentation relating to grant writing and fundraising to bring EWG's new track and field sports complex to completion. He spoke about strategies to develop a resource plan to identify priorities and to submit grant proposals to funders that match the district's program needs. Dr. Geismar pointed out that although Mr. Proudfoot spoke primarily about fundraising for the sports complex, Ms. Condon and Mr. Proudfoot will also look at raising funds to support other programs such as PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) and the Mentoring Program.

Clerk Zuercher requested that the School Committee receive a list of the grants that have been awarded to date and be updated as new grants come in. Member Rafanelli questioned if policies need to be developed to give direction for where the funds are to be spent. Dr. Geismar presumed that the auditors could also help give direction with spending funds. Member Pande said that usually grantees are required to report to donors how the funds are spent. Member Donovan reported that she recently attended a Narragansett School Committee meeting presentation regarding their track at which EWG's new track was cited. Narragansett is contemplating doing the same thing so EWG will be competing for the same donors; therefore, timing is an issue. Member Donovan said she was disappointed that EWG did not take advantage of the Safe Routes to School opportunity. She told Mr. Proudfoot that she hopes he will explore all resources. Mr. Proudfoot said that he and Ms. Condon would certainly work with the committee.

Member McFadden referenced the National Criminal Record Check correspondence from the Attorney General's office enclosed in members' supplemental packet and

requested to notify that office that Roy Seitsinger is no longer the Superintendent of Exeter-West Greenwich Schools.

Correspondence – (1) Memo from Dr. Geismar to the School Committee Regarding SORICO Update

NEW BUSINESS – Vote whether to continue Legal Advertising of School Committee Agendas – Dr. Geismar reported that it costs approximately \$3,600 annually for legal advertising of School Committee agendas. A new law is in place that no longer requires posting agendas in the newspaper. This item was brought to tonight's agenda to discuss and vote whether to continue legal advertising of School Committee agendas.

Dr. Geismar recommended that if the committee decides to discontinue advertisements, to provide a leeway period when notifying the public. Vice Chair Cicero recommended using the district website to post that notice and to let community members know that agendas will be posted there. Clerk Zuercher voiced support to discontinue advertising and said that the money spent on legal advertisements could be used elsewhere. Member Pande stated that she does not think a transition period is necessary.

Clerk Zuercher made a motion that we no longer post in the newspaper. We post on the website and local community centers and at the schools and town halls, libraries and other places that we already use.

Chair Coutcher recommended rewording the motion to simply say to discontinue advertising in the newspaper.

Clerk Zuercher rephrased her motion and moved to discontinue advertising [agendas] in the newspaper, contingent on that we will continue at the other venues; seconded by Vice Chair Cicero.

Member McFadden said he does not support this change because there would no longer be a record kept and the opportunity for dispute could arise. Chair Coutcher said that submission to the Secretary of State website would act as public record if a dispute should arise. Member Donovan said that she supports public notice. She gave various reasons that it is important to her to continue to make agendas available to the local community through the newspapers and for supporting the local newspapers.

Chair Coutcher called for a vote on Clerk Zuercher's motion; seconded by Vice Chair Cicero. Voted 4 – 3 in favor. Members Rafanelli, McFadden, and Donovan voted no. The motion passed.

Grievance Form Review – Member McFadden offered his opinion that all grievance forms should include a name and be signed and dated. If an individual is engaged in a class action grievance, the printed names of all involved participants should appear and

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each participant should sign and date the form. Additionally, a narrative in complete detail should be included. Member McFadden said that he feels the form is inadequate and does not provide enough detail. He questioned if other members share his opinion. Member Rafanelli agreed and questioned if there is a documented procedure by which to file a grievance. He said he would like to see a more formal procedure followed and the opportunity for the School Committee to review grievances in advance. Vice Chair Cicero, Member Pande, and Clerk Zuercher gave their views in support of Member McFadden's recommendation. Member McFadden summarized that the desire is to have all grievance forms include names, signatures, dates, and provide complete details. Members should have the opportunity to review grievance forms in advance of a hearing. He requested to have the form brought to the School Committee for review. Vice Chair Cicero added that administration should not consider any forms that are submitted incomplete. This item will continue to the next regular meeting agenda for further review.

New Security System Discussion – Dr. Geismar referenced Mr. Ross' report and gave an update on the district security/card access systems at each school. A discussion ensued and members asked clarifying questions. Member McFadden voiced concerns regarding the importance of unhindered accessibility to all buildings for

emergency personnel and entranceway signage to document security policies to alert individuals without passkeys that they are to be “buzzed in” and are required to sign in at the main office. Dr. Geismar advised that the new system would not be implemented for at least a couple of months. Further updates are forthcoming.

Discussion Regarding Track Operations – Dr. Geismar requested to discuss his proposal to purchase equipment (approximate cost - \$35,000) and create a part-time administrative position, (annual stipend - \$6,000) to oversee the operation of the track, maintain the equipment, supervise and monitor the track coaches, and make decisions about hiring and retraining track coaches. Dr. Geismar said this would help to develop a first-class track program at EWG, which he believes would be a good investment. He said that after seeing the big response to the summer track program, he also believes community members would like to see this as well. A discussion ensued and Member Rafanelli offered his opinion that before adding another part-time administrator he would rather explore who is already in place to take on the responsibility or to consider a full-time Athletic Director opposed to a part-time AD. Member Pande asked the Superintendent to provide information entailing what is needed for track meets. She offered her opinion that if this happens, the qualities in coaches need to be reviewed to make sure they are trained in coaching track. A complete review of all sports needs to take place to assess all EWG coaches. This item will continue to the next regular meeting agenda and Dr. Geismar will bring back the

information requested.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Policies Review/Adoption – 8608: Health and Safety of Student-Athletes – Adoption –

Member Donovan left the meeting at this time, (7:14 p.m.).

6220: Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug-Free Work Place – Adoption – Member Pande moved to adopt policies 8608 [Health and Safety of Student-Athletes] and 6220 {Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug-Free Work Place]; seconded by Member Rafanelli; and voted 6 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

Approve Request for 1.0 FTE to be determined as a Contingency – Dr. Geismar said he is not requesting approval for this item tonight; however, he and Principal Marino have been monitoring enrollment for grade 2, which is currently at capacity. He said that he and Principal Marino are waiting to see how many students come on the first day of school. They may or may not need to come back with a request for additional support at Wawaloam.

Member Donovan returned to the meeting at this time, (7:15 p.m.).

Superintendent Geismar reported that presently the first grade enrollment numbers are all right. He assured Member Pande that additional FTEs would not be necessary, in spite of the enrollment numbers, for the split classroom.

Student Information System Update – Dr. Geismar said he wanted to thank again the secretaries, clerks, principals, assistant principals, administrators, and IT folks for their teamwork with ASPEN. They have done a great job and the schedule looks good. ASPEN is coming together nicely. Eventually, the redundancy of the paperwork parents are asked to complete at the beginning of a school year will be addressed. The next component to get up and running is the parent portal, which is expected to be completed in another six weeks or so.

Capital Project Update – Dr. Geismar expressed discontentment with the status of the Metcalf water system project. He gave a detailed explanation of the two different problems delaying the completion of the project. Dr. Geismar said that there would be water available for flushing and drinking water would be accessible through the temporary water system or bottled water. It is anticipated that the delay will last no more than one to two weeks. Member McFadden expressed concern that with the impending hurricane, the school district is not prepared to support residents in the event of an

emergency. He said that Metcalf School is an emergency shelter for community members and it would be embarrassing to the school department and the school committee if an emergency occurs and water is inaccessible. Dr. Geismar explained in detail the actions taken to get the temporary water system functional and reiterated that if the temporary system is not cleared for drinking, bottled water would be provided. Dr.

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Geismar said that he has done all he can. Mr. Ross will be in contact with the DOH (Department of Health) first thing in the morning to arrange for expedited water testing of the temporary system. He is in contact with the EMA folks on what to do to get water into the building. Member McFadden expressed his opinion that bottled water would not be adequate. Chair Coutcher said that the Superintendent has explained that he has done everything possible. If the test fails, bottled water may have to do. Member McFadden requested that the Superintendent provide members with follow up information detailing dates, times, retests, etc. and what further steps will be taken in the event that the water test fails. Dr. Geismar said that he would update members tomorrow.

Reports/Comments – None

Important Dates and Meetings – Wednesday, August 24, 2011 –

Building Committee Meeting; Thursday, August 25, 2011 – New Staff Training; Friday, August 26, 2011 – Professional Development Day; Monday, August 29, 2011 – Teacher Orientation Day; Tuesday, August 30, 2011 – First Day of School K- 12; Wednesday, August 31, 2011 – Building Committee Meeting

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

Adjournment – Member McFadden moved to adjourn; seconded by Member Rafanelli; and voted 7 – 0 in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

ROBIN CERIO

CLERK