

MINUTES

The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District School Committee held a meeting on this date at 6:00 p.m. in the Jr. – Sr. High School Library. Members present were Teri Maia-Cicero, Chairperson; Mark Rafanelli, Vice Chairperson; Valerie Zuercher, Clerk; Theresa Donovan, Paul McFadden, Claudine Pande, and Lee Kissinger. Others present: Superintendent Thomas J. Geismar, Director of Administration Robert V. Ross, Student Member Angela Russo

ORDER –Chair Cicero called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and Student Member Russo read the District Mission Statement.

Open Forum – In response to Member Zuercher’s inquiry, Student Member Russo reported that Prom will take place on Friday, May 4 at Lake Pavilion in Foxboro, MA.

In response to Member McFadden’s inquiry, Superintendent Geismar said he would research how old the junior high school science books are and report back at the next regular meeting.

RECOGNITIONS/ACHIEVEMENTS – March 2012 Youth Art Month – Dr. Geismar reported that March is Youth Art Month and he recently signed the RI Art Education Association Youth Art Month Endorsement on behalf of the district and was proud to do so. He expressed his view that the district is fortunate to have one of the finest Fine Arts Department in the country. The community is truly fortunate to have such a fine program and such outstanding teachers.

EWG Music and Art Teachers – Dr. Geismar, the building principals, and Member Pande praised the EWG Fine Arts Department and the many talents of EWG art and music teachers Elizabeth Lind, Nicole Pichette, Sharon LaFrenaye, Amie Ray, Ron Runner, Gregg Charest, Stacey Place, and Carrie Scheff. Expressions of gratitude and admiration for their hard work and the dedication they show to the world of Arts and to the education of EWG students were shared.

PRESENTATION – Student Member Report – Student Member Russo said that the most exciting news she has to share is that right now the boys’ basketball team is playing in the south regional tournament against North Providence (a Division I team) at Bryant College. Last Saturday the boys were successful in defeating Prout in triple overtime. EWG is the only team to beat Prout this season. She informed members about other various activities taking place at the senior high level that included, spring sports, a DECA Club competition, a school dance, a rock expedition field trip, advisory activities, NECAP results pizza party/prizes, and wrestling championship results.

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

Member McFadden made a motion to accept the consent agenda. Member Kissinger seconded the motion. Voted 7 - 0 in favor.

The following items were approved:

- A. Approval of Minutes - Regular Minutes of February 14, 2012**
 - B. Personnel Items**
 - 1. Appointments – (As Recommended by the Superintendent)**
 - a. Steven Hoard as Senior High School Softball Coach, Stipend \$4,239.61, effective for the 2011 – 2012 season**
 - 2. Leaves of Absence**
 - 3. Resignations**
 - 4. Grievances**
 - 5. Non-Renewals**
 - 6. Recalls**
 - 7. Sabbaticals**
 - C. Bills – In the amount of \$361,301.96**
 - D. Home School Approval**
- End Consent Agenda**

Correspondence – (1) January 31, 2012 Letter to Mr. Feinstein from Melissa Marino

NEW BUSINESS – 2012 – 2013 Final Budget Adoption – Member McFadden moved to approve the 2012 – 2013 budget for the amount of \$29,900,000 without consideration of state and local aid; seconded by Clerk Zuercher; and voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

Dr. Geismar reported that he and Chair Cicero met with the Board of Canvassers (BOC) today. The All Day Referendum (ADR) will take place on April 9 from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. There will be a special meeting following the ADR at 8:30 p.m. in the high school library for the BOC to report out voting results to the School Committee. Amendments must be presented by 4:00 p.m. on March 9. Chair Cicero and the Superintendent spoke with Attorney Brad Gorham. Attorney Gorham advised that the district does not entertain amendments that would lower the amount because it is not legal. Mr. Gorham said that he would write a letter to taxpayers regarding the law if so desired. The BOC will use their respective town halls as polling places. The Exeter Library is unavailable on April 9.

Chair Cicero shared a concern that was discussed at today's BOC meeting. If the School Committees' approved budget amount is listed on the voting ballot for a *Yes* or *No* vote

and the budget does not pass, a second ADR would be required, which would be an unnecessary added cost to the district. Chair Cicero and the BOC agreed that it is therefore important to educate taxpayers that \$29,900,000 is legally the lowest amount that can pass. The BOC recommended having School Committee members at each polling place to answer questions. Chair Cicero proposed that School Committee members should compose an informative notice to display at various locations throughout the two towns. Clerk Zuercher concurred but stressed that the message should be brief and kept in simple terms. The School Committee agreed to utilize the Public Relations subcommittee to publicize the budget and educate voters.

Member Donovan questioned whether or not the budget still goes to voters for approval if no amendments are received and only one item, which cannot be rejected, appears on the ballot. Dr. Geismar recalled that last year there were two budget amounts on the ballot and voters could only vote affirmatively for one or the other. He questioned if there is only one amount on the ballot this year, does it become an *Approve* or *Reject* vote? Vice Chair Rafanelli expressed concern that voters may not come out to vote. Members questioned if a quorum is necessary and if so what that is. The committee reached consensus to have Dr. Geismar seek advice from Attorney Gorham to address the committees' questions/concerns, to inquire if ballot language could just display a *Yes* vote option, and to ask whether or not the law could be written directly on the ballot. Chair Cicero requested Dr. Geismar to communicate Attorney Gorham's recommended ballot language via email to all members. Member Donovan pointed out that the Public Hearing will be critical and it is important to get the word out. Member McFadden suggested soliciting the Standard Times as a means to inform taxpayers. Dr. Geismar advised that the BOC needs to receive the ballot language by March 16. The committee agreed to continue this item to the March 7 Special Meeting agenda for follow-up.

Distribution of Student Information Beyond the School District – Dr. Geismar referenced enclosures pertaining to the distribution of student information that goes out from the schools each year as per school policy and law. Parents are required to inform the school if they do not want directory information such as student names and addresses to be released. Dr. Geismar said that since this issue came to light, he and the building principals have discussed a better method for informing parents. Member McFadden referenced RI General Law 671, paragraph 7, which asks for an affirmative signature to release student information, which is contradictory to the federal statute that states a signature is not required. He proposed that the district could have a policy that is stronger than both of these. Member McFadden expressed concerns he has about data leakage and identity theft and said that he would like the district to think stronger when it comes to distributing student information beyond addresses. Principal Butler said that the district policy is vetted through the RI Department of Education (RIDE) legal office. Since it passes their standards and is satisfactory to RIDE, he believes it is sufficient. Member McFadden expressed his view that this is a different world today. There are organizations today that are very sensitive to that information. When the data goes out,

there is no control unless it is going to a trusted source. Chair Cicero and Dr. Geismar recommended and the committee agreed to have the policy subcommittee review/discuss the district policy.

Member McFadden requested an update on the student enrollment data review. Mr. Ross reported that the enrollment data that was submitted to both towns and the October 1 data that was submitted to RIDE would be merged to line up and the results would be resent to each town. That data will omit student names and include addresses only. Member McFadden asked if the verification results produce a different number, how that would reflect in the budget. Mr. Ross advised that each student miscounted would result in an approximate \$12,000 differential. He said that he anticipates the verification might result in a wash or with the town of West Greenwich picking up a couple of additional students. Member McFadden suggested that moving forward the School Committee should discuss how to meet the October 1 enrollment count and confirm its accuracy. Chair Cicero requested to add October 1 Enrollment to the next regular meeting agenda for discussion.

IT Overview – Chair Cicero said that she put this item on tonight’s agenda. She recently had the opportunity to attend the Technical Conference at RI College. The EWG technology subcommittee at the high school has had one meeting to date and another meeting is planned. She thinks the School Committee needs to examine the infrastructure of the district’s technology in order to understand where it is and what the 5-year plan needs to be going forward. She recommended forming a technology subcommittee to research various aspects of technology and to bring back information/recommendations to the School Committee, as there is a great deal of work to be done.

Vice Chair Rafanelli said that he had asked for a baseline of where the district stands as a whole relating to technology. He proposed that until that is realized, research cannot be done. He expressed a desire to have that presented to the School Committee. In response, Mr. Ross advised that on the district website is the comprehensive EWG Technology Plan for 2010 – 2013 that was submitted by Technology Administrator David Wright. The document does not include what was purchased in 2012 however. Mr. Ross noted that the district has three comprehensive policies in place relating to technology and he made reference to the *Safe School Act* that was introduced by Senator John Tassoni. He advised that the three policies should be reviewed and updated to bring all four of these documents in sync.

Members agreed that the School Committee needs to make policy decisions and understand what is being done and where the district is heading as it relates to technology. The committee reached consensus to form a technology subcommittee. Members Kissinger, McFadden, and Donovan, Chair Cicero, and Vice Chair Rafanelli volunteered to serve. Chair Cicero said that a meeting date would be established and meetings would be posted. She speculated that perhaps the subcommittee might decide to form two separate groups, one to look at infrastructure and one to look at technology in

the classroom. Subcommittee reports will be on every business meeting agenda going forward to keep the committee informed. Dr. Geismar pointed out that there are in fact four aspects/areas of interest to technology to review, (1) Infrastructure; (2) Policy; (3) Technology in the Classroom; and (4) Technology Management. At the suggestion of Principal Butler, Member Kissinger and Chair Cicero agreed to also serve on the senior high school technology subcommittee.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Approve Plan to Assist with Implementation of the Common Core State Standards – Dr. Geismar said that Principal Marino was here to speak to this item but had to leave for another commitment. Principals Marino and Almonte developed the plan enclosed in member’s packets that minimizes the time out of the classroom for teachers. Dr. Geismar asked the School Committee to approve the recommendations refined in the report brought tonight. He said that it has a fiscal impact of \$6,047.36 and is a good sound plan.

Member McFadden moved to approve; seconded by Vice Chair Rafanelli; and voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

Capital Project Update – Member Kissinger asked for an update on the generator bids. Mr. Ross said that he is in receipt of a quote for the administration building only. Mr. Plumley has alerted vendors that the district needs quotes for the high school as well, so there will now be two different quotes. Vendors are now wondering if the district will in fact make a purchase or if they are wasting their time. The district has requested quotes from three vendors. An RFP will be developed from those three quotes. Member Kissinger suggested to scratch the original quote and to request quotes for the administration building and the high school. Member McFadden said that keeping two separate quotes would allow flexibility to address one building at a time, if the committee decides it is too expensive to do both. Chair Cicero said that she researched with the town of West Greenwich and learned that the fire stations are the WG emergency shelters. WG Emergency Management Director Brook Lawrence reported there is also a connection with Metcalf School. She plans to sit with Director Lawrence to talk about a grant. Member Kissinger stressed the importance of protecting the districts investments. He said he is more concerned about the overall facility and it makes sense to him to have one unit to cover both the high school and the administration building. Member McFadden said that he needs to know what amount of money the district can afford to put into phase II. Member Kissinger explained that what prompted this discussion is that the old generator at the high school is gone. He questioned the point of putting a small unit in the administration building when there is no generator at the high school. At the request of Member McFadden, the committee agreed to continue the emergency generator purchase discussion to the next regular meeting agenda and to have Mr. Ross bring additional information to that meeting.

Reports/Comments – In response to Superintendent Geismar’s inquiry, consensus of the School Committee was that the Public Hearing would begin at 7:00 p.m.

Important Dates and Meetings – **Wednesday, March 7, 2012-Special School Committee Meeting (Grievance Hearing(s)); Tuesday, March 13, 2012-School Committee Meeting; Monday, March 26, 2012-Public Hearing; Tuesday, March 27, 2012-School Committee meeting (at METCAL SCHOOL)**

EXECUTIVE SESSION – RIGL 42-46-4 and RIGL 42-46-5 – Vice Chair Rafanelli moved to go into Executive Session at 7:54 p.m. in accordance with 42-46-5 (2) – CBA – (C-94/Teachers’ Association) – Negotiation Discussion and/or Pending Litigation and 42-46-5 (a)(1) – Personnel; seconded by Member Kissinger; and voted as follows:

Teri Cicero	Yes
Valerie Zuercher	Yes
Mark Rafanelli	Yes
Theresa Donovan	Yes
Paul McFadden	Yes
Claudine Pande	Yes
Lee Kissinger	Yes

Meeting recessed to Executive Session at 7:54 p.m.

Clerk Zuercher left the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Member McFadden moved to reconvene to Open Session. Member Donovan seconded the motion. Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

Meeting reconvened to Open Session at 8:35 p.m.

There were no votes taken during Executive Session.

Adjournment – Member Donovan moved to adjourn; Vice Chair Rafanelli seconded the motion; and voted 6 – 0 in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

**ROBIN CERIO
CLERK**