

Warwick School Committee Minutes
Meeting of September 10, 2008
Open Session

The Warwick School Committee met in Open Session at Winman Junior High School, on Wednesday, September 10, 2008. Chairman Friel called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. with the following in attendance:

COMMITTEE

Christopher Friel, Chairperson
Lucille Mota-Costa, Vice Chair
Bethany Furtado, Clerk
Joyce L. Andrade
Paul Cannistra

ADMINISTRATION

Peter P. Horoschak, Superintendent
Leonard Flood, Director of Business Affairs
Rosemary Healey, Esq., Director of Compliance & Human Resources

MOTION 2008-172: Moved by Ms. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, to go into closed session for discussion and/or action regarding those items of business exempt from open meetings under General Laws of Rhode Island 42-46-5(a)(1), (a)(2) and (a)(4)

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye Bethany Furtado - Aye
Paul Cannistra - Aye

Meeting reconvened at 6:45 p.m. with the following in attendance in addition to those above:

Victor Mercurio, Director of Secondary Education
Robert T. Bushell, Director of Elementary Education
Richard D'Agostino, Director Special Services
David E. Small, Director of Buildings and Grounds

Student Comments

Pilgrim: Alan Golde, Stephanie Loiselle, Jackie Steinkamp
Aldrich Jr. Erica Hammond, Amibeth Marks, Josh Salinger

Allen Golde, a senior at Pilgrim commented on all the great things going on at Pilgrim, talking about respect between students and teachers, school spirit, the gardens in the courtyards, pep rallies, not just for football, but recognizing all seasons of sports, student/faculty games, charitable fund raisers, running a city to make a profit and mentoring middle school students, teaching them how to run a city. Jackie Steinkamp, a junior at Pilgrim, explained about "challenge day" and how it brought the students together. She told the Committee about the activities that were held after the prom, and since it was such a huge success, they are doing it again this year. Stephanie Loiselle, a junior at Pilgrim, said that the first Friday of every month everyone gets to wear Pilgrim colors. They have a student leadership program and other students come to them if they have problems. She said our administrators care about the students.

Aldrich: Josh Salinger, a student at Aldrich, said that some of the good things happening at Aldrich are the Washington Trip, basketball and football games, dances and that the teachers are really good.

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Approval of Minutes of Public Session

MOTION 2008-173: Moved by Mr. Cannistra, seconded by Mrs. Furtado, to approve the Minutes for the Open Session on August 12, 2008, August 21, 2008 and September 3, 2008.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye Bethany Furtado - Aye
Paul Cannistra - Aye

MOTION 2008-174: Moved by Mr. Cannistra, seconded by Mrs. Furtado, to approve the Minutes for the Executive Session on August 12, 2008 and August 21, 2008.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye Bethany Furtado - Aye
Paul Cannistra - Aye

Transfers:

MOTION 2008-175: Moved by Ms. Mota-Costa, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, to approve the transfers presented to the Committee.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye Bethany Furtado - Aye
Paul Cannistra - Aye

Warrants:

MOTION 2008-176: Moved by Mrs. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, to approve the warrants presented to the Committee.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye Bethany Furtado - Aye
Paul Cannistra - Aye

Professional personnel items:

Appointments:

MOTION 2008-177: Moved by Mrs. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, that the appointment of **Joan McPherson**, English Language Arts Site-Based Literacy Coach (90-day work year) at a salary of \$350 per day, be approved (subject to the continuing availability of Federal funds); and that the appointment of **Meredith Whittaker**, English Language Arts Site-Based Literacy Coach (90-day work year) at a salary of \$350 per day, be approved (subject to the continuing availability of Federal funds).

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye Bethany Furtado - Aye
Paul Cannistra - Aye

Resignation:

MOTION 2008-178: Moved by Mrs. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, that the following **resignations** be accepted: **Debra Micheli**, 60% nurse teacher (Drum Rock Early Childhood Center – effective August 15, 2008; **Candice Pomfret**, reading specialist, Veterans High School – effective August 19, 2008; and **Paul Tarasevich**, science teacher, Toll Gate High School – effective August 4, 2008.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye Bethany Furtado - Aye
Paul Cannistra - Aye

Warwick School Committee Minutes
Meeting of September 10, 2008
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Unfinished Business:

Warwick Veterans Scoreboard Advertisements: Chairman Friel said we are currently negotiating with Sports Image concerning advertisements that are suppose to be placed on the scoreboard at Warwick Vets. The Chair called for a motion to approve the erection of signs while pending further negotiations with Sports Image.

MOTION 2008-179: Moved by Mrs. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, to approve

MOTION PASSES (3 ayes 2 nays)

Christopher Friel - Aye	Lucille Mota-Costa - Nay
Joyce L. Andrade - Nay	Bethany Furtado - Aye
Paul Cannistra - Aye	

Chairman Friel said that the Toll Gate Football Booster Club has requested to have 3 x 7 vinyl advertising banners displayed at their home games. The advertisers are NP's Home Improvement, Prata Bar, Universal Ambulance Services, Brentwood Nursing Home, Centreville Bank, Rooms to Grow, and Apple Computers. The money raised will go directly to the Football Booster Club to purchase items needed for the team. Attorney Healey said this is not technically on the agenda, and was concerned about any vote at this meeting. The request will come before the Committee at their next meeting.

Smart Bus Live – tabled to next meeting – additional material requested and not available as of this meeting.

New Business:

Pilgrim Chorus Field Trip to Austria – The director of Choral Music at Pilgrim High School requested permission to participate in a performance tour of Austria in February 2009. The tour dates are February 12th through February 20th, 2009.

MOTION 2008-180: Moved by Mr. Cannistra, seconded by Mrs. Andrade, to approve the Pilgrim Chorus Field Trip to Austria in February of 2009

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye	Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye	Bethany Furtado - Aye
Paul Cannistra - Aye	

2008-2010 Strategic Plan Update – Mr. Lowery reviewed the Strategic Plan covering the goals, changes made, mentor programs, and putting the plan on the school website. It was requested that the current document be kept on line so it can be reviewed and compared to the updated plan.

MOTION 2008-181: Moved by Ms. Mota-Costa, seconded by Mrs. Andrade, to accept the 2008-2010 Strategic Plan as presented.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye	Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye	Bethany Furtado - Aye
Paul Cannistra - Aye	

Warwick Wellness:

MOTION 2008-182: Moved by Mrs. Furtado, seconded by Mrs. Andrade, to approve the parent survey.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye	Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye	Bethany Furtado - Aye
Paul Cannistra - Aye	

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Equal Access Policy – Mrs. Andrade presented a draft of the policy and said she was looking for input and suggestions. She provided copies for the public. Legal counsel will review the policy and it will be brought back for the first reading next month. There is no action this evening.

Graduation by Proficiency Update: Marilyn Massey of Pilgrim presented an update, telling the Committee that some students took advantage of the summer to start their projects. The projects included business of baseball (at McCoy Stadium), hike up Mount Washington, working with mentor at the fire department, Gaspee Days, working with an English professor at RI College auditing the class; going to opening and closing arguments at trial at the Kent County Court house; overzealous little league parents. The next thing will be the research paper which is due in January. Mentors are stepping forward. An update will be presented every month.

Parental Commission Committee: The proposal to form a parental commission committee was discussed. The committee would be a sounding board and deal with new initiatives. Ms. Mota-Costa asked would make up the committee and who would represent the school committee. It was proposed to post this on the website for parents to sign up, and that two school committee members be part of the committee. The Superintendent could call meetings. The agenda will have to be addressed because a committee formed by the school committee has to be posted with the Secretary of State.

MOTION 2008-183: Moved by Mr. Cannistra, seconded by Ms. Furtado, to approve the creation of a parental commission committee.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye
Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – Aye
Paul Cannistra - Aye

[Note - Ms. Mota-Costa volunteered for this committee.]

School Department Audit: Mr. Cannistra and Mr. Friel attended a meeting with the accounting firm, Bacon & Associates. They are the firm auditing the City and the School Department. There are difference options for an audit, forensic, performance, agreed upon procedures allowing for specific questions and a general audit. The more detail, the more expense. It was suggested to move forward on the audit and schedule a meeting with Bacon & Associates. The question was raised why we are using the same auditing firm and not a different auditor so there would be no conflict. A public member commented that the fact there is a \$4 million deficit, he felt a forensic audit was in line.

MOTION 2008-184: Moved by Ms. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, to move forward with audit and set up meeting with the auditing firm.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye
Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – Aye
Paul Cannistra - Aye

Bids:

MOTION 2008-185: Moved by Ms. Andrade, seconded by Ms. Mota-Costa, to approve the bid package as presented

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye
Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – Aye
Paul Cannistra - Aye

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 Meeting of September 10, 2008
 Open Session

Information and Proposals: The Superintendent asked his directors to briefly discuss the opening of school. He said that the “receiving” school parents, principal and staff went out of their way to welcome the students. Mr. Bushell said that things went well and that the average class for one through six is 20 students. Dr. D’Agostino said the opening went smoothly with no complaints or problems. He attributed that to communications set forth. Dr. Mercurio said the opening of secondary went well.

Mr. Flood commented that the Corrective Action Plan for the 2008-2009 projected budget deficit will be posted on the School Department’s website. He said we are implementing changes to help us better manage and analyze expenditure trends to keep us on track for the current fiscal year. This includes widespread use of encumbrances for a majority of salary and fringe benefit costs. Employees are required to submit purchase requisitions for all purchases, and until the purchase order is received, employees have no authority to commit the School Department to the expense. Non-salary line item budget accounts are capped at 50% of the budgeted amount. The Superintendent remarked that this was not an agenda item.

Public comment: Jane, a special education assistant, asked to read a letter from a parent who has a child on the special ed bus, which respectfully requested to maintain the level of care and support to our children. Tom Daniels said he had requested qualifications of his son’s special education teacher assistant and he received a letter stating personnel information could not be given to him. He commented that he could go online and get teacher’s qualifications, why not teacher assistants. A parent said that he disagreed that school opening went smoothly, that there were 30 fourth graders who want to go back to their old school. We need to search them out and find make it right for them. Bernadette McDowell, who said she was representing the nurses, read a letter about the cut of a nurse position and their concern of operating without proper medical supports in place. Darlene Netcoh commented on the GBP from a teacher’s prospective. She said that the previous summer reading had no weight; now this summer reading has new weight. She said that the senior project should not be one-third of their grade. Laura Testa asked about the proposed new report card and had it been put on hold. The Superintendent said he could envision this coming before the parental committee.

MOTION 2008-186: Moved by Mr. Cannistra, seconded by Mrs. Furtado, to adjourn.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye	Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye
Joyce L. Andrade – Aye	Bethany Furtado – Aye
Paul Cannistra - Aye	

Meeting adjourned: 8:50 p.m.
 Bethany Furtado, Clerk
 Betsey Snipes, Secretary