

Warwick School Committee Minutes
Meeting of April 27, 2011
Open Session

The Warwick School Committee met in Open Session at Toll Gate High School on Wednesday, April 27, 2011. Chairperson Furtado called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. with the following in attendance:

COMMITTEE

Bethany A. Furtado, Chair
Patrick E. Maloney, Jr., Vice Chair
Eugene A. Nadeau, Clerk
Christopher E. Friel
M. Terri Medeiros

ADMINISTRATION

Peter P. Horoschak, Superintendent
Rosemary Healey, Esq., Director of Compliance & Human Resources
William Sangster, Assistant to the Superintendent
Anthony Ferrucci, Chief Budget Officer

MOTION 2011-63: Moved by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Mr. Maloney, 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) and (a) (2).

MOTION PASSES (4-0)

Bethany A. Furtado - Aye Patrick E. Maloney, Jr. - Aye
Christopher E. Friel - Aye Eugene A. Nadeau - Aye
M. Terri Medeiros - [not present for vote]

Meeting reconvened at 8:05 p.m.

Also present to those listed above:

Robert T. Bushell, Director of Elementary Education
Richard D'Agostino, Director Special Services
E. Paul Jansson, Construction Coordinator
David LaPlante, Interim Director of Buildings & Grounds

Introduction of resolution: Mr. Nadeau – Mr. Nadeau introduced a resolution asking for additional funding for Warwick in the state aid funding formula. The resolution reads as follows:

WHEREAS, Current state law provides for a funding formula for education; and WHEREAS, School districts and cities and towns have seen a calamitous reduction of state aid; and WHEREAS, there exists a \$300 million dollar revenue/expenditure gap in the FY2012 budget and over an anticipated \$411 million revenue/expenditure gap by FY2016 budget that will result in further state aid reductions; and WHEREAS, taxpayers are already burdened by some of the highest property taxes nationally and; WHEREAS, school districts and cities and towns must comply with RIGL § 44-5-2 that caps the property tax levy for FY2012 at 4 ¼%; and WHEREAS, according to § 16-2-9(d) "The school committee of each school district shall be responsible for maintaining a school budget which does not result in a debt."; and WHEREAS, the current funding formula proposed by the Rhode Island Department of Elementary Education is scheduled to be implemented effective July 1, 2011 for a period of ten school years; and WHEREAS, the Warwick Public School District has over ten thousand students; and WHEREAS, the state funding formula will only provide the Warwick Public Schools, the third largest school district by student population, with a per pupil allocation of \$3,286.08 per year, while seventeen other districts receive a higher per pupil allocation; and WHEREAS, if state funds were allocated based on the number of students in Warwick, Warwick's share of the state funding formula would approximate \$54 million rather than the approximate \$33 million that

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Warwick current expects to receive in FY2012; and WHEREAS, the state funding formula does not treat the Warwick Public Schools equitably as compared to other school districts and therefore places an undue burden on Warwick taxpayers for the next ten years; and WHEREAS, the state funding formula unfairly shortchanges Warwick Public Schools students; RESOLVED, that the Warwick School Committee respectfully requests the Rhode Island General Assembly amend the current state funding formula in favor of a straight per pupil allocation; and be it further RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to every Rhode Island Municipality, School Committee, State Senator, State Representative and the Governor.

[signed: Bethany A. Furtado, Chair; Patrick Maloney, Vice Chair; Eugene A. Nadeau, Clerk]

MOTION 2011-64: Moved by Mr. Friel, seconded by Mr. Maloney, to approve the Resolution presented by Mr. Nadeau.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Bethany A. Furtado – Aye Patrick E. Maloney, Jr. - Aye
Christopher E. Friel - Aye Eugene A. Nadeau - Aye
M. Terri Medeiros – Aye

Budget:

MOTION 2011-65: Moved by Ms. Medeiros, seconded by Mr. Friel, to approve the Superintendent's budget subject to those items discussed in executive session, with amendments.

Mr. Friel commented it is not a safe assumption to say both WTU and WISE will pay 20% co-pays next year. There is a WISE grievance regarding the 20% co-share. The first amendment proposed:

“To increase the salary and benefits line item of the budget by \$3.2 million, which the schools are contractually obligated to pay to the unions.”

The second amendment proposed:

“To eliminate the 2 per cent pay increase for WISE, since WISE continues to operate without a contract, which results in a \$325,000 reduction in the salary line item.”

Mr. Friel also commented that there is \$3 million worth of fire code improvements for next year that aren't even contained in the current budget. The fire marshal has been pressing the school department and the City of make these changes by 2012 or else we face criminal sanctions.

The third amendment proposed:

“Level funding all non-salary, non-personnel line items for next year, resulting in a \$2.2 million reduction and leaving a \$680,052 deficit.”

Fourth amendment proposed:

“To increase the allocation by \$680,052 over FY09 to bring the budget into balance.”

Mr. Maloney commented that in addition to the union contract that has not been settled, we have reduced ARA funding this year, and the funding formula is not adequate for our students. He said he was not confident in sending a budget to the City that does not take into account the way things are now. He also commented that he recommends cutting employee travel costs and computer costs by obtaining software licenses from companies other than Microsoft.

Superintendent Horoschak pointed out that when we presented the budget on April 12th and 13th we anticipated state aid of \$32,387,157; however, since then we received a new figure of \$32,262,907.

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MOTION 2011-66: Moved by Mr. Maloney, seconded by Ms. Medeiros, to approve the amendments as outlined.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Bethany A. Furtado – Aye Patrick E. Maloney, Jr. - Aye
Christopher E. Friel - Aye Eugene A. Nadeau - Aye
M. Terri Medeiros – Aye

MOTION 2011-67: Moved by Mr. Maloney, seconded by Ms. Medeiros, to approve the Superintendent's amended budget.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Bethany A. Furtado – Aye Patrick E. Maloney, Jr. - Aye
Christopher E. Friel - Aye Eugene A. Nadeau - Aye
M. Terri Medeiros – Aye

MOTION 2011-67: Moved by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Mr. Maloney, to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

Bethany A. Furtado – Aye Patrick E. Maloney, Jr. - Aye
Christopher E. Friel - Aye Eugene A. Nadeau - Aye
M. Terri Medeiros – Aye

Meeting adjourned 8:40 p.m.
Eugene A. Nadeau, Clerk
Betsey Snipes, Secretary