

Warwick School Committee Minutes  
Meeting September 11, 2014  
Open Session

The Warwick School Committee met in Open Session at the Administration Building on Thursday, September 11, 2014. Ms. Furtado called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. with the following in attendance:

COMMITTEE

Bethany A. Furtado, Chair  
M. Terri Medeiros, Vice Chair  
Karen Bachus, Clerk [present at 6:05 p.m.]  
Jennifer Ahearn  
Eugene A. Nadeau

ADMINISTRATION

Richard D'Agostino, Superintendent  
Dennis Mullen, Director of Secondary Education  
Lynn Dambruch, Director of Elementary Education  
Anthony Ferrucci, Chief Budget Officer  
Rosemary Healey, Esq., Director of Compliance & Human Resources  
David LaPlante, Director of Buildings & Grounds

MOTION 2014-252: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Ms. Medeiros, 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 (40)

Bethany A. Furtado – Aye  
Eugene A. Nadeau – Aye  
Jennifer Ahearn – Aye

M. Terri Medeiros – Aye  
Karen Bachus – not present for vote

**Open Meeting reconvened at 6:05 p.m.**

Ms. Furtado announced that the only item on the agenda tonight is the Warwick Teachers Union contract set for a vote of the School Committee. Ms. Healey recommended to the Committee on behalf of the negotiating team, Terri Medeiros, Richard D'Agostino, Bethany Furtado, and me, a one-year agreement with the WTU. The Union had ratified the contract this afternoon [9/11/14]. In summary, the contract includes a 1.18% pay increase, co share payments on dental and medical ins. premiums increase to 20%; Superintendent will endorse each job fair assignment/transfer; teachers will receive layoff notices June 1<sup>st</sup> instead of March 1<sup>st</sup>; teacher evaluation system used in the past two years will remain intact. Both sides desired a longer term agreement but there were a number of factors preventing that from being accomplished. Ms. Healey said that academic-related proposals and complex issues will take time to negotiate and after much back and forth discussion we mutually agreed to work out the long-standing issues.

Ms. Healey commented that the 1.18% increase is less than the \$1,000 pay raise offered to city employees. Raises are extremely modest and are a reward for good work and recognition of cost of living increases. After the vote, the economic impact statement and tentative agreement will be available. Dr. D'Agostino said the two sides decided to move forward in an agreeable manner toward reaching a longer-term contract in an effort to avoid a work to rule situation, which is a situation where no one wins and the students lose the most.

Mr. Ferrucci said that the economic impact of one-year agreement, with a 1.18% pay raise being added to teacher steps, results in a total salary increase of \$826,389, state retirement increase of \$113,643; SS tax \$63,219 total increase of \$1,003,251. Increased cost offset by reducing costs associated with the increase in teacher co-share payments for dental and medical ins. premiums, which increases from 17.8% to 20%. Medical expenses are reduced by \$284,621 and dental expenses reduced by \$6,795 for a total

decrease of \$291,416. Taking everything into account the 2015 fiscal year budget overall increased by \$711,835. Local budget would be impact by \$683,252 and the grant budgets by \$28,583.

*Ms. Furtado called for a vote that we accept and ratify the 1-year agreement before us.*

MOTION 2014-253: Moved by Ms. Bachus, seconded by Ms. Medeiros, that we accept and ratify the 1-year agreement before us

Discussion - Mr. Nadeau said they we started working and preparing nearly 10 months ago; working faithfully to return to a 3-year contract. There were 34 changes made to the contract in that time. A list of the school committee approved changes were presented to Union for consideration and wanted Ms. Healey to read into the public record what those approved changes were. He said he thought the public should know all the things that the five of us agreed to before negotiations and people ought to be made aware.

Ms. Healey responded that the document was prepared in executive session, during private negotiations, and she couldn't release that information unless three members of the School Committee vote to approve it. Negotiations won't work if they are handled in public. Ms. Bachus agreed that negotiations that take place are not public and should not be public. She said she would not vote to make them public. Ms. Medeiros said that document was placed in front of us at each meeting, and we have to have faith that we are moving forward. We tried to do this for the benefit of the teachers and students. You have to have faith we did the right thing. Releasing that information will do nothing but hinder the relationship we are building. She said that she would not vote to disclose it, as it was a private discussion. Ms. Furtado remarked that the end result was time well spent. Would we like to get more – yes – Would teachers have liked more – I'm sure of it. We need to make sure teachers aren't distracted so they can focus on their students.

Ms. Ahearn said she understood my fellow school committee members' endorsement of this contract, and the belief in another year of labor peace without "work to rule." I fully support pay increases for effective teachers and do not believe that Warwick students should ever endure any type of work to rule environment. I support a higher increase than 1.18% that has been proposed for high performing teachers. What I don't support is the practice of equal pay for all regardless of job performance. This practice dilutes effectiveness of great teachers and creates an environment of underachievement and complacency. I believe in rewarding achievers. The continued union workshop mentality does nothing to promote growth of staff and continues to compromise student learning. What I believe is lacking in the proposal is enough indication from the Union that they are willing to concede on aspects of the contract that will directly benefit our students. Examples would include: increased principal access to teacher planning sessions and training schedules that reduce time out of the classroom. I vote with my conscious as a parent of school-age children and as a believer in continual academic progress in our district. I consider myself progressive in thinking about ways to improve the union/committee/teacher/student relationship. Ideals such as program quality, pay for performance and individual accountability are most important to me. We are too focused on counting pennies in negotiations and take our eye off the ball of what could truly be accomplished in support of those we are in charge of caring for- our teachers and students.

### **Call for Vote**

MOTION 2014-253: – call for vote – *that we accept and ratify the 1-year agreement before us.*

**MOTION PASSES (3 ayes 2 nays)**

Bethany A. Furtado – Aye      M. Terri Medeiros – Aye  
Eugene A. Nadeau - Nay      Karen Bachus - Aye  
Jennifer Ahearn - Nay

MOTION 2014-254: Moved by Ms. Medeiros, seconded by Ms. Bachus, to adjourn.

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Bethany A. Furtado – Aye      M. Terri Medeiros – Aye  
Eugene A. Nadeau - Aye      Karen Bachus - Aye  
Jennifer Ahearn - Aye

**Adjourned at 6:40 p.m.**