

Warwick School Committee Minutes
Meeting April 27, 2015
Open Session

The Warwick School Committee met in Open Session at Winman Junior High School on Monday, April 27, 2015. Ms. Ahearn called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with the following in attendance:

COMMITTEE

Jennifer Ahearn, Chair
Eugene A. Nadeau, Vice Chair
M. Terri Medeiros, Clerk
Bethany A. Furtado
Karen Bachus .

ADMINISTRATION

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

The Chair announced that the individuals involved in the superintendent's discussion in executive session this evening have been notified of their right to have the discussion take place in Open Session. Not all have agreed to have the discussion in Open Session, so we will be proceeding in Executive Session.

MOTION 2015-106: Moved by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Furtado, 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 (3-0)

Bethany A. Furtado – Aye M. Terri Medeiros – not present for vote
Eugene A. Nadeau – Aye Karen Bachus – not present for vote
Jennifer Ahearn – Aye

Open Meeting reconvened at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem

Administrators also present in addition to those listed above: Dr. Anne Siesel, Dr. Sara Monaco, Ryan Mullen, David LaPlante, Denise Bilodeau, Dianne Silvia, Kathleen Desrosiers

Discussion of Vincent Ragosta contract: Ms. Ahearn announced the first item on agenda is Vincent Ragosta contract and turned it over to Ms. Furtado. Ms. Furtado said while the committee voted to hire Mr. Ragosta, it has not voted on contract terms and said she was seeking an explanation as to his hourly rate, what the cost will be to the district, and where it is being funded from. Ms. Ahearn responded the committee voted to engage in discussion and engage him in a contract and designate me as point person, which I have been doing for the past four weeks. It was discussed that his rate would be \$285 per hour. The scope is that he is currently investigating what transpired with Mr. Atoya in 2013. The money would be coming from the current budget and the projected surplus. Ms. Furtado inquired if we entered into an actual contract/retainer. Ms. Ahearn said she has a letter of engagement and would send out a copy of the engagement to the Committee. Ms. Healey said the letter of engagement was signed on behalf of the School Committee and could not guarantee that it was not a public document without having seen it first. Mr. Ferrucci remarked that the money was coming from legal services line item. He also said he has not

received any documents. Ms Ahearn said Mr. Ragosta was hired for four weeks and if he worked 40 hours a week at \$285 per hour, it would result in a total of \$45,000. We have not received a bill. He usually bills bi-weekly, but because the investigation would only be a month, he would send a bill at the end of the month. There was no vote taken on this matter as it was for discussion purposes only.

Discussion - Andrew Henneous terms of representation and contract – Ms. Furtado asked for a point of clarification if we have engaged Mr. Henneous, if we have a contract or tentative agreement and some kind of hourly rate. She also pointed out that she was not in favor of this. She asked when he was expected to start his work and how long he would be engaged. Ms. Ahearn responded he has not been engaged and that his billing rate was \$185 per hour. He will come and meet with us about the terms of engagement at our next meeting in executive session on May 12th. Ms. Healey pointed out that during that meeting teacher layoffs will be discussed. Ms. Ahearn suggested that the executive session could start at 5:30 p.m. and then the open session at 7:30 if executive runs over. Ms. Medeiros inquired if the money to pay Mr. Henneous would come out of the current budget. Mr. Ferrucci said if services are performed in June but bills come in July, the money would have to come out of this year's budget, but if services are performed in July or after, payment will come out of next year's budget.

Budget Adoption FY2016

The Superintendent's recommended budget was reviewed and line items with significant increases were discussed. Line items of each department were reviewed and discussed.

Secondary Education:

Ms. Furtado referenced #53301; #53701; #56101; #57306; #57311

[Noted that technology related hardware/software is now found in each department's separate budget.]

Summer School budget is - \$3,528.00

Ms. Bachus commented she hoped that literacy positions would be put back and Mr. Mullen responded that staffing issues are being discussed but there was nothing in the budget.

Discussion followed regarding the cost of PSAT testing and Ms. Ahearn moved to amend/reduce \$9,000 for the cost of PSATs, and wait and see how many students are engaged in this process next year.

MOTION 2015-107 – Moved by Ms. Ahearn to amend/reduce the budget by \$9,000 for those cost associated with PSATs – at this time next year we will be able to see what attendance rate is – see how many students are engaged in this process, seconded by Mr. Nadeau.

CALL FOR VOTE: Nay: Medeiros,Bachus,Furtado
 Aye: Ahearn and Nadeau
 MOTION FAILS (2 AYES/3 NAY)

Athletics:

Ms. Furtado reference #54601 rental land/buildings \$5,000 – She also commented on #54605(ice rink rental) #54606(pool rental) saying she had a problem with the fact we have to budget nearly \$60,000 in fees to the City for use of McDermott Pool and Thayer Arena. As residents, students should have the right to use these facilities without schools paying fees.

MOTION 2015-108: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Ms. Bachus, to reduce Athletic Supplies #56116 by \$21,005.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Career & Technical

Ms. Furtado referenced #53701; #56101

It was suggested to cut this budget \$24,000 – Mr. Mullen commented this would affect the amount of consumables in programs (i.e. cooking, construction) and would hurt programs tremendously. This is a group of students not necessarily going to college, and this is their trade. It serves 400 students, 200 of which are from Warwick. Ms. Furtado said leave it as it stands. Ms. Medeiros commented that consumables could be revisited later. Ms. Ahearn commented we have increased the cosmetology program, but we let ALAP go and she had an issue with that.

Elementary -

Ms. Furtado commented on #51115(substitute salaries); #56101(general supplies/material) #56501(color printers and cartridges); #57306(furniture/fixtures). It was noted that the furniture/fixtures line item was for two new all-day kindergarten classrooms and to replace cafeteria tables. Ms. Ahearn moved to amend the budget by \$28,547 from the elementary education budget that would pay for color printer portions of the line item.

MOTION 2015-109: Moved by Ms. Ahearn to amend/reduce the budget by \$28,547 by removing costs associated with color printing and color copier costs.

MOTION FAILS	Nay: Medeiros/Bachus/Furtado	3 nays
	Aye: Ahearn/Nadeau	2 ayes

Special Services: - Dr. Connolly

Ms. Furtado said that this budget encompasses a lot and no questions. Ms. Ahearn commented on #53218 and #53220.

Maintenance: David LaPlante

Ms. Furtado reference a number of line items, including ##53406; #54021; #54310; #54312; #54313 #50735; #54321; #54322; #54405; #54902; #56202; #56216 lumber/hardware #57301; #57305

Mr. LaPlante said no vehicles have been purchased in two years. Also discussed was maintenance of school fields and if maintenance was shared with the City. The City does maintain Gorton football field but not the others.

Ms. Ahearn asked if we could charge the City for use of the fields, since they charge us for the ice rink and pool. She said we have deferred maintenance since 2006 and had no problem approving the recommendation.

Curriculum

Line items reference: #51115; #53503; #56101; #56112; #56401 #57305 and #58101 – Individual cuts were suggested from line items: \$37,000 from general supplies/materials, \$34,000 from equipment and \$8,000 for uniform wearing apparel – as well as \$12,400 for professional organization fees. Discussion regarding providing uniforms and what is required; professional fees provide professional development and also student participation in music festivals, art shows, etc. If not a member of professional organization cannot participate.

Ms Medeiros made a motion to amend the budget by cutting \$100,000 from the curriculum budget and let them go back and tweak it to get the best out of the program.

MOTION 2015-110: Moved by Ms. Mederios to cut \$100,000 from this budget and let administration go back and tweak it; and let them get the best out of their program, seconded by Ms. Furtado.

MOTION PASSES (3 ayes 2 nays)

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

Literacy – Desrosiers

Line items reference: #51115 substitute salaries and #53301 and #56401

Math/Science: Mullen

Line items reference: #53303; #57309 and #57311

Federal Funds

No changes - can't do anything with "Federal dollars"

Tech Coordinator – Denise Bilodeau:

Ms. Bilodeau commented that she never had prof/dev or substitutes in her budget before and #57311 technology not in her budget before.

Informational Services:

Line items reference: #53502; #53706; #54320; #56101; #56501; #57309 and #57311

Superintendent

Line items reference: #53101(SMA contract); #56101; #57306; #58101;

MOTION 2015-111: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Ms. Medeiros, to reduce the Superintendent's Budget by \$2,500.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Transportation – self explanatory**Human Resources**

Line items referenced: #51115; #53402 legal services; #53409 neg/arbitration; #53701 other charges; #56112 and #57311

Alternate Human Resources and Legal/Department –

MOTION 2015-112: Moved by Ms. Furtado to strike from budget in its entirety the separation of human resources and legal, and re-entertain when appropriate. I would prefer to buy more chromebooks for students rather than add administrative positions, seconded by Ms. Medeiros.

MOTION FAILED 3 naves: Ahearn,Bachus,Nadeau
2 ayes: Furtado,Medeiros

Ms. Ahearn disagreed she ran numbers could realize savings by eliminating additional staff needed to create a separate legal services department approximately \$90,000, as well as current special education legal counsel \$84,000, cutting legal services line item in the HR budget \$174,000 and outsourcing legal services for the SD, adding \$225,000 and well as \$25,000 for arbitration.

Ms. Medeiros asked if outsourcing legal would have knowledge and experience to follow cases that we have. Ms. Healey said what you lose with outside counsel is the ability to triage problems before they occur. She said she literally answers hundreds of legal questions a year from principals, department heads, etc. When you pay someone by the hour, it can cost a small fortune to get that Ms. Ahearn felt there was a conflict having legal and human resources combined. Dr. Connolly said she has access to Jon Anderson as much as she wanted. Policy and procedures are very difficult to transition to someone outside. It

would only take one case to put the district in a vulnerable position. Ms. Furtado said that Jon Anderson knows the games and does it well. We have already hired two other lawyers and we have one on staff. I don't see this as a savings, this is not the right move.

The vote was called for Motion 2015-112: {striking in its entirety the separation of legal and human resources.

MOTION FAILED 3 nays: Ahearn,Bachus,Nadeau
2 ayes: Furtado,Medeiros

MOTION 2015-113: Moved by Ms. Ahearn to cut \$174,000 legal services, \$84,000 in special education legal services for a total cut of \$258,000; then adding \$225,000 into the superintendent's budget to outsource legal services as well as \$25,000 for arbitration purposes for a total addition of \$250,000.

MOTION FAILED 3 nays: Furtado, Medeiros, Bachus
2 ayes: Ahearn and Nadeau

MOTION: Moved by Ms. Bachus, that we separate legal and HR and we keep Jon Anderson in the budget for special ed, seconded by Ms. Ahearn.

Mr. Ferrucci pointed out that in the Superintendent's recommended budget includes Jon Anderson and the alternate human resources/legal split. He summarized amended cuts: \$21,005 cut in athletics; \$100,000 in curriculum; \$2,500 in Superintendent's budget; total of \$123,500 approved cuts, which includes the alternate HR/legal split.

MOTION 2015-114: Moved by Ms. Ahearn, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to approve the recommended amended Budget as amended.

MOTION PASSES (3 ayes 2 nays)

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

MOTION 2015-115: Moved to Moved by Ms. Furtado, 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

Meeting adjourned: 11:20 P.M.