

Warwick School Committee Minutes
Meeting June 9, 2015
Open Session

The Warwick School Committee met in Open Session at Toll Gate High School on Tuesday, June 9, 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

MOTION 2015-151: Moved by Ms. Ahearn, 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), (a)(4) and (a)(9).

MOTION PASSES 4-0

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

Open Meeting reconvened at 7:10 p.m.

Administration present: Richard D’Agostino, Dennis Mullen, Lynn Dambruch, Anthony Ferrucci, Rosemary Healey, David LaPlante, Anne Siesel, Sara Monaco

Vote to seal minutes of Executive Session

MOTION 2015-152: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Ms. Medeiros, to seal the Minutes of the Executive Session of June 9, 2015.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Approval of Minutes of Public Session

MOTION 2015-153: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to approve the Minutes of the Open Session for May 5, 2015, May 11, 2015, May 12, 2015, May 18, 2015, May 21, 2015 and May 27, 2015.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Vote of Minutes for the Executive Session

MOTION 2015-154: Moved by Ms. Furtado, and seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to accept the Minutes of the Executive Session for May 12, 2015.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Approval of transfers:

MOTION 2015-155: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to approve the transfers presented to the Committee.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Approval of Warrants

MOTION 2015-156: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to approve the warrants presented to the Committee.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

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Professional Personnel Items

Appointments

MOTION 2015-157: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, that the appointment of **Paul Heatherton**, Program Coordinator for the extended school year program be approved.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Retirements/resignations:

MOTION 2015-158: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, that the **retirement of Robin Polish**, elementary teacher (Greenwood Elementary School) be accepted effective at the end of the 2014-2015 school year; **retirement of Paula Lemarche**, elementary teacher (Cedar Hill Elementary School) be accepted effective at the end of the 2014-2015 school year; **retirement of Susan Perkins-Brillat**, physical education teacher (Aldrich Junior High) be accepted effective at the end of the 2014-2015 school year; that the **retirement of Richard D'Agostino**, Superintendent of Schools, be accepted effective July 13, 2015; and that the **resignation of Thomas Hewes**, social studies teacher (Gorton Junior High) be accepted effective June 9, 2015.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Classified Personnel Items:

Retirements/resignations

MOTION 2015-159: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, that the **resignation of Jennifer Sousa**, bus aide, be accepted effective May 28, 2015.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

The Chair announced that the School Committee has received several recommendations as a result of the investigation completed by Mr. Ragosta. As an outcome of several of these recommendations the School Committee has separated both the legal and human resource role in our district. The School Committee had voted, last Thursday, to hire Mr. Henneous to oversee the legal responsibilities within our school department. Additionally, further recommendations were made concerning policy and contract language reform with the goal of raising awareness of personal conduct with both teachers and students to protect the welfare of our students. These reform items will be addressed by our committee, based on Mr. Henneous' future recommendations, as we continue to analyze the investigation and recommendations and move through this process.

The Chair also announced that regarding the Superintendent search, action will be slated at the next meeting scheduled by the School Committee concerning the superintendent selection process to date. Tonight there will be no committee discussion or action on this topic.

As a parent, one of the first rules of behavior I explained to my children was "treat others as you would want to be treated" – the golden rule per se. Last night during open comment an individual felt it necessary to target decisions I have made for family and my own kids. While I understand that this statement was fueled by emotion, I want to be 100% clear that I will not listen nor will I entertain questions or comments about my family's personal business while serving on this committee.

Pilgrim High School Football Camp – Niantic, CT (August 17th to 20th, 2015)

MOTION 2015-160: Moved by Ms. Ahearn, seconded by Ms. Furtado, approval attendance on August 17th to 20th 2015 for the Pilgrim High School Football Camp in Niantic, Connecticut.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

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Trip to RI National Skills USA Championship Conference – Louisville, Kentucky (June 21st to June 27th, 2015

MOTION 2015-161: Moved by Ms. Ahearn, seconded by Ms. Bachus, approval of the trip to the RI National Skills USA Championship Conference in Louisville, Kentucky June 21st to June 27th, 2015.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Resolution to modify the fair funding formula

MOTION 2015-162: Moved by Ms. Ahearn, seconded by Ms. Furtado, approval of the Resolution to modify the fair funding formula.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF PETITIONING THE RI GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO MODIFY
THE FAIR FUNDING FORMULA TO ADEQUATELY AND REQUITABLE FUND ALL RI SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

RESOLVED, that

Whereas, the RI Fair Funding Formula in principal is based on adequate, fair and equitable funding for all students, and
Whereas, the RI Fair Funding Formula constituted a major step in linking resource allocation to the State's standards on a core instruction amount that adequately and equitably funds student instructional needs as described in the Basic Education Program (BEP); and

Whereas, the current funding formula specifically excludes such BEP mandated costs such as transportation, special education, out of district tuitions, career & technical center out of district tuitions, pension and retirement, building safety, building maintenance and building upkeep from core cost instruction amounts; and

Whereas, Warwick Public Schools for school year 2014-2015 had to budget \$35,313,308 for the above funding formula core instruction cost exclusions; and

Whereas, the State of Rhode Island requires all school districts to calculate local share for charter schools inclusive of requiring school districts to pay one hundred (100) percent of these excluded BEP costs; and

Furthermore, whereas, the current funding formula has addressed a community's socio-economic situation through the inclusion of providing additional funding to communities based on free and reduced lunch, which is referred to as student success factor, and

Whereas, the current funding formula includes a calculation for the state's share, which is referred to as share ration; based upon a community property values, a community's median income and a community's percentage of free and reduced lunch statistics; and

Whereas, the inclusion of both a student success factor and a state share ratio calculation is redundant and favors specific communities over others; and

Whereas, this redundancy of using a community's socio-economic position is contrary to the basic intent of the funding formula, that being adequate and equitable for all students in Rhode Island;

Be it RESOLVED that the Warwick School Committee requests that the Rhode Island General Assembly modify the Fair Funding Formula by:

- 1) Adding those BEP costs currently excluded from the core instruction foundation to the core instruction foundation before determining the state's share of aid to Rhode Island public schools and;
- 2) Eliminate the double accounting of a community's socio-economic position by modifying the student success factor to address a community's socio-economic situation AND replace the current formula used to calculate the state share ratio with a fixed ratio for all Rhode Island public schools and;
- 3) Ensure that the core instructional foundation is adequately determined and funded at the state and local levels, and
- 4) Calculate local share payments to charter Schools by determining each community's per pupil excess local contribution.

The calculation of excess local contribution to be determined by taking the core instructional foundation (inclusive of all BEP costs) and deducting the state share to arrive at a community's core instructional foundation. A community's excess local contribution would then be determined by taking a community's contribution to their school department less the community's core instruction requirement. The community's excess local contribution divided by a community's total enrollment would then determine a community's local share amount that would be payable if a community's child enrolled in a properly authorized Charter School.

Be if FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to members of the Board of Education, Governor Raimondo, Speaker of the House Mattiello, Senate President Paiva-Weed, and the legislative delegation from the city of Warwick, the Warwick City Council and the Honorably Mayor of Warwick Scott Avedisian.

Signed: Ahearn, Nadeau, Medeiros, Furtado, Bachus

Contract award for workers compensation insurance – The Trust Renewal – Mr. Ferrucci reported that we advised the School Committee that the RI Interlocal Trust workers compensation insurance renewal was projected to increase by 19.2%. We planned on seeking alternative proposals. Based on meetings, the only company willing to explore underwriting Warwick Schools was Beacon Insurance and they would be approximately 6% higher than that currently proposed by RI Interlocal Trust. We need this insurance in place and request that the Trust's proposal for renewing workers compensation insurance be approved.

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MOTION 2015-163: Moved by Ms. Ahearn, seconded by Ms. Furtado, approval of the contract award for workers compensation insurance to RI Interlocal Trust.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Contract award for food service – Aramark Annual Renewal – Mr. Ferrucci said that although we have a 5-year contract, we are required to renew annually.

MOTION 2015-164: Moved by Ms. Ahearn, seconded by Ms. Furtado, to award the contract for food service to Aramark.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Closure of Gorton or Aldrich – Ms. Ahearn called for a Motion tabling discussion/action of closure of Gorton or Aldrich –

MOTION 2015-165: Moved by Ms. Medeiros, seconded by Ms. Bachus, to table discussion/action of closure of Gorton or Aldrich.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Discussion: Statement by **Ms. Furtado**: In May of 2013 I was the lone vote in favor of Gorton closure. In December of 2013 I regretfully succumbed to the pressure and tabled the vote on consolidation as presented by a volunteer group of community members that spent years coming up with plans to move this district forward. I welcomed the RFP Committee doing their work to come up with an appropriate bid package to get an outside entity to manage this task. After months of diligent work between SMMA, the school administration staff and stakeholders, plans were formulated and presented over several open meetings. Opinions were given. Plans were questioned. Ultimately this decision comes down to the 5 elected School Committee members. No matter which plan is selected not everyone will be happy. No matter which plan is chosen people will disagree with the school committee, school department and SMMA. The hope is that once a plan is chosen, we all come together as one united community to show our children that as adults we can have difference of opinions and disagreements but that the end result will be a positive step forward for this city.

Ms. Ahearn commented: It was brought to our attention that we had to have RIDE approval within six months before any closure. We looked into this and were advised of what the ruling could be and we decided to table it.

Ms. Medeiros stated: I believe with moving forward with consolidation, but I don't support the tabling of voting to close a school for now. Tabling means it could come up again in a month or six months down the road, so I'm not supporting it.

Call vote the vote “to table” - #2015-165:

Nay: Bachus Medeiros (2)
Aye: Furtado Ahearn Nadeau (3)

Discussion and/or action Consolidation Plan

MOTION 2015-166: Moved by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Furtado, discussion and/or action of Consolidation Plan.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

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The Chair opened the meeting for discussion: Ms. Bachus commented I am the lone person with the opinion to consolidate three (two school) campuses. She read an e-mail sent to the committee by Neena Savage (who was part of the RFP Committee). This e-mail pointed out a number of things: at the June 4th workshop the purpose was to discuss final two Options 5 and 7. Another option (#10) was introduced. Option 7 had the highest score in the review by SMMA. The School Committee unofficially picked Option 5 (although a vote was not listed on the agenda for June 8). She commented that Option 5 (two high schools and two middle schools) would continue the disparity between Toll Gate and Winman and the rest of the city. Option 7 preserves continuity for students and fits with the city's objectives. Ms. Savage's e-mail asked that Option 7 be chosen.

MOTION 2015-167: Call for vote for Option #7.

Nay: Nadeau Medeiros Furtado Ahearn

Aye: Bachus

(4 against 1 for #7)

MOTION 2015-168: VOTE called for Option #5

Aye: Nadeau, Furtado, Medeiros, Ahearn

Nay: Bachus

Option #5 carries – 4 ayes with 1 against

Mr. Frenette was asked to once again explain Option #5 and he responded consolidating to two high schools and two middle schools was known as “option 5 – retire Aldrich and Gorton – conversion of Veterans

FY2015 Monthly Financial Report – Mr. Ferrucci – For the period ending 5/28/15:

Total Revenue received \$155,657,492

Total Expenditures 126,877,393

Total Encumbrances 3,948,815

[Excludes salaries and fringe benefits]

Summary Review of non-salary and fringe benefits costs

| School Committee Approved Budget 7/15/14 | School Committee Revised Approved Budget 8/12/14 | School Committee Revised Approved 9/15/14 | School Committee Revised Approved Budget 3/18/15 |
|--|--|---|--|
| \$25,807,010 | \$ 28,295,510 | \$28,471,510 | \$27,900,763 |
| | Year to date Exp.&Encumber 5/28/15 | Percentage of Non Staff Costs | |
| | \$24,064,787 | 86.3% | |

Bids/Change Orders

MOTION 2015-169: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Ms. Ahearn, that the bid for custodial supplies, in the amount of \$174,170.47 be awarded to the various vendors as per the bid tabulation presented.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Public Comment:

Following is summary of public comment: Ken Genereux you need any help whatsoever – let me know – we need to make sure this process is “open.” Beg you to reopen superintendent search. Nathan Cornell - It's hard to breathe in the atmosphere surrounding the district. Tension is rising up all the time and causing stress. We are supposed to have people working together for the benefit of the students of the city. He supported #7. What happens with the faculty of the closed schools? I'm not finding any answers.

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Ms. Medeiros responded: no one wants teachers to go anywhere. The staff can create programs; we have a chance to create enriched educational programs. Darlene Netcoh said the committee paid to hire the consultant but didn't listen to the recommendation. You need to have a traffic busing study before anything is done. She also asked that the Superintendent search be reopened. A parent said her child would have to get up at 5:30 in the morning to get to school and that you are separating the city into two parts. Mike Pierce, teacher/parent, said you are putting people into a smaller number of buildings to maximize class size and cut teachers as much as you can; you are taking away neighborhood schools, increasing school and class size, and going in the exact opposite direction from where we need to go. Ms. Furtado responded the department can only lay off 20 teachers per year by contract. We are not maximizing class sizes, and if a class does go over the maximum allowed by contract, you get an extra stipend. Mr. Landrie said Mr. Frenette and his firm did a capacity analysis, facility assessment, demographic study, provided several master plans; their professionalism is unmatched. He said he would go with option 7 and you went against his wishes. This is some of the most highly volatile and tumultuous times I've seen in this system. Tracy McDermott remarked when her son was in 6th grade he would be moving up to a middle school, and he is now 25 years old. She said I have been attending budget hearings for 20 years, and at the last budget hearing there were no parents fighting for Chromebooks. Kayleigh, a student at Veterans was concerned about her class schedule for next year if Vets were to close. She is in honors and AP classes, and schedules are already booked. If all the classes are filled because we merge schools, she was concerned she wouldn't be able to transfer classes. Peter Sangiovanni commented on paying \$200,000 for a consultant who gives a plan and also wanted to know what was going on with the superintendent search. Jason Hutton remarked that the Committee has not acted in a respectful manner throughout the process. You tried to close a school against RIDE regulations, that's not being respectful. Students don't know what their classes are or what teams they will be on, that's not being respectful. If you want respect, earn it and be honest, which you have failed to do. An audience member, Katherine, commented that there has been a slight issue with chromebooks, teachers are concerned, and they are not compatible with the smart board. She also asked as we move forward will we continue with SMMA? David Testa said Mr. Frenette was asked for two plans. He felt it was unprofessional for him to give his bias. The investment comes from the City; money has to come from the City. Now, we can either get behind it or fight it. If we fight it, the kids will suffer. If we get behind it, it'll work. He also said the schools cannot be responsible for the bond interest and debt. Meredith said that the amount of money spent on SMMA infuriates her; you are back to the exact plan that we already had. She urged that special ed be thought about as they seem to be the ones that we think about last. Patrick Maloney comment the consultant was to put together two plans and he put the decision in jeopardy by saying his bias. He said Option 7 will give his company more money and I have a problem with that.

MOTION 2015-170: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Ms. Ahearn, to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Meeting adjourned 9:40 p.m.