

Warwick School Committee Minutes  
Meeting June 8, 2015 - Open Session

The Warwick School Committee met in Open Session at Toll Gate High School on Monday, June 8, 2015. Ms. Ahearn called the meeting to order at 6:10 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

Mr. Frenette commented that over the weekend he received an e-mail with a last minute option suggestion to consider. It was creation of one super middle school and two magnet high schools with ninth grade academies (magnet high schools at Toll Gate and Pilgrim and super middle school at Veterans). Aldrich and Gorton Junior High Schools would be closed and Winman Junior High School would be repurposed. This would be one of the largest middle schools in the nation as it would result in a 2,000 student middle school. Discussion and comments followed, i.e. large amount of students at such a developmental time of their life; difficult to have a lot of offerings, what the cost would be if considered; how it would be possible to handle so many students and give them a good education; campus so large trouble keeping it operational. The purpose this evening was to review all possibilities. A motion was called to consider adding Option #10 until we get down to the final decision.

MOTION 2015- 148: Moved by Ms. Ahearn, seconded by Ms. Furtado, to consider adding this Option #10 until we get down to the final decision.

MOTION PASSES (4 ayes 1 nay)

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

Review and discussion of Alternative Plan #5 (creation of 2 middle schools and 2 magnet high schools with 2 ninth grade academies grade 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> (retiring Aldrich Junior High and Gorton Junior High and Alternative Plan #7 (create 3 2-school campuses (middle & high); incorporating grade 6 and reorganization of secondary to magnet schools with 9<sup>th</sup> grade academies – retiring Aldrich and Gorton Junior High Schools). Mr. Frenette reviewed Alternative #7 Pilgrim High Schools Site, the Toll Gate High School Site and the Veterans High School Site. He also presented a benchmarking personnel and dollars chart showing national, Rhode Island and Warwick teachers to total personnel; students/teacher ratio; additional teachers national averages; additional personnel national averages; additional teachers RIDE averages and additional personnel RIDE averages. Bond cost associated with each option were 2 middle and high schools \$112,100,663 (RIDE \$72,865,431); 3 2-school campuses \$142,757,663 (RIDE \$92,792,481) and 2 high schools and 1 super middle school \$112,100,663 (\$72,865,431).

Discussion and comments: Option 7 would require a change in how the current curriculum is delivered by transitioning to project-based learning, utilizing magnet schools and ninth grade academies at the high schools and incorporating sixth grade at the middle schools. Option 7 would move Gorton and Aldrich students to Vets and Pilgrim High School, thereby keeping all three high schools intact and creating three two-school campuses, with middle and high school students sharing one building at Vets and Pilgrim, and Winman and Toll Gate remaining in their current state. Vets and Pilgrim would be divided up to keep middle school students separate from high school students by having separate building entrances, gyms, lunch rooms and library/media centers. This would also mean there would be two sets of administration and two sets of guidance counselors. There would also be no savings on busing since separate bus routes for students would be necessary. Ms. Medeiros said talking about consolidation and moving students, no learning happens in chaos and I am not comfortable talking about reducing staff other than what would happen if we move buildings. Mr. Frenette said according to your current contract it would take over 20 years to get down to State of RI average. Mr. Frenette said magnet schools are schools with a focus or concentration in specialized programming, such as the arts, humanities, STEM, that draw students from all over the district. He said ninth grade academies would function as “a school

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within a school,” where students would have the same team of teachers that work together on lesson plans, which serves to assist students with the transition from middle school to high school. Ms. Furtado commented we do not have parity among our current district.

One audience member asked who would be implementing the option chosen, and Mr. Frenette his company can assist with some or all needs. When asked how long the process would be he answers 5 to 6 years. Another person said she was against having a super junior high school and really didn't think #10 should be considered. Summary of comments: #10 would be a bad decision; in favor of consolidation of 2 high schools and 2 middle; plan would fit in with the City Master Plan; the City built three new fire stations and they should put some money into schools; same curriculum, same content, delivery system would be different; could not imagine anyone with special needs fitting in with a 2,000 school body it would be very stressful; Mr. Testa commenting he felt #10 should be off the table, in his opinion go with #5 or #7 and that the City Master Plan has no consideration for schools and they don't support us; questioned if changes would come as soon as September and Mr. Frenette responded no decision made yet, that decision would not come from him, have to make a decision on the master plan. It was also noted that paper work for closing a school has to be filed with RIDE six months before the closing. There were also comments on solar and wind harvesting. An audience member commented that 2012-2013 numbers have changed, there are new homes being built and we will be needing schools for children. Creating a 2-school system will not have parity. Mr. Genereux commented on the process – first 2 plans then 3. Ms. Ahearn said there is no decision made at this point; we are listening to all the plans, tomorrow on the agenda it will be listed as “action/discussion.” A question was asked why there were no traffic studies. Mr. Frenette responded to do a traffic study of every possibility not possible. He was obligated for two master plans. Mr. Frenette remarked that all graphics and resources will be put on the website. Mr. Frenette was asked what his proposal would be and he said his bias was #7. Another question was about the fire codes.

Ms. Ahearn called for a vote to take Option #10 off the table.

MOTION 2015-149: Moved by Ms. Ahearn, seconded by Ms. Furtado, to take Option #10 off the table.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)  
Bethany A. Furtado – Aye M. Terri Medeiros – Aye  
Eugene A. Nadeau - Aye Karen Bachus - Aye  
Jennifer Ahearn - Aye

MOTION 2015-150: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Ms. Ahearn, to move forward for discussion.

MOTION PASSES (4 ayes 1 nay)  
Bethany A. Furtado – Aye M. Terri Medeiros – Aye  
Eugene A. Nadeau - Nay Karen Bachus - Aye  
Jennifer Ahearn - Aye

Ms. Ahearn we have two different Options #5 and #7 – would each individual member state plan that they would like to go with. Response: Ms. Furtado #5 Ms. Medeiros #5 Mr. Nadeau #5 Ms. Ahearn #5 Ms. Bachus #7 - Move forward with Option 5

Mr. Testa commented he thought this was a workshop and there was no mention of a vote on the agenda. Ms. Ahearn responded we will go over the vote tomorrow night with a formal vote. Mr. Testa asked will the public who turns out tomorrow night have any input – the response was “no.”

MOTION 2015-151: Moved by Ms. Ahearn, 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 at 7:30 p.m.**