

Warwick School Committee Minutes
Meeting October 13, 2015
Open Session

The Warwick School Committee met in Open Session at Toll Gate High School on Tuesday, October 13, 2015. Ms. Ahearn called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE

Jennifer Ahearn, Chair
Eugene A. Nadeau, Vice Chair
M. Terri Medeiros, Clerk
Bethany A. Furtado
Karen Bachus [present at 6:30]

Administration present: Dr. William Holland, Rosemary Healey, Anthony Ferrucci, Lynn Dambruch, Steven Ruscito, David LaPlante, Jennifer Connolly
Attorney Andrew Henneous

MOTION 2015-273: 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), (a)(4) (a)(9).

MOTION PASSES (3-0)

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

Meeting reconvened at 7:05 p.m.

Vote to seal minutes of Executive Session

MOTION 2015-274: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to seal the Minutes of the Executive Session of October 13, 2015.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION 2015-275: Moved by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Furtado, to approve the Minutes of Open Session for September 8, September 14, September 15, September 16, September 21, September 23, 2015.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

MOTION 2015-276: Moved by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Ahearn, to approve the Minutes of Open Session for September 29 and September 30, 2015.

MOTION PASSES (3-2 abstain)

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

[Ms. Furtado and Ms. Medeiros abstained as they were not present at those meetings.]

Approval of Executive Minutes:

MOTION 2015-278: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to approve the Minutes of Executive Session for September 8, September 14, September 15, September 16, September 21, September 23, 2015.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

MOTION 2015-279: Moved by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Ahearn, to approve the Minutes of Executive Session for September 29 and September 30, 2015.

MOTION PASSES (3-2 abstain)

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

[Ms. Furtado and Ms. Medeiros abstained as they were not present at those meetings.]

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Professional appointments/transfers re-assignments

MOTION 2015-280: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, that the appointment of **Stephanie Shields**, Warwick Veterans High School Graduation by Proficiency Coordinator be approved for one year only; that the appointment of **Carol Marginson, McKinney-Vento** transitional advocate at a salary of \$45 per hour, not to exceed 400 hours, be approved subject to the continuing availability of federal funds; that the appointment of **Elise Sefcsik**, elementary librarian, step 10, be approved pending receipt of National and State BCI; and that the appointment of **Jennifer Roy**, assistant administrator of Special Education, step 3 of the Administrative Pay Scale be approved for one year only.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Resignation/retirement

MOTION 2015-281: Moved by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Furtado, that the **retirement of Joseph Paquin**, science teacher at Pilgrim High School be accepted effective November 6, 2015; and that the **resignation of Jennifer Salvias**, psychologist at Greenwood Elementary School be accepted effective October 30, 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 2015-282: Moved by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Furtado, that the **retirement of Ray Corbin**, head custodian at Drum Rock Early Childhood Center be accepted effective October 16, 2015; that the **retirement of Patricia MacDonald**, secretary to the Superintendent, be accepted effective December 18, 2015; that the **retirement of Paula Lavigne**, secretary to the Director of Secondary Education be accepted effective December 18, 2015, that the **retirement of Ellen Cashman**, teacher assistant-Kindergarten at Lippitt Elementary be accepted effective December 18, 2015 and that the **resignation of Gregory Coupe**, programmer-analyst Green Administration Building be accepted effective September 28, 2015.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Coaching appointments:

MOTION 2015-283: Moved by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Furtado, that the appointment of **Tina Seng**, assistant coach girls volleyball at Toll Gate be approved for one year only; that the appointment of **Thomas Doyle**, head coach boys indoor track at Toll Gate be approved; that the appointment of **Jared DeAlmo**, assistant coach girls indoor track at Toll Gate be approved for one year only and that the appointment of **Michael DeCesare**, assistant coach boys basketball at Toll Gate be approved.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Principal transfer to Pilgrim High School for the 2016-2017 school year

Dr. Holland recommended that Gerald Habershaw be transferred to Pilgrim High School as principal for the 2016-2017 school year pending his renewal as principal for the next year.

MOTION 2015-284: Moved by Ms. Ahearn, seconded by Ms. Furtado, to approve the Superintendent's recommendation.

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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Health and Wellness Committee - Ms. Healey recommended the reactivation of the Committee; that Ms. Bethany Furtado be appointed as Chair and that she be delegated to appoint members to serve on the committee to get this committee started once again.

MOTION 2015-285: Moved by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Medeiros, to approve the recommendation of reactivation of the Committee and that Bethany Furtado be appointed Chair.

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

[It was pointed out that transfers and warrants are on this agenda - the Chair called for a vote.]

Approval of transfers:

MOTION 2015-286: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to approve the transfers presented.

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 2015-287: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to approve the warrants presented.

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 Public Relations Consultant - Recommended that Noel Rubinton's services be extended to November 10, 2016 and be approved at his current rate.

**MOTION 2015-285: Moved by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Ms. Furtado, to approve the recommendation.

MOTION PASSES (4 ayes 1 nay)

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

[**Noted for November meeting: this motion should be amended because the extension date should have been November 10, 2015.]

Contract Award for Technology Work Order System – School Dude – Mr. Ferrucci recommended this contract be awarded as it enhances our ability to monitor progress of work orders requested and issued for technology hardware throughout the district. This company currently provides a work order system for maintenance and grounds. The use of this system for technology hardware is recommended. The contract amount is \$13,565.

MOTION 2015-288: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to approve the contract award for technology work order system to School Dude.

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 key cutting machine for physical plant – This contract award is for purchasing a key cutting machine to be used by the physical plant in producing and managing the district's key inventory from Clark Security Products.

MOTION 2015-289: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to approve.

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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Contract award for Gizmo Licenses – science curriculum - Ryan Mullen said this will allow our students access to online science lab simulations. It is recommended that this be awarded in the amount of \$21,712.24 to Explore Learning, LLC for the science program proposed.

MOTION 2015-290: Moved by Ms. Ahearn, seconded by Ms. Furtado, to approve the contract award for Gizmo Licenses (science curriculum).

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Position for sign language interpreter - Dr. Connolly requested the creation of a new teacher assistant (sign language interpreter) position to support a high school student returning to Warwick from an out of district placement. This position will be funded through general funds. It would be posted when it is approved.

MOTION 2015-291: Moved by Ms. Ahearn, seconded by Ms. Furtado, to approve the position for a sign language interpreter

MOTION PASSES (5-0)

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

Monthly Fiscal Report FY 2016

FY2016 Monthly Financial Report – Mr. Ferrucci – For the period ending 9/30/15:

Total Revenue received	\$127,160,257
Total Expenditures	22,040,211
Total Encumbrances	14,106,076

[Excludes salaries and fringe benefits]

Summary Review of non-salary and fringe benefits costs

School Committee Approved Budget 7/15/15	School Committee Revised Approved Budget 7/15/15	School Committee Revised Approved 8/11/15	School Committee Revised Approved Budget
\$25,770,266	\$ 25,945,266	26,795,266	
	Year to date Exp.&Encumber 9/30/15	Percentage of Non Staff Costs	
	\$16,731,788	62.4%	

One trending item of concern is that Charter School Tuitions have exceeded the little contingency amounts budgeted for FY2016. Currently \$115,000 over budget. This issue will be addressed at the November school committee meeting when the year-end projection report is presented.

Bids and change orders – none on the agenda

Information/Proposals – School Committee members

The Chair made the following comments: This school district was truly blessed to come upon Dr. Bill Holland and have him as our Interim Superintendent for the past three months. Bill has truly remarkable leadership skills and has accomplished a tremendous amount here in a short time. He is incredibly empathetic, considerate, calm and unbiased. In his time as superintendent, he made crucial structural assessments and has had an important impact on the relationships of all stakeholders. He is an exemplary professional with a powerful intellect and he harnessed his decades of experience here on behalf of the district. He has always been focused on creating the best outcome for students and his unwavering positivity has helped us all get through some difficult moments. One of Bill's greatest accomplishments was to put us on a fast track to finding a high quality permanent superintendent. His assistance in recruiting and evaluating candidates was enormous. As of October 16th, Bill has stepped away from the district. He has left us in the capable hands of Dr. Phil Thornton, who has the character traits to pick up where Bill leaves off. Bill has been fully committed to his position here, and we feel fortunate that we will still be able to call on him from time to time for his advice. The district wishes Bill all good things as he goes back to his consulting work, not to mention getting back in touch with his wife, children, and grandchildren after such a busy

time here. His time here may have been relatively brief, but his vision will be long. Bill is leaving Warwick schools with new and exciting doors cracked open. Hopefully we all can continue to model the honorable behaviors Bill has shown and keep opening the doors that are required to achieve a communal vision of a “return to prominence” for Warwick schools.

Dr. William Holland’s message: I would like to thank the school committee and other members of the Warwick community for the opportunity to be your interim superintendent for the last three months. It has been a great privilege to serve as your superintendent. It has also been a whirlwind experience. I have seen things in Warwick I have never seen before in 46 years in education. I inherited so many serious problems and challenges in Warwick so fast that at times I wondered why I accepted such a job. After two weeks, I felt like I had been here for two years.

Three months as superintendent is not much time to understand what’s really going on in a school district the size of Warwick. I don’t claim to have all the answers. All I have are perceptions based upon my time here and my prior experiences. If you asked me what title I would give to my last public statement to the Warwick community, I would call it a “Message of Hope.” These were many issues that contributed to the negativity that surrounded the school district when I arrived on July 17th. It wasn’t a warm welcome, and then an unexpected powerful storm that caused a four day power outage didn’t help things either. There is hope, and believe me better times are coming. Even in the past three months, with tremendous effort by many people, progress has been made. More progress will not come easily and it will take a while. But better times are ahead. With a full effort from all parties, the district’s problems are solvable over time. Keeping that in mind, here is a list from my message of hope:

1. I hope that the public, parents, teachers, taxpayers, and politicians will realize the school committee has an extremely difficult job. The committee is focusing on what is best for children while at the same time respecting the need to keep school costs reasonable and affordable for Warwick residents. The school committee is an easy target, in many cases an unfair target. No one knows how hard and long this school committee works at doing what they feel is right. Whether you agree with them or not, they are totally committed people.
2. I hope the school committee’s and school district’s communication with the public improves. This is needed to meet many challenges. We’ve made progress on this in the last few months and there are plans to keep going in this crucial area.
3. I hope people will see the positive value of changing the outdated and outmoded class size weighting system. I understand why parents are concerned but, believe me, I have never heard this school committee say at any time that it wants to increase class size for special education students. Warwick has a fine special education program and will continue to have one. However, it is time to take a good look at old contract language to see if it is the best way programmatically and financially to serve our special education students. We feel the old language is hurting students, denying them their civil right to be in their “least restrictive environment” to quote the federal law. Also, we can adopt better language from other districts’ teacher contracts that will keep our class sizes at the current levels.
4. I hope that consolidation is an impetus for positive change. It is a real opportunity where measurable school improvement can be realized. A tremendous amount of effort in planning for consolidation is underway. That planning needs to keep going but it is essential that there be frequent communications to all parties and that input from the community is sought as implementation plans and details emerge.
5. I hope a contract agreement can be reached through good faith bargaining in the current mediation process. Both sides will lose if the teacher contract goes to arbitration.
6. I hope that greater civility will prevail in public meetings and general discourse in Warwick. Personal and public frontal attacks are often politically motivated or are cases of passion gone astray. I have seen a lot in my career, but what I have observed on this front during my short stay in Warwick I have not seen anywhere else. People tell me, this is Warwick politics, get used to it. Sorry, but this much persistent contentiousness should not be the case. This is Warwick, Rhode Island, a prideful city with a long reputation of being a key part in making Rhode Island a wonderful place for families to live and raise their children. You deserve a more positive, constructive atmosphere. Everyone can do better.
7. I hope the school district leaders and the city council and mayor will exercise patience, let tempers subside, and find ways to reconcile their differences. For example, this is not the time for actions to get rid of the school committee and place the schools under city council control. It is time for healing. The current governance system has lots of room for improvement, but tell me what government system or structure is perfect. Its success depends upon the degree of mutual respect, trust, understanding, and cooperation.
8. Finally, I hope the teacher’s union will seize the opportunity to work collaboratively with the new superintendent, Philip Thornton. I hope there will be the type of dialogue and joint exploration of new ways to usher in a better era in public education, as has happened elsewhere between strong unions and school leaders. As our current contract mediator has told us, it’s like a marriage between school leadership and union leaders where they have to live together. They can’t get divorced. They have to resolve our differences. I call on Dr. Thornton and his leadership team and union leaders to jointly find a collaborative process that works so that we can Warwick schools can return to the glory they once knew and again be education pacesetters in the state.

Dr. Holland thanked his remarkable secretary, Patti MacDonald, all the members of the School Committee for their support and encouragement, John Howell of the *Beacon*, Mayor Scott Avedisian, and the directors and their staff. He said my last words should be Go Warwick! Or better still, Go Warwick Schools! Thank you so much.

Public comment: Brendan Lawton commented that teachers deserve a fair contract and everything they are fighting for is justifiable; increasing class size will hurt the quality of education; and contract negotiations hurting students. Ken Genereux commented on last month's meeting with three members walking out and said it is obvious you intend to create an environment that is not productive and rather than listen you left. Darilyn Gorton commented on class size and student ratio. Darlene Netcoh said in the past the public was allowed to comment – what good does a vote do without hearing from people that may be able to provide additional insight. You should open it up to comment during the meeting so you can vote with an informed opinion. A teacher from Toll Gate commented on the condition of athletic fields. Michael Pierce referencing the consolidation process said you should look at other districts and the amount of planning per school that was in place the year before implementation and the amount of detail that went into it – compare to what is going on here – and asked if we are truly ready. Nathan Cornell remarked that restricting public comment is a bad idea; PR consultant is not necessary; and that a student, parent and teacher should be part of the school committee. David Testa said the school department is a \$160 million enterprise and a communications director is need for something this size.

MOTION 2015-292: Moved by Ms. Ahearn, seconded by Ms. Furtado, 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 8:45 p.m.