

# **NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Block Island School**

**December 7, 2009**

**7:00 P.M.**

**The New Shoreham School Committee met in open session on Monday, December 7, 2009, in the cafeteria of the Block Island School. Chair William Padien called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following members were present: Shea Butcher, Annie Hall, Sean McGarry, William Padien, and Richard Tretheway. Mr. Hicks was also in attendance.**

## **Discussion of Administrative Structure**

**Mr. Hicks went over the highlights from the first meeting regarding the administrative structure, including the importance of the individual in a position, who is in charge, how do we know it is working, and lack of continuity during turnover. This evening he intended to clarify the requirements when hiring Rhode Island retirees, perspectives on the current structure from principals, faculty, and superintendent, and other options available.**

**The Employees Retirement System of Rhode Island places limits on the employment of retirees. They may substitute for up to 90 days or be hired for a position that totals no more than 90 days if the district certifies it has searched and made a good faith effort to find a non-retiree. This certification must be done annually, but there is**

disagreement as to whether a search must be done each year. Some districts post the positions every year, while others do not. A ruling has been requested of ERSRI, but no decision has been forthcoming. It has been left up to the local community to interpret the statute on whether a position has to be posted, but the certification must be signed each year. Mr. Hicks would like to ask our attorney for an opinion on this issue.

From the principals' perspective strengths include experience; breadth of knowledge, skills, approaches; compatible working relationship; and no health care or retirement payments. Weaknesses include the 90-day limit and how to have days to work in the summer; second hand information; and time lapse between work days and getting things done. Ms Improta stated that having two principals provides a lot more energy and the ability to handle the day to day things. However, they spend the first day back catching up and dealing with what is on the table for those days. Long range items are more difficult to handle.

The faculty favors the current model because of the stability. The loss of one is not a loss of all. They also like the diversity and the position is attractive to those who are competent and experienced. The concerns include needing a vehicle for faculty input, clear roles and responsibilities, summer requirements; what happens in the absence of the administrators, and policy protocol. Having two principals would necessitate more policy requirements to ensure that

nothing falls through the cracks. Kristine Monje stated that the faculty was looking for a transition document that would spell out in writing what happens when one administrator leaves and a new one is hired.

Strengths from Mr. Hicks' perspective include the depth of experience and skills that are unlikely to be available in one person and the backup, support, and schedule flexibility that provides excellent coverage. Weaknesses include the lack of consistent, daily leadership and who would take care of the summer work.

Mr. Hicks feels that the options include advertising broadly and then deciding which model to use depending on the applicants; keeping the split position; returning to a single, full-time principal; or creating a single superintendent/principal position. He asked if there were other options not yet considered.

The cost differential between having one full-time principal and two part-time, retired principals is approximately \$12,000. Mr. Hicks took into account salaries, retirement and benefit costs, travel, housing, and summer work.

It was suggested that the part-time principals be limited to 75-80 days during the school year to enable them to have days remaining for summer work. This would require additional coverage during the school year, which could be done by reallocating people. When

asked if it would be problematic to have the superintendent in the building when the principals are not working, faculty members stated they would prefer to have someone in the building who could handle the day-to-day issues. Mr. Canole reported that currently there are five people on staff with administrative certificates and perhaps schedules could be adjusted to cover all of the school days so days are left to address the summer work. Ms Improta cautioned that using the guidance counselor as a principal could be confusing for the students. Others suggested that a third person could be the long-term project person. Another concern was going back to one person filling two positions, including superintendent/principal or special education director/principal.

Mr. Hicks suggested that when we advertise for a principal or principals, we wait to see who applies before deciding which model would be best. Most would like to continue with the part-time superintendent and two part-time principals. However, to keep this model the weaknesses would have to be addressed, including coverage during summer. It was stated that there could be enough work during the summer to keep someone busy five days each week, but it would really depend on the initiatives that need to be worked on, planning for professional development, extended school year coverage, scheduling, etc.

William Padien stated that it appeared that most were on the same page in wanting to keep the current administrative model. A decision

**will be made at the School Committee meeting scheduled for Monday, December 21.**

### **Executive Session**

**A motion (Padien, Butcher) at 8:23 p.m. to go into executive session pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws 42-46-4, 5(a)(2) for contract negotiations carried with a vote of 5-0.**

### **Open Session**

**A motion (Padien, Hall) at 8:56 p.m. to return to open session carried with a vote of 5-0.**

**A motion (Padien, Hall) to seal the executive session minutes carried with a vote of 5-0.**

### **Adjournment**

**A motion (Padien, Butcher) at 8:57 p.m. to adjourn carried with a vote of 5-0.**

**Marsha L. Gutierrez, Clerk**

**Date approved: December 21, 2009**