

REGULAR NORTH PROVIDENCE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

APRIL 23, 2008

The North Providence School Committee met on April 23, 2008 at 5:30 p.m. in the Library at the High School. Members present were Chairman Martinelli, Mr. DaSilva, Mr. Cataldi, Mrs. Reall, Mr. Iannetta, and Mr. Palmieri. Also present was Superintendent Ottaviano and Mr. Scungio. Ms. Celona, Dr. Gerardi, Mr. Lynch and Mr. Milazzo were present for the regular session only. Mr. Marciano was not in attendance.

Motion by Mr. Iannetta, seconded by Mrs. Reall and carried to recess the regular session and go into Executive Session at 5:45 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a Student Legal Matter, Legal Advice re: Administrator's Contract, Discussion on Bus Extension and Oil Contract Extension, and Smart Bus.

The meeting reconvened at 6:35 p.m. It began by saluting the flag. Next, Chairman Martinelli asked for a moment of silence.

Next was the Chair to Report Out Any Votes Taken In Executive Session. Chairman Martinelli reported that there were no votes taken in Executive Session.

Next was Correspondence. Chairman Martinelli turned the meeting over to Mrs. Reall for acknowledging teachers. Mrs. Reall stated that

she would like to call attention to two of our outstanding teachers a former colleague, Marianne Quinterno, reading specialist and Janine Napolitano are being honored by RI College as outstanding alumni at a dinner at Rhode Island College on May 8th, 2008. She felt it is important to bring out this positive information. She turned the meeting over to Dr. Gerardi. Dr. Gerardi spoke about how rare it is to see two alums being honored from one area as outstanding alumni. He spoke about working very closely with both of them and he felt that they are both teacher leaders in the area of literacy.

The next Item on the Agenda was Superintendent's Report. First was the Field Trip Requests. Superintendent Ottaviano turned the meeting over to Dr. Gerardi, who read the list of requests and recommended approval of the Field Trip Requests as submitted and in accordance with School Committee Policy.

Motion by Mr. Iannetta, seconded by Mr. DaSilva and carried to approve the Field Trip Requests as submitted and in accordance with School Committee Policy.

Next was Smart Bus. Superintendent Ottaviano spoke about the legal agreement drawn up by legal counsel and signed. The driver surveys have been returned. Once the surveys are entered, the best routes will be determined. There is also a Bill in House Finance which is expected to be approved in June.

Next was the Monthly Financial Report. Superintendent Ottaviano

recommended approval of the Monthly Financial Report as submitted.

Motion by Mr. Iannetta, seconded by Mrs. Reall and carried to approve the Monthly Financial Report as submitted.

Next was School Committee Reports. Mr. DaSilva spoke about the issue of school security. He felt that the High School should be used as a measuring stick. He talked about the vestibule being controversial and about the bid award to the most responsive and responsible bidder. There were some allegations that the fact that it should have been cheaper, but no one bid. He also talked about what would have happened if someone had an incident. He felt that the School Committee did the right thing and that we will continue to do the right thing in the other schools and the middle schools and would like to see the same model used so that when someone comes in, they will have to show ID and they are escorted into the school. He also reassured everyone that the same models are in Ricci and Birchwood and the elementary schools. He asked the Committee to continue to ensure that all visitors are stopped and checked in and that they must show ID's and be escorted. He felt that the model used at the High School is working and that we need to tighten up. Superintendent Ottaviano said that there is a meeting with the administrators tomorrow and she will go over the procedures again. Mrs. Reall added that she is at the schools all the time. The doors are locked at all times. It is like getting into Fort Knox. Mr. DaSilva also felt that we should tighten up the procedure for PE and recess.

Next was Letter Re: Colleague. Mr. DaSilva stated that as a favor to Mrs. Reall, he is withdrawing this item.

Next was Public Comments on Agenda Items 3-5. Chairman Martinelli asked if there were any comments. Lucille Dellasanta, principal at Ricci Middle School spoke about school security and PE and the procedure the gym teachers follow. Also, they do not have recess.

Next was Requests to Address the Committee. Mr. Burke introduced himself as a resident and President of the Taxpayers Association. He asked for the answers to the Request regarding the hiring practices. Chairman Martinelli deferred remarks to legal counsel. Mr. Scungio explained that the Committee considered the information provided and the questions that it was given to them. They reviewed them and felt that no further action should be taken. He added that no information is accessible to the public regarding any personnel matter. The Committee considered the issues in Executive Session. Chairman Martinelli added that the matter was deferred to legal counsel.

Next was the Football Incident. Mr. Burke asked for a copy of the report. Chairman Martinelli explained to Mr. Burke that he must submit a written request for the copy.

However, the names would have to be blocked out on the report. Mr.

Burke thanked the Committee for their time.

Next was New Business. First was Resignations. Superintendent Ottaviano recommended approval of the resignation of Michael Whittet, NPHS Assistant Football Coach effective March 29, 2008.

Motion by Mr. Iannetta, seconded by Mr. Palmieri and Mrs. Reall and carried to accept the resignation of Michael Whittet, NPHS Assistant Football Coach effective March 29, 2008.

Next was Retirements. Superintendent Ottaviano spoke about the distinguished service records of the two retirees and recommended approval of the retirement requests by Krina Cavallaro – Grade 4 – Whelan School (Pursuant to Article VI Section 10) effective at the end of the 2007/08 School Year and Nancy Iafra, North Providence High School – English Teacher (Pursuant to Article VI Section 10) effective at the end of the 2007/08 School Year.

Motion by Mr. DaSilva, seconded by Mrs. Reall and Mr. Iannetta and carried to accept the retirement of Krina Cavallaro as submitted.

Motion by Mr. DaSilva, seconded by Mrs. Reall and Mr. Iannetta and carried to accept the retirement of Nancy Iafra as submitted with regret.

Mr. Iannetta commented that he worked with Nancy for thirty-four

years and commended her for her dedication and service and wished her good luck in her retirement. Mrs. Reall piggybacked Mr. Iannetta's comments and added that she is a wonderful teacher who always went the extra mile and gave of her time. She was a wonderful role model.

Next was Appointments. Superintendent Ottaviano recommended that the Committee grant advice and consent to the appointments, which were voted on as follows:

Motion by Mr. DaSilva, seconded by Mr. Iannetta and Mrs. Reall and carried to grant advice and consent to the appointment of Crystal Bozigian – NPHS Mock Trial Advisor Effective the 2008-2009 School Year.

Motion by Mr. DaSilva, seconded by Mrs. Reall to grant advice and consent to the appointment of Mary Read – Account and Finance Controller effective April 28, 2008. Mr. Palmieri stated that he has nothing personal against Mary Read. However, 1.2 million dollars was cut from the School Department Budget. He felt that he would have a problem approving a position that we have been doing without for eight months and would like to know where the cuts are coming from. Mr. DaSilva stated that he understands what Mr. Palmieri is saying. However, this position is required by the auditor. It is not a new position. It is the same money and the position was upgraded. He felt that what we do in the central administration office is

important to the students too. He felt that the position will help make the district strong. Mrs. Reall felt that the position has been open for almost a year. It was recommended by the auditor general. Also, the district is starting a new chart of accounts as a pilot program and Ms. Celona is working very hard to coordinate between the municipal side and the school district and one person cannot do the job. It would be taking a step backwards instead of moving forward into the 21st century. Mr. Palmieri made a motion to postpone the appointment. He also asked if the auditor general is prepared to pay for the position. He added that Linda Celona could continue to do the job. Superintendent Ottaviano spoke about the fact that the duties of the position are not part of Linda's duties and that the position is a 1033 position. This position is a checks and balance position. It is an assistant to the Finance Director. It is not a new position. Mr. Palmieri asked Superintendent Ottaviano where the cuts are coming from. Mrs. Reall reminded Mr. Palmieri that Mrs. Celona has been doing "double duty" and is putting in a lot of hours and there is a very high price for doing this job. It is easy to say she should continue to do the job but it is at a very high price to her. Mr. Palmieri felt that he is not opposed to this position but would like to know where the cuts are coming from before approving a position. Chairman Martinelli agreed with Mr. Palmieri. He spoke about the fact that only two Committee members, he and Mr. Palmieri, spoke at the Council budget hearing and fought hard to get the money needed. He felt that it is hard to put in a sixty thousand dollar position, including benefits, when the budget was cut 1.2 million dollars. He also spoke

about there being an issue with the union and this position. Mr. DaSilva felt that someone in the audience knows about the union issue. He asked if there was anyone that has any information. Lucille Valliere, the union steward, stated that she is not aware of any issue and that she never heard anything from the taxpayers association. The Union has worked with the finance department and the Union and negotiation team and there is no problem with the position. Chairman Martinelli stated that his information was that there were members of the Union that are not in agreement. Lucille said that there was one person who felt that the position should be kept as the secretary to the Finance Director. However, this position is entirely different. There was one member that was upset out of ninety three members. Kenneth Ciccerone introduced himself as a member of the Taxpayers Association and stated that they were told that the position was not approved by the Union members and that it was done behind the members backs. The secretary position was not filled and this position was not approved by the members. Mrs. Reall asked for a roll call vote.

Mrs. Reall, aye; Mr. DaSilva, aye; Mr. Palmieri, nay; Mr. Iannetta, abstained; Chairman Martinelli, abstained. The motion carried by a majority vote of the Committee. Members of the Committee offered congratulations to Mary Read. Chairman Martinelli assured Mary that it has nothing to do with her and that it is all about the money.

Motion by Mr. Iannetta, seconded by Mr. Palmieri and carried to grant advice and consent to the appointment of Paul Rizzo – NPHS

Assistant Baseball Coach effective April 24, 2008. Mr. DaSilva abstained from voting on the appointment because his son plays baseball on the team.

Next was Old Business. Mr. Milazzo spoke about a project that the district is going to be undertaking that has to do with energy. He spoke about the lighting in the boys gym. We will realize a savings of thirty-five dollars per fixture. He felt that he would like to start this project and take it out of the capital improvements. The project will cost approximately five thousand dollars and will save fifteen hundred dollars in the first year. Mrs. Celona added that this is a capital improvement and we will be entitled to reimbursement between 32 and 35 percent from the State.

Mr. DaSilva asked about the other gyms. Mr. Milazzo stated that he is looking to start in the boys gym. Chairman Martinelli added that he has been complaining about the electric bills for three and a half years and is glad it is finally getting done. Mr. Palmieri felt that we have a list of fire code violations and asked about the fire escape for McGuire School. Mr. Palmieri felt that the fire stuff needs to be done before anything else. Mr. Milazzo stated that this project was being taken out of the capital improvement budget. Mrs. Reall spoke about the Building Committee and the list of things that the School District can afford to do. The abatement lead paint issue is brand new and nothing can be done until the lead is out. Mr. Palmieri stated that he personally cannot approve anything else until the other work is done.

Mrs. Reall clarified that this is from this years' budget. Chairman Martinelli stated that we are moving forward with the fire escapes, the bleachers, and the bathrooms. This is an energy-efficient project. We need to try to do as much as we can do.

Motion by Mrs. Reall, seconded by Mr. DaSilva to approve the energy project as presented. Mrs. Reall asked for a roll call vote. Mrs. Reall, aye; Mr. DaSilva, aye; Mr. Palmieri, nay; Mr. Iannetta, aye; Chairman Martinelli, aye as long as we are going forward with the other projects. The motion carried by a vote of 4 to 1.

Next was Use of Property Requests. Superintendent Ottaviano recommended approval of the Use of Property Requests as submitted.

Motion by Mr. DaSilva, seconded by Mrs. Reall and carried to approve the Use of Property Requests as submitted.

Next was Approval of Bills. Superintendent Ottaviano recommended approval of the List of Bills as presented.

Mr. Palmieri felt that the format for the List of Bills is great. He felt that he would like an itemized list of the expenditures for the past few years itemized by activity date. Mr. DaSilva spoke about legal services and asked Mr. Scungio to comment. Mr. Palmieri asked if there is a problem with the legal matter being paid for. Mr. Scungio

asked for clarification of the question. He asked if the question was whether or not it is appropriate for the School Committee to pay for legal services? He stated that it is appropriate when a complaint is filed against the School Committee. If an ethics complaint is filed against someone, then he/she would have to hire private counsel. Mr. Palmieri asked if the Committee has ever been billed for this type of expenditure. Mr. Scungio stated that there have been similar expenditures.

Next was Approval of Minutes.

Motion by Mr. DaSilva, seconded by Mrs. Reall and carried to approve the Minutes of the March 26, 2008 Executive Session as presented and kept closed in accordance with R.I.G.L. 42-4-4 and 42-4-5.

Motion by Mr. DaSilva, seconded by Mrs. Reall and carried to approve the Minutes of the March 26, 2008 Regular North Providence School Committee Meeting as presented.

Mr. DaSilva asked if the recorder was purchased and whether or not it was being used. The clerk stated that it was recording the meeting. Mr. DaSilva felt that the minutes for the March 26, 2008 were sparse.

Next was Public Comments on Agenda Items 7-12. Mr. DaSilva spoke about the full day kindergarten item and referred to page six of the March 23, 2008 Minutes and asked about the ad hoc committee.

He asked again for the Chairman to appoint an ad hoc committee. Chairman Martinelli stated that the Committees were put together by the former Chairman. Mr. Palmieri stated that he would love to be on the Committee if Donna puts the money in the budget. Chairman Martinelli asked for volunteers. Mr. DaSilva volunteered.

Motion by Mrs. Reall, seconded by Mr. Iannetta and carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald Iannetta