

**MINUTES**  
**WEST WARWICK SCHOOL COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING**  
**APRIL 25, 2013**  
**WEST WARWICK PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**  
**10 Harris Avenue**  
**5:00 P.M.**

*This meeting was called to order by Sean M. Murphy, Chairman.*

**Members Present:** Sean M. Murphy, Chairperson  
Elizabeth B. Brunero, Vice-Chairperson  
Joseph Florio, Jr.

**Members Absent:** Christopher R. Messier, Clerk  
Stephen H. Lawton

**School Committee Liaison/  
Consultant Present:** James A. Williamson, Jr.

**Administrators Present:** Kenneth M. Sheehan, Superintendent of Schools  
Margaret Baker, Director of Financial Operations  
Paul Vigeant, Director of Special Education and  
Pupil/Personnel Services

**Recording Secretary:** Michelle M. Colozzo

**1. Open Session**

**Open Session**

Mr. Murphy opened the meeting at 5:15 P.M.

**2. Roll Call**

**Roll Call**

The following members were present:  
Mr. Murphy, Mrs. Brunero, and Mr. Florio.  
Mr. Lawton and Mr. Messier were absent.

**3. Discussion/Action:  
Superintendent Search  
Procedure**

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Procedure**

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Mr. Murphy began by saying as you know, we have to get started as soon as possible; everyone has had time to read over the Superintendent search process—does anyone have any questions or concerns? Mr. Florio stated he had questions on the four central office people—should we have four—if we are trying to whittle down the list, can't they whittle it down for someone to represent them?

Mr. Sheehan responded the reason why there are four of them is because not one of them would have the propensity to answer questions which are not in their area of expertise; for example, Paul Vigeant cannot answer questions with regard to finances, and Maggie Baker couldn't answer questions with regard to Special Education or Human Resources. Ken Townsend would represent Property Services and transportation, and Jim Monti would represent the Technology Department and also the education reform piece and compliance issues regarding Race to the Top.

Mr. Murphy asked you feel comfortable having a student on board, and Mr. Williamson said yes; he has a student in mind who has been accepted to Brown and from the things he has witnessed of this student over the past few years, he feels comfortable.

Mr. Murphy asked are there two West Warwick Teachers' Alliance members because they are the larger union? Mr. Williamson replied that one is a union representative and one is a faculty member. He said Council 94 is about 25-30% of their size; and he had spoken to the president, and he was comfortable with that. Mr. Florio asked if we can come down to one on the West Warwick Teachers' Alliance side. Mr. Williamson reiterated the reason for this is one is a union representative and one is a faculty member.

Mr. Murphy asked about the PDA—who are the members? Mr. Sheehan named the following individuals: Audra McPhillips, Pat D'Alfonso, Paul Bovenzi, Jim Monti, the Executive Director, and Dana Papitto, who is the Drop Out Prevention and Mentor

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Program coordinator. Mr. Williamson said his intention is to ask Audra McPhillips. Mr. Murphy said he doesn't know if everyone is comfortable with a total of 14 people on this committee.

Mr. Williamson said his goal would be more to develop a consensus rather than it come down to a 3 to 2 type of thing.

Mr. Florio asked about one School Committee member on the Search Committee – will Sean be at all the meetings? Mr. Williamson said what we did the last time is we had one person from the School Committee because ultimately the entire process is turned over to the School Committee. This group is only going to take it so far—it will advertise, screen, interview, and recommend to the School Committee.

Mr. Murphy said there are 14 representatives on this committee—if there is any vote, everything is weighted and measured. Mr. Murphy asked if Mr. Williamson will have any say—he thought he would get everything going but not have a say.

Mr. Sheehan asked what specifically is that panel doing. Mr. Williamson answered: a) we will get together and agree on the process—what we are going to put out there such as requiring a resume, letters of recommendation; b) advertise, and c) collect and screen, to the point where it is turned over to the School Committee.

Mr. Sheehan stated after this is done and a preliminary interview of let's say 9 or 10 people has taken place, at that time, the committee will forward x number of candidates for the five members of the School Committee to choose the next superintendent.

Mr. Williamson pointed out that the Search Committee would be as specific as the School Committee would like them to be.

Mr. Sheehan explained because you only have a five-member School Committee, if you have more than one School Committee person in this beginning process, and there are two people getting together looking at

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one candidate, they only have to influence one other member of the School Committee, and they in fact will have chosen the Superintendent. That's why when you do it, the person on the School Committee doesn't necessarily have to be the chair. That person is there to report back as to the process and the purpose is to make sure the process is adhered to by the School Committee—that's why there should only be one member.

Mr. Murphy said I have had three members speak to me that they want to see fewer people on this; and not only do I want to honor their input, but I think every person plays a specific role.

Mr. Sheehan asked if they are trying to shrink the committee, who do they want taken off? Mr. Murphy said that's why the liaison should not have a vote, so in fact this committee is really 13. Mrs. Brunero indicated we only want one member of the School Committee. Mr. Murphy said he thinks it's important we stay with one member and that person will stay in touch with him—he is not on it.

Mr. Murphy summarized that today the School Committee is discussing and voting on the process; then the people will be asked to be on this sub-committee—we have to make sure it fits in with their schedules. Mr. Sheehan advised that when you come down and interview three to five finalists, don't look at it that it's the final interview—you may need to have another interview and pare down from five semi-finalists to two or three finalists. You may choose to do that because people are close or you have some other questions you need to ask; and you may have to do a third interview.

Mr. Williamson suggested if he is going to be the facilitator of this process, let's say there are five candidates and it's close, he would maybe then suggest to the committee you might want to say how it went down and how you might want to go forward from there. Mr. Williamson said depending on how

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the first stage goes, he thinks that will drive how the rest of the process goes.

Mr. Sheehan explained you can create the questions; in the last round, they will be very different from the other questions, they can separate the candidates, because ultimately you should be seeing what the strengths, characteristics, and skill levels are that you want from the next superintendent; and if you ask those questions, a candidate should emerge. You don't know how many people will be in the semi-finalist group—you may see one person has emerged. Mr. Murphy said if we end up by June 1<sup>st</sup>, we would have a month to get the person in.

Mr. Florio said when the school committee representative brings back information for discussion, they can also bring back their point of view.

Mr. Sheehan highlighted the importance of the timeline, because the person who is the candidate is probably under contract somewhere else and may not be able to start July 1<sup>st</sup>. If you can get them within a month and get ready for June 1<sup>st</sup>, that person can give 30 days. Mr. Sheehan noted that he has just signed a 150 day clause in Attleboro if he will not be renewing his contract.

### MOTION

**MOTION MADE BY ELIZABETH B. BRUNERO THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE PROCESS FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH COMMITTEE WITH THE CAVEAT THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE LIAISON DOES NOT HAVE VOTING PRIVILEGES BUT WILL BE THE FACILITATOR OF THIS PROCESS.**

Motion seconded by Joseph Florio, Jr. The following members voted in the affirmative: Joseph Florio, Jr., Elizabeth B. Brunero, and Sean M. Murphy. Motion passed 3 to 0.

## 4. Adjournment

### Adjournment

### MOTION

**MOTION MADE BY ELIZABETH B. BRUNERO THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN THE MEETING.** Motion seconded by Joseph

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Florio, Jr. The following members voted in the affirmative: Joseph Florio, Jr., Elizabeth B. Brunero, and Sean M. Murphy. Motion passed 3 to 0.

Meeting adjourned at: 5:34 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

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Elizabeth B. Brunero, Vice-Chairperson

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Michelle M. Colozzo, Recorder