

School Committee Minutes

June 19, 2013

Page 2 of 10

GENERAL LAWS 42-46-4 AND 42-46-5, SUBSECTION (a) PARAGRAPH 1. Motion seconded by Stephen H. Lawton. The following members voted in the affirmative: Christopher R. Messier, Stephen H. Lawton, Joseph Florio, Jr., and Sean M. Murphy. Motion passed 4 to 0.

4. Executive Session

Executive Session

a) Personnel

5. Return to Open Session

Return to Open Session

6. Roll Call

Roll Call

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

7. Motion to Close Executive Session Minutes

Motion to Close Executive Session Minutes

MOTION

MOTION MADE BY CHRISTOPHER R. MESSIER THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE CLOSE THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES. Motion seconded by Stephen H. Lawton. The following members voted in the affirmative: Joseph Florio, Jr., Stephen H. Lawton, Christopher R. Messier, and Sean M. Murphy. Motion passed 4 to 0.

8. Consent to Superintendent's Appointments

Consent to Superintendent's Appointments

a) Maisie E. Quinn School Principal/Assistant Special Education Director

Mr. Sheehan said as you recall at the last meeting in June, we had tabled this appointment for some consideration. He said he is back here to recommend Brian Ackerman to the position of Principal/Assistant Special Education Director at Maisie E. Quinn School.

MOTION

MOTION MADE BY JOSEPH FLORIO, JR. THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPOINT BRIAN ACKERMAN TO THE POSITION OF PRINCIPAL/ASSISTANT SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR AT MAISIE QUINN

School Committee Minutes

June 19, 2013

Page 3 of 10

SCHOOL. Motion seconded by Christopher R. Messier, for discussion.

Mr. Sheehan said he would like to introduce Brian Ackerman, a resident of Lincoln, who has a Master's Degree in School Administration from Rhode Island College and also has a Master's Degree in Special Education from Rhode Island College. He did his undergraduate work at Syracuse and received a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science. He is currently a Special Education teacher in Exeter-West Greenwich, and he has worked in Warwick as a Behavior Specialist.

The following members voted in the affirmative: Stephen H. Lawton, Christopher R. Messier, Joseph Florio, Jr., and Sean M. Murphy. Motion passed 4 to 0.

The School Committee congratulated and welcomed Brian Ackerman.

Mr. Sheehan said as discussed previously, there will be a contract which will be amended as discussed no later than tomorrow, and Mr. Ackerman will receive a telephone call when it is ready.

Mr. Sheehan noted that we are continuing to bring more programs to Quinn—now we are going to be up to 8 or 9. We also have a Briggs program and they pay. We pay a reduced tuition for West Warwick kids to go there. Currently we had an administrator and Assistant to the Special Education director who was retired and was paid a stipend to do that for 90 days; the problem is we need to have a principal in charge for our parents, students, and teachers; but we also need to evaluate the eight or nine teachers who are there. What ends up happening is that funding for this comes from IDEA or the Federal Government, so we have two positions; one is the Assistant Special Education Director.

School Committee Minutes

June 19, 2013

Page 4 of 10

b) Teachers – ESL Summer School Program

Mr. Sheehan recommended that the School Committee give advice and consent to the appointments of the following certified staff as Teachers in the ESL Summer School Program: Tracy Thornbury and Sharon Jochmann.

MOTION

MOTION MADE BY JOSEPH FLORIO, JR. THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE GIVE ADVICE AND CONSENT TO THE APPOINTMENTS OF THE FOLLOWING CERTIFIED STAFF AS TEACHERS IN THE ESL SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM: TRACY THORNBURY AND SHARON JOCHMANN.

Motion seconded by Stephen H. Lawton. The following members voted in the affirmative: Christopher R. Messier, Stephen H. Lawton, Joseph Florio, Jr., and Sean M. Murphy. Motion passed 4 to 0.

9. Approval: Copier Lease for Production Center Copy Machines

Approval: Copier Lease for Production Center Copy Machines

Mr. Sheehan recommended that the School Committee accept the lease copier bid for the production center. He said Mrs. Baker is here to provide you with any additional information if necessary.

MOTION

MOTION MADE BY JOSEPH FLORIO, JR. THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE COPIER LEASE FOR THE PRODUCTION CENTER COPY MACHINES. Motion seconded by Stephen H. Lawton. The following members voted in the affirmative: Christopher R. Messier, Stephen H. Lawton, Joseph Florio, Jr., and Sean M. Murphy. Motion passed 4 to 0.

10. Budget Workshop

Budget Workshop

Mr. Murphy said he received a phone call yesterday about the Town Council meeting with Rosemary Booth-Gallogly, and Mr. Sheehan said they met

School Committee Minutes

June 19, 2013

Page 5 of 10

yesterday. Mr. Murphy said first and foremost, he is wondering why no one was there to represent the biggest part of the town budget. Mr. Sheehan said that is the exact same point he and Mrs. Baker made. Mr. Sheehan said he knows Mr. Gosselin is going to be here, and Mr. Murphy said he is going to tell us what was said.

Mr. Murphy said Mr. Gosselin said one of the questions raised was why isn't the school committee opening up contracts, and another was why are they asking for \$500,000. Mr. Sheehan said we would have had the answers to those questions. Mr. Murphy noted that five years ago, our budget was \$54 million, and now we are operating with \$3-1/2 million less. Mr. Sheehan said that the School Committee has already cut \$1.5 million from this budget.

Mr. Sheehan said that this past September 26th, a letter was sent to Rosemary Booth-Gallogly, Dennis Hoyle, the Town Council, and Mike Stampfler; and they never told us they had a problem with it.

Mr. Murphy noted that our teachers have gone from 3rd to 28th in the state, and we maybe have the lowest paid administrators in the entire state.

Mr. Lawton noted that he has been receiving phone calls; there is a lot of confusion out there about the tax increase. He said what needs to be done is some type of e-mail or public relations flyer with the correct information—exactly what it will mean for the town.

Mr. Sheehan said that the state doesn't care about keeping the library open; they don't care about the sports program or accreditation; they care about paying money towards the pension—they have no vested interest in those other things—Rosemary Booth-Gallogly has said that.

Mrs. Baker said she has asked since she came here in September exactly what the school department's piece of the pension is, and they have not provided that. Mr. Sheehan said our pension contribution is caught up to date and what Mrs. Baker wants to know is what

School Committee Minutes

June 19, 2013

Page 6 of 10

is the split—will our people be paid their pensions because we have paid our contributions.

Mr. Sean Doyle, President of the West Warwick Teachers' Alliance, stated that with all due respect to Mr. Gosselin, he would like to hear from Rosemary Booth-Gallogly directly. Mr. Sheehan said just by virtue of the fact that Rosemary Booth-Gallogly and Dennis Hoyle did not invite the school department, the school department is treated no differently than the police or fire as viewed by the state.

The School Committee discussed what could possibly happen if the state were to come in.

Mr. Sheehan told the School Committee your job tonight is if you don't get the 4%, you are \$558,000 short right now, if you don't get it because the town won't give it to you. He said the law says within five days of the referendum vote, if you know you are going to be in deficit, you have five days to produce a corrective action plan and submit it to the Town Council for approval. If the Town Council approves it, it goes to the Auditor General for approval. If they reject the plan, you have a decision to make: go back with another plan, or knowing you are going to be in deficit, you need to file a Caruolo action.

Mr. Sheehan said the question is what are some of those things that can equate to \$558,000. He said everything in the budget currently refers to law, regulation or contract. If in fact you seek to reduce the \$558,000, you are in fact saying which one of those three are we going to violate? Mr. Sheehan said Rosemary Booth-Gallogly will interpret it in a certain way because if they come in as a receiver, you don't have contracts anymore. Mr. Murphy said the state is violating because they are supposed to be funding mandates. Mr. Sheehan said that you receive \$20 million from the state called educational funding; if you don't do the mandates and choose to operate like that, they say no more funding.

School Committee Minutes

June 19, 2013

Page 7 of 10

Mr. Murphy said for the record maybe we should receive \$21 million and the legislature should have taken all that into consideration when they gave Curt Schilling a \$75,000 loan. Mr. Sheehan said they say the state funding formula is to pay for mandates. Mr. Murphy said there is no proper formula because it varies from district to district. Mr. Sheehan said they say if you don't do the mandates, they can hold back state aid. Mrs. Baker added if we don't make the state retirement contribution, they hold the state aid until we pay it.

The School Committee discussed deferring the town pension payment until the end of the year. Mr. Messier asked how funded is our pension program? Mr. Sheehan responded ours is completely funded as of this date—we paid \$2.7 million last year. He said there is enough money in the town's pension fund for about 2-1/2 years; after that the town will have to fund the pensions directly.

Mr. Doyle said part of his concern is that they have former bargaining unit members who are retirees and Phil Kelly does as well, and the Town Council is supposed to be negotiating with them right now. He said the bottom line is that there is a \$500,000 shortfall right now, and those negotiations might solve that problem.

Mr. Doyle recommended that based on what he sees going on in town and what he sees other unions doing, it's probably time to reach out and politely insist on a meeting with the Director of Revenue. He said he knows other people have called her office and they get phone calls back.

Mr. Sheehan said he would give the School Committee some food for thought: you still have on the table \$450,000 worth of athletics programs at the high school and middle school. He said the other thing is when you asked for a list of potential cuts, we bandied about cutting transportation. Mr. Sheehan said if we were to expand walking distances a half mile, there would be considerable savings associated

School Committee Minutes

June 19, 2013

Page 8 of 10

with that. He said this school committee has never sought to do this because of safety issues because there are no appropriate sidewalks.

Mr. Sheehan said because of the socioeconomic situation in this town, if you had inclement weather, many parents would choose not to send their kids, so it creates attendance problems, and then your school category goes down because you haven't reached a certain attendance level.

Mr. Sheehan said the School Committee may want to think about changing the high school walking distance only. He said we have many high school kids who have their own cars; if you were to extend the high school only a half mile, you would actually only have to have two buses for the high school. He said you would only be transporting students who lived on the far side of the Greenbush district. Mr. Sheehan said this would amount to a savings of \$250,000.

Mr. David Gosselin, President of the West Warwick Town Council, addressed the School Committee at his time. Mr. Gosselin relayed information from the meeting with Rosemary-Booth Gallogly which included the following:

- If the budget gets voted down, she will be here. We will go directly to receivership, no budget commission.
- Her exact words were: the Wizards as you know them today, will not be the Wizards you see after she has come and gone.

Mr. Sheehan asked can she move directly under statute right from Budget Commission to receiver, and Mr. Gosselin responded yes, because of the all-day referendum.

Mr. Gosselin said they said the town has three MOU's and she asked where the school's MOU's were.

School Committee Minutes

June 19, 2013

Page 9 of 10

Mr. Sheehan said we would have been more than happy to answer any of her questions if we were invited to attend. He said he would like to have heard her response to the document he sent to her and to Dennis Hoyle.

Mr. Gosselin said she also asked why the schools are looking for \$560,000. Mr. Sheehan said from last year to this year, there was a \$2.1 million increase in the budget, and we cut \$1.5 million this year in programs and personnel to only ask for \$600,000. Mr. Gosselin said she is looking at the budgets from 2004 to 2013, and the budget has gone up \$10 million: \$39 million to \$49 million.

Mr. Gosselin said we met with Fitch today, and they are going to be releasing the bond rating on Monday.

Mr. Gosselin gave the following information about tax increases if the budget passes:

- We have a tier tax system.
- The lowest tax will be on single family homes: a .77% increase, less than one percent. For the average house in West Warwick, valued at \$159,000, the tax increase would be about \$39 a year.
- There would be an increase in car taxes of \$28 for everyone.
- There would be a 2 to 2-1/2 % increase for multi-family houses.

The School Committee and Mr. Gosselin discussed the financial town meeting and how important it is to get the correct information out there.

Mr. Gosselin spoke about what will happen if the budget gets voted down including the receiver coming in for five years and then an additional five years of oversight during which time the town pays for the receiver and staff.

School Committee Minutes

June 19, 2013

Page 10 of 10

**11. School Committee
Discussion for the
Good and Welfare of
the School System**

**School Committee Discussion for the Good and
Welfare of the School System**

None.

12. Adjournment

Adjournment

MOTION

**MOTION MADE BY STEPHEN H. LAWTON
THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN
THE MEETING.** Motion seconded by Christopher
R. Messier. The following members voted in the
affirmative: Joseph Florio, Jr., Stephen H. Lawton,
Christopher R. Messier, and Sean M. Murphy.
Motion passed 4 to 0.

Meeting adjourned at: 6:44 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher R. Messier, Clerk

Michelle M. Colozzo, Recorder