

Approved 11/09/2004.

5.1

NEWPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Special Meeting

Tuesday, October 26, 2004, 7 p.m.

MINUTES

Call to Order. Chairperson David S. Gordon called the Special Meeting of the Newport School Committee to order at 7:05 p.m. at the Thompson Middle School Beatrice Berman Bazarsky Performing Arts Center and Cafeteria. Attendance was as follows: School Committee: Vice Chairperson Robert J. Leary, Mary Jane Barry, Ph.D., Hugo J. DeAscentis, Jr., David R. Carlin, Jo Eva Gaines, and Thomas S. Phelan; School Department: Superintendent of Schools Mary C. Canole, Ed.D, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Robert B. Power, Ed.D., Director of Special Education Linda Martin, Director of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development Judith M. Droitcour (absent), Business Manager Bruce Alexander, Director of Property Services Paul Fagan, Coordinator of Human Resources and Information Services Fran Eames (absent), School Building Principals, Administrators, and School Committee Counsel Neil P. Galvin (absent).

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Agenda Item Taken Out of Order.

Mrs. Gaines made a motion to suspend the rules and amend the Agenda to consider Agenda Item No. 2.0: New York Yacht Club: Underwood School Proposal. Mr. Carlin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

2.0 New York Yacht Club: Underwood School Proposal. At the request of Chairperson David S. Gordon, discussion followed relative to the New York Yacht Club: Underwood School Proposal. Representing the New York Yacht Club, Vice Commodore George Hinman reviewed the proposal with the Committee. He introduced the Proposal to explore a public-private partnership for the renovation of the playground and parking facility at Underwood School. He provided the Committee with a list of objectives of the proposed concept plan for Underwood School Playground and Parking Facility: 1. To develop parking facilities large enough to handle the needs of the school; 2. To create access to the school that will be more user friendly to cars as well as to busses; 3. To look at the merits of a second access from Brenton Road; 4. To restrict parking on Harrison Avenue, thus eliminating a dangerous and very congested situation; and 5. To create a facility that is attractive and consistent with a residential neighborhood. He stated that it was in the interest of the Yacht Club to assist funding the Proposal in return for a lease arrangement on the parking facility during times that will

not conflict with school usage and that the Yacht Club was seeking conceptual approval from the School Committee this evening to proceed by hiring an engineering firm at the Club's expense to draw a preliminary design for review by all the concerned parties to use for further evaluation regarding the merits of the Project. Discussion followed. Dr. Barry requested that administration needs to find out if the Committee could enter into more than a three-year lease. At the request of Mr. Carlin, Underwood School Principal Nancy DaPonte-Easter stated that the administration would need to know how the buses would drive in to the parking lot and drop off children, as well as how handicapped parking would be designated. Representing the Underwood School Parent-Teacher Organization, Parents Brian McKeon and Joseph Pratt sent to the Committee their Letter of Endorsement for the Proposal. Chairperson David S. Gordon stated that there might be a possibility that Underwood School could be expanded. Mr. DeAscentis stated that he wanted to be assured that the proposed engineering study would be of no expense to the School Department and what the lease would contain. Vice Commodore George Hinman stated that the Yacht Club wants to create a win-win situation for the City of Newport, School Department, and the New York Yacht Club. He stated that the engineering study would prompt a cost for the project and that the preliminary study would cost approximately \$5,000. After the study, he stated that the New York Yacht Club would make a decision to move forward. Mr. DeAscentis stated that he didn't see a problem to move forward. Mr. Hinman then welcomed input from Underwood School. Property

Services Director Paul Fagan stated that any idea like this should be looked at carefully. He asked if the New York Yacht Club had an interest in the Rogers High School Parking Lot? Mr. Hinman stated that the New York Yacht Club has had no discussion on the construction of the playground. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mary C. Canole stated that School Committee Counsel Neil Galvin would need to determine whether the engagement with one entity was acceptable without giving the opportunity to other concerns. Mrs. Gaines stated that the Committee should explore the study if the Underwood School PTO felt it would be a win-win situation. Vice Chairperson Robert J. Leary stated that he was not ready to approve the project and was glad that the New York Yacht Club was just asking for conceptual approval. He stated that the New York Yacht Club would need to involve the neighbors in the formation of the project and that Rogers High School was a good possibility to consider. Mr. Hinman explained that Underwood School would be a more comfortable walk to the New York Yacht Club than Rogers High School and that historical easements would not allow parking at the New York Yacht Club. Chairperson David S. Gordon stated that this Proposal would be accomplished only if it is a win-win situation. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve that a preliminary engineering study be performed by North East Engineers and paid for by the New York Yacht Club, as presented. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

1.0 Lenthal School Disposition. From its meeting of Tuesday, September 21, 2004, the Committee continued its discussion relative to the disposition of Lenthal School. The following issues were reviewed: The proposed School Committee Resolution, a letter from Marketplace Properties citing three options for the use of Lenthal School, a letter from Newport's KinderArt Preschool requesting the use of Lenthal School, communications from Business Manager Bruce Alexander and Property Services Director Paul Fagan relative to the proposed relocation of the Kitchen, and the Long-Range School Facilities Planning Study (April, 2002) conducted by the New England School Development Council. Discussion followed. At the request of Dr. Barry and Mrs. Gaines, Property Services Director Paul Fagan stated that the administration would need a professional opinion to see if the current Rogers High School Kitchen facility could be enlarged. Chairperson David S. Gordon stated that the School Department is vacating Lenthal Schools and made the following points: Rogers High School could be the new Kitchen location; Sodexo would be willing to give; Funding could come from City's Asset Protection Fund; Could turn building back to the City and have its sale contingent on the moving of the Kitchen; Main issue is to turn Lenthal School back to the City; and city and school administrations should work out the details. He then distributed to the Committee a sheet referencing Operating Expenses for Lenthal School. Mr. DeAscentis stated the following points: All questions

would need to be answered before the building is surplus; Look at possible lease arrangement; Lenthal School saved the School Department when Thompson Middle School students were relocated; The Thompson Middle School relocation cost the School Department \$390,000; A short-term or long-term plan on facilities is needed; Cautious about surplus a building before its time; May be able to lease the building for \$30,000 per year. Mrs. Gains stated the following points: The School Department doesn't own Lenthal School if it is used for school purposes; If the building is no longer needed for school purposes, the School Department has no right to hold on to it; and Concerned that the School Department must have a place for food services. Chairperson David S. Gordon stated the following points: NESDEC Report cites that \$2.5 million is needed to upgrade Lenthal School; It's not wise to invest money to get Lenthal School up to code; References his handout: Operating Expenses for Lenthal School, relative to \$100,000 operational costs in three years; Need to begin the process to dispose of Lenthal School; and Lenthal School is appraised at \$2.7 million. Mrs. Gaines stated that it becomes the business of the Council. Chairperson David S. Gordon stated that the School Department could turn Lenthal School over to the City contingent on a food preparation facility to be found. At the request of Mr. Carlin, Mr. Fagan stated that Triplett School would not be an eligible site given that there is not adequate space, and that considerable additional funds would be needed to make the site usable. Mr. Carlin stated that the School Department would need to have a plan for the Kitchen before Lenthal School is turned over to

the City and that the School Department should share in the proceeds of the sale of Lenthal School. Mr. Gordon stated that the money from the sale of Lenthal School should go to the renovation of the schools.

At the request of Mr. Phelan, Business Manager Bruce Alexander stated that it would cost \$35,000 per year to run the Kitchen at Lenthal School. Mr. Phelan stated that the cost would be transferred to the new Kitchen site. Mr. DeAscentis stated that he thought it was too early to sell Lenthal School and that the building is currently in use. He requested to know if the amount of \$35,000 per year would be less should Sodexo rent it. Dr. Barry asked to find out if it was the recommendation of the City—School—Community Advisory Group's Final Report to surplus Lenthal School. Mrs. Gaines asked administration to consider if another place could be found to cook. Mr. Carlin made a motion to surplus Lenthal School contingent on (1) before surplus, the administration has a replacement kitchen facility designated; and (2) proceeds of any sale of the real estate go to the schools. Mrs. Gaines seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Mr. Phelan stated that the administration needs a definite idea of whether or not the move of the Kitchen would come out of the Asset Protection Money or note before the building is surplus. Mrs. Gaines suggested that a third contingency to the motion be added stating that the cost of relocating Kitchen should be paid out of the Asset Protection Fund. Discussion followed. Mr. DeAscentis stated that the Committee hasn't studied this, and the Business Office should not be located at the Triplett School. Mr. Gordon stated that money needs to be raised for the elementary schools and Rogers

High School. Mr. Carlin amended his motion to include a third contingency: (3) the cost of relocating the Kitchen should be borne by the City. Public input was received relative to the need to have available long-range projections in population and a long-term plan before a building is surplus. Mr. Leary stated that he would support the motion but had concerns with not addressing Resolution on Thompson Middle School. The motion carried (5-2). Those Members voting in favor of the motion were: Chairperson David S. Gordon, Vice Chairperson Robert J. Leary, Mary Jane Barry, Ph.D., David R. Carlin, and Jo Eva Gaines, Those Members voting against the motion were: Hugo J. DeAscentis, Jr., and Thomas S. Phelan.

3.0 Rogers High School Improvement: NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges): Facility Proposal. From its Meeting of June 8, 2004, the Committee continued its discussion of the Rogers High School Improvement: NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges): Facility Proposal performed in collaboration with the Newport Collaborative Architects, Farrar and Associates, and the Maguire Group to address facilities renovation and expansion. Rogers High School Principal John Harrington, Rogers High School Science Department Head Alan Bardsley, and Athletic Director John Heino, Jr., stated that they were present to review the Proposal with the Committee and to advocate for Rogers High School to address a NEASC expectation for the science labs, library, and locker rooms and cited how these effect the instructional

programs at Rogers High School, as follows: Alan Bardsley's comments: repairs need to be done on antiquated equipment; Rogers High School labs are the oldest on the island—over 50-year old labs; cited science labs' standards—need 1,400 square feet/lab and only have 1,000 square feet; currently has combination lab—if seating is taken out, standards could be met; Newport Collaborative design can retrofit without moving walls; sinks are blocked up often; have had multiple OSHA violations—Mr. Fagan has addressed these violations; this is not the way science should be taught; it's dangerous for kids to be in these labs without our strict attention to the extraordinary safety protocols, which we have in place; and we should be renovating labs; John Harrington: renovations should be done every 30 to 35 years; need to think five to ten years from now; Newport Collaborative did a magnitude study on labs of \$1.5 million; need a timetable to submit to NEASC by February 1, 2005; and need to confirm an adoption of a plan; Mr. Heino: Read aloud his statement relative to the need to upgrade the facilities of the Athletics Program and circulated pictures of the Rogers High School Locker Rooms. Discussion followed. Chairperson David S. Gordon stated that Rogers High School once had the best labs and library when they were built and that the administration is reacting to NEASC rather than doing what should have been done (Agassi Fund, Coles Lab Fund, Norman Fund). Mr. Heino stated that consideration needs to be focused on the auditorium sound and air conditioning, the need for signage at the building, and there exists major challenges in the library. Mr. Leary stated that he had more questions relative to the

gymnasium and that it looked as if it was let go. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mary C. Canole recommended to the Committee to establish a subcommittee to move forward. Mrs. Gaines suggested that a bond be considered for all three projects. Dr. Barry stated that the plan is the priority. Mr. Gordon requested that the administration develop a timeframe. Chairperson Gordon and Member Jo Eva Gaines volunteered to work as part of the high school subcommittee.

3.0 Executive Session.

At 9 p.m., Mr. DeAscentis made a motion to go into Executive Session under jurisdiction of Rhode Island State Law, Chapter 46, 42-46-5 – Exceptions (a)(1) Personal Matters, and the person or persons affected have been notified in advance in writing and advised that they may request that the discussion be held in an open session; and (a)(2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation. Mrs. Gaines seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

EXECUTIVE SESSION

OPEN SESSION

At 9:20 p.m., the meeting was called in Open Session.

Adjournment. At 9:22 p.m., Mrs. Gaines made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

David S. Gordon Mary C. Canole, Ed.D.

Chairperson Clerk