

Approved 4/10/2007.

5.1

SEAL MINUTES
NEWPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, March 13, 2007

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER. Chairperson Dr. Charles P. Shoemaker called the Regular Meeting of the Newport School Committee to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Thompson Middle School Beatrice Berman Bazarsky Performing Arts Center and Cafeteria.

ROLL CALL. Attendance was as follows: School Committee Members: Chairperson Dr. Charles P. Shoemaker, Vice Chairperson Robert J. Leary, David R. Carlin (absent), Hugo J. DeAscentis, Jr., Jo Eva Gaines, Dr. Thomas P. Galvin (absent), and Thomas S. Phelan; School Department: Superintendent of Schools Dr. John H. Ambrogi, Director of Student Services Amy Donnelly Roche (absent), Executive Director of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development Jacqueline Naspo, Ed.D., Business Manager Michael Saunders (absent), Director of Property Services Paul Fagan (absent), Coordinator of Human Resources and Information Services Fran Eames (absent), School Building Principals, Administrators, and School Committee Counsel Neil P. Galvin.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

1.0 MOMENT OF SILENCE.

- **Joan E. Reiland:** who passed away on Tuesday, February 13, 2007, at the Village House Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Newport. She was an Elementary School Librarian for Newport Public Schools for approximately 15 years, retiring in 1986.
- **Leroy M. Jennings:** who passed away on Tuesday, February 20, 2007, at Newport Hospital. He was the father-in-law of Cranston-Calvert School Secretary Catherine Jennings.
- **Estelle Gaines Drummond:** who passed away on Wednesday, February 21, 2007, at Newport Hospital. She was the sister of Paul Gaines and the sister-in-law of Jo Eva Gaines, and was Clerk/Typist for the Library at Rogers High School for approximately 16 years.
- **Charles A. Deveau:** who passed away on Thursday, March 1, 2007, at Newport Hospital. He worked for the Newport Public Schools' Maintenance Department for 31 years, retiring in 2002.

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT. No Public Comment was received.

Taken Out of Order

4.0 RESOLUTIONS AND CERTIFICATES OF ACHIEVEMENT.

4.1 Resolution: Secret Garden Tour—Myra H. Duvally, President. As March is “Arts in the School” Month, on behalf of the Newport School Committee and Newport Public Schools, Chairperson Dr. Shoemaker recognized the contributions of the Secret Garden Tour who, since 1984, has been donating a substantial number of dollars to the Newport Public Schools for art, music, theater, and other cultural programs and indicated that Myra Duvally, the President of the Secret Garden Tour, has been a strong supporter of the District and has most recently participated in the donation of a new lighting system at Rogers High School, which cost in excess of \$35,000. Dr. Shoemaker then presented a Resolution to Myra H. Duvally as the President of the Secret Garden Tour. On behalf of the Secret Garden Tour, Ms. Duvally thanked the Newport School Committee and the Newport Public Schools. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to adopt the Secret Garden Tour Resolution, as presented. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (5-0).

3.0 STUDENT ACTIVITIES.

3.1 Student Council:

- **Update: Marina Zambrotta.** Student Council Representative Marina Zambrotta provided a brief update on the spring activities to date at Rogers High School: Boys’ Basketball Championship Game played this past weekend at the Ryan Center; Annual Cookie Cook Off; and Mock Trial Competition.

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5.0 CONSENT AGENDA. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda, as presented, with the exception of Item 5.5: Appointments, to be acted upon individually, at the request of Mr. Phelan. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (5-0).

5.1 Approval of Minutes. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to consent to the approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, February 13, 2007; Special Meeting Minutes of Wednesday, February 21, 2007; Special Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, March 6, 2007; and Special Joint Meeting Minutes of Wednesday, March 7, 2007; as follows. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (5-0).

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- **Regular Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, February 13, 2007.** No amendments were made.
- **Special Meeting Minutes of Wednesday, February 21, 2007.** No amendments were made.

- **Special Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, March 6, 2007.** No amendments were made.
- **Special Joint Meeting Minutes of Wednesday, March 7, 2007.** No amendments were made.

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5.5 **Personnel Actions.**

Resignations. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to accept the Resignations of: Michael Pendergast, Social Worker, effective March 9, 2007; and Eileen Rearick, Kindergarten Para Educator, Underwood School, effective immediately. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (5-0).

Appointments.

Mr. DeAscentis made a motion to approve the Appointment of: Fran Brow, Head Baseball Coach, Rogers High School, effective March 14, 2007. Mrs. Gaines seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (5-0).

Mr. DeAscentis made a motion to approve the Appointment of: Patricia Phelan, Special Education Para Educator, Thompson Middle School, effective March 14, 2007. Mrs. Gaines seconded the motion, which carried (4-1-0). Member Mr. Phelan recused himself, given that the appointee is his daughter.

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- 5.6 **Requests for Home Instruction.** Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve the two Requests for Home Instruction, as presented. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (5-0).

Superintendent of Schools John H. Ambrogi, Ed.D., distributed the approved Personnel Actions (attached) dated March 13, 2007, as presented.

6.0 **DISCUSSION**

6.1 **High Expectations for All Students: Update—**

Rogers High School National History Day. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi updated the Committee that on Thursday, March 8, 2007, Junior U.S. History Classes at Rogers High School participated in National History Day, an academic competition. Rogers High School Principal Patti DiCenso applauded Rogers High School History Teachers Stephen Ferris (Coordinator of the Event), Coleen Hermes, Edith Morin, Kathleen Babcock, and John Heino for their coordination and production of this Day's Event and to Technology Coordinator Mitchell Williams, who prepared the DVD viewed by the Committee this evening, which captured an overview of the Day's competition, judging criteria, and the

students who received recognition for their presentations. Coordinator Stephen Ferris announced the names of the students who received award recognition for their presentations, as follows: First Place Performance—Emma Sconyers—1918 Flu Pandemic; Second Place Performance—Samuel Lewis—Charlie Chaplin; First Place Group Documentary—John Bender and Andrew Strattnr—McCarthy’s Triumph and Tragedy of the Red Scare; Second Place Group Documentary—Nora Eschenheimer, Anna Perry and Sunny—Dae Larson—Rogues Island Piracy in Newport; First Place Individual—Kayla Kutsaftis—1918 Influenza Epidemic; Second Place Individual—Patrick Wygant—Triumph of Trains; First Place Group—Lizzie Almanzor and Taylor Maguire—U.S. Olympic Hockey Team 1980; and Second Place Group—Evan Trifero and Stephen Clair—Fall of Saigon. On behalf of Rogers High School, Principal Patti DiCenso presented Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi with the first benchmark, “National History Day” Plaque.

6.2 Subcommittee Reports:

6.2.1 Facilities Planning Subcommittee. Subcommittee Chairperson Hugo J. DeAscentis, Jr., stated that the contract with HMFH Architects would be voted upon this evening under Agenda Action Item No. 7.3.

6.2.2 Newport School Committee/Newport City Council Liaison. Chairperson Dr. Shoemaker updated the Committee on the Liaison Subcommittee Meeting held on Monday, March 12, 2007: Fewer/Newer Schools and Sister City Japan Trip in May. The next meeting of the Subcommittee is scheduled to be held on Monday, April 2, 2007, beginning at 4 p.m., at City Hall, with topics of discussion to be: Special Education and the Newport Area Career and Technical Center.

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6.2.3 Policy. Mrs. Gaines stated that as a result of the recent Policy Subcommittee Meeting held on Wednesday, March 7, 2007, Action Item 7.1.1 and 7.1.2, Policies for Early Admission to Kindergarten and Graduation by Proficiency, were before the Committee, for Second Reading, inclusive with requested amendments from Committee Members and Administrators as a result of the First Reading held at the School Committee’s Meeting of February 13, 2007.

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6.2.4 Wellness. In the absence of Dr. Galvin, Mrs. Gaines, stated that the Wellness Policy Subcommittee had been scheduled to meet on Wednesday, February 14, 2007, but due to the close of school because of inclement weather, the meeting was cancelled and has not yet been rescheduled.

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6.2.5 Rhode Island Association of School Committees (RIASC). Mrs. Gaines stated that the Rhode Island Association of School Committees will be holding their 2007 Legislative Workshop on Saturday morning,

March 24, 2007, from 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., at Rhode Island College. She stated that Workshop topics would include: 2008 State Budget Analysis, RIASC's Legislative Initiatives, Review 2007 Education Legislation, and New State Education Aid Formula Update. Mrs. Gaines also indicated that the Association would be focusing on researching State Mandates that exceed federal requirements.

6.2.6 Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force. In the absence of Mr. Carlin, there was no report of the Task Force.

7.0 ACTION.

7.1 Newport Public Schools' Policy Amendments—Second Reading:

7.1.1: Policy No.: 4.2.3.1—Early Admission to Kindergarten. As a result of the Committee's suggestions at the last School Committee Meeting, the Policy Subcommittee recently met and reviewed the Policy and the following changes were recommended for Second Reading this evening.: Under the Policy, to include "appeal" language—"This cutoff date may be appealed under three sets of special circumstances."; Under the Procedures, to change the criteria from 2 to 1.5 standard deviations on the testing; and Under the Procedures, to specify that parents will need to be notified no later than the 10th school day of the given year when the youngster has requested early admission. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to accept for Second Reading Policy No.: 4.2.3.1—Early Admission to Kindergarten, as presented. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Mr. DeAscentis clarified the definition of the standard deviation language under the Procedures of the Policy. The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

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7.1.2: Graduation by Proficiency

Policy No.: 4.2.3.2—Early Admission to College
Policy No.: 4.2.3.6—Alternate School Programs
Policy No.: 4.4.3.3—High School
Policy No.: 4.4.5—Graduation Requirements
Policy No.: 4.4.5.1—Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements
Policy No.: 4.4.5.2—Honoring Prior Learning and Knowledge Acquired Outside of School
Policy No.: 4.4.5.3—[New]—Demonstration Timeline
Policy No.: 4.4.5.4—[New]—Measurement of Proficiency
Policy No.: 4.4.5.5—[New]—Appeal Process for Graduation Decisions
Policy No.: 4.4.7—[New]—Fairness of Assessments
Policy No.: 4.4.8—[New]—Bias Review Panel

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi stated that, as a result of the Committee's suggestions at the last School Committee Meeting, the Policy Subcommittee recently met and reviewed the Policy and the following changes were recommended for Second Reading this evening.: One of the changes reflects that students "shall be permitted" to be involved in

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graduation ceremonies rather than merely “shall participate”. The other two changes refer to the Bias Review Panel and the Appeal Process for Graduation Decisions. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to accept for Second Reading the above-named Policies, as presented. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (5-0).

7.2 State of Rhode Island Department of Health—

2007 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi reviewed with the Committee the request received from the State of Rhode Island Department of Health regarding Newport Public Schools’ participation in the 2007 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey at Thompson Middle School and Rogers High School. He stated that School Committee Policy requires the approval of the School Committee prior to the Survey being distributed. Dr. Ambrogi indicated that he had spoken to Donald Perry, the Manager of School-Based Health Surveys, at the Department of Health, who assured him that the Survey would be confidential for the students and confidential for the schools and, therefore, there would be no available information specific to any given school that participates. Dr. Ambrogi stated that, given this understanding, he believed that the School Department should be involved with this Survey activity. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve participation in the State of Rhode Island Department of Health—2007 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey for students of Rogers High School and Thompson Middle School, as presented. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion. Discussion followed. At Mr. DeAscentis’ request, Mr. Perry, who was present, confirmed that individual district Survey results would remain confidential to only the Department of Health and not released to participated school districts and further indicated that the Survey would be administered before the end of the current school year. The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

7.3 Contract Approval—

Newport School Committee and HMFH Architects, Inc. Chairperson Dr. Shoemaker indicated that the contract approval between the Committee and HMFH Architects had been put on hold due to the new proposed regulations being considered by the Rhode Island Department of Education for all school construction projects statewide but that, just recently, they informed the district that it could move forward with the contract approval. He further stated that the most probable date for the Bond Referendum would be the November, 2008, General Election. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi then reviewed with the Committee the recommended Contract between the Newport School Committee and HMFH Architects, Inc. He stated that the Contract conforms with the outline that he had previously presented to the Committee and has been reviewed by Counsel Galvin to insure that it has similar provisions as the architectural contract that had previously been entered into with HMFH for the Thompson Middle School Project. He further stated that the only aspect of this Contract that the Committee is now obligated for is the \$37,000 and for the Feasibility Study and the \$50,000 for the Pre-Bond Referendum Activities. When the Bond passes, Dr. Ambrogi stated that the \$50,000 for the Pre-Bond Referendum Activities would be subsumed under the basic compensation fess of seven percent of the estimated construction costs. He stated that this Contract was well negotiated, in that the last

contract with HMFH Architects was 9.15 percent of estimated construction costs and this contract was based on seven percent of construction costs, a difference of 2.15 percent lower. Most importantly, he did specify that a typewritten error could be found on Page 1 of the Agreement, sixth line from the bottom, that the words "...in the fall of 2007" be omitted in the sentence that currently reads: "Assist with a Public Information and Outreach Campaign in preparation for a Bond Referendum in the fall of 2007." Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve the Contract between the Newport School Committee and HMFH Architects, Inc., as amended. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Mr. Leary requested that the administration stress to the architect the importance to gain a consensus of the community through the formation of a "community group", to provide a backup design plan, and to define further the language on Page 9—Basis of Compensation. Dr. Ambrogi addressed Mr. Leary's discussion points. School Committee Counsel Neil Galvin addressed questions from Committee Members relative to negotiating language of the Contract (Feasibility Study—inclusive of evaluating existing schools and providing a plan inclusive from zero to up to three new schools) and its Addendum (2.2.1, 2.2.4, and 2.4.1). The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

8.0 Reports from Superintendent and Staff: Expenditure and Revenue Reports, Enrollment Reports, Damage Reports, Superintendent's Update, and Aquidneck Island Adult Learning Center Report.

8.1 Expenditure and Revenue Reports. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi reviewed with the Committee the Expenditure and Revenue Reports as of February 28, 2007. Mr. DeAscentis made a motion to accept the Expenditure and Revenue Reports, as presented. Mrs. Gaines seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (5-0).

8.2 Enrollment Reports. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi reviewed with the Committee the Enrollment Reports as of February 28, 2007. Mr. DeAscentis made a motion to accept the Enrollment Reports, as presented. Mrs. Gaines seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (5-0).

8.3 Damage Reports. There were no Damage Reports presented this month.

8.4 Superintendent's Update. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi briefed the Committee on activities to date: Rogers High School Black History Month Assembly; Rhode Island Interlocal Risk Management Trust Loss Prevention Awards Luncheon; East Bay Educational Collaborative Board Meeting; Annual JROTC Military Ball; Summer Programming Meeting; T.A.N. Job Fair Planning Meeting; Rotary Club Meeting; Presenter Jonathon Kozal at Ochre Court; Administrators' Monthly Meeting; NSC Budget Meeting; YMCA Sullivan School Summer Camp Meeting; NSC Policy Subcommittee Meeting; NSC and NCC Budget Meeting; RHS National History Day Competition; Newport County Fund Panel Discussion—What is a School?—at CCRI; Newport Partnership for Families Annual Breakfast at Ochre Court; and NSC/NCC Liaison Subcommittee

Meeting. Mr. DeAscentis made a motion to accept the Superintendent's Update, as presented. Mrs. Gaines seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (5-0).

- 8.5 Aquidneck Island Adult Learning Center Report.** Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi reviewed with the Committee the Aquidneck Island Adult Learning Center Monthly Report. Mr. DeAscentis made a motion to accept the Aquidneck Island Adult Learning Center Report, as presented. Mrs. Gaines seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (5-0).

9.0 SUGGESTED MEETING DATES AND AGENDA ITEMS

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi reviewed suggested meeting dates and agenda topics for the months of March and April, 2007, as follows:

- Thursday, March 1, 2007:
No School: Elementary Only—Parent Conferences
- Monday, March 5, 2007:
No School: Rogers High School Only—Parent Conferences
- Tuesday, March 6, 2007:
No School: Thompson Middle School Only—Parent Conferences
- Tuesday, March 6, 2007, 3 p.m.:
Newport School Committee Special Meeting
Administration Center, First Floor Conference Room No. 2
- Wednesday, March 7, 2007, Noon:
Newport School Committee Policy Subcommittee Meeting
Administration Center, First Floor Conference Room No. 2
- Wednesday, March 7, 2007, 6:30 p.m.:
Newport School Committee and Newport City Council
Special Joint Meeting
Council Chambers
- Monday, March 12, 2007, 4 p.m.:
Newport School Committee/Newport City Council Liaison Subcommittee Meeting
Thompson Middle School Library
- Tuesday, March 13, 2007, 7 p.m.:
Regular Newport School Committee Meeting
Thompson Middle School Cafeteria
- End of Third Term

- Monday, April 2, 2007, 4 p.m.:
Newport School Committee/Newport City Council Liaison Subcommittee Meeting
City Hall
- Friday, April 6, 2007:
Good Friday—No School
- Tuesday, April 10, 2007, 7 p.m.:
Regular Newport School Committee Meeting
Thompson Middle School Cafeteria
- Monday, April 16-20, 2007:
Spring Recess—No School
- Month of April—To be Determined:
Newport School Committee Policy Subcommittee Meeting
Administration Center, First Floor Conference Room No. 2

10.0 Executive Session.

At 8:17 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 require that the discussion be held in an open session; and (a)(2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation. Mr. Phelan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (5-0).

EXECUTIVE SESSION

OPEN SESSION

At 9:15 p.m., the meeting was called in Open Session.

Adjournment. At 9:17 p.m., Mrs. Gaines made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Phelan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (5-0).

Charles P. Shoemaker, M.D.
Chairperson

John H. Ambrogi, Ed.D.
Clerk

