

Approved 10/09/2007.

5.1

NEWPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, September 11, 2007

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER. Chairperson Dr. Charles P. Shoemaker called the Regular Meeting of the Newport School Committee to order at 7:01 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 (arrived at 7:02 p.m.), Hugo J. DeAscentis, Jr., Jo Eva Gaines, Dr. Thomas P. Galvin, 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. (absent), Business Manager Michael Saunders, 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).

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

1.0 MOMENT OF SILENCE.

- **Tragedy of September 11, 2001:** For the sixth anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.
- **Mary Elizabeth Ryan:** who passed away on Monday, August 6, 2007, at the John Clarke Nursing Center in Middletown. Ms. Ryan retired from the Newport Public Schools in 1977, after serving over 40 years as an Educator and retiring as Principal of Coggeshall School.
- **Bertha T. "Pudge" Sullivan:** who passed away on Thursday, August 30, 2007, at her daughter's home in Middletown, Rhode Island. Mrs. Sullivan was the wife of the late Jeremiah "Denny" Sullivan, retired Newport Police Chief, and the mother of Mary "Eileen" Sullivan, Grade 5 Teacher, at Coggeshall School.

At approximately 7:02 p.m., David Carlin arrived to the meeting.

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT.

No Public Comment was received.

Chairperson Dr. Shoemaker requested that Public Comment regarding: Approve Plan for New School Construction and Thompson Middle School—Fifth Grade Move—September, 2008 be held under each of their respective Action Items of No. 7.1 and No. 7.2.

3.0 STUDENT ACTIVITIES.

3.1 Student Council:

3.1.1 Update—Amelia Dias. Ms. Dias provided a brief update on the Fall activities planned for Rogers High School.

4.0 RESOLUTIONS AND CERTIFICATES OF ACHIEVEMENT. There were no Resolutions/Certificates of Achievement presented. Chairperson Dr. Shoemaker Thanked the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Excelsior Lodge #49 for Offering Grants to Teachers for Classroom Supplies. Dr. Shoemaker requested that administration develop a process, perhaps through the Newport School Agenda, to publicly announce receipt and appreciation of acknowledgement of gifts from outside organizations.

5.0 CONSENT AGENDA. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda, as presented, with the exception of Personnel Actions: Item No. 5.5, to be acted on separately, at the request of Member Mr. Carlin. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

5.1 Approval of Minutes. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to consent to the approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, August 14, 2007; and Special Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, August 14, 2007, as follows. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

- **Regular Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, August 14, 2007.** No amendments were made.
- **Special Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, August 14, 2007.** No amendments were made.

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to

5.5 **Personnel Actions.**

Resignations.

Mrs. Gaines made a motion to accept the Resignation of: Marvin L. Abney, II, Food Services Technical Assistant, NACTC, effective August 24, 2007. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Mrs. Gaines made a motion to accept the Resignation of: Lisa Freeman, Grade 7 Math Teacher, Thompson Middle School, effective August 27, 2007. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Mrs. Gaines made a motion to accept the Resignation of: Lisa Pine, Special Education Building Para Educator, Cranston-Calvert School, effective August 15, 2007. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Retirements.

There were no Retirements presented.

Leaves of Absence.

Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve the Maternity Leave of Absence of Tracey Hackley, Special Education Teacher, Thompson Middle School, from January 2, 2008, through May 1, 2008. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve Rescinding the Maternity Leave of Absence of: Donna Kelly, Kindergarten Teacher, Coggeshall School, from November 13, 2007, through December 21, 2007. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Appointments.

Mr. Carlin made a motion to approve the Appointment of: Steven McNiff, Grade 6 Science Teacher, Thompson Middle School, for the 2007-2008 School Year Only, effective September 10, 2007. Mrs. Gaines seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Mr. Carlin made a motion to approve the Appointment of: Christine Wirth, Grade 7 Mathematics Teacher, Thompson Middle School, for the 2007-2008 School Year Only, effective September 10, 2007. Mrs. Gaines seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Mr. Carlin made a motion to approve the Appointment of: Linda Hogan, Reading .5 Teacher, for the 2007-2008 School Year Only, effective September 4, 2007. Mrs. Gaines seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Lead Mentors.

Mr. Carlin made a motion to approve the 2007-2008 School Year Only Stipend Positions for Lead Mentors, as presented. Mrs. Gaines seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Transfer(s).

Mr. Carlin made a motion to approve the Transfer of: Joanne Cadenazzi, PBGR Coordinator, Rogers High School, effective September 12, 2007. Mrs. Gaines seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Mr. Carlin made a motion to approve the Transfer of: Susan Dias, Custodian, Cranston-Calvert, Second Shift, to Custodian, Thompson Middle School, First Shift, effective September 17, 2007. Mrs. Gaines seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

- 5.6. Requests for Home Instruction.** Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve the following Requests for Home Instruction: Christina, Stephen, Catherine, and Caitlyn Clemans; Hugh Harvey; Erin Montoya; Benjamin Adams; and Sarah Williams. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Superintendent of Schools John H. Ambrogi, Ed.D., distributed the approved Personnel Actions (attached) dated September 11, 2007, as presented.

6.0 DISCUSSION

6.1 School Opening—School Enrollment: Update.

6.1.1 Opening Day. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi stated to the Committee that he visited schools on opening day, welcoming back staff and students. He was pleased with a successful opening day for all schools.

6.1.2 School Enrollment. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi reviewed with the Committee the School Enrollment statistics relative to the opening of schools on September 5, 2007, indicating that enrollment is down by 92 students from last year at the same time. He stated that the most disconcerting aspect of this is the Whitehall Study that projected we should have 191 Kindergarteners instead of 167 and that our live births five years ago for Newport residents was 304. Dr. Ambrogi stated that more accurate information regarding these figures would be available by October 1, 2007. Discussion followed relative to the Alternative Learning Program. Dr. Ambrogi stated that this Program Enrollment would be

reported out beginning with next month's Enrollment Report. Mr. DeAscentis asked that the number of students be broken out by each classroom.

6.2 Facilities: Update. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi and School Committee Members had their annual walk-through of the school facilities on Thursday, August 30, 2007. Dr. Ambrogi and Committee Members were pleased to report that the buildings were clean and well maintained. Of note was the work that was being done at Rogers High School in the Academic Wing and the Boys' Locker Room.

6.3 Subcommittee Reports:

6.3.1 Facilities Planning Subcommittee. Subcommittee Chairperson Mr. DeAscentis stated that he had no new business to report.

6.3.1.1 Ad Hoc Building Committee. As point of information, the Ad Hoc Building Committee had their first meeting last evening, Monday, September 10, 2007, at 4:30 p.m., at the Central Administration Center.

6.3.2 Newport School Committee/Newport City Council Liaison. Chairperson Dr. Shoemaker stated that he had no new business to report.

6.3.3 Policy. Subcommittee Chairperson Mrs. Gaines stated that she had no new business to report.

6.3.4 Wellness. Subcommittee Chairperson Dr. Galvin stated that he had no new business to report.

6.3.5 Rhode Island Association of School Committees (RIASC). Subcommittee Chairperson Mrs. Gaines stated that she had no new business to report.

6.3.6 Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force. Subcommittee Chairperson Mr. Carlin stated that he had no new business to report.

7.0 ACTION.

7.1 Approve Plan for New School Construction.

Laura Wernick, from HMFH Architects, presented the Plan for new school construction in Newport, explained in length, as follows. This Plan provides for every student to be educated in an updated, state of the art educational environment, handicap accessible, and have greater flexibility for class assignments.

The new Newport Middle School at the Rogers High School Campus will be totally separate and apart from Rogers High School. There will be absolutely no interaction between grades 9 through 12 and grades 7 and 8. There will be a separate middle school staff, with guidance counselor(s), and administrator(s). The mean cost for that aspect of the project will be \$3,857,250. With all of the work we are doing at Rogers High School, Rogers High School and the Newport Middle School will essentially be new schools.

The second aspect of this Plan is providing a new playground at Thompson Middle School where parking is currently located. This portion of the Plan will be approximately \$100,000.

The third portion of the Plan would be to construct a new primary K-2 school at the current site of the Underwood School. The mean cost would be \$18.5M. The mean cost for this total Project would be \$22,527,000. This is opposed to the other options, which have been discussed that are substantially more expensive. Ranging from a mean low of the one K-4 school of \$30,712,000 to a high of \$37,684,000 for two separate Pre-K-4 Schools.

This new Plan, which maximally utilizes space, also obviously is substantially less costly than any other of the alternatives. Additionally, when you look at the cost to taxpayers over a 20-year bonding period, you can see, from some of the attached information, that compared to our existing situation, the District will save \$38,418,740 in operating costs and in renovations. The city would gain \$24,073,018 in additional revenue in property sales and new taxes. These figures do not take into consideration other economies of scale with other professional staff but is a conservative impact only addressing the issue of administrators, secretaries, and custodians. Additionally, not considered, are the cost savings for heating and fuel by closing five inefficient elementary schools and creating one new one.

From a cost perspective, the taxpayers and residents should actually save money over the course of a 20-year bonding period. Additionally, there are great educational benefits by having all the youngsters at one grade level attend the same school. Appropriate grouping practices and additional targeted assistance

and/or enrichment will be able to be explored as a result of having more youngsters at each grade level at one place.

There might be some concerns regarding the middle school location at Rogers High School, but when people see the Plan that is in place, it should allay any concern of having 7th graders with 12th graders. Truthfully, most people should like that our elementary school model will extend from K-6.

It is believed that this Plan truly addresses the greater good of the students who attend the Newport Public Schools and will save resident taxpayers by reducing costs associated with the funding of our public schools.

Mr. Carlin made a motion that the Newport School Committee approve the Superintendent's recommendation for a new school construction plan, which includes: (1) construction at Rogers High School, to establish a new grades 7 and 8 middle school at the Rogers High School location; (2) renovation of Thompson Middle School, to establish a new grades 3 through 6 elementary school at the Thompson Middle School location; and (3) construction of a new K-2 primary school at the site of the current Underwood School; and that this plan will not be implemented until Newport voters approve a bond issue needed for the plan in November, 2008.

Mr. Phelan seconded the motion. Discussion followed.

Mrs. Gaines offered an amendment to No. 3:construction of a new K-2 primary school at "a site to be determined at a later date." Dr. Galvin seconded the motion. Discussion followed.

Public Input was received from: Justin McLaughlin, City Councilor; David Hanos, Parent; Jane Regan, former Thompson Middle School Principal; and Residents Mark Colborn and Marjorie Simmons. Public Input was closed.

Repeating the amendment with a deadline date, Mrs. Gaines offered an amendment to No. 3:construction of a new K-2 primary school at "a site to be determined by September 25, 2007." Dr. Galvin seconded the motion. Discussion continued. Public input was followed by Jim Asbel, Becky Bolan, and Sarah Germaine.

Mr. Phelan asked to put the vote off until that night.

Mrs. Gaines amended the original motion to delay action until September 25, 2007. Mr. Galvin seconded the motion, which failed (3-4). Those Members voting in favor of the amended motion were: Chairperson Charles P. Shoemaker, Jo Eva Gaines, and Dr. Thomas P. Galvin. Those Members voting against the motion were: David R. Carlin, Hugo J. DeAscentis, Jr., Robert J. Leary, and Thomas S. Phelan.

The Original Motion passed (5-2). Those Members voting in favor of the original motion were: Chairperson Charles P. Shoemaker, David R. Carlin, Jo Eva Gaines, Dr. Thomas P. Galvin, and Thomas P. Phelan. Those Members voting against the motion were: Hugo J. DeAscentis, Jr., and Robert J. Leary.

- 7.2 Thompson Middle School—Fifth Grade Move—September, 2008.** The Committee had voted to table action of this item from its meeting last month in order to receive more feedback and bring the item back to the Committee this evening for reconsideration. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi, as he did last month, presented to the Committee the Proposal to move the Fifth Grade Students from Carey, Coggeshall, Cranston-Calvert, Sullivan, and Underwood Elementary Schools to Thompson Middle School, effective September, 2008. He reviewed the schematic for the preferred classrooms for Thompson Middle School for next year. He indicated that we could safely separate the 7th and 8th graders from the 5th and 6th graders, develop programs that would closely align the 5th and 6th graders, and give the 5th graders the option of taking a foreign language. He stated that by having the 5th grade at a new modern facility would be preferable than having them dispersed among our five old elementary schools. Discussion followed. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve the move of the Fifth Grade Students from Carey, Coggeshall, Cranston-Calvert, Sullivan, and Underwood Elementary Schools to Thompson Middle School, effective September, 2008. Dr. Galvin seconded the motion, which failed (3-4). Those Members voting in favor of the motion were: Chairperson Dr. Charles P. Shoemaker, Jo Eva Gaines, and Dr. Thomas P. Galvin. Those Members who voted against the motion were: Vice Chairperson Robert J. Leary, David R. Carlin, Hugo J. DeAscentis, Jr., and Thomas S. Phelan.

8.0 Reports from Superintendent and Staff: Expenditure and Revenue Reports, Enrollment Reports, Damage Reports, and Superintendent's Update.

- 8.1 Expenditure and Revenue Reports.** Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi reviewed with the Committee the Expenditure and Revenue Reports as of August 31, 2007. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to accept the Expenditure and Revenue Reports, as presented. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).
- 8.2 Enrollment Reports.** Enrollment Reports were taken under Discussion Item No. 6.1.2 of the Agenda this evening.
- 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: Rhode Island School Superintendents' Association General Membership Meeting; Rhode Island Foundation Mentor Meeting; HMFH Architects Meeting with TMS & RHS Principals and Facilities Director; Sodexho Food Services Meeting; RIDE School Construction Meeting;

Island Moving Company Meeting; Connect-ED Training for Administrators; Administrators' Team Meeting; Independent Order of the Odd Fellows Association—Meeting to Offer Teacher Grants; Sullivan School—Basketball Court Renovations Project; Meeting with Ambassador John Loeb; New Teacher Mentor Orientation; Annual School Facilities Tour; East Bay Educational Collaborative Meeting with Administration; Professional Development Day—Greetings & General Opening; HMFH Architects Meeting; First Day of School for All Students—Visitations to All Schools and Classrooms; Rhode Island Teacher of the Year Selection Committee Meeting; Ad Hoc Building Committee Meeting; and Special Legislative Commission Meeting—Consolidation of School Functions—@ Old Colony House in Newport. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to accept the Superintendent's Update, as presented. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

9.0 SUGGESTED MEETING DATES AND AGENDA ITEMS

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

- Monday, September 3, 2007:
Labor Day Holiday
- Tuesday, September 4, 2007:
Teacher In-Service Day
- Wednesday, September 5, 2007:
First Day of School, K-12, Full Day
- Monday, September 10, 2007, 4:30 p.m.:
Ad Hoc Building Committee Meeting
NPS Administration Center
- Tuesday, September 11, 2007, 7 p.m.:
Regular Newport School Committee Meeting
Thompson Middle School Cafeteria
- Tuesday, September 18, 2007, 7 p.m.:
Special Newport School Committee Meeting—Executive Session
Thompson Middle School Library
- Monday, October 8, 2007:
Columbus Day Holiday
- Tuesday, October 9, 2007, 7 p.m.:
Regular Newport School Committee Meeting
Thompson Middle School Cafeteria

- Monday, October 22, 2007:
Teacher In-Service Day [No School]

Special Meetings may be scheduled, as required.

10.0 Executive Session.

At 8:54 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 (7-0).

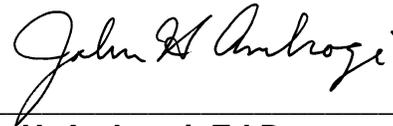
OPEN SESSION

At 9:30 p.m., the meeting was called in Open Session.

Adjournment. At 9:31 p.m., Mrs. Gaines made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Carlin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).



Charles P. Shoemaker, M.D.
Chairperson



John H. Ambrogi, Ed.D.
Clerk