

EAST GREENWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE**MINUTES OF THE MARCH 8, 2005 SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING****1. Call to Order**

The second March meeting of the East Greenwich School Committee was held on

Tuesday, March 8, 2005 in the gymnasium of the Hanaford School. Chair Vincent Bradley called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Other members present were: Paul Martin, Vice-Chair, Dr. Al Ross, Steven Gregson, Merrill Friedemann, and William Day as well as Helen O'Hara, Assistant Superintendent, Carol Brown, Director of Student Services, and Maryanne Crawford, Director of Administration. Mrs. Cienki was absent. The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

2. Public Hearing on the Budget

Mrs. Crawford stated that the budget increase is presently at 5.4%. Dr. Ross questioned the cut in the maintenance budget. A discussion was held on whether to put the repairs for Cole in the budget or ask the voters for a warrant of 1.3 million dollars. Mr. Gregson noted that at the last Property Subcommittee meeting, the Cole repairs for a boiler, windows and frames, fire alarms, paving and curbing were discussed. There was also an issue of safety for students at Cole while repairs are going on. Dr. Ross made a motion which was seconded by Mrs. Friedemann to restore the cuts to the Cole

maintenance budget by \$20,000.

Mrs. Christine Mattos stated that she has compared the salary and benefit spreadsheet and feels there is an overstatement of salaries. She noted that she is looking at real numbers across the board and could only find three items that match. She stated that it is a difficult budget to read and the numbers are nonsense.

Mrs. Friedemann questioned special education tuitions, and wanted to know where the money is going.

Mrs. Mattos asked about mileage for central office. Mr. Bradley noted that it is a perk that a previous School Committee extended. Mrs. Mattos noted that 1.85% of the budget is for materials and supplies that directly affect the children, and that is unacceptable. Mr. Bradley thanked Mrs. Mattos for spending so much time on the budget. He noted that Mrs. Crawford would go over all the numbers questioned. Mr. Bradley suggested that the budget be voted on tonight and given to the Town Manager, knowing that it may be amended. Dr. Ross stated that the School Committee does not have control over salaries, benefits and health care, but is trying to keep costs down for taxpayers while giving more services to kids.

Mr. Joseph Cardello stated that East Greenwich has the worst fields in the state. He added that they are not managed properly, and there should be one central department in charge of fields. Mr. Gregson responded that, with the cooperation of the town, Mr. Day has taken up the torch, and added that he, Mr. Day, Mr. Wilkinson and Mr. Cardello met last spring to talk about this. He stated that the Town Council budget was a little confusing the last two years but not as

bad as the School Committee's budget. Dr. Jolin responded that the Rhode Island Department of Education requires that the school department break down the budget by schools. Mr. Cardello also asked about having a former School Committee members' interest free loan paid back immediately.

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Mr. Neaves stated that the past political process had led to big contracts, and the generosity extends to the administrators as well as the teachers' union. He also questioned giving three year rolling contracts to administrators and retroactive pay raises to people working to rule.

Mr. Anthony DellaGrotta stated that in last year's budget there was an item for inflation, which appeared to be fat in the budget. Dr. Jolin responded that it was a question of how the budget was presented and was really a combination of other line item increases.

Mr. Robert Vespia asked how the School Committee could vote on a budget now with the questions being raised. Mr. Martin stated that there are still three months left before the Financial Town Meeting's vote.

Mr. Jonathan Finkle asked if any more cuts will be made by School Committee after tonight's meeting. Dr. Ross replied that the Town Council could cut and then voters at the Financial Town meeting could make cuts.

On the vote to approve the budget for FY 2006, Mr. Bradley, Mr.

Martin, Mr. Day, and Dr. Ross voted yes, and Mr. Gregson and Mrs. Friedemann voted no. The motion passed.

3. Facilities Committee/Responsibilities of Architect and Project Manager

Mr. Bradley noted that the warrant charge takes the responsibility that the Oversight Committee has, moves it over to the School Committee, and puts it into the hands of the Facilities Committee. He noted that the objective is to move the warrants along in a timely manner, and move the operation into the way things are done in industry. It was decided to give the Construction Management Proposal to Attorney Visconti to look over. Mr. Gregson stated that authority should not be given to the current project manager since they have not done anything they said they would do. He also said that Mr. DeSaia needs time to look at the proposal and explain it. Mrs. Friedemann asked if the School Committee could get out of the contract they now have with the project manager. Mr. Bradley responded that one way to move it along was to have Mr. DeSaia sit down with the current project manager and have them be a construction manager and do it right. Mrs. Friedemann stated that Mr. Bradley is assuming that Ahlborg will take this over, Mr. DeSaia will disappear, and Mr. Hilton will come back and monitor Ahlborg.

Dr. Ross made a motion to accept the warrant charge subject to endorsement by legal counsel. This motion was seconded by Mr. Day. Mr. Gregson feels that more time is needed to do this. On a motion made by Dr. Ross and seconded by Mr. Day, the Committee

voted unanimously to table the Facilities Committee Warrant Charge and the Construction Management Proposal. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Mr. Robert Vespia stated that there was a presentation by the Recreation Department on Monday night that stated there are not enough fields in town. He also asked about the paraprofessional's contract and hopes they have the same benefit package as proposed for teachers. He stated that the benefits package should go along with every contract negotiated.

On a motion made by Mr. Martin and seconded by Dr. Ross, the Committee, being polled individually, voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 9:35 p.m. under R.I.G.L. 42-46-5 (a) (1) and (2) for personnel issues and contract negotiations.