

TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2008

Hanaford School Cafeteria

200 Middle Road

East Greenwich, RI 02818

ANY ITEMS CONSIDERED BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MAY BE SUBJECT TO A

VOTE

The School Committee meeting was called to order at 7:30p.m. in the Hanaford School Cafeteria. Members present were: Sue Cienki, Chair, Skip Day, Vice-chair, Anne Palumbo, Mary Ellen Winters, Merrill Friedemann, JeanAnn Guliano, and Susan Records as well as Superintendent Charles Meyers, Director of Administration, Maryanne Crawford, Assistant Superintendent Helen O'Hara, and Director of Facilities Robert Wilmarth. The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

2. Public Comments

Maura Meiser, Flintstone Court, thanked everyone for the positive building effort and action. She gave a huge thank you to the East Greenwich teachers who listened and moved work to rule out of the schools and for continuing to work on negotiating. She thanked the Meadowbrook team and is proud of the parents.

Donna Hayes, teacher at Frenchtown and EGEA co-president, noted that raises for administrators are on the agenda tonight. She noted there should be raises for everyone and wanted to remind the leadership how much extra work the teachers do. She stated that no

one should be willing to accept a raise until teachers get a contract. She wanted to remind the School Committee to make good choices.

Heather Tibbetts, Hickory Drive, thanked teachers for stopping work to rule. She noted that the negotiation session date was changed and some Committee members couldn't attend. She felt there may have been an agreement, but now the Committee has to wait to talk to the Town. She feels it is a slap in the face to teachers now that they ended work to rule. Mrs. Cienki stated that even if there was an agreement, it would have to be done in public. Mrs. Friedemann stated that she did make the attorney aware that she would not be at the negotiating meeting. Mrs. Tibbetts asked why meetings are being scheduled on such short notice, and asked what has changed. Mr. Day replied that the Committee has been notified that the Town is going to cut \$500,000. Chris Boie stated that the union negotiators were willing to meet on both nights, and they have always been willing to negotiate. He noted that now they have to wait 30 to 45 more days.

Robin Leshing, Hill Drive, thanked the teachers for ending their work to rule, but wondered why we have two lawyers for a school district of our size. Mr. Day responded that Mr. Ackerman has been negotiating the teachers' contract since 2003. Mrs. Leshing's understanding is that our general counsel does the same work, and she asked about Mr. Ackerman's motivation to settle. Mrs. Friedemann stated that Mr. Ackerman's proposal to be the counsel for the school department was \$35,000 less than Oliverio and Marcaccio proposal. She noted that Mr. Ackerman made an offer for \$60,000 for all the work in order

to relieve some of our financial crisis.

Mrs. Laurie Ratigan, teacher at Meadowbrook, asked if Mr. Ackerman was aware of the previous offer by Oliverio & Marcaccio and could still come in \$30,000 less. She asked if Mr. Ackerman was an educator. She also noted that if she has someone making crucial decisions, she wants that person to be an educator. She noted that the Committee has been shown where there is waste and now they should use those funds to decide what is important. Mrs. Ratigan stated that previous School Committee members came to open houses and visited the schools throughout the year, but she has not seen any School Committee members now. She noted that teachers have never gotten acknowledged for the great Salt Visit and that affects the quality of education in East Greenwich. She added that teachers are only asking for what was budgeted at the beginning of the school year.

3. Recognitions

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Mrs. Cienki stated that the following students will be also recognized at graduation and it is a great evening for them. She added that they are a credit to East Greenwich. Mr. Yu thanked all the teachers who trained his son very well and noted that it is a great school system. He asked that the negotiations be resolved and both sides should come together to end the issues.

3.1 Valedictorian of the Class of 2008 - Jovian Yu

3.2 Salutatorian of the Class of 2008 – Meredith Thurston

4. Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Palumbo made a motion which was seconded by Mrs. Guliano to approve the minutes of the March 4 and March 19 Executive Sessions with suggested changes to the March 4 meeting. The motion passed with Mrs. Friedemann voting no.

Discussion of method of minutes taken by Mrs. Giuliani in open and executive sessions

Mrs. Friedemann would like to see the actual written minutes of the executive session meeting when the law firm of Oliverio and Marcaccio was hired. Mrs. Cienki stated that some Committees record their meetings and members can go back and listen. Mrs. Friedemann feels we should be taping our meetings and added that the secretary's notes are not her own since she is an employee of the Town. This item will be put on a future agenda.

5. New Business

5.1 Resignation

On a motion made by Mr. Day and seconded by Mrs. Palumbo, the Committee voted unanimously to accept the following resignations:

5.1.1 Anne Marden, Director of the Cultural Organization of the Arts, effective April 7, 2008.

5.1.2 Doug Haynes, head baseball coach at Cole Middle School.

5.1.3 Gregory Stewart, Administrative Assistant to the Director of Special Education, effective March 6, 2008

5.2 Appointments

On a motion made by Mrs. Records and seconded by Mr. Day, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the following

appointments:

5.2.1 Mark Streich, head boys' baseball coach at Cole Middle School, pending his background check.

5.2.2 David Kelaghan, head boys' tennis coach at EGHS

6. Approval of Facilities and Fields Plan for RIDE Reimbursement

Mr. Meyers stated that Mr. Winikur from SBS could not attend the meeting tonight but shared with him the current discussions with RIDE on seeking reimbursement. He noted that they have a scheduled appointment with the Board of Regents on April 24 for the \$52 million project. This project is to construct a 100,000 sq. ft. middle school and make renovations to the front entrance of the high school, including seven new science labs but no additional science classrooms. The Superintendent stated that RIDE would like him to use the savings at the high school for Eldredge and Hanaford School repairs. Portables at Frenchtown and Hanaford would be gone and sinks will be put in rooms at Frenchtown. It was noted that the Meadowbrook floor project is too big to get done over a summer.

Joanne Leach wondered if the teams will be cut from seven to six now that the size of the new middle school has been cut. She also asked if there is a Plan B if the bond fails. Mr. Meyers responded that there is no intention of reducing staff and a feasibility study was done and we know exactly what we have to do. He also stated that Plan B would be to re-tool and go back to the voters. Mrs. Friedemann stated that the Capital Improvement Plan has a way to make Cole livable.

Mr. Day made a motion which was seconded by Mrs. Palumbo to

approve the Facilities and Fields Plan for RIDE reimbursement. It was noted that if we approve this as a district-wide plan, it can be changed. The motion passed with Mrs. Friedemann voting no.

7. Extension of SMMA's Contract

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Mr. Day made a motion which was seconded by Mrs. Winters to approve the extension of the contract for SMMA, contingent upon receiving the impact fees from the Town. Mr. Meyers stated that \$50,000 will be taken out of the town's impact fees and this will extend the contract until the referendum in November. It was noted that Mr. Frenette has continued to work with us since his original contract ended. The motion passed with Mrs. Friedemann voting no.

8. Administrators' Salary Increases and Medical Insurance Co-share

Mr. Meyers recommended that the administrators receive a two year contract with a 2.4% increase for 2007-2008 and a 15% co-pay, and for the 2008-2009 school year, a 2.4% increase and a 20% co-pay. Mr. Meyers noted that Mrs. O'Hara and Mrs. Sousa will be retiring and have served the district well. He noted that Mrs. Sousa will retire in September and Mrs. O'Hara will retire on June 30. He stated that this will result in a savings of \$72,000. Mr. Meyers also noted that we will not have an Assistant Superintendent but will hire a Special Education Director. He will put a report on restructuring of administrators on the next agenda. Mr. Meyers also noted that when Mrs. Sousa retires, her replacement will be an elementary principal, not have the additional title of Director of Elementary and Secondary

Education. He stated that in 2006 he restructured and eliminated the Director of Special Education and gave Mrs. O'Hara the title of Assistant Superintendent, and that resulted in a savings of \$81,000. Mr. Meyers stated that the sentiment out there is we are heavy of administrators, but we are not. Mr. Boie asked how raises could be considered for administrators when the Committee is telling the union they can't get a proposal. Mr. Meyers stated that this raise does accomplish giving people a modest cost of living adjustment while increasing their co-share. Mrs. Friedemann stated that if she were a principal, she would not take any money until teachers receive a raise. Mr. Day made a motion to give administrators a raise for the 2007-2008 school year, with an increase in their co-pay until we see what the budget will be at Financial Town Meeting. The motion was defeated because there was no second. Mrs. Guliano made a motion to table this item until after the budget meeting on May 12, 2008. This was seconded by Mrs. Records and was unanimous.

9. Restructuring Plan with Town Government for Landscaping and Snowplowing

Mr. Meyers stated that the consolidation committee has been talking about turning landscaping and snowplowing services over to the Town. The Town will provide the same services that Seascope now provides. Mrs. Friedemann wants to make sure that the insurance carries over. Mrs. Cienki stated that this needs to be articulated in an agreement and we need to see if it is going to save us money. She wants a punch list of all questions we need to ask the Town. Mrs. Crawford explained that the Town will take over landscaping and as

far as snowplowing is concerned, for a storm of over four inches, two of our maintenance workers will be called in to assist the Town staff. Mr. Meyers stated that the Town's Public Works Department has been good to the schools and this could result in a very good relationship. Mrs. Friedemann would like the Committee to read and agree to the terms of the consolidation. Mrs. Guliano doesn't want any reduction in our budget because next's years' budget is based on that school department appropriation. She wants to try it as an expenditure not as a budget decrease. She stated that we have met our obligation by law. Mrs. Cienki stated that the Town should look at their side for cuts.

10. Discussion on School Food Service Provider for 2008-2009

Mrs. Crawford stated that there is a push to have a statewide contract. She also noted that the State went out to bid and awarded the contract to Aramark. She noted that our contract with Sodexo expires at the end of the 07-08 school year. She noted that a letter from the SEUI Union out of Pennsylvania was sent out suggesting we not go with Aramark. Mrs. Crawford stated that the State is still going with Aramark, and she noted that if we go with the Statewide contract, we will not go out to bid. Mrs. Palumbo would like one person from the Wellness Committee to meet with Aramark. She also noted that she will meet with Carole Tosselli from Kids First. Mrs. Crawford spoke to Aramark and told them we not allow a deficit. Mr. Meyers stated that it is difficult for small districts to keep the price down if they go with the State

contract. It was noted that if there is a new food service vendor, they will buy the new equipment at the high school. Tara Apperson, the reporter from the NorthEast Independent, asked why we would not go out to bid to see what is out there.

11. School Committee Concerns

Mrs. Guliano stated that April 2 is Statewide Autism Awareness Day and she wants to recognize all the work people do with the Pilot Program at Meadowbrook. Mrs. Friedemann would like to recognize the Autism Society of America and Autism Speaks and all the people who have done research at the universities.

Mrs. Guliano stated that the Town Energy Commission is focusing on recycling and will make a presentation at a School Committee meeting. It was noted that there are new recycling efforts at Hanaford and Meadowbrook.

Mrs. Guliano stated that what we do this year will impact us for the next five years and therefore we need to defend our budget and keep it where it is.

Mrs. Winters asked about having PSAT's on Saturday and having kids miss sporting events. Mr. Meyers will check this out.

Mrs. Friedemann is disturbed that we are going to have our budget cut. She noted that we have to start thinking about our priorities and put this on every agenda. She feels we should be judicious in how we spend our money.

Mrs. Laurie Ratigan stated that educators in East Greenwich wish Mrs. O'Hara well, thank her for her service, and appreciate and value her. She also noted that they wish Mrs. Sousa well and they are sorry

to see her retire also.

The following items may be discussed in Executive Session:

12. On a motion made by Mr. Day and seconded by Mrs. Records, the Committee, being polled individually, voted unanimously to adjourn and go into Executive Session at 9:05p.m. under RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (2) for Teacher Contract Negotiations; Report on New Litigation, John Doe vs. East Greenwich School Department; Discussion of Insurance Coverage for New Lawsuit.

13. Indemnification of Law Firm of Oliverio & Marcaccio in John Doe vs. East Greenwich

Maryanne Crawford indicated that Carolyn Hamel, Senior Litigation Specialist at Massamont Insurance, informed her that the law firm of Oliverio & Marcaccio are not covered under the School Department's policy in the matter of John Doe vs. East Greenwich School Department 2008-0358 (Claim No: MAS 006-4725).

Mrs. Friedemann stated that Oliverio & Marcaccio have their own insurance that should cover them in this matter. She further stated that Oliverio & Marcaccio have malpractice insurance that covers errors and omissions and there is no need for the School Committee to indemnify them. No action was taken. On a motion made by Mr. Day and seconded by Mrs. Records, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Giuliani
Secretary