

# **Minutes of the East Greenwich School Committee**

**Tuesday, February 28, 2012**

**Archie Cole Middle School Library**

**100 Cedar Avenue`**

**East Greenwich, RI 02818**

**6:11p.m. Executive Session, Mrs. Winters made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Green to go into Executive Session for discussion and/or action regarding those items of business exempt from open meetings under General Laws of Rhode Island 42-46-5 (a) (2) Collective Bargaining Grievance-Custodial. The vote was unanimous (4-0).**

## **7:00p.m. Regular Meeting**

**Those in attendance were: Dr. Deidre Gifford, Chair; Mr. David Green; Mr. Jack Sommer; Mrs. Mary Ellen Winters, and Mrs. Susan Records. Mr. Robert Durant and Mr. Paul Martin were absent. Dr. Victor Mercurio, Superintendent; Mrs. Paula Dillon, Assistant Superintendent, and Mrs. Maryanne Crawford, Director of Administration were also present.**

### **I. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**

**The meeting commenced with the Pledge of the Allegiance to the Flag. Dr. Gifford welcomed back Mrs. Records who has been absent due to an injury.**

## **II. Public Comments**

**There were no public comments.**

## **III. Approval of Minutes**

**On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Sommer, the Committee voted 4-0 (with Mrs. Records abstaining) to approve the minutes listed below:**

- a. Executive Session for 1/9/12**
- b. Budget workshop for 1/31/12**
- c. Budget workshop for 2/2/12**
- d. Special meeting for 2/13/12**

## **IV. Superintendent's Report**

**Dr. Mercurio gave an update on the Cole softball field. SBS is working with Aldinger technical engineers to examine the field drainage. Dr. Mercurio expects additional information next week and will ask Mr. Sullivan to attend the meeting. Mr. Sommer asked about the issue with the infield and questioned the deadline dates. Dr. Mercurio did not have information on the infield, but will get the deadline dates from Mr. Cobain and provide those dates to SBS and SMMA to see if they can comply. Dr. Gifford asked if the district is paying to have the field reconfigured as a softball field. Dr. Mercurio said the field is structured for softball and materials were budgeted. Contingency money was also put aside. Dr. Mercurio also noted the unified volleyball team won the national championship in Salt Lake City, Utah. The team will be recognized at a future meeting.**

## **V. School Committee Concerns**

**Mrs. Winters discussed the chorus position at Cole and asked about**

the course selection process. She would like to see data regarding the number of students in each course. The Committee discussed opportunities of sharing staff between Cole and the high school. This item will be discussed at the next meeting

#### **VI. Cole Tennis Club**

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Green, the Committee voted 5-0 to table this item.

#### **VII. World Language Presentation**

Dr. Mercurio gave an overview of the research conducted by the committee including the benefits of studying foreign languages. The Arabic Club is in its second year servicing seventeen students after school. Dr. Mercurio explained URI's teacher certification process for Mandarin which offers students the opportunity to become credentialed teachers. The first class of teachers to graduate from this program will happen in May 2013. Dr. Mercurio discussed the task force's proposal which is to increase exposure for students, offer enrichment time during the school day, phase in Arabic offerings in the high school, utilize Startalk funding to train teachers, and continue to develop a partnership with the Flagship program at URI. All languages need to be aligned with the common core state standards. Dr. Mercurio explained the need to sustain a credentialed teacher long-term and the need to offer a language which will enable a student to go through multiple levels of the language (i.e. Spanish I, Spanish II). Dr. Mercurio stated that enrichment time is built in during the school day and is about an hour plus each week.

**Mr. Green asked if the task force wanted to expand world languages or replace a current language. Dr. Mercurio said the group did not discuss replacing a language. Dr. Gifford asked if there is a national advisory body that can assist districts in exploring languages. Mrs. Chavez, EGHS Foreign Language Chair, noted the American Council can assist and denotes which languages are considered “critical languages.” She added that languages deemed “critical” are due to the lack of speakers in the country. Both Arabic and Mandarin are deemed “critical.” The Committee discussed the importance of sustaining a new language in the district. Mrs. Chavez explained how colleges look for depth in languages. Dr. Gifford would like the task force to discuss the Startalk grant and develop a partnership with URI. The task force can move forward with proposed items that do not need funding or resources. Dr. Mercurio will take steps to move forward on these items. The charge of the group can be revised if there any additional needs.**

#### **VIII. Public Hearing on the FY 2013 Budget**

**Dr. Mercurio explained the E-Rate application process and noted there is a hearing tomorrow on E-Rate. E-Rate proposed revenue is \$24,000 for FY2013. Mrs. Crawford is meeting with the state tomorrow to get updates on items that may have a big impact on the budget (i.e. non-public text books). Mrs. Crawford gave the Committee suggested budget decreases which total \$247,082. The current proposed budget stands at \$34,044,968 which is 4.55% over last year. Mrs. Crawford discussed state aid which is projected at \$1,791,453. She noted the decrease in wealth in East Greenwich (3%) affects**

**state aid dollars. Mrs. Crawford discussed the reconciliation of state aid proposed in the Governor's budget which addresses the Jobs Bill Funds and the Year II funding formula. Mrs. Crawford also highlighted other items in the Governor's budget including state wide transportation and special education. The total state aid in the Governor's proposed budget totals \$1,950,924.**

**Budget owners will be asked to look at their proposed budgets if additional cuts are needed. Health insurance is projected to increase 2% over the previous year and Delta Dental has a projected decrease of 5%. West Bay is going out to bid and the district should have information by mid-April. IDEA is funded about 10% for special education which leaves the burden on the local school district. Transportation is projected to increase approximately 5%, but bids aren't due for four to six weeks. Mr. Sommer asked if there is an opportunity to expand the policy in transportation regarding the "mile" policy. Mrs. Crawford does not think the district can expand the policy and noted the district could actually use another bus. She is looking into eliminating the late bus. Daily ridership has seen a consistent increase (slight). Mr. Sommer asked if the policy committee is looking into a bus reservation system. Mrs. Crawford said the committee is researching this possibility.**

**Mr. Green reminded the Committee that most budget owners at the school level have been level funded in prior years which tends to make their proposed budget increases look significant. Dr. Gifford noted the Town Council needs the budget by March 15th. There may be a need for an additional School Committee meeting before March 15th. The Committee asked Mrs. Crawford to give them suggested budget reductions in increments of 4%, 3%, 2%, and 1%. The Committee would like to know how these cuts will affect the district from a monetary and educational standpoint.**

**Dr. Gifford addressed the public and explained the protocol for engaging in conversation with School Committee members during meetings. While public input is welcomed, the public is given fifteen minutes at the beginning of the meeting to address the Committee with any comments or concerns.**

## **IX. Action Items**

### **a. Appointment**

#### **1. Orchestra .4 FTE- Cole-Megan Catelli**

**This position is an Appendix B position that works with students before and after school, and holds all-state and other concert rehearsals which cannot take place during the school day. About twenty-five students participate. Dr. Gifford would like to see the class sizes for the programs offered during the school day. On a motion by Mr. Green, which was seconded by Mr. Sommer, the Committee voted 4-0 to approve the appointment. Mrs. Winters abstained.**

## **2. Chorus- EGHS and Cole-Dan George**

**Mr. George worked at Cole during the first semester (during the school day) as a .5FTE and now is working at the EGHS as a .5FTE for the second semester. The goal of this position is to maintain a program at Cole and the EGHS. On a motion by Mr. Sommer, which was seconded by Mr. Green, the Committee voted 5-0 to appoint Mr. George.**

### **b. Contract for Director of Technology/Systems Analyst**

**Mrs. Records asked about the duties for the system analyst portion of this position. Dr. Mercurio will send her a copy of the job description. There was discussion about five weeks' vacation which is being recommended. Many members stated that five weeks' vacation is extraordinary for a first year employee. To be consistent with other administrators' contracts, the Committee agreed to leave the vacation time as is and work on adjustments for upcoming renewals. On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Sommer, the Committee voted to approve the contract 5-0.**

### **c. Approval of layoffs, suspensions, and non-renewals**

**According to state statute, layoffs; suspensions; and non-renewals need to be approved by the School Committee and communicated to staff by March 1st. Dr. Mercurio explained there are three (3) one-year only teachers, and four (4) other teachers who will receive notice. Mr. Sommer questioned whether this reduction would be sufficient due to the potential budget reductions that may come from the Town Council. Mrs. Crawford explained the reductions may be tight, but there is still some flexibility. On a motion by Mr. Sommer,**

which was seconded by Mr. Green, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve the recommended layoffs, suspensions, and non-renewals.

**d. Aramark Contract**

The contract was tabled at the February 7, 2012 meeting due to questions regarding the calculation of operating costs. The calculations were clarified by Attorney Oliverio. On a motion by Mr. Green, which was seconded by Mrs. Winters, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve the contract.

**X. Discussion Items**

**a. Fields' MOU**

Dr. Gifford noted the Town Council met last evening and made some modifications to the cover memo of the MOU. The Town Council voted to approve the modifications, but recognizes the School Committee still needs to approve and may have additional revisions. Mrs. Winters would like to discuss the use of the fields; specifically water consumption. Dr. Gifford asked Mrs. Winters to initiate a proposal regarding water consumption. The Fields' MOU will be discussed again at the next meeting.

**b. Cole lighting**

Dr. Mercurio did not have anything new to report. Mr. Sommer discussed the timing on the surge and would like to know when the power surge happened: before or during the storm. Dr. Mercurio assumed it was during the storm, but will get clarification.

**c. Update on EGHS technology**

Dr. Mercurio discussed the extensive work that has been done by the new Director of Technology/Systems Analyst. An RFQ needs to be

initiated for the EGHS library. The district needs to ensure that Cole and the EGHS are consistent in their technology. Dr. Mercurio will give an update to the Committee at the next meeting. Mr. Sommer asked if the Committee will hear a report regarding the possibility of 1:1 tablets. The report should be presented at the March 20th School Committee meeting. Dr. Mercurio noted that Apple is giving a presentation to surrounding districts on March 1st at New England Technology (East Greenwich). The presentation will discuss I-books and I-tunes. Committee members are welcome to attend.

Dr. Gifford discussed the high school computer and infrastructure issues with Mr. Podraza. He would like to see the impact of the new infrastructure before working on individual computer issues. Dr. Mercurio would also like to see the impact of the new infrastructure on existing hardware. Mrs. Dillon and Mr. Zambrano have reviewed the equipment in rooms 111 and 113 at the high school. They have determined what needs to be replaced in these rooms to make them fully operational in September. Dr. Gifford questioned the condition of the carts and other hardware at the high school. Mrs. Dillon and Mr. Zambrano have not reviewed the carts yet. There was discussion about the timeline of the RFQ and bidding process. Mrs. Crawford stated the RFQ can be revised if needed and vendors will be allowed to bid again if there are new specs.

#### **d. National School Board Conference – April 2012**

The National School Board Conference will take place in April. Mr. Martin was not present to discuss this item.

## **XI. Adjournment**

**On a motion by Mrs. Records, which was seconded by Mr. Green, the Committee voted 5-0 to adjourn at 9:36pm.**

**CHRISTINE DIMEGLIO**

**SECRETARY**