

Minutes of the East Greenwich School Committee

Tuesday, April 3, 2012

East Greenwich High School Library

300 Avenger Drive

East Greenwich, RI 02818

6:12p.m. Executive Session, Mr. Durant made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Winters 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) Ocean State Transit Contract Renewal. The vote was unanimous 6-0.

7:02p.m. Regular Meeting

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

7:02p.m. Regular Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Deidre Gifford, Chair.

I. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

III. Approval of Minutes

a.Regular for 3/20/12

On a motion by Mr. Durant, which was seconded by Mr. Green, the Regular minutes for 3/20/12 were approved 7-0.

IV. Superintendent's Report

The posting for the Meadowbrook Principal closes on April 12th. There are thirty-nine applicants for the position. A parent forum and a faculty/staff forum will take place after the April vacation. A recommendation will be given to the School Committee at either the last meeting in May or the first meeting in June. A forum is being scheduled on Thursday, April 26th and Monday, May 21st to discuss the Teacher of Excellence Commission. The time and venue will be announced.

V. School Committee Concerns

Mr. Martin encouraged School Committee members to attend the upcoming April School Board conference in Boston.

VI. Recognitions

a.Building Committee Community Members

Dr. Mercurio thanked all Building Committee members for their dedication and work throughout the district. Mr. Winakur, of SBS, gave a presentation of Building Committee projects including Cole, EGHS Science rooms, EGHS library renovation, and discussed the upcoming Meadowbrook project. Dr. Gifford thanked all Building Committee members for their countless volunteer hours spent at

meetings and the like. She expressed the Committee's gratitude and appreciation for their efforts. The Committee presented Building Committee community members with framed pictures of the new Archie Cole Middle School, along with certificates of recognition. Dr. Gifford also thanked school and town employees, SBS employees, and SMMA for their assistance. Local business Crestar was also thanked for their assistance in producing beautiful keepsakes for the community members.

b.Charlotte Palmer, EGHS

The Committee recognized EGHS student Charlotte Palmer for her award-winning essay in investing. Ms. Palmer's essay placed number one in the state and number five in the country.

VII. Action Items

a.School Committee Resolution

This resolution is in support of the bill to change the teacher layoff date from March 1st to

June 1st. On a motion by Mr. Durant, which was seconded by Mr. Sommer, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the resolution.

b.Retirements

On a motion by Mr. Martin, which was seconded by Mrs. Winters, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the following retirements:

Constance McCormack, EGHS; Karen Murtha, EGHS; Marianne (Teddy) Davis,EGHS; Kathleen Bennett, Meadowbrook, and Janet Snyder, Hanaford. All retirees will be recognized at a future meeting.

c.Parental Leaves

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Durant, parental leaves for Bethany Gorter, Meadowbrook and Jennifer Mattox, Meadowbrook were unanimously approved 7-0.

d.Approval of School Calendar 2012-2013

Dr. Mercurio explained that due to state law, schools must be closed for the primary election. Dr. Mercurio recommended that substitutes be hired to replace teachers at Cole who will participate in senior project judging on April 25, 2013. The Committee discussed the value of having Cole teachers participate in senior project judging and would like to set up a task force possibly in the summer to make recommendations for future senior project judging. The only early dismissal on April 25, 2013 is for EGHS students. On a motion by Mr. Durant, which was seconded by Mr. Martin, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the school calendar for 2012-2013.

e.Sabbatical request for 2012-2013-Christina O'Day

Ms. O'Day was present to offer additional information regarding her request. The Committee asked clarifying questions regarding credentialing. Dr. Mercurio noted it will take the Rhode Island Department of Education approximately four to six weeks to review Ms. O'Day's credentials. Ms. O'Day also discussed her request for grant funding through EGEF. She explained that she needs the funding to attend classes. Mr. Durant made a motion to approve the sabbatical pending approval of funding by EGEF. Mr. Martin seconded the motion. Dr. Gifford asked the Committee if there should be a budget discussion prior to voting on the sabbatical. Mr. Durant withdrew his motion. Mr. Green applauded Ms. O'Day's

enthusiasm, but noted his budget concerns and questioned the direction of the language program. The sabbatical will cost the district approximately \$40-\$50,000 which will include half of Ms. O'Day's salary and benefits and the salary and benefits for a one-year substitute. Dr. Mercurio also noted that if Ms. O'Day needs emergency certification there is an associated cost to the district. That cost is unknown at this time. Dr. Gifford discussed her concerns of approving a sabbatical because the town has recently cut \$400,000 from the proposed school budget. This item will be discussed at a future meeting after the budget is finalized.

f. Grade Configuration

The cost associated with moving grade three to Hanaford and Eldredge is approximately \$125,000. An additional special education teacher and a .2FTE Speech Pathologist would be needed. Mrs. Dillon explained the caseloads at the elementary schools and why additional staff would be needed. Mrs. Dillon also explained that program models would have to change if she pulled staff from buildings to cover the reconfiguration. The Town Council and School Committee have a joint budget meeting on Monday, April 9, 2012.

Dr. Mercurio also discussed the Race to the Top language surrounding early childhood education and the possible implications which may affect where preschools are housed. Several parents were present and asked clarifying questions about the possible move including Lori Grenier, Judy McCauley, and Dave Decawich. Another parent asked about the possibility of only moving up students to one school (either Hanaford or Eldredge) rather than moving up both.

Leslie Barone discussed health concerns regarding work being done at Meadowbrook while students are there. The Committee discussed this topic in depth and will vote on whether to move grade three to Hanaford and Eldredge at the next meeting on April 24th. Dr. Gifford discussed the budgeting process noting the school gave the town the proposed budget on March 15th and only received the town's input last week. The town is giving the school a 1.5% increase which means the school department now needs to cut an additional \$400,000 from the proposed budget. Mrs. Gifford went on to explain the budgeting process which goes back and forth between the school and town until it is finalized in June.

g.Resource Officer- EGHS

This item needs to be discussed at a future meeting when the budget is finalized with the town.

h.Budget FY2013

The school gave the town a proposed budget of \$33,756,904. Local revenue is expected at \$31,375,451. The town decreased the school's FY2013 budget by to \$30,975,120, a 1.55% increase over FY2012. This decrease means the school department needs to cut \$400,000 from the proposed budget. Seven teachers will be retiring at the end of the year and six are eligible for two years' of health benefits. Mrs. Crawford discussed the suggested "priority two level" budget cuts. She also noted she has a meeting on April 11th to discuss the West Bay Healthcare bid. The Committee asked Mrs. Crawford to get ridership numbers for the late bus. The Committee discussed potential areas where the district could save money (i.e.

nursing). Dr. Mercurio noted student needs and the teachers' contract would need to be reviewed. Dr. Mercurio discussed the Gems Net contract noting Gems Net is requesting a three-year commitment. The associated costs are significantly higher than expected. The current contract expires on June 30th and the district is looking into other opportunities such as maintaining, refreshing, and storing the kits in district. Mr. Rath has been part of the discussion. By maintaining the kits in district, the district may save 50% of the cost. Mrs. Crawford asked if the district can collaborate with other districts.

i.Fields' MOU

The Committee discussed the water usage history and the fields' usage for Spring 2012.

The school has been paying for the water and the town has maintaining the fields. Fertilizer cost has been shared between the schools and the town. Mrs. Winters discussed the issue of charging fees to out-of-town groups to defray the cost of water. Dr. Gifford discussed collecting fees and maintaining the accounts for the rental of Carcieri field. Mr. Cobain noted Mrs. Bradley (town) schedules all non-school events. Dr. Gifford asked if we can rent out the field for RILL. If so, fees collected for the rental can be maintained by the school department for future capital improvements for the school. Mr. Cobain said the district can and would need to set up a system to collect fees. Mr. Cobain was asked if he would be willing to schedule all of the fields. Mr. Cobain said he would. Dr. Gifford would like Dr. Mercurio to schedule a meeting with Mr. Cobain and Mrs. Bradley to

discuss scheduling. This item will be discussed again at the next meeting on April 24th.

j.Natural Gas Contract

Mrs. Crawford discussed the proposed extension of the “Blend and Extend” contract with Direct Energy. She explained that Direct Energy will modify our contract with a lower price if we extend for an additional two years. Savings may amount to approximately \$75,000. Attorney Oliverio reviewed this contract with Mr. Wilmarth and recommends the extension. On a motion by Mr. Green, which was seconded by Mrs. Winters, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the natural gas contract.

VIII. Presentation-Technology

On a motion by Mr. Martin, which was seconded by Mrs. Records, the Committee voted 7-0 to table this item until the next meeting.

IX. Discussion Items

a.Update on Meadowbrook bid

Dr. Mercurio discussed the phasing in of the project with Tower. There are concerns regarding construction while students are in school. Mr. Winikur met with SMMA and Tower to identify potential cost impacts of vacating the school in its entirety during construction. They also discussed the possibility of working while school is not in session (double stack over the summer), and also extending the project by another year. Mr. Winikur will give Dr. Mercurio projected costs for the options discussed.

b.Update on EGHS dug-outs

Dr. Mercurio said the dug-outs are three to four days from being

completed. The home dug-out should be finished for the first home game on Saturday. Dr. Gifford thanked all volunteers who were involved in this project.

c.Cole Music Program

The School Committee had questions regarding “appendix b” positions at Cole and questioned why they are not part of the regular positions. Mrs. Meyer gave input regarding the history of the programs and offerings at Cole and discussed the changes that have been made since grade six

moved to Cole. Mrs. Catelli and Mr. Levesque were present to discuss the schedule at Cole.

d.Protocol for lowering school flags

Mr. Martin had questions regarding the protocol for lowering flags due to the passing of school and community members. The Governor’s office sends communication when it is appropriate to lower state flags.

X. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Martin, which was seconded by Mrs. Winters, the Committee voted 7-0 to adjourn at 10:27p.m.

CHRISTINE DIMEGLIO

SECRETARY