

Minutes of the East Greenwich School Committee

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Archie R. Cole Middle School Library

100 Cedar Avenue

East Greenwich, RI 02818

6:00 p.m. Executive Session, Mr. Osborne made a motion to go into executive session for discussion and/or action regarding those items of business exempt from open meetings under Rhode Island General Laws §42-46-4 and §42-46-5 (a) (2) Teacher Negotiations. Mr. Fain seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Those in attendance were Ms. Carolyn Mark, Chair; Mr. David Osborne; Mr. Matt Plain; Mr. Michael Fain; Mr. Stuart Peterson, and Dr. Yan Sun. Mrs. Mary Ellen Winters, Vice-Chair was absent. Dr. Victor Mercurio, Superintendent; Mrs. Gail Wilcox, Director of Administration; and Mr. Bradley Wilson, Director of Student Services were also in attendance.

7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting

I. Call to Order

Ms. Mark called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

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

III. Recognitions

- a. EGHS Girls' Swim Team-Division II Champions**
- b. Ian MacDonald-First Team All-State Swimmer 200 Freestyle**
- c. Scholastic Art Award Winners-Cole and EGHS**

All were recognized and congratulated for their achievements. Dr. Mercurio also welcomed new School Committee member Stuart Peterson.

IV. Public Comments

Anne Musella voiced concerns regarding busses arriving late (ten minutes or so) at Meadowbrook Farms School. She said when the busses do arrive the students continue to sit on the bus for another three minutes so they do not get into the building until 12:45 p.m. Ms. Musella said the official dismissal time is 3:25 p.m., but students' are released at 3:20 p.m. Ms. Musella discussed this issue with Mr. Marcaccio recently and met with Dr. Mercurio today.

V. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular and executive for March 1, 2016**

On a motion by Mr. Plain, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve the minutes. Mr. Peterson abstained.

VI. Superintendent's Report

RIDE is holding a series of community-based meetings to discuss graduation requirements. RIDE would like to engage parents, students, and stakeholders in this conversation. There will be an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. East Greenwich community members may attend the meeting on March 22, 2016 at

6:00 p.m. at North Kingstown High School. Mr. Podraza and his staff were thanked for their extensive work in compiling the five-year progress report, which is part of the decennial accreditation cycle. They were also thanked for the progress made in meeting the recommendations. A health/wellness forum will be held in the Cole library on March 29, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

VII. School Committee Concerns

There were no concerns.

VIII. Discussion

a. FY2016 budget update

Mrs. Wilcox provided a snapshot of the FY2016 budget as of February 28, 2016 (67% of the fiscal year). YTD actual revenue is \$24,178,524 and YTD actual expenditures are \$23,233,002.

b. Fund Balance

Mrs. Wilcox discussed the fund balance as of FY2015. The fiscal year surplus is \$226,725 and the general fund operating deficit is \$114,703. The total surplus as a percentage of the total budget is 0.64%. Mrs. Wilcox explained how the WB Collaborative drives the surplus.

c. School Committee Resolution on Gun Free Schools

Last year the School Committee passed a resolution in support of a ban on guns on school campuses, but the legislation did not pass. The Committee has been asked by the R.I. Coalition on Gun Violence to consider the resolution that is before the Committee. Ms. Mark read the resolution and noted some edits to the resolution. This resolution will go for a vote at the next School Committee meeting.

IX. Action Items

a. Parental leave-Lisa Offiler, Art Teacher, Cole

On a motion by Mr. Fain, which was seconded by Dr. Sun, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the parental leave.

b. Appointments

1. Newspaper Advisor, Cole-Kathleen Hook

On a motion by Mr. Osborne, which was seconded by Mr. Plain, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the appointment.

2. Head Coach Girls' Softball, Cole-Carlos Rodas

On a motion by Mr. Osborne, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the appointment.

c. Field Trips

1. Samsung Solve for Tomorrow-Washington, D.C.-EGHS-4/25-4/27/16

On a motion by Dr. Sun, which was seconded by Mr. Plain, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the trip contingent on the EGHS team moving forward in the competition and full funding by Samsung.

2. Field Trip-Washington, D.C, - Cole-5/29-6/1/16

Mrs. Meyer provided background details on the trip and the curriculum that is followed. Donations have been received to cover funding for four students. Scholarships are also available from Project Close-Up. Mr. Plain had several questions regarding funding and accommodations. The Policy Committee has asked Attorney Oliverio to review "pay to play," which will be discussed at the next meeting. The Policy Committee is discussing the funding

of trips and the possibility of revising the district's policy. On a motion by Mr. Osborne, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted 5-1 to approve the trip. Mr. Plain voted no (based on the process, not the trip).

d. Discussion/Adoption of the FY2017 Budget

Dr. Mercurio provided a summary of the proposed budget. This budget has two large-scale initiatives. One is required by the state (all day kindergarten) and one is a local decision (school start time change). Budget deliberations started in November with budget workshops held during January and February. The formal budget hearing was held on March 1st. The public hearing on the town budget is scheduled for April 11, 2016. Ms. Mark voiced concerns regarding the staffing assumption for all day kindergarten. Originally two kindergarten teachers and two paraprofessionals were proposed for both Meadowbrook and Frenchtown. Based on the drop in kindergarten enrollment, staffing was pared back to one teacher and one paraprofessional at each school. Dr. Mercurio said he is confident the staffing structure will be sufficient if enrollment remains consistent. If there is a spike in enrollment, Dr. Mercurio may need extra staffing. Fund balance would be needed to support this staffing. Mr. Plain asked if the district could use WB funds. Dr. Mercurio is unsure how much latitude the district has with WB, but will look into it. Mr. Fain made a motion to approve the FY2017 budget (\$37,821,043) as presented at the budget hearing on March 1, 2016, which is a 2.67% increase over FY2016 and a 2.64% ask from the town. Dr. Sun seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

e. School Calendar 2016-2017

At the last meeting, two possible scenarios for calendars were presented. These calendars were based on the template from R.I.S.S.A. One calendar had a start date of Monday, August 29th and the other Wednesday, August 31th. Dr. Mercurio discussed the challenges the district would face if East Greenwich is the only district to opt for a March break. Challenges include statewide transportation, transportation to career/tech centers across the state, and scheduling challenges for staff members who live in other districts.

Drafts of the school calendar were discussed with administrative council members and bargaining unit leadership. There were concerns regarding a Monday start; especially at the elementary level. Dr. Mercurio thinks the Wednesday start might be better for all.

He also discussed the possibility of having an “orientation day” on the first day, which would give freshman, sixth graders, third graders, and kindergarten students the opportunity to get familiar with a new school without the full population present. Dr. Mercurio recommended example #A (start August 31st) and keeping the February and April breaks. He would like to give the community two years’ notice if a break will be eliminated. Notice could be given by the end of this school year. The Committee discussed the lack of flexibility with Primary Day, Election Day, numerous federal holidays, heat in the buildings, and snow days. Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Calendar Committee were also discussed. Ms. Mark suggested an August 29th start and an abbreviated February break (Monday and

Tuesday only). The professional development day scheduled for April could be moved to March 17th. Dr. Mercurio discussed the holidays that fall during the weekend, which add a non-work day during the week for bargaining unit members (Christmas Eve, New Year's Day, etc.). These days will be confirmed with the union. After considerable discussion, Mr. Plain made a motion to table the calendar for further study and an April 5th vote. Mr. Peterson seconded the motion, which passed 6-0. Mr. Plain asked Dr. Mercurio to provide a calendar proposal(s) from administration that takes into account the needs of the district.

f. Policies: Second Read/Adoption

1. #1140: Selection of Ad Hoc Committees and School Committee Advisory Committees from the Community (revised policy)

On a motion by Mr. Fain, which was seconded by Dr. Sun, the Committee voted 6-0 to adopt the policy.

2. #9305: Naming Buildings and Other School Department Sites (new policy)

On a motion by Mr. Osborne, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted 6-0 to adopt the policy.

X. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Osborne, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted 6-0 to adjourn at 10:04 p.m.

CHRISTINE DIMEGLIO

SECRETARY