

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

Martin Middle School Cafeteria

111 Brown Street

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

School Committee Special Meeting

August 23, 2005

Open Session

Mr. Gouveia, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:40 PM. All members were present: Robert Faria, Eileen Lovett, David Medeiros, Mildred Morris and Antone Gouveia. Also present: Mr. Manuel Vinhateiro, Superintendent of Schools and Andrew Thomas, Esq.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Mrs. Morris and a Moment of Silence was observed.

Report of the Superintendent

Personnel Recommendations ¶ The following items were recommended by the Superintendent of Schools:

Appointments:

Jennifer Benell Speech/Language Pathologist, SPED

M. Manuela Duarte ESL Coordinator

Recall:

Beth Studley Education Specialist

Personal Leave of Absence:

Sherry Jordan Secretary, Martin Middle School

Carole Melucci Education Specialist, 2005-06

Resignation:

Marilyn Perry Secretary, Riverside Middle School

Effective August 23, 2005

Motion by Mrs. Morris to approve, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0.

2005-2006 Budget Work Session

Mr. Vinhateiro presented budget highlights in a PowerPoint Presentation as follows:

BUDGET PREPARATION 2005-2006

Introduction

***f* In 2004-2005, salaries comprised 64% of the School Department budget. As the largest portion of the budget, the salary line item is**

the foundation of each budget.

fP In 2004-2005, our employees gave back raises which saved the School Department \$905,000 in salaries only. This total does not include additional savings realized by reducing pension contributions and other dollar related items frozen in the various collective bargaining agreements.

fP SALARIES 2004-2005 \$34,985,000.

fP SALARIES 2005-2006 \$36,323,000.

fP These salary increases are calculated using the \$905,000 lower base negotiated in 2004-2005.

fP What would these costs be without a renegotiated contract?

fP Assuming a minimal negotiated raise of 3% for fiscal year 2005-2006, our salary costs would have been \$37,014,000 compared to \$36,323,000.

fP Renegotiation savings total \$691,000.

fP Carrying out the same cost factor scenario, 2006-2007 3% increase without renegotiaton would put our salary line at \$38,147,000.

fP Our renegotiated total is \$37,756,000.

fP Renegotiation saved approximately \$391,000. in 2006-2007.

Staffing needs have a direct effect on salary expenditures.

Administrative staff will be determining staffing levels for 2005-2006 in January.

fP Once staffing needs are determined and retirement vacancies filled, a more accurate salary determination can be made.

Mr. Gouveia commented that we have a moral obligation to fund

special education expenses and a recent Senate bill may reduce IDEA money even more. He feels the whole process is unfair.

Mr. Medeiros asked why there was a drop in the state revenues. Mr. Vinhateiro explained that there is no formula for state revenue to cities and towns; it is just at the whim of the State. Representative Helio Mello is presently serving on a committee studying the state funding formula to make changes which would enable Superintendent;is to be able to figure out what their state funding will be much sooner in the budget process.

Mrs. Morris asked for an explanation of the charter school assessment. Mr. Vinhateiro explained that East Providence must provide funds for charter school tuitions such as Met School, CVS Charter School and others. Mrs. Morris asked about repairs of equipment on Page 2; Dr. Hilton advised that any repairs to equipment in the schools would be charged to that account. Mrs. Morris asked about physical education equipment on page 3 in the amount of \$11,045. Dr. Hilton advised that money would be used for athletic programs in the schools.

Mr. Medeiros asked about the general attendance office clerk. Mr. Vinhateiro explained that the position was reduced to 1.6 with .4 of the clerk;is time used to work at Watters School in the morning with alternative school students, which eliminates the need for a secretary in that building. Mr. Vinhateiro explained that Special Services office

has grown and although there have always been two secretaries in that office, in order to make that office more efficient with the additional work load, he has reassigned the secretary in the ESL Office to share duties, half-time in the ESL and Special Education Offices with no additional staff added in the budget. Mrs. Morris made a motion to accept first passage of the budget as prepared by the Superintendent, seconded by Mr. Medeiros.

Mr. Gouveia reviewed the addition of three School Resource Officer positions that increased the budget by \$90,000; two vehicles at \$50,000 (will explore lease/purchase options). He said that a \$7.2 million dollar budget increase has never been discussed as reported recently. He said he will try to keep all the fires out and keep to reality if people do not know the numbers, he advised them to please ask for the information. He and Mr. Faria have been meeting on the budget committee and have asked about the numbers, so he knows what they are.

Mrs. Morris related that in other communities, they are splitting the cost of the School Resource Officers between the City and the Schools.

Mr. Gouveia said that as the process moves along, the public is asked to comment. The contractual issues are not going to change and we cannot get help from the employees again as we did last year. There is an increase in Blue Cross of 12% and an increase in the pension

costs. There is nothing we can do about it and we don't want to point fingers or blame. The School Committee is looking for input from citizens and some help.

Mrs. Streit asked if citizens can get a copy of the budget, as it is difficult to pose questions without having a copy of the budget. Mr. Vinhateiro thanked Mrs. Streit for bringing up this point and he will also explore getting the budget on the website.

Mr. Vinhateiro stated that he did not want any one to misconstrue that the reason for increases in the school budget are just special education related. We are committed by law to fund special education; we are approaching a shortfall of 22% funding for special education. The children who receive these services deserve every educational opportunity and he did not want any one to misconceive the reasons for the increases. If the federal government promised funding, they should be true to that. Unfortunately, the federal government has failed to live up to their obligation. All need to be behind the funding of IDEA at the 40% figure, which was the original commitment.

A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye, Mr. Gouveia, aye. Vote 5-0.

Public Comment

Mr. Jack Fahey complimented the Superintendent for his presentation. He requested a five-year proforma budget using this year as a benchmark; both optimistic and pessimistic projections having a base to compare and contract. Also he would like a copy of the PowerPoint information. He thanked all and will work toward the goal of quality education.

Mr. Furtado related that the National PTA will be running the "Five Cents Makes Sense" Program which funds some school programs. Also, he asked that everyone keep in mind when reviewing the budget that our budget year starts on November 1st although school starts in September.

Mr. Gouveia advised that the second budget work session will be held on Tuesday, August 30, 2005 at Waddington School.

A motion was made by Mrs. Morris to adjourn at 8:40 PM, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Vote 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Executive Secretary

David A. Medeiros, Clerk of the Committee