

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence City Hall

145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

School Committee Meeting

September 11, 2007

Open Session

Mrs. Morris called the meeting to order at 6:00PM. All members were present: Stephen DeCastro, Robert Faria, Eileen Lovett, Steven Santos, Mildred Morris. Also in attendance: Dr. Jacqueline B. Forbes, Superintendent, Robert Silva, Esq. and Andres Thomas, Esq. A motion was made by Mr. Faria to move to Executive Session in accordance with RI General Laws, Section 42-46-5 (a) (1) Personnel, (a) (2) Collective Bargaining/Litigation, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

Public Session reconvened at 7:30PM. A motion was made by Mrs. Lovett to return to open session and to seal the minutes, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0.

Mrs. Morris introduced new School Committee member, Stephen DeCastro, and welcomed him to the School Committee.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Mr. Santos and a Moment of Silence was observed for the 9/11 victims.

Record of Previous Meetings – A motion was made by Mr. Faria to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2007 meeting and the August 21, 2007 meeting, seconded by Mrs. Lovett.

Vote 4-aye. (Mr. DeCastro abstained from voting as he was not present at those meetings).

Chair's Report – Mrs. Morris reported that opening day was a great success and she thanked principals, staff and the Parent Associations for the different programs. She also complimented Whiteknact School for their uniforms and their shirts sporting the word "respect." She hopes that all schools will emphasize respect and would like other schools to try to implement uniforms in school for next year. Also, School Committee members toured the schools with Mr. Tavares, Interim Buildings and Grounds Director before the start of school; some schools are in need of roofs and there are many cosmetic repairs to be done.

Mrs. Morris presented a plaque to outgoing School Committee member, David A. Medeiros, for his service to the School Committee; Mrs. Morris thanked him for being very conscientious and serving the School Committee well; she hopes he will visit and she wished him well in his social work career.

School Committee Reorganization – Mr. Santos nominated Mr. Robert Faria for Vice Chairman, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0 to approve. Mrs. Morris reported the following committee assignments: Mr. Santos, Finance Sub-Committee, Mr. DeCastro will represent the School Committee on a negotiations team, and Mrs. Morris stated that she would serve on the Family Involvement Team Committee.

Hearings – None

Reading of Communications – None

Report of Superintendent and Staff – Dr. Forbes reported that school got off to a great start; 5,504 students are in attendance; we are a strong district with high and moderately performing schools and the goal is high performance for all schools. We have dedicated professionals and we are proud of their efforts for a wonderful school year.

FY 2006-07 Financial Report – Dr. Hilton presented the report as of August 31, 2007. He reported a deficit in special education tuitions and in a few weeks we will be able to know where the salaries are to offset this deficit. Mr. DeCastro commented that on some accounts the balance is at zero, e.g. health insurance, and he was intrigued by that. Dr. Hilton advised that the health care number is set by a

consultant and if in trouble, he will let the School Committee know. Mr. DeCastro also asked about the utilities at zero. Dr. Forbes advised that in the report we project a deficit in the area of \$70,000 and have made transfers from other lines to balance the budget. Dr. Hilton said we cannot predict where we will be in a few months with utilities. Mr. DeCastro said that at some point in time, we will not have a zero balance. Mr. Faria advised that he look at the percentage spent for line items; Dr. Hilton said any extra money in the budget goes toward the deficit in the end. A motion was made by Mr. Faria to accept the report, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

Personnel Recommendations – Diane Rodericks presented the following personnel items:

APPOINTMENTS

**Tammy Crowther Teacher, Bio-Med Tech, CTC
(Due to a Leave of Absence)**

**Diana Morvillo English Teacher, EPHS
(Due to a Transfer)**

**Alan Svendson Student Liaison, EPHS
(Due a resignation)**

**Maureen Spaight Student Liaison, EPHS
(Temporary to 10/31/07)**

**Lawrence Izzì PBGR Coordinator, EPHS
(Proficiency-based Graduation Requirements)**

Motion: Mr. Faria/Second: Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

Edna Souza Under 20 hours Teacher Assistant, EPHS

(Assigned to a child 1-1)

Wendy Aurelio Supervisory Assistant, M.J. Francis

Elizabeth Quirini Supervisory Assistant, Oldham

Lianne Bartlett Supervisory Assistant, Orlo

Tracy Oliver Supervisory Assistant, Silver Spring

Colleen Kinder Supervisory Assistant, Waddington

Sandra LeBert Supervisory Assistant, Waddington

Motion: Mrs. Lovett/Second: Mr. Faria for discussion. Mr. Faria asked about the supervisory assistant positions. Dr. Forbes advised that these positions are three hours per day and the individuals help supervise recess and lunch. Mr. Faria brought up a personal matter about the Chair recusing herself from the vote. Mr. Santos wondered what kind of a message this sends by hiring a family member for a position. Mrs. Morris said the person has been doing this for three and one half years already and this is only a three hour per day position. Dr. Forbes advised that we do not have enough people to fill these aide positions and have three to four openings; these are three hour per day positions with no benefits. Mr. DeCastro asked to be clued in on what the matter was about. Vote: Mr. Santos, nay; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mr. DeCastro, aye; Vote 3, aye; 1, nay, Mrs. Morris recused herself from the vote because it involved a family member (on advice of counsel). Motion carried.

RETIREMENTS

Maria Casimiro (32½ yrs) Teacher, Martin Middle School

Effective January 25, 2008

Celeste Radock (21 yrs) Secretary, Benefits Office, ADM

(Temporary position)

Effective December 21, 2007

Diane Perry (30 yrs) Teacher Assistant, EPHS

Close of the 2007-2008 School Year

Kenneth Bergin (16 yrs) Custodian, Whiteknact School

Close of 2007-2008 School Year

Motion: Mrs. Lovett/Second: Faria. Vote 5-0.

RESIGNATION

Susan Tullson English Teacher, EPHS

Effective September 4, 2007

Motion: Mr. Faria/Second: Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE (Maternity)

Jennifer Cahoon Art Teacher, EPHS

Approximately October 1, 2007

Motion: Mrs. Lovett/Second: Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0.

APPOINTMENTS

Elizabeth Salzillo Reading Coordinator, ADM

Dennis Nobrega Chemistry Teacher, EPHS

Motion: Mrs. Lovett/Second: Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0.

Facilities Update – Mr. Joseph Tavares presented the following report:

At the High School, the generator has been installed, inspected and tested. New hot water tanks have been installed in the kitchen. The target date for the running of the new boiler system is October 1, 2007. Clearance has been received from the Health Department to use the pool and it will re-open on Monday, September 10th. Several broken windows have been repaired and more glass will be ordered for additional window repairs. Mr. Tavares explained that it was discovered that the chimney has deteriorated and needs to be rebuilt; ATC will perform the work and still expects to meet the target date of October 1st for completion of the heating project.

The new parking lot at Orlo Avenue School was in operation by the 1st day of school. This project was completed with the cooperation of the city highway department. All school parking lots were re-stripped by the city highway department.

Mr. Tavares expressed thanks to the City Highway Department for their assistance with several projects over the summer months. The City will patch the stairs at Waddington and wait until next year for more extensive repairs.

The circular stone wall at Martin Middle School (Brown Street side) has been repaved with concrete by the city highway department.

All schools opened on September 5, 2007 without incident. The custodial and maintenance staff did a fine job and due to their hard work and cooperation no overtime costs were incurred during the summer cleaning.

Mr. Tavares thanked School Committee members, Steven Santos, Eileen Lovett, Mildred Morris and Superintendent Jacqueline Forbes for taking time out of their busy schedules to tour all of the school buildings on Wednesday, August 29th. It was an all day affair and members of the school committee were able to see the good and the not so good conditions of our buildings. As a result, a list has been compiled of projects to be completed and some have already been addressed.

Mrs. Morris asked if the metal in the pool area had been fixed. Mr. Tavares said the more immediate concerns needed to be addressed first, but it is on the priority list. Mr. DeCastro asked for a copy of the priority list, which was provided by Mr. Tavares. Dr. Forbes explained that security is being given first priority in the district's Five Year Facilities Plan; a copy of that report will be sent to Mr. DeCastro.

Mr. Santos thanked Mr. Tavares for the School Committee tour of buildings; he had a concern about some mold he saw at Riverside Middle School and Oldham School and would like everyone to stay on top of these situations. Mr. Tavares reported that they try to stay on top of replacing wet ceiling tiles (from a leaking roof) which cause the mold problems. Dr. Forbes advised that Indoor Air Quality teams are in place in all schools, which include custodians to take care of any problems which could lead to mold. If the problem cannot be handled by our staff, we can make a call to the appropriate state agency for assistance. Mr. DeCastro asked if there were any plans to repair leaky roofs. Dr. Forbes stated that there is a plan in place to fix all roofs that have been identified with problems; Oldham has a significant problem. Mr. DeCastro inquired if any roofing contractor had been asked about temporary measures to alleviate the problems. Dr. Forbes said the maintenance staff is doing the best they can with these problems. Mr. DeCastro would like a contractor to take a look at the roofs to see if anything can be done. Mr. Tavares will report on this at the next meeting. Mrs. Morris said that roofs at Oldham, Francis and Kent Heights are slated to be replaced.

Requests for Home Schooling – Mr. Rodericks reported that the all of the requests have met requirements and have been recommended for approval. Mr. DeCastro requested information on the number of student returns from other years; Mr. Rodericks will obtain the number of students returning and have it available at the next meeting. Motion by Mr. Santos to approve, seconded by Mrs. Lovett.

Vote 5-0.

Report of Sub-Committees – Mr. Faria responded to a letter written by the EPEA President and published in the East Providence Post, regarding recent contract discussions and one million dollars which the School Committee did not take advantage of. He reported that the savings of one million dollars did not warrant an extension of the contract and did not provide the savings necessary to constitute the extension. Mr. DeCastro said he would welcome the opportunity to have a discussion with the bargaining unit; he does not know what the agreement was and he would like to sit down for honest negotiations and a need to reach an agreement. Hopefully through the next few weeks we can get something started again. Mr. Faria requested that a notice be sent out through the Superintendent and asked Dr. Forbes to do this.

Mrs. Lovett reported that the Annual Townie Parade will be held at Pierce Field on September 28, 2007; kick-off will be at 5:45Pm and all schools are encouraged to participate. The parade will begin at 6:30PM and everyone is asked to get involved. All elementary students who are marching in the parade should be accompanied by a parent(s) or guardian(s).

Unfinished Business

FY 2007-08 Budget – Second Passage

Dr. Forbes stated that the challenges facing the School Department

have much more to do with limited state funding than with student achievement. As she stated previously, East Providence is a high and moderately performing district, which we can be proud of; however, this year we will see the impact of the state's efforts to control spending through level funding of education. The state is shifting the responsibility of paying for education to the local cities and towns and property tax payers with out a funding formula. The budget that she and the School Committee Finance Sub-Committee proposed, asked for revenue to cover the costs of the school department that would require the City Council to vote by supermajority to exceed the 3.5% cap. The average City appropriation for the last ten years has been 4.85% and one year at 7.77%

Dr. Forbes explained that at the last meeting, she was directed by the School Committee to propose further budget reductions, which she will provide tonight. Because these cuts will have a negative impact on students and community, they are not her recommendations. These budget reduction options are not required by law, contract or regulation. The School Committee plans to bring the budget to a place where they can vote for second passage and approve a budget. The School Committee is responsible to approve a budget and forward it to the City Council and the decisions will not be easy. Dr. Forbes also added that she has joined other Superintendents on a legislative committee to develop and support legislation that would provide reform on health care, pension, special education regulations and transportation. She thanked the School Committee for working

at the General Assembly level with our legislative contingent on behalf of the students of East Providence.

Dr. Forbes presented the following potential adjustments totaling \$721,377, which are not recommended by the Superintendent:

• General Instruction Professional Development -\$32,360

Reduce total Professional Development line items to amount of State Allocation

Assistant Superintendent will manage all professional development (Mr. DeCastro asked if this would be mostly salary) Motion by Mrs. Lovett to proceed with first cut, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0.

• General Instruction Band Instrument and Repairs - \$3850

Reduce line item for repairs to \$2000 and eliminate line item for new instrument purchase.

Motion by Mrs. Lovett to approve, no second. Motion failed.

• Various Departments Office Supplies

(Non-instructional) -\$2,135

Motion by Mrs. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Faria for discussion: how will it impact students and families. Dr. Forbes will do everything for minimal impact. Mr. DeCastro cannot support this.

Vote: DeCastro, nay; Faria, aye; Lovett, aye; Santos, aye; Morris, aye.

Approved 4-1.

 Technology Computers -\$33,620

Motion by Mrs. Lovett, No second. Motion Failed

 Special Education Aides Substitutes -\$ 8,000

Mr. DeCastro asked who will do the work. Dr. Forbes explained that assignments would be prioritized by the Director of Special Education and Human Resources.

Motion by Mrs. Lovett, No second. Motion Failed

 Special Education Education specialists Substitutes -\$2,000

Motion by Mrs. Lovett, No second. Motion Failed.

 Special Education Adm. Private School Evaluations -\$20,000

Motion by Mr. DeCastro, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0.

 Special Education Adm. Instructional Supplies -\$10,000

Motion by Mrs. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote: DeCastro, nay;

Faria, aye; Lovett, aye;

Santos, aye; Morris, aye. Approved 4-1.

 Special Education Educational Equipment -\$8,000

Reduce the line to \$25,000 – Motion by Mr. DeCastro, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

 Maintenance Security Position @ H/S \$4,542

Motion by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

 Maintenance Heating – change Vacation Week \$14,478

**Based on a 2 week Feb. Vacation and no April vacation. Motion:
None**

 Maintenance Reduce Masonry Repairs, \$9,800

Window Shades, Snow removal

**Motion by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mr. DeCastro. Mr. Santos voted
nay; DeCastro, aye; Faria, aye; Lovett, aye; Morris, aye.**

 Maintenance Fire Code Requirements -\$10,000

No Motion.

 Maintenance Floor Tiles & Stair treads -\$1,500

**Motion by Mrs. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Faria. Mr. Santos voted nay;
Mr. DeCastro, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye.**

 Transportation Field Trips -\$900

**Motion by Mrs. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Faria. Mr. DeCastro, nay; Mr.
Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, nay. Motion
3-2 to approve.**

 Safety Patrol Eliminate line item -\$1,500

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

 School Administration Asst. Principal -\$95,000

Martin Middle School (Do Not Fill the Position)

Tabled Until November 1st. Will be revisited after experience in Sept. and Oct.

 School Administration Secretary -\$40,000

Motion by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0. (Effective 11/1/07)

 Fiscal Services Computer Maintenance -\$500

Motion by Mrs. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Faria. Mr. DeCastro, nay; Mr. Faria, aye; Mr. Lovett, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye. Vote 4-1 to approve.

 Human Resources Adm. Salaries -\$12,000

(Only one administrative position will be filled for the first 2 months of fiscal year)

Motion by Mr. Santos, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Dr. Forbes advised that she is looking into this position with legal counsel; individual on military leave. Mrs. Morris asked for a report at the next meeting. Vote 5-0.

 Human Resources Co-Op Student -\$3,000

Motion by Mrs. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.

 Legal Services Judgment and Claims -\$20,000

Motion by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

 Negotiations Consultant -\$20,000

Motion by Mr. DeCastro, no second. Motion failed.

 Negotiations Labor Negotiator -\$25,000

Motion by Mr. DeCastro, no second. Motion failed.

 Adult Education GED Program -\$10,436

Eliminate Program. Motion by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Mr. DeCastro vote nay; Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye. Vote 4-1 to approve.

 Athletics Middle School Athletics -\$79,900

 Athletics. Jr. Varsity Athletics -\$31,500

 Athletics High School Hockey -\$25,238

 Athletics H/S Hockey Cheerleading -\$1,164

 Athletics High School Golf -\$4,725

 Athletics High School Cross Country -\$5,454

 Athletics High School Tennis -\$11,275

Motion: None

 Extra-Curricular Clubs- Reduce Offerings -\$15,000

With low participation

Motion: None

 Extra-Curricular Band Transportation -\$4,500

5 Away Games – Only High School that transports to away games

Motion: None

 Transportation Pupil Transportation -\$154,000

Increase walking distance. Discussion: Mr. Linneman, Transportation Director advised that he cannot reduce any further without extending the walking distance. Mr. DeCastro asked if any way to reduce out of district transportation for students. Mr. Linneman advised that unfortunately we are restricted; not yet ready to use Ride buses that have the capability to transport wheel chairs to other locations. Dr. Forbes advised that the state determines the zones for transporting students to private and parochial schools, etc. East Providence has a large zone and in RI we are mandated by zones. Mr. Santos asked if line 3310 included the total transportation number. Dr. Hilton advised that Line 41755 (p. 15) 41756 (p.18) and 41757 is regular, special education and out of district; pro-rated on how buses are used. Mr. Santos asked what we spend for transportation and how much is for out of district transportation in the zone. No Motion.

The School Committee recessed at 9:40PM.

The School Committee reconvened at 10:00PM. A motion was made by Mrs. Lovett to return to open session, seconded by Mr. DeCastro.

Vote 5-0.

Dr. Forbes referred to Page II of the budget and advised that the reductions approved by the School Committee totaled \$175,673. Dr. Forbes reviewed the changes on Page II of the budget under Revenues:

City Appropriations Increase: reduced to \$4,647,997

Amount of increase changed from \$5,299,694 to \$5,124,021

The city appropriations percentage amount of increase changed from 11.65% to 11.23%

Percentage of total increase changed from 7.43% to 7.19%

Motion by Mrs. Lovett for second passage as amended, no second.

Mr. DeCastro presented his ideas for reductions; he explained that he could not support more than 3 ½% on the expenditure side and still have to cut \$2,627,061. He made the following recommendations:

Benefits - \$1,854,354 - additional cut –3 ½% increase in that line; we would have to live with that and research what it would cost to self-insure dental. Other health carriers have come in with reductions with rates; Mr. DeCastro would like to set up a meeting with Blue Cross to find out why they cannot match the offer given by the other carrier, if we can get the same program from the other carrier with the same benefits. We need to check the contract through legal counsel about switching; but he would rather try that first. He needs to understand mandates from the retirement system because of the

huge increase in retirement costs in the municipal and teachers' pensions and he wants to see if we can drive the costs down. Mr. DeCastro needs to cut some where other than to cut extra-curricular activities, etc.

Mrs. Morris also wants to see a benefits reduction. Mr. Faria would reduce the benefits also. Mr. Santos looked at this years' numbers and we have spent \$9,451,104 for the year; he does not see the justification for huge increases like that. A motion was made by Mr. DeCastro to cut an additional amount from the benefit line, \$1,854,354, seconded by Mr. Faria. Mrs. Lovett voted nay, Mr. Faria, aye; Mr. DeCastro, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye. Vote 4-1 to approve.

Mr. De Castro made a motion to restore textbooks and instructional supplies as he does not feel comfortable with those reductions; he proposed to reverse \$10,000 cut and restore \$195,295 back to textbooks and instruction, zero percent increase from last year. No second to the motion.

Mr. Faria said this was discussed in the community forums. Dr. Forbes explained the curriculum/textbook cycle at elementary replaced all essentials; all updated books in elementary; consumables are needed every year and money is needed for the libraries. At the secondary level we have replaced all text books; funds are needed for replacement textbooks and the libraries are

always an issue. We have already reduced 75% after working with the teachers and principals.

Motion by Mr. Faria to reinstate \$100,000 in the textbook account, seconded by Mr. DeCastro. Mrs. Lovett asked for justification. Mr. Faria felt it was important that the budget reductions have the least impact on students; cutting benefits would not have that impact and he agreed with Mr. DeCastro that we need to look for resources and angles to reduce expenses. Vote 5-0.

Purchase Services at \$227,405 – we already cut \$51,700; Motion by Mr. DeCastro to cut an

Additional \$175,705 (increase to 5%), seconded for discussion by Mr. Faria, who asked for justification. Mr. DeCastro felt that \$96,000 for copier maintenance should be researched to determine if anything can be done to reduce this item; he also wanted to look at the \$95,000 in the budget for negotiations. Mrs. Morris does not think it is necessary to allocate that amount of money for negotiations and wanted to take it out of the budget this year. Mr. Faria said the city and every one else in the state needs a negotiator; he supports this and if we take it out of the budget this year, we will not be ready for negotiations. Mr. Santos concurs that we are at a key cross road now and coming into a contract year and need to look to the future. This is the new fiscal year, the contracts will be expiring and we need to move forward with this. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Faria, nay; Mrs. Lovett, nay; Mr. Santos, nay; Mr. DeCastro, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye. Vote 3-2

against this recommendation.

Mr. DeCastro asked to cut \$630,000 in Special Education tuitions and to investigate the number of students, categories, where the schools are and how East Providence compares with other communities; could we collaborate with other communities sending students to the same schools. Motion by Mr. DeCastro, seconded by Mr. Santos. Mr. Faria questioned trends; he believes projection should be lowered a little around \$500,000. Mrs. Lovett does not think this will fly and that it only looks good on paper. Mr. Faria said we have time to see what the trends are. Roll call vote: Mr. DeCastro, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, nay; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye. Vote 4-1 to approve.

A motion was made by Mr. DeCastro to cut \$40,500 from the transportation account; 3 ½% over last year. He felt that we should look at fuel and he will try to get the Superintendent in touch with edging gas prices, seconded by Mr. Santos. Roll call vote: Mr. DeCastro, aye; Mr. Faria, nay; Mrs. Lovett, nay; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye. Vote 3-2 to approve.

A motion was made by Mr. DeCastro to cut \$150,370 from the utilities account, seconded by Mr. Faria. Roll call vote: Mr. DeCastro, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, nay; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye. Vote 4-1 to approve.

A motion was made by Mr. DeCastro to reduce the legal services

account by \$75,000, seconded by Mr. Faria. Roll call vote: Mr. DeCastro, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, nay; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, nay. Vote 3-2 to approve.

Mr. DeCastro cuts totaled \$2,754,197.00. A motion was made by Mr. DeCastro to take a short recess in order to verify numbers, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

The meeting reopened at 11:00PM. Motion by Mrs. Lovett to return to open session, seconded by Mr. Santos.

Dr. Forbes provided a budget summary: total expenditures now increase \$2,473,797, a total increase of 3.47% and under revenues; the city appropriation is now \$1,997,773, an increase of 4.83%.

Dr. Forbes advised that additional changes will have to be made in the budget. As Superintendent, the School Committee has made unrealistic cuts that will put the School Department in major deficit in 2007-2008 in order to meet the property tax cap. She does not think the School Department will be able to operate and meet its obligations under contract, law or regulation with those types of cuts.

Mr. Santos commended Mr. DeCastro for his efforts; we need to look at how much is spent and where the source of the money comes from; being asked every year to have to look at Blue Cross and health

benefits and we may have to look at other options although they are not pleasant.

Mrs. Morris said we need to look at utilities and all avenues, purchasing at best deals, etc.

Mr. DeCastro really believes that special education tuitions should be the priority of the state and they need to do a better job; we need to look for better ways of doing things.

A motion was made by Mr. DeCastro for second passage of the budget as amended, seconded by Mr. Faria. Roll call vote: Mr. DeCastro, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, nay; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye. Vote 4-1 to approve.

New Business - Amended Policies – First Passage. Mr. Daft, Assistant Superintendent explained that Policy II.B.3. Management of Student Activity Funds was amended as recommended by the auditors; gives the school administration a better idea of the revenues, etc. Motion by Mr. Santos, seconded by Mr. Faria to approve first passage. Roll call vote: Mr. DeCastro, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mrs. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye. Vote 5-0.

Policy II.D.5. Use of School Buildings – Mr. Daft explained that a maintenance/facilities fee has been proposed to assist the district in maintaining the wear and tear on the buildings. A motion was made

by Mrs. Lovett to approve, seconded by Mr. Faria for discussion. Mr. Santos asked if this is the standard in other districts and if the money would be kept in a separate account. Dr. Forbes explained that this will help to maintain the facilities. Dr. Hilton explained that it would be recorded as anticipated revenue and would be used as needed for repairs and maintenance. (Not allowed to have separate account while in deficit). Roll call vote: Mr. DeCastro, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mrs. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye. Vote 5-0. Mr. DeCastro would like a study done on other communities and what they charge for similar use.

Policy V.A. 20. Crisis Intervention/Physical Restraint – Mrs. Waterman, Director of Special Services reported that the policy was reviewed and updated by members of her staff in accordance with RI Department of Education regulations. A motion was made to approve by Mrs. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Faria. Roll call vote: Mr. DeCastro, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mrs. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye. Vote 5-0.

Payment of Bills

Local Operating Bill List:

Warrant #000759 9/05/07 \$1,236,505.58

Mr. DeCastro felt it was not a good practice to release the checks before the School Committee's vote; he asked if the mileage payments are early. Dr. Forbes will look at this procedure; the Chair and Clerk of the Committee usually review and sign the bill lists

before payments are released. Mr. Santos also felt that the School Committee should have the opportunity to vote prior to the release of checks. Motion: DeCastro/Second: Faria. Vote 5-0.

Question and Answer Period

Mr. Jack Fahey of 2535 Pawtucket Avenue asked about the second passage vote on the budget, since the budget was rejected at the last meeting. He commended the budget process and the intense review. The School Committee restricted itself by exercise of the way they reviewed the budget; did not include parameters for the adjustment of numbers on second passage; he referred to six provisions of the law the School Committee is not operating in those. The Taxpayers Association contract provisions were not addressed and the contract not valid. He spoke about the City Council looking into legal ramifications. (Mr. Silva, School Department attorney, had no opinion on it tonight). Mr. Fahey said School Committee is making management decisions embodied in law; revisit procedures and amend conclusions. The budget impacted students, did not address significant items and the students suffer. All expenditure items should have come under scrutiny and they did not. He referenced the law again and the need to address it as everything will not be addressed in negotiations process. The School Committee is the guiding hand to set parameters for the Superintendent to move forward. The Superintendent said the budget is not realistic. The School Committee did not provide parameters; should have said come back with a budget under the 3.5 cap; it should have been clean

cut. They need to look at all parameters; not fair to students. He will address this in the media and on a TV show. Mr. Faria asked what the School Committee should have looked at. Mr. Fahey said salaries, benefits, co-pay and what is the definition of “immediate family” for sick time, as he thinks it is anyone who lives in the house. Mr. Fahey said regarding negotiations, there was no mention about demands to bump up from 5 to 8 in the last year salary. Mr. Faria said there are all points to all proposals; we could not afford those proposals and they would have been repeating history.

Hillary Fournier of Riverside spoke about the special education budget decrease; she felt students would be short-changed, the cuts will increase costs in the long run; and that it was very short sighted.

Antone Gouveia, Riverside, said there are at least three active community groups and to not repeat last year with the interchangeable verbiage about the 3.5% cap; he asked that this not be mis-stated. Mr. Fahey suggested that we are breaking the law and quoted law and ordinance and that the School Committee is breaking the law. The tax levy applies only to City Council; they would be breaking the law; everyone should understand that the School Committee cannot break the law. Because it is a City ordinance, only the City Council can vote on it; no where is there any restriction on allocation. It is a tax levy and only the City Council can raise 3.5% higher than last year. He also mentioned that the tax base has increased, not decreased. As we go through the budget process; the

whole story should be told. He talked about the cuts in special education and the fact that this budget does not take one cent from special education, as state law requires it and students will get it anyway. He cautioned all to give correct information.

A motion was made by Mr. DeCastro to adjourn at 11:40PM, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant

Eileen Lovett, Clerk of the Committee