

# **EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT**

**East Providence City Hall**

**145 Taunton Avenue**

**East Providence, Rhode Island 02914**

**October 9, 2007**

## **Open Session**

**Mrs. Morris called the meeting to order at 6:00PM. Three members were present: Robert Faria, Steven Santos and Mildred Morris. (Eileen Lovett and Stephen DeCastro arrived later). Also present: Mr. Edward Daft, Assistant Superintendent, Robert Silva, Esq. and Andrew 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 Mr. Santos. Vote 3-0.**

**Public Session reconvened at 7:35PM. All members were present. A motion was made by Mrs. Lovett to return to open session and to seal the minutes of the Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0.**

**Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence was observed for Marilyn McDonald, Al Santi and Lauren Zarembka.**

**Record of Previous Meetings – A motion was made by Mr. Faria to approve the minutes of School Committee Meetings held on August 28, 2007 and September 11, 2007, seconded by Mrs. Lovett.**

**Discussion: Mr. Santos requested that a correction be made on a vote of the School Committee on page 2 of the September 11, 2007 minutes regarding a personnel action, which should have been recorded as 3 aye, 1, nay and 1 recusal.**

**Chair's Report - None**

**Hearings - None**

**Reading of Communications - None**

**Report of Superintendent and Staff – Mr. Daft, Assistant Superintendent presided, in the absence of the Superintendent who was called out of state due to an emergency.**

**FY 2006-07 Financial Report – Dr. Hilton reported that the financial report as of 9/30/07 is in pretty good shape; transfers have been made as listed on page two of the report. Mr. Santos asked if the salary line will be in deficit as a result of the nine transfers from that account.**

**Dr. Hilton responded that he was fairly comfortable with those figures as payrolls are fairly consistent at this time of the year and it should be OK. Mr. DeCastro questioned the tuition account down; Dr. Hilton**

**explained this is due to 13 new members and 8 dropped since September. A motion was made by Mr. Faria to accept the report, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.**

**Awarding of Bid – A motion was made by Mrs. Lovett to move up Item K.1. Health and Dental Insurance Costs to this portion of the agenda, seconded by Mr. DeCastro.**

**Vote 5-0. Mr. Daft announced that Kevin Walsh of Group Benefits Strategies (School Department's benefits consultant) was present to answer questions from the School Committee regarding a bid on reinsurance. Mr. Walsh explained that the health insurance reinsurance was put out to bid for renewal and his office is sorting through the information and preparing an analysis. Mr. Walsh suggested that the School Committee take under advisement for a later meeting. Mr. Faria motioned that the matter be taken up at a future meeting after the Committee receives the information from Mr. Walsh, seconded by Mr. DeCastro. A special meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 30, 2007 at 6:00PM in the high school cafeteria. Mr. Faria asked for an explanation of the bid. Mr. Walsh advised that since the School Department has a self-funded arrangement, there is a risk involved and purchasing reinsurance provides protection for the School Department for members who are involved in large claims of \$150,000 and over. Mr. DeCastro asked about an analysis of self insurance in Dental. Mr. Walsh advised that the School Department elected to renew with Delta on a premium arrangement; a two year contract with a 5% cap, which saved the School Department about**

**\$120,000. At the next meeting, he will be providing information on claims, loss ratio, etc. Mr. DeCastro needs claims information to make a judgment if we should be self insured; his concern is what our claims experience is. To make the right choice, he needs this information. All ayes. Legal Counsel Robert Silva advised that a special meeting will be held on October 30, 2007 to discuss this bid. Mr. Faria amended his motion to include the special meeting, seconded by Mr. DeCastro. Vote all aye.**

**Energy Savings Proposal – Dr. Hilton related that the auditor recommended an energy saving proposal be implemented. Refer to the graph provided; the five year savings is about \$170,000. He needs approval to borrow the money and permission is needed from the City Council. Mr. DeCastro asked what guarantee do we have that we will save money. Dr. Hilton advised that the proposal was developed by Mr. Rizzo of American Development Institute, the engineer-contractor for the high school boiler replacement project, who has a great deal of expertise in this matter. Also it was done before through RISE; the engineer studied this and recommended it. He talked about better chance of controlling heat, etc. Mr. DeCastro was concerned about the contract; is it guarantee or money back? He would like legal counsel to review it first. Dr. Hilton wants to approach the City Council quickly about this contract. Mr. DeCastro asked if there were any city engineers who could review this; if spending \$330,000, another opinion is needed. Mr. Santos asked if there is a specific date on this. Mr. DeCastro asked if we are required**

to put this out to bid. Dr. Hilton said he needs a vote to get the grant. It was agreed to table this until the October 30, 2007 meeting in order to obtain further information before voting on it. Mr. Silva will be reviewing this request. A motion was made by Mr. Faria to table until October 30th, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

**Bill Paying Procedures** – Mr. Daft said we are back to the old procedure under the current policy as requested by Mr. DeCastro that the School Committee review and approve the bill lists first, prior to releasing checks. A motion was made by Mr. DeCastro to approve the procedure, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0.

**Personnel Recommendations** – Diane Rodericks presented the personnel items:

### **Appointments**

**Jacqueline Barker** Teacher, Grade 2, Waddington

**Kelly Pringle** Teacher, ½ Day Kindergarten, Francis

**Linda McCoart** School Nurse Teacher 1-1 High School

**Robert Hanlon** Testing Coordinator, Riverside Middle School

**Hildeberto Barbosa** JV Asst. Coach, Girls' Soccer, High School

**Daniel Silva** JV Asst. Coach, Boys' Soccer, High School

**Leslie Eastwood** Coach, Cross Country, Riverside Middle School

**Christopher Whorf** Coach, Girls' Soccer, Riverside Middle School

**Danielle Reis** Supervisory Asst. Kent Heights

**Bonnie Clayton Freshmen Class Advisor, Job Share**

**Kristin Bovi-Pallotta Freshman Class Advisor, Job Share**

**Raymond Lombardo Coordinator, Virtual Learning Academy**

**Nancy Flanagan Guidance, Virtual Learning Academy**

**Patricia Armstrong English, Virtual Learning Academy**

**Richard Silva Science, Virtual Learning Academy**

**Jean Petisce Lynch Art, Virtual Learning Academy**

**Patricia Hawksley Tech/Business, Virtual Learning Academy**

**William Flanagan Social Studies, Virtual Learning Academy**

**Karen Panzarella Sp. Ed. Teacher, Virtual Learning Academy**

**Motion: Mrs. Lovett/Second: Mr. Faria. Mr. Santos asked if these positions being filled are open positions. Vote: 5-0.**

## **Recall**

**Gail Costa Secretary, Human Resources (Temporary)**

**Motion: Mrs. Lovett/Second: Mr. Faria. Discussion: Mr. Santos asked about the tempory status. (Until Thanksgiving according to Mrs. Rodericks). Vote 5-0.**

## **Retirements**

**At the Close of the 2007-2008 School Year:**

**Kimberly Boucher Teacher, Special Subjects – Art**

**Chrystine Caffrey Teacher, Banking & Finance, CTC**

**Mary E. Costello Teacher, Spec. Subj. Phys. Ed.**

**Patricia Dionne Coop. Education Coordinator, CTC**

**Karen R. Hellendrung Rowe Teacher, English, Martin Middle School**

**Leslie Logan Teacher, Grade 2, Orlo Avenue**

**James Manchester Teacher, English, High School**

**Brian Shea School Psychologist**

**Gail Torinese Speech/Language Pathologist**

**Maureen Vavolotis Teacher, Grade 2, Francis School**

**Richard Vars Director of Music, High School**

**Louise Capello Secretary, Nurse's Office – High School**

**Ligia Ferro Bus Assistant**

**Dolores Bliss Bus Assistant – Effective 10/25/08**

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

**Mrs. Morris thanked all retirees for their service and wished them health and happiness.**

### **Resignations**

**Kathy Bickford Safety Patrol Coordinator, Oldham School**

**Effective 9/4/07**

**David Axelson Freshmen Girls' Basketball, High School**

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

### **Leave of Absence (One Year)**

**Elizabeth Salzillo Teacher, Grade 2, Waddington**

**Effective 2007-08 School Year**

**Joseph Andrade Asst. Coach, Boys' Basketball, High School**

**Effective 2007-08 School Year**

**Gregory McCarthy Coach, Girls' Basketball, Riverside Middle School**

## **Coach, Girls' Track, Riverside Middle School**

**Motion: Mrs. Lovett/Second: Mr. Santos**

**Mr. DeCastro asked for an explanation of the Virtual Academy and the positions listed for that program. Discussion was delayed until the curriculum report.**

**Mr. Santos made a request that the names listed on the personnel docket be made available to the public in general. When asked about a legal opinion on the matter, Mr. Silva stated that once the recommendations are received from the Superintendent, he believes they would become public record. He would like to review it first as to at what point the information becomes public record.**

**Facilities Update - Mr. Joseph Tavares reported that it was discovered that the high school new boiler system needed an additional meter which caused a delay; however, the tank will be filled tomorrow, all of the equipment is in, and 90% of the work is complete. Barring any unforeseen emergencies the firing date should be October 17th at the latest.**

**Mrs. Morris asked about the signed contract with the company and if we can start charging them for every day they are late. Dr. Hilton responded that there were some unforeseen problems along the way, such as the crumbling chimney, the hook up for the gas, etc. but for the most part, they are on time and within the budget; there was no**

**punishment clause in the contract. Mrs. Morris asked to be kept informed about this. Mr. DeCastro asked for discussion in the future about penalty clauses; sometimes it works in reverse and we would have to pay a company for finishing the work early.**

**Mr. Tavares also informed the School Committee regarding a back log of electrical work orders that have accumulated over the past two years and were contracted out to local companies at a cost of \$28,993. The School Department has not had an electrician on staff for two years; the majority of the electrical problems were mandated by inspections and others were made to satisfy the needs of our special education students. He felt that continuing to use outside contractors to perform this work is too costly and asked the School Committee to examine the feasibility/possibility of retaining an electrician on staff once again; he has ten work orders right now for pre-existing conditions. Mr. DeCastro asked to look into the city sharing services or joint hiring. Mr. Tavares has inquired about this already. The City Manager and Superintendent need to prepare analysis of this.**

**Requests for Home Schooling – Mr. Rodericks presented the requests and recommended approval. We have received requests for a total of 32 children to be home schooled this year. Motion by Mr. Faria to approve, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.**

**Curriculum Report – Mr. Edward Daft, Assistant Superintendent**

reported on the Virtual Learning Academy, which is a customized, technology driven, and independent alternative curriculum specifically designed to meet the individual course/credit needs of unique student populations. The implementation of this program will be beneficial to East Providence by meeting the challenging needs of students who are excluded from school (suspended, expelled, home-bound, home-schooled, credit deficient and/or drop outs). This program is substantially less than sending students to alternative school settings, such as East Bay Academy at a cost of \$21,000 per student. The savings recognized would include home instruction and student expulsion costs. Discussion regarding salaries of teachers: Mr. Daft explained the first year program hourly rate is \$35.00 for teaching as needed.

Mr. Daft reported on Physics First, a pilot program begun last year in six communities. Ms. Kim Laliberte, Science Dept. Chair explained the program, which reorders science instruction into what educators say is a logical sequence; mastering the principles of physics in freshman year is critical to understanding modern chemistry and biology in the sophomore and junior years. She explained that the premise of the program is that everything is done with safe chemicals. A new government grant funded over a three year period will help bring in technology; interactive software, which provides visuals for students; this is a tremendous opportunity for the high school.

**Mr. Faria asked about any shortages of textbooks or supplies. Ms. Laliberte advised that a new text is in the process of being written and all six schools are involved in the process, which includes input from students.**

**Student Census – Mr. Robert Rodericks presented a report to the School Committee. He explained that at the start of school, additional students registered for Kindergarten necessitating the hiring of a half-time teacher. All Kindergartens were filled by the first day of school and students are continuing to register every day. He presented historical data indicating a decrease in student enrollment every year from 2000 to 2008; current enrollment is 5,844 a decrease of 968 students since 2000. Other information included in the report consisted of a 5-year overview of student enrollments, new student enrollment report for 2007-08, an out of neighborhood and administrative transfer report and a census report by school.**

**Mr. Rodericks provided information to the School Committee regarding residency verification procedures, enrollment policy and applicable RI State law. He explained that in the case of students who do not live in East Providence, but are attending school here, that this is not happening at the point of registration, rather, they move and continue to attend school here until someone finds out about it; one by one we are going after them. The affidavit of residency has been used here for years. There are steps to go through to register for school in East Providence, however; sometimes people move and do**

not tell us. He would like to have a city task force, including SRO Paul Rodrigues, to look into what other measures might be taken to keep non-residents out. In response to a question from Mrs. Lovett, Connect-Ed does provide bad phone numbers which could alert us to students whose families do not live in East Providence and those numbers are pursued along with license plate checks, etc. Mr. DeCastro asked about the 125 students who are outplacements and how many were going out of the state. (Vast majority go in state). Mr. Faria asked if any situations were being investigated now and the need to notify the City Council regarding billing for tuitions. He said that even little league registration requires three proofs of residency. Mr. Rodericks said he uses discretion and judgment in many cases; we accept car registrations; RIDE takes them at their word and then we must prove it. Mr. Faria noted that the five year enrollment shows a decrease of students.

**Report of Sub-Committees – Family Involvement Team - Mrs. Lovett reported on the success of the third annual Townie Parade held on September 28th, organized by the Family Involvement Team. Marilyn McDonald was honored for her work with the AYSO Soccer Program. Mrs. Lovett thanked all who participated, especially the band, cheerleaders, etc. She received letters from the Community Center and Books are Wings Program regarding the remarkable number of canned goods and books collected for both organizations. The next meeting of the FIT is scheduled for October 30th at the high school and all are invited.**

**Wellness Committee - Mrs. Morris attended the Healthy Schools Coalition along with administrators and other staff; this year's goal is to provide physical education for kids every day. Also, in an effort to introduce healthy foods to students, a Thanksgiving Dinner will be served to all students by our food service company.**

**Mr. DeCastro announced that negotiations are scheduled with the custodial union on October 11th and teachers' union on October 22, 2007. He mentioned that he met with the Superintendent on September 24th to discuss strategies and he and the Superintendent attended a meeting in the afternoon at Blue Cross to try to get a better rate. Hopefully at the October 30th school committee meeting, we might have more information; waiting for our friends at Blue Cross to provide that information.**

### **Unfinished Business**

**FY 2007-08 Budget – Mr. Daft explained that the Superintendent made an appeal to the City Council not to reduce the budget by another \$566,490 and to reconsider capital outlay for security and the Hennessey heating system as part of the Five Year Facilities plan. Mr. DeCastro was disappointed that the City Manager cut the budget even more; they stayed under the cap on expenditures side and the School Committee has shown good faith to do the job the best way possible. He noticed appropriations on the School side at 3 ½% while**

the appropriation on the city side is less than last year. He asked the Superintendent to find out about that; the School Department 3 ½% increase, but City collected less money than last year. Mr. Faria was very disappointed about the cut because of cuts made at the last meeting; he felt that the School Committee tried to minimize increases. Mr. Santos said we still have to keep in mind that the final decision rests with the City Council and the School Committee may have to look for further reductions. Mr. DeCastro hopes City Council restores cuts; if they do that, we will still be able to stay under the 3 ½% cap.

**School Uniforms** – Mrs. Morris requested this item be placed on the agenda; she would like to take a survey and try uniforms again for next year. Mr. Rodericks advised that two or three schools are still wearing uniforms and almost every school is doing something for school pride and colors. As far as concerns about ordering uniforms and collecting money, possibly the PTA's could become involved in this. Dr. Forbes will be sending out a survey through Connect-Ed to see if there is sufficient interest; we will try it again. Mrs. Morris will check it out and she hoped it could be done as it also helps parents financially.

## **New Business**

**Health and Dental Insurance Costs** – Moved up on the agenda

**Technology Strategy – IT & Voice - Mr. DeCastro asked if we have a strategy; the School Department has problems with emails and being connected to other buildings. We need a plan, place to connect and plan to hook buildings together; can use voice over IP but we need a technology plan in place to do it. We can make the public more in tune with information. The Superintendent could send out emails, etc. to buildings. Mr. Daft explained that we already do that; we also have a Five Year Facilities plan, which includes technology. Lori Fox, Director of Information Technology, advised that we do have a five year technology plan as required by RIDE, which is up this year; RIDE requires that we revisit it and we need to form a committee including principals and the Superintendent. Possibly some high school students might be involved; all 14 school buildings are connected and using emails especially at the High School and middle schools. Mrs. Fox advised that we did switch over to Cox for all schools and are now posting items on line such as the policy book and other items. She can scan items at City Hall. Mrs. Fox asked for voice over IP on the city side and it has not been finalized yet; it could then be placed on the school side later after the fire dept. etc. Centrex is very costly and we would realize a substantial savings by switching. Mr. DeCastro said we should be looking at what is the plan, the capital costs and what we will be saving. Teacher assignments and other costs could be streamlined, improved and save some money. Mrs. Fox said to keep in mind we receive E-rate money also; we get back 60% on phones. Discussion about having classroom phones. Mr. DeCastro would like to see a strategy plan; an outline of where we**

are now and where we should be in year one, two and three, the cost to get there, and the possibility of grant money. Mrs. Fox completed a five year plan for the schools for Dr. Forbes when she arrived. She talked about the number of IT personnel in N. Kingston with 4100 students versus the number East Providence has to work with. Discussion about the location of servers, which was a concern to Mr. DeCastro. Mrs. Fox submitted a spreadsheet to Dr. Forbes broken down by school and the amount of money needed is huge. The High School has received a number of grants. Mr. DeCastro would like every elementary classroom to have working computers for students and teachers and he would like to look at voice IP now. Mrs. Fox said we spend about \$10,000 per month per school for phone service. Mr. DeCastro suggested that we could reallocate this \$120,000 cost; we could find money in the budget like this for savings.

**Copier Analysis-** Mr. DeCastro had questions about copier repairs and he asked about this number during budget hearings. He would like to see an analysis of the age of the machines, their location and asked if they are on a schedule to bring in new ones in the lease. He would like to take a look at this on an annual basis. Discussion at a later meeting.

#### **Instructional Supplies (Mr. DeCastro)**

Mr. DeCastro explained that more money was allocated for instructional supplies than requested, but teachers are being told to be careful with the use of paper starting from the first day of school.

**Mr. Daft said the supply budget was cut 75% and everyone has been asked to be conservative since there could be a potential problem. Mr. DeCastro wanted to put the money back in this account at the budget meeting and he is confused about the paper situation; he hopes the problem is corrected and does not exist after the November 1st new budget year. Dr. Hilton said we entered into a state bid for an additional discount, with a rebate at the end; this was prepared electronically and the ordering process should ensure that paper is available on the 1st. Mr. DeCastro would like an answer on this.**

**A brief recess was taken. A motion was made by Mr. Santos to reopen public session at 10:00PM, seconded by Mr. Faria.**

#### **Amended Policies-Second Passage:**

**Policy II.B.3. Management of Student Activity Funds – A motion was made by Mr. Faria for second passage, seconded by Mr. Santos. Roll call vote: Mr. DeCastro, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye.**

**Policy II.D.5. Use of School Buildings – Motion by Mr. Faria for second passage, seconded by Mr. Santos for discussion. Discussion regarding fees for rental and how they compared with those in other communities. Mr. Daft reviewed the charges in other communities, Cranston, Pawtucket and Warwick and East Providence charges**

appear to be in line with others. Roll Call Vote: Mr. DeCastro, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye.

**Policy V.A. 20. Crisis Intervention/Physical Restraint – Motion to approve second passage by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Roll call vote: Mr. DeCastro, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye.**

## **Payment of Bills**

### **Local Operating Bill List:**

**Warrant #000765 10/2/07 \$ 664,301.86**

**Motion: Mr. Faria/Second: Mr. DeCastro. Vote 5-0.**

**Warrant #000766 10/2/07 \$1,192,466.21**

**Motion: Mr. Faria/Second: Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0. (Discussion about first two items)**

### **Federal Bill List:**

**\*Warrant #000761 9/12/07 \$ 50,040.77**

**Motion: Mr. Faria/Second: Mr. DeCastro. Vote 5-0.**

**\*Previously Approved by Telephone Poll of School Committee and signed—Needed public vote**

**Warrant #000767 10/5/07 \$ 177,817.90**

**Motion: Mr. Faria/Seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.**

### **Question and Answer Period**

**Thomas Reilly, 3620 Pawtucket Avenue asked if negotiations are presently underway (one is beginning, but no date yet) ; Will the School Committee open contract negotiations process to the public; possibly on cable access television. Mr. Faria would encourage this, but does not know how successful it would be. Mr. DeCastro does not think that could be done, because it is not conducive to negotiations. Mrs. Morris did not believe it is workable; Mrs. Lovett would seek legal opinion; Mr. Santos would consider it a new and interesting approach if it would pass legal. Mr. Reilly asked if the School Committee would ask for a fiscal impact statement before making any commitments; all agreed it is mandatory.**

**Bill Murphy, 27 Wetmore Avenue, had questions on the budget. The City Council did not make cuts, but the School Committee failed to submit a budget in compliance with the 3.5% cap; the numbers the School Committee started with, were higher. Mr. Faria said any cuts would be difficult ones and some tough cuts have already been made; his frustration was making further cuts. Mr. DeCastro explained that in the total city budget of 3.5%, the School Department could ask for more, but with no control of income, expenditures can be controlled. In the spirit of keeping within the 3 ½% on the**

expenditure side, what is the cut for if the property tax rate is 3 ½% or lower. Mr. Murphy questioned why the School Department does not line up and not the city? Mr. Murphy asked what the primary cause is of or what is driving school spending up. Mr. DeCastro answered that it is salary, benefits, and special education tuitions. Mrs. Morris agreed. Mr. Murphy said the Superintendent was not confident in being able to meet obligations with that level of funding and talked about deficit spending as related to the benefits line. He asked if there is a possibility that the School Committee has not met with underlying drivers in those accounts; but the excess is going off to deficit spending at the end of the year. Mr. DeCastro said due to ordinances, laws, etc., the conflict is what should we violate; they are caught in a quandary and he hopes we do not deficit spend. He hopes for success with Blue Cross and the unions thru negotiations, as we have to work as hard as we can to stay within that 3 ½%.

Mr. Murphy said that based on information the Superintendent has, this is not achievable. Mr. DeCastro explained that it is easy to put numbers on paper and that is the Superintendent's opinion on the benefits line; these are actuarial estimates and the School Committee has looked at these and the variations over the years. Mr. Faria said that money has been moved away from benefits before and he looked at three to four years of numbers. Mr. DeCastro said we can not cut salaries and the question is if we can do anything with benefits through negotiations, where is there a large chunk of money. Mr. Murphy said the contracts are on the top pedestal and other

regulations, etc. are under that. The Auditor General's letter never mentioned the 3.5% cap; he asked what the order of precedence by the School Committee is. Mr. Faria said we have to weight options; try to get under the 3.5% city ordinance; there are different things to look at and what impacts kids. Mr. DeCastro mentioned the Caruolo law; he does not think it is a great way to go and it accomplishes very little. Mr. Murphy asked if the School Committee is committed to deficit spending and what are the actions to stop it? Mr. DeCastro will do whatever he can to minimize it, as he does not want to deficit spend without harming education of kids. Mr. Faria felt that all have worked diligently since on the School Committee to streamline or eliminate costs and they will keep plugging away, working with the City Council as a group. Mrs. Morris doesn't support deficit spending and felt that all have worked hard on budget cuts, especially Mr. Faria and Mr. Medeiros who worked on the Finance Sub-Committee. Mr. Santos said we are obligated by the State law to balance the budget and every option is on the table. Mrs. Lovett felt that even with the cuts, we are set up for deficit spending, but she will not give up on doing the right thing. Mr. DeCastro felt that if allocated, we will spend it; it is difficult to stay there, but you work hard if you don't have it; with the laws on 3.5% and deficit spending, etc.

Mr. Murphy spoke regarding providing materials to the public, as it is extra helpful to have community involvement; he felt that the agendas are austere. Mr. DeCastro thinks we should overcome technical challenges and put out information on the website, as he is all for

giving information to the public, so they will have a better understanding of the topics. Mr. Murphy appreciated getting the policy manual on line, and he asked about tape recording the School Committee meetings. Mr. DeCastro suggested maybe streaming video through cable.

Mr. Fahey, 2535 Pawtucket Avenue, provided a handout of a bar graph taken from 2005-06 Info Works showing equity and adequacy of resources in RI Schools; he asked about statutory obligations and contract requirements. He thought that part of the dilemma is that no one seems to know what takes precedence in the School Committee. He thinks contracts should be opened immediately, that it is unfair that there is not parity between the city and school employees, and that this issue needs to be addressed now.

Mr. DeCastro asked if by chance the School Department was able to get better from the teachers, custodians, etc., would he ask the City Council to go over that too? Mr. Fahey said the School Committee is not addressing contract provisions and is not addressing all the legal provisions they could. Mr. Faria explained that an extension was signed four years ago and asked if the School Committee should do the same thing now.

Mr. Fahey wants co-pays and co-sharing looked at; the School Committee asked for relief from RIDE on mandates, why not use leverage to get reductions in other areas? On the deficit aspect, he

**has accepted that as a factual statement, but what controls or provisions are in the system now to prevent this from occurring? What procedures and account controls are in place?**

**Mr. DeCastro explained that the School Committee reviews the financial statement every month and they will continue to do so for the 2007-08 Fiscal Year; if we begin to deficit spend, they will need to do something. The School Committee needs to look at each month, pay out as much as they can and then everyone knows where we are at.**

**Mr. Reilly asked to speak again regarding public access; he spoke to the cable company and knows about the taping situation; he was told that public access will provide a tape if blank tapes are provided and they receive a letter approving this from the City Clerk.**

**Mr. Charles Mello asked about the Five Year Facilities Plan; is it being pushed; how many roofs are leaking because he noticed in the city budget that no money was allocated for it and students and teachers are suffering because of leaking roofs. Mr. Mello asked if there was any feedback from the City Council. Mr. Daft advised that the Superintendent did speak to the City Council about this. When asked about a response, the matter will be referred to Dr. Forbes.**

**Bob Carlin, 66 Merritt Road, asked for a copy of the September 11th minutes; he mentioned that he thought Mrs. Morris did not recuse**

**herself on a vote. Mrs. Morris said that she deferred, according to legal counsel and thought she did the right thing. Attorney Silva stated that the required papers were filed.**

**A motion was made by Mr. DeCastro to adjourn at 11:00PM, seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant**

**Eileen Lovett, Clerk of the School Committee**