

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence, City Hall

145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

August 18, 2011

Open Session

Mr. Tsonos called the meeting to order at 6:30PM. All members present: Luisa Abatecola, Stephen Furtado, Ryan Tellier, Chrissy Rossi, Charles Tsonos. Also present: Ed Daft, Interim Superintendent and Andrew Thomas, Legal Counsel.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag & Moment of Silence were observed in memory of Joshua Wildenhain, Michael Caffrey, and Carl Sweeney, Sr.

Public Comment I- None

Report: Interim Superintendent's Report

School Construction Work Update – James Farrar and Mike Taber, the on-site project manager, reported

that a tremendous amount of work was taking place in a short amount of time with the daily coordination with Mr. Catelli and Mr. Farrar, the Fire Department, architects, and engineers on issues such as code violations and many undocumented situations as the teams are moving through. They are pleased with the pace of the work and

have full cooperation from the city officials. Most issues are on the district wide repair project; life safety areas of assembly; energy project by Johnson Controls; however, there is no interference with the two projects. The School Committee was asked to consider for the future that funding has been delayed; \$3.8 million is out to bid on general contractors; there is a good handle on projects for school opening and everyone is on board for that to happen; Department of Health wants issues addressed on violations from past years; balance of the work in Phase II and to think of the ramifications of cancelling and delays; it takes time to plan these projects and go through the bid process; there is a tremendous amount of lead time for starting work; 6-8 weeks before special materials arrive at the site; energy upgrade in all schools; want Johnson Controls to complete and satisfy RI Department of Education requirements.

Mrs. Rossi asked about the end date on phase II in order to have proper mobilization and if advice is needed for Farrar Associates to start prepping for Phase II. Farrar advised that the design work and planning needs to start now and it is important that a decision be made in the next few weeks, since we do not have the luxury of time. This will be detailed and planned with the building committee and the School Committee will be advised accordingly.

Mr. Farrar was very confident schools will open on time and after that work will be done on a second shift, vacation, and holidays. The roof at Hennessey School will be done through a phased approach and

will not be disruptive to school operations. Mr. Farrar explained that a good faith effort is being made to complete work in response to Health Department violations and requests of the Building Inspector; these are items which were budgeted and it was anticipated this might happen; through the competitive bid process, the schools made out well. Mr. Daft thanked Farrar Associates and recognized the efforts of the work crew and city officials.

Watters Program Update – Mr. Daft reported that progress is being made for opening in September and that a soft opening will take place on August 31, 2011.

Finance Report – Mary King reported that with 75% of the fiscal year over, revenues were solid at 72% and that the deficit had not changed due to the educational jobs fund loss; she noted that two lines for transportation in the budget were not an issue and that rebates on the Esco bond should be on target by October 31st at \$300,000. Mr. Furtado requested that in the future, the School Committee be provided with information on last year's figures for comparison purposes.

Personnel Report on Retirements/Resignations/Leaves of Absence – Mary King presented the personnel items:

RESIGNATION

Cynthia Sadler

Assistant Principal – Oldham and Waddington Elementary Schools

Effective August 11, 2011

Holly DaSilveira

Reading Teacher – MMS

Effective immediately

Joseph Lydon

Social Studies Teacher – East Providence High School Effective

August 17, 2011

Greg Amore

Assistant Baseball Coach – East Providence High School - Effective

immediately

RETIREMENTS

Nancy Flanagan

(31 years) Guidance Counselor/Coordinator – Riverside Middle School

Effective August 17, 2011

Constance Crowshaw (24 yr)

English Teacher– Riverside Middle School Effective August 18, 2011

PERSONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Stephen Prew

Assistant Principal – Martin Middle School Effective 2011/2012 School Year

Patricia Vinhateiro

10 month Secretary – Riverside Middle School – 2011/2012 School year

Santo DiGati

Art Teacher – East Providence High School – 2011/2012 School year

EXTENDED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Bradley Wilson

Special Education Department Head – Martin Middle School – Effective August 10, 2011

Mr. Tsonos thanked the retirees for their service.

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes –A motion was made by Mrs. Abatecola to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2011 meeting, seconded by Mr. Tellier. Vote 5-0

A motion was made by Mr. Furtado to change the order of the agenda

to move up Item 9 on the agenda, Grant Writer, seconded by Mr. Tellier. Vote 5-0. In response to a request from Mrs. Rossi regarding a full time grant writer, Mr. Daft advised that he met with a former grant writer from Cranston, Carol Bissante, and requested that she attend the meeting to provide information to the School Committee.

Ms. Bissante explained that many districts are making decisions about which positions to keep going forward and decisions between administration and School Committee in general about what grants are available through federal, state and private funding; competition is strong and there are restrictions on many of the grants through private funding; there are restrictions on grants being tied into the district's strategic plan and funds cannot be supplanted. Although grants are helpful, there is no free lunch; they have things attached; everyone looking for money in this desperate time; funding sources have strings attached. Whoever the grant, they have the say; district administration is in the best position to do work because they best understand what the needs are based on the district's goals; the grants are very competitive depending on the level of need and most of the time, it is not allowable to pay a person with money from the grant. In response to Mrs. Rossi's explanation that the district would like to obtain grants for a gifted program, Ms. Bissante said the most important aspect for any community is to work with central office staff. Mr. Daft felt that there is a team in place and we are not missing any opportunities; we have people on staff and structures in place for control of grants and do not need a full time grant writer at this time.

Mr. Tsonos appreciated the advice and her expertise; we need to look at central administration which has done a fine job; he does not think we need a full time person. A motion was made by Mrs. Rossi to hire a full-time grant writer, no second. Motion failed.

Action Items

Personnel Appointments/Recalls - Mary King presented the personnel items:

SUPERINTENDENT'S PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATIONS:

APPOINTMENTS

Cheri Guerra

Assistant Principal - Martin Middle School

Andre Rondeau

Pre-Engineering Instructor - CTC

Mark Stickney

1/5 Physics Teacher – East Providence High School

Diane Milia

Special Education Teacher Behavioral Class – MMS

(student enrollment)

Marisa Martinez

Music/ Band Director – Riverside Middle School

Nichole Collins

School Nurse/Teacher- Whiteknact Elementary School

Ruth Dickinson

School Nurse/Teacher - TBD

Christen Farias

ESL Teacher - MMS

Lindy Iannucci

ESL Teacher – Elementary – Orlo Elementary

Elaine Delaney

ESL Teacher — Orlo/Whiteknact Elementary Schools

Marissa Denice

Grade 3 Teacher – Francis Elementary School

Stacey Messier

Grade 1 Teacher – Orlo Elementary School

Amanda Holland

Grade 1 Teacher – Oldham Elementary School

Alicia Testoni

Kindergarten Teacher – Orlo Elementary School

Nomi Hauge

Librarian – Orlo/Silver Spring Elementary Schools

Robert Rodericks

Baseball Coach – East Providence High School

Kevin Croke

Head Hockey Coach – East Providence High School

Crissy Borton

**Flag Corp Advisor – East Providence High School Effective
8/29/2011**

RECALLS

Nicole Delanos

2/5 Art Teacher – East Providence High School

Jeff Gouveia 180 Day Custodian

Richard Pacheco 180 Day Custodian

Miguel Lopes 180 Day Custodian

Paul Mello 180 Day Custodian

Kenneth Foley 180 Day Custodian

David White 180 Day Custodian

Augustinho Linhares 180 Day Custodian

Motion by Mr. Tellier to approve, seconded by Mrs. Abatecola. Vote 5-0.

Discussion: Mr. Furtado commented that the personnel list was just received at noon today. Mr. Daft explained that all are trying to get as much done as soon as possible during this crunch time prior to school opening.

Ms. Guerra, Assistant Principal,999 was present and was recognized and congratulated by the School Committee on her appointment.

Requisitions – Bill List

Summary of Requisitions – Bill Lists

Warrant #1117 8/4/11 \$ 403,388.93

Warrant #1118 8/4/11 \$ 47,766.90

Warrant #1119 8/11/11 \$ 518.00

Warrant #1120 8/17/11 \$ 9,798.34

Warrant #1121 8/17/11 \$ 497,559.75

Warrant #1122 8/17/11 \$ 286,720.00

Motion made by Mrs. Rossi, seconded by Mrs. Abatecola. Vote 5-0.

Discussion: Mr. Furtado noted the Accounts Payable list over 90 days and wanted to bring home the point that these are real vendors who will not be paid until November. Mary King noted that \$5.3 million owed to vendors is now over 90 days and until the deficit is resolved, not many people will be paid until November 1, 2011.

Revised School Calendar 2011-2012 – Mr. Daft explained changes: the January 11, 2012 professional day has been cancelled and trimester dates added. He noted that through the efforts of the Technology Department, report cards will be done on Power School shortly. A motion was made by Mr. Furtado to approve, seconded by Mr. Tellier. Vote 5-0.

New Policy - Advertising on School Property -Second Passage – A motion was made by Mr. Tellier, seconded by Mrs. Rossi to approve: Discussion: Mr. Tsonos noted that this issue needed to be handled carefully since there are many questions; RI Department of Education was asked to provide an opinion. Mr. Thomas, legal counsel, advised that RIDE will not get involved but can only offer advice; a letter was received from RIDE, George Muksian, Esq. which gave measured approval; they do not want anything objectionable; this is up to the School Committee if they want to open this up to discussion. Vote: 5-0.

Revised Policy I.E. School Committee By-Laws -Second Passage – A

motion was made to approve by Mr. Tellier, seconded by Mr. Furtado for discussion: It was decided that because additional changes were presented tonight, it was recommended by legal that the policy be held over for second passage and to consider this as first passage. Mr. Tellier rescinded the original motion and moved on first passage, seconded by Mrs. Rossi. Vote 5-0.

Revised Policy V.A. 11 Transportation - Second Passage- Motion by Mr. Tellier, seconded by Mrs. Rossi; it was decided to vote on first passage since an additional change was made. First vote rescinded and a motion was made by Mr. Tellier for first passage, seconded by Mr. Furtado. Vote 5-0.

Deficit Elimination Options - Mrs. Rossi advised that at a joint meeting they were given options to review and get back to the City Finance Director; the next meeting will be held on August 25, 2011 at 5:00PM at City Hall. Mr. Tsonos advised that the city and school department have been asked to list priorities and present them individually to the city in order to come up with a deficit elimination plan to move the department forward.

AYSO Waiver of Fees - Mrs. Rossi explained that this group is trying to save some money toward a permanent place to play soccer for approximately 800 kids and by next year they hope to achieve that. A motion was made by Mrs. Rossi to waive the fees we charge for this year for use of our fields, seconded by Mr. Tellier for discussion. In

response to Mr. Furtado's question regarding the amount of the fees and wear and tear on the fields, Mr. Daft believed it is appropriate to charge the fees and that funds from the concessions should more than cover that ; once we start waiving fees, it starts something; the fee is not outrageous and they can afford it. Discussion regarding the Athletic Department taking over the fields and our Maintenance Department doing the work there; the fee pays for expenses related to maintaining the fields.

Mr. Daft met with Ms. Doucette of AYSO and they are expected to pay a fee of \$1500 by August 20th for weekend games through November.

Mr. Daft pointed out that dance studios and others pay upwards of \$3000 in some cases to use the facilities. Mrs. Rossi argued that most are our kids and some are special needs; this should be their last year and they are trying to save as much money as possible; could the payment at least be delayed until August 30th. Mr. Tsonos said he would be willing to table for further discussion. A motion was made by Mrs. Rossi to table for further discussion, seconded by Mr. Tellier.

Mr. Furtado suggested that a representative from AYSO attend the next meeting. Vote 5-0.

Human Resources - Staffing Solutions/Options – Motion by Mr. Furtado to table at the request of Mr. Daft, seconded by Mrs. Abatecola. Vote 5-0.

Old Business

Legal Update on Teachers' Contract Signatures - Mrs. Rossi requested an update from legal counsel. Andrew Thomas advised that because this School Committee and legal counsel were not part of the original negotiations, the contract is being reviewed again and the process completed shortly. Mrs. Rossi requested that if there is no resolution by the next meeting, she would like it reviewed page by page by a team from both the School Department and the union in order to have it completed and signed, as it should have been done months ago.

Legal Update MOA between City of East Providence and School Department Director of Maintenance and Director of Information Technology –Andrew Thomas advised that a draft of the MOA for the Maintenance Director was sent to the City Solicitor, Mr. Craven, and City Manager, Mr. Andreoni. After a request for a minor change, the agreement was executed and sent back to the city; school department legal counsel is now waiting for city officials to return it. Regarding the MOA for the Director of Information Technology, Mr. Thomas stated that changes had been made and copies distributed for review and signature. Mr. Tsonos requested that Mrs. Rossi, School Committee liaison to the City Council, follow up to obtain signatures from city officials.

Waddington Playground Community Build - Mrs. Rossi congratulated the PTA at Waddington School for their hard work and encouraged all to volunteer for the community build on September 10th.

Discussion on Advertising and Sponsorship Salesperson - Mrs. Rossi requested that the Committee begin to recruit a sales person(s) either paid or on a commission basis. Mr. Tsonos was concerned with how the process would play out and who would be interviewing. Mrs. Rossi stated that this is a pilot program and perhaps Mr. Daft along with two members of the School Committee could participate; she would be willing to participate. Mr. Tsonos would want to interview sales people; he would like to cautiously move forward. Mr. Furtado stated that the Committee needs a plan going forward on signs, prices, etc.

Mrs. Abatacola suggested a bid process might work; hire a business to go out and get the advertising.

Mr. Tellier felt that now that a policy is in place, we need to find out where and what we want to advertise, set parameters before hiring and going out to bid; perhaps set up an advertising committee first before preparing a bid. Mr. Tsonos suggested appointing a committee at the next meeting to put a plan in place. Mr. Furtado thought all School Committee members could prepare ideas and then cull through them. It was decided to get the word out to the public through the media for volunteers who wish to work on the committee.

New Business

IV.C.4. Telecommunications and Networked Services -Acceptable Use Policy Students and Employees Revised Policy - First Passage -

Kelly Ahrens, Technology Director explained the changes in the policy are necessary to protect the network; there is a need to have a stronger policy; by participating, all students will have to opt in and parents need to sign if not; kids will also need to sign. The policy will be posted on line and parents may opt out if they wish. A motion was made by Mr. Furtado for first passage of the policy, seconded Mrs. Rossi. Vote 5-0.

Public Comment II

Maureen Bucket – former President of the EPTAA stated that the teacher assistants' contract was ratified long before the teachers' contract and still had not been signed. Mrs. Rossi requested that a copy be provided to the School Committee members.

Anthony Ferrera suggested that the School Committee provide an option for the AYSO group; if their agreement/deal to find a new home for the team falls apart, they will be required to pay the fee at that time; he felt the School Committee should not deny their request for a waiver of the fee to use the fields.

He felt the meetings regarding advertising should be public. He expressed concern that money from the construction bond being spent on unforeseen items which will cause other work to not be completed and he requested that the public be informed about this at every meeting; as a taxpayer he would like to know about the extra work and what we are spending. Mrs. Rossi

advised that we are billed monthly.

The Finance Director, Ms. King, will discuss this with the project manager.

Tony Gouveia spoke regarding the \$6.3 deficit and that the School Committee has options; this is a game by the city to wait until the end of the month; no one has guts to say what needs to be done; the funding formula should not be used to take care of the deficit; the School Committee should reject that; the meals tax should be used to pay down the deficit. He suggested that the city cut non-mandated positions and the School Committee should reject any cuts to education, since we just keep cutting the educational system.

Mr. Tsonos stated that the Committee will fight for every penny, since the schools have been underfunded for years, but we should try not to place blame on others.

Valarie Lawson 122 Hoyt Ave, President of the East Providence Education Association stated that school administrators had reviewed the teachers contract line by line and that a Tentative Agreement had been signed some time ago by the prior School Committee so she was not sure what the discrepancies would be from the existing agreement; redoing the work that numerous people have done would be a waste of time and money; she would like to have a discussion about it.

Mr. Tsonos stated that a member of this School Committee issued an email ruling unilaterally that all discussions between department heads should be directed through this person; he refused to allow an edict to the city or to him since he is a taxpayer, he can ask questions if he wishes and never had a problem before; all should be working together with a united front to stand up for the School Department we must work to our best abilities with cooperative attitudes with the city; not confrontation; trying to work out the deficit positively and cooperatively.

Announcements

East Providence Prevention Coalition - Mrs. Abatecola requested that Jen Wall, Executive Director attend the meeting to provide information regarding their programs.

Recognition of Custodians - Mrs. Rossi wanted to personally thank Mr. Catelli and the maintenance team for their hard work in getting schools ready for the new year.

The August 23rd School Committee was rescheduled to August 30, 2011.

Mr. Daft thanked State Representative Helio Melo for legislative grants presented to Hennessey and Orlo Avenue Schools.

Mrs. Rossi announced that a welcome for the new principal at

Riverside Middle School will be held on August 29th; information will be posted on the website.

A motion was made by Mr. Furtado to convene in Executive Session for purposes of discussing: Personnel - R.I. Gen. Laws §42-46-5(a) (1) Collective Bargaining R.I. Gen. Laws §42-46-5(a) (2) Litigation/Pending Litigation -R.I. Gen. Laws §42-46-5(a) (2), seconded by Mr. Tellier. Vote 5-0.

The School Committee returned to Public Session. Motion to seal the minutes of the executive session made by Mr. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Tellier. Voted 5-0 to seal the minutes of executive session.

Report Executive Session Votes - None

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Tellier. Voted 5-0 to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant

Stephen Furtado, Clerk of the Committee