

**EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT**

**East Providence School Committee**

**East Providence City Hall Council Chamber**

**145 Taunton Avenue**

**East Providence, Rhode Island 02914**

**August 13, 2013**

**Open Session**

**Mr. Monteiro, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:30PM.**

**Members Present: Elizabeth Clupny, Timothy Conley, Anthony Ferreira, Richard Pimentel, Joel Monteiro. Also Present: Kim Mercer, Superintendent of Schools, Julie Motta, Director of Education, Andrew Thomas, Esq. School Legal Counsel.**

**A motion was made by Ms. Clupny that the Committee 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. Pimentel.**

**Vote 5-0.**

**Motion by Ms. Clupny to return to open session and to seal the minutes of the executive session, seconded by Mr. Pimentel. Vote**

**5-0.**

**Report Executive Session Votes - None**

**The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag & a Moment of Silence were observed.**

**Motion by Ms. Clupny to change the order of the agenda and take up Item L7 – Review of School Committee Policy Book – Section I, seconded by Mr. Pimentel. Vote 5-0.**

**Review of School Committee Policy Book – Section I**

- Legal Requirement of Policy Handbook**
- General Powers and Duties of the East Providence School Committee**
- Code of Basic Management Principles and Ethical School Standards**
- School Committee By-Laws**
- Communications**

**Motion by Ms. Clupny to approve first passage of policies in Section I as presented, seconded by Mr. Pimentel. Vote 5-0.**

**Student/Staff Recognition – Ms. Jane Sylvia, former Supervisor of Meadowcrest Early Learning Center was honored and presented a certificate for her service to East Providence Schools.**

**Report on Budget Commission – Kim Mercer reported that the Commission met on August 1st and approved personnel recommendations being presented to the School Committee this evening.**

**Public Comment I – None**

**Superintendent's Report**

**PARCC Update – Technology – Kelly Ahrens, Chief Information Officer for the City of East Providence reported that RI Department of Education expects East Providence to be ready to facilitate computer-based testing by fall 2014: 650 new computers are needed in 20 new labs; we expect to add two computer labs per school except Oldham; there are currently no computer labs in our elementary schools; the High School has five and Middle Schools have four each. The existing computers do meet PARC requirements for now, but we need to replace computers in a timely manner as all were bought in 2009-2010. While we have identified spaces for computer labs at the High School and both Middle Schools, there are some elementary schools which have no space and will need a rolling computer lab option. Kelly provided the Technology Budget and Recommendations for Action:**

- School District should continue to finance purchases over four years and commit that as a budget line item.**
- Stagger purchases and payment plans; this allows in-house staff to**

**do most of the work to install many computers.**

- Commit to PARCC readiness for Fall 2014 so that East Providence does not fall behind other school districts. The new teacher evaluation system is very important and the district should provide a stable environment for this process.**
- Purchase schedule for 2013-14 presented to the School Committee**

**Kelly pointed out that equipment is needed not only to satisfy the PARCC requirements and to refresh our existing inventory, but also to satisfy NEASC recommendations for the High School; a line item is needed in the budget for instructional technology. Discussion took place regarding the cost of wiring and installation of tables and the School Committee requested that Kelly attend and present a report to them on a quarterly basis, so they can be informed of the progress.**

**Facilities Update- Mr. Ed Catelli, Facilities Director presented an overview of construction projects underway at the high school, Waddington and Oldham School (former Meadowcrest Building). Discussion followed.**

**Representatives of Symmes Maini & McKee Associates (SMMA) presented a PowerPoint explanation of the Building Repairs Progress Report for East Providence Schools. Discussion took place. Mr. Ferreira requested a list of items which have been completed and a list of what has not been done in order to avoid having a problem at the end of the project.**

**NEASC Update – Kim Mercer, Superintendent of Schools presented a Power Point detailing the following information:**

- **The NEASC Accreditation Process from 2004 to 2013 and Standards for Accreditation**
- **Existing concerns from 2004-07**
- **March 2008 Decennial Visit Commendations and Findings regarding Instruction, School and Community Resources for Learning**
- **June 2009 Meeting Commendations and Additional Improvements Cited**
- **June 2009 NEASC Meeting- Decision to continue school's accreditation, but remain on warning**
- **June 2011 Meeting Commendations and decision to continue the school's accreditation, but remain on warning**
- **January 2012 Special Report Review**
- **April 2013 Five Year Progress Report Review**
- **May 2013 Visit Findings and Additional Issues Identified**
- **July 2013 Report: Findings/Decision to maintain East Providence High School's Accreditation but place the school on Probation due to "the continued failure of the current school site and plant to adequately support all aspects of the school's educational programs and its ability to deliver 21st century learning expectations."**
- **Explanation of NEASC "Warning" and "Probation" Status**
- **Proactive Plan to Address Possible Probation Status – East Providence School Department will submit documentation to Show Cause as to why the high school should not be placed on probation;**

**due August 30, 2013.**

- **Superintendent advised that NEASC will meet in October to review our written response to show cause as to why the high school should not be placed on probation.**
- **Presented next Steps- Five Year Plan**

**Discussion: Mr. Conley thanked the Superintendent for presenting a comprehensive report and expressed his concerns regarding the accreditation of the high school.**

**Kim Mercer noted that teaching and learning at the high school is in a good place and that she will find money for supplies to support that; however, in addition, the physical plant needs to be improved in order to further support teachers; the School Committee has taken the first steps by approving new science labs and the gym renovations and we need to keep the momentum going with the support of the City Council and City Manager. After discussion, Mr. Monteiro stated that the School Committee members are all in agreement that the issues at the high school are long overdue and they consider these issues to be a priority.**

**Personnel Report on Resignations/Leave of Absence/Retirement**

**RETIREMENT**

**Cristiano Costa -Maintenance-EPHS-Effective 06/27/2013**

**RESIGNATION**

**Marcia Woodside-Reading Specialist-EPHS-Effective 06/27/2013**

**Kristen Provost -Grade 3 Teacher-Francis-Effective 08/05/2013**

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Margaret Carroll-School Nurse-EPHS-Effective 2013/2014 school year**

**Richard Silva-Summer School Science Teacher-MMS-Effective  
Summer 2013**

**Alexander Kanelos-Dean of Students-EPHS-Effective 2013/2014  
School Year**

**Robert Perry-Latin Teacher-EPHS-Effective 2013/2014 School Year**

**Christopher Zanghi-Librarian-MMS-Effective 2013/2014 School Year**

**PARENTAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Emilie Joost-School Nurse-EPHS-Effective 2013/2014 School Year**

**Cindy Gregoire -Grade 4 Teacher-Francis Elementary-Effective  
2013/2014 School Year**

**FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT**

**Patricia Garganta-Special Ed Teacher-MMS-Approximately  
09/12/2013-13 weeks**

**Laurie Marchand-Numeracy Coach-District-Approximately  
09/03/2013-13 weeks**

**RESCINDING LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Patricia Piros-Business Teacher-EPHS-Return as Special Education  
Teacher-RMS**

**Melissa Natusch-Special Ed/Pre K-MEAD**

## **Consent Agenda**

**Approval of Minutes –Motion by Ms. Clupny to approve the minutes of the meetings held on June 11, 2013, June 28, 2013, and August 1, 2013, seconded by Mr. Pimentel. Vote 5-0.**

**Finance Report – Superintendent Mercer reported Revenues at \$47 million (66.33%) and Expenditures at \$53 Million (74.98%) from the report dated 11/1/12 to 7/31/13.**

## **Action Items**

### **Personnel Appointments and Recalls**

#### **APPOINTMENTS**

**Frank DeVall - Principal-Martin Middle School**

**Stephen Prew -Principal-Riverside Middle School**

**Jenna Mendonsa-Summer Math Camp Teacher-EPHS**

**Desiree Santiago-Math Teacher-MMS-Effective 09/03/2013**

**Marilyn Cabral -Cosmetology Teacher-CTC-Effective 09/03/2013**

**Robert Rodericks-Assistant Varsity Football Coach-EPHS-Effective 2013/2014 School Year**

**Keith Daniels-Pre-Engineering Teacher-CTC-Effective 2013-2014 School Year**

**Bobbi Simon-Football Cheerleading Coach-High School-Effective**

**2013-14**

**RECALL**

**Amanda Izzi-Social Studies Teacher-EPHS**

**Kelly Love-English Teacher-MMS**

**Motion to approve by Ms. Clupny, seconded by Mr. Pimentel. Vote 5-0.**

**Transportation Extension Presentation- Table until September meeting – Motion by Ms. Clupny, seconded by Mr. Pimentel. Vote 4-1; Mr. Ferreira voted nay.**

**Naming of Oldham School and the East Providence Early Learning Program – Kim Mercer stated that she wanted to make it official that the Meadowcrest building is now the Oldham School; the students who attended the former Meadowcrest School will now attend the Early Learning Program at Waddington School. Motion to approve by Ms. Clupny, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 5-0.**

**Requisitions – Bill List**

**Warrant #**

**1319 6/19/13 \$ 900.00**

**1320 6/21/13 \$ 197,611.45**

**1321 6/10/13 \$ 600.00**

**1322 7/18/13 \$ 3,386,564.17**

**1323 7/24/13 \$ 330,863.27**

1326	8/1/13		447.00
1327	8/13/13	\$	1,097,234.07
1328	8/13/13	\$	30,784.46

**Motion by Ms. Clupny to approve, seconded by Mr. Pimentel. Vote 5-0.**

**Home School Requests – Motion to approve requests for the 2013-14 school year by Ms. Clupny, seconded by Mr. Pimentel. Vote 5-0.**

**The Superintendent recommended that the School Committee approve a request from the High School Music Department for students to attend a cultural and performance tour of Italy in February 2014; the request has been supported by the Principal. Motion to approve by Ms. Clupny, seconded by Mr. Pimentel. Vote 5-0.**

## **Old Business**

### **PTA Reports - None**

**Mr. Ferreira requested a follow up on a request made by the Orlo Avenue PTA regarding signs for the playground. The information will be forwarded to Superintendent Mercer for follow-up.**

### **Public Comment II**

**Jessica Beauchaine, parent, felt that she was not given enough information regarding the high school accreditation and requested**

more input from all members of the School Committee; she believed the school needs to stay within warning status. She does not know if the community is behind her about raising money for Middle School sports and doesn't know if they will continue to support it because people keep donating but it doesn't seem like all are on the same page. She felt that the School Committee and City Council should work together on this. She asked how long the high school would stay on probation if that happened. She requested that the School Committee provide more information to the community in order for all to work together to support it.

Mr. Conley agreed that we have asked the community for a lot and cannot continue to do that. He stated that he tried to be honest about the high school at the August 1st meeting and shared the same concerns; he has confidence in the present administration and wants our school to continue to be accredited.

Elizabeth Clupny stated that the School Committee is held to certain rules, does not always have all the answers to respond to questions, and does not want to provide the wrong information as comments can be misconstrued. She believes that the five School Committee members will continue to work well together on these issues.

Mr. Monteiro also felt that the School Committee members were working well together; he would like to have all the correct information before public discussion because this has a direct impact

**on students, which is the reason it was held for discussion until the August 13th meeting; also in order to be in compliance with the Open Meeting Laws, the item must be listed on the agenda.**

**Mr. Ferreira felt that we have to be honest with the taxpayers about the condition of the schools so they will be supportive as there are many issues with our schools; he will do whatever it takes, but he felt that the School Committee's hands are tied; we can't keep doing it the old way.**

**Mr. Ed Prew of 43 Rogers Ave, addressed the School Committee regarding resurrecting the old Townie logo; this was addressed in a recent article in the Post.**

**Mr. Rybka asked about the Project 106 money collected from taxes. He expressed concern as to why cleanliness issues were not addressed at the high school prior to the NEASC visit; he felt that the school has been neglected and the issues are serious. He requested that more information be provided on how the Project 106 tax bill donations to the city will be converted over to the school account.**

**Mr. Conley noted that trash bags covered broken sinks when NEASC visited the high school and this all related to the budget; there was no plan for infrastructure; all School Committee members are committed to change.**

**Mr. Monteiro agreed that with a new Superintendent there is a culture change now and he agreed with all about cleanliness issues; this has been the mentality, culture for years.**

**Discussion regarding meeting with City Council members. Mr. Monteiro stated that there was an issue over the summer with getting a date and he was out of town on the last proposed date, but a meeting date will be scheduled.**

**Ms. Clupny related that she did not know about the recommendations made by NEASC; this was never mentioned to this School Committee before; she was embarrassed to walk through the building with NEASC; all School Committee members committed to correct this.**

**Chrissy Rossi, City Council member, announced the annual school supply drive; please call her if supplies are needed. She is also waiting for a date for the joint City Council and School Committee meeting. She felt that the City is moving in a positive direction with committed elected officials and City Management. Discussion regarding the amount of the surplus and rainy day fund.**

**Mr. Ferreira added that the mentality has to change; it is not OK to leave things undone; we have to do more with what we have and we have to hold people accountable.**

**Announcements - Special School Committee Meetings August 22,**

**2013 and August 27, 2013**

**Ms. Clupny announced that School Committee meetings will be held on 8/22 and 8/27 in order to provide updates on construction in school buildings; time and place to be announced.**

**Motion by Elizabeth Clupny to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Pimentel.  
Vote 5-0.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant**

**Elizabeth Clupny, Clerk of the Committee**