

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence School Committee

East Providence City Hall Council Chamber

145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

September 10, 2013

Open Session

Mr. Monteiro called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Members Present: Elizabeth Clupny, Timothy Conley, Anthony Ferreira, Richard Pimentel, Joel Monteiro. Also present: Kim Mercer, Superintendent of Schools, Julie Motta, Director of Education, Robert Silva, Esq. and Andrew Thomas, Esq.

Motion 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 public 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 & Moment of Silence were observed.

Community/Staff Recognition

Julie Motta, Director of Education recognized Cori Durfee, a member of Colonial Baptist Church, Pastor Jeff Francour and Girl Scout Troop 505 from East Providence for the donation of 20 backpacks and school supplies to students at Orlo Avenue School. Also, special thanks to Ed Catelli, Facilities Director, and the Custodial and Maintenance Staff for a successful school opening.

Chairman Monteiro thanked Superintendent, Kim Mercer, and Director of Education, Julie Motta, for their hard work to make school opening a success and for leading by example.

Student Liaison Report – Joshua Conception presented a report on high school activities and events.

Report on Budget Commission – Kim Mercer reported that the Budget Commission had not met since the last School Committee meeting and that the next Budget Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 12th.

Public Comment I

Steve Souza requested middle school soccer and it did not come through; net near Francis School is still down. He questioned why students were told they would get detention if they did not bring in items on a school supply list. Mr. Monteiro requested that Mr. Souza also contact Mr. Briden of the City Council regarding the field net. Mr. Souza explained that a situation had occurred whereby nets were removed from Martin Middle School and returned to the high school; tire tracks were left on the field when the nets were removed.

Fred Rybka requested clarification regarding the amount of the surplus; taxes being raised 1%; what can be done to budget for Middle School sports.

Mr. Monteiro responded that fall sports was not included in the current budget; however, the Superintendent is reviewing the budget for next year, is in support of bringing this up in budget discussions; all are optimistic and hope to have finalization in the next couple weeks. Mr. Monteiro stated that while the School Committee and Superintendent recognize that the education of students is the priority, they recognize that sports also play a big role

Mr. Conley recognized the efforts of Project 106 which supported cross country at the Middle Schools; he agreed that the School Committee intends to fund Middle School sports going forward.

Mr. Ferreira stated that the Superintendent is working on a budget that the public will be able to review line by line and would like their support at upcoming budget meetings.

Mr. Monteiro requested community involvement in the budget process; parents and families need to support the budget; while Project 106 and other organizations have helped to sustain the sports programs, the School Committee has taken the position of fully supporting those programs.

Jessica Beauchaine of Project 106 stated that the Middle School principals agreed that cross country was best since it involved both boys and girls; her organization was told that buses were needed to transport the players when some sports at the high school do not use buses and that the buses cost \$77 per hour times five hours; Project 106 is paying for the middle school cross country; they were unable to do soccer now; she does not want the money for Middle School sports to be taken away from kids when supplies are lacking for education; if she knew the School Committee would be able to fund the program for fall, Project 106 could have saved that money for winter sports.

Mr. Monteiro responded that the School Committee cannot be sure about funding sports until the budget is finalized and that they realize that education and extra-curricular activities should be balanced;

bringing Middle School sports back is not taking away from kids.

Mr. Conley agreed that academic resources come first and that it is a tribute to Project 106 to keep this issue in the forefront

Superintendent's Report

Facilities Update – Mr. Edward Catelli, Facilities Director felt that the opening of school was very positive; the high school is gleaming and the maintenance staff did an unbelievable job over the past two months even working through Labor Day weekend. Thanks to all who came out to support John Carnevale in his enthusiasm to refurbish the gym. Other construction: public address systems (PA) are 85% complete at the high school and we hope to continue to move forward on that project; a tremendous amount of money is needed and with School Committee support, it will take a lot of time. The Waddington building was opened; everyone pulled together to open school; the PA system has been completed; electrical and internet will be completed tonight at Waddington; now working on doors and frames; will tour to do a punch list of remaining items; new Oldham substantially completed and will be done by end of the month. At Martin Middle School, the PA system will be completed by September 23rd.

Mr. Ferreira asked who would be responsible for any delays in construction and if a meeting will be held with the architect to review

and pay bills; even though the work is almost completed; we need to watch where the money was spent. Mr. Catelli stated that there was just not enough time to do that when the construction documents were put out on July 9th with only seven weeks to complete the construction projects before the new school year. Mr. Ferreira felt there were some issues about where/how the money was spent.

Discussion took place about putting up signs prohibiting food and drinks in the high school gym and the need to enforce those rules. Mr. Monteiro felt that was not an unreasonable request since the gym was completed through donations and many hours of dedicated volunteer work. He thought it was not uncommon to have rules in place for the gym; a lot of work was completed in a short amount of time; staff knew what needed to be done; in good shape now; thanks to Ed Catelli and his staff for their many hours of work.

Mr. Ferreira asked if all costs are in line; Mr. Catelli answered that there were some change orders, but there are credits to be applied. Mr. Ferreira stated that there should be close to \$1 million dollars left and thought it was important to confirm that within the next 30-40 days in order to move forward.

Personnel Report on Resignations/Leave of Absence/Retirement

Resignations

James DeBlois Teacher Assistant-MMS-Effective 08/25/2013

**Mary Anne Abatecola-Supervisory Assistant-Meadowcrest-Effective
09/03/2013**

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes – Motion by Ms. Clupny to approve the minutes of the meetings held on July 17, 2013 and August 13, 2013, seconded by Mr. Pimentel. Vote 5-0.

Finance Report – Kim Mercer, Superintendent, reported Revenues of \$47,131,299 and Expenditures of \$58,214,402 during period of 11/1/12 to 9/10/13.

Action Items

Personnel Appointments

**Christina Farley -Math Teacher - Martin Middle School-Effective
2013/2014 School Year**

**Stefanie Edwards-Special Ed/SC Teacher-Francis-Effective 2013/2014
School Year**

**Joanne Mitchell -Reading Specialist-MMS-Effective 2013/2014 School
Year**

**Michelle Chamberlain-Special Ed/Res 5/5-2/5-Kent Heights-Effective
2013/2014 School Year**

Kate Sweeney-Reading Specialist-Silver Spring-Effective 09/09/2013

Stephany Hull-Latin Teacher- 2/5-High School (one year)

Rescinded Appointment

**Desiree Santiago-Math Teacher-Martin Middle School-Effective
08/29/2013**

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

Requisitions – Bill List

Warrant #

1331 9/6/13 \$ 48,672.83

1332 9/6/13 \$1,959,693.62

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

**RFP for Transportation Contract – Diana Clarkin, Director of
Operations, requested approval to allow the Transportation
Department and Business Office to Request Proposals for a
Transportation Contract; two years left on current contract; intention
is to allow for competitive bidding; five year projections done to 2020,
but would like to see what's out there; track expenses would be more
efficient; no option for automatic renewal; more for cost
effectiveness. Motion by Ms. Clupny to approve RFP, seconded by
Mr. Pimentel. Vote 5-0.**

Home School Request(s) – Motion by Ms. Clupny, seconded by Mr.

Pimentel. Vote 5-0.

**Policy IV. E. Procedures/Policy on School Volunteers – Amended
-First Passage – Motion by Ms. Clupny to table, seconded by Mr.
Pimentel. Vote 5-0.**

**Policy III.J.5. Criminal Records Background Checks – Amended –
First Passage – Motion to approve by Ms. Clupny, seconded by Mr.
Pimentel. Vote 5-0.**

**Review of School Committee Policy Book – Section I – Second
Passage:**

- **Legal Requirement for 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 to approve by Ms. Clupny, seconded by Mr. Pimentel.
Discussion took place; Mr. Monteiro would like the weekly
communication from the Superintendent included in the By-Laws
policy; amended motion seconded by Mr. Pimentel. (It was agreed to
leave 6PM in the By-Laws policy as the start time for School
Committee meetings).**

Old Business

PTA Reports

Public Comment II – Fred Rybka offered thanks to Mr. Catelli; he appreciates the playground build.

Mr. Monteiro thanked Mr. Rybka for providing the new sign for Oldham School.

Mr. Souza asked that the School Committee consider winter sports such as wrestling when thinking about barring drinks from the new gym.

Mr. Ferreira thanked the street cleaners/sweepers for cleaning up at Martin Middle School; the goal is to do as many small things as possible to show pride in our schools.

Jessica Beauchaine commented that the State PTA would pay for criminal background checks and Warwick is doing it free of charge; she had questions about who would monitor this.

Discussion took place regarding the background check policy since there are many classroom visits for events such as Reading Week; when the teacher is present in the room, volunteers/individuals do not need background checks because it is not an unmonitored visit.

Mr. Ferreira asked it is would be possible to get the city to do the background checks again.

Ms. Clupny read the policy on Criminal Background checks.

Ms. Beauchaine spoke about transportation issues; asked why some students were told they could not ride the bus after the second day of school. Discussion regarding the policy on transportation; appeals may be filed and will be reviewed case by case for space availability on the bus after school starts; if it is determined there is space on the bus for additional children, appeals may be granted.

Diana Clarkin, Operations Director, explained that appeals are decided on a case-by-case basis according to special requirements, medical situations, and other needs; the department has received over 200 appeals to date. Discussion took place regarding transportation issues. Mr. Monteiro noted that East Providence is at or below other communities regarding walking distances for students and the fact that it is important to follow the policy since it effects spending; there is an appeals process in place.

Izilda Teves, Orlo Avenue PTA asked if there was a plan to do repair work in other schools and if the district has a policy related to students going outside as it relates to weather conditions.

Superintendent Mercer responded that funds for Phase II

construction will be determined when the present construction is completed; weather policy will be researched.

Question regarding absence of crossing guard at Orlo; it was determined that is the responsibility of the Principal to notify the Police Department when that situation occurs. Question regarding half-time school nurse at Orlo and what would happen during an emergency. Superintendent will look into it.

Announcements

Special Joint School Committee/City Council Meeting – September 24, 2013 – 7:00PM

8th Annual Townie Pride Parade – Pierce Field - Friday, October 25, 2013 – 6:15PM

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

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant

Elizabeth Clupny, Clerk of the Committee