

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence School Committee

Weaver Library-Champlin Program Room

41 Grove Avenue

East Providence, RI 02914

City of East Providence

Legislative Breakfast

8:00AM

January 29, 2014

Open Session

Meet and Greet with Legislative Delegation, City Manager, City Council, Superintendent, School Committee, City Solicitor and Directors of Planning, Public Works, IT, Chief of Police and Fire Chief.

Discussion of Current and Proposed Legislation as Related to East Providence with Legislative Delegation, Council and School Committee Members.

School Committee Members Present: Joel Monteiro Chairman;

Timothy Conley, Vice-Chairman, and Elizabeth Clupny, Clerk.

City Council Members Present: Mayor James Briden, Assistant Mayor, Thomas Rose, Tracy Capobianco, Chrissy Rossi

Legislators Present: Senator Daniel Daponte, Senator William Conley, Jr., Senator David Bates, Rep. Helio Melo, Rep. Katherine Kazarian, Rep. Joy Hearn

Also in attendance: Acting City Manager, Paul Lemont and City Department Heads

Note: Mr. Lemont thanked Career/Technical School Culinary students for catering breakfast.

Mr. Lemont asked individuals to express their concerns/requests to legislators:

Joel Monteiro: High School; burden of facilities; playing catch-up – future funding? PARCC assessment-current burden; how to meet demands of the transition.

Tim Conley – NECAP graduation requirement; any legislation that has impact? Any consideration this legislative session.

Senator Daponte – not much to get attention to make it less burdensome; NECAP impediment-greater discussion needed; issue here and everywhere; stay tuned.

Senator Bates – strong group getting together to put off for a few years

Representative Melo – Amore bill asking to study it; Rep. Hearn has been working with Rep. Amore on a committee to discuss it this session.

Senator Daponte – response from RIDE-variety of avenues that

students would eventually get there; RIDE not communicating this; lack of communication to School Departments and parents; need better communication between RIDE and districts.

Senator William Conley – Senate leader – Task Force – construction money; how to structure school aid; report to Senate before February break; NECAP exceptions swallow the rule; that means it does not work; concern about this year's graduating classes; benchmark year for the rest of their lives; RIDE has not communicated even to School Committees about this.

Rep. Melo – construction moratorium on school housing; lifts 7/1 if nothing in General Assembly changes; look to change formula; recoup investments; Woonsocket built new school; state paid 90%; if Woonsocket ever sells the building, the state recoups the money; throughout, there is discussion.

Tim Conley – Ms. Raimondo an advocate for a program similar to roads; asked opinion of legislators about that.

Rep. Melo – borrowing money for schools is a large amount and subject to voter approval; East Providence receives 40% from the state; not sure what she means, but could look at it.

Paul Lemont – bond for roads, etc.

Tim Conley – High School is 60 years old; we have to look under every rock; we have to look at everything needed for the high school; what would it cost to bring it back; City Manager said he took a tour of the high school and it was in better shape than when he attended school there.

Senator Daponte – moratorium on housing; would like to see deeper

assessment of buildings to avoid throwing good money after bad; don't put money in any building beyond repair; look at student population and where to put schools; should be programmatic and systematic how we approach this

Senator Bates – money for bridges and roads – won't be any money left over.

Joel Monteiro – schools are the center of the town/community; will determine the families who will live here; more and more rentals; draw what we don't have; small business will come and bring revenue to the city ten-fold if good schools.

Rep. Hearn – strong investment; education bricks and mortar and graduating students; employers need good public education in RI.

Kat Waterbury, H/R Director – asked that legislators look at teachers benefits at retirement; Malcolm Moore, Finance Director – explained that employees age 55 to age 85 still pay the same rate for insurance; Mr. Lemont asked if a blended rate; Malcolm Moore – insurance never goes up; schools have been subsidizing it; just came up in Central Falls – statute takes precedent.

Senator Daponte – Does not make sense; may need an entire new look; not fair to School Department paying for something not intended to be when you purchase it.

Paul Lemont – clause to carry through life with no way to pay for it.

Rep. Melo – Governor introduced a budget; hearings start tonight for FY15 – education formula fully funded; schools will receive money; schools the big winner.

Kat Waterbury had no additional issues to bring up.

Fire Chief, Oscar Elmasian, asked for assistance from legislators on completing the construction on the fire stations.

Paul Luba (Financial Oversight for the City) financial statements will be completed on a regular basis

Malcolm Moore – money for bridges; asked to exempt from referendum; Rep. Melo responded there should be a solution shortly

Police Chief Tavares – Google money – task force committee to meet on how to spend; wants to include programs –he mentioned schools;

Joel Monteiro –expressed thanks for School Resource Officers and the impact they have on students

Chief Tavares– Officer Doug Borden does a good job; the department works closely with the schools.

Chrissy Rossi – asked about a four year City Council and School Committee? Rep. Melo does not see that it needs ratification (like the contracts); General Assembly just gives a blessing; because of the City Charter, if the people voted for it, ratification is not necessary because East Providence has a Home Rule Charter; Mr. Melo does not see the need to ratify. Chrissy Rossi wanted to know how to go about getting bingo on the waterfront.

Senator Daponte – pension discussions saved the city money; whatever decision is reached will have an effect on local budget; Senate did due diligence on what works and what is affordable.

Mayor Briden wrote a letter to Reporter newspaper regarding accomplishments.

Paul Lemont, City Manager, closed the meeting commenting that the city is heading in the right direction; financial reports; good

relationship with the City Council; ten years ago the city had a good mosaic of libraries, community center, etc. and he wants to replicate that; the Budget Commission left a shortage in some areas and we need to get that back; asked legislators for support. He also talked about the development on the waterfront over the next five years which will change the city.

Other reports from Jean Boyle, Planning; Steve Couto, DPW; and Eileen Socha, Library Services.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant

Elizabeth Clupny, Clerk of the Committee