

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence School Committee

East Providence City Hall - Council Chamber

145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

February 11, 2014

Open Session

Mr. Monteiro, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM.

Members present: Elizabeth Clupny, Timothy Conley, Anthony Ferreira and Joel Monteiro. (Richard Pimentel, absent). Also present, Kim Mercer, Superintendent of Schools, and Robert Silva Esq.

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); Review of Bids for Legal Services; 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. Ferreira. Vote 4-0.

Motion by Ms. Clupny to return to Public Session and to seal the minutes of the executive session, seconded by Mr. Conley. Vote 4-0.

Report Executive Session Votes – Ms. Clupny reported that the East

Providence School District Safety Plan had been approved in executive session. Vote 4-0.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and Moment of Silence were observed.

Student/Staff Recognition – Julie Motta, Assistant Superintendent, presided:

Aspen Aerogels – Mrs. Leddy, Principal of M. J. Francis School, announced a community partnership with Aspen Aerogels and thanked them for their donation of \$730 to Francis School; Ms. Margie Mosler, Human Resources Director, affirmed that Aspen is looking forward to a future community relationship; she also announced a temporary employment recruiting situation.

Robotics Teams – Principals of Martin and Riverside Middle Schools attended – Rebekah Gendron, Director of Instructional Technology, explained the background of the recent competition; students were congratulated and presented with certificates.

Student Liaison Report – Joshua Conception unable to be in attendance.

Public Comment I – Agenda Items

Representative Greg Amore, 73 Plymouth Rd, parent and legislator,

spoke in favor of Resolution H-7095 in support of a joint task force for Common Core and PARCC (consisting of curriculum experts, RIDE, and business people) to determine if student-appropriate and a true assessment of readiness; two states have backed out (NY and Kentucky); this action is to push pause button; know what we are doing first. There are student privacy issues and questions if cities like East Providence can afford to implement the test and support curriculum with tools; some school districts will not be able to afford this; on February 26th this will be put before the House Education Committee. Rep. Amore requested that East Providence School Committee support this resolution.

Judy Lopes, Kensington Road, asked that the School Committee support the Amore Bill.

Superintendent's Report

Update on Pool – Kim Mercer advised that at the last meeting, the School Committee received a proposal from Odeh Engineering, expressed concern that a \$45,000 engineering study was too costly, and suggested talking to Marshall Muir of Envious Swimming who had expressed interest in opening the pool. Kim Mercer stated that she went over the report with Mr. Muir and at this time recommended the report be put on hold, because of all the other issues going on in our district at this time and other more important priorities. Mr. Ferreira stated that we should try to recoup some of the money spent

on the pool cover and humidifier if the pool deal will be on long-term hold. Mr. Conley asked about plans going forward. Superintendent Mercer stated that securing and locking the pool has already been done. Ms. Clupny felt that if we do have a date then we should make a decision to close or repair it since this has been hanging over our heads for a long time, but she was concerned about selling off equipment without knowing if we will open the pool again. Superintendent Mercer recommended that any decisions on equipment be put off and that the project be placed on hold for six months until other district priority work is completed. Mr. Monteiro agreed that a time frame is needed to look into the equipment aspect.

Facilities Update and Tools for Schools – Mr. Catelli, Facilities Director, advised that the kits were delivered to principals today and that the Department of Health will be coming in for a meeting on Thursday morning. He thanked Mr. Coutu and Mr. Walker of the Highway Department for their support.

Mr. Catelli stated that a considerable amount of work on the punch list had been completed; SMMA, Iron and Farrar are to set dates for the completion of the punch list; a meeting will be held on Wednesday morning; work will be done during school vacation; at the high school administration corridor door frames to be painted; banners will be installed in the gym along with two large screen televisions at both ends of gym donated by John Carnevale and staff.

Also, mats will be added to work out area in small gym. In February, filter changes are due and Tony from HVAC will instruct all the custodians about how to do that work during school vacation week.

Mr. Ferreira asked about the science lab; there has been no movement since the walk-thru; tomorrow we will be meeting with Farrar, SMMA, and others regarding the delay in construction and hope to be able to move this forward. Mr. Ferreira added that the School Committee had discussed holding two meetings per month during the construction phase so we would not have to wait 30 days for updated information. Mr. Ferreira requested an update as to where we are because he has been told six weeks, cabinets not coming; his opinion is that not one student will be able to use that room this year; for \$180,000 we need to manage, build, and get kids in the science lab; they have already been denied a year; his opinion due to project mismanagement, it's like putting puzzle pieces together. Mr. Ferreira requested information from the Superintendent as to where the project stands; what has been accomplished; it is important to get these answers; we cannot manage \$180,000. Mr. Ferreira requested that SMMA and the Project Manager attend the meeting next week.

Wireless Grant – Kelly Ahrens, Chief Information Officer, announced that a \$494,887 grant had been awarded to East Providence for wireless and internet activity for all classrooms and that every school in the district will have access; amounts awarded to each school:

Martin Middle School \$81,198.99; High School \$151,517; Kent Heights \$16,525; Waddington \$49,865; Hennessey \$15,794; Whiteknact \$19,597; Oldham \$14,114; Riverside Middle \$69,855; Silver Spring \$16,080; Orlo \$16,781; Francis \$19,014; CTC \$24,540. The grant will be facilitated by Kelly Ahrens who explained the process and requested School Committee approval. (Kelly noted that if a school is closed, RIDE will negotiate on that equipment)

As soon as the School Committee signs off on the grant; installation will take place over the summer. Kelly would like to suggest some other improvements for students; East Providence is not responsible for costs; there may be a small amount of money to facilitate this grant. 300 laptops bought; 80 new I-Pads will be out in the district; this is a great opportunity for our schools. Motion by Ms. Clupny to approve, seconded by Mr. Ferreira to accept the grant. Vote 4-0.

**Personnel Report on Resignation/Leaves of Absence/Retirement:
Read by Clerk, Elizabeth Clupny.**

RETIREMENT

Linda Capone-Math Teacher-EPHS-Effective End of 2013/2014 School Year

RESIGNATION

Teresa Medeiros-Science Teacher-EPHS-Effective 01/28/2014

Alex Kanelos-Dean of Students-EPHS-Effective End of 2013/2014 School Year

Jennifer Marcello-Occupational Therapist-Effective End of 2013/2014 School Year

Gretchen Lopez -Reading Teacher-RMS-Effective 01/15/2014

Brian Petsch-JV Softball Coach-EPHS-Effective 01/23/2014

Richard Small-Boy's Track Coach – RMS-Effective 01/21/2014

Michael Almeida-Boy's Track Coach – MMS-Effective 01/15/2014

Simani Villella-Supervisory Assistant-Hennessey-Effective 02/14/2014

Julie Rose-Building Based Teacher Assistant- EPHS-Effective 04/01/2014

Charlene Chapman-Building Based Teacher Assistant-EPHS-Effective 4/01/2014

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Ann Ackerman (yr 2)-Grade 5 Teacher-Waddington-Effective 2014/2015 School Year

Candace Andrade (yr 2)-Effective 2014/2015 School Year

Margaret Carroll (yr 2) School Nurse-Effective 2014/2015 School Year

Emilie Joost (yr 2) School Nurse-Effective 2014/2015 School Year

Susan Libutti (yr 2)-Special Education Teacher Effective 2014/2015 School Year

Robert Perry (yr 2) Latin Teacher - Effective 2014/2015 School Year

Ellen Reinhardt (yr 2) School Psychologist-Effective 2014/2015 School Year

Christopher Zanghi (yr 2) Librarian-Effective 2014/2015 School Year

Cindy Gregoire (yr 2)-Elementary Teacher-Effective 2014/2015 School

Year

Sandra Forand, Principal-Effective 2014/2015 School Year

FMLA

Amanda Rapoza-Art Teacher-MMS-Effective 04/28/2014-13 weeks

Heather Coughlin-English Teacher-EPHS-Effective 05/27/2014-13 weeks

Motion by Ms. Clupny to approve the recommendations, seconded by Mr. Conley. Vote 4-0.

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes – Motion by Ms. Clupny to approve the minutes for meetings held on July 12, 2013, December 3, 2013, December 10, 2013, and January 14, 2014, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 4-0.

Finance Report – Superintendent Mercer requested that the School Committee pass on the report until the next meeting; will send out a new report. Motion by Ms. Clupny to approve, seconded by Mr. Conley. Vote 4-0.

Action Items

School Safety Report – Previously reported.

Local 2969 – Change in Probationary Term – Superintendent Mercer

requested approval of the change from 120 days to 30 days; most of the hires have been from the 180-day employees who have already been working for us; step 0-recommended eliminating for 30 days – go to first step. Mr. Ferreira asked who bumped up two positions? The Superintendent responded Human Resources and the Facilities Director. Mr. Monteiro had concerns; discussion about management, communication, etc. If 30 days for someone who has not done the job, are we giving supervisors ample time? Superintendent Mercer explained that we hire from within; if on a probationary period, cannot give over time. Ms. Clupny asked if hired from outside, would it be only 30 days? Superintendent can rewrite; if internal 120 or part-time. Mr. Monteiro requested that we separate the item for internal move. Mr. Ferreira felt it was wrong to have someone new come in and get only 30 days probation; need to rewrite some of this. Ms. Clupny made a motion to put any vote off to the next meeting, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 4-0.

Food Service RFP – Superintendent Mercer explained that the food service contract ends this year and recommended that East Providence go out on its own rather than through the Collaborative as in the past. Mr. Conley supported the due diligence of the Superintendent. Motion by Ms. Clupny to support the Superintendent's recommendation to request proposals (RFP) for food service, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 4-0.

Personnel Appointments/Layoffs

SUPERINTENDENT'S PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATIONS:

APPOINTMENTS

Allison Hurst-1:1 Teacher Assistant-Waddington-Effective 02/24/2014

Sonia Aguiar-1:1 Teacher Assistant-Whiteknact-Effective 02/24/2014

Miguel Lopes – Custodian-TBD-Effective 2/12/14

Jose Aguiar-Custodian-TBD-Effective 2/12/14

Motion to approve by Ms. Clupny, seconded by Mr. Conley. Vote 4-0.

Motion made by Ms. Clupny to support 42 layoffs at the end of the 2013-2014 school year, as recommended by the Superintendent due to reduced enrollment, funding, and performance issues. Mr. Ferreira asked if all will be called back; Superintendent Mercer responded that most will be returning. Under discussion, Mr. Conley asked for an estimate of the number of employees who may not be coming back. Mr. Conley then seconded the motion. Vote 4-0.

Home School Request(s) – Motion to approve by Ms. Clupny, seconded by Mr. Conley. Vote 4-0.

Requisitions – Bill List

Warrant #

1357 1/15/14 \$ 1,609.02

1359 1/29/13 \$ 706,751.85

1360 2/10/14 \$ 193,039.82

1361 2/10/14 \$ 1,637,547.38

Motion to approve by Ms. Clupny, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 4-0.

School Committee Meeting Dates – Change from second Tuesday of the month to Monday, September 8th and Monday, November 10, 2014 (Election Day and November 11th holiday fall on second Tuesday of

the month). Motion to approve change of meeting dates by Ms. Clupny, seconded by Mr. Conley. Vote 4-0.

House Bill 2014-H 7095 (Amore) – Standardized Testing – Mr. Monteiro read the resolution; he noted that the financial burden of the entire package has been put on East Providence; motion by Ms. Clupny to support, seconded by Mr. Conley. Vote 4-0.

Investigate Reduction of Split Teams at Middle School Level – Superintendent Mercer expressed concern about split teams at middle schools (100-125 students all at the same grade level); a few years ago, students were moved to Riverside which split teams at Martin and she would like to reach out to parents to see how they feel about moving students back. Budget Commission reduced the number of teams, leveled off student numbers at the two middle schools, but it split teams which strongly impacted teachers and students. Superintendent Mercer would like to explore leveling off teams and redistricting populations back to the past whether you want to go to a particular school or not. Assistant Superintendent,

Julie Motta, explained make-up of teams: four core area content teachers plus ESL or Special Education; 5-6 teachers working exclusively with one group of students; now some do and some do not. Kim Mercer stated that it limits special subjects that students can go to; this would address a lot of problems. Julie Motta stated this would not reduce staff. Motion to approve by Ms. Clupny, seconded by Mr. Conley. Vote 4-0.

New Policy - Travel and Business Expense Reimbursement Policy – First Passage - Superintendent Mercer explained this would outline what can be spent on items, the documentation required and the receipts needed to verify. Motion by Ms. Clupny, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 4-0.

New Policy on Children Left at School – Superintendent Mercer read the policy for first passage; she explained that many times this is simply a miscommunication issue, but we need to have a policy and procedure in place. Motion by Ms. Clupny for first passage with noted corrections, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 4-0. Under discussion, it was noted that a guardian at home or at a bus stop is only applicable to Preschool, Kindergarten and First Grade students.

Amended Policies – Second Passage – Superintendent Mercer requested approval. Ms. Clupny read list of policies:

II.A.2. Superintendent’s Annual Report

- II.A.4. Social Events Calendar**
- II.D.1. Naming New Facilities**
- II.D.2. Guidelines for the Use of Elementary Schools**
- II.D.3. Inspection Tours**
- II.D.6. Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Tools for Schools**
- II.D.7. Energy Star Policy**
- II.F.1. Fire Safety Drills**
- II.F.2. Emergency Communication to the School Committee**
- II.H.1. Integrated Pest Management Policy**
- II.I.1. Advertising on School Property**
- II.F.4. Crisis Response**
- V.A.11. Transportation Policy**
- IV.B.III.a Admission to Kindergarten**

Discussion: Mr. Ferreira questioned the advertising on school property; Mr. Monteiro noted an opportunity to advertise these on a case by case basis might limit other opportunities; Motion by Ms. Clupny for second passage, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 4-0.

PTA Reports

Judy Lopes and Melissa Smith of Whiteknact School PTA thanked the Superintendent and staff who came out last week to Whiteknact to review/discuss building concerns and issues; they also thanked the Principal and staff members who persevere even with all the problems they have had; still have concern about air quality, windows open. Superintendent Mercer and Facilities Director, Mr. Catelli, will

be using Tools for Schools; Mr. Carroll of the HVAC Department, bought CO2 units (\$1000) and tested this morning-one room over 700; PM-650-700 with windows shut; levels normal, including Room 10.

Ms. Lopes requested that results be posted on line for all schools. Mr. Monteiro stated that in accordance with Tools for Schools, reports will be available at the school or the Superintendent's Office. Ms. Lopes still had questions and concerns about the copy machine and installation of a SmartBoard. Ms. Mercer suggested that she set up a meeting with her office to discuss these issues further.

Izilda Teves of Orlo Avenue School announced a fundraiser on February 27th from 5-9PM at Orange Leaf in Seekonk.

Public Comment II – Non Agenda Items

Fred Rybka, 9 Cousins, asked when the roof started leaking at Whiteknact? Superintendent Mercer stated that she is working on an RFP and the project will be completed this summer; balance of the bond money will be utilized. Mr. Ferreira added that the roof was part of the bond; the roof will not be leaking when kids come back in September.

Chrissy Rossi, City Council liaison asked about the length of the average leave of absence; one administrator has been allowed leave

for the fourth year. Superintendent Mercer noted that this particular leave was through an agreement with RI Department of Education; if that individual comes back to East Providence, she will displace someone else.

Ms. Rossi thanked School Committee for voting on Amore Bill; she was not in agreement with split teams as presented by the Budget Commission and B &E Report; intervention for special education students suffered the most from it.

Ms. Rossi asked about enrichment classes. Julie Motta, Assistant Superintendent, explained that the schedule does not have room to accommodate enrichment classes; we need to have intervention like an elective.

Ms. Rossi noted that in one class which was advertised as a computer class, students were reading a book book? Ms. Motta stated that she would look into it; teachers have curriculum and principals should monitor that; also, curriculum teams revise the work. Discussion took place.

Mr. Prew, Principal of Riverside Middle School, explained that when teams were split we handcuffed them with intervention; they had to get creative with teachers and the schedule; he explained it might be a means to an end; creating curriculum as we go, etc.

Jessica Beauchaine stated that the schedule did not fit her 7th grade student; we should offer kids what they want to do; 6th grade students can get chorus/band, but there was none for him. She introduced her own child to art at RISD; the National PTA has a program called STEAM which we should look at; we should make art a choice versus band; she asked for a way to add art to band and chorus to make it possible for kids to have choices when entering Middle School. Also, do we need to meet with the City Council to get the \$10 million?

Superintendent Mercer stated that the Stage II construction application has been filed with RI Department of Education; representatives of the City Council will get together for those needs.

In response to a question from Ms. Beauchaine, the Superintendent responded that Middle School sports had been funded for next year.

Announcements

February 26, 2014 Information Night for parents of students taking the PARCC field test - Martin Middle School @ 6:00; February 27 Parent Math Night – Grade 2 – Kent Heights.

Mr. Ferreira stated that the high school chemistry lab and the Whiteknact roof will not be sidetracked; he has the plans already; by end of Friday he wants an RFP; the roof was supposed to be done;

this is time sensitive; within a week he wants a report on it with a schedule; the roof will get done well before school opens in September.

Motion by Ms. Clupny to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant

Elizabeth Clupny, Clerk of the Committee