

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence School Committee

East Providence City Hall - Council Chamber

145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

March 24, 2015

Open Session

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

Members present: Jessica Beauchaine, Nathan Cahoon, Anthony Ferreira, Joel Monteiro, Charles Tsonos. Also Present: Kim Mercer, Superintendent of Schools, Robert M. Silva, Esq., Andrew Thomas, Esq. Members 6:30 PM

Motion by Mr. Cahoon 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. Ferreira. Vote 5-0.

Return to Public Session – Motion by Mr. Cahoon to return to public session and to seal the minutes of the Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 5-0.

Report Executive Session Votes – Mr. Cahoon reported that one vote was taken in Executive regarding pending litigation; Vote unanimous 5-0 to approve.

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

Student Recognition - Martin Middle School State Championship Wrestling Team members were congratulated and presented with certificates.

Public Comment I – Agenda Items

Mr. Monteiro requested a special education item on the agenda, which was not included; also, PTO report not listed on agenda. Motion by Mr. Monteiro to add PTO report to the agenda, seconded by Mr. Cahoon. Vote 5-0.

Mrs. Jessop, a parent, read a letter regarding the fact that special education grading developed in Middle School not being in line with elementary grading; she requested that the School Committee review that. Ms. Beauchaine requested a copy of the letter.

Kathy from the East Providence High School Parent Group provided details of the annual Flamingo fundraiser; details on the school website.

Kim Sorrentino announced a Pasta Dinner which is being held at Waddington on April 17th.

Mrs. Rossi, Whiteknact PTA, noted a series of holes in the gym floor and asked to have temporarily patched now and then step up the priority for building renovation; she stated that the Principal requested this in the budget every year and never received it.

Mr. Monteiro requested that it be put in the budget again this year.

Superintendent's Report

Grade by Grade Curriculum Presentation – Requested by Mr. Cahoon – Dawn August, Curriculum Director presented a PowerPoint to demonstrate how to locate the curriculum information which is listed under teacher use tab and then listed by different curriculum, grade by grade i.e. science.

Discussion took place.

Facilities Report

Kim Mercer, Superintendent, requested that Mr. Feola report on the work we are doing to address the Fire Marshall's requests. Mr. Feola stated that information was presented to the Facilities Sub-Committee regarding the annual fire department report which was reviewed before the Fire Review Board; we have been working on correcting minor violations first. Superintendent and team reviewed fire department reports; we have been granted some waivers, but now have to find solutions for major items. Next meeting with Fire Board at the beginning of May; weekly meetings are being held with the Superintendent and staff to look for solutions. The Fire Marshall did a

revised inspection today and we are meeting tomorrow morning to discuss and plan the layout of the work to present to the Facilities Sub-Committee which will meet next on April 7th.

Personnel Report on Resignation/Leaves of Absence/Retirements:

RESIGNATION

Jason Clancy-Assistant Freshman Football Coach-EPHS-Effective 03/09/2015

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Angelo Pizzi (1 yr.) Girls Soccer Coach-EPHS-Effective 2014/2015 school year

Nicholas Shattuck-Girls Assistant Soccer Coach-EPHS-Effective 2014/2015 school year

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes for the School Committee Meeting held on February 10, 2015 and the Facilities Sub-Committee Meeting held on February 5, 2015. Motion to approve by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 5-0.

Action Items

Approval of the School Calendar for 2015-2016 School Year - Kim Mercer recommended starting school before Labor Day for the 2015-16 school year with the Convocation on August 31st and students starting on September 1, 2015; last day scheduled for June 14, 2015. Ms. Beauchaine noted that professional development days

were not accounted for in the calendar. Superintendent Mercer explained that this school year we have six make-up days and school will end late in June; she had a committee review how we could have professional development after hours and it was decided this year to generate a menu of professional development opportunities after school and on Saturday where teachers would have choices on items beneficial to them. In response to Mr. Cahoon's question regarding teacher approval, the Superintendent responded that the School Committee would be receiving a signed Memorandum of Agreement with the union regarding the start of school before Labor Day for this year only. Ms. Beauchaine noted that the calendar does include school vacations in February and April.

Motion to approve by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

School Calendar Make-Up Day Schedule – Kim Mercer explained that because we had six snow days which cancelled school, that will result in the last day of school at June 30th; Superintendent sent a request to the Commissioner of Education that we make up these days by adding one half hour to the school day (15 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the afternoon); instructional time would be added to make up four days; if approved, the last day will be June 24th; the time addition will begin April 16t, 2015; both the teachers' union and secretaries' union voted to approve the additional time to the school day.

Ms. Beauchaine was in agreement with the plan; some schools get

out late already; wanted to be sue there were no issues with athletics, busses, etc. Motion by Mr. Cahoon to approve the make-up day schedule, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Secondary Science Curriculum Pilot Program – STEM Scopes – Dawn August, Curriculum Director,

requested that Mr. Joel Swan, Department Chair at the High School, provide information on the program; highlights:

- **Currently using grade span expectations, which is a set of content standards which students are expected to learn each year; as we move to NGSS, it is more a change of philosophy on how we teach science. Old standards have held us back; new NGSS allows us to change how we teach science; adopted whole curriculum with that philosophy; new generation standards has content piece and application of science. Practices will be defined by NGSS; STEM scopes adopted whole curriculum with that new philosophy;**
- **High School fully embraced this program and the Middle school is on the same page; put together for teachers; imbedded in curriculum**
- **August Dawn – asking publisher for access to on-line materials for free to try out some of the units and come back to see if any decisions about using on a grander scale**
- **Mr. Swan – both Middle Schools on board and High School Principal and Department Chairs - will not be complete transition for them; opportunity for them to use this new program until the end of the year to see if it meets needs of students and teachers**

Discussion about changes in curriculum;

Mr. Swan curriculum addresses all Common Core imbedded in what we do; no reservation with his staff; now current GSE holds us back; High School embraced it wholeheartedly and it is more in line with what they want to do with their students; can see if we can implement at elementary level with a consistent program from K-12 which we never had before; everything they need in one place; long term way to think about it; students will come to middle school with a set of skills.

Discussion about getting an anonymous survey if possible at end from the educators who participated and if it goes well, to implement long term.

Ms. Beauchaine asked if students will notice the difference. Mr. Swan stated that they will notice the opportunity to explore at a deeper level; there will be more time in certain areas which will be used to bring in math and engineering piece; scope and sequence more appropriate on what we are trying to move forward on.

Talked about difference in assessments; students will be asked to do things as part of their assessment; different than now

Ms. Beauchaine hoped that the STEM and enrichment classes would be participating; she is all for this amazing program; hopes STEM would be used in a STEM class.

Mr. Ferreira –in favor if this will provide a boost for students and teachers; keep in the loop on funding for materials.

Mr. Tsonos agreed that it sounded like an excellent opportunity Mr. Cahoon would be interested in seeing how this would fit in the Advanced Placement (AP) and Pre-AP curriculum; and if the students are better prepared for advanced curriculum.

Mr. Monteiro would approve the pilot with the addition of the anonymous survey from participating instructors; Ms. Beauchaine added getting two programs at the Middle School involved, seconded by Mr. Cahoon. Vote 5-0

Elementary ELA Pilot Program – In a federal grant, Kent Heights, Hennessey and Waddington participated; post survey from teachers; Dawn August was at a data meeting and asked teachers to speak;

Teachers - Leslie Andrade, Judy Clifton, Andrea Sprout, and Jen Clarkin provided information on positives and negatives of the program and provided handouts. Overall, teachers felt this program would fill current gaps in programming and Waddington would like the opportunity to pilot.

Dawn August requested that teachers be given the opportunity to try out module this year; texts are not part of pilot; ways we can try it out because of technology; teacher materials downloadable; books likely in school libraries; can survey at end to hear comments; teachers can scan materials and use on a SmartBoard; books for kids to read from would be needed.

Mr. Ferreira would be in favor of this; if successful program, we should come up with the money to support it.

Dawn August – in June when survey results come in, we can have present a budget for this program

Discussion about sampling going across district because of different technology resources; if technology is an enhancement, we need to find out where it is lacking;

Dawn August – would get up to 25; told teachers we would not support program if we could not support with technology and resources.

Ms. Beauchaine agreed that technology has been an issue in the district; number of SmartBoards better now than in the past; she supports getting the books; if we do not have what they are asking for we will not be sure pilot will be successful. Discussion about mix of participants.

Motion by Ms. Beauchaine to approve the pilot and any materials to help it along, seconded by Mr. Monteiro through the end of the year with an anonymous survey. Vote 5-0.

Personnel Appointments – Superintendent Mercer announced and recommended:

**William Reynolds-Facilities Director-East Providence School
Department-Effective April 20, 2015**

Discussion:

Mr. Monteiro stated that he made calls to check on process; he was assured that it was followed; good

pool of candidates and comfortable with where we are.

Mr. Ferreira will follow the recommendation of the Superintendent but in his opinion the interview team

was stacked with city employees and only one with construction background; he pushed to get names and

qualifications of individuals on interview committee; he wanted to feel comfortable that someone had

construction background; issue with how we left out of the loop in filling such an important position. Ms.

Beauchaine agreed that School Committee did not have a say, but that she does take seriously the

recommendation of the Superintendent and respected her decision.

Motion by Mr. Cahoon to approve the appointment of Mr. Reynolds, on recommendation of the

Superintendent, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 4-1; Mr. Ferreira voted nay but not against person.

Mr. Cahoon noted the effective date of April 20, 2015.

Cassidy DesRoches-Flag Corp Coach-EPHS-Effective 2015/2016

School year – Motion by Mr. Cahoon to approve, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine. All aye. (Correction noted on year from 2014/15 to 2015/16).

Discussion on the salary for Facilities Director – Superintendent advised that she was given a range for salary and exact amount will be determined when the contract is put together and signed. Mr. Monteiro agreed with that.

Requisitions – Bill List – Linda Dykeman, Deputy Finance Director, read the warrants:

Warrant #

1480 3/4/15 \$101,883.33

1485 3/18/15 \$112,500.00

1486 3/18/15 \$ 54,788.83

1487 3/18/15 \$140,154.13

Motion to approve by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 5-0.

Construction Payment Request – Linda Dykeman reviewed the requests:

SBS – \$14,000 - Orlo Fire Alarm and district door project; asking for payment of two invoices for management of these two projects.

Discussion: questions about paying for work not done;

Linda Dykeman responded that this is the contract School Committee previously approved to manage two projects.

In response to questions, Mr. Feola explained that the hollow metal doors for three schools were in; store front doors for Orlo and Riverside Middle School are scheduled for April 20th installation on school vacation.

Mr. Ferreira – if all doors are on the property, he would be comfortable with the motion; he did not want to overload the project manager with work; would like the number of hours for Mr. Roberts; he only wants him to do what he is contracted for; we are behind on this project; how many hours for meetings with the Fire Department; any other work he billed us for other than original project?

Linda Dykeman – there has not been anything presented to School Committee yet; she can put in a request on what the project manager is working on; vote no on paying until she gets the information.

Mr. Cahoon –January itemized hours worked; description of services, but does not give hours; he is 100% with Mr. Ferreira

Mr. Ferreira– wants to track; keep as Project Manager and other meetings; has problem with outside person making more money than our employee;

Linda Dykeman – asked for itemization of hours

Discussion about bills

Mr. Monteiro– expectation of meeting attendance

Mr. Ferreira– agreed to hard copies in our packets each week.

Linda Dykeman - #6 requisitions - SBS - OK

E.W. Burman – \$44,799.15

Information requested on when work will be started; work should be after 3PM when kids are gone; Project Manager should be managing that.

Motion by Mr. Cahoon to approve Orlo Fire Alarm Upgrade, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 5-0.

SMMA – Orlo Fire Alarm Upgrade – Invoice #42209-42287-42441-\$7,804.30 Total

Mr. Ferreira asked if money held on fire alarm project;

Mr. Cahoon withhold until they tell us the cost; Motion by Mr. Cahoon to defer payment on three invoices pending resolution of final estimate, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 5-0.

SMMA – Whiteknact Roof – Invoice #42407 - \$217.33 – Motion by Ms. Beauchaine to defer until we know it is done; seconded by Mr. Cahoon. Vote 5-0.

SMMA – Egress Door Repair – Invoice #42408- \$1,212.86

Motion by Mr.Cahoon to pay, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

SMMA – Accessibility Upgrades – Invoice #42409 - \$4,238.32. Mr. Cahoon not sure what they are billing for; Motion by Mr. Cahoon to defer until we know what it applies to, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine. Vote 5-0.

**Farrar and Associates – Life Safety Upgrades – Invoice #2659 - \$2,850
– Linda Dykeman advised there is still a small balance between \$10-12,000 for them to bill.**

Motion by Mr. Ferreira that no payments be made until roof issue resolved, seconded by Mr. Cahoon. Vote 5-0.

Ms. Beauchaine – Riverside Middle School should be first door to be done, if not, she needs to be told why not; the public told it was a priority and now it is not first on the schedule; 4/20 finish without an explanation.

Mr. Cahoon voted to authorize them to do that door first; no one here to ask and Burman not here.

Mr. Feola – metal doors came in, store front doors delayed; first one to be installed; meeting with Burman, School Department and AAA abatement so that all on track to start at Riverside; May date is completion date for the whole project. It is an aluminum door with panels exactly like what is there now; he, Mr. Barilla and Mr. Roberts looked at every door; held up these to make sure never happens again; will be presenting report to Superintendent next week; we always knew store front doors were coming in second; information was that metal doors would be delivered first and storefronts second.

Mr. Monteiro – it appears that no one finds out “why” to do better job the next time; School Committee wanted to understand what questions to ask; even the wheelchair lift at Waddington was still never explained.

Mr. Feola – store front doors take longer period of time

Mr. Monteiro – when we don't identify the problem, it repeats itself; discussion about that

Mr. Cahoon concurred with that; we brought in SBS in December; voted on doors in October; Project manager identified requirements, ordering etc. With Project manager requirement, he asked if they could provide us with a report card on how the contractor did; until we start working on our own procurement policies, need to get a handle on that.

Mr. Ferreira – missing an important point; in cafeteria, we signed away millions of tax dollars, have professionals to do doors at close to \$700,000; project manager billed us out;

Mr. Feola –we reviewed every piece of Phase II Project not to run into this again

Mr. Ferreira not happy that two of our employees are used when Project Manager bills us \$120 hour;

Mr. Feola – looked at second piece so we are not behind to make sure access point, hardware, etc. is all correct; will present to Superintendent in order to make sure going forward.

Mr. Ferreira – SMMA involved; how many people do we need to get from Point A to B; professional architect did drawings; if not right; professional architects, Project Manager and so many people involved and now our maintenance people. Mr. Monteiro – Project manager should be coming to us.

Mr. Ferreira– shop drawings by architect; Burman sent to their own;

variety of people have reviewed and this is coming out of taxpayer money; School Committee gets no answers.

Ms. Beauchaine – never told that Riverside was not the first door by people/companies; School Committee should have been told; we asked for it to be the first door; safety and security issue.

Mr. Ferreira – first store front door, not part of first batch, we were not informed properly.

Mr. Monteiro – correct on record LOA for Mr. Pizzi should be 2015-16. Contract Amendment for Owner's Project Management Services (SBS) to allow SBS to do additional work with Fire Safety Team; probably not in a position to take on more work; defer this and ask him to come in. Motion by Mr. Cahoon to defer, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 5-0.

Resolution to Support State Legislation to Allow Parents and Legal Guardians to Opt Out of Standardized Testing (Bill H5845) - Mr. Cahoon wrote a resolution in support of the bill; summary of the bill: "this act would allow parents and legal guardians to elect to have their child opt out of Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for Colleges and Careers or "PARCC" assessment, or similar assessments." Mr. Cahoon requested that the School Committee approve resolution to support Bill H5845. Mr. Monteiro supporting the bill while recognizing the need for assessments, but not this one. Mr. Cahoon wished to clarify that the bill states to allow to opt of PARCC and similar assessments.

Motion made by Mr. Monteiro to accept Mr. Cahoon's resolution, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine who agreed there needs to be an

assessment, but does not necessarily agree with PARCC; with this letter, we agree with supporting the bill. Mr. Cahoon noted that the bill allows parents to opt-out their students with no negative consequences.

Discussion about who decides what the assessment is; Mr. Cahoon, motion to support, no second. Mr. Tsonos asked to table and bring back in April. Ms. Beauchaine would like to talk to the originator of the bill. Mr. Cahoon – his intention was for School Committee members to have enough time to review and support and advise if more time needed.

Resolution to Support Enhanced State Aid for School Construction and Maintenance (Bill H5434) - Mr. Cahoon read language “this act would expand the powers of the Health and Educational Building Corporation in regard to the financing and granting of approval for school facility projects.” Would establish a fund to be available for school construction for all districts in RI. Mr. Cahoon requested support.

Mr. Ferreira supported this and hopes it goes through and stays positive; mentioned other state entities created and wasted money. Motion by Mr. Ferreira to approve, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Amended Policies – First Passage:

III.J.1 Staff Vacancies – Ms. Beauchaine read old policy and revisions; Mr. Cahoon asked why not on all positions; Superintendent advised that at the end of the year we could have 100 people moving into positions; Mr. Monteiro would like to know about building

administrators. Superintendent advised that may be in conflict with Superintendent's authority; she can inform School Committee. Motion to approve first passage by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Mr. Cahoon. Vote 5-0.

III.J.2 Consultants – Ms. Beauchaine read and pointed out the changes to the policy; there should not be any consultants hired without School Committee knowing about it; motion by Mr. Cahoon to approve first passage, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine. Vote 5-0.

III.J.3 Interview Process and Procedures for Selection of Principals and Above – Motion by Ms. Beauchaine to table, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

III.J.4 Comparability – Kim Mercer explained this is a component of Title I; cannot supplant funds; need to report and submit reports to RIDE; covered by assurance; we will be in compliance. Motion by Ms. Beauchaine for first passage, seconded by Mr. Cahoon. Vote 5-0.

III.J.6 Anti Nepotism Policy – Mr. Cahoon commented that he understood the basis of this policy not to award on basis of familial relationships, but do we need to exclude on the basis of familial relationships.

Ms. Beauchaine – when she discussed over two meetings with Principals and the Chair, quite a few involved in this; added “recruitment” at policy consultant/Mr. Sweeney's request; original policy adopted in 2008.

Discussion: Mr. Monteiro restated to administration and School Committee; as we sit we cannot recruit

Mr. Cahoon – we have ethics in place, why do we need additional

policy that people cannot apply for jobs.

Ms. Beauchaine– this is more about what has happened in the past

Mr. Monteiro – can waive policy through process; should be standard in schools and city

Mr. Cahoon – not sure if necessary; is there a rampant problem

Mr. Tsonos– problems in the past; need to look at this policy again

Mr. Cahoon asked if policy meetings open to public; any reason why not.

Ms. Beauchaine – this is a daunting task; she did go to Bristol-Warren meeting which was five hours long and she was only person there; first and second passage allows anyone to comment; she had a hard time with policy; public can let us know if it effects them; spent six hours of work on this

Mr. Tsonos added that the public does have opportunity to provide input

Mr. Monteiro requested that legal counsel provide input; discussion on policy at 11PM.

Ms. Beauchaine – that is the reason why two passages; this is our working time; public here to comment; this is our dinner table to talk about it.

Mr. Monteiro asked if possible to have the policies available; post them for people to review them

Kim Mercer – can ask about putting them on website after first passage.

III.J.7 Special Education Staffing Policy – Minor revisions; first

paragraph; Ms. Beauchaine read policy.

Motion by Ms. Beauchaine to approve, seconded by Mr. Cahoon pending minor corrections. Vote 5-0.

III.J.8 English Language (ELL) Instructional Program Staffing – Read by Ms. Beauchaine. Motion to approve first passage by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine. Vote 5-0.

Public Comment II – Non Agenda

Fred Rybka asked if Principals keep a list of computer problems with PARCC testing.

Kim Mercer – very few problems; taken care of right away; list goes out every day.

Mr. Monteiro stated that he asked for specific items to be on the agenda; special education update district-wide, Bradley contract and Middle School update; have one year contract with Bradley with automatic one year renewal and they need to be notified by end of April; his understanding is that special education wants to extend it a year, but School Committee needs to vote to approve reason for extension. Also technology approved at a meeting half tech/half finance brought to his attention that a student can test out of the tech requirement to free them up to take a class in the A/P program, which is a heavier weighted course; he wanted to have discussion about that. He hoped for district communication, but that has not been case; noted a couple cases when his requests went unanswered. He requested that legal advise the appropriate way for the Committee to communicate.

Mr. Tsonos noted that personal attacks would be out of order

Mr. Monteiro - when he asks questions or to have something in writing, there is a reason for it; this School Committee warrants in writing; March 12th neither one of his items were on the agenda.

Mr. Tsonos – record speaks for itself; if emailed about personnel or job performance; do not expect an answer from him.

Mr. Monteiro – was not personnel; about how a meeting was handled; suspect that he would not put something in writing; would be told by another committee member; shady and political

Mr. Tsonos ruled an out of order on the comment about “shady.”

Mr. Ferreira asked for someone to explain the process when we request items on the agenda and they are not on there.

Mr. Silva – reluctant to discuss in public comment section; he will be more than happy to address Mr. Monteiro’s concerns; first time he heard about this; should not be discussing something which is not on the agenda and in Public comment; not proper place.

Mr. Ferreira – will not tolerate items not being put on the agenda when it is their right; he tried 3-4 times to put something on agenda; School Committee voted for confidential reports every Friday, if not on agenda how can we discuss them.

Mr. Silva will review policies and guide protocol for all.

Announcements – EPLAC meeting 6:30PM tomorrow night at Martin Middle

Motion by Mr. Cahoon to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Ferreira. Vote 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant

Nathan Cahoon, Clerk of the Committee