

APPROVED - 2/27/2014

There was a special meeting of the Cumberland School Committee held on Wednesday, February 19, 2014 at the Cumberland High School Transitional Building Cafetorium, 2602 Mendon Road, Cumberland, Rhode Island.

Members Present: Lisa Beaulieu, Jeff Mutter, Linda Teel, Craig Duffy, Mark Fiorillo, Raymond Salvatore – Paul DiModica was absent.

Administration Present: Dr. Phil Thornton, Superintendent, Robert Mitchell, Assistant Superintendent, Atty. Stephen Adams

Agenda Item #1: Chairperson Convenes Meeting
Chairwoman Beaulieu convened the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

Agenda Item #2: Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Item #3: Approval of Agenda
Mrs. Beaulieu stated that agenda item #14 – A - #3 would be moved up to immediately after the personnel recommendations are complete. She is asking for this amended change to the agenda because the teacher involved in #3 would like this to be heard in open session. Mr. Fiorillo made a motion to amend the agenda to reflect item #14 – A - #3 to be moved to immediately after personnel recommendations, 2nd Mr. Salvatore and Mrs. Teel, approved 6-0.
Mr. Fiorillo made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, 2nd Mr. Salvatore, approved 6-0.

Agenda Item #4: Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Minutes – 1) Regular meeting 1/23/14 and 2) School Committee/ Town Council Workshop 2/4/14 – Mrs. Beaulieu noted that the minutes from 2/4/14 were not in tonight's packet and would be on the agenda next SC meeting for approval.
- B. Approval of Minutes – 1) Executive Session 1/23/14
- C. Enrollment Report 2/1/14
- D. School Police Report 1/1/14
- E. Residency/Truancy Report 2/1/14

Mr. Mutter made a motion to approve the agenda, with the removal of A-2, School Committee/Town Council Workshop 2/4/14 because this was not in tonight's packet, 2nd Mrs. Teel, approved 6-0.

Agenda Item #5: Report Out of Executive Session Meeting

- A. Report of Executive Session Meeting on 2/13/14 and 1) Vote to Seal Minutes of Executive Session – Mrs. Beaulieu noted that this meeting had been cancelled due to a snowstorm.

Agenda Item #6: Superintendent's Report

A. John J. McLaughlin Cumberland Hill Elementary School Song
Dr. Thornton shared a presentation – that he had recently seen – of the JJM Cumberland Hill Elementary School Song – it was a great song that the children performed to the music of

“Call Me Maybe” by Carly Rae Jepsen – it was great – they did a wonderful job – congratulations to everyone involved!!!!

Agenda Item #7: Chairperson’s Report
Mrs. Beaulieu had no report tonight.

Agenda Item #8: Reports of Standing Committees

- A. Payment of Bills – Mr. Mutter stated that FM met earlier and that payment of invoices passed with a 2-0 vote so he made a motion to pay invoices totaling \$1,627,107.29, 2nd Mr. Fiorillo, approved 6-0.
- B. Fiscal Management Sub-Committee Update – Mr. Mutter noted that the committee discussed the superintendent’s contract, the 2015 timeline, SC-R-2014-02, SC-PR-2-2014-03 and the CHS activity report.
- C. Policy & Procedures Sub-Committee Update – Mrs. Teel stated that the next meeting would be Tuesday, February 25, 2014.
- D. Achievement & Communications Sub-Committee Update – Mrs. Beaulieu noted that the committee met with some elementary teachers and they discussed the progress of Engage NY curriculum in the schools – lots of feedback on the progress of the students. Also discussed was the technology plan timeline. They will be looking at and discussing chromebooks next meeting.

Agenda Item #9: Comments from the Public
No comments at this time.

Agenda Item #10: Old Business

- A. Update on Energy Management System – Mr. Mutter stated that this item would be in FM next week – which will be prior to the next regular SC meeting and with that he made a motion to table this item until next weeks SC meeting, 2nd Mr. Fiorillo, approved 6-0.

Agenda Item #11: New Business

- A. Early Childhood Presentation – Mrs. Gibney from Ashton School and Mrs. Michelle Palermo from R.I.D.E. were on hand to give a brief presentation. Michelle started off by reviewing some research facts such as by age 3, children of professional parents have heard approximately 11 million words in the past year compared to 3 million words for children whose parents receive welfare, middle income children scored higher on cognitive tests than their low income peers, but lower than their high income peers. She went on to say that according to the 2000 census, only 52% of 3 and 4 year olds in Rhode Island were enrolled in some sort of early childhood program – it seemed like most of the children in Barrington, South Kingstown, East Greenwich were given that opportunity, but a lot less children living in North Providence, Central Falls and Pawtucket were given that opportunity. It showed that the access to early childhood education is definitely uneven across this state. Michelle said that the high quality early childhood state systems and local programs will be the foundation for early education, with certain standards for the programs, highly qualified teachers and funding available so all children could attend the programs. There is new R.I. Early Learning and Development Standards for birth – 5, used to be 4-year-old standards, they are also being aligned with common core standards and the professionals as well as the parents are being trained. Kathy noted that Cumberland was the first to be trained with the old standards and is

- currently already on board for the new standards – in fact families will be invited in during the spring to learn about activities that will assist their children in early learning. Michelle reviewed some standards and programs that will set the goals high for everyone involved in early childhood education – one program is called Bright Stars and the requirements will go beyond the minimum requirements and Cumberland has already started their application and they are hoping to receive another grant as well. Kathy noted that Cumberland teachers are truly dedicated and are highly qualified – our teachers utilize all professional development that is offered to them – from RIDE and through our district at monthly curriculum meetings. Michelle ended the presentation by reviewing the funding that would be available and also reiterated the fact that children that participate in pre-kindergarten programs definitely are impacted positively by their effects.
- B. NECAP Assessment Results – Fall 2013 – Mr. Mitchell started off by saying that all students in grades 3, 8 and 11 took the assessments back in October 2013 based on the prior years learning. The results were back in January, he also noted that this would be the last year for NECAP’s, next year it will be the PARCC testing. NECAP testing for Science will continue until 2016. Field-testing for PARCC will begin in March – 7 of our 8 schools will be participating – not all students – certain classes have been selected. Mr. Mitchell reviewed the reading and math scores for each grade and Cumberland scored higher than the state in every grade level. Some highlights were Cumberland Hill getting a 22-point increase in writing, Community had 11-point increase in writing and CHS had a 30-point increase in writing. Mr. Mitchell also compared 2012 vs. 2013 numbers. He also reviewed some comparisons to the 55 districts in our state and noted that Cumberland has had significant growth in reading and math. In fact on the RIDE Homepage Commissioner Gist writes the following: “Districts making significant progress in both Mathematics and Reading over the past five years are Chariho Regional, Cumberland, Exeter-West Greenwich Regional, North Kingstown, North Providence, Providence and The Learning Community (Charter).” Mrs. Beaulieu would like to see a gap analysis in the district – she would like to make sure that the schools are doing everything that they can do – she would like details in particular grades and schools. She also requested a copy of Mr. Mitchell’s presentation so the SC members could review the numbers in detail.
 - C. One-to-One Computing Update – Mr. Fiorillo made a motion to table this item, 2nd Mr. Mutter, approved 6-0.
 - D. Discussion of FY2015 Budget Timeline – Dr. Thornton stated that this was for the SC members information and Mrs. Beaulieu asked if it could be put on the website – Mike Chandler would be doing that.
 - E. Discussion and/or Vote to Approve Superintendent’s Contract – Mr. Mutter said they discussed this and approved with a 2-0 vote earlier in FM – 3-year contract, \$6,000 raise first year, other two years to be determined. Mr. Mutter made a motion to approve the superintendent’s contract, 2nd Mr. Fiorillo, approved 6-0.
 - F. Discussion and/or Vote to Approve Resolution SC-R-2014-02: Budget Transfer for Engage NY Educational Materials – Mr. Mutter noted that this was passed in FM with a 2-0 vote. Mr. Mutter made a motion to approve SC-R-2014-02, 2nd Mr. Salvatore and Mr. Fiorillo, approved 6-0.
 - G. Discussion and/or Vote to Approve Resolution SC-PR-2-2014-03: Engage NY Educational Materials – Mr. Mutter noted that this was passed in FM with a 2-0 vote. Mr. Mutter made a motion to approve SC-PR-2-2014-03, 2nd Mr. Fiorillo, approved 6-0.

- H. Discussion and/or Vote to Approve Overnight Student Field Trip: 1)
Paris/Normandy France Trip – April 2014 – Mr. Mutter made a motion to table this item, 2nd Mr. Duffy, approved 6-0.
- I. Discussion and/or Vote to Approve Home School Instruction Requests for the 2013-14 School Year – Mr. Mitchell said there was one request this evening. Mr. Mutter made a motion to approve, 2nd Mrs. Teel, approved 6-0.

Agenda Item #12: Personnel Recommendations

Mrs. Fogell requested the following personnel recommendations:

Amended

Retirements

I request the advice and consent of the School Committee on the retirement of **James Alix, School Social Worker**, at **Systemwide**, effective **7/16/2014. Retiring after 27 years.**

I request the advice and consent of the School Committee on the retirement of **Phyllis Koutros, Purchasing Clerk**, at **Cumberland School Department**, effective **1/24/2014. Retiring after 13 years.**

Resignation

I request the advice and consent of the School Committee on the resignation of **Matthew Smalley, Boys Lacrosse Assistant Coach**, at **Cumberland High School**, effective **2/12/2014.**

Appointments

I request the advice and consent of the School Committee on the appointment of **Matthew Campanelli, Boys Outdoor Track Assistant Coach**, at **Cumberland High School**, effective **3/17/2014. (budgeted)**

I request the advice and consent of the School Committee on the appointment of **Hilary Switzer, Girls Head Lacrosse Coach**, at **Cumberland High School**, effective **3/17/2014. (budgeted)**

Leave of Absences

I request the advice and consent of the School Committee on the unpaid leave of **Jessica Belliard, Teacher Assistant**, at **Cumberland High School - Trans**, effective **5/12/2014. (budgeted) 5/12/14 to end of 2013-2014 school year.**

Mr. Fiorillo made a motion to approve the personnel recommendations as presented, 2nd Mr. Salvatore, approved 6-0.

At this time agenda item #14 – A – 3) CTA Employee Disciplinary Hearing (including discussion): Teacher B will be discussed in open session – this item was moved up into the open session from the Executive Session at Teacher B's request. Atty. Adams explained what would happen and spoke about some ground rules. He started off by saying that a teacher may be suspended but before that happens the SC needs to hold a pre-suspension hearing – they will consider evidence and then let the teacher respond. If the SC votes to suspend the teacher, then the teacher gets a letter and a

full-blown hearing. Mr. Cobleigh, attorney for the teachers union, will present next. Mrs. Fogell passed out packets of information regarding this matter to the SC members. Dr. Thornton started by saying that the teacher, Heather Bogossian, is a physical education teacher and she has done the bulk of her career at CHS but has recently been transferred to Community Elementary School. Dr. Thornton went on to say that Ms. Bogossian was texting a student during a school day – she texted that many of her students had cut her class that day and she referenced someone that was working with her as “Jimmy Boy”. Ms. Bogossian confirmed the information and subject matter that was being texted and with that she was put on administrative leave pending an investigation. There was also another issue where Ms. Bogossian gave employee A a key to the Wellness Center bathroom/showers which is against policy. She also admitted that she asked employee A to delete a text message from her phone for her. In 2005 she was suspended for taking three students to Boston for the day – during school time. Dr. Thornton recommended that she be suspended for 10 days. At this point Mr. Cobleigh asked Ms. Bogossian to present a statement with her version of events. Ms. Bogossian said that calling the person that works with her “Jimmy Boy” is not ill talking, it is a nickname. She said she did text the student but she was at home when she did because she was out on medical – the student was in school. She is very good friends with the students family and that this student had recently had a concussion and the students mom told her to contact Ms. Bogossian if she had a problem – the student had no guidance counselor to speak with – Ms. Bogossian was her support – her mom told her to contact Ms. Bogossian. She went on to say that in the high school there are several teachers, coaches, etc., that are in contact with their students via cellphone – it happens all the time. Ms. Bogossian said she is not the only one in the district that has done this. Ms. Bogossian said she responded to the student when she got back to school and disciplined her – she addressed the issue and gave the student a zero for the day – the phone had gone to Mr. Skurka – he opened the phone and read the text and did not discipline the student – Ms. Bogossian said she did not check to see what Mr. Skurka did for discipline – she was on medical – she had only been back one day. The text message that she asked employee A to delete was personal and she said she did not want other people reading her personal text messages. She said she offered Facebook, other text messages, etc. Ms. Bogossian noted that administrators believe that the text that was deleted had something to do with the situation, but she said it was deleted because it was personal and had nothing to do with anything. She does not feel this situation warrants a 10 day suspension and not a transfer too – she said she always taught high school and this situation should not effect her career. Mr. Cobleigh said that Ms. Bogossian has indicated that she’s been subjected to suspension from responding to a student’s text – she was at home – and as far as letting administration not see a message that was personal, 10 days is excessive – two weeks without pay is a huge concern. She feels as though she is being punished twice – she is teaching elementary students and she has no experience with them and her replacement has no experience with high school students. She should not be punished twice for the same infraction. Mr. Cobleigh went on to say that the union suggests that administrators have no right to read her text messages and 10 day suspension is excessive – he said the union is unclear as to why this is so excessive as the parents of the student asked Ms. Bogossian to be the students mentor. At this point Atty. Adams said that Dr. Thornton commented that regarding the transfer – teachers in physical education are qualified to teach K-12 – the transfer is in the best interest of the students – texting during school and taking three students to Boston were violations of school policies and were not minor infractions. At this point the SC broke out for discussion with Atty. Adams – the time was 9:19 p.m. The SC and Atty. Adams returned at 9:50 p.m. After referencing a section of the policy that pertains to this situation, Atty. Adams asked is the SC members had questions. Mr. Mutter

asked if Ms. Bogossian could read the text messages that went back and forth between her and the student. After a couple of minutes Mr. Cobleigh said that the student's mother – who was in the audience – expressed some concern about this and did not want the text read out loud. Mr. Salvatore asked if Ms. Bogossian could just read what she said because he said some of it was slang and the SC members did not understand all of it. Mr. Salvatore pointed out a couple of questionable statements and Ms. Bogossian read them – one said this stinks, I'd rather be at school, another said I'm surprised you didn't see employee A, seeing how I'm not there, and another said you need to have your mom call and make a change. Mr. Fiorillo asked about the key to the Wellness Center – why did she give someone her key? Ms. Bogossian said copies of the key were given and there was no key policy in place at the time – she said it was a key to the shower – one door to a bathroom and the shower – she never gave a key to another teacher after the policy was in place. Mrs. Beaulieu told Ms. Bogossian that she did not have the authority to dispense the key – she also told her that she understands that she has a friendship with the student but that the situation is still inappropriate and she would expect more from our teachers. Mr. Duffy asked Ms. Bogossian if she read the policy about devices and then asked her what she felt would be a reasonable discipline. Mr. Cobleigh answered the question and said that in 2005 when Ms. Bogossian was disciplined for abusing sick time (when she took students to Boston) she was suspended for one day – if we were to be consistent Mr. Cobleigh thought that a 2 or 3-day suspension would be progressive. Mr. Duffy brought up the fact that when students get in trouble their phones are taken away from them for five days. Mrs. Beaulieu said that the Superintendent is recommending a 10-day suspension and asked if there were any other comments – there were none. Mr. Fiorillo made a motion to uphold Dr. Thornton's recommendation for a 10 day suspension, 2nd Mr. Mutter, Mr. Duffy clarified that this suspension was discipline for inappropriate texting and violation of the key policy – does not include the involuntary reassignment from CHS to Community School, motion was approved 6-0. Mrs. Teel made a motion to include a statement of cause to be drafted by Atty. Adams, 2nd Mr. Salvatore and Mr. Mutter, approved 6-0.

Agenda Item #13: School Committee Comments (School Liaison Reports)
There were no comments tonight.

Agenda Item #14: Vote to go into Executive Session for Discussion on Items Referred to in R.I.G.L. 42-46-5
Dr. Thornton stated that there was no Executive Session tonight.

Agenda Item #15: Adjournment
Mr. Mutter made a motion to adjourn, 2nd Mr. Fiorillo and Mrs. Teel, approved 6-0.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Linda A. Jackvony