

APPROVED - 4/9/2015

There was a Special Meeting of the Cumberland School Committee held on Tuesday, March 31, 2015, at the Cumberland High School Transitional Building Cafetorium, 2602 Mendon Road, Cumberland, Rhode Island.

Members Present: Lisa Beaulieu, Raymond Salvatore, William Dennen, Paul DiModica, Craig Duffy, Mark Fiorillo, Linda Teel

Administration Present: Dr. Phil Thornton, Superintendent

Agenda Item #1: Chairperson Convenes Meeting

Chairwoman Beaulieu convened the meeting to order at 6:47 p.m.

Agenda Item #2: Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Item #3: Approval of Agenda

Mr. DiModica made a motion to approve the agenda, 2nd Mr. Dennen, approved 7-0.

Agenda Item #4: Discussion and/or vote to approve FY16 Superintendent's Budget
Mrs. Beaulieu asked if there were any questions/comments from the public. There were none at this time. Mrs. Beaulieu stated that the Fiscal Management Sub-Committee had just finished their meeting (FM meeting began at 5:30 p.m.) and with a 3-0 vote approved moving the budget to the full committee. Mr. DiModica stated that there were a couple of items that they asked Dr. Thornton to provide figures for and then discussed the extra interventionists at the elementary schools and also discussed the later start time at the high school. Middle schools would start first, followed by the high school and then the elementary schools – this would entail bringing in eight busses. Mr. Duffy noted that based on some information that he has reviewed – the difference in studies could be between 3 and 10% increase! He will report back in a couple of weeks with more information. At this point a member of the audience asked what the cost was for the eight busses – Mr. DiModica stated that it would be \$469,000 – the whole town will change – it will be middle school, high school and then elementary schools. He went on to say that there is some legislation being created to ask parents if they are going to send their children on the bus or not use the service provided. Currently the district needs to provide a seat on the bus for all of the students that attend our schools – whether or not they use the bus – Mr. DiModica noted that some busses that leave the schools are half empty and some almost completely empty (from the high school). Mr. Fiorillo asked if the eight busses were just for the high school and Dr. Thornton stated that it would be a complete reorganization and that there would be three tiers at the elementary level. Mr. Fiorillo also asked if the middle school students would be at the bus stops in the dark in the morning but Dr. Thornton did not think that would be an issue. He went on to say that the elementary schools would be moved back about one hour, the middle schools would start at 7:30 a.m. and the high school would start at 8:10 a.m.

Mrs. Beaulieu went on to point out some expenses in the budget such as teacher increases \$2.2m, pension increase \$554,000, Charter School \$823,000 – the budget being brought forward is \$63,158,454 – with the eight busses. A member of the audience asked about the cost per student- Charter School vs. Public School and if there was a dollar amount if the student stayed at the Charter School - what the loss to the district would be? Dr. Thornton said it would be the entire amount - \$1.8m and he went on to say that he could do it for less money. Mrs. Beaulieu said that if they leave they realize 100% of the local share – our students are pro-rated – the local piece is phased in over five years. Dr. Thornton said it is about .74 cents out of every dollar for Charter Schools. Mrs. Beaulieu said in Massachusetts they set a state share and a community share – the state also helps if the community cannot do its share. Rhode Island does not do this. To run the Charter School is approximately 1/3 to 1/2 of our budget increase. Mr. DiModica noted that our schools are operating at capacity – we are not able to close anything – we are full. Mrs. Beaulieu noted that the state needs to revisit the way they are figuring the state share because of the large percentages of students attending the charter schools in some areas such as Central Falls, Providence, Pawtucket, Cumberland and Lincoln – some of these communities had in excess of 10% of their students going to the charter schools. Mrs. Beaulieu noted that now the budget will go to the Mayor’s office, then Town Council – two votes from their committee to ratify the budget – process begins in April/May timeframe – we could reconcile in June – if need be. Mrs. Beaulieu noted that some of our schools like Garvin are doing so well and that what we are doing is really working – our students are really improving – their presentations at meetings are very informative and so Mrs. Beaulieu has asked Dr. Thornton to ask other schools for more presentations so that everyone can learn more about what is working and helping our students in our schools. Mrs. Teel also commented on how wonderful some of the presentations have been and that the interventionists really work and are really meeting the students needs. We have made great progress and have done some wonderful things and she went on to say that if we do not get the funding that we need all the good that has been done will go away and this will not be fair to the students – to let the district continue to be level funded is grossly wrong. Mr. Duffy asked Dr. Thornton where we would reduce if we had to and Dr. Thornton said that he has been preparing for it and some of the cuts would be in middle school sports, high school sections, capitol (phase 2), he said these cuts would be bad but that if we had to reduce by \$1.5m these cuts would only be a part, the last \$800,000 would be very bad – guidance and interventionists would be effected also. Mr. Dennen asked if there were guidelines for the interventionists and Dr. Thornton said the ratio is 36 to 1 and this (what is requested in this budget) would put us right where we should be. Mrs. Beaulieu noted that some of the schools need to make their free/reduced lunch information available because this will affect the size of the learning gaps. Mr. DiModica stated that the Valley Breeze printed that we have 25 languages in the elementary schools to deal with – he asked how are we supposed to get there without the money? He went on to say that the Mayor and the Town Council need to help – he said the Town Council is thinking about allowing apartments in the bottom of commercial buildings – more students – parents not buying homes. Mrs. Beaulieu said the SC

added on \$995,631 to the Superintendent's budget (\$62,162,823) – the total budget is \$63,158,454. Mr. DiModica made a motion to send the approved budget from the Fiscal Management Sub-Committee in the amount of \$63,158,454 to the Town Council for consideration, 2nd Mr. Salvatore, approved 7-0.

Mrs. Beaulieu noted that there would be a meeting Thursday evening and Mrs. Teel and Mr. Duffy asked that if the unfortunate happens and we need to reduce the budget, could Dr. Thornton prepare a potential list of cuts.

Agenda Item #5: Public Comment

There were no comments at this time.

Agenda Item #6: Adjournment

Mr. Duffy made a motion to adjourn, 2nd Mr. DiModica, approved 7-0.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Linda A. Jackvony