

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL-SCHOOL COMMITTEE LIAISON COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD JANUARY 20, 2015.

The meeting convened at 1:00 p.m. in the Newport Public Library.

Committee members present:

COUNCIL: Naomi Neville, Co-chair, and Lyn Ceglie

Absent: John Florez

SCHOOL COMMITTEE: JoEva Gaines, Co-chair; Kathy Silvia, and Sandra Flowers

Also in attendance were Superintendent of Schools Colleen Jermain and School Director of Admin. Services/Business Manager, Joan Tracey

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

1. Budget expectations.

Co-chair Gaines reported a projected \$1.5 million shortfall in the School Budget. Reasons for the shortfall were attributed to the inclusion of an \$800,000 savings in the FY15 budget in retiree health care benefit costs that has not occurred, and the addition of two buses for children attending the Pell School.

A tentative date of March 4, 2015, was set for a joint meeting of the School Committee and City Council to meet the statutory requirement of meeting 90 days before submission of the School Dept. Budget to the Council. The meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. at either the Pell School or Thompson Middle School, whichever is available.

2. Imminent needs

A recent presentation by 8th grade students of Thompson Middle School on the need for a playground for 5th grade students was discussed. Councilor Neville said that Scott Wheeler, City Grounds & Maintenance Supervisor, had said he would be happy to do a walk-through of the area and assist in looking into funding. Co-chair Gaines said he should contact TMS school principal, Jaime Crowley. State Rep Lauren Carson had also advised her that she was looking into funding from the State.

3. Facilities and potential shared services

Superintendent Jermain said she had had a very positive meeting with Acting City Manager Joe Nicholson and they will be working out the details of possible shared services. She said she was also looking into sharing IT services and has had preliminary discussions with the Portsmouth Town Administrator.

4. Public Relations

Councilor Ceglie again suggested School Dept. put information on Engage Newport. The contact person is Maureen Cronin of Worldways. Superintendent Jermain said School Dept. personnel could provide a link. Appointments to the School Committee Sub-committee on Public Relations were also discussed.

5. Triplett School

Superintendent Jermain said the School Dept. needs to work with the RI Dept. of Education; and, if funding is to be sought, Stage 1 and 2 studies would first need to be done. Co-chair Gaines noted that an extensive feasibility study, paid for by a grant, has already been done. She said some renovations to make the school usable could be done without the need for bonding. Superintendent Jermain said discussions with the full School Committee first need to occur to determine what the Committee wants to do. She said she did not believe keeping at the pre-K at the Kennedy School in Middletown for the next school year would be an issue.

6. Labor Contracts

Co-Chair Gaines said settlement of the School Department agreements with both NEA and AFSCME was close.

Because of the February school vacation, **the next meeting of the Liaison Committee was changed to WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2015.**

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Silvia