

Regular Meeting of the Pawtucket School Committee

Tuesday, June 14, 2011

6:00 PM Media Center

Jenks/JMW Complex for the Performing and Visual Arts

350 Division Street, Pawtucket RI 02860

I. Meeting will come to order

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 6:21 PM. (This was due to the JMW Graduation held earlier in the evening.)

A. Roll Call

Mr. Araujo-here; Ms. Bonollo-here; Mr. Coughlin-here; Mr. Noonan-here; Ms. Nordquist-here; Mr. Spooner-here

Mr. Tenreiro was not present.

Also in attendance was Mrs. Deborah Cylke, Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Kimberly Mercer, Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum Instruction and Assessment; Mr. Thomas Conlon, Business Administrator and Ms. Maggie Baker, Assistant Business Administrator.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Chairperson.

II. Celebration/Recognition

Most Improved ESL Students in Memory of Earl Fenner

Mrs. Cylke: I'd like to call forward Ms. Julie Motta to recognize the most improved ESL students in honor of one of our long time dedicated colleagues, Mr. Earl Fenner, who we lost this year.

Ms. Motta: I'm honored to present the first Earl Fenner award. I need to share with you about the wonderful teacher and human being this

man was. When I first started in this district, I remember a wonderful teacher coming to meet me and tell me if there is anything you need, do not hesitate to let me know. He was an outstanding educator and worked with the ESL students. He worked very hard with two of those students. He went so far as to learn sign language for one of those students. He was a strong advocate for his students and father figure. He had a very strong spirit and he was a humble and gentle man. Some of the clerks in Central Administration fondly named him "Earl the pearl." It was very difficult to share the news that he passed away suddenly. The Pawtucket School Department lost a very special teacher. Tonight we present the first ever awards to honor the most excellence improved in English in honor of Mr. Fenner and hope to make this an annual award that will honor students from Agnes Little Elementary School and Nathanael Greene Elementary School where Mr. Fenner worked as an ESL resource teacher. These awards are given based on how well these children excelled based on acquisition of the English language and also embodied the qualities that Mr. Fenner possessed; strength, humility and a gentle spirit. These students show kindness to their classmates as they work very hard to learn English.

At this time I would like to call forward Deborah, Jason and Devonte. Our first student is fifth grader from Nathanael Greene. Devonte first spoke Portuguese before learning English. This year his English learning proficiency scores helped him take the rigorous criteria to exit the ESL programs. He's described as a citizen in his classroom. He always has a positive attitude and is always first to volunteer to

help.

Our second student is a sixth grader from Agnes Little. Deborah came to us from Liberia in 2009. Although her first language is in English, Mr. Fenner was helping her to improve her pronunciation. When Mr. Fenner passed away this young lady felt so strongly about Mr. Fenner she wrote a song about him and performed it in front of the whole school.

Our final student is another sixth grader from Agnes Little and although from the U. S., Jason first learned to speak Spanish. He has excelled in his studies and is a valuable member of his class and his school. Jason and Deborah will attend Jenks Junior High next year where they will continue to improve their English as they study hard. Ms. Motta noted that she and many in the audience were wearing blue wrist bands that say “always in our hearts, E. Fenner” and that they were a reminder of Mr. Fenner, a “band of blue.” One of Mr. Fenner’s colleagues wrote a poem about him after his passing.

“This wrist band is a reminder of our teacher and our friend in hopes that you’ll remember him is the message he would send. Each day you wear this band of blue, be respectful and be kind in your thoughts and in your actions keep others feelings in mind. With laughter and a smile try to brighten someone’s day. Be helpful and cooperative, they’ll be problems, come what may. Quench your thirst for knowledge. Read and learn all you can. And on the way to school each day, think of this special man. This wrist band is a reminder of our teacher and of our friend in hopes that you will remember him and help our hearts to mend.”

Mrs. Cylke thanked the parents and students.

III. Public Participation

Patricia Finucane, York Ave, Pawtucket, RI: In November 2010, I called the Pawtucket School Department to verify the school my daughter would be attending. This answer did not sit well. I repeated the call three times with the same answer. After going to the Administration Building I was told she would be going to Potter Burns. She's entering kindergarten. I have to be an active participant and if a parent call and wants to know how can you trust the other person on the other line? Where can I see it in black and white? I was here a couple of meetings ago and I hear about No Child Left Behind. When speaking to other parents and teachers, they could not believe what I was going through. Where does the money go for parent education? What is it used for? My daughter will not be going to Pawtucket Public Schools next year. She'll be going to a private school.

Liana W. and Anton K., Charles E. Shea High School Students: Good evening. We wanted to introduce ourselves and let you know that we will be the new voices of Shea representing our school at your meetings. We don't have anything ready for this evening, but wanted to come and say "hi."

Mr. Spooner: If no one objects, Mr. Howe, the Emergency Management Director is here to present line item New Business d, and he has another commitment to get to so if we could move that item next on the agenda, we would appreciate it.

V. New Business Action Items

d. Emergency Management Policy-First Reading

Mrs. Cylke: Last fall I worked with Mr. Howe to do a scope of work project. I asked Mr. Howe to review our emergency management plan. I've asked him to go through it and see if it meets local, state and federal standards. We'd like to take that policy and make it into a flip chart, color code different drills so that teachers and principals can have it in a usable format. This is a first reading.

Mr. Howe: As the Superintendent alluded to, we looked at it, the old 2000 emergency plan and in September, 2001 things changed. We addressed many things. In 2007 when I came on board and with the help of the Pawtucket Police we showed all schools teachers, principals and students how to prepare in the event of a lock down. Myself and the Pawtucket Police developed that and more programs and acquired more grant dollars for school safety. \$275,000 was granted from the homeland security grant to put door locks on most of your schools. You see cameras at Slater. Those were provided with the help of that grant funding. There was a company, Be Safe Technologies that also took digital photos of all of the schools that would assist police and fire departments in the event they should ever have to come into those buildings. Cameras are a deterrent for vandalism and violence. We get many calls for communication for teachers. Because of federal cuts, the monies were cut. I'll continue to fight for more funding for the safety of the students and schools. This evening we are talking about an emergency plan. At one point it highlights what could happen in the school, how to address it, respond, recover and how to deal with some mental health issues.

The format in there from 2000 for mental health should go to that expert.

Mr. Araujo: Thank you for that work that you've done here. The equipment and evaluation and rehab to keep up to date; do we still have funding to be sure that's up to date?

Mr. Howe: If we have to utilize it, we have an eminent threat and we have a serious problem. I would like to prevent the problem before it comes to that. The eyes and ears of an educator knowing their students are important. We talked about having a five gallon bucket full of supplies, non perishables and some medical for diabetics. A lot of teachers said radios would work especially if a student goes missing.

Mr. Araujo: Regarding making the document smaller. I saw eight sections that could be smaller. I think it' a great starting point as we move forward we may want to see what the procedures are and see that they are in place.

Mrs. Cylke: The kits we talked about were a five gallon bucket with bottled water, crackers a privacy curtain —a military list, the bucket was used as a toilet. This is what we had in a previous district. We had a shooting in one of our schools and had to be locked down for two hours and police luckily caught the shooter right away. My goal would be to find the money. North Providence just went through a revision and we grabbed their plan and we want it to be thorough. We want to have an informational piece in the classrooms for the start of the school year. We need to be prepared.

Mr. Araujo: The reason I brought up the kits was that I want to make

sure they are brought up to date if we should have to use them.

Mr. Howe: If we had to lock down, the Police would have to get a manifest list to get those students with medical issues so we can remove them right away. The teachers know their students. They're the eyes and the ears—you have a student that always comes in and brings you an apple and that one student comes in one day and isn't acting right. Those are the things you have to i.d. to find school shooters.

Mrs. Cylke: We'll bring this back for a second reading.

Ms. Bonollo: How many classrooms do we have?

Mrs. Cylke: I don't have that right now.

Mr. Howe: Thank you and have a great summer. Be safe.

Ms. Bonollo: Is there going to be professional development for this?

Mr. Howe: There is training toward the end of August.

Ms. Bonollo: One of the issues pointed out is accountability. What happens if a student went to the restroom during a lock down? Can he/she be let back into their classroom?

Mr. Howe: That one student cannot be let back in once the school has been locked down. The teacher sees a student in the hall and grabs that student and brings them in the classroom. The reason for a lock down is to keep students safe.

IV. Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes 5/10/11- Action Item

Ms. Bonollo moved to accept and approve minutes of previous meeting, May 10, 2011. **Ms. Nordquist** seconded.

Roll call:

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Mr. Noonan-yes;

Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes

Motion carried unanimously.

V. New Business - Action Items

a. Recall of Teachers

Mrs. Cylke: It's my pleasure this evening to recall the following teachers.

Karen Dube, Social Worker, Baldwin

Mary Jo Mansililo, Social Worker, Potter-Burns

Jane Whelan, Social Worker, Greene

Lori Chadwick, School Nurse, Fallon

Christina Peterson, Phys. Ed./Health, Slater

Craig Giarruso, Phys. Ed./Health, Varieur

Ingrid Calderon, Spanish, Shea

Maria Tavares, Spanish, Shea

Glenn Hopkins Jr. Social Studies/ESL, Shea

Elizabeth Chalmers, Sp. Ed. Elementary, Curvin-McCabe

Brenda Reid, Sp. Ed. Elementary, Winters

Christopher Reynolds, Math, Tolman

Allison Dubray, Greene

Keri Wujcik-Paquette, Sp. Ed. Elementary, Curtis

We are asking you to approve the recall of 14 teachers this evening. The teacher pool is scheduled for June 28th at 9:00 AM and we anticipate requesting a special meeting later that evening to recall more teachers before June 30th as is the case every year.

Ms. Nordquist moved to approve recall of 14 teachers as recommended by Superintendent, Mrs. Cylke. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Mr. Coughlin: The memo states 6 rescinded? I just want to know what that means.

Mrs. Cylke: We're rescinding that decision and officially recalling 14 teachers.

Roll call:

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Mr. Noonan-yes; Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes

Motion carried unanimously.

b. Approval of New Job Descriptions—ESL Teaching and Intervention Specialist and Common Core Standards Coordinator

Mrs. Cylke: This evening we're asking that the Committee approve two positions. The job descriptions have been provided. The ESL Teaching and Intervention Specialist and Common Core Standards Coordinator. One is full time and the other is half time.

Mr. Coughlin moved to approve the two positions, ESL Teaching and Intervention Specialist full time position and Common Core Standards half time position. **Ms. Nordquist** seconded.

Mr. Coughlin: Will you be coming back to us a second time with these?

Mrs. Cylke: No.

Roll call:

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Mr. Noonan-yes; Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes

Motion carried unanimously.

c. FY12 Budget

Mrs. Cylke: On line 46 at our last meeting we notified the Committee

that our Literacy Set Aside funds could be used to deal with the budget deficit. Our current deficit stands at \$1,206,277. Lines 48 through 58 were presented and not acted on. We had a remaining deficit until Literacy Set Aside was approved. Under reorganization of support services each department had to come up with a way to address the budget deficit. We have identified a total of \$542,136. If you approve further budget reductions, as you said in your motion on April 25th, that we balance the budget in further reductions, new monies coming in and using our anticipated medical reserves I believe we have a balanced budget tonight. I have said many times that I believe using medical reserves is not a good practice. What would be prudent for us to do is as early as October is to check with Mr. Conlon to see if we are on track. A couple of things we have to think about is what is the legislature going to do; the unidentified cuts, the people going out on maternity leaves that we don't always anticipate; and we need to adjust to actual in the fall. The budget is really a dynamic document and we either wait to make a final decision or you give me the go ahead and make those deductions and as of this evening with that \$452,136 in cuts and medical reserves anticipated, I think we can declare a balanced budget.

Ms. Bonollo moved to approve the reorganization of support services in the amount of \$452,136 in budget cuts and utilize the medical reserves anticipated to balance the budget. Mr. Coughlin seconded.

Mr. Noonan: This is all just line 48 you are talking about, nothing else?

Mrs. Cylke: Yes, just line 48.

Ms. Bonollo: It's nice to see that we could balance it, but from what I have been hearing is that they might not give us the funding that we had expected which means we might want to put the vote off to see what the General Assembly is going to do to us. Because if we vote tonight, and they decide to do something, that doesn't necessarily mean it's going to be balanced on June 28th. The other thing is it would be equitable if they want to take away \$17.1 M from us—the State in education and if they do that we're in big trouble and we have to look for more.

Mrs. Cylke: I'm hopeful that the State legislature leaves us alone and I'm hopeful that the City Council and the Mayor with any reserves that they have assist us. I've made it very clear that they owe us \$1,680,000 but the question is do they have it? My goal is to meet your expectations and move forward and have a balanced budget.

Mr. Noonan: Do we have any recommendations from our business manager or our Superintendent on whether we should wait or go ahead with it?

Mrs. Cylke: When making budget reductions, it impacts people. The sooner the better for those people, that's in their best interest. That's the one factor I would share.

Mr. Conlon: I would agree whole heartedly.

Mr. Coughlin: I'm totally confused here. Line 48 says \$596,154. Line 60 through 69 looks like a detailing of line 48 and seems to total \$452,136. What is causing that?

Mrs. Cylke: I know you're thinking my math is weak, but what happened is I wanted to meet again with Department leaders and the

Deputy and Mr. Conlon and Ms. Baker and as we looked at line item 48, there were two positions that we had listed that we really didn't think that we could cut. One example is library clerks. Once we got under that \$770,000 I said stop we met our mark. Lines 60 through 70 reflect the best decisions of the directors and it was definitely a group decision and group consensus.

Ms. Nordquist: I know everything is time sensitive but we were just handed these two minutes ago. Everyone affected by this, have they been notified? Were they notified way back when they were originally on this list?

Mrs. Cylke: I acknowledge your frustration and we originally wanted to get it to you sooner. We were hopeful that we were going to get more funding from the Council when they met on Monday but that wasn't the case. To answer your second question, absolutely they were notified. When we first identified the cuts and each director sat down face to face with those employees and we updated those employees after each meeting on the salmon colored portion.

We have to have a balanced budget by June 30th to be in compliance with the BEP and we currently have a deficit.

Ms. Nordquist: I see one of the items is mentoring stipends. Is that because of the two new positions?

Mrs. Cylke: No, we would still have the mentoring system and still provide mentors we would just not have the stipend to pay them. They would volunteer. We might be able to put that back in and may be something to revisit.

Mr. Coughlin: If I understand this correctly the \$452,000 would come

off this and the deficit would be \$754,641 and the anticipation would be that we would resolve the rest of it with the medical reserves to the tune of \$770,000. Is that correct?

Mrs. Cylke: Correct.

Mr. Coughlin: What are your concerns about the \$770,000 for next year? Do you think they'll be there?

Mr. Conlon: We anticipate ending this year between \$675,000 and \$750,000. We would start off with zero. We are increasing our funding by 1 ½ % in medical and 5% in dental. There's also something called premier formulary that the City is adapting that will hopefully increase the fund balance at the end of the year.

Mrs. Cylke: When we look at the salmon section these are cuts you really hate to make. We would then be looking at cutting athletics, employee assistance program which is valuable to our employees.

Mr. Araujo: When are we going to find out if the City is going to appropriate any more money?

Mr. Conlon: Apparently Warwick and several other communities are going through this thing a similar situation with the Maintenance of Effort. It's the Deborah Gist opinion versus the Teresa Paiva-Weed opinion and it is going to end up in court or at the very least a complaint before the Commissioner.

Mrs. Cylke: I shared this with the City Council. But it may be dragged out in the Courts. The Mayors have pushed very hard because that allows the 95%. I'm hopeful that someone says Deborah Gist is correct.

Mr. Araujo: I don't anticipate that we are going to get a decision by

the 28th. The City chargeback, we haven't heard anything back about that? If we do end up getting money back from the City, will that go back into the medical reserves to bring that back up?

Mrs. Cylke: Any additional revenue regardless of its source I would bring back to the Committee and would have the same priorities and the things I felt most important in some kind of order that made sense and get input from the Committee about where that would go. I would definitely bring that back to you. We haven't heard back about the City charge backs.

Mr. Conlon: Alan did bring that up at the City Council meeting and going back to the School Resource Officers the credits on the City's books so if they are eliminated on our side their credits have to be increased by that same amount.

Ms. Bonollo: I was talking to a different school committee member and we were talking about snow removal and she mentioned our schools and parking bans and they asked why are they charging you and you're not charging them?

Mrs. Cylke: Our teachers and our students benefit the day after the ban. We need to have a more serious conversation about that. I've been told about how things use to be back in the day by several superintendents and business managers when money was good and then someone at either the state or local level caught on.

Mr. Conlon: The three things the judge said the City could charge us for things we couldn't do ourselves and they are lot sweeping, trash pickup and snow removal.

Roll call:

**Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Mr. Noonan-yes;
Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes**

Motion carried unanimously.

e. Government Accounting Standards Board 54 Policy - First Reading

Mr. Conlon: GASB 54 stands for Government Accounting Standards Board and they set the policy for all government entities, not just schools and how their books are presented to them and the public and they have decided that they have to have two kinds of books. Reserved and unreserved. They decided that wasn't detailed enough and now the outside accountants at the end of the year who come to prepare the financial statements and fund balances are either restricted, committed, assigned or unassigned. They require that every legislative body adopt a policy stating as much and that's the policy you have in front of you now. It was drafted by Foster/Gloster and adapted by RIASBO and adjusted to fit Pawtucket. This is the first reading.

Ms. Nordquist moved to approve the first reading of the Government Accounting Standards Board 54 Policy. Mr. Coughlin seconded.

Mr. Spooner: Any changes from the previous policy?

Mr. Conlon: This is brand new. There was no previous policy. We generally only have two fund policies restricted which is usually grants and unrestricted which is the local budget. All it does is classify balances by the auditors.

Roll call:

**Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Mr. Noonan-yes;
Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes**

Motion carried unanimously.

f. Award of Bid - School Bus Transportation

Mr. Conlon: I'll have to once again pass on this. I received the phone call just today to pick up the results tomorrow from RIDE. We will bring it back at the next meeting.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Mrs. Cylke: It was so very heartwarming to be at the Shea High School graduation and see so many smiling faces. Graduation is a good reminder of what it is we are here to do. I want to look at how many freshmen started four years ago and how many graduated because that is the number we need to go after. I hope some of the interventions we are putting into place means that every child in Pawtucket gets to graduate. Also tonight I enjoyed the JMW graduation.

Tolman won the State Championships in volleyball and Committee Coughlin's son was on the team and then went to his prom so really a great night for him and for Tolman High School.

Really the best news was the \$650,000 literacy grant that we received for K, 1 and 2 super kids through the Rowland Literacy Foundation. The people who deserve the credit for this are our Deputy Superintendent, our Literacy Coordinator, Kim McCaughey, Gail Mulligan and our many coaches and teachers and principals who are really focused on literature. There is no doubt in my mind that we got that grant because they liked who they were going to be working with, they saw the improvement over the last couple of years and they like the fact that our teachers have had the LETRS training. I met these

folks and they have a good quality and its great news in light of all the reductions we had to make. Thank you.

VII. Special Report- School Committee Members

Mr. Araujo: I wanted to congratulate the graduates of 2011 from Blackstone Academy, Shea, JMW and Tolman. Good luck with this world and what they have to face. They're going to do the best that they can and I hope that their future is bright. I'll be up late tomorrow night watching the Bruins and wishing them luck too.

Ms. Bonollo: Good night. Have a safe one.

Mr. Coughlin: Ditto Ms. Bonollo.

Mr. Noonan: Thank you all for coming by the way. That was a wonderful article in the Pawtucket Times about the grant. It's terrific and I'm glad to see that the entire staff is so terrific. I was at the Tolman volleyball game and must give credit where credit is due. Kevin Coughlin gave the push when the game was tied for the lead and gave the winning serve that gave Tolman the State Championship. I know his father is very proud of him.

Ms. Nordquist: It was really great to attend the Shea High School graduation last night and The Jacqueline Walsh tonight. I look forward to Tolman tomorrow. It's another successful year for the Pawtucket School Department. One other thing is that the headmaster from the School from China where Dr. Dellith visited I believe a couple of years ago is here and will be here until Saturday. They may be going around to some of the schools tomorrow. The kids from Shea have really benefited from that program and thanks to Dr. Dellith for getting that whole program going. If you were at Shea

you would have heard the valedictorian and how much it impacted her life by getting to go. The last thing is that I hope to read in the newspaper tomorrow is that the School Department has balanced the budget.

Mr. Spooner: I just wanted to say that over at the Jackie Walsh graduation as we were getting in line as a system I hear about the administration, the teachers, the this, the that, but I have to tell you I listened to the valedictorian at the Jackie Walsh School tonight get up and give a speech that was very moving. This young lady took the time and must have talked to someone and found out who Jackie Walsh was all about. I was never more proud to be on a School Committee than to listen to that speech and how eloquent she spoke about Dr. Walsh and those of us who knew her and how passionate she was about the kids in the system. For that student to take the time and find that information out I thought was an absolute credit and it shows how our system goes for the most part. We have our ups, we have our downs, but we have a great place here in Pawtucket, don't we! Good night everybody!

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Coughlin moved to adjourn. Mr. Noonan seconded.

Voice vote carried unanimously.

The Chairperson adjourned the regular meeting of June 14, 2011 of the Pawtucket School Committee at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Clerk

APPROVED 9/27/11