

Regular Meeting of the Pawtucket School Committee

Tuesday, January 14, 2014 at 6:00 PM

Jenks/JMW Complex for the Performing and Visual Arts Media Center

350 Division Street, Pawtucket, Rhode Island 02860

Minutes

I Meeting will come to order

The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM.

a. Roll call

Ms. Bonollo-here; Ms. Cano-here; Mr. Coughlin-here; Ms. Nordquist-here; Mr. Spooner-here; Mr. Tenreiro-here; Mr. Araujo-here
Also in attendance were Mrs. Deborah Cylke, Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Patti DiCenso, Secondary School Performance Officer, Ms. Kathleen Suriani, Elementary School Performance Officer, Ms. Melissa Devine, Chief Finance Officer, Mr. Hersh Cristino, Chief Information and Innovation Officer, Mr. Michael Connelly, CTE Coordinator and Mr. Stephen M. Robinson and Ms. Vicki Bejma, Legal Counsel for the Pawtucket School Committee.

b. Pledge of Allegiance

The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II Celebration/Recognition

The Superintendent, Mrs. Cylke, recognized Mrs. Michelle Depot, Curtis Elementary Teacher who was selected as “Teacher of the Year.” Mrs. Cylke invited Mrs. Jean Friend, Principal of Curtis Elementary to speak in honor of Mrs. Depot.

Mrs. Friend commented that it was very hard because there are so many wonderful teachers at Curtis Elementary School. Mrs. Depot stood out because she is very dedicated, supports her colleagues, inspires the community and works tirelessly. Mrs. Friend also mentioned many of the projects and organizations that Mrs. Depot has served on including the Parent Teacher Organization and The Battle of the Books. Mrs. Depot sees the connection of the school and the community. Mrs. Depot did the cleanup of the Curtis yard this spring and the neighbors called to comment how wonderful it looks. Children can hardly wait to get into third grade and into Mrs. Depot's class.

Mrs. Depot introduced her family.

Mrs. Cylke congratulated Mrs. Depot's parents for raising such a wonderful daughter.

Mrs. Depot: Thank you very much for even considering me. Thank you to Mrs. Cylke for coming to my classroom and to the School Committee from recognizing me tonight. Teaching is not just an "I," it's a "we." I'm accepting this on behalf of all of Curtis. It could not be done without all of my colleagues.

Backpackers

Ms. Bonollo: As most of you know, I'm chair of the Pawtucket Backpackers. We have people you don't see that work behind the scenes. They pack the food up, put it in their cars and drive it to the schools. We have a team that has 150 bags a week. But before we recognize our hard working volunteers, I'd like to share with you a letter I received from the Commissioner of Education, Ms. Deborah

Gist.

Ms. Bonollo commented on the contents of the letter from Commissioner Gist acknowledging Ms. Bonollo for her efforts on the Pawtucket Backpackers program. Ms. Gist also included a donation to the Pawtucket Backpackers.

Our volunteers:

Dianna Liss from Central Administration assists with our administrative duties.

Karen Baillargeon

Tara Charette

Diane Clift who is a teacher from Goff and brings food to the school.

Abby who works for Sodexo and helps unload my card full of food.

Gail Fisher. Gail is also a parent in this district.

Heather Hopkins, Heather is also a teacher in this district and ad a dress down day and collected \$136.

Barbara Lampinski, Sodexo's Administrative Assistant.

Kaidy McQuade, a driver for us.

Solagne Morrissette, Director of School Food Services for Sodexo

Dale Rogers, a graduated parent who is another driver.

Colleen Surette, Sodexo

Karin Wetherhill

Kathy Suriani, who picks up for ALP

We now have 250 students receiving backpacks. Each school gets a supply for their school.

The good news is besides this Power of One, BJ's in South Attleboro is doing a food collection for us starting February 1, 2014.

III Special Reports of Student Representatives

Charles E. Shea High School

None

William E. Tolman High School

Raquel, Treasurer of the Senior Class: The Senior Class Supper is this Friday at the Hilltop Country Club catered by Johnson & Wales.

Parent/teacher organization met on January 8, 2014.

We have a wonder winter concert on Thursday, the 19th.

Jacqueline M. Walsh School for the Performing and Visual Arts

None

IV Public Participation

None

V Executive Session

If there was no objection from the Committee Members, the Chairman requested to move the executive session to the end of the agenda.

With no objection from the Committee Members, the executive session was moved to the end of the agenda.

VIII Approval of previous meeting minutes

Mr. Spooner moved to approve the meeting minutes of 10/15/14 and 1/7/14. Mr. Tenreiro seconded.

Voice vote carried all in favor.

IX Action Items

1. Approval of Hiring Freeze

Mr. Spooner moved to impose a hiring freeze with the exception of currently budgeted staff and not to be in violation of the BEP, in

addition that Administration brings to the Committee any new hires.

Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Ms. Bonollo: What if someone retires? Is it only new positions?

Mr. Spooner: No, correct it to include no violation of the BEP.

Mr. Coughlin: Superintendent Cylke, what do you think?

Mrs. Cylke: I think it's prudent that Mr. Spooner put this on. Ms. Devine will come to us in February with actuals, but every appointment, we bring to you. The current open positions are Director of Curriculum and Instruction; I. T. Instructional Coordinator and we put in a Science Coordinator. The Human Resources Shared Director and Staff accountant have not been hired, however, the staff accountant is very essential in the business operations.

We have a special education teacher, a librarian position, the parent and family engagement coordinator position that we were able to put in the federal grant monies.

That's just an update on open positions. We will meet again in February and have an update.

Mr. Coughlin: You could fill all these positions and not be impacted by this motion?

Mrs. Cylke: We are in a deficit.

Mr. Coughlin: Are we saying we can or cannot if this passes?

Mr. Spooner: I'm saying any positions that are not budgeted.

Ms. Cano: Are you saying the parent coordinator we approved in September, but did not hire? We don't have money in the budget, are we really going to hire someone?

Mrs. Cylke: We can come back in February and strictly put that in

Federal monies. Every time we had new positions, I've brought them forward and they are similar and modernized. I've asked for your approval. Right now I would say is they are budgeted, but we have a deficit. We have a function to educate kids. We don't have to deal with it tonight, in February, we will have to deal with it. Because of the ceiling repairs, we have a deficit to address.

Ms. Nordquist: I'm concerned about this because of teaching positions. It doesn't say when the freeze would end. I'm reluctant when at times we should have hired more teachers and we haven't. How do you answer that?

Mr. Spooner: Would you expect the Committee to do the right thing?

Ms. Nordquist: Why are you doing this?

Ms. Bonollo: Based on the list of open positions, what would the forecast be to the end of the year?

Mr. Tenreiro: That certain hires by the freeze we are looking at for direct service.

Roll call

Ms. Bonollo-yes; Ms. Cano-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Ms. Nordquist-no; Mr. Spooner-yes; Mr. Tenreiro-yes; Mr. Araujo-yes

Motion passes six in favor; one opposed.

2. Approval of Certified Appointments

Mrs. Cylke: We are seeking your approval on the following certified appointment.

Elizabeth Dubois, Special Education Educator – Curvin McCabe Elementary/1 yr. position

Mr. Tenreiro moved to approve the certified appointment as

recommended by the Superintendent, Mrs. Cylke. Mr. Spooner seconded.

Roll call

Ms. Bonollo-yes; Ms. Cano-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes; Mr. Tenreiro-yes; Mr. Araujo-yes

Motion carries unanimously.

3. Approval of Job Description – Staff Accountant

Ms. Devine: Before you is a revision of the job description before Ms. Prodger was promoted to the grant manager position. Mrs. Cylke and I revised the job description and put forth what we felt was best for the business operations as well as the district.

Mr. Spooner moved to approve the Staff Accountant Job Description.

Mr. Tenreiro seconded.

Ms. Bonollo: What kind of hours and flex hours for nightly meetings are associated with this position? We can add these because it's a salary position and with salary positioned employees it is usually understood that they have to stay. I don't have any problems with that.

Roll call

Ms. Bonollo-yes; Ms. Cano-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes; Mr. Tenreiro-yes Mr. Araujo-yes

Motion carries unanimously.

4 Approval of Confucius Classroom Contract

Mrs. Cylke: The Confucius classroom has been in Shea High for some time and it used to be with Roger Williams University. It is now with the University of Rhode Island (URI), so we have to bring forward

a new agreement.

Mr. Connelly: This replaces a less formal agreement we had with Dr. Dellith. It has been reviewed by Vicki Bejma and we will receive \$10,000 to support our program. Keith Wilk is the Department Chair and there is no cost to us.

We will continue our partnership with Heng Shui High School in China. Credits will be shared with all colleges. Other schools have this same program and it's excellent for Pawtucket's Applied Learning Program.

Mr. Tenreiro moved to approve the Confucius Classroom Contract with URI. Ms. Cano seconded.

Ms. Nordquist: We go in April, they come in June?

Mr. Connelly: Yes, they get a two week vacation in June.

Roll call

Ms. Bonollo-yes; Ms. Cano-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes; Mr. Tenreiro-yes; Mr. Araujo-yes

Motion carries unanimously.

5. FY14 Budget Update and Deficit Options

Mrs. Cylke: \$803,000 for ceiling repairs was estimate in September. When you see a child in September, we don't get credit for that child until the following year. That was cost reported in October. With the ceiling costs and additional students showing up is how we ended up with a deficit of \$943,000.

Before Christmas break, we were doing ceiling repairs at Slater. We were not up to code.

There was a significant increase of out of district placements. Eileen

Crudele, Tom Conlon and myself brought back many students from out of district. Right now the challenge is where do we put them if we want to add an autistic class in the district?

Tuitions for charters came in \$80,000 more than budgeted.

Ms. Devine: Each month the School Department puts aside \$1.4M to satisfy claims for medical based on a twelve month period. Looking at the first few months, it looks like we're tracking ahead of schedule. I'm actually requesting to reduce 16.8 by \$300,000 which is \$50,000 per month. While it is very risky, we are looking to balance the budget and this is where I think we can balance.

Mr. Coughlin: What's different now than when we made a similar move a couple of years ago?

Ms. Devine: It's a risk. It's not fool proof. We're looking at places to cut. We're nickel and diming. I'll be tracking the claims every month. This year we ended with \$875,000. You have to satisfy debts under GASB. I get the claims each week electronically.

Ms. Bonollo: As long as we can adjust back to it.

Mr. Spooner moved to reserve taking any action on the FY14 Budget until it comes back in February adjusted to actual. Mr. Coughlin seconded.

Mr. Tenreiro: Hold off on using medical reserves, it's just too risky. I know we put in an increase. We should be putting in a lot more.

Mrs. Cylke: You gave me clear direction in the past not to rely on medical reserves or lag. She's comfortable putting \$1M instead of \$1.4M in medical reserves. We we're not going to do this without your permission. We can certainly bring this back.

Mr. Coughlin: I would certainly like to have all the cuts available to us to make a conscious decision. Mr. Spooner has a good idea, no offense to the CFO.

Ms. Devine: I agree with that, but bringing to actual we would have to get back to you.

Roll call

Ms. Bonollo-yes; Ms. Cano-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes Mr. Tenreiro-yes; Mr. Araujo-yes

Motion carries unanimously.

6. RFP for Legal Services

Mr. Spooner: I think we should put together an RFP for legal services. This is something that has come up before and that the Committee has discussed.

Mr. Spooner moved for the approval of a Request for Proposals for Legal Services to be brought back to the Committee next month. Mr. Coughlin seconded.

Roll call

Ms. Bonollo-yes; Ms. Cano-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes; Mr. Tenreiro-yes; Mr. Araujo-yes

Motion carries unanimously.

X Presentation/Discussion Items

1 Monthly Financial Report

Ms. Devine: What you have in front of you shows a committed expense of 32% and minimal appropriations of 0% and that's not true.

We are taking in appropriation dollars and you will see that in the next report for December.

2 Monthly Vendor Expense Report

Ms. Devine: A total of \$1,659,393.97 in vendor payments was paid as of December 13, 2013.

3 Pawtucket Graduation Waiver Process

Mrs. Cylke: The Board of Regents changed the graduation requirements at year's juniors were informed if they do not receive a two on the NECAPS, they may not receive a diploma to graduate. I've been on record there that I do not agree with this, but we must comply with those who fund us.

We will bring this back in February for a vote.

Ms. DiCenso: I gave you some background information. In it, the staff aligned with the state model to ensure we were in alignment with the state waiver process. I will say the process will not take place until the end of the fourth quarter and students are not allowed to until they take their third attempt at the NECAPS. They can then apply for a waiver.

Mr. Araujo: Is there any difference between the third time?

Ms. DiCenso: It's testing their proficiency and measuring their performance on standardized assessments.

It's difficult to give a specific date.

Mr. Tenreiro: They've already taken the 2nd list (i.e. Colleges). What percentage of kids in Pawtucket take the PSAT'S?

Ms. DiCenso: Everyone, because we pay for that.

Mr. Tenreiro: That's something we could budget for once transformation money goes away. Something to consider students required to use their own funds.

Ms. DiCenso: They help differ the cost.

Ms. Nordquist: I thought they do offer a waiver for the PSAT?

Ms. DiCenso: It is a good bang for the buck when working with the crusade.

4 Technology and Wireless Updates

Mrs. Cylke: What an incredible work ethic this gentleman has. We have a \$1M grant award due to his work.

Mr. Cristino: We rolled out much needed laptops for the elementary teachers and updated laptops for them to use DreamBox. Unfortunately, we had to turn them down from bringing in their own devices. Our buildings have just one access point to get coverage. We were waiting on e-rate or use on our 90% schools. This may be the first year they may not provide 90% schools.

Mrs. Cylke: Ninety percent were 90% on free and reduced lunch. It's been raised to 95%.

Mr. Cristino: Rhode Island put forward wireless classroom initiative and we put that forward. There are things in that that are not covered full classrooms with students in there working with vendors. Last week we received the award letter for \$1M and would cover only those schools receiving 90%. I wanted to use it at all schools, but will have it vetted by legal. It's a million dollar grant. We pay ahead and Pawtucket is reimbursed. We are paid in stages.

The Skyward implementation is in full swing and the trainer has been here on a day to day basis. They've been excellent to deal with.

Mr. Tenreiro: Thanks for your work for this. My concern is a question. Is there a timeline for how quickly we spend this award?

Our infrastructure is crumbling and we're putting this in. What's the timeline?

Mr. Cristino: The vendor won't start until we start the work. When the money runs out, it runs out. Access points are movable. Standard moving card; we're not losing anything.

Mr. Tenreiro: We're looking at a budget deficit. When we're talking about a budget deficit and talking about computers, I think we need to talk about that what we need at each school.

Mr. Cristino: Pawtucket is part of a pilot program with PARCC. We have to find a way to make it work.

Mr. Spooner: You and Debbie both brought up about this network. Does this alleviate connectivity for you?

Mr. Cristino: It's not going to pick up the areas in the hallways and roaming. It will pick up the library in the high school. Like to us cafeteria, it won't pick up that and it won't pick up the music classroom. It's a \$1M grant that will help a lot. It doesn't cover anything wired, more like switches.

Mrs. Cylke: Strategically, my goal is to be ahead of Providence; like with Skyward. Hersh and I talked about this a lot. One we have your approval we can get to work. Providence, I don't know what their proposal is but my fear is other big districts will use up that money.

5 Tools for Use for the Purpose of the Superintendent's Review

Mr. Spooner: As we know, we need to adopt a format and do this on a yearly basis. We have been lack on this so committees in the future will have something to go by.

Mr. Araujo: I like the idea of an anonymous survey of employees Mr.

Spooner brought to my attention.

Mrs. Cylke: I certainly welcome this. A good evaluation has a 360° performance standards nationally recognized.

I always set goals, however, we move forward. When I asked Tim Ryan and Tim Duffy for examples, I get pointed toward Narragansett. I feel this is appropriate.

6 City/School Department Budget Study Group

Mrs. Cylke: I didn't feel comfortable going forward with the Ad Hoc Committee so I spoke with Tony and he can be straight forward and humorous. He wants to get together with the City Council President and Finance Committee. They really want to meet to talk about the deficit. We have a date set for January 31, 2014.

Mr. Araujo: We have to limit the members to three and I would like to attend.

Ms. Bonollo: It would be important for them to accommodate us too.

Mr. Tenreiro: I think a study group would be fine. I would still like to see where we make a one hour presentation to the City. Here's where the money goes, here are our difficulties and challenges. I think we should take an hour and have a joint meeting.

Ms. Cano would like to take part in this Study Group.

Mr. Coughlin also volunteered to participate in this Study Group.

XI Superintendent's Report

Mrs. Cylke: I'd like to take a moment to share what I see as critical tasks ahead. State housing has the task for determining housing monies and should be done in four weeks. In the past year \$100M

would have been available for communities like ours to tap into, however, it's now down to \$60M and it may be changed to only health and safety. Our Master Plan can easily become a health and safety plan. I was asked to serve, be a member on the Housing Committee.

We are going to be piloting the PARCC tests.

The FY14 deficit, we have four months to deal with that.

SBS wants us to go to RIDE with the systematics to vote for summer projects.

With the FY15 Budget development we experienced and 8% decrease in Federal monies. The Race to The Top monies end.

In twelve months the SIG grant for school improvement funds ends.

We have a challenge ahead. The Facilities Master Plan, I sent the second request to the City Council.

I've asked Patti to start a task force for the 11th grades.

At our next meeting we will be telling you about our 5th graders and where they will be going next year.

We have the Pawtucket Teachers Alliance, the Pawtucket Administrators Association and the Council 94 contracts that are in negotiations or waiting for approval by the City Council.

We are in the process of changing our student information system to Skyward.

We need to start preparing for our FY14 Bond campaign.

We need to keep pushing our music initiatives thanks to community support.

Gateway curriculum for sports. Each student graduates with gateway.

Our strategic plan needs to be revised.

It's not official from RIDE, but we feel confident that our numbers will not be changed. Three years prior to 2010 the high school graduation rates were less than 60%. With a lot of hard work the graduation rates are at 71% and 82%. It shows we're focused. RIDE should be publishing those figures shortly and the average overall graduation rate has gone from 62% to 67% and is now at 75%. We have also made significant progress with our 5th grade outscoring the state average in writing. I feel very confident about that.

The last thing I want to share is that after a lot of thought as of June 30, 2014 I am announcing my retirement from the Pawtucket School District. You will have my full support, 110% until then. My nephew became a dad recently and I'm a grandma. In October, I had to deliver the eulogy of my best friend. I want to focus on the work ahead and I wanted to make that public.

XII Special Reports of School Committee Members

Ms. Bonollo: Good night.

Ms. Cano: I went to visit Shea with Ms. Mendillo and Mr. Miller and there is this partnership called "if you build student success" in which Navigant participates and Gina Raimondo spoke and it was a great celebration. It was National Literacy week and I was very proud to be there congratulating Mr. Miller and Ms. Mendillo who volunteer. Thank you and have a good night.

Mr. Coughlin: I'm disappointed to hear that Superintendent Cylke will be leaving us. I want to wish her well in her retirement.

Ms. Nordquist: Have a good night.

Mr. Spooner: Have a good night.

Mr. Tenreiro: Pass

Mr. Araujo: Thank you, Superintendent Cylke, for your leadership for the last four years.

V Executive Session

Mr. Araujo: The Committee will possibly recess to executive session in accordance with provisions under Title 42, Chapter 46, Subsection 5 (a) (2) (legal advice and litigation/collective bargaining) and (a) (9) (grievances under collective bargaining) of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island for the purpose of discussing and/or acting upon the following:

- 1. Update on status of Pending Litigation and Grievances (Adequacy, Retiree benefit, Nursing College Tuition, ACLU Access to Public Records, OCR Compliance, Teacher Transfer Grievance, Extended Year Grievance)**
- 2. Legal Advice: Update on Status of Budget, Personnel Leave and Accommodation Policies, Consolidation and Purchasing Matters**
- 3. Negotiations – Pawtucket Teacher Alliance and Council 94**
- 4. Seal Executive Session Minutes**

Mr. Coughlin moved to recess to executive session. Mr. Spooner seconded.

Mr. Coughlin objected to item #2 and for the record stated it was not properly posed under the OMA and would not go into executive session.

Roll call

**Ms. Bonollo-yes; Ms. Cano-yes; Mr. Coughlin-no; Ms. Nordquist-yes;
Mr. Spooner-yes; Mr. Tenreiro-yes; Mr. Araujo-yes**

Motion passes six in favor; one opposed.

The Committee recessed to executive session at 7:48 PM to 9:04 PM.

Mr. Coughlin left the meeting at 7:50 PM.

VI Reconvene to open session

The Committee reconvened to open session at 9:12 PM.

a Roll call

**Ms. Bonollo-here; Ms. Cano-here; Mr. Coughlin-left at 7:50 PM; Ms.
Nordquist-here; Mr. Spooner-here; Mr. Tenreiro-here; Mr. Araujo-here**

VII Report out vote(s) of executive session of 1/14/14, if applicable

**The Chairman, Mr. Araujo asked the Clerk if there were any votes to
report out of executive session.**

**The Clerk reported that the Committee voted to seal the executive
session minutes and to adjourn the executive session with a vote of
six to zero on both in the affirmative.**

XIII Adjournment

Mr. Spooner moved to adjourn. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Voice vote carried all in favor.

**The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, adjourned the regular meeting of the
Pawtucket School Committee of Tuesday, January 14, 2014 at 9:13
PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Clerk

Approved 2/11/14