

Regular Meeting of the Pawtucket School Department

Wednesday, November 12, 2014 at 6:00 PM

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

350 Division Street, Pawtucket RI 02860

Minutes

I Meeting will come to order

The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

a. Roll call

Ms. Bonollo-here; Ms. Cano-here; Ms. Nordquist-here; Mr. Spooner-here; Mr. Araujo-here

Also in attendance were Mrs. Patricia DiCenso, Superintendent of Schools; Mrs. Lee Rabbit, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Technology; Ms. Kathleen Suriani, Elementary School Performance Officer; Ms. Melissa Devine, Chief Financial Officer; Mr. Andrew Henneous, Legal Counsel for the Pawtucket School Committee regarding School Food Service Vendor and Mr. Jon Anderson, Legal Counsel for the Pawtucket School Committee.

Mr. Coughlin was not present this evening.

Mr. Tenreiro arrived at 6:23 PM.

b. Pledge of Allegiance

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

II Celebration/Recognition

1. Red Ribbon Winners

Mrs. DiCenso: We are fortunate to have great support during Red Ribbon Week. Children used skits, art and songs for the drug campaign to present at City Hall.

Nathanael Greene received the “School Spirit Award.”

The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, awarded certificates to the Principal, Ms. Monique Jacob, the staff and students. Ms. Jacob thanked her staff for their hard work.

Mrs. DiCenso announced the winner of the grade one through grade 3 category and it was Agnes Little Elementary School.

Agnes Little Principal, Mr. Raymond Dalton, commented that his teachers did a great job as well as the students.

Mrs. DiCenso announced the winner in the grade four through grade six category and it was Virginia M. Cunningham School.

Mrs. Babiec, a teacher at Cunningham, accepted the certificate on behalf of the school. Mrs. Babiec commented that the staff at Cunningham was very proud to participate in this activity and put their heart and soul into everything they do.

The winner in grade seven and eight was Jenks Junior High School. The Principal, Ms. Fasteson accepted the certificate and thanked everyone so much especially the dance and theater teachers who did a great job with their performances. Ms. Fasteson further commented that they were so very proud of their staff and students.

2. Peace Poster Contest Winners

Mrs. DiCenso: The Peace Poster Contest is sponsored by the Lions Club who asked the middle school students to participate in art their message of peace throughout the world.

Deputy Chairperson, Ms. Bonollo, presented certificates to the following winners:

First place went to Jenks student, Celina S.; honorable mention went to Jenks student, Cameron Baxter; honorable mention went to

another Jenks student, Brittany F.

Slater Junior High first place went to Julie R.; honorable mention to Tabitha M. and another honorable mention to Yasmin S.

First place went to Leslie P. at Goff Junior High; honorable mention to Connor S. and another honorable mention to Andrew D.

Superintendent, Mrs. DiCenso, thanked the Lions Club and acknowledged all of the Pawtucket students who participated.

III Special Reports of Student Representatives

Charles E. Shea High School

Shea student Mary G. wanted to give a big shout out to the Shea Soccer Team who sadly lost to South Kingstown in the State Championships due to a penalty.

The Shea Girls' tennis, volleyball and soccer teams were acknowledged for an awesome season.

In addition, Shea was having an application week in which staff helped to facilitate the completion of college applications for students.

The audience was also invited to Shea's Got Talent. An event held annually.

William E. Tolman High School

The Tolman Class President announced that the students raised over \$100 for the Pawtucket Backpackers.

The JROTC Color Squad participated in honoring the Veterans on Veterans Day and the Tolman Chorus played at the Veterans Services as well.

Parent/Teacher conferences were being held tonight from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM. The Homecoming Dance will be held on November 11, 2014 at 6:00 PM.

Tolman High School will be holding a blood drive on November 20, 2014 and everyone is invited to come and donate.

Spirit week is November 24th through November 26th.

Jacqueline M. Walsh School for the Performing and Visual Arts

JMW student, Kristen, commented that on November 3rd JMW had their open house for incoming freshmen. Kristen further commented

on the performances that the JMW students participated in with professionals. Kristen also announced that Family Bingo night was coming up.

IV Public Participation

Comments from the public are invited at this time. Citizens wishing to speak should sign in with the Committee Chair before speaking. The Committee is precluded from discussing or acting on items raised by Public Comment, which are not already on the agenda. Public comment will be included in the minutes of the meeting.

Nancy Iadeluca, Food Service Contract: Good evening. I am here as the Vice President of the Local 217 to speak about the workers and food service program. Tonight I am speaking with a different flavor than in September. We would facilitate an easy switch to whichever vendor you choose this evening. We have reached out to Compass in order for them to sign an agreement to keep health insurance, wages and schedules as they are now.

Sodexo has committed not only to the School District, students and taxpayers, but also to the workers and their committed wages.

I'm asking you to vote Sodexo. Stay with the program that truly cares about each and every child that comes through the line. I hope you

will give consideration to them.

Marina Wilson and Lory Foti; the children: Lory—I am here to remind you that Pawtucket is a nationally recognized food district. We are a model for the rest of the country offering fruits and vegetables. We also have a backpack program for children, also a chef program where students devise their own healthy recipe and compete.

Marina: My kids at Baldwin look forward to the Junior Chef competition and it is a Sodexo sponsored event. I would hate to see that gone.

Carlos Tobon, State Representative Elect; Food Service Contract: Good evening. I've done some research and being a child of this school district and seeing what this current organization has done, they've poured their heart and soul into this. When looking at a rubric and the fact that they can change the numbers as they see fit. I don't know if this can be done with the Rhode Island Department of Education unless it is changing the evaluation criteria.

I would like to see consistency that is in place remain this way. Thank you.

Jen Oulette; Charter Schools: I wanted to speak about the Charter School enrollment. I speak only on research I've done on my own and what I heard at the last meeting. It frustrates me that so many

kids are leaving to attend a charter school. What are we doing to prevent them from leaving?

I would think for parents that sixth grade students may know if they will be college bound. At your last meeting you said there would be another charter opening in Providence, but I don't think many Providence students will fill those slots.

Maybe we could take the two junior high schools, put them together to make one school that focuses on technology. They have grants for roads, what about for schools?

We have great teachers. I have two children in two different schools. I think we could raise the bar to get to the competitive level we want to. I believe in the Pawtucket School System.

Our kids only have one shot at education and we have to do the best for them. I hope we can see some of these changes in the future.

Thank you.

V Executive Session

The Chairman commented that the Committee would recess to executive session in accordance with provision under Title 42, Chapter, 46, Subsection 5 (a) (2) (legal advice and litigation/collective

bargaining) of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island for the purpose of discussing and/or acting upon the following:

- 1. Potential Litigation/Legal Advice—Food Service Vendor/Contract**
- 2. Seal Executive Session Minutes**

Mr. Spooner moved to recess to executive session. Ms. Cano seconded.

Roll call

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

Motion carries unanimously with six members present.

The Committee recessed to executive session at 6:31 PM to 7:36 PM.

VI Reconvene to open session

The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, reconvened the open session at 7:45 PM.

a. Roll call

Ms. Bonollo-here; Ms. Cano-here; Ms. Nordquist-here; Mr.

Spooner-here; Mr. Tenreiro-here; Mr. Araujo-here

VII Report out vote(s) of executive session of 11/12/14, if applicable

The Chairman asked the clerk if there were any votes to report out of executive session.

The clerk reported that the Committee voted unanimously that the final information on the tax and food service decision be shared with the Rhode Island of Education (RIDE); to seal the executive session minutes and to adjourn the executive session with six members present.

VIII Approval of previous meeting minutes

Mr. Tenreiro moved to accept and approve the previous meeting minutes of October 14, 2014. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Voice vote carried unanimously with six members present.

IX Old Business (discussion/Action Items)

1. Approval to Rescind the June 30, 2014 vote on the Food Services Vendor

Ms. Bonollo moved to approve to rescind the June 30, 2014 vote on

the Food Services Vendor. Ms. Cano seconded.

Ms. Nordquist: I'm voting no. When I make a vote, I do so with my conscience. That was what I was elected to do and believe we followed the correct process.

Roll call

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

Motion carries four in favor; two opposed—Ms. Nordquist and Mr. Tenreiro.

2. Approval of Food Services Vendor and Negotiate Contract

Ms. Bonollo moved to reject and rescind all Food Service Requests for Proposals and enter into negotiations with the State approved contracted vendor, Aramark as determined by RIDE. Mr. Spooner seconded.

Mr. Tenreiro: This had a lot of political attraction at the time and hurt the relationship in trust with the City Council. The City Council took Mayor Doyle to court because the Water Board wanting to go with a higher vendor by \$3.5M. Mary Bray felt her vote was against her beliefs and were scare tactics.

I believe this to be permissive language. “The contract may not” will be amended. I do believe the Committee has the right to choose. The legal opinion received mentions that RIDE has the ability to withhold \$3.6M in funding. There is further language that Pawtucket failed to follow the evaluation process. The Learning Education Agency (LEA) may establish its own as required in the Request for Proposal.

Does the School Committee have to follow the subcommittee recommendation? I think no. I believe it to be true to follow on funding. Those are scary tactics that work, “no, you need to do it this way or you don’t get the money.”

I’ve always been a firm believer in the care and custody of the School Committee. I think authority lies within us.

I don’t think that we’ve appealed to the USDA for an opinion on this. It’s very difficult and there is a lot of work that needs to be done. Some language needs to be changed. I will listen to the deliberation and make my decision. It’s important to know that we don’t make decisions just to make decisions.

Mr. Spooner: Would you change the motion to form of bypass RFP’s?

Ms. Bonollo: Motion withdrawn.

Ms. Bonollo moved to reject and rescind all previous requests for proposals and enter into a contract with state approved vendor, Aramark, subject to acceptable, negotiated terms. Mr. Spooner seconded.

Ms. Bonollo: I have made the motion and I am the last person that wants to remove the food service contract we have. They are loyal to our students. The food is more than acceptable and far above the standards. RIDE's threat is that they will withhold approximately \$4M in funding and I will not allow RIDE to withhold funding and jeopardize our students. They have taken our choice away and that of the students.

We have to use their RFP so we can have our bonds and that is one of the issues if we continue as we are. I'm not willing to lose food service funding for our students. What I believe is best for the City is to go forward with the vote.

In order to protect the needs of our staff, students and buildings and I have to follow my motion and I am sorry.

Ms. Cano: In June, we took a vote and I voted what would be the best nutritional value of our students. We did not have information from RIDE and we would lose our \$4M reimbursement to our program and eventually it would take away a profit from food service and possible

tax exemption for our bond. We asked for the tax opinion and we only got that opinion today in executive session. We were provided with three options. Some things could be a new vendor, commit to vendor to our employees.

Mr. Araujo asked legal counsel, Mr. Henneous, if it was okay for Ms. Cano to continue to speak about the Committee's options. Mr. Henneous agreed Ms. Cano could continue.

We raised some questions, would this approved state vendor retain the current employees that is why the motion was made so that we could protect the employees. It is because of employees, but also our children.

Ms. Cano: One reason I took to go with Sodexo was the nutritional value of the food. I would assume they would follow the guidelines of nutrition and we can hold them to high standards. We do have a nutritionally recognized food service program. I want to ensure you the best work is put into negotiations. Thank you.

Ms. Nordquist: When you have to apologize for doing something you believe, that says a lot after the amount of time and due diligence we put in. We're in a sad situation. On June 30th, when this was presented to us, I think there was a one on one with Chartwells and Sodexo based on loyalty, national accolades and nutrition.

I've always voted my conscience. My big issue is that I didn't agree that they would serve breakfast at door. I do, however, have a problem when weeks following, it became a political issue. "I should be thrown in jail for my vote." I also feel that it was unfortunate that a member was not there to vote and not here again this evening, but was the Monday quarterback about the issue.

I made my vote. If you can stand up for what you believe in, you shouldn't back down. I echo Mr. Tenreiro's statements. We know that the price or higher rate of return would come from another vendor. The rate of return with Aramark would be the lowest. I don't know why Sodexo came in the way they did because it's such a huge difference. I think if Sodexo knew the rubric, they would have bid differently.

One reason I felt not to go forward is because the power of the School Committee has been taken away. Joanne said it's mandated, but RIDE said if you don't choose this one, you will lose funding. I want to thank Ms. Devine and Mrs. DiCenso for all of your hard work.

I will be abstaining from this vote because I've already voted. My colleagues decided to rescind that vote. I am not going to be told how to vote.

Mr. Spooner: I just want to go back to June and say it was a very impassioned night. I was very concerned about one individual and

she is no longer here. She went above and beyond for this district.

Ms. Nordquist: Because the extension runs out on November 30th, this vote must take place very shortly. I was impressed with what I saw at Fallon a few years ago. The hard work is not going undone.

The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, turned the Chair over to the Deputy Chairperson, Ms. Bonollo.

Mr. Araujo: I want to say back on June 30th, it was the toughest decision I had to make. I echo Ms. Cano and Ms. Bonollo's remarks, these employee groups, you're very important to us. By refusing this RFP, we can negotiate without this clause in there and would protect the Pawtucket School Department and protect the City by not putting the bonds at risk.

If we go with the motion of Ms. Bonollo this way, we won't have to face it anymore. I cannot tell you how difficult of a decision this was to make. I know how hard this is for Sodexo.

The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, returned to his seat as Chairperson.

Ms. Nordquist: The reason we cannot just accept Aramark's bid is because the extension runs out on November 30th and the funding may be rescinded. We can go with that because they are the state approved vendor. If RIDE changes the RFP process, this could go

out to bids again with the new Committee again in the spring.

Ms. Cano: By having this issue raised, RIDE now knows other communities face the same bond consequences and they may change the rubric and Pawtucket may be the model for this change.

Ms. Bonollo: This was the first year that RIDE used this rubric and it was Pawtucket who had the issue and this may be the last year that RIDE uses this rubric.

Roll call

Ms. Bonollo-voting under duress, yes; Ms. Cano-yes; Ms. Nordquist-abstain; Mr. Spooner-yes; Mr. Tenreiro-yes; Mr. Araujo-yes

Motion carries five in favor; one abstention-Ms. Nordquist.

X Action Items

1. Approval of Rhode Island Department of Education Memorandum of Agreement—School Construction

Mr. Anderson commented in an abundance of caution, we ask that you approve this Memorandum of Agreement even though you discussed this project in October, 2013.

Mr. Tenreiro moved to approve the Rhode Island Department of

Education Memorandum of Agreement—School Construction. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Ms. Cano: Is construction work going out to bid for this project?

Mr. Anderson: Yes.

Roll call

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

Motion carries unanimously with six members present.

2. Approval of Certified Coaching Appointments

Mrs. DiCenso: I would like your support on approving two Tolman coaches:

Matthew Medina, Assistant Wrestling Coach and Jason Ruston, Wrestling Coach.

Mr. Ruston is a member of the Tolman High School staff.

Ms. Bonollo moved to approve the Tolman coaches as recommended by the Superintendent, Mrs. DiCenso. Mr. Spooner seconded.

Voice vote carries unanimously with six members present.

3. Approval of Non Certified Appointment

Mrs. DiCenso: We are asking for your approval for a non-certified appointment, Clerk III-A, certified payroll in the Administration Building, Business Office:

Karen Barriere

This position was formally filled with a School Department employee, however, found it to be too stressful and requested to return to his previous position which per contract, by so many days, they are able to do.

Ms. Nordquist moved to approve the non-certified appointment, Clerk III-A Certified Payroll Clerk, Business Office to Karen Barriere as recommended by Superintendent, Mrs. DiCenso. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Ms. Bonollo: The current employee was tested?

Mrs. DiCenso: Yes.

Voice vote carries unanimously with six members present.

4. Approval of Out of State Field Trips

Mrs. DiCenso: At the last meeting, Mr. Tenreiro asked about whether we approve out of state field trips and we pulled some from other communities and Mr. Anderson felt if our students were leaving the state, the trips should be approved by the Committee.

Mr. Spooner moved to approve out of state field trips as recommended by Superintendent, Mrs. DiCenso. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Ms. Bonollo: I attended these trips 36 years ago when I was in school.

Mr. Tenreiro: I feel it's very important that these are approved with everything going on.

Voice vote carries unanimously with six members present.

5. Approval of Energy Service Contract

Superintendent, Mrs. DiCenso, turned this agenda item over to Ms. Devine, Chief Financial Officer.

Ms. Devine: The current contract is with Constellation Energy and

will expire in December, 2014. Through the Rhode Island Association of School Committee collaborative, in June, 2012 they went out to bid and they awarded the contract to Direct Energy. We are looking for you to approve a three (3) year contract with Direct Energy. The price changes every day and as of this morning the prices are estimated at:

December 2014 – December 2015, Year one—10.76 cents/kwh

December 2014 – December 2016, Year two—10.25 cents/kwh

December 2014 – December 2017, Year three—9.98 cents/kwh

The District uses about 5 million kwh per year. Previously priced at 7.8 cents the price has gone up.

Ms. Bonollo moved to approve a three (3) year Energy Service Contract to Direct Energy as recommended. Mr. Spooner seconded.

Voice vote carries unanimously with six members present.

XI Presentation/Discussion Items

1. Monthly Finance Report

Ms. Devine: It's for two (2) months, August and September. In September, as you know, we are hoping to take back the budget for revision.

The year to date expenses are \$13.7M, or 12.83% of the budget. \$23M in revenues received to date are still on tonight.

2. Monthly Vendor Expense Report

Ms. Devine: The Vendor expense reflects the checks issued on behalf of the City for the School Department. The current total is \$2.2M and includes payments to every vendor in the City.

3. Correspondence from City Finance Director—School Deficit Reduction Plan of FY2010

Mr. Araujo: This is a public document that Mrs. L'Heureux sent on behalf of the City to pay the FY15 payment out of the FY14 surplus.

Ms. Bonollo: It's the deficit reduction plan. It keeps us balanced.

Mr. Araujo: It also helps with the bond rating.

Mr. Tenreiro: It's a pretty great accomplishment with the Mayor's Office working together.

XII Superintendent Report's

Mrs. DiCenso: We have a parent and committee member elect wearing two (2) hats and we want to thank Ms. McQuade for our

anti-bullying campaign. We need to be sending a better message to our students.

Thank you, thank you, and thank you, to the voters who approved our bond. We had such a busy summer working on projects in the schools to get them ready for the start of school.

We need to reconvene that commission soon. We have emergency plans developed and they were sent over to RIDE that can only be shared in executive session for the protection of our children.

I want to congratulate the Administration team, including Lynn Cristino who had a flex day where teachers could choose a skill set in the classroom.

XIII Special Report of School Committee Members

Ms. Bonollo: Thank you to Tolman High School for their support of the Backpackers program to have raised over \$100 on their own. I have to get back into gear.

Thank you to Dennis Rebelo who received a letter that we received \$7,000 in light bulbs. Lumen in the same wattage is less, once again saving energy.

I'm glad the election is over and would like to welcome the new

members.

Ms. Cano: I would like to say I was able to be at a math conference, PTCA to see high school students participate in competing for a \$500 raffle. It went to a student from Shea High School.

Last Saturday I was proud to see a group of Shea students participating in Clean City.

After I had the opportunity to be at the Veterans Ceremony and was excited to see the Tolman Band and JROTC. The Officers addressed the veterans attending the event.

Thank you to the voters of Pawtucket for the opportunity to serve them on the City Council. I am sorry to be leaving the School Committee, but am looking forward to working collaboratively. Please call me when you need me. Thank you.

Ms. Nordquist: There were fifth grade students who participated in a photo contest sponsored by Ms. Patricia Zacks. I saw her picture recently in the paper with the Mayor and I want to congratulate my niece Trinity and the others who participated.

The Mayor did not even know she was my niece. I'm glad to see community partners working collaboratively with students.

The Tolman Softball team is fund raising right now for new uniforms.

I think there will be another meeting before Thanksgiving, however, I miss the rivalry of the Tolman versus Saints game, but Tolman and Shea will be playing.

Have a good night.

Mr. Spooner: I want to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and “Go Tigers!”

Mr. Tenreiro: Happy Thanksgiving everyone.

Mr. Araujo: Go Raiders! I believe in the Shea Raiders having attended Shea High School myself and all but one of my children as well. Congratulations to the new members, I am looking forward to working with you and Ms. Bonollo.

I want to thank the residents for voting on the bond. This is just the beginning. We are going to be moving in the right direction.

Mrs. DiCenso: To re-iterate Ms. Nordquist with pictures, our goal is to do it in every elementary school in grade five (5).

XIV Adjournment

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

Voice vote carried unanimously with six members present.

The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, adjourned the regular meeting of the Pawtucket School Committee on Wednesday, November 12, 2014 at 8:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Clerk

Accepted and Approved by the School Committee 12/9/2014