

**BUDGET WORKSHOP/SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PAWTUCKET  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Thursday, March 19, 2015 at 6:00 PM**

**William E. Tolman High School Auditorium**

**150 Exchange Street, Pawtucket, RI 02860**

**Public Participation at 7:00 PM**

**Minutes**

**I. Meeting will come to order**

**The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, called the meeting to order at 6:09 PM.**

**a. Roll call**

**Ms. Bonollo-here; Mr. Charbonneau-here; Ms. Dube-here; Ms. Grant-here; Mr. Knight-here; Ms. McQuade-here; Mr. Araujo-here**

**Also in attendance were Mrs. Patricia DiCenso, Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Lee Rabbitt, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Melissa Devine, Chief Financial Officer; Mr. Robert Wall, Director of Special Education; Mr. Hersh Cristino, Chief Information and Innovation Officer; Mr. Dennis Rebelo, Director of Facilities; Mr. Jon Winikur and Mr. Ed Edelman, Strategic Building Solutions and Mr. Jon Anderson, Legal Counsel.**

**b. Pledge of Allegiance**

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

## **II. Executive Session**

**The Chairman commented that the Committee would recess to executive session in accordance with provisions under Rhode Island General Laws, Title 42, Chapter 46, Subsection 5(a) (2) for the purpose of discussing and/or acting upon collective bargaining:**

- 1. Pawtucket Teachers Alliance**
- 2. Local 1352**
- 3. Seal Executive Session Minutes**

**Mr. Knight moved for the Committee to recess to executive session.**

**Ms. Grant seconded.**

**Roll call**

**Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Charbonneau-yes; Ms. Dube-yes; Ms. Grant-yes;**

**Mr. Knight-yes; Ms. McQuade-yes; Mr. Araujo-yes**

**Motion carries unanimously.**

### **III. Reconvene to open session**

**The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, reconvened the open session at 7:12 PM.**

#### **a. Roll call**

**Ms. Bonollo-here; Mr. Charbonneau-yes; Ms. Dube-here; Ms. Grant-here; Mr. Knight-here; Ms. McQuade-here; Mr. Araujo-here**

### **IV. Report out vote(s) of executive session of 3/19/15, if applicable**

**The Clerk reported that the Committee voted unanimously regarding collective bargaining, to seal the executive session minutes and to adjourn the executive session.**

### **V. Old Business/Action Items**

#### **a. Approval of My School Bucks Contract**

**Mr. Anderson: At the last meeting there was a question and I am here to answer that.**

**Ms. Bonollo moved to approve the My School Bucks Contract. Mr. Charbonneau seconded.**

**Mr. Knight: This is a contract with the Pawtucket Public Schools and a vendor, Heartland and if there is a problem with a stolen debit card or credit card we could be brought in. The food service vendor provides the service.**

**Mr. Anderson: We're the merchant operating the program.**

**Mr. Knight: Do we have a hold harmless agreement with Heartland?**

**Mr. Anderson: No.**

**Mr. Knight: So we could be party to a lawsuit?**

**Mr. Anderson: You are correct. The agreement assigns a risk to the School Department. I can do the legal in terms of district advice whether the concern you're raising and the School Department has a problem with the relationship. The School Committee should vote no. I am answering a legal question. I answer risk questions.**

**Ms. Devine: I polled districts and received seven responses because of the concern. I re-polled about the fees and received three responses and of the three responding to the liability issue, all responded no and one district uses it for other collections of money.**

**Mr. Knight: Have we looked at a sort of fee to collect from Heartland for the expense?**

**Ms. Devine: No.**

**Mr. Anderson: The answer is no if the parent wants to pay with a**

**credit card. There is a potential for risk; a risk placed on you. Heartland is going to provide the service.**

**Mr. Knight: Have we asked Heartland for indemnification on this issue?**

**Mr. Araujo turned the Chair to the Deputy Chairman, Mr. Charbonneau.**

**Mr. Araujo: Is there something we can write that the Pawtucket Schools will not be responsible?**

**Mr. Anderson: My response is Heartland will say no. It's a merchant vendor agreement.**

**Mr. Araujo: I've had other constituents contact me about this and would like the option here in Pawtucket.**

**Mr. Araujo took back the Chair from the Deputy Chairman, Mr. Charbonneau.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: Do we have compliances in place?**

**Ms. Devine: That's a technology question.**

**Mr. Cristino commented about Heartland's certificate and encryption.**

**Ms. Bonollo:** With the credit card processing system who is reconciling the account?

**Ms. Devine:** You log into the website the company then deposits and the City reconciles and we record the receipt.

**They'll give you a report and the city has the reports.**

**Ms. Bonollo:** Who will be reconciling how long of a re-lapse will there be?

**Ms. Devine:** I don't have online banking access. I can have one of my employees do it.

**Ms. Bonollo:** What's the notification time?

**Ms. Devine:** We would have to be notified by the City.

**Ms. Bonollo:** But how long? That's a month's worth of food.

**Ms. Devine:** Processes can be put in place for that.

**Mr. Knight:** I'm reading we'll be responsible for charge backs. Are we going to be the entity chasing fraudulent charges?

**Mr. Anderson:** We are talking about school lunches. If a student is getting a lot of sun butter sandwiches, it will be flagged. This is not something like a car or jewelry. This is about school lunch.

**Mr. Knight:** What is the cost of a bounced check?

**Ms. Devine:** I asked if we are charged for that and the City has not charged us with insufficient fund fees.

**Mr. Knight:** Is there going to be a possible charge from Heartland or the City? The Pawtucket Water Department does charge \$35 on returned checks and I know that for a fact.

**Ms. Devine:** I'm not privy to how the City handles that. The City has the right to charge back to the School Department.

**Roll call**

**Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Charbonneau-yes; Ms. Dube-yes; Ms. Grant-no; Mr. Knight-no; Ms. McQuade-yes; Mr. Araujo-yes**

**Motion carries five in favor; two opposed—Ms. Grant and Mr. Knight.**

## **VI. Public Participation**

**Comments from the public are invited at this time. Persons 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**

**None**

## **VII. New Business/Action Items**

### **a. Approval of Administrator Appointment**

**Mrs. DiCenso: I would like Dr. Monique Jacob to come up to the podium. This summer Dr. Jacob was appointed as the Interim Principal at Nathanael Greene Elementary School and took the job on with great excitement and energy and worked out with starting late and getting the school opened smoothly. We advertised for this position and Dr. Jacob applied and was voted unanimously to the job.**

**Dr. Jacob is a Rhode Island Department of Education Fellow Teacher; a district level teacher; a district level administrator for reform and she embraces change and realizes challenges. We are lucky to have her on her journey to Pawtucket. She loves our children.**

**Dr. Jacob thanked Mrs. DiCenso for all of her help and support.**

**Ms. Grant moved to approve Dr. Monique Jacob to the Administrative Position as the Nathanael Greene Elementary School Principal. Ms. Bonollo seconded.**

## **Roll call**

**Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Charbonneau-yes; Ms. Dube-yes; Ms. Grant-yes;  
Mr. Knight-yes; Ms. McQuade-yes; Mr. Araujo-yes**

**Motion carries unanimously.**

### **b. Approval of RFP Scoring Matrix**

**Mr. Winikur: This was reviewed and we talked about the selection criteria at the subcommittee meeting last week. If you approve the matrix tonight, we can distribute and review and the top three firms will be selected next Tuesday.**

**Ms. McQuade moved to approve the RFP Scoring Matrix. Ms. Grant seconded.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: The recommendation of the Facilities Subcommittee was to approve the scoring matrix rubrics.**

**Ms. Dube: Are any weighted heavier than the others?**

**Mr. Araujo: No. Equal weight.**

## **Roll call**

**Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Charbonneau-yes; Ms. Dube-yes; Ms. Grant-yes;  
Mr. Knight-yes; Ms. McQuade-yes; Mr. Araujo-yes**

**Motion carries unanimously.**

## **VIII. Discussion Items**

### **a. FY2016 Budget**

**Mrs. DiCenso: You all received a copy of the proposed FY16 budget. If you are using your computer, you have a copy of the PowerPoint. We prioritized the districts needs and wanted to be sure our students have 21st Century opportunities.**

**In elementary it's not so specific, they do have common planning time. I felt it unfair to the elementary schools to meet during this time and included one to one computers and the dual language pilot program.**

**The Chinese Confucius Partnership with the University of Rhode Island (URI) will bring in Chinese language immersion program in the junior highs.**

**Initiative for roll out we maintained a strong feeling that we are moving this out next year. Hersh working out with other districts something we felt was essential for our students to have 21st Century**

**Learning.**

**Science kits have not been replaced since 2005. We made a commitment to purchase new kits and sent teachers to see how it aligned to the content.**

**We have an International Charter School immersing children to learn another language by the time they hit the middle school.**

**We were fortunate to partner with the International Charter School for the dual language program.**

**We have the partnership with URI to obtain highly qualified teachers.**

**Starr Renaissance reading in grades kindergarten through grade two. The data and growth models we are about to watch teachers incredible growth. The program we are currently using, Dibble, is not the newest model and doesn't align to our current kindergarten through grade 12 program.**

**The bottom line projected estimate from RIDE for Charters is \$725,000. Transformation funds will be sun setting and those positions are gone. We had to shift staff to reflect the district's priorities. We are re-purposing staff to elementary based on projections. I am concerned about some positions that need to be put in the general budget.**

**Facilities:** We have one plumber for sixteen buildings. I'd like to see a decrease in the overtime and increase in staff that will better serve the district.

**Health and Dental Insurance:** We have received guidance that the increase would be between five and six percent. We projected and put it in the middle. Pension increase of 5.6%; workers' compensation insurance went up ten percent and utilities increased by \$241,000; transportation is estimated at two percent.

**Revenue:** State aid is 71%; City appropriation is 27%. We are over budget at \$134,283.00.

There is also the 2% reimbursement from Medicaid and some from JMW tuition.

Last year Hersh had a very big technology budget, but it's still not enough. As much as we thought about pushing it out a lot of upgrades we wanted to do we were hoping to get into refurbishing cycle.

The Special Education out of district placements is slightly increased but we don't have much of a pad there.

We trimmed very low in that area.

**RIDE in 2017 will be transferring to a Basic Education Plan (BEP) mandate that all districts will have full day kindergarten. We funded this by Title One and went to move these monies to the local budget but we did not want to take the money out and move it over so it makes the issue much bigger next year.**

**The kindergarten money is \$1.4M in teaching staff and has to be moved to the local budget. We may have to go as far as to talk to RIDE about our distressed district.**

**We had to make a decision between science and spelling and our spelling books are from 1999. We need the science kits.**

**Transformation administrators: we had to put into Title but it's not optimal for what we want to keep doing. The total of salaries and benefits in FY16 are 82.8% and in FY15 the total of salaries and benefits was 83.3%.**

**Mr. Knight: Under the miscellaneous revenue, how much is in JMW tuition?**

**Ms. Devine: \$300,000.**

**Mr. Knight: What about the Davies tuition? How much is going out? We're paying \$1.4M to Davies and \$2.9M for Charters.**

**Ms. Bonollo: Do you know the per pupil cost?**

**Ms. Devine: It will be \$2,282 for next year. That is the rate Pawtucket pays.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: That's the local aid, but the state aid follows the student.**

**Ms. Bonollo: The change in expense; that has reduced our per pupil cost?**

**Mrs. DiCenso: No, the extra is the number of students leaving us to go to Charters as they add additional grades.**

**Ms. Dube: Central Administration when it lists non public textbooks; because if the Governor's budget passes that goes away.**

**Ms. Devine: If that does go through, that would be a savings.**

**Ms. Dube: This is done without the Governor's budget passing?**

**Ms. Devine: Yes.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: Utilities; what is \$241,203?**

**Ms. Devine: All utilities are going up.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: It was frustrating for me looking at this budget. This City voted overwhelmingly to hand out \$32M to fix our buildings and we're looking at a 3.2% increase in supplies for teachers and students. This is unacceptable to me.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: The \$32M bond that does not include furniture that is all Health and Safety. Most districts would look at funding new furniture as well.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: Do we go to our State Delegation? Do we go to our City Council? We have to fix it.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: This is a discussion item feel free to contact Melissa or me with any questions. Our problem is when we wait too long we can't purchase things for professional development in a timely manner. If you could come to a consensus in approving the budget in April, we could roll out initiatives in a timely fashion.**

**We can't approve it until its level.**

**Mr. Araujo: We could ask the City for additional money or go back and look for cuts.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: What is the cost for spelling books at the**

**Elementary level?**

**Mrs. DiCenso: About \$50,000 but it depends on how you do it. It could be \$100,000.**

**Mr. Knight: I don't understand what you're saying about level. We have a deficit. We are required to submit an approved budget.**

**Ms. Devine: You can't ask for more than 4%.**

**Mr. Knight: We don't need to cut anything on this but I agree with some things the Superintendent said we need. Davies tuition up until four or five years ago was not part of our budget. Renovate and bring back the vocational students.**

**Thank you, you put out one heck of a budget.**

**Ms. Bonollo: I asked last year to put the previous years' budget so the new Committee Members could see the difference.**

**Ms. Devine: The major part of that is UCOA. I won't be able to put the old budgets in this format. This is an excel spreadsheet and it will mess up the format. I can print reports from the old system.**

**I want to correct the vocational tuitions. We may have a student going to Cranston and one other going to East Providence.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: We rely on state aid and the March snapshot is based on the average daily membership calculated by RIDE. The formula is figured with free and reduced lunch and daily membership. Mrs. DiCenso read a letter received from Andrea Castaneda from RIDE addressed to Chairman Araujo. (Addendum A)**

**I want to thank everyone especially Dennis for letting me reduce the snow removal budget for next year. I also want to thank Lee Rabbit for her hard work, Hersh Cristino and all the directors for all of their hard work.**

#### **b. Subcommittee Updates**

- Facilities Subcommittee**

**Mr. Charbonneau: We held a Facilities Subcommittee meeting on March 12, 2015 and approved the scoring matrix rubrics that we brought forward and approved tonight.**

**We tabled the motion to conduct an accessibility of all district schools. We approved the project manager to create a report of ongoing participation of MBE and WBE companies during all phases of the \$32 million bond project and we invited two teachers, Ms. Pissonault and Ms. Rundlett whose names will be brought forward to the full committee for approval.**

- **Policy Subcommittee**

**Ms. Dube:** We had a meeting on March 16 and our next meeting is scheduled on April 6th. We will be bringing back recommendations to the full committee in April.

- **St. Leo's Subcommittee**

**Mr. Araujo:** We had a meeting last night and had a positive dialogue. We will meet again on April 8th and will be doing a walk through with City Councilor, Tetreault.

- **Wellness Subcommittee**

**Ms. McQuade:** The Pawtucket Day is on May 2nd at Vets Park next to Nathanael Greene Elementary. We have a lot of community support and hope to see you there. Our next meeting is April 8 and if anyone wants to come, you're invited to do so.

## **IX. Superintendent's Report**

**Mrs. DiCenso:** I want to give a big shout out to Hersh and his team. No one understands how many chromebooks got up and running. Our teachers didn't complain once and it went very smoothly. Students were ready and had no infrastructure issues because they knew what to do.

**Lee Rabbitt got an email from a principal and I have to say there a lot of good things that go on:**

**“I just want to let you know the testing went fantastic today. There were minor issues in the am that were corrected for the pm. We finished all ELA and IEP students. Thank you to everyone who helped especially Jennifer Carney, Lee Rabbit, Kathy, Hersh and Ron, the test facilitator. I heard many compliments from teachers on how well it went.”**

**Thank you all and thank you to the teachers who stepped up.**

## **X. Special Reports of School Committee Members**

**Ms. Bonollo: Good night.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: I would just echo the Superintendent’s thoughts. Thank you to the teachers. My children were excited to take this test. Good night.**

**Ms. Dube: Good night.**

**Ms. Grant: I want to thank our Special Education Director, Bob Wall. Mr. Wall sits on the SELAC which for those of you who do not know is the Special Education Local Advisory Committee. Every district is required to have one and it is typically run by a parent but we’re**

working on it. On Tuesday evening with the help of a special education teacher from Winters and a parent liaison from Varieur and four parents showed up. It was tremendous. Mr. Wall provided information about support visit and answered questions from the parents. I felt informed and proud. Thank you very much. Have a good night.

Mr. Knight: I want to thank every one of our staff this past week has been one of the most difficult in the last ten years and I want to say thank you for all your hard work.

Ms. McQuade: I want to blow sunshine on everyone else. It's been a pleasure to see this professionalism of this district and I talk to parents whose children are in private schools and want to transfer their children to our public schools. Thank you, thank you, and thank you!

Mr. Araujo: I would just echo Ms. McQuade and the Superintendent. Thank you for following through Hersh and the educators. Also I'd like to give a shout out to Patti and Melissa for working on this budget. Also thank you to Mrs. Rabbitt. Good night.

## **XI. Adjournment**

Mr. Charbonneau moved to adjourn. Ms. McQuade seconded.

**Voice vote carries unanimously.**

**The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, adjourned the Budget Workshop/Special Meeting of the Pawtucket School Committee on Thursday, March 19, 2015 at 8:30 PM.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Clerk**

**Approved by School Committee April 14, 2015**