

Warwick Community Outreach Educational Committee
Minutes for July 13, 2016

Members Present: Karen Bachus (co-chair), Sarah Callahan, Nathan Cornell (co-chair), Ed Ladouceur, Darlene Netcoh (clerk), Michael Pierce, Anthony Sinapi

- I. Call to Order:** Nathan Cornell officially called the meeting to order at 6:12 pm.
- II. Vote to Approve Minutes:** The committee voted to approve the minutes of June 1, 2016. Sarah Callahan and Ed Ladouceur abstained because they did not attend the June 1, 2016 meeting.
- III. Discussion: Review of Topics Discussed at Previous Meeting.** The committee reviewed the issues, particularly consolidation and special education.
- IV. Discussion: Warwick Students' Advisory Committee Report.** Cornell reported that the committee will resume meeting in the fall.
- V. Discussion: Consolidation Update**
 - A.** Karen Bachus said that the superintendent sends pictures and little briefs daily. The chairs of the auditoriums have been ripped out. She said that a lot of money that should be going to education is being spent. She said that the superintendent is talking about a seven-million-dollar field house and athletic center at Vets. She said that they should have kept Vets as a high school.
 - B.** Ladouceur asked if the construction happening right now is part of the \$3.1 million-dollar grant. He said that the mayor had appointed a committee to oversee the project. The committee has never met. The school district was not supposed to move forward without the committee.
 - C.** Darlene Netcoh said that if they are going to build a field house, they should have thought about following one of SMMA's recommendations and built a new school at the Vets complex.
 - D.** Cornell asked about the boiler at Vets, and Bachus said that a few months ago it was an emergency, and now it is not.
 - E.** Mike Pierce said that he looked on the district's Web site, and as of July 7, the contract change orders totaled \$3.5 million.
 - F.** Bachus said that the superintendent has "an awful lot of money" to spend on non-educational matters.
 - G.** Pierce said that for the record the most notable thing about all of the technology that has been ordered is that teachers were not consulted.
 - H.** Netcoh seconded Pierce's concern that teachers have not been consulted about anything. When the science teachers saw the carts that had been ordered for them, they said not to order them because they are too big and bulky. She said that over the years through the RITTI program teachers have earned a great deal of technology for their classrooms. Over April vacation Doug Alexander and his staff went through the schools and red-dotted everything, including teachers' personal property. The old technology is better than no technology.
 - I.** Bachus said that teachers know what is best.
 - J.** Anthony Sinapi asked Ladouceur if his motion to put a tighter control over transfers passed.
 - K.** Ladouceur said that they can only vote up or down.
 - L.** Sinapi said that as long as the provision in the charter is ratified, transfers are supposed to go to the council or the mayor; because it was ratified, it counts.
 - M.** There was a discussion about Aldrich and Gorton. Aldrich is supposed to be returned to the city, and Gorton is going to be the new administration building.
 - N.** Bachus said that administration has told her that the scheduling is almost done.

- O. Netcoh said that there are people moving into the city. Ladouceur said that parts of the real estate market are booming.
 - P. There was a discussion about the numbers of students at Pilgrim versus Toll Gate. The buildings were used differently when they were first built. Every room at Pilgrim is going to be filled. There are going to be twenty teachers in the English department at Pilgrim.
 - Q. There was a discussion about the re-posting of the position of director of secondary, the problems with scheduling, and the proposed elementary consolidation. Cornell said he questioned the administration about doing everything at once.
- VI. Discussion: School Construction/Moving of Materials**
- A. Netcoh described her experience of packing the Gorton English Department books in June. When she arrived at Gorton on that day, there were only ten boxes for all of the departments to use. She had to call the superintendent and complain.
 - B. Pierce described his experience of packing up years' worth of his materials.
- VII. Discussion/Action: Special Education Investigation**
- A. Sinapi shared his letter in response to J. David Sienko.
 - B. Ladouceur said that he talked to Sienko. Ladouceur is going to rescind his earlier resolution and have RIDE conduct the investigation, He said that this committee does not have the resources to conduct an investigation. What it did was give people the confidence to come forward. Teachers and parents have come to him. They are concerned that their children will be removed from IEPs and be given 504s instead. Ladouceur said that we should have a public meeting and have as many people in this room as we can.
 - C. Pierce said that he noticed that after the city council passed the resolution, the administration was much more careful with IEPs.
 - D. Netcoh said that the teacher observations got better too.
 - E. Ladouceur said he wants to forward Sinapi's letter to the city's legal counsel. Cornell made the motion, Bachus seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously. Ladouceur said he would wait to hear from legal counsel.
 - F. Sinapi said that even the Special Education Advisory Committee had questions about services for next year.
 - G. Pierce said that they haven't explained how special education students are going to be serviced next year.
 - H. There was a discussion about when the public meeting should be held. The committee decided that October would be a good time to hold a meeting.
- VIII. Information and Proposals from Committee Members:** Sinapi said that we should send letters to parents and conduct a survey about the issues.
- IX. Public Comment**
- A. One member of the public said that his oldest son is eligible for Drum Rock, but he did not send him there because he is not satisfied with the resources, and there is not enough green space. He also wondered if there were some way to auction off parts of Vets to raise funds.
 - B. Another member of the public said that legally that may not be possible and that realistically it would have to be planned. He said that inventory should have been taken at all of the closed schools. He said that it is "minor league logistics." He also said that one of his children has an IEP. The administration changed it to a 504, but that plan did not work, so she got the IEP back. He also said that during the last election there was supposed to be a committee similar to this one, but it never met.
 - C. Netcoh said that she is aware of this committee because the mayor asked her to be on it, and it never met.
- X. Next Meeting: TBD.**
- XI. Adjournment: 8:30 pm**