

School Committee Business Meeting/Workshop
School Administration Offices
1675 Flat River Road

September 7, 2010

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Patenaude at 6:00 p.m.

Members present were: Chairperson Katherine Patenaude, Vice-Chairman Andrew 'Ben Perra, Members Nancy Sprengelmeyer, Thomas Hetherman and Lisa Tomasso, Superintendent Michael Convery, Assistant Superintendent James Erinakes, Finance Director Robin Reasor, Special Education Director Susan Lyons, and Attorneys Stephen Adams and Matthew Plain.

Recording Secretary: Donna A. McDonald

Executive Session: Personnel, Litigation, Negotiations

Motion No. 10-8-1 by Member Sprengelmeyer, seconded by Vice-Chairman Perra, that the Committee recess into executive session at 6:01 p.m. to consider matter(s) relating specifically to personnel, litigation and negotiations; said action being taken in accord with Open Meetings Act, Sections 42-46-5(a)(1)&(2).

<u>Roll Call Vote:</u>	Chairperson Patenaude	<u>AYE</u>
	Vice-Chairman Perra	<u>AYE</u>
	Member Sprengelmeyer	<u>AYE</u>
	Member Hetherman	<u>AYE</u>
	Member Tomasso	<u>AYE</u>

Motion No. 10-8-2 by Member Tomasso, seconded by Member Sprengelmeyer, to recess to the Open Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

<u>Roll Call Vote:</u>	Chairperson Patenaude	<u>AYE</u>
	Vice-Chairman Perra	<u>AYE</u>
	Member Sprengelmeyer	<u>AYE</u>
	Member Hetherman	<u>AYE</u>
	Member Tomasso	<u>AYE</u>

Motion No. 10-8-3 by Member Tomasso, seconded by Member Hetherman, that the records of the executive session be kept closed pursuant to Sections 42-46-4 and 42-46-5. Motion unanimously approved.

Business Agenda:

The regular business meeting reconvened at 7:05 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence for the pending school business. Vice-Chairman Perra notified the public of emergency exits and read the Mission Statement.

Personnel: Superintendent Convery reported that we are very close to being fully staffed.

Certified Leaves of Absence:

Motion No. 10-9-4 by Member Tomasso, seconded by Vice-Chairman Perra, to approve a paid leave of absence for Jennifer Houghton, Resource Teacher at Western Coventry School, from approximately 9/30/10 to 11/16/10. (maternity) Motion unanimously approved.

Motion No. 10-9-5 by Member Hetherman, seconded by Member Sprengelmeyer, to approve a paid leave of absence for Marie Dunphy, Spanish Teacher at Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School, from approximately 10/12/10 to 11/24/10. (maternity) Motion unanimously approved.

Certified Appointment:

Motion No. 10-9-6 by Vice-Chairman Perra, seconded by Member Hetherman, to affirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to appoint Dori Bathgate to the position of .6 regular (one-year only) Spanish Teacher at Coventry High School, for the 2010/2011 school year, effective 9/7/10. Motion unanimously approved.

Coaching Appointment:

Motion No. 10-9-7 by Member Tomasso, seconded by Vice-Chairman Perra, to affirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to appoint Alicia Simas to the position of Head Girls' Soccer Coach at Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School, for the 2010/2011 school year, effective 9/7/10. Motion unanimously approved.

Classified Resignation/Termination:

Motion No. 10-9-8 by Vice-Chairman Perra, seconded by Member Hetherman, to affirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the resignation of Joan Badorek, .6 Supervisory Assistant at Blackrock School, for the purpose of retirement, effective 6/30/11. Motion unanimously approved.

Motion No. 10-9-9 by Member Sprengelmeyer, seconded by Vice-Chairman Perra, to affirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the termination of Lisa Lukowicz, 1.0 1st-Shift Custodian at Coventry High School, effective 9/1/10. Motion unanimously approved.

Classified Appointments:

Motion No. 10-9-10 by Member Hetherman, seconded by Member Tomasso, to affirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to appoint Cassandra Dei to the position of .5 regular one-on-one Teacher Assistant at Hopkins Hill School, for the 2010/2011 school year, effective 9/7/10. Motion unanimously approved. Motion unanimously approved.

Motion No. 10-9-11 by Member Sprengelmeyer, seconded by Vice-Chairman Perra, to affirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to appoint Tiffany Reposa to the position of 1.0 regular one-on-one Teacher Assistant at Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School*, for the 2010/2011 school year, effective 9/7/10. *(housed at Rhode Island School for the Deaf) Motion unanimously approved.

Chairperson's Report/Executive Session Report:

Chairperson Patenaude reported that in executive session the Committee discussed personnel and litigation.

Public Agenda:

Performance Contracting Presentation:

Two representatives of Johnson Controls, who was the top of eight bidders to perform energy management for the Town, gave the Committee and public an overview of how a *Performance Contract* can improve school facilities with no new dollars expended from the school budget or taxpayers. The bid was done three ways - the Town and Schools together, just the Town, and just the Schools. At this point the Committee is under no obligation or contractual agreement with the Town or Johnson Controls.

Support Staff Appreciation:

The School Committee established a practice of recognizing the work of support staff at its first meeting of the school year. Custodians and Maintenance workers work all summer to prepare schools for the start of the school year. In addition, support staff such as clerks (school and administrative) worked during the summer or were called back to address changing school enrollments and the work related to the management and operation of the school district. Additionally, some teaching assistants worked during the summer months in Extended School Year (ESY) programs and have returned to work for school year support to students; and behavior specialists have returned for their support including work with PBIS. In addition, there are grounds keepers, certified occupational teacher assistant (COTA) and others who support student learning. A proclamation was read into the record and will be distributed to all support staff during the week of September 27th, which will be recognized as *Coventry Public Schools Support Staff Appreciation Week*.

Citizens' Comments:

A resident asked about the bus monitor situation. Superintendent Convery reported that there is an issue with Western Coventry students. Although door-to-door transportation was promised, there are some roads where the busses cannot get down the street.

Establishment and Maintenance of Interscholastic Athletic Activities Policy - Second Reading:

Based on the recommendations of the Committee and the public, several changes were made to this policy and posted on the district website.

Motion No. 10-9-12 by Vice-Chairman Perra, seconded by Member Hetherman, to dispense with the reading of the Publicly-Sponsored Sports Team Policy. Motion unanimously approved.

Motion No. 10-9-13 by Vice-Chairman Perra, seconded by Member Sprengelmeyer, to adopt the Establishment and Maintenance of Interscholastic Athletic Activities Policy as presented/amended. Motion unanimously approved.

Acceptance of Gifts Policy - Second Reading:

Based on the recommendations of the Committee and the public, several changes were made to this policy and posted on the district website.

Motion No. 10-9-14 by Member Sprengelmeyer, seconded by Member Tomasso, to dispense with the reading of the Acceptance of Gifts Policy. Motion unanimously approved.

Motion No. 10-9-15 by Member Hetherman, seconded by Vice-Chairman Perra, to adopt the Acceptance of Gifts Policy as presented/amended. Motion unanimously approved.

Start of School Update:

Grades 3 - 5 are very crowded at this time. The Superintendent has until 9/24/10 to rectify the numbers.

Professional Development activities were held on opening day. Assistant Superintendent Erinakes and Special Education Director Lyons stopped in at all the elementary schools. Superintendent Convery attended the middle school RTI discussion.

Three revisions have been made to the administrators and teachers evaluation system and is in the process of being submitted to the State Department of Education. At the next School Committee meeting, the goal is to get our own system approved.

Scheduling of Next Meeting:

Motion No. 10-9-16 by Member Sprengelmeyer, supported by Vice-Chairman Perra, that the next meeting of the School Committee be scheduled for Tuesday, September 28, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. Motion unanimously approved.

Student Appeal:

Chairperson Patenaude and representatives of the Taylor-Duane Law Firm conducted a student appeal of a middle school disciplinary issue from June, 2010. The Committee is to decide if due process was followed. The parent requested that the hearing be held in Open Session.

Documents submitted by the legal time were: a notice of suspension; an email from the parent; a thank you note to the principal; a letter from Superintendent Di Pietro about an upcoming meeting; a letter from the parent responding to the Superintendent's letter; another letter from the Superintendent to the parent; a letter from the new Superintendent Convery regarding the process of the hearing being held in open session; scheduling of the hearing of 9/7/10; a letter from the lawyer to the parent about a phone call; a letter from the lawyer to the parent about the disruption policy. The parent will speak first about how she feels her son did not receive due process; then the lawyer will talk; then the School Committee will vote.

The parent feels that the actual discipline was excessive for the situation. She feels that the punishment should be reconsidered. She has concerns about how the incident transpired. An administrator saw her son push a student on school grounds. The mother claims that a rock was thrown across the school yard and hit her son's phone, cracking the glass. Her son acted out and pushed the other student down. At the time, the bus was getting loaded and verbal altercations continued on the bus. The bus driver told her son to sit down. Her son pushed the other boy. Later on, the police went to the other boy's house and asked if they wanted to press charges, to which they replied 'no'. Her son is a three-year high honor student. He is in the band, on the football team, participated in the geography bee. He has now lost his rights to the National Jr. Honor Society. Mother is asking for an alternative discipline.

Dr. Almeida, Principal of Feinstein Middle School was then sworn in. He affirmed what the mother had said - that a rock was thrown and hit his phone. He approached the other student and hit him in the face; the altercation continued on the bus. He then got off at the other student's bus stop and continued to punch the other student a few more times. The student has not denied his actions.

Attorney Adams then asked the Committee if they were ready to vote. A motion was made by Vice-Chairperson Perra to uphold the Superintendent's decision as to the punishment in terms of due process. The vote was 4-0. Member Hetherman recused himself from voting.

Adjournment:

Motion No. 10-9-17 by Member Sprengelmeyer, supported by Vice-Chairman Perra, that the meeting be adjourned at 10:03 p.m. Motion unanimously approved.

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Approved by School Committee 11/23/10