



EAST GREENWICH  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## East Greenwich School Committee

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

Hybrid Meeting: Cole Middle School & Via Zoom

### Minutes

Those in attendance for Executive Session and Open Session

**School Committee:** Ms. Anne Musella, Chair; Ms. Alyson Powell, Vice Chair; Ms. Nicole Bucka; Mr. Tim Munoz; Mr. Kevin Murphy; Dr. Eugene Quinn

**Additional Attendees:** Dr. Brian G. Ricca, Superintendent; Mr. Michael Podraza, Assistant Superintendent (Open Session Only); Mr. Neil Marcaccio, Director of MTSS (Open Session Only); Mrs. Maggie Baker, Director of Administration; Mrs. Amy Healey, Confidential Administrative Assistant; Attorney Aubrey Lombardo

**Absent:** Mr. William Hangan

#### 6:00 pm Open Session

##### I. Call to Order

Ms. Musella called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

##### II. Pledge of Allegiance

##### III. Public Comment

Ms. Musella stated that public comment is limited to 5 minutes per person and is for items that are not already on the agenda.

*Jean Ann Giuliano, 300 6th Avenue, EG*

Ms. Giuliano, former School Committee member, said that she wrote to the Town and School Department last February regarding the damage done to some neighboring homes during the construction of Cole Middle School. She relayed an account of what happened to the homes and what the School Committee was told at the time. Ms. Giuliano urged that the neighbors be compensated for the damage to their homes; to be paid from the balance of the bond funds.

*Christopher Lamendola*

Mr. Lamendola challenged the five minute limit on public comment. He spoke of his family's support of public education. Mr. Lamendola claimed that he and his neighbors were defrauded by the District and its representatives. Although he does not hold the current School Committee members responsible for the damage to his home, he said that they have a responsibility to learn the facts about the destruction of the homes and need to do the right thing. Mr. Lamendola pointed out that the project manager of the Cole building project is working on the current proposed building project for the District.

Ms. Musella told Mr. Lamendola several times that he had exceeded the five minute limit on public comment.

*6:20 pm - Ms. Musella excused herself and left the meeting.*

Mr. Lamendola continued to speak about the principles of Colliers and allegedly read from email communications.

*6:22 pm - Ms. Musella returned to the meeting.*

*Ms. Powell made a motion to suspend the School Committee meeting. Ms. Bucka seconded the motion. Ms. Musella, Ms. Powell and Ms. Bucka voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Murphy, Mr. Munoz and Dr. Quinn voted against the motion. The motion failed 3-3.*

Mr. Lamendola continued to speak and ask the School Committee to do a valid investigation.

*Mr. Keith Amelotte, 35 Sarah's Trace, EG*

Mr. Amelotte asserted that two former School Committee members have said that critical information about the damage to homes on Sarah's Trace was withheld from them. After the problem was brought to the District's attention, the construction continued and additional damage was done to the homes. Additionally, Mr. Amelotte asserted that the contractor's attorney was hired to conduct an investigation, despite a conflict of interest. Mr. Amelotte made allegations of fraud. Mr. Amelotte requested that funds from the school bond be used to repair the damaged homes.

*Mrs. Wendy Amelotte, 35 Sarah's Trace, EG*

Mrs. Amelotte raised concern about the School Committee's educational leadership. She asserted allegations of fraud and said there needs to be an investigation. Mrs. Amelotte said that the allegations of fraud have not been settled.

*Mr. Tom Hogan, 40 Sarah's Trace, EG*

Mr. Hogan stated that he and his neighbor have been left with homes undervalued.

#### **IV. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings**

- A. September 20, 2022 Executive Session Minutes
- B. September 20, 2022 Open Session Minutes

*On a motion by Ms. Bucka, seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve both sets of minutes from the September 20, 2022 meeting.*

- C. September 23, 2022 Open Session Minutes

*On a motion by Dr. Quinn, seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted 4-0-2 to approve the September 23, 2022 minutes. Ms. Bucka and Ms. Powell abstained from the vote.*

#### **V. Action Items**

- A. Homeschool Requests, Grades K, 10, 11

*On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the homeschool requests.*

- B. Appointment of Matthew Tsimikas - EG Building Committee, community member

Ms. Powell said that Mr. Tsimikas is very enthusiastic about serving on the Committee. He has great ideas and has already begun attending meetings.

*On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the appointment of Mr. Tsimikas.*

- C. Appointment of Nicole Bucka - Personnel Subcommittee Chair

Ms. Musella appointed Ms. Bucka as the Chair of the Personnel Subcommittee.

- D. Contract for EGHS Interim Principal

Dr. Ricca announced that Dr. Patricia Page has accepted the position of Interim Principal for the East Greenwich High School for the remainder of the school year. The interview committee was very impressed with Dr. Page and her commitment to the District. Dr. Ricca thanked Mr. Podraza and Dr. Mendelsohn for all of their hard work while the Principal position has been vacant.

*On a motion by Ms. Bucka, seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the contract of Dr. Patricia Page, Interim Principal of East Greenwich High School.*

#### **VI. Superintendent and Staff Reports**

### A. Personnel Report

Dr. Ricca said that the District continues to fill vacant positions. Unfortunately there has been another resignation in the tech department. He thanked EGEA President Donna McPhee for allowing the counting of clinical work towards work experience. He said that the District needs to look outside the box to meet the needs of students.

Ms. Musella pointed out that many districts are facing the same hiring challenges.

### B. Athletic Handbook Update

Dr. Ricca said that changes have been made to the handbook from the School Committee feedback and that the update of the Athletic Handbook has been completed.

## VII. Discussion

### A. Superintendent's Goals and Evaluation Process

Dr. Ricca explained that he has been working with Ms. Bucka and Mr. Munoz on developing goals and a thoughtful evaluation process. Work has been done to frame an actual process which is realistic, authentic and has accountability.

Ms. Bucka explained that the District previously used the Massachusetts model which was felt to not be a good model for the role of the Superintendent. The Michigan model better addresses the role of the Superintendent. This is research based, not a 360 evaluation tool. Ms. Bucka reviewed a calendar of the process timeline. This proposed evaluation process will be discussed at Friday's Personnel Subcommittee meeting.

Dr. Quinn said that he agreed with the elimination of standardized tests from the evaluation.

Ms. Powell commented that the rubric is clear and asked for a specific template. She noted that it aligns with the strategic plan. Ms. Powell concurred that the 360 is a difficult tool to use.

Mr. Munoz pointed out that Dr. Ricca manages a \$45 million enterprise and is responsible to many stakeholders. He said that the Michigan evaluation model encompasses those many stakeholders. It is important to note that the new strategic plan will be integrated into the evaluation.

Dr. Ricca said that this is a learning process and he appreciated being brought into the development of the evaluation process.

Ms. Musella said that the Superintendent's goals and evaluation instrument are expected to come before the School Committee for approval at the October 25, 2022 meeting.

## VIII. Policies (First Read)

- A. Policy # 9110 Cleaning and Maintenance
- B. Policy # 9220 Recreational Facility (Repeal)

Ms. Musella explained that portions of Policy #9220 will be incorporated into Policy #9110. Ms. Bucka asked about ground maintenance. Ms. Musella and Ms. Powell responded that the grounds are maintained by the Town under a shared services agreement. Playgrounds are maintained by the school department.

## Policies (Second Reads)

- A. Policy # 8310 Code of Student Conduct

Ms. Musella said that the policy has been updated to be in full compliance with the District's legal obligations.

*On a motion by Ms. Bucka, seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the revised Code of Student Conduct, Policy # 8310.*

- B. Policy # 3110 Financial Overview
- C. Policy # 3115 Midyear Budget Reallocation
- D. Policy # 3410 Fund Balance

Ms. Musella explained that the Finance Subcommittee plans to discuss these three policies at its next meeting.

Mr. Munoz said that Mr. Nota, Town Manager, provided input on these policies and has been invited to a finance subcommittee meeting next week.

*On a motion by Mr. Munoz, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 6-0 to table the second reads of Policies #3110, #3115 and #3410.*

## IX. Subcommittee Reports

- A. Health & Wellness

Mr. Murphy reported that the Health & Wellness Subcommittee met last week. Draft meeting minutes were submitted as part of the agenda packet for today's School Committee meeting. Ms. Musella noted that the minutes were thorough yet objected to obesity being referred to as an eating disorder.

Mr. Murphy and Ms. Musella introduced Mr. Bob Houghtaling, Director of Substance Abuse Prevention and Mental Health Services for the Town of East Greenwich. Mr. Houghtaling said that alcohol abuse and mental health challenges have been exacerbated by COVID. Some students' social and emotional growth has been truncated.

Mr. Houghtaling said that he looks forward to working with the Health and Wellness Committee.

Ms. Bucka said that a lack of needed student supports has been exacerbated by the pandemic. She asked whether the District is looking out for students' mental health needs. Ms. Bucka queried which subcommittee should address this topic.

Mr. Houghtaling responded that this is a community problem, not a school problem and needs to be looked at with a holistic approach. There should be an expansion of discussion about how resources are allocated. Schools and the community should work in partnership.

Mr. Murphy said that the charge of the committee is broad.

Dr. Ricca said that coordination with many stakeholders is necessary and must be addressed in order to achieve academic excellence.

Dr. Quinn pointed out the lack of financial reimbursement for some medical services provided by schools.

#### B. EG School Building Committee

Ms. Powell included a summary of the last meeting in the agenda packet. The timeline and expectations for the school building project have been recalibrated. The project needs to be data driven. Ms. Powell said that community engagement and feedback is needed. The building committee discussed the need of engaging a communications consultant who can assist with community messaging and engagement.

#### Project timeline:

- September 15, 2022 - Stage 1 (notice of intent; identification of the problem)  
Submitted to RIDE
- September 15, 2023 - Stage II due by September 15, 2023 (schematic design documents, accompanied by "substantial detail" needed to assess whether the plan is construction ready) Many design aspects/details will continue to develop and change through Stage III.
- December 15, 2023 - RIDE Approval of Stage III
- By December 31, 2023 - hiring of construction manager so that project is "commenced" as required for bonus point eligibility
- January 2024 - commence Stage III, Design
- By June 2024 - bond referendum for project financing submitted to, and approved by, voters of EG
- Spring 2025 - construction begins

Ms. Musella said that the new district website will be a vehicle to share information with the community.

**X. School Committee Suggestions for Future Agenda Items**

**XI. Executive Session**

At 8:04 pm Ms. Powell made a motion to Recess Open Session and Convene Executive Session for discussion and/or action regarding those items of business exempt from open meetings under RIGL 42-46-4 and RIGL 42-46-5(a)(9) - Any hearings on, or discussions of, a grievance filed pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement - EG Educational Support Professionals Level 4 Grievance. Individuals have been notified including their right to have any discussion held in open session. Ms. Bucka seconded the motion which passed 6-0.

**XII. Adjourn Executive Session and Reconvene Open Session**

*On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted 6-0 to adjourn Executive Session and reconvene Open Session at 9:11 pm.*

**XIII. Seal Executive Session Minutes of October 11, 2022 and Disclosure of Executive Session Votes of October 11, 2022.**

On a motion by Mr. Murphy, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 6-0 to Seal the Executive Session minutes of October 11, 2022.

Ms. Musella reported that no action was taken in Executive Session.

**XIV. Action Item**

- A. National Education Association of Educational Support Professionals Grievance (NEA ESP)

*Ms. Bucka made a motion to deny the NEA ESP grievance. Ms. Powell seconded the motion to deny which passed 6-0.*

Ms. Musella said that the School Committee will send a letter to the union denying the grievance.

**X. Adjournment**

*On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 6-0 to adjourn at 9:13 pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

Amy J. Healey  
School Committee Clerk

*Approved 10-25-22*