



Thursday, October 12, 2023
School Committee Meeting: 6:00 p.m.

Call to Order/Roll Call

Meeting called to order by Chairperson Pierson 604:p.m.

Roll	Call	James Pierson, Chairperson	
Vote:			<u>Aye</u>
		Ana Isabel dos Reis-Couto, Vice-Chairperson	<u>Aye</u>
		David Florio, Member	<u>Aye</u>
		John Cambio, Jr., Member	<u>Aye</u>
		Bradford Mayer, Member	<u> </u>
		Don Cowart	<u>Aye</u>
		Christopher DeVerna	<u> </u>

Vote to Go Into Executive Session

Motion No. 23-18-1 by Member dos Reis-Couto, seconded by Member Cambio that the Committee recess into Executive Session at 6:06 p.m. to consider matter(s) relating specifically to:

- Student Matters: R.I.G.L. §42-46-5 (a)(8) (Homeschool Requests)
- Approval of Executive Session Minutes 9/28/2023, the following items were discussed: 1.) Student Matters: R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(8) (Homeschool Requests), 2.) Approval of Executive Session Minutes 9/14/2023
- Review of School Safety Plans: R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(3)

Motion passed 4/0

Reconvene Open Session

The Open Meeting reconvened at 6:02 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence/Safety Notification/Reading of Mission Statement

Vote to Seal Minutes of Executive Session

Motion No. 23-18-2 by Member dos Reis-Couto, seconded by Member Cambio that the records of the Executive Session be kept closed pursuant to Sections §42-46-4 and §42-46-5. Motion passed 4/0.

Executive Session Report

In executive session two votes were taken, the first to approve homeschool requests and the second to approve executive session minutes of 9/28/2023. Both motions passed. School safety plans were also discussed.

Approval of Minutes 9/28/2023

Motion No. 23-18-3 by Member Florio, seconded by Member dos Reis-Couto, to approve the minutes of 9/28/2023 as presented. Motion passed 4/0.

Citizens Comments on Topics Listed on the Agenda

No comments

Washington Oak Presentation of Piglet Mindset

Mr. Cowart Invited Ms. Jacquard to introduce her team. Ms. Jacquard said that Ms. O'Connell found this program and brought it to Washington Oak. She thinks the program is wonderful and that it fits in nicely with the district to be inclusive. Ms. Jacquard introduced Ms. O'Connell and her second grade students. Ms. O'Connell showed a video on who Piglet is. The second grade students stood before the school committee wearing their pink hats and holding pink papers. They all shared a piece of a Piglet's mindset by reading to the audience and sharing how it relates to them. They all read the Unified Pledge. They taught the audience the "I Choose to Include" pledge in sign language. Chairperson Pierson opened for Comments or questions from the committee. The committee thanked the students.

Finance Report: Discussion

Mr. Cowart introduced Mr. Dervana to speak on the financial report. Mr. DeVerna reviewed the School finance office transition. He reviewed the fiscal year 2024 quarter 1 preliminary financial reports that were also shared with the committee. The annual audit-update for FY 2022 was provided. Mr. DeVerana stated that the school department is basically done, we are waiting on the town to complete their field work. Meetings with the town and auditor general are scheduled with the next one scheduled for 10/23. The school department is actively working on the FY 23 audit preparations. The town agreed they will pay the \$510,000 from capital with the transfer to be scheduled in November. Chairperson Pierson opened for question and comments from the committee. Questions and answers session followed.

Update on Purchase of School Department Vehicles: Discussion

Last year the town council approved \$110,000 of apra money for vans. Originally Esser funds were going to be used, but now those funds can be used elsewhere.

Transportation for out of district students, including CTE and homeless students, is a challenge. The school department has had a fleet agreement with Enterprise in the past but now are looking to purchase vehicles outright. In the past Enterprise was used because there was a supply shortage. The town recommends purchasing the vehicles and not leasing them. A quote was received from a dealership in Raynham in the amount of \$44,012.81 per a van with other options to be added. The quote has been sent to the town finance director. The town will pay for the vans directly. Another meeting is scheduled with a different dealership in case something falls through with the one they are currently working with. Chairperson Pierson opened for question and comments from the committee. There were none.

Update on Employment for School Department Vehicles: Discussion

Drivers were added to the SRP contract. The drivers require the same licensing as bus drivers from the department of Education. The school department is actively looking for drivers for the vehicles. The school department may have to work with some candidates to make sure they have all the requirements to drive. If we have door-to-door pick-up, then a variance will be given to not have a monitor. Chairperson Pierson opened for question and comments from the committee. Question and answer session followed.

Re-bid of Food Service Contract: Discussion

Mr. Cowart stated a few months back, the school committee took a vote to have Sodexo as the school lunch provider. Once the process was completed, RIDE was notified of the selection. RIDE didn't approve the contract for the reason that none of the vendors' bids were responsive. Bids didn't address nutritional and dietary needs. Two options were considered, one to go with a state approved vendor or second to do an emergency 1 year contract. It was determined to go with a one year emergency contract. Mr. Cowart stated the school department will initiate a new RFP in the spring. Chairperson Pierson opened for question and comments from the committee. The committee thanked Mr. Cowart for the update.

Update on Student Attendance and Ways to Improve Absenteeism: Discussion

Mr. Cowart said there is a lot of conversation at the state and local level on improving attendance. He explained chronic absences is 10% of the number of days in session. Attendance improves performance not just academics but also the emotional and social. Mr. Cowart reviewed the RIDE Dashboard by showing its set-up, and explaining the data. He reviewed attendance goals and explained how improving attendance is part of the strategic plan. He shared the link to the RIDE Dashboard and reviewed the data and set-up of the dashboard. Chairperson Pierson opened for question and comments from the committee. Question and answer session followed.

Superintendent Report: 1.) School Construction Next Steps

Mr. Cowart stated the bond was voted on and it passed. He said now we have to do the work to make it all happen. The school department is waiting on feedback from the Stage II application so work on Stage III can begin. Mr. Cowart said they will post

pictures and timelines of work being completed (credit to Jim Murphy for the idea). He will schedule another School Building Committee meeting and ask Phil to attend. The timeline of the bond needs to be determined so the school department can determine when the work can start. Chairperson Pierson opened for question and comments from the committee. Question and answer session followed.

Citizens' Comments

No comments

Scheduling of the Next Meeting

Motion No. 23-18-4 by Member Florio, and seconded by Member Cambio, to schedule the next meeting for October 26, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. Motion passed 4/0.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion No. 23-18-5 by Member Florio, and seconded by Member Cambio, to adjourn at 7:36pm. Motion passed 4/0.