

Approved 06/12/2007.

5.1

NEWPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting
Thursday, May 24, 2007, 4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Call to Order. Chairperson Dr. Charles P. Shoemaker called the Special Meeting of the Newport School Committee to order at 4:00 p.m. at the Thompson Middle School Beatrice Berman Bazarsky Performing Arts Center and Cafeteria.

Roll Call. Attendance was as follows: School Committee Members: Chairperson Dr. Charles P. Shoemaker, Vice Chairperson Robert J. Leary, David R. Carlin (arrived at 4:01 p.m.), Hugo J. DeAscentis, Jr., Jo Eva Gaines, Dr. Thomas P. Galvin, and Thomas S. Phelan; School Department: Superintendent of Schools John H. Ambrogi, Ed.D., Director of Student Services Amy Donnelly Roche, Executive Director of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development Jacqueline Naspo, Ed.D. (absent), Business Manager Michael Saunders, Director of Property Services Paul Fagan, Coordinator of Human Resources and Information Services Fran Eames (absent), School Building Principals (absent), Administrators (absent), and School Committee Counsel Neil P. Galvin.

Taken Out of Order

4.0 Executive Session.

Mr. Carlin arrived at 4:01 p.m.

At 4:01 p.m., Mr. DeAscentis made a motion to go into **Executive Session** under jurisdiction of Rhode Island State Law, Chapter 46, 42-46-5 – Exceptions (a)(1) Personal Matters, and the person or persons affected have been notified in advance in writing and advised that they may require that the discussion be held in an open session; and (a)(2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation. Mrs. Gaines seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

SEAL MINUTES

EXECUTIVE SESSION

OPEN SESSION

At 4:05 p.m., the meeting was called in Open Session.

1.0 Council 94—Local 841 Contract Ratification.

Mrs. Gaines made a motion to ratify the Collective Bargaining Tentative Agreement between Council 94—Local 841 and the Newport School Committee effective July 1, 2006, through June 30, 2010, subject to review of contractual language by Counsel Galvin. Mr. Carlin seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Member Mr. DeAscentis stated that he would recuse himself. Counsel Galvin provided a brief history of the negotiations process. Vice Chairperson Mr. Leary stated he would not support the contract for the following reasons: (1) receipt of life-time benefits for 10 years of service; (2) recommends competitive bidding for health care; (3) should reduce health care buyback; (4) 14.5% increase in pay over four years is too high; and (6) Para Educators receiving an extra 20 cents per hour. The motion carried (5-1-1). The Members voting in favor of the motion were: Chairperson Dr. Charles P. Shoemaker, David R. Carlin, Jo Eva Gaines, Dr. Thomas P. Galvin, and Thomas S. Phelan. The Member voting against the motion was: Vice Chairperson Robert J. Leary. Member Hugo J. DeAscentis, Jr., recused himself.

Highlights of the Tentative Agreement were reviewed, as follows: the elimination of summer hours; the elimination of life-time health benefits for new employees; the increase in the cost share for existing coverage and contributions for retirement health care; and 15 percent cost share for all new hires.

2.0 Administrators' Contracts.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi highlighted the changes to the proposed Renewals of the Administrators' Contracts for the 2007-2008 Fiscal Year, as follows: 3.75 percent increase; reduce the payment for unused vacation days from 40 to 30; increase the health care cost share from 10 percent to 12.5 percent; and, additionally, a clause was placed in the section regarding the payment for unused sick days, which requires the administrator to have worked for at least five (5) years in Newport to be eligible for that payout upon termination; and Administrators hired after July, 2005, do not receive lifetime health benefits. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve the Renewals of the Administrators' Contracts for the 2007-2008 Fiscal Year, as follows: Mario Andrade, Assistant Principal, Rogers High School; Jennifer Booth, Principal, Cranston-Calvert School; Maria O. Bradfield, Business Office Coordinator; Frances Eames, Director of Human Resources; Paul Fagan, Director of Property Services; Wendy Gasior, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent; Kimberly Homer,

Principal, Carey School; Maria Mare Schulz, Principal, Sullivan School; Eddie Merritt, Student Attendance Facilitator; Jacqueline Naspo, Executive Director of Teaching, Learning and Professional Development; Doreen Schlackman, School Accountability Specialist/Information Systems Manager; Eric Thomas, Principal, Thompson Middle School; Patricia DiCenso, Principal, Rogers High School; Amy Donnelly Roche, Director of Student Services; Brent Kermen, Assistant Principal, Thompson Middle School; Adrian Poland, Literacy Coordinator K-12; Michael Saunders, Business Manager; and Barbara Smith, Coordinator of Special Education. Mr. Carlin seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Vice Chairperson Mr. Leary cited his reasons for not supporting the motion: (1) \$2,000 Stipend increase to certain administrative positions; and (2) 3.75 percent cost-of-living raise too high. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi defined that the additional stipends of \$2,000 were to bring certain administrative positions into line with the state average in salary. The motion carried (5-2). The Members voting in favor of the motion were: Chairperson Dr. Charles P. Shoemaker, David R. Carlin, Jo Eva Gaines, Dr. Thomas P. Galvin, and Hugo J. DeAscentis, Jr. The Members voting against the motion were: Vice Chairperson Robert J. Leary and Thomas S. Phelan.

3.0 Fiscal Year 2007-2008 School Budget.

As a result of the Tentative Budget developed on March 6, 2007, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi recommend to the Committee a Budget that will increase by a total of less than one percent to provide the City with an increase of 2.17 percent in contributions, leaving a gap between this Budget Proposal and Ed Lavalley's Proposal to the City of \$40,263. He reviewed the differences in the original tentative Budget and the Budget for consideration this evening, highlighting some of the following major areas: an increase in Impact Aid Revenue of \$95,000; contract savings of almost \$70,000 between the Administrators' Contracts and the Council 94—Local 841 Contracts; the elimination of three Elementary Teaching Positions and one Physical Education Position, as a result of actual needs due to projected declining enrollment; elimination of the Alternative Education Program Teacher in Middletown, as we will be having our own Alternative Education Program at Rogers High School next year; a position transfer from local to federal funds, as a result of the ability to fund the Reading Academy Teacher out of Title I monies; a reduction in Special Education Tuition of \$64,000, as a result of a return of a youngster placed in an out-of-state residential program; and, last and sadly, the elimination of a Health Service Teacher at the Newport Area Career and Technical Center. He stated that this Program had only a total of eight upper classmen and five sophomores who had applied for the first year of the Program and had hoped that this Program would have grown but continued to decline in enrollment. He further stated that total reductions in expenditures were \$609,213, with an increase of \$8,644 to our Liability Insurance; the need to fund a Family Service Coordinator at Underwood School locally, rather than through federal funds, as Underwood School will not qualify as a Title I School next year; and, lastly, the need to hire an additional Social Studies Teacher at Rogers High School. With increased requirements from the state and the interest in our Social Studies Program, he stated that the classes are more fully subscribed and believed this to be positive.

As a result of all of the above, Dr. Ambrogi recommended that the District's new request for appropriations from the City is \$506,621, with a total Budget Proposal of \$37,874,213.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi indicated to the Committee that the Budget surplus was currently estimated at \$1.5 Million or five percent of the total Operating Budget and could be targeted, as follows: \$600,000 revenue stream for the 2007-2008 school year; \$600,000 for the 2008-2009 school year; and utilize the remaining additional funds for non-occurring items. Discussion followed relative to defining "Surplus". Dr. Ambrogi indicated that surplus budgeting was evidence of prudent financial practices, which have been in place since his arrival to the District two years ago.

Discussion followed relative to the elimination of the Health Careers Program at the Newport Area Career and Technical Center and its continued loss of programs given tuition, programming, and scheduling concerns. The Committee and the Superintendent agreed that future discussion would be needed in addressing this topic and to place it as a future Committee agenda item. Given a potential Budget Surplus, Dr. Galvin and Mrs. Gaines voiced concern as why programs were being eliminated. Dr. Galvin further requested to know why the Center's Programs were in trouble. Mr. Carlin asked the Superintendent to research the statewide and nationwide trend regarding career and technical education—"Is it on the decline?"

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi then reviewed with the Committee the District's 2007-2008 request of \$465,000 for the Capital Improvement Plan to the City, stating that the City had appropriated \$600,000 for the current Fiscal Year but recommended a decrease of \$135,000 for the next Fiscal Year.

Mrs. Gaines made a motion to adopt the proposed Fiscal Year 2007-2008 School Budget of \$37,874,213, as presented, and to forward the proposed Fiscal year 2007-2008 School Budget to the Newport City Council, with continued study of the career and technical education program, in particular the nursing program. Dr. Galvin seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Mr. Carlin and Mr. Leary praised Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi for his continued sound budgeting practices. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Adjournment. At 5:37 p.m., Mr. DeAscentis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Galvin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Charles P. Shoemaker, M.D.
Chairperson

John H. Ambrogi, Ed.D.
Clerk