
**EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
OPEN SESSION – August 11, 2020**

I. Call to Order Open Session

The East Providence School Committee met virtually in Open Session on Tuesday, August 11, 2020. Mr. Tsonos called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Members present were Charles Tsonos, Chair, Jessica Beauchaine, Vice Chair, Karen Oliveira, Clerk, Joel Monteiro and Anthony Ferreira. Also present were Superintendent Kathryn Crowley, Assistant Superintendents Sandra Forand and Celeste Bowler, Ben Russell, Tony Feola, Leslie Anderson, Diana Clarkin, Cheryl Mammone and Craig Enos.

II. Consent Agenda

1. Communications
2. Correspondence

Appointments: Tabitha Watjen, Social Emotional Facilitator/Administration, effective 2020-2021 school year; Justine Giorgi, MLL Teacher at Hennessey and Whiteknact, effective 2020-2021 school year; Kristyn-Anne Pinheiro, MLL Teacher at Riverside Middle and Martin Middle Schools, effective 2020-2021 school year; Jalyn Alves, Kindergarten Teacher at Waddington, effective 2020-2021 school year; Megan Silva, Kindergarten Teacher at Myron J. Francis, effective 2020-2021 school year; Natalie Tarr, Science Teacher at EPHS, effective 2020-2021 school year; and Richard Martin, 2/5th Social Studies Teacher at EPHS, effective 2020-2021 school year.

3. Homeschool Requests: There were 31 homeschool requests.
4. Approval of Minutes: July 14 & July 21, 2020 School Committee Meetings
July 13, 2020 Building Committee Meeting

Motion by Ms. Oliveira, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the consent agenda.

III. Public Comments I – Agenda Items – No comments received.

IV. Superintendent's Report

1. School Re-entry Plan Update – The District's plan was approved with minor revisions which is posted on the website. A summary version of the plan is also posted on website. Administration met with faculty and parents at all schools. There were approximately 300-500 people who attended those virtual meetings. Parents/guardians were asked to write in to a special email with any questions or concerns and were answered by Dr. Forand – approximately 200 questions in all were answered. There will be more school meetings to speak with parents. Each principal submitted a plan for their school which is being reviewed. The principals will be sending out their individual plans to their parents and communications will be coming from

each school. There will be a meeting with faculty virtually to apprise them of the plan. The principals will be giving a virtual tour for the parents/guardians of their schools.

Dr. Forand reported they met with the teachers' union today about scheduling and another meeting will be held tomorrow to move #s around. They are trying to keep students at their home schools and may have to combine students with other schools. The distance learning form closed on August 7. She will be meeting with the high school leadership tomorrow to discuss scheduling and the middle school leadership during the week. They will be mapping out numbers for the classes. If parents want to continue distance learning, they are being directed to contact their principals. There were 2000+ entries. The form has been opened up again. A sheet was developed for maintenance/custodial duties based on CDC guidelines which will be sent out to each principal. More custodians may be needed depending upon how many students will be in school. The Task Force will be reviewing it prior to the parents receiving it. A final decision for distance learning will be made. Teachers will be chosen by seniority for distance learning.

2. Enrollment Numbers – There were 323 students registered for kindergarten. 24 spots in pre-k at Martin and 20 spots at Oldham. Classes were filled by going to the waiting list. The total number of students for distance learning is 2,008 as of today. Other districts have high numbers for distance learning. Pre-K students will have staggered openings. There will be a virtual open house and virtual tour for parents. There will be staggered openings for kindergarten and grade 1 so students can get acclimated to the new procedures. RIDE wants the children in school and teachers will reach out to families if distance learning.

Enrollment at the high school is 1,532 with 600 students distance learning

Enrollment at Martin Middle School is 580 with 256 students distance learning

Enrollment at Riverside Middle School is 553 with 258 students distance learning

Diana reported that the district is currently working on bus routes and utilizing the fleet of buses that we have. Thirty-one students can now be on the buses instead of twenty-one. Mileage restrictions may still need to be pushed out after looking at the numbers. A seating chart will be established and seating arrangements will be in a zigzag pattern in a stable pod. Students have to take one bus to and from school. This has been established by RIDE and RIDOH. A full disinfecting will be done on the buses each day. Masks will be required and students will have to face front at all times. She will be discussing social distancing and parents can contact Ms. Clarkin directly with any questions. A bus schedule will be placed in the Post and online by the middle to end of August. Parents will be notified by email as well.

Masks are mandated in schools and on buses and would be available to students. Protocols will be sent to parents. Updated information from RIDE will be forwarded to everyone.

Mr. Monteiro would like legal advice/guidance on enforcing mask wearing. Dr. Forand said they will be doing safety training so students understand. Principals will have conversations with parents. Any medical reasons for not wearing a mask will need six foot distancing at all

times. Dr. Forand stated we have a responsibility to protect everyone and are taking this very seriously. The Governor mandated that masks are to be worn and RIDE guidance has been changing.

V. Director of Human Services Report

Resignations – Ms. Mammone announced the resignations as follows: Jennifer Reynolds, Special Education Teacher in Therapeutic Class at Silver Spring, effective 7/28/2020; and Tracey Bradley, Health Occupations at the Career & Technical Center, effective 8/3/2020.

Motion by Ms. Oliveira, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine and carried by unanimous consent to approve the resignations as submitted.

Retirements – Ms. Mammone announced the retirement as follows: Shani Wallace, Principal of East Providence High School. She extended best wishes for good health and happiness in all future endeavors. Superintendent Crowley thanked her for her contributions to the high school and best of luck in her retirement. The School Committee wished her all the best.

Motion by Mr. Monteiro, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine and carried by a vote of 4-1 to accept the retirement as submitted. Mr. Ferreira voted nay.

Leave of Absences – None

Non-Renewals – None

Recalls – Ms. Mammone announced the Recall as follows: Victoria Moore, Special Education Teacher in Therapeutic Class at Silver Spring Elementary School, effective 2020-2021 school year.

Motion by Ms. Oliveira, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the recall as submitted.

VI. Director of Finance Report – Mr. Enos gave an overview of the financial report as of August 7. He highlighted a few items regarding retirement and unemployment. There have been many instances of unemployment fraud with \$2,500 in claims. The HR and business offices have stayed on top of the fraudulent claims. Three hundred lunch applications have been received. Chromebooks are available at the registration and business offices to fill out a lunch application. The district will be receiving two grants from RIDE – the ESSA fund is going to be replacing state aid that was taken away. 1.3 mil and \$240,000 of that is being allocated to the private schools due to federal dollars that have to be shared with private schools. These funds expire in 2022. Most districts are using these grants to replace the state aid. Corona/CRF Relief Fund from RIDE– approximately 1.6 mil to start up opening of schools and is not shared with private/parochial schools but must be expended by December 30, 2020.

VII. Building Committee Report – Mr. Monteiro gave an overview of the OPM report that was presented to the Building Committee last evening. Milestones permitting going on with roadwork on Pawtucket Avenue. Drywall activity, siding and stonework internally this month, window glazing beginning in September. Fire marshal and building inspection meetings are taking place this month. Contingency dollars are being tracked and utilized. Looking at design alternatives. All trades are coming in. The new high school building is one of the most highly efficient buildings in New England and has set the standard for new construction. Mr. Monteiro would like to have Mr. Jordan from A3 Architects speak to parents about the progress of the project design but not until after the opening of school. Mr. Ferreira would like an update on the finish work.

VIII. Discussion Items

1. Removing “Senior” from the EPHS Name – Mr. Monteiro would like to look into the official name of the high school to see if “Senior” is included in the name – East Providence Senior High School.

2. High School Scoreboards – Mr. Monteiro – After working with the Athletic Director and architects, the score boards for all the fields at the high school are wirelessly controlled for softball fields in front and back. Two scoreboards on the softball field and the scoreboard on the soccer/lacrosse field which were donated by Friends of Townie Athletics are not needed but are in good order and he would like to donate these scoreboards to the City. The middle schools cannot utilize them.

3. Parental Involvement Now and Going Forward – Mr. Tsonos
There are parents who want to be involved in the school department and help on subcommittees. PTAs and PTOs need help and would welcome volunteers. School Improvement Teams have to be reformed and parents are needed. Title I schools have a parent involvement requirement for receiving federal funds. Parents can sit on different committees virtually. PTAs/PTOs can look into a re-entry support system. This topic will be discussed at the next principals’ meeting on Monday, August 17.

4. CTC Instruction during Pandemic – Mr. Tsonos
All programs at the CTC will run virtually. Students who are full time distance learning will be able to attend the CTC for hands-on learning. There is a plan being developed to bring in students on Wednesdays for hands on training.

5. Special Needs Support in Person – Mr. Tsonos
Leslie Anderson reported that approximately 340+ requests were received for distance learning in special education. The district is still required to provide FAPE (free and appropriate public education) in specialized services. Pre-k students and students with complex needs are priority students. They planned as much face to face or in person instruction for those populations. Students are entitled to a free public education in a least

restrictive environment. They will be providing services to students in their established pods while in school and work in the requirements of the IEP. They have to utilize virtual learning within the school itself and will engage and communicate with families on the reopening. Families will be notified of how the services will be provided. IEP meetings will be held virtually and had a 50% increase in parent involvement. Special education teachers will have directions and review the IEP to make sure scenarios and modifications are in place. The requirements under federal and state law will not be giving any waivers or forgiveness. A supplemental plan and guidance will be given out to special education teachers regarding toileting and health care plans. They will be working with the social emotional facilitator to reach out to teachers and students.

6. Building Maintenance Protocols during Pandemic – Mr. Tsonos

The Superintendent is working on custodians needed for the reopening of schools and is looking to hire subs first if we have to. She will review the need after schedules are complete.

7. Busing and CDC Standards – Mr. Tsonos

The RIDE/RIDOH has changed its standards to 31 students on a bus from 21 students.

8. Federal Money from COVID-19 and Line Items Affected – Mr. Tsonos

Mr. Enos said that ESSA funds will be replacing our state aid and FEMA will be reimbursing for purchases. He explained the requirements for the Corona relief funds and how they will be allocated. There is a process for allocating funds and we cannot spend until we get approval. Mr. Monteiro reported there is \$1 mil for COVID related expenses in the GMP and is looking into an automated temperature check at a cost savings over the course of the year.

9. Parental Commitment to Distance Learning through January 2021 – Mr. Tsonos

The district will accommodate families who have a change in personal circumstances.

10. Schedule Meeting in August – Mr. Tsonos

A budget workshop II is scheduled for August 18 at 6 pm. A vote on the budget will be in September.

11. Public School Committee Meeting – Mr. Tsonos

The Committee discussed having a public School Committee meeting during the pandemic. There have been inquiries as to why there are no public meetings being held since students are asked to return to school. The Committee talked about holding a public meeting at one of the schools. The Tech Director advised that there is no video conferencing and there are technical challenges to have both in person and virtually. Audio equipment is needed and the cost would be approximately \$5,500 to support a sound system for proper equipment to have a hybrid environment. This equipment is in high demand and on back order as of right now. Mr. Ferreira would not support that amount.

Ms. Oliveira will not attend a public meeting due to a personal matter and would not open schools to jeopardize anyone's health. Virtual meetings are working. Why should the Committee risk a meeting if it's not safe. More people have been watching the meetings than attending them at City Hall.

Mr. Ferreira stated he is against and uncomfortable with opening schools and it's not our call. He was asked why the School Committee is the only elected body who doesn't support the public by having public meetings especially if teachers are asked to go back to school. He would like strict guidelines based on scientific evidence and keep schools closed for the next six months.

Mr. Monteiro said the guidelines state that there cannot be gatherings of more than 15 people. There would be too many people attending and a member of our administration would have to be eliminated. He said the Committee should think as a team and include all members. The district doesn't have the audio to support a meeting in person. There isn't a member of this body that feels good about the situation that they're facing.

Ms. Beauchaine hasn't had anyone reach out to her about not being productive as a Committee member by having virtual meetings. We could look at having meetings in the schools. She doesn't feel the need to enter City Hall with all the safety protocols. She feels we should continue doing what we are doing. Once schools reopen and teachers are asked to come back, then we should hold meetings publicly.

IX. Action Items

1. Bill List:

Motion by Mr. Monteiro seconded by Ms. Oliveira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the following warrants as submitted.

Voucher No. 1029 for \$79,273.68
Voucher No. 1031 for \$34,715.25
Voucher No. 1032 for \$866,285.13

2. Removal of "Senior" from the EPHS Name

Motion by Mr. Monteiro, seconded by Ms. Oliveira and carried by unanimous consent to table this item. The Policy Committee will address this.

3. High School Scoreboards

Motion by Mr. Monteiro, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the donation of the existing scoreboards that sit on the softball field and soccer/lacrosse field with the sign that says donated by Friends of Townie Athletics to remain on them and to be utilized for the youth of the City.

4. Public School Committee Meeting

Motion by Mr. Monteiro, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine and carried by a vote of 3-2 to not open to public meetings at this time. A roll call was taken.

Mr. Ferreira voted nay
Mr. Monteiro voted aye
Ms. Oliveira voted aye
Ms. Beauchaine voted aye
Mr. Tsonos voted nay

The following invoices were approved by the Building Committee last evening and reviewed by Mr. Enos for a total of \$8,277,764.45.

5. Ai3 Invoices for Services

Motion by Mr. Monteiro seconded by Ms. Oliveira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the Ai3 July Invoice for Basic Services in the amount of \$122,474.84, Extra Services in the amount of \$19,544.80 and Reimbursable Expenses in the amount of \$4,426.06 as submitted.

6. Peregrine Invoice for Services

Motion by Mr. Monteiro, seconded by Ms. Oliveira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the Peregrine Group July Invoice for services in the amount of \$59,000.00 as submitted.

7. Gilbane Invoice for Services

Motion by Mr. Monteiro, seconded by Ms. Oliveira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the Gilbane Construction Co. July invoice for services in the amount of \$8,038,414.97 as submitted.

8. Stephen Turner, Inc. Invoice for Services

Motion by Mr. Monteiro, seconded by Ms. Oliveira and carried by unanimous consent to approve Stephen Turner, Inc. July invoice for services in the amount of \$5,851.28 as submitted.

9. Thielsch Engineering Invoice for Services

Motion by Mr. Monteiro, seconded by Ms. Oliveira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the Thielsch Engineering July invoice for services in the amount of \$28,052.50 as submitted.

XI. Public Comments II – Non-Agenda Items – No comments received.

XII. Announcements – There will be a Budget Workshop meeting on August 18 at 6 pm and hard copies of the budget will be sent. Mr. Enos stated that if schools do go out again, students

will not be receiving a free lunch - only students who qualify for free and reduced lunch are eligible. Parents/guardians are urged to fill out the lunch application forms.

XIII Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Monteiro , seconded by Ms. Beauchaine and carried by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Corsi, Administrative Assistant

Karen Oliveira, Clerk