
**EAST PROVIDENCE SPECIAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
OPEN SESSION – August 20, 2021**

The East Providence School Committee met for a special meeting on Friday, August 20, 2021 at 5:00 pm in Council Chambers at East Providence City Hall. Members present were Joel Monteiro, Chair, Jessica Beauchaine, Vice Chair, Max Brandle, Clerk, Jenni Azanero and Charles Tsonos. Also present were Superintendent Kathryn Crowley, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Forand, Craig Enos, Ben Russell, Anthony Feola, Leslie Anderson, Diana Clarkin, Diane Wallace and Attorney Ronald Cascione.

Call to Order – Open Session

Mr. Monteiro called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence were observed.

Discussion Items

Motion by Mr. Tsonos, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine and carried by unanimous consent to move discussion items 2, 3, 1 up on the agenda.

2. Bid Protest from Mill City Construction – A representative from Mill City Construction addressed the Committee regarding the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the entranceway project for Hennessey and Silver Spring Schools. Mill City Construction was the low bidder who didn't get the award. He stated that they were not selected on July 29th based on relevance to experience and MW/BE participation. The bid was \$70,000 lower.

A representative from Jensen Engineering gave a brief background of the submittal process and on July 13th the bids were publicly opened. He went through the criteria and listed the three main components of the RFP. Mill City Construction did not submit MW/BE participation, no project schedule and did not meet K-12 experience within the last 5 years. The rep from Mill City said that a schedule was not possible.

The other two bidders submitted the MW/BE participation requirement. One other bidder had the most experience.

Martone Service Company had 92.7 points out of 100
Mill City Construction had 80 points out of 100
American Construction had 83 points out of 100

Mr. Enos stated that in terms of the MW/BE participation – knowing the work that was done with the high school project, MW/BE is something that the department of administration looks for and is an important component.

Attorney Ron Cascione stated the case law – when officials in charge of awarding a contract, their actions should not be interfered with by the courts. In reviewing the bidding process they will only interfere if it was acted upon inappropriately. This has been the law in RI for 27 years. There is no formal protest process in the city charter.

Motion by Ms. Azanero, seconded by Mr. Brandle and carried by unanimous consent to move up action item #2 on the agenda.

Bid Protest from Mill City Construction

Motion by Ms. Azanero, seconded by Mr. Brandle and carried by unanimous consent to uphold the approval of the contract that has been signed by Martone Service Company.

3. 2021-2022 School Re-entry Plan – Dr. Forand presented the updated Re-entry plan for 2021-22. The Plan has some changes from the last plan which remains to be fluid as the COVID situation changes. All students and staff will now be wearing masks in school buildings as required by the Governor's executive order that was issued yesterday.

Breakfast and lunch will be free for all students. There will be two choices to start the year and offering hot lunches. Students may be eating in the classrooms due to distancing in the cafeterias. They are still discussing cafeteria options. It was requested by Ms. Beauchaine that Melissa Read from Chartwells attend the next meeting.

A meeting with all directors, principals, assistant principals and deans will be held on Monday, August 23rd at 10 am in person at the CTC.

A kick-off campaign has begun with all signs at each school building to welcome students back.

Distance learning is not an option per the Rhode Island Department of Education. Professional development days will be virtual learning days. After school programs will be continued. A meeting with the YMCA will be held on Monday. Sports will be followed with RIIL guidance. PTO/PTA meetings will be held in person.

Motion by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Ms. Azanero and carried by unanimous consent to move up action item #3 on the agenda.

2021-2022 School Re-entry Plan

Motion by Ms. Azanero, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine and carried by unanimous consent to approve the Re-entry Plan for 2021-2022 as submitted.

1. School Budget for FY22 – Mr. Enos updated the FY22 school budget and presented some changes that were made to it. The changes were made to grant funded decisions and reductions that were made. In 55000 series Special Ed out of district placements - number continues to be fluid and removed \$100,000 for private special placements. In 56000 series supply items - proposing reduction of \$100,000 and can access ESSER funds to supplement. In 57000 series vehicles reduction of \$100,000, however, if a vehicle is needed, can access the capital fund. Reimbursements are made twice per year. For determination on housing aid, they are holding everyone harmless again this year. School lunch applications do help the district. All back to school supplies were ordered in April.

Proposing a budget of \$89,204,880. This would require the School Department to ask the City for additional funding of \$639,639.00.

FY22 School Budget

Motion by Mr. Tsonos, seconded by Ms. Azanero and carried by unanimous consent to approve the school budget for FY22.

Public Comments

1. Michael Klein, parent of a kindergarten student. He would like a requirement for vaccinations and is glad there is a requirement for wearing masks indoors. He supports a mandate for testing all students.

The Superintendent stated that we do have air filters in all classrooms and offices. We do have a testing protocol. RIDE requires the district to do three vaccine clinics which will be held on September 13 at EPHS, September 15 at Martin Middle School and September 17 at Riverside Middle School. They will be held after school hours. The fire department runs these clinics and are open to students 12+ and older, staff members and families.

Head nurse, Diane Wallace, reported that a doctor has to be present with the EMTs for running these clinics. She is also the liaison to RIDE and will call them about students having to leave school early to obtain their second vaccine. Hours should be made available for students after school. She will notify the Committee with an update.

Mr. Klein asked if the School Committee has the authority to mandate proof of vaccinations. Attorney Cascione said the School Committee doesn't have the authority to require staff to show proof of vaccinations. The Superintendent will speak with the union presidents to ask staff to respond whether or not they are vaccinated for the safety of the students.

2. Kim Marotto, teacher at Riverside Middle School and parent of two students. She was immunocompromised last school year and chose to return to the classroom. She announced that the district does a great job with keeping all students and staff safe.

Announcements – Superintendent Crowley announced that Head Nurse, Diane Wallace, did a phenomenal job last year during COVID and went above and beyond with our records and contract tracing all hours of the day.

Saturday, August 21 at Martin Middle is the Bridgepoint Back to School supplies event from 9 am – 1 pm. There will be vision screening and games and ice cream trucks. Parents need to register first.

Ms. Beauchaine announced that she can be reached at jbeauchaine@epschoolsri.com or 401-862-9049 if anyone has anything they need to speak to her about. Please go through the chain of command but feel free to reach out to her. The entire Committee feels the same way.

Mr. Monteiro said the goal is to have school committee meetings at the new high school. Presently, the construction site at the high school is off limits. Nobody will be allowed in the building other than students and staff. On October 6th there will be a meet the teachers night. The official report from Gilbane is that we are on schedule for the opening of the new high school on August 30th.

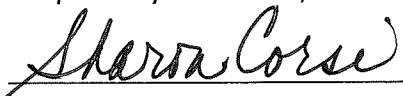
Superintendent Crowley invited the Committee to the convocation on September 1st in the auditorium of the new high school by 8:45 am. Directors will be present. It will be streamed to all schools.

Mr. Monteiro asked Mr. Enos, with regard to the bid, if the awardee gave a schedule and if it carries a penalty. Mr. Enos replied that they did provide one and that there are penalties if the schedule is not met, with consideration for the delay created by this protest.

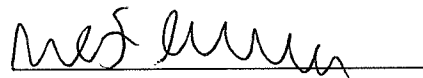
Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Ms. Azanero and carried by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sharon Corsi
Executive Administrative Assistant



Max Brandle
School Committee Clerk