
**EAST PROVIDENCE SPECIAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
OPEN SESSION – May 20, 2024**

I. Call to Order Open Session

The East Providence School Committee met in Open Session on Monday, May 20, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the auditorium at East Providence High School. Ms. Furtado called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Present: Jenni Furtado, Chair, Jessica Beauchaine, Vice-Chair, Max Brandle, Clerk, Anthony Ferreira and Ryan Queenan. Superintendent Sandra Forand and Craig Enos were also present.

II. Executive Session

Motion by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried unanimously to move into Executive Session in the main office conference room for the purpose of: Hearing: Appeal regarding Student Suspension and Legal Advice Related Thereto Pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a)(8); Discussion regarding Personnel Pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a)(1); and Consider & Vote on Motion to Adjourn and Convene into Public Session. Appropriate disclosure was made by the Chair concerning compliance with RIGL §42-46-5(a)(1) indicating that any person to be discussed had been appropriately notified in advance in writing and given the opportunity to have the discussion held in public session. No request had been made.

III. Reconvene in Open Session

Ms. Furtado called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence were observed. The Chair reported that one vote was taken in executive session to table #1, Hearing appeal regarding student suspension. It will be rescheduled for the meeting on June 11. Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Mr. Brandle and carried by unanimous consent to seal the minutes.

IV. Hearing: Appeal regarding Student Suspension if Requested by Parent

Motion by Mr. Brandle, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to table this hearing and reschedule for the next meeting in June.

V. Budget Workshop – Dr. Forand gave a high level overview of where the District predicts to be next year. There will be increases in salaries (\$2,000,000), healthcare (\$600,000), transportation (\$300,000), software (\$300,000) and custodial supplies (\$300,000) totaling a \$3M increase in the budget for next year.

In order to address decreases in personnel of \$1,935,000 for next year, they are looking at thirteen layoffs and eleven displacements. For every position eliminated, you need to layoff someone in each certification area that the person holds. Educators displaced will have the opportunity to bid on open positions.

Dr. Forand went through the positions being eliminated at each school and the reasons why. Some positions were due to small caseloads, kindergarten enrollment was low, positions were currently vacant and small classes.

Any positions eliminated can be called back. By law, teacher layoffs are required to be done by June 1. The process needs to begin to get teachers recalled. If teachers are still laid off by the last day of school, they are eligible for unemployment.

Ms. Beauchaine stated that she doesn't see anything presented tonight that was different from the last meeting on April 30th. Dr. Forand responded that there were two positions that were removed. Ms. Beauchaine stated that they are not doing a budget tonight. Everything discussed at the meeting in April is still the same as this evening.

The District is facing a state aid cut of \$1.1M which was found out in mid-April. They met with RIDE to discuss further. The District is looking at an increase of \$4.6M. They will be asking the City for the maximum of \$2.2M.

The District is not in budget season yet so there are many pieces that need to be put together. The Superintendent presented preliminary figures. Budget workshops will begin in July. They will know what state aid will be and be in a much better place and have solid numbers at that point. They will go line item by line item through the budget. Dr. Forand stated that they are not prepared to say publicly what the budget scenario will be but will be working on a budget that is balanced and fair and meets the needs of the District.

Two separate demographic studies have showed a decrease in kindergarten students in the next ten years. There is an ongoing issue with lower enrollment in the elementary schools but a steady number in the middle and high schools with enrollment.

There are other considerations for saving money. Dr. Forand will be testifying in supporting the CRAFT legislation which could be a \$400,000-500,000 savings each year. What they are paying out will decrease. There will be a savings in the ALP program and contracted speech services to bring down costs. Also, an increase in rental fees and CTC tuition. Currently 24 students have been accepted out of district for the CTC. There will be a slight increase in enrollment with seniors leaving and freshmen coming in.

Ms. Furtado and Dr. Forand had a meeting with the Mayor, City Council President and Vice President, Chief of Staff and both Finance Directors from the school district and city. They outlined the financial need for the district, the bill and plan in place to bring in revenue. It was a productive meeting knowing where the City was on their budget side. It was a preliminary meeting regarding their financial responsibility. The City hasn't started their budget talks.

VI. Action Items

1. Uphold the Superintendent's Decision for Student Suspension

Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Mr. Brandle and carried by unanimous consent to table this item for a later date.

2. District Layoffs

Motion by Mr. Brandle, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by a vote of 3-2 to approve the district layoffs as submitted. Ms. Furtado and Mr. Ferreira voted nay.

VII. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Mr. Brandle and carried by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sharon Corsi, Executive Assistant



Max Brandle, School Committee Clerk