

EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EASTON, MA

EASTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
Thursday, May 11, 2016

Minutes of School Committee Meeting, May 11, 2016, Simmons Lecture Hall convened at 6:04 p.m. Present: Chair Laurie Han, Jackie Weisman, Caroline O'Neill, Jackie Weisman, Dr. Sean Mullen, Nancy De Luca, Dr. Keough and Dr. Cabral.

Chair Han opened up the School Committee Meeting explaining that tonight's meeting was scheduled due to the fact that ECAT and the press were unable to attend the last School Committee Meeting on April 28, 2016. Therefore, she continued that the Committee decided to add this meeting as a way to inform the public of matters at hand.

Minutes: Regular Meeting 4/28/2016; Executive Session 3/8/2016, 4/6/2016:

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a 5-0 vote, the Committee approved the minutes of the Regular School Committee Meeting on 4/28/2016.

On a motion by Ms. Weisman, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a 5-0 vote, the Committee approved, but not to be released, the minutes of the Executive Session on 3/8/2016.

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a 5-0 vote, the Committee approved, but not to be released, the minutes of the Executive Session on 4/6/2016.

Schedule of Payments:

Circulated for signatures.

Personnel Change; Resignation

a. Assistant Principal, Richardson Olmsted School

Chair Han stated that Frank Rich, Assistant Principal at Richardson Olmsted School is moving on to become a Principal in another district. She said the Committee wishes Mr. Rich the best of luck.

Dr. Keough added that Mr. Rich is excited and that he will do well.

Vote on School Choice:

Dr. Keough said that this is something that the School Committee votes on each year. He continued that Easton has never been a School Choice town.

Chair Han explained that there's an opportunity for towns to participate and accept students from other districts. She continued that once a district accepts a student, they have that student up to graduation. She continued that it is great for districts that have a low number of students. Ms. O'Neill reiterated that Easton has never chosen to participate in School Choice, and that financially it is not worth it.

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a 5-0 vote, the Committee voted to not participate in School Choice.

Budget / Override Discussion:

Dr. Keough presented a power point on the Budget and Override.

Dr. Keough said that a lot of work went into the budget process and that it is a well thought out budget. He thanked all the Principals and the School Committee on the amount of time that went into deliberations. He continued that the budget is based on the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan, as these were the wishes of the community. He said that these were the goals that were developed as a result of his entry plan and his entry work in the district. He said that the requests in the override budget go back to the goals. Dr. Keough said most importantly, they went into the budget with the main focus on the best interest of the students and the intent to provide the teachers with the tools they need to be successful. Dr. Keough said the last time Easton had an override was in 2006. He continued that systems suffer with larger classroom sizes and it affects rankings. Dr. Keough referred to the Massachusetts School Rankings list by town website, and noted that Easton rated 93rd in the region in the Boston Magazine. He continued that kids suffer in larger classroom sizes, teachers suffer and the community suffers because it becomes a less desirable place for families as it impacts the property values.

A discussion took place of the possible consequences should the override fail and the impact it will have on the district.

Dr. Mullen concluded that as people talk about the override and whether it will pass or fail, he hopes that everyone will just take a step back and understand that there is no town side or school side; and that we are one community and we will rise or fall together.

Audit Update / FY 2017-18 Budget:

Chair Han stated that the Audit Committee has been meeting since November to put together the scope of the audit. The RFP is still not written, they are benchmarking; identifying towns like us, looking at salaries and staffing, looking at fees, lunch programs, activity fees, technology and professional development in the schools.

Ms. De Luca stated that Carol Nestler talked about the like communities. She said it is a work in progress, they got a lot of input last night from the public meeting that they had and will be going back to the table on Tuesday to refine the list, the benchmark, and probably can add the curriculum.

Chair Han said in terms of a timeline, they started in November, they are coming into the homestretch and the work may be done by May 17th. She continued that it then goes to the attorneys to craft the RFP then it gets mailed out to bid and there's a 30 day window to choose someone. She continued that it seems like it will be in July before they possibly have a company, then three to six months until they have answers.

Dr. Keough thanked the Audit Committee.

Public Comment – Question and Answer:

None.

Superintendent Notes:

Dr. Keough wanted to speak to the Ability Awareness Day; he said that SEPAC is moving in the right direction. He and Dr. Cabral covered lunches for Teacher Appreciation week and got caught up and he was unable to attend the Ability Awareness Day. He said that they certainly support all the efforts of the SEPAC. He continued that they are still talking about the budget and working on the budget, and that we started a weekly Newsletter as a form of communication to the staff.

Assistant Superintendent Notes:

Dr. Cabral thanked the PTAs, PACs, parents for their support of the teachers and staff during the Teacher Appreciation week. Dr. Cabral said that the YMCA is offering free childcare on the night of the Town Meeting at the Elm Street facility starting at 6:00 p.m. until the meeting is over.

School Committee Notes:

Ms. O'Neill wanted to remind everyone of the Town Meeting starting at 7:00 p.m. at Oliver Ames High School. She said she got an email from an active parent in Easton who has never attended a Town Meeting, and was having some anxiety over attending the Town Meeting. Ms. O'Neill said that it is mostly sitting for several hours, listening to various warrants and raising your hand to vote. She encouraged everyone to attend.

Chair Han said that the votes are tight and don't assume someone else will be doing the voting for you. She continued that there has been the expectation that the School Committee will answer things via Face Book and she said they have to go through the proper channels. She said the Committee members can be contacted via email, the k12.ma.us and that they will respond.

Jane Martin, a member of the community, said she would like to thank the School Committee for all the hard work that they have done along with the Administration for crafting the budget and to work with the other sub committees in town to go back and diligently determine what the priorities are and how you move those priorities forward. She said she is confident and that Easton has always stepped up and done the right thing when it came down to our town and the education of our children.

Possible Executive Session RE: Negotiations Update:

Not needed.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a 5-0 vote, the meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Andrew W. Keough Ed.D.
Secretary