

EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EASTON, MA

EASTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
Thursday, September 8, 2016

Minutes of School Committee Meeting, September 8, 2016, Simmons Lecture Hall, convened at 6:31 p.m. Present: Laurie Han, Jackie Weisman, Caroline O'Neill, Nancy De Luca, Dr. Keough and Dr. Cabral.

Approval of Minutes: Executive Session 8/05/2016, 8/18/2015; Regular Meeting 8/18/2016:

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. DeLuca , with a 4-0 vote, the executive session minutes of 8/5/2016 were approved but not to be released.

On a motion by Ms. DeLuca, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a 4-0 vote, the regular minutes of 8/18/2016 were approved as amended.

No vote was taken on the Executive Session Minutes of 8/18/2016.

Schedule of Payments:

Circulated for signatures.

Approval of Science from Scientists Contract:

Dr. Cabral said that they are working towards funding the program Science From Scientists as this is not part of the budget. She continued that they are working on corporate sponsorship and that the whole year has not been funded as of yet. Dr. Cabral said that Science From Scientists have agreed to start the program for the first trimester. She encouraged people to check out the video on ECAT that describes what Science From Scientists is all about. Dr. Cabral said on the video Mr. Carroll, Principal of Easton Middle School along with several teachers, discuss the program. She continued that Science From Scientists also have their own website that has information regarding their program and that anyone can make a donation towards the funding of the program.

Mr. Luke Carroll, Principal of Easton Middle School, said the students benefited from the program and it is a special event that takes place in the science lab throughout the day and it is active learning. Mr. Carroll said the students enjoyed using the different forms of equipment that is available for the students to use with the program. He continued that the teachers find it helpful as well and that it has been a great program.

Dr. Cabral said the students go once a week every other week throughout the year. She continued that Science From Scientists employ real scientists and the teachers work with the scientists. She said the program is currently available to grade six.

Ms. De Luca asked if the sixth graders have Science From Scientists along with the Sheep Pasture.

Dr. Cabral stated that they do get Science From Scientists along with the Sheep Pasture. She continued that the sixth grade teachers participated in a curriculum overhaul and the Sheep Pasture representatives attended. She continued that the Sheep Pasture representatives were very open to ideas from the teachers and have agreed to work with the teachers to revamp their curriculum.

Dr. Keough added that the teachers talk about the standards and that is a key component to raising achievement. Dr. Keough said all the teachers understand what they are supposed to be teaching and in order to do that they have to look at the standards. He stated that he is confident that Science From Scientists and the Sheep Pasture have their instruction designed to support the work that the teachers are doing and that these are two beneficial initiatives.

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill , seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a 4-0 vote, the Committee approved the Science From Scientists contract.

Wings of Hope Presentation to the School Committee:

Dr. Keough introduced Dottie Fulginiti and Colleen Less, members of Easton Wings of Hope.

Ms. Fulginiti said that Kristen Harrison, Chairperson of Wings of Hope, was unable to attend, and that Kristen asked her and Colleen to speak on her behalf. She continued that Wings of Hope began about eighteen months ago when Kristen Harrison and her husband, Chris, lost a loved one to an overdose. She continued that the Harrisons wanted to do something in the community to engage people and to try to help. Ms. Fulginiti continued that the Harrisons started this coalition and brought community stakeholders in to establish a community coalition working to reduce substance abuse through education awareness and policy change. Ms. Fulginiti said the steering committee consists of the following people: Dottie Fulginiti, member of the Board of Selectmen, Lynne LeBlanc, Eileen Gardner, John Morley, Colleen Less, Kathy Emerson, Serah Selmon, Stephanie Patton, and Chris and Kristen Harrison. She said that the steering committee voted to fund the late bus for the Easton Middle School this year for one year.

Ms. Less said that Easton Wings of Hope applied for grant monies. She continued, the funds are used for their purpose, which is, to foster education awareness around addiction

and substance abuse. She continued that one of the items on the override was the funding of a late bus for the middle school. Ms. Less said when the override failed they decided that this was a priority for them. She continued that when kids are unsupervised at that school age specifically, risky behavior tends to emerge and the longer that you can delay a child from trying any kind of substance, the less chance they have of having dire consequences. She said that middle school is a primary age to keep kids engaged and without the late bus, many of the students who want to stay after school would not be able to stay after to get the support that they need in a structured environment. Ms. Less said it was important for the steering committee to provide the funding of the late bus at the middle school for the school year. Ms. Less said the school nurses, Lynne LeBlanc and Eileen Gardner, are tremendous, they love every one of the kids like their own and they put in so much extra time to make sure these initiatives are working for our kids' benefit.

Chair Han expressed her gratitude for this generous donation.

Ms. Fulginiti thanked the generous support of the community and the people who contributed so that they have the funding to make this possible.

Dr. Keough added that the nurses and so many people have been instrumental in conducting our Youth Risk Survey and Adolescent Wellness Survey. He continued that the Youth Risk Survey / Adolescent Wellness Survey Committee are working to put a presentation together to educate the public about the activities, risky and otherwise, that our students are involved with. They will discuss the dangers that are out there and how to provide our teens with healthy alternatives. He said the support for the middle school late bus is so hugely appreciated.

Mr. Carroll thanked the Wings of Hope on behalf of the students. He said that they have worked really hard to provide over thirty three clubs, activities and programs every single day after school. He said it is really important as Ms. Less said, that the students in middle school face the most difficult choices during those years and that we want to keep them close, keep them supervised, and have instructed activities where they are supervised, meeting friends and they are enjoying school. He said he cannot thank the Wings of Hope enough for this donation.

On a motion by Ms. DeLuca, seconded by Ms. O'Neill with tremendous gratitude, with a 4-0 vote, the Committee approved the \$10,800.00 donation to fund the late bus at Easton Middle School.

Approval of the Cross Country Out of State Meets:

Kyle Sousa, head coach of the Cross Country team, stated he is requesting approval for the Cross Country team to participate in two Cross Country meets in Warwick Rhode

Island at Goddard State Park, on Saturday, September 24 and October 15th. Mr. Sousa said the Cross Country team consists of 115 students.

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a 4-0 vote, the Committee approved the various out of state Cross Country meets.

Approval of Out of State Field Trips:

a. OA Marching Band

b. Elementary Schools

Dr. Keough said that in the packets were a list of some trips that are coming up seeking approval from the Committee.

On a motion by Ms. Weisman, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a 4-0 vote, the Committee approved the OA Marching Band and Elementary Schools out of state field trips.

Approval of Foreign Travel Trip to Spain:

Dr. Keough introduced Maria Palma, World Language Department Chair. He said Ms. Palma is here seeking approval from the Committee for a foreign travel trip to Spain.

Ms. Palma said that she has chaperoned this trip in the past and in the fall students from Spain come to live with host families in Easton for two weeks and in February Easton students of the upper level Spanish class go Spain for two and a half weeks. She continued that while they will be touring Madrid for three days, they will be staying at a hotel and spend two weeks with the host families that they met in the fall. She continued that this has been a wonderful experience but it has been five years since the last time they went. Ms. Palma told the Committee that she has several teachers in the department who will be chaperoning.

Dr. Keough said this trip dovetails nicely with what they are aiming to achieve with the Strategic Plan that focuses around global scholars and preparing our students for life in the big world. He continued that Ms. Palma connected this trip with the standards as well.

A brief discussion took place.

On a motion by Ms O'Neill, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a 4-0 vote, the Committee approved the proposed foreign travel trip to Spain.

Discussion On Question #2 Charter Schools:

Dr. Keough said that Mr. Steve McGinnis from the Mass Teachers Association spoke to the Committee at the last School Committee meeting asking the Committee to consider a vote to support the opposition of Question #2 in lifting the cap on Charter Schools in

Massachusetts. He continued that Easton currently gives \$100,080 to funding students who attend Charter Schools. He continued that it is on the agenda as a discussion item.

Ms. O'Neill spoke in depth on Charter Schools and a discussion took place regarding the advantages and disadvantages of Charter Schools.

Chair Han said it is basically a private school using public dollars with no accountability.

Ms. De Luca said that Question #2 is only dealing with Massachusetts and that the Committee should consider signing the resolution along with the other towns and cities in Massachusetts in support of "no" on Question #2.

Chair Han suggested putting Question #2 regarding Charter Schools, on the next workshop agenda so they may take a vote.

Dr. Keough encouraged the public to communicate with the School Committee members regarding Question #2, Charter Schools, before the School Committee takes a vote.

Opening of School Year Update:

Dr. Keough said the document that was in the School Committee packets, gives a sense of who was hired and the transfers that occurred. He continued that the custodians and DPW deserve a lot of credit for the work that they do outside and around the buildings. He said the facilities are in great shape. Dr. Keough continued that they hired hall monitors at the high school in place of the SRO position. Dr. Keough stated that the funds used for the hall monitors came from the funds that was previously used for the SRO position that was originally eliminated from the first half of the school year but hopes it will be reinstated in January.

Dr. Keough discussed enrollment figures. He continued that this topic will be discussed in depth at the October School Committee meeting when the October 1st enrollment figures are prepared for sending to the state.

Dr. Keough said that the new start times have gone off well according to the principals. He said that the afternoon bus runs have a tight timeline and that they are actively addressing this issue especially with the Richardson Olmsted School. He continued that Assistant Principal, Bryan Aries, is working with the teachers on this issue at RO.

Ms. O'Neill said that she has spoken with two parents and they say their daughters are just more relaxed, more pleasant and that it is not as hard to get them up in the morning, and that they are in a better mood to start learning.

Dr. Keough said that many schools are having the conversation of earlier start times but fewer schools taking it to fruition and that this took a lot of courage on the part of the School Committee to really insist upon this as it is in the best interest of the kids.

Ms. Weisman said that this has been more difficult for the younger children.

Chair Han said that although she hasn't been to the younger grade schools, the Easton Middle School and Oliver Ames High School looks beautiful, and that every year the staff does a nice job.

Dr. Keough said the custodians take pride in their work and they should be acknowledged as much as possible, they work very hard.

Notice of Professional Status Reception:

Dr. Keough said the Professional Teaching Status Reception is on October 6th, 5:45 pm in the Oliver Ames High School Cafeteria, which is prior to the School Committee Meeting. He said he encourages anyone to attend and see the teachers receive this important recognition.

Ms. Weisman said she has a friend in another district and she was very impressed that Easton does this as not all districts do.

Budget Discussion - FY 18 Preliminary Discussion:

Dr. Keough said that he has set four dates in the calendar to discuss the budget and give the Committee updates. He said that as far as the FY18 budget, which they will be building this year, it is really very early as Marilyn Gordon is still factoring in lane changes and people coming on board. He said Ms. Gordon knows how important it is to the Committee to get this information and the Administration have agreed to discuss this at the first Cabinet Meeting. He continued that the Cabinet is now meeting weekly, it will be shorter meetings, targeted meetings. He said the principals are on board with this format. Dr. Keough said they will discuss the list that they put forward to the town at these meetings with the principals and share with the Committee their highest priorities from this list.

Public Comment:

None.

Superintendent Notes:

Dr. Keough said another Superintendent's Newsletter was sent out, not to be confused with the 50 Oliver Newsletter that is quarterly. He said his regular newsletter to the staff and 50 Oliver for the parents are intended to keep people in the loop about happenings in the district. Dr. Keough said that he received news from the Massachusetts School Building Association that they wanted to see Center School as part of their Senior Study. He continued that the district sent in the statement of interest to the MSBA and they want to come out and take a look at Center School, however, it doesn't mean that the district has been approved for a new construction project. He said we were only allowed to name one school but it was mentioned that there are needs at the Parkview and Moreau Hall Schools as well.

Dr. Keough reminded the Committee of the training on Open Meeting Law and Public Records with Rebecca Bryant at the September 23rd workshop.

Chair Han said the workshop is looking quite bulky so she suggested reviewing Policy Section J for the first hour of the workshop prior to the training. Chair Han also suggested setting an hour aside for each workshop to go over the policies until they are all reviewed.

Assistant Superintendent Notes:

Dr. Cabral said that she wanted to give the Committee a quick update from the summer work. She continued that she is extremely proud of over 100 staff members who put in over 1600 hours of work between them, in terms of finishing up units, starting units, aligning them, and writing lessons. She said a lot of really good work had been done, and that all the teachers will have access to Rubicon Atlas, our curriculum management system, which will have everything in one place. She added the School Committee will have access to that system as well. She continued that the goal is to begin implementation this year. Dr. Cabral stated the district will implement one or more units this year, in every single grade, every single content area across the district. She continued that she wanted to thank the teachers and building administrators.

Chair Han asked if the curriculum writing process is a five year plan.

Dr. Cabral answered yes, and that the district is currently at year three, going into year four.

School Committee Notes:

Ms. De Luca reminded everyone that on Friday, September 16th the Greg Chapman dedication of the Easton Middle School Gymnasium will be at 6:00 pm and following is a reception at the Easton Country Club. She continued that the opening day was great,

honoring those people who have been with the district for a number of years with flowers and plaques was wonderful.

Ms. O'Neill said a common theme at the opening day seemed to be focused around "talk to us" if you have questions before you post comments on Facebook.

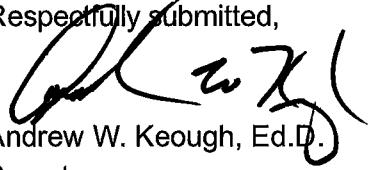
Chair Han said that the field hockey team won their first two games.

Ms. O'Neill said that she was at the Town Hall and the Audit Review Sub Committee reviewed the two responses to the request for proposal and until the Selectmen see the information and vote on it, she is not at liberty to say anything about the proposals. She continued that the Selectmen vote on September 26th and anticipate either firm would start at the end of this month and it would be about a four month process.

Possible Executive Session: RE: Contract Negotiations:

On a motion by Ms De Luca, seconded by Ms O'Neill, the Committee was polled, with a 4-0 vote, the Committee adjourned at 8:15 pm to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations not to return to Open Session.

Respectfully submitted,


Andrew W. Keough, Ed.D.
Secretary