

REGULAR MEETING OF THE NEW BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

PRESENT: MAYOR LANG, DR. FLETCHER, MS. POLLOCK, MR. NOBREGA, DR. FINNERTY,
MRS. USSACH, ATTY. CLARK (ARR. 7:43)

ABSENT: NONE

IN ATTENDANCE: DR. FRANCIS, H. LARKIN, L. OLIVEIRA, C. COSTA, L. DUNAWAY (Acting recording
secretary)

Justin Braga, Student Representative, was in attendance.

Public Comment was as follows:

1. Carol Strupczewski – Safety and maintenance issues at Pulaski School
2. Eddie Johnson – Opposed to position of Assistant Superintendent of Equity and Diversity
3. Christine Levasseur Smith – Concern over school funds at Pulaski School
4. Gloria Pasteris – Opposed to maintenance and custodial cuts
5. Matt Riley – Distributed and spoke on recommended list of cuts submitted by principals
6. Bruce Rose – Spoke in favor of Assistant Superintendent of Equity and Diversity position
7. Missy Gilbarg - Spoke in favor of Assistant Superintendent of Equity and Diversity position

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Dr. Finnerty and seconded by Mrs. Ussach, to take item 7C on the Agenda, including the item on the Addendum out of order.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Dr. Finnerty and seconded by Mrs. Ussach, to take up Item 7C on the Agenda and on the Addendum.

Atty. Clark arrived at 7:43 P.M.

Michael Arguin, on behalf of the Whaling City Clippers, gave a brief description of the organization and their need for the use of the football stadium at Paul Walsh Field and a waiver of half the rental fee.

VOTED five to two, on a motion by Mr. Nobrega and seconded by Atty. Clark, to grant approval to Michael Arguin/General Manager/Whaling City Clippers, to use the football stadium at the Paul Walsh Athletic Field for five home games (to be determined) with a waiver of half the rental fee. Dr. Finnerty and Mrs. Ussach were opposed.

Mayor Lang mentioned to the Committee that it was his understanding that the children involved in the SouthCoast Children's Theatre were all New Bedford students. Dr. Finnerty concurred.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Atty. Clark and seconded by Mrs. Ussach, to grant approval to Denis Lawrence, Jr./N.B. City Council President, on behalf of the SouthCoast Children's Theatre, to use the auditorium at Keith Middle School on Sunday, January 9, 2011 from 12:00 to 6:00 P.M. for auditions and May 8 – 14, 2011 for the production of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat", with a waiver of the rental fee.

Rich Taber, on behalf of the 2010 Feast of the Blessed Sacrament Committee addressed the Committee regarding his request to use the grounds at the Ottiwell School.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Mr. Nobrega and seconded by Dr. Finnerty, to grant approval to Rich Taber, on behalf of the 2010 Feast of the Blessed Sacrament Committee, to use the grounds at Ottiwell School from July 22 – August 4, 2010, to prepare for and host the 96th Annual Feast of the Blessed Sacrament.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Dr. Finnerty and seconded by Mrs. Ussach, to grant approval to Timothy Rumberger/Asst. Principal-Lincoln School/New Bedford Youth Lacrosse, to use the playing field at Normandin Middle School (or the gymnasium in inclement weather) from July 26 – 29, 2010 from 1:00 – 5:00 P.M., to conduct a free instructional lacrosse clinic for students entering grades 6 – 9, with a waiver of all fees.

Ms. Pollock asked Mr. Oliveira how much the fees were in relation to a request by Sea Lab Keel, Inc. PTO. Mr. Oliveira said the custodial overtime would amount to \$120.

VOTED six to one, on a motion by Mrs. Ussach and seconded by Dr. Finnerty, to grant approval to Arthur Dutra/Principal/Hannigan/Sea lab, on behalf of the Sea Lab Keel, Inc. PTO, to hold Sea Lab's annual car wash on Saturday, July 21, 2010, from 9:00 – 1:00 P.M., with a waiver of all fees. Ms. Pollock was opposed.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Dr. Finnerty and seconded by Dr. Fletcher, to take up the three requests for approval of minutes together.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Atty. Clark and seconded by Dr. Fletcher, to receive and place on file the minutes of the following meetings:

- May 10, 2010 – Public Hearing on the FY 2011 Budget
- May 10, 2010 – Regular Meeting
- June 14, 2010 – Regular Meeting

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Dr. Finnerty and seconded by Ms. Pollock, to go to Item 6A, Old Business.

Dr. Francis asked that the local budget be passed so the School Department could go forward with personnel movements.

Mr. Oliveira reviewed the previous actions taken regarding the budget and told the Committee that 20 teaching positions were able to be saved by cutting maintenance and custodial positions. He also cautioned that each week positions are not cut, additional costs are incurred by department of \$27,000 or more. Currently, \$60,000 more would have to be cut because the actual cuts made on June 28 have not been done. He went on to say that 47 Paraprofessional cuts could be made without affecting student services.

He suggested that the Committee vote to balance the budget so talks with the unions could start regarding ways to save positions. The schedule is to eliminate AFSCME positions, then Paraprofessionals, then teachers. Mayor Lang cautioned about triggering unemployment. Mr. Oliveira said that full year personnel would be first and it would take at least five weeks for teachers could be in place after all the "bumping" of positions took place.

A discussion ensued regarding the Assistant Superintendent of Equity and Diversity position.

Mrs. Ussach acknowledged that the position is very important to the community but she is also concerned about the loss of teachers. She went on to say that she could not fathom why we cannot get someone to come to the Community for the rate of pay of Director. In bad times you have to curtail – good times you advance. She stated that she would prefer that it be a director's position.

Dr. Finnerty stated that he was in favor of the position of Equity and Diversity. It is a very busy position which includes hearings, recruitment, etc., but could not justify it at the level of Assistant Superintendent.

Dr. Fletcher commented that the Administration is down to two assistants when several years ago it had seven on staff. Assistant Superintendent for Equity and Diversity will also be responsible for hearings relative to harassment allegations and to recruit minority staff. Families feel disconnected because they cannot bridge the gap and need to know that there is someone at the highest level in the district that they can communicate with.

Ms. Pollock stated that the position was fully funded at a previous meeting by combining I T positions. There is a great need for Latinos and other immigrant population to have access.

Mayor Lang stated that we need the Assistant Superintendent for the health and development of our school system and community.

A motion was made by Mrs. Ussach and seconded by Dr. Finnerty, to reconsider the vote to establish the position of Assistant Superintendent of Equity and Diversity and to re-classify the position as a director.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mayor Lang	No	Atty. Clark	No
Dr. Finnerty	Yes	Ms. Pollock	No
Dr. Fletcher	No	Mrs. Ussach	Yes
Mr. Nobrega	No		

2 - Yeas

5 - Nays

0 - Absent

Mrs. Ussach asked that the Committee consider cutting freshman sports at the high school level. Mr. Oliveira said that this amounted to approximately \$20,000. Mrs. Ussach mentioned that it was her understanding that the enrollment was not particularly high in the program.

Mrs. Ussach made a motion to eliminate freshman sports at the high school. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Dr. Finnerty started a discussion on the issue of using grant funding to go to conferences. In these hard times, it was his recommendation that only state and federally mandated conferences be attended, School Committee included, and that the funds be used for direct services to students.

Dr. Fletcher concurred with Dr. Finnerty and commented that the sacrifice had to be made. Mrs. Ussach and Ms. Pollock also stated their support as they agreed that this was an area that could be cut.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Dr. Finnerty and seconded by Mr. Nobrega, to utilize grant funding for direct services to students, in place of conferences, whenever possible.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Mrs. Ussach and seconded by Ms. Pollock, to go to item 7B on the Agenda

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Mrs. Ussach and seconded by Dr. Finnerty, to take up all requests for acceptance of donations together.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Dr. Finnerty and seconded by Dr. Fletcher, to authorize acceptance of the following donations:

- Marcia Faucher/Principal/Pacheco School – \$616 from Lifetouch National School Studios.
- Heather Larkin/Asst. Supt. Student Services – To accept various monetary donations from families and staff to cover all costs for field trips for the Carney Academy Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Extended School Year Program.
- Deborah Cimo/Principal/Kempton School - \$57.29 from Stop & Shop A+ Bonus Bucks; \$319.67 from Lifetouch National School Studios.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Atty. Clark and seconded by Dr. Finnerty, to take up Addendum item 7D.

Dr. Finnerty mentioned, regarding the request to distribute flyers announcing a Lacrosse Clinic, that lacrosse teams need a feeder program. He also stated that anyone involved in the clinic will need to be C.O.R.I.'d.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Dr. Finnerty and seconded by Mrs. Ussach, to grant permission to Timothy Rumberger/Asst. Principal – Lincoln School/New Bedford Youth Lacrosse, to distribute flyers to New Bedford Public School summer school students, announcing a free instructional lacrosse clinic for students entering grades 6 – 9.

Regarding the previous vote relative to conferences and related travel, Mayor Lang asked Mr. Oliveira to calculate the money that will be saved.

Mrs. Ussach asked if there was a possibility to offer a stipend to employees if they opt to go on their spouses' medical insurance instead of being insured by the City. Mr. Oliveira said this suggestion would have to go to the Insurance Advisory Committee to discuss. Currently, one in three staff members have insurance with their spouse.

Dr. Finnerty asked that clarification be given that the vote taken regarding conference travel include in state travel as well as out of state.

A list of recommendations for cuts which were submitted on behalf of a group of principals was reviewed by the Committee. Mr. Oliveira and Dr. Francis noted the impact that the suggestions of potential cuts would have on the department.

Among the suggestions were possible furloughs for Professional Development days. Atty. Clark asked if this had been discussed since the last meeting on June 28. Dr. Francis responded that this is certainly something to explore and explained that furloughs for two of the three days were possible as one Professional Development day is funded through a grant.

Atty. Clark made a plea to Union members to give feedback before the teaching positions are cut.

At this time a discussion took place regarding principals taking a wage freeze and leading the way for teachers to follow.

Dr. Finnerty said that he felt that a discussion should take place with the unions before a vote on budget cuts relative to teaching positions take place, not after.

Mrs. Ussach stated that we should all work together to help come to a conclusion before the vote is taken as this is a tough decision.

Dr. Fletcher acknowledged that until there are sacrifices, we will be in a crisis come September and made the comment that we should stop taking programs, teachers and help away from the children.

A discussion took place regarding the possible disparity in class size and funding between the Charter School and New Bedford Public Schools.

Ms. Pollock asked Mr. Oliveira if any consultants were being paid through the local budget, Mr. Oliveira responded that consultants have not been paid through local for three years.

Upon review, Mayor Lang noted that the budget still had to be cut \$3.6M and identified the following:

- Possible \$150,000 is left over from the ARRA Grant (Stimulus Funds)
- Possible savings from \$4.67 M in SPED bus negotiations
- Possible furlough system
- Possible pay freeze for steps and/or salary increases

Mayor Lang said he hoped that by the next meeting on July 19, we would have more revenue to look at and take a final vote.

Mr. Oliveira clarified that the School Committee voted to cut 57 teaching positions at the previous meeting on July 12, therefore 55 more positions would have to be cut for a total of 112.

A motion was made by Mr. Nobrega and seconded by Mrs. Ussach, to cut 55 teaching positions, in the amount of \$3.6M, if all other sources of revenue are exhausted.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mayor Lang	Yes	Atty. Clark	Yes
Dr. Finnerty	Yes	Ms. Pollock	Yes
Dr. Fletcher	Yes	Mrs. Ussach	Yes
Mr. Nobrega	Yes		

7 - Yeas

0 - Nays

0 - Absent

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Mr. Nobrega and seconded by Atty. Clark, to receive and place on file the Financial Statement from the Office of Finance & Operations.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Dr. Fletcher and seconded by Mrs. Ussach, to receive and place on file the Schedule of Bills from the Office of Finance & Operations.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Atty. Clark and seconded by Dr. Fletcher, to receive and place on file the Personnel Report.

The Superintendent's Report included the following:

- Announcement that New Bedford Public Schools has received a 21st Century Community Learning Centers High School Innovation Grant in the amount of \$135,000.

At this time Mayor Lang mentioned to Mr. Oliveira that it is imperative that the School Department and City work together to gather building surplus from the old Lincoln School. Mr. Oliveira stated that the process was already in progress to share with principals, the City, and non-profit groups.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY, on a motion by Mrs. Ussach and seconded by Ms. Pollock, to approve a request to declare, in accordance with School Department Policy DN-R, a recommended list of surplus property located at Lincoln School.

A motion was made by Mr. Nobrega and seconded by Ms. Pollock, to go into Executive Session to discuss collective bargaining and non-union personnel negotiations.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mayor Lang	Yes	Atty. Clark	Yes
Dr. Finnerty	Yes	Ms. Pollock	Yes
Dr. Fletcher	Yes	Mrs. Ussach	Yes
Mr. Nobrega	Yes		

7 - Yeas

0 - Nays

0 - Absent

At 9:53 P.M., on a motion by Mr. Nobrega and seconded by Atty. Clark, the Committee VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to adjourn the Regular Session meeting.

Submitted by,



Dr. Mary Louise Francis
Superintendent of Schools
Secretary, School Committee

MLF/lpd