

**WATERTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
WATERTOWN, MA**

**RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
149 MAIN STREET**

**MONDAY  
AUGUST 14, 2017  
6:45 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

**I. Roll Call**

Mr. John Portz, Chairman, called the August 14, 2017 meeting to order at 6:45 PM. Present were School Committee members Dr. Guido Guidotti, Ms. Eileen Hsü-Balzer, Dr. Candace Miller, Mr. Mark Sideris, and Ms. Elizabeth Yusem. Not present was School Committee member Ms. Kendra Foley.

**II. Executive Session: 6:45 PM**

The School Committee adjourned to an Executive Session for discussion of strategy with respect to non-union contracts and WEA contract negotiations as an open meeting may have had a detrimental effect on the WPS' bargaining position.

**III. Return to Open Session**

The School Committee returned to open session at 7:00 PM. Also present were Superintendent Dr. Deanne Galdston, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching, Learning, & Assessment Dr. Theresa B. McGuinness, Director of Human Resources Mr. Craig Hardimon, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations Ms. Mary C. DeLai, Director of Student Services Ms. Kathleen Desmarais, and various members of the public.

The Chairman introduced and welcomed Dr. Deanne Galdston who as of July 1, 2017 had stepped into the role as Watertown Public Schools' Superintendent. Dr. Galdston made a statement thanking the School Committee, administration, staff, and community for the opportunity to serve in Watertown.

**IV. Public Forum -- Session I**

A member of the public, a Watertown parent and Town Councilor, noted his support of a feasibility study on the elementary schools' reconstruction to be voted upon later in the meeting. He thanked Dr. Candace Miller for her service as this would be her last meeting.

**V. Action Items -- Discussion and Vote**

**A. WEA Unit A Contract Amendment**

A motion was made to approve an amendment to the Unit A contract with regards to the WEA president's pay and term effective September 1, 2017 through August 31, 2018.

The motion was seconded.

The Town Manager, Mr. Michael Driscoll, said he would not support the amendment due to the lack of language to reimburse costs for health insurance.

A roll call vote was taken:

Sideris: Yes

Miller: Yes

Yusem: Yes

Hsu-Balzer: Yes

Portz: Yes

Driscoll: No

Guidotti: Yes

The motion passed with one School Committee member not present for the vote.

A motion was made to approve an amendment to the Unit A contract with regards to stipends for athletics coaches

A roll call vote was taken:

Sideris: Yes

Miller: Yes

Yusem: Yes

Hsu-Balzer: Yes

Portz: Yes

Driscoll: Yes

Guidotti: Yes

The motion passed unanimously with one School Committee member not present for the vote.

#### **B. Building for the Future – Proceed with Feasibility Studies of Elementary Schools**

The Chairman introduced Mr. Scott Dunlap of Ai3, the architectural firm hired to study the next steps in the District's Building for the Future initiative. Mr. Dunlap said that his firm had recommended the District consider an in-depth evaluation to determine the best solutions at each elementary school to alleviate their physical space needs. He said that renovations would fully modernize the buildings and enable the facilities to provide adequate spaces for 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning. Mr. Dunlap presented some images exemplifying the kinds of school renovation work that Ai3 has completed in recent years.

A School Committee member asked if students and teachers are ever present while construction is being completed; Mr. Dunlap responded that Ai3 does oftentimes partake in phased-occupied construction, meaning the students and teachers may continue their school and work during the renovation process.

A School Committee member said he believed phased-occupied construction would incur additional costs and asked how much extra funding might be required to complete such projects in Watertown. Mr. Dunlap responded that it would depend on the ultimate projects chosen, but would likely be a 5% to 8% premium.

A motion was made for the School Committee to authorize the Superintendent to proceed in conjunction with Town officials with procuring the services of an owner's project manager (OPM) to provide project management services for the construction, additions to, or renovations of the three elementary schools.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously with one School Committee member not present for the vote.

A motion was made for the School Committee to authorize the Superintendent to proceed in conjunction with Town officials with procuring the services of a designer to provide professional design services for the construction, additions to, or renovations of the three elementary schools.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously with one School Committee member not present for the vote.

## **VI. Presentation and Discussion**

### **A. Superintendent's Entry Plan and Goals for 2017-2018**

Dr. Deanne Galdston presented her entry plan and goals for the 2017-2018 school year. Dr. Galdston said that her core values were to focus on instructional core, collective responsibility for all students, districtwide improvement based on collective inquiry, highly effective communication, and facilities that meet the educational needs to Watertown's children.

Dr. Galdston outlined a series of meetings she would be having with Town officials, community members, and WPS staff members with the goal of determining the District's core values and vision for the future. Dr. Galdston said she would compile a report of the data collected during these meetings and present her findings to the School Committee in January of 2018. The report would then inform

the work of a Strategy Team who would work with Dr. Galdston to develop a three-year District improvement plan.

Dr. Galdston outlined her eight goals:

- Effective entry and direction-setting
- Partaking in the New Superintendent Induction Program (NSIP)
- Fair, effective administrator evaluations
- Fair, effective classroom teacher evaluations
- Implementing a districtwide communication plan
- Continuing the “Building for the Future” elementary project
- Increasing student achievement for all students
- Developing a district improvement plan

The Chairman commented that he liked that student achievement benchmarks were included in the Superintendent’s goals.

A School Committee member said she hoped administration would use the Superintendent’s goals to aid in the creation of the FY19 budget and beyond.

A School Committee member thanked the Superintendent for her thorough and thoughtful entry plan and goals. She said she hoped the School Committee would attend a training on superintendent evaluation with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC). The School Committee member suggested the Superintendent look into why some student choose not to attend Watertown High School.

#### **B. Schools’ Handbooks**

Dr. Galdston said that in the spring of 2017, the Watertown Public Schools requested an attorney’s review of the District’s student handbooks for compliance with School Committee policy and with state and federal law. The attorney had found many changes that were required – mostly additions of policies – that were given in draft form to the School Committee for their review. These draft handbooks for the elementary schools, middle school, and high school were given to the School Committee ahead of the meeting.

A School Committee member suggested that the use of the terms “parent” and “parent or guardian” be consistently used throughout the handbooks. She further questioned whether parents or guardians should be held accountable for students who are 18 years of age or older; Dr. Galdston said she would investigate.

The Superintendent clarified that the new handbooks would need to be voted on by the School Committee before September 5, 2017 in order for them to be distributed to students on the first day of school. A School Committee member said he wished the handbooks had first been vetted through the Curriculum Subcommittee and said he did not think a vote could occur tonight because the handbooks were not listed as an action item on the meeting’s agenda. The School Committee member suggested a Curriculum or Policy Subcommittee meeting be held soon, with a special School Committee meeting held not long after for the approval of the handbooks by the time school was set to begin on September 5<sup>th</sup>. The Chairman and Superintendent agreed to find a time for the Policy Subcommittee to meet for further discussion around the amended handbooks.

A motion was made to refer the handbooks to the Policy Subcommittee.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously with one School Committee member not present for the vote.

## **VII. Action Items – Discussion and Vote**

### **A. School Start Times – Proposal for Community Input**

The Chairman presented a draft document of a flyer inviting the public to partake in community forums on proposed changes to school start times.

A School Committee member said that she thought it would be pertinent to include more information on how the final decision on changing school start times would be made. Another School Committee member agreed that the purpose of the forums should be made clear on the flyer. The Chairman clarified that the School Committee would make the final decision and agreed that the community should be informed of how their feedback would be used by the School Committee in their final decision.

A motion was made to proceed with community outreach regarding proposed changes to school start times.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously with one School Committee member not present for the vote.

### **B. Approval of Voting Member of EDCO**

A motion was made to approve the Superintendent as the voting member of EDCO.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

## **VIII. Reports**

### **A. Director of Public Buildings Update**

Ms. Mary DeLai delivered an update on search for the Director of Public Buildings. She said that the interview committee would consist of both school and town officials with the anticipation that the role would eventually serve both the schools and the town. She said that six of sixteen applicants met the minimum qualifications and would be interviewed in the coming weeks, with an anticipated start date of mid- to late-September for the chosen individual to begin his or her role.

### **B. Community Education Update**

Dr. Theresa McGuinness announced that Ms. Debora Cornelius had been appointed Director of Community Education. She additionally announced that Mr. Reis Colgan had been appointed Coordinator of Extended Day Programs at Lowell Elementary School.

A School Committee member requested to see the resumes for these individuals at the next School Committee meeting.

### **C. Middle School Windows Project**

Ms. Mary DeLai provided an update on Watertown Middle School's window replacement project. It was said that the designer and contractor had been very responsive to unforeseen conditions and issues discovered during the project which so far remained on schedule, currently at about 60% completion.

### **D. FY17 Budget Closing Review and FY18 Budget Update**

Ms. Mary DeLai said that the Fiscal Year 2017 budget was now closed. She said that requisitions for FY18 were beginning to be entered, but a more in-depth review of the FY18 budget status would be provided the following month once staff salaries had been loaded into the budget.

### **E. Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA)**

Ms. Mary DeLai said that the schools had recently been inspected in compliance with AHERA; some warnings to correct issues, mostly procedural, had been delivered to the District. Ms. DeLai said that a formal review of the District's asbestos procedures and management would be conducted to ensure

compliance.

**F. Enrollment Update**

Dr. Deanne Galdston said she would have a full enrollment report with student numbers once school began in September. She said that, so far, all classrooms were within the guidelines for class size with one exception, a third grade class at Lowell Elementary School.

A motion was made to authorize the Superintendent to develop a buffer zone proposal for incoming students.

The motion was seconded.

The motion passed unanimously with one School Committee member not present for the vote.

**IX. Public Forum – Session II**

No member of the public spoke.

**X. Reports**

**A. Chairman's – Draft Calendar of School Committee Meetings for 2017-18**

Mr. John Portz said that the School Committee had been invited to join the Superintendent's administrative retreat on the afternoon of August 23, 2017. He said that School Committee had a planned retreat for September 18, 2017 in the evening.

The Chairman thanked Dr. Candace Miller for her service to the Watertown community as a School Committee member.

He presented a draft calendar of School Committee meeting dates for the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

**B. Superintendent's**

Dr. Deanne Galdston announced a three-day administrative leadership retreat that would be occurring the following week. She said that orientation for new hires would occur on August 27-28, 2017.

**XI. Next Meeting: School Committee Meeting – September 11, 2017**

The next School Committee meeting was said to be scheduled for September 11, 2017 at 7:00 PM.

**XII. New Business**

No new business was discussed.

**XIII. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 PM.

**Meeting Documents**

Draft School Start Times Flyer

Proposed Changes to School Start Times

WMS Windows Project Update

Proposed School Committee Meeting Dates

Superintendent's Entry Plan

School Committee Memo - Handbook Revisions

Elementary Handbook

WMS Handbook

WHS Handbook

School Committee Memo- Elementary Enrollment Aug

Minutes submitted by Christie Fisher, Administrative Assistant to the Central Office.

