

**EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EASTON, MA**

Minutes of School Committee meeting, April 1, 2009, Moreau Hall Library, convened at 7:00 p.m. Present: Caroline O'Neill, Dawn Boynton, Dr. William Braun, Jane Martin, Dr. Michael Green and Dr. William Simmons. Rebecca Turley was not present.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

None.

MINUTES:

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 4-0 vote, the Public Interview Minutes of 2/25/09 and 2/26/09 were approved.

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 4-0 vote, the Workshop Minutes of 6/16/08 were approved.

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 4-0 vote, the Workshop Minutes of 8/26/08 were approved.

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 4-0 vote, the Workshop Minutes of 9/18/08 were approved.

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 4-0 vote, the Workshop Minutes of 10/10/08 were approved.

Release of Executive Session Minutes:

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 4-0 vote, the Executive Session Minutes of 1/2/07 were approved for release.

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 4-0 vote, the Executive Session Minutes of 10/2/08 were approved for release.

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 4-0 vote, the Executive Session Minutes of 11/6/08 were approved for release.

Release of Executive Session Minutes(continued):

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 4-0 vote, the Executive Session Minutes of 12/4/08 were approved for release.

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 4-0 vote, the Executive Session Minutes of 1/8/09 were approved for release.

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 4-0 vote, the Executive Session Minutes of 2/11/09 were approved for release.

**OLD BUSINESS:
Schedule of Payments:**

Circulated for signatures.

A motion was made by Dr. Braun, seconded by Mrs. Martin, and with a 4-0 vote, the Committee moved to School Business at this juncture.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ISSUES:

The Committee took this time to recognize Dr. William Braun, who is stepping down as a member of the Easton School Committee after this evening's meeting.

Chair O'Neill stated that this is Bill's very last meeting tonight. She spoke about the 13 years of service on the Board and the contributions he has made to the Board and to the school system.

Mrs. Martin expressed that it has been her pleasure to have worked with Bill these past three years and the amount of information and knowledge that he has passed on.

Vice Chair Boynton said that she has served on the Committee with Dr. Braun for the past eight years and that he is a man of integrity, vast wisdom, and progressive thinking. For the past thirteen years, Bill has been a corner stone of the School Committee. His professional experience in higher education has benefitted our educational system.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ISSUES(continued):

Vice Boynton went on to say that Bill's thoughtful, insightful and reflective approach has gained him the respect and admiration of the entire educational community. Among Bill's many attributes are collaboration, collegiality, commitment and compassion. Bill always encouraged dialog and discussion which allowed the members to move to a place which they never thought possible. Vice Chair Boynton's closing remarks are "Bill Braun is a great philosophical leader who will be truly missed".

The School Committee presented a plaque to Dr. Braun for his service to the school system and to the town of Easton.

Dr. Braun remarked that it has been his privilege to have been elected and become a member of this Committee where the primary concern is education. He added that he was pleasantly pleased to have been the chair of the search committee that chose Bill Simmons as Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Braun said it is through Dr. Simmons' leadership, diplomacy, and humanity that he was able to address the various constituencies to bring the system to where it is today. Dr. Braun reflected on this past year's increased parent involvement in the process of transitioning to a non-geographic placement at the grade 3 level. In closing, he thanked the Committee for their kind words.

Mrs. O'Neill stated that Bill Braun will be a loss to the school board and the depth of deliberation. She added that he is a wonderful teacher and mentor.

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Dr. Braun, and with a 4-0 vote, the Committee moved the agenda item "Vote to Appoint the Superintendent of Schools" under New Business to this juncture.

NEW BUSINESS:

**Vote to Appoint the Superintendent of Schools and
Enter into Contract Negotiations:**

Chair O'Neill stated that the Committee has been engaged for the past six months to replace our present Superintendent Bill Simmons. Dr. James Walsh, NESDEC consultant, set the process for us. There were 23 applications received, and 8 were recommended by Dr. Walsh for preliminary interviews by the Committee. From those interviews, 4 finalists were interviewed publicly. Background checks were accomplished which narrowed the field to 2 finalist.

**Vote to Appoint the Superintendent of Schools and
Enter into Contract Negotiations(continued):**

Those interviews were held with Dr. Michael Green being one of the finalists. The Committee is now ready to take a vote to appoint the new Superintendent of Schools.

On a vote by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 4-0 vote, the Committee voted to appoint Dr. Michael Green as Superintendent of Schools effective July 1, 2009 subject to a successful contract.

Chair O'Neill inserted that Mrs. Turley sends her best wishes to Mike on his appointment.

Dr. Braun remarked that Mike Green already has a relationship in place with the town departments. Mike has been given high praise with the internal and external community, is a good listener, understands the possibilities of the system and is always looking to increase improvements. With all that said, Dr. Braun is very pleased to have Mike in this position.

Mrs. Martin spoke of the site visits that took place in Town and at the schools. She talked with people and got an entirely different perspective. The conversations were enlightening and confirmed that Mike is the right choice for this position. Mike's classroom learning experience, his connection with the students when he was a principal, the ability of trust that he had as a principal, and his approachability make it very clear that this is a good choice.

Vice Chair Boynton commented that it has been an honor to serve on behalf of the community and to work with the members of the Board in the Committee's quest to hire a new Superintendent. She added that many hours spent by the members were dedicated to the commitment to obtain the best leader for our system. Vice Chair Boynton reiterated the fact that Dr. Green rose to the top of 23 candidates for the following reasons:

- Proven reputation of honesty and integrity
- Sincere passion for Easton Public Schools
- Proven track record for successfully leading complex multifaceted school projects
- Genuine desire and ability to move our system to the next level

**Vote to Appoint the Superintendent of Schools and
Enter into Contract Negotiations(continued):**

Vice Chair Boynton shared comments made by different people that Mike interacts with which are the among the many reasons that Dr. Green has risen to the top of the candidate list and has her support.

Chair O'Neill said it was interesting to hear what Jane had to say, as it is most striking with the modest individual Dr. Green has been over the years. Lives have changed because of Dr. Green's support. We are most proud to announce Dr. Michael Green as the new Superintendent of Schools.

Dr. Green thanked the Committee for their kindness and support. He stated that he is excited to take over this position and continue to work in the Town of Easton. He spoke about the excellent students in the system, staff, administrators, support staff, volunteers and parent support.

The Committee took a two minute break to allow people in the audience to congratulate Mike.

Municipal Building Committee Update:

Dr. Green stated that as previously reported, all areas are substantially complete at both the high school and middle school. At the high school, the final re-punch has been done and remaining work has been scheduled. At the middle school, there are only a few items remaining on the punch list that need to be addressed.

Update on the Stadium and Fields Project:

Dr. Green reported that during the past several weeks the shop drawing review process has been taking place and will continue. This is a very important part of the project, which began with the contract drawings and specifications, and will end with the final products we will see installed at the stadium. As there is no frost left on the field, the site is workable so the earthwork is going well.

Dr. Green further stated that the track has been reclaimed. All of the sub-grade work has been completed. Drainage work is taking place and will continue for the next two weeks. The bleacher company is due on-site later this week to begin their work.

Update on the Stadium and Fields Project(continued):

Dr. Green remarked that he is very pleased with the progress that is being made. In closing, he said that it is exciting to see the changes in the site as the project moves along.

SPED Policy Regarding Program Observation (Second Reading):

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Dr. Braun, and with a 4-0 vote, the Committee tabled the SPED Policy on Program Observation until the next regular meeting.

2009-2010 School Committee Meeting Calendar(Second Review)

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Dr. Braun, and with a 4-0 vote, the Committee approved the 2009-2010 School Committee Meeting Calendar.

NEW BUSINESS:

Appointments:

None.

Resignations:

None.

Retirements:

Technology Specialist – Systemwide:

Chair O’Neill read the letter of retirement from Christine Margulies, Technology Specialist for the System, to be effective June 30, 2009.

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Dr. Braun, and with a 4-0 vote, the Committee accepted with regret the retirement of Chris Margulies as Technology Specialist for the system effective June 30, 2009.

Chair O’Neill remarked that Chris has worked tirelessly and dedicated her life to expand technology to teachers and students.

Dr. Braun stated that Chris had a vision for technology and, by pushing her own personal growth, was able to share her expertise to provide us with sophisticated technology. Dr. Braun said she will certainly be missed.

Retirements(continued):

Technology Specialist – Systemwide:

Mrs. Martin said that one of Chris' favorite remarks is "we'll get it done" and she does. Our students are so fortunate to be provided the level of technology that we do.

Vice Chair Boynton stated that we have been very fortunate to have Chris on board. She is a very dedicated staff member who will be missed.

Elementary Art Teacher – MH/FLO:

Chair O'Neill read a letter of retirement from Susan Masse, elementary art teacher who services Moreau Hall and F.L. Olmsted, to be effective June 30, 2009.

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Dr. Braun, and with a 4-0 vote, the Committee accepted with regret the retirement of Susan Masse as Elementary Art Teacher effective June 30, 2009.

Chair O'Neill commented that Sue is a talented art teacher and will be successful as she pursues becoming an "artist".

Grade 1 Teacher – Parkview:

Chair O'Neill read a letter of retirement from Patricia Svajian, Grade 1 Teacher at Parkview School, to be effective June 30, 2009.

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Dr. Braun, and with a 4-0 vote, the Committee accepted with regret the retirement of Patricia Svajian as Grade 1 Teacher at Parkview effective June 30, 2009.

Chair O'Neill spoke of her son having Mrs. Svajian years back and that she made quite an impression on him and had a wonderful year in her classroom.

Vice Chair Boynton also mentioned that her son had Pat about 10 years ago and that she is a very compassionate teacher. She always found ways for students to reach the next level.

School Committee Meeting Start Times for May 21 and June 11:

Dr. Simmons stated that it has been past practice to start the meetings that have School Council presentations at 6:00 p.m. on both evenings to allow ample time to present and answer any questions. The two meetings are May 21 and June 11.

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 4-0 vote, the Committee voted to start the May 21 and June 11 meetings at 6:00 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING: Proposed 2009-2010 Operating Budget:

Dr. Simmons stated that this is an annual item, as the School Committee is required to hold a hearing on the budget being proposed for the following fiscal year and possibly take a vote on the 2009-2010 budget at that time.

The Superintendent said that at the March 11th meeting he outlined a number of variables and indicated the governor's proposed budget. He added that the legislators have not yet taken any action, i.e. meals tax. Towns need to move forward with State Aid contingent that we may never see certain areas supported at the State level.

Dr. Simmons pointed out that our budget represents a 2 percent increase for the next fiscal year and that there will be reduction in staff. He spoke of the union contracts that are in place until June 30th or August 31st. There will be some attrition through retirements. Dr. Simmons stated that there will be a need to look at more staff reductions, as the expense budgets are level funded. There are exceptions with the regular bus transportation and the SPED Therapy account, costs for autistic child services. The personnel side reflects 78 percent of the budget. Dr. Simmons mentioned that this might have to be revised in May or June for further cuts, if negotiations don't go well or State Aid funding is cut.

Dr. Simmons stated that at the May 18 Town Meeting, many items may have to be detained for the following reasons:

- 1) Title I – no stimulus money, just the basic grant
- 2) Stabilization Account – our allocation would be \$55,000 but this still needs approval by the legislators

PUBLIC HEARING: Proposed 2009-2010 Operating Budget(continued):

- 3) SPED – IDEA – a grant that traditionally has gone to the 50 states – allocation was released last week which will be over a two-year period in the amount of \$450,000 with stipulations:
 - a) half of the money is to be used to start programs and bring new staff on board; as in professional development for diversity, differential instruction, and inclusion, or to start programs to help students now being serviced or transferred out of the district.
 - b) the remaining half can be used for retaining SPED staff to prevent further layoffs in our district

Dr. Simmons continued that it is very unlikely that this budget amount will hold up. We need to move forward in order to present it to the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee. Dr. Simmons reiterated that the 2 percent increase reflects 8 staff reductions which is based on information available to us today.

Dr. Braun questioned the reduction of a math position.

Dr. Simmons said it is needed to balance the budget. He said that he had met individually with every administrator. With Wes Paul and John Giuggio, we reviewed their class section counts, reviewed every department, looked at the current grade 8 enrollment, and number of seniors graduating. In SPED, five-year olds in SPED on IEPs can now be in programs with four-year olds due to a change in policy.

Mrs. Martin wanted to clarify that presently five year olds are with four year olds and that this program will be eliminated.

Dr. Simmons is worried that this is just the first of two lists of personnel to be cut.

Mrs. Martin mentioned the stimulus money and the process and impact it would have down the road.

Dr. Simmons said that certainly every city and town is having the same discussion. He strongly recommends that \$225,000 be used to eliminate layoffs.

PUBLIC HEARING: Proposed 2009-2010 Operating Budget(continued):

On a motion by Dr. Braun, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 4-0 vote. the Committee voted the proposed budget presented this evening in the amount of \$31,179,032 for FY2010 which is a Reduced Services budget.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

School Council Presentation Schedule for May 21 and June 11:

The School Council Presentation Schedule is as follows:

May 21

MH, FLO, PKV

June 11

HHR, EMS, CTR, OAHS

Unanticipated Expenses:

None.

SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTES:

Dr. Simmons reminded the Committee that at their March 26th Workshop that the Committee voted to change their April 30th meeting to April 29th to accommodate the Easton Lions Club for their Recognition Night.

Dr. Simmons took the opportunity to congratulate Mike Green on his appointment as Superintendent of Schools. He looks forward to working with Mike over the next four months to make this a smooth transition. He added that it is great to have that period of time with Mike for the transition. Dr. Simmons assured the Committee that he is committed to leaving the school system in positive condition for Mike Green to move on.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ISSUES:

Chair O'Neill spoke of Dr. Braun being on the Search Committee for Dr. Simmons. She said that personally she will miss Dr. Braun on the Committee. She also extended congratulations to Dr. Green.

Dr. Simmons talked about working with Bill Braun 13 of the past 16 years and learning from what he said and his actions. He said that Bill "pushed the envelope"! Dr. Simmons added that there were paths he planned to take but went on a different path because of Bill's input.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ISSUES:

Mike thanked Bill Braun on the principal search adventure. Mike stated that he learned a lot from Bill's expertise and the information that he shared on school culture and the process.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 4-0 vote, the Committee entered into Executive Session at 8:20 p.m. for the purpose of reviewing the Minutes of 3/11/09 and to discuss contract negotiations through collective bargaining.

OPEN SESSION:

The Committee returned to Open Session at 8:25 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES:

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 4-0 vote, the Executive Session Minutes of 3/11/09 were approved.

ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Dr. Braun, and with all members in agreement, the meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

William J. Simmons, Ed.D., J.D.
Recording Secretary