

**EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
EASTON, MA**

**Minutes of School Committee meeting, April 29, 2009**, Moreau Hall Library, convened at 7:30 p.m. Present: Caroline O'Neill, Jane Martin, Dawn Boynton, Rebecca Turley, Colleen Less, Dr. Michael Green and Dr. William Simmons.

Dr. Simmons called the meeting to order, which occurs one time each year following Town elections.

**REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE:**

Dr. Simmons asked for nominations to fill the Chair position.

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. Boynton and with 4 votes in favor and 1 abstention, Caroline O'Neill appointed again as Chair of the Easton School Committee.

On a motion by Mrs. O'Neill, seconded by Mrs. Boynton, and with 4 votes in favor and one abstention, Mrs. Martin was appointed as Vice Chair of the Easton School Committee.

Mrs. Turley took the opportunity to congratulate Dr. Green for being selected Superintendent and wished him all the best.

Chair O'Neill congratulated Colleen Less on being elected to the School Committee and welcomed her as the newest colleague.

**PROCLAMATION FOR TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK:**

Chair O'Neill read the Proclamation for Teacher Appreciation Week which will take place May 5 – May 9. As is customary, the proclamations are distributed to the faculty rooms of each of the 7 school buildings as well as Central Office for posting.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

None.

**MINUTES:**

On a motion by Vice Chair Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. Turley, and with a 3 votes and 2 abstentions, the Minutes of 3/11/09 were approved.

**MINUTES(Continued):**

On a motion by Vice Chair Martin, seconded by Mrs. Boynton, and with 3 votes in favor and 2 abstentions, the Minutes of 4/1/09 were approved.

**OLD BUSINESS:  
Schedule of Payments:**

Circulated for signatures.

**Municipal Building Committee Update:**

Dr. Green reported that all areas have been re-inspected and monetized at the high school. There are a small number of items that still remain on the punch list. It is expected that the school department should have the Certificate of Substantial Completion for the high school next week.

At the Middle School, Dr. Green stated that all of the work has been completed and final payment has been made.

Dr. Simmons inserted that once the high school list is completer, there is a formality, but we will wait until both the High School and Middle School are turned over.

**Update on the Stadium and Fields Project:**

Dr. Green provided an update on the stadium and fields. He said the field under-drain system is completed. The concrete turf curb is currently being placed. Dr. Green explained that this the concrete edge that goes around the entire edge of the field area, to which the turf is attached. This curb is being placed via an extruded curb machine and only takes one day to install.

Once the turf curb is completed, Dr. Green said the field area will be available to receive the top and bottom stone, upon which the turf sits. This will be hauled in by trucks and will take approximately 2 weeks to install and grade.

The bleachers are almost completed. The work crew will be back on-site in about 2 weeks when the press box is due to arrive. Once this installation takes place, the lift will be installed.

**Update on the Stadium and Fields Project(continued):**

After all the stone is placed in the field, the track will be finished grading and then paved. About the end of May the field area will be ready for the turf installation. Dr. Green remarked that much progress has been made due to the good weather.

**SPED Policy Regarding Program Observation(Second Reading):**

Chair O'Neill reported that there were some grammatical errors and wording that was too vague in nature, so she changed it. This document, which came from another source, is now in the corrected form and distributed to the Committee.

Dr. Simmons remarked that through the Technical Assistance Advisory, a new law was passed. As a result, this policy has been approved in the Town of Norton. Before the Committee tonight is the draft policy with better grammar and minor changes. He explained that the Committee needs to vote on this policy tonight. It then will be turned over to SPED, will be put on the website, and a mechanism will be put into place to get the message out to parents.

On a motion by Vice Chair Martin, seconded by Mrs. Turley, and with a 5-0 vote, the Committee approved the SPED Policy Program Observation.

Dr. Simmons commented that this document will be put in policy format and become part of our policy book.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Retirements:**

**Secondary English Department Chair/Teacher:**

As is customary, Chair O'Neill read the letter of intent to retire from Joan Nicholaides, Secondary English Department Chair and Teacher, effective 6/30/09. Joan has spent thirty-seven years in the system.

On a motion by Vice Chair Martin, seconded by Mrs. Turley, and with a 5-0 vote, the Committee accepted with regret the retirement of Joan Nicholaides as Secondary English Department Chair and Teacher.

**Retirement(continued):**

**Secondary English Department Chair/Teacher(continued):**

Chair O'Neill commented that both of her children had Mrs. Nicholaides for a humanities course, which she went on to say was a course the Joan created herself. She stated that Joan has been a major contributor to the school system.

Dr. Simmons remarked that during the MCAS movement, Joan provided great leadership at the grades 7-12 level. He stated that the results reflected these students' achievements. Dr. Simmons said that Joan will be deeply missed.

**Resignations:**

None.

**Appointments:**

None.

**Senior Letter Approval:**

Dr. Simmons commented that the Senior Letter had been revised by the Committee about 3 years ago. This annual letter will then be forwarded to the high school and be included with Wes Paul's letter for a mailing that he will be doing to members of the senior class.

On a motion by Vice Chair Martin, seconded by Mrs. Boynton, and with a 5-0 vote, the Committee voted to include the Senior Letter in Wes Paul's packet for seniors.

On a motion on Vice Chair Martin, seconded by Mrs. Turley, and with a 5-0 vote, the Committee voted to move the Technology agenda item to this juncture.

**Technology – Status Update and Overview:**

Chair O'Neill announced that Chris Margulies will provide the Committee with a status update on our sophisticated technology program.

Dr. Simmons said that he had met with Chris quite a few times this school year. He reflected back 9 to 10 years ago where we were at with technology. F.E.E.E, Capital Budget, Comcast, and the school budget have all been included for the technology in our district. Dr. Simmons continued to say that the leadership and direction we took is a credit to Chris. He remarked that Chris had her dreams, goals, and the ambition, but there was no money.

**Technology – Status Update and Overview(continued):**

Dr. Simmons went on to say that the challenge will be to be able to make this same statement in three years.

Chris provided some background information on how F.E.E.E. was established. Through her powerpoint presentation, Chris was able to describe how, when and why FEEE came about. Funding was needed in the district, so Dr. Zimmerman, a prior superintendent, established F.E.E.E., which has been the largest fundraiser for technology, or as it was called “Technology for Kids”. A great deal of energy and resources went into and continues to go into this foundation. Chris remarked that PACs have been on board as well relative to technology funding. It was pointed out that the Capital Budget has provided minimal funding. Also, the grant through the Cable Commission that has been a funding source and got technology growing has just ended.

Chris spoke of her very knowledgeable staff and how she feels quite comfortable with her retirement approaching, that the department will be left in good hands. She mentioned that the Technology Plan for Easton was approved by the DOE.

In her very enthusiastic manner, Chris highlighted what happened in all the schools via her powerpoint presentation. Chris spoke of the plans set forth for the 2009-2010 school year which includes the POS Lunch Program. She said we need to keep a global K-12 view of the technology needs for the system.

Chair O’Neill thanked Chris and remarked that we have move so much further than we could have gotten out of our budget. She stated that F.E.E.E. has been relentless!

Vice Chair Martin asked if there are step standards set by the DOE.

Chris responded that this is new but that she has been in contact with the DOE and actually help craft some of these things with the DOE.

Mrs. Boynton remarked on the major achievement the district has made. She said we no longer are weak in technology and thanked Chris for all that she has done to bring us to this level.

**Technology – Status Update and Overview(continued):**

Chair O’Neill stated that when the Committee accepted Chris’ retirement, she commented on Chris’ expertise and the dedication that she gave above and beyond. Chris is a top mentor in the Easton Public Schools. Again, Chair O’Neill thanked Chris for her wonderful presentation.

Vice Chair Martin asked how Easton compares with other districts to which Chris replied that there are districts that might have more. Chris stated that more isn’t always better, rather knowing and using is the key.

Mrs. Boynton asked if the district had pursued virtual classrooms.

Chris responded that virtual classrooms are distance learning and very expensive proposition.

The Committee was very appreciative of the Technology Update provided by Chris. Her knowledge, expertise and passion for technology has brought Easton to where it is today.

**Naming Campaign Update and Approvals:**

Chair O’Neill introduced Jane Pike Benton and Leslie Fitzgerald, co-chairs of the The Campaign for OAHS, who will make a presentation to the Committee tonight.

Dr. Simmons stated that he and Jane have been communicating via email of recent with the update on what is happening.

Jane submitted the following names and donations for consideration and approval by the Committee:

- √ David and Karen Howe in-kind donation of \$80,000 for the Fitness Center for physical fitness equipment
- √ Donation by the Brophy Family of \$5,000 for a classroom in memory of Colleen Brophy
- √ Jane Martin and Dr. Steven Herschlag donation of \$5,000 for a classroom in memory of John H. Martin
- √ Jim and Leslie Fitzgerald and Family donation of \$4,000 for a Portal

**Naming Campaign Update and Approvals(continued):**

Dr. Simmons pointed out that approval is needed for each of the donations.

On a motion by Mrs. Boynton, seconded by Vice Chair Martin, and with a 5-0 vote, the Committee accepted the donation of \$80,000 made by David and Karen Howe for physical fitness equipment for the Fitness Center.

On a motion by Mrs. Boynton, seconded by Mrs. Turley, and with a 5-0 vote, the Committee accepted the donation of \$5,000 for a classroom made by the Brophy Family in memory of Colleen Brophy.

On a motion by Mrs. Boynton, seconded by Mrs. Turley, and with a 5-0 vote, the Committee accepted the donation of \$5,000 for a classroom made by Jane Martin and Dr. Steven Herschlag in memory of John H. Martin.

On a motion by Mrs. Boynton, seconded by Mrs. Turley, and with a 5-0 vote, the Committee accepted the donation of \$4,000 for a Portal made by Jim and Leslie Fitzgerald and Family.

Jane remarked that so far \$250,000 has been donated despite the economic times.

Chair O'Neill thanked Jane and Leslie for their continued work on this campaign.

Leslie announced that a dedication ceremony is planned for Sunday, May 31<sup>st</sup>, for the unveiling of the plaques. Donors, families and friends are invited. Light refreshments will be available. Leslie stated that the plaques are much in keeping with the school decorum.

Chair O'Neill again thank them for their time.

Mrs. Boynton inserted that this is an opportunity forever for anyone who is interested to participate in this campaign.

**Curriculum Approval for K-5 Physical Education:**

Chair O'Neill introduced Chris Power, Chair of the Physical Education Department, and Allen Duarte, Interim Curriculum Director who will present the K-5 Physical Education Curriculum.

Before Allen addressed the Committee on the curriculum, he wanted to compliment Chris Margulies and Donna Davey on their powerful powerpoint workshop. Allen added that the staff survey rated the workshops of the highest level.

Mr. Duarte mentioned that In March of last year, Mrs. Powers came before the committee to present a revised middle school Physical Education Curriculum for Grades 6, 7, and 8. and that tonight she is here to present the new Physical Education Curriculum for Grades 1-5. He also mentioned that as was the case with the middle school program, this new elementary curriculum includes a comprehensive approach to physical education. In addition to physical education and fitness activities, the curriculum focuses on wellness, movement, as well as social and team building skills. Mr. Duarte commented that the curriculum provides a very effective approach that will build a strong foundation and will help students' develop a life-long appreciation for participation in physical, wellness, and leisure activities. Mr. Duarte complimented Mrs. Powers and the physical education teachers who contributed to the document for their excellent work.

Mrs. Powers pointed out that the curriculum addresses 3 major goals that are designed to:

- Promote physical fitness and wellness
- Have students acquire and refine their motor and movement skills
- Have youngsters attain an appreciation for social responsibility through a variety of learning activities

She also mentioned that the Physical Best Philosophy, which is endorsed by the National Association for Sport, Physical Education, and Recreation, is embedded in the new curriculum. The Physical Best Philosophy is an approach that focuses on fitness as a continuous process, not just isolated training and conditioning. It is a total curriculum approach that is designed to assist youth in understanding the importance of exercise and physical activity throughout their lives.

**Curriculum Approval for K-5 Physical Education(continued):**

Mrs. Powers highlighted the major sections of the curriculum document for the committee and expressed her appreciation to the members of the physical education staff for their contributions. In closing, she stressed that the document will be used extensively by the physical education teachers in their work with students.

A brief discussion took place.

On a motion by Vice Chair Martin, seconded by Mrs. Boynton, and with a 5-0 vote, the Committee voted to approve the K-5 Physical Education Curriculum.

**Athletic Trainer RFP and Contract Award:**

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:**

**Unanticipated Expenses:**

None.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTES:**

None.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE ISSUES:**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

On a motion by \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by \_\_\_\_\_, and with a 5-0 vote, the Committee entered into Executive Session at \_\_\_\_\_p.m. for the purpose of reviewing the Minutes of \_\_\_\_\_and to discuss contract negotiations through collective bargaining.

**OPEN SESSION:**

The Committee returned to Open Session at \_\_\_\_\_ p.m.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES:**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion by \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by \_\_\_\_\_, and with all members in agreement, the meeting was adjourned at \_\_\_\_\_ p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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