

**EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
EASTON, MA**

**Minutes of School Committee meeting, April 29, 2010**, Simmons Lecture Hall, convened at 7:05 p.m. Present: Caroline O'Neill, Jane Martin, Donna Abelli, Colleen Less, Rebecca Turley, Allen Duarte, and Dr. Michael Green.

Dr. Green called the meeting to order as Superintendent, which occurs one time each year following Town elections. He welcomed Donna Abelli as the newly appointed member to the School Committee.

**REORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:**

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

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. Less, and with a 5-0 vote, Caroline O'Neill was again appointed as Chair of the Easton School Committee.

Dr. Green congratulated Mrs. O'Neill and then passed the gavel to her.

Chair O'Neill asked for nominations for Vice Chair.

On a motion by Mrs. Less, seconded by Mrs. Turley, and with a 5-0 vote, Mrs. Martin was again appointed as Vice Chair of the Easton School Committee.

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

**TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK PROCLAMATION:**

Dr. Green announced that May 3<sup>rd</sup> to May 7<sup>th</sup> is Teacher Appreciation Week. Copies of the Proclamation were included in the members' packets. He said, as is customary, the Proclamations are distributed for posting in each of the Faculty Rooms of each of the school buildings.

Chair O'Neill read the Proclamation for Teacher Appreciation Week which will be held during the week of May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Vice Chair Martin commented that it is important for parents to communicate to a staff member via a short note or phone call if their child's life has been significantly impacted by a specific teacher.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

None.

**MINUTES:**

On a motion by Vice Chair Martin, seconded by Mrs. Less, and with 4 votes in favor and 1 abstention, the Minutes of 4/8/10 were approved with a correction.

On a motion by Vice Chair Martin, seconded by Mrs. Less, and with a 5-0 vote, the Workshop Minutes of 4/15/10 were tabled.

On a motion by Vice Chair Martin, seconded by Mrs. Less, and with 4 votes in favor and 1 abstention, the Workshop Minutes of 4/20/10 were approved.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Schedule of Payments:**

Circulated for signatures.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Retirement:**

**OAHS Social Studies Teacher:**

Chair O'Neill read the letter of retirement submitted by Ellen Sheridan, a Social Studies teacher at OAHS, to be effective June 30, 2010.

Dr. Green stated that Ellen began her career in Easton in 1978 travelling between the high school and junior high. In 1989, she transferred to the high school where she remained full time in that building. Dr. Green remarked that Ellen has done a superb job, working with her students over the years in the areas of social studies, history and psychology. He said that she will certainly be missed.

On a motion by Mrs. Less, seconded by Vice Chair Martin, and with a 5-0 vote, the Committee accepted with regret the retirement of Ellen Sheridan as OAHS Social Studies Teacher effective June 30, 2010.

Chair O'Neill interjected that Ellen was always looking for opportunities for her students.

**OAHS Social Studies Teacher(continued):**

Mrs. Less concurred that Ellen has been a wonderful teacher and will be missed.

**Resignations:**

**Mathematics Teacher – OAHS:**

Dr. Green included in the Committee's packet a resignation letter from David Eyerman, Math Teacher at OAHS, to take effect at the end of the school year. Dr. Green said that David is completing his third year in Easton but has decided to move into a different field.

**Appointments:**

None.

**Senior Letter Approval:**

Dr. Green said this letter comes before the School Committee on an annual basis. It serves as a companion letter to the correspondence that is sent home by the high school administration to the senior student body.

Chair O'Neill read the Senior Letter.

On a motion by Vice Chair Martin, seconded by Mrs. Less, and with a 5-0 vote, the Committee approved the Senior Letter for 2010.

**PUBLIC HEARING: Proposed 2010-2011 Operating Budget:**

Dr. Green pointed out that the public hearing on the Operating Budget is an annual item and that the Committee is required to hold a hearing on the budget being proposed for the following fiscal year.

The Superintendent spoke about what he reviewed with the Committee at the March 10<sup>th</sup> workshop. At that time he outlined some of the variables that are on the table relative to the development of next year's budget. Dr. Green said that Draft #1 reflected a 4.86% increase and is an adjusted level-services budget. That draft included 4.6 FTE positions that had been identified to address Special Education needs, class size issues, and staff needed to implement a proposed "block and drop " schedule at the high school, as well as develop a more uniform schedule for grades 6, 7 and 8 at the Middle School.

**PUBLIC HEARING: Proposed 2010-2011 Operating Budget(continued):**

Dr. Green said that he is hearing there are proposed reductions in FY11 Chapter 70 and Local Aid, estimated to be 4% lower than the Governor's House two amounts of both Chapter 70 and Unrestricted Local Aid. As a result, Draft #2 was created, paring the budget down to a 3.98% increase. Dr. Green stated that the budget sub-committee met again and had more definitive figures and found a gap. Thus, the school budget was revisited once again and the percent of increase is reduced to 3.5%, or \$32,021,028. He reviewed with the Committee both the expense side and the salary side of the budget. Dr. Green spoke about the recommendation of 3.6 FTE positions to address class size and/or the NEAS&C recommendations and followed with explanations. He pointed out the savings that will be applied to the budget with utilities, retirees/resignees and their replacements for 2010-2011, anticipated savings in SPED tuition due to in-house programs, and that the athletic trainer cost will be charged to the Athletic User fees.

Despite the unknowns and uncertainties, Dr. Green stated that it was necessary to move forward in the budget process, in anticipation of the upcoming May Annual Town Meeting. It is possible, Dr. Green pointed out, that at a future School Committee meeting, he will need to present a revised 2010-2011 Operating Budget for reconsideration due to the budget gap that still exists.

In summary, Dr. Green said the budget before the Committee tonight represents a 3.5% increase from our current year to next year. It includes a net effect of 1.6 positions and is based on information that is available to us at this point in time.

A brief discussion ensued.

On a motion by Vice Chair Martin, seconded by Mrs. Less, and with a 5-0 vote, the Committee approved the FY2010-11 School Operating Budget in the amount of \$32,021,028, which is an Adjusted Level-Services Budget, knowing that the board might have to revisit it again.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:**

**Schedule "School Choice" Public Hearing:**

Dr. Green reminded the Committee that this is a two-step process. The first step is to publicly announce that at the next regular scheduled School Committee meeting a Public Hearing on School Choice will be placed on the agenda. At that meeting a vote will be taken.

Dr. Green said it is an annual obligation to take action to not participate in School Choice, if that is the Committee's decision for the district. It is required by statute that every year a public hearing be held by June 15<sup>th</sup> and a formal vote taken. Therefore, a Public Hearing for School Choice for the 2010-2011 school year will be placed on the May 20th agenda for a Committee vote.

Vice Chair Martin said that she hasn't recommended school choice thus far and doesn't think the Committee would want to entertain it now.

Dr. Green added that there is some space available, but with the moving of Project Early and other classes, we are not sure what space, if any, would be available.

Chair O'Neill spoke of other districts that adopted school choice and found that it is a risky proposition, financially as well as in other ways.

**Unanticipated Expenses:**

None.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTES:**

Dr. Green mentioned that the OAHS Division 2 State Championship Basketball team was invited to the State House on Wednesday and the girls were recognized for their accomplishment. They were provided lunch and given a tour of the facility.

Dr. Green shared with the Committee regarding anti-bullying that our principals, teachers and school staff understand the importance of promoting and sustaining a safe and caring environment that is conducive to student learning and based on respect. He also shared that we are reviewing our current programs and procedures and look to build on and extend our efforts on this important topic.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTES(continued):**

Dr. Green referred to an article that appeared in today's *Boston Globe* which reported that the MA House and Senate are expected to approve a new Anti-bullying Prevention Bill today. He said this new law will impact school departments' Anti-Bullying policies. Dr. Green stated we are in the process of establishing an Anti-bullying Sub-Committee that will include school staff, administrators, parent representation, and school committee representatives and will be chaired by Cathy MacLeod, our incoming Assistant Superintendent. The sub-committee's charge will be to ensure that our district policies and procedures are in line with the new legislation and are linked to best practices. The MA Department of Education is sponsoring a workshop which will be attended by staff. The intent of this workshop is to help school districts prepare for the new Bullying Prevention Legislation and also address the issue of cyberbullying. Dr. Green added that the district will continue to provide a safe and optimal learning environment for all of our students.

The Committee expressed that they would like Mr. Duarte to stand in as Chair of this sub-committee to get things underway until Mrs. MacLeod comes on board.

Vice Chair Martin would like to see this sub-committee take its time to do it correctly.

Allen Duarte shared with the Committee that the Ames Free Library in conjunction with community partners have created a summer of very interesting events outlined in an "Easton Reads Together" brochure which has been distributed to students in our schools. All the events have to do with "nature". Mr. Duarte wanted the community to be aware of these programs which are all free.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE ISSUES:**

Chair O'Neill spoke about the Lions Club Recognition Night held last evening. She stated that Dawn Boynton, a former School Committee member, received the "Outstanding Servant" award, Charlene Dalrymple received the "Educator of the Year" award, and the following group of students were recognized for their "Heroism", Bobby O'Donnell, Andrew Kerester, Dyle Sweezey, Ty Cabone, Alec Breton, and Devin Thomas.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

On a motion by Mrs. Less, seconded by Vice Chair Martin, and with a 5-0 vote, the Committee entered into Executive Session at 7:50 p.m. for the purpose of reviewing the Executive Session Minutes of 4/8/10, to approve the Executive Session Minutes of 2/25/10 and 3/10/10, and to discuss contract negotiations through collective bargaining.

**REVIEW OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES:**

The Committee reviewed the Executive Session Minutes of 4/8/10.

**APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES:**

On a motion by Mrs. Less, seconded by Vice Chair Martin, and with a 4 votes in favor and 1 abstention, the Executive Session Minutes of 2/25/10 were approved.

On a motion by Mrs. Less, seconded by Vice Chair Martin, and with a 4 votes in favor and 1 abstention, the Executive Session Minutes of 3/10/10 were approved.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion by Mrs. Less, seconded by Mrs. Turley, and with all members in agreement, the meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael A. Green, Ed.D.  
Secretary