

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PITTSFIELD SCHOOL COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2011, 6:30 P.M., PITTSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL.

I. A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Amuso called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

"Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, s. 20, I am hereby informing all attendees that a video and audio recording is being made of this meeting."

B. MOMENT OF SILENCE

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

D. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Kathleen Amuso, Chairperson
Alfred Barbalunga
Churchill Cotton
Daniel Elias
Erin Sullivan
Katherine Yon

ABSENT

Mayor James Ruberto

Chairperson Amuso declared a quorum.

II. A. PARTICIPATION BY THE PUBLIC

NONE

B. PARTICIPATION BY THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Daniel Elias commented on some of the events he attended such as Capeless' Living Wax Museum, Stearns State Fair and the Spring Concert. Mr. Elias also said he was impressed with the CBS bullying project and talked about Sue Daoust's work with MILA on a parent program.

Mr. Elias attended the School Council meeting at Herberg Middle School where they talked about the need to promote Herberg, focusing on attendance, finding ways to fund a full-time librarian position and doing a Connect Ed survey on assessment. He said a team have been put together to work with Reid's team on compiling and assessing data.

Katherine Yon said *Chicago* was Ralph Hamman's final production and it was a great production.

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Erin Sullivan has heard comments like Mr. Austin's from other parents. She said there is a dual responsibility for both adults and students and that all students are being punished for an offense committed by a few students.

Daniel Elias said *Chicago* was a tremendous performance and that Ralph Hammann is an amazing man.

Alfred Barbalunga suggested that the Committee members watch the movie *Lottery* that is relevant to public education.

Superintendent Eberwein thanked the community for their positive support for the Senior Class. He said there was a breakdown in student and adult communication. Mr. Benson has addressed the school community on this issue.

Chairperson Amuso said she has dealt with the PHS issue as a parent rather than a School Committee member since her son is a senior. She said it is a learning experience for all.

III. INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

A INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUDGET ADOPTION (see Pages 5-13)

Churchill Cotton asked why the increases in the following Lines Item:

- Page 2 - Salaries
- Line 266 - Custodian OT - Mrs. Douglas explained due to the severe weather this winter there were more times that the custodians were called in for snow removal.
- Line 286 Telephones - Mrs. Douglas said costs of repairs have gone up as well as additional reimbursement of cell phone costs to various members of the administration.

He asked why Line 225 – School Services Facilitator was so low. Mrs. Douglas said a portion of the salary is grant funding.

Chairperson Amuso asked Mrs. Douglas to clarify Mr. Kinnas' comment about retirement costs. Mrs. Douglas said the school system is obligated for City retirement only and not the teachers' retirement system which is a state system.

Erin Sullivan said she does see a return on the investments with the graduation rate going up and the drop out going down, and attendance has improved. She inquired about the source of funding for public relations. She wanted to know if the costs were included in the budget Mrs. Douglas said costs for promoting the schools comes out of the School Choice funds directly.

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Katherine Yon agreed with Ms. Sullivan that the school system has seen a return rate for their investment and that the district has made progress. She was pleased to see a commitment to Pre-K programs.

Katherine Yon asked about increases in the following Lines Items:

- Line 80 - Professional Development Cabinet: Mrs. Douglas said professional development as well as course reimbursement is included in the Cabinet's contracts.
- Line 122 – Substitute Paraprofessionals: Mrs. Douglas said there has been an increase in the number of paraprofessional absences.
- Line 166 – Elementary Supplies: Mrs. Douglas said it was advance purchases of textbooks in FY'10.

Alfred Barbalunga asked about the following Line Items:

- Lines 60-69 – 1000 Salaries: Mrs. Douglas explained what positions are covered under these Line Items.
- Line 210 – Juvenile Resource Center: He would like a breakdown of expenses for this Line Item.
- Line 222 – Coaches: He would like the negotiating team to look at the salaries for coaches. He feels varsity coaches should be paid more than assistant coaches.

Daniel Elias agreed with Mr. Barbalunga that salaries for coaches need to be reviewed. He would like to take a hard look at facts and data to see if a position was eliminated what effect it would have.

The Committee would like Superintendent Eberwein to come back with a plan and dollar amount for promoting the schools.

Superintendent Eberwein will bring an update on the PR plan within the next two weeks.

Daniel Elias said that the Committee and administration need to change how the community views the school system.

Chairperson Amuso said there is an investment – achievement of children, investing in programs, teachers etc.

Alfred Barbalunga said that the Committee and administration need to review what is being marketed such as the JRC program and get feedback on it.

Katherine Yon wanted to know if the administration is on board with personal contact of families leaving the district. She also wanted to know if the principals reach out. Superintendent Eberwein respond that both the district and principals reach out to families leaving the district.

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Daniel Elias said Committee and administration should never be content until more School Choice students are entering the district rather than leaving the district. He said the district must have data showing how diverse the school system is and to stay on course and change the thinking of the people.

Katherine Yon said the billboards are excellent and good publicity for the district.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. ITEMS OF NEGOTIATIONS

Motion by Erin Sullivan, seconded by Churchill Cotton, That the School Committee go into Executive session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, s. 21(a)(3) to discuss strategies with respect to collective bargaining with the United Educators of Pittsfield, because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Pittsfield Public Schools, was by roll call vote unanimously approved.

The School Committee went into Executive Session at 7:15 p.m.

Motion by Erin Sullivan, seconded by Churchill Cotton that the School Committee return to the regular order of business, was by vote unanimously approved.

The School Committee returned to the regular order of business at 9:28 p.m.

Let the record show no votes were taken in Executive Session.

V . ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Erin Sullivan, seconded by Churchill Cotton that the School Committee be adjourned was by vote unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

ERIN SULLIVAN