

TOWN OF PROVINCETOWN

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2000

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Meeting Held in the Veterans' Memorial Elementary School

Members Present: Lois Borgesi (Chair), Frank Wills (Vice-Chair), Terese Nelson (Secretary), Dana Berry, William Rogers, Elizabeth Santos (Representative from the PHS Student Advisory Council)

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Dr. Fleming (Superintendent), Mr. Rokicki (VMES Principal), Ms Slivka (Director of Student Services), Rachel Crosby (Recording Secretary), parents, students and staff.

Call to Order: Chair Lois Borgesi called the Meeting to order at 7:07 P.M.

REGULAR SESSION

Lois Borgesi read from the School Committee Rules concerning visitors' statements.

VISITORS' STATEMENTS

- Warren Cabral spoke favorably about retaining PHS Principal Mr. Marino.
- Molly Perdue read a letter from several PHS staff members in favor of Mr. Marino.
- Mary Cabral spoke favorably about retaining PHS Principal Mr. Marino.
- Sheila Colburn spoke favorably about retaining PHS Principal Mr. Marino and read from the 2000 PHS Yearbook notes to Mr. Marino.
- Kathryn Widgery(?) asked questions about the controversy involving PHS Principal Mr. Marino.
- Custodio Silva spoke about the recent employment issues involving his sister and reminded the School Committee that they are limited in their power to affect employment decisions for School District staff. Mr. Silva asked that the minutes of the recent School Committee Executive Session (December ____, 2000) be made public within ten business days.
- Rose Kennedy, Sandy Silva and Laurie Depalo each individually spoke favorably about retaining PHS Principal Mr. Marino.
- Heather Reis and Ms Marino, PHS students, read a letter from several PHS athletes and spoke in favor of retaining Mr. Marino.
- Rachel Peters spoke against the suspension of Mr. Marino.
- Gary Silva, Gary Studley, Ruth Rogers, Suzanne Inderson(?), Kathy Rosencroft, Mark Lambrou, Carol Distefano, Mrs. Welsh, Lisa Zawaduk and Pam Silva each spoke individually in favor of Mr. Marino.
- Anthony Avellon, a PHS athletic coach, spoke in favor of Mr. Marino.
- Mr. Cabral and Ms Souza, PHS students, spoke in favor of Mr. Marino.

Lois Borgesi explained that the School Committee does not have any authority concerning staff disciplinary actions and/or the hiring and/or firing of District staff.

Dr. Fleming explained that she is not at liberty to share personnel issues with the public and that she therefore cannot provide a clear explanation to the public of why Mr. Marino has been suspended or why his contract has not yet been renewed. Dr. Fleming emphasized that she does not want a battle that will negatively affect the school community and that she hoped the controversy can be resolved in a positive manner.

MINUTES

- November 14, 2000, Regular Session** – *Dana Berry moved to approve with corrections, William Rogers seconded.* After discussion, Dana Berry withdrew his motion and William Rogers withdrew his second. *Approval was postponed.*
- December 5, 2000, Work Session** – *Terese Nelson moved to approve with several corrections, Dana Berry seconded, and it was so voted, 4-0, 1 abstain (William Rogers).*
- May 13, 2000, Joint Meeting with Truro School Committee** – *postponed until the next meeting of the Joint Committees.*

COMMUNICATIONS:

- City and Town Newsletter
- Maguire Group Thank You Note and Holiday Card
- VMES Newsletter of November 30th
- The NET Newspaper
- Building Committee Minutes of November 21
- Letter of Resignation from teacher Paul Ouellette – Dr. Fleming mentioned that she had received several letters in support of Mr. Ouellette – Dr. Fleming explained why she had started Mr. Ouellette at a “normal” Step 5, though she did have some flexibility in the starting step. Dr. Fleming explained that problems with establishing such a precedent in terms of other staff. In response to a question from Terese Nelson, Dr. Fleming said there was also the possibility of increasing Mr. Ouellette’s work percentage, but the School Committee would have to vote for that increase in his position.
- Dr. Fleming reported that she had received several letters and a petition in support of Mr. Marino.

EDUCATIONAL UPDATE:

- ◆ **PHS Athletic Program: Fall Review & Winter Highlights** – Mr. Ingram spoke about the Athletic Program, referring to a memo from him to Faculty and Staff, dated December 10, 2000, with the subject “Upcoming Winter Season”. Mr. Ingram reported that Harwich and Chatham were recently voted out of the Cape and Island League, which will be dissolved effective autumn 2001. Provincetown will try to join the Mayflower League. Mr. Ingram will be meeting with personnel from the Mayflower League to promote Provincetown’s membership. Mr. Ingram reported that he was not receiving any assistance from the MIAA in joining a league. The Harwich-Provincetown Hockey Team will not be affected.
- ◆ **VMES After School Program/ Athletic Program** – Mr. Rokicki reported on these programs. The After-School Program includes the Homework Club and a computer program. There are several intramural athletic teams. Mr. Rokicki said that he would be advertising in the community for someone to coordinate the After-School Program
- ◆ **Building Committee Update: VMES Final Plans** – were approved today. The Maguire Group will be sending the specifications within a few weeks. Dr. Fleming reviewed what the District can expect to get from the Building Project. Dr. Fleming reported that Preston Lightsey will be resigning from the Building Committee, but will remain available for consultation. Lois Borgesi reported that she is also contemplating resigning from the Building Committee due to time constraints and asked if any member of the School Committee would be interested in taking her place.
- ◆ **Adult Education Schedule for 2001** – Rachel Crosby explained the final schedule for the Adult Education Program, which will start the week of January 22, 2001.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. **FY 2002 School Budget:** – Dr. Fleming said that the District will probably stay within the expected 2.5% increase limit.
 - **School Council Reports** – not ready yet.
 - **Timeline for Budget** – the Committee discussed the budget timeline outlined in the School Committee Policy Manual.
 1. The public hearing on the Budget was tentatively scheduled for the School Committee meeting on January 23, 2001.
2. **Retirement Notification Incentive: Final** – Dr. Fleming reviewed the final changes in the Incentive as suggested by Town Counsel. December 15th is the deadline for applying for the Incentive. Three staff members have sent in letters indicating they were planning to retire.

3. Other

- None.

NEW BUSINESS –

1. **VMES Cafeteria Proposal to Increase Price for Main Entree** – Dr. Fleming referred to a memo from VMES Cafeteria staff person Sarah Bartholomew to Dr. Fleming dated November 27, 2000 with the subject “A la carte prices, VMES”.
Frank Wills moved to approve the change in the charge for the “entrée only” and “bowl of soup” choices to \$1.00 in the cafeteria in VMES, Dana Berry seconded and it was so voted, 5-0.
2. **VMES Nature Classroom Trip** – Mr. Rokicki explained that the 5th grade will be again going to Nature’s Classroom for a field trip of several days (and nights) duration.
Frank Wills moved to approve the 5th Grade trip to Nature’s Classroom as proposed, Terese Nelson seconded, and it was so voted, 5-0.
3. **John A. Francis Scholarship Committee Membership** – Dr. Fleming explained that they did not need to advertise for the current vacancy if the incumbent, Carol Westcott, wished to continue.
Dana Berry move to reappoint Carol Westcott to the John A. Francis Scholarship Committee, Frank Wills seconded, and it was so voted, 5-0.
4. **Superintendent: Discussion on Financial Commitment to Building Project** – Dr. Fleming reported that she had had four people volunteer at the District Improvement Panel Workshop to be on a sub-committee to study the financial commitment to the Building Project. She requested that two School Committee members also volunteer. Terese Nelson said she felt that they needed more than two School Committee members and that meetings of the group be posted as a School Committee sub-committee (as opposed to a Superintendent’s committee). Dr. Fleming explained the function and purpose of the sub-committee, though she stressed that the School Committee could also perform the work. Lois Borgesi suggested that the members of the School Committee Budget Sub-Committee join this new sub-committee. Terese Nelson and Frank Wills emphasized the importance of involving the community in the Building Project process. Frank Wills and Terese Nelson will serve on the new sub-committee. The sub-committee will be called the “School Committee Working Group Addressing the Financial Commitment to the Building Project”.
5. **Other**
 - Dr. Fleming suggested they could add a day (20%) of musical instruction at VMES, funded by School Choice funds, to increase Mr. Ouellette’s position percentage to 80%. Mr. Rokicki agreed with this proposal. In response to a question from William Rogers, Dr. Fleming explained why Mr. Ouellette had taken the job initially, despite knowing what the compensation would be. *Terese Nelson moved to offer Mr. Ouellette an 80% position, with 20% funded from School Choice funds and with the other terms to be spelled out by the Superintendent, Frank Wills seconded.* Dana Berry read from Mr. Ouellette’s letter of resignation, which stated that the part-time nature of the position was not a factor in his decision to resign. Elizabeth Santos reported that the students are resisting Mr. Ouellette’s presence due to the recent controversy over the previous music teacher and that she felt that resistance was a factor in his decision to resign. William Rogers said he could not vote for the motion without having an opportunity to speak with Mr. Ouellette and suggested the School Committee invite Mr. Ouellette to appear before the Committee. *The motion passed by a vote of 4-1 (William Rogers).*
 - Terese Nelson expressed concerns about possible student unrest tomorrow at the Provincetown High School due to Mr. Marino’s suspension. Dr. Fleming reported that she had met with High School staff and that they were aware that Mr. Rokicki would be the Acting High School Principal during Mr. Marino suspension. Teaching staff has made a commitment to be present to provide the regular instruction schedule and that various Administrative staff would also be available. In response to a question from Terese Nelson, Dr. Fleming said that students who did not come to school during Mr. Marino’s suspension would be marked “absent”.
 - Lois Borgesi reported that she had received a letter from the AFSCME with a request that the District’s clerical employees be supported in their desire to join the AFSCME Union. This issue will be on the agenda of an upcoming School Committee meeting after Lois Borgesi has had time to discuss it with Town Counsel and others.
 - Upcoming School Committee meeting schedule: The Committee agreed to leave it to the Chair’s discretion whether to hold a meeting on December 26, 2000.

CLOSING STATEMENTS

- Ms Trovato spoke about the possible loss of the musical teacher and said she hoped that there were alternative solutions. She also suggested they hold an assembly at the High School tomorrow to help defuse possible tensions over Mr. Marino’s suspension.
- Warren Cabral again spoke in favor of retaining Mr. Marino.
- Terese Nelson said she felt it was wonderful and moving to see so many people interested in the children’s education and asked that this interest be sustained over the long run. Frank Wills concurred with Terese Nelson’s comments.
- William Rogers said he felt that the problem was that the Education Reform put too much power in one position.

Lois Borgesi stated that the School Committee would be going into Executive Session and would be adjourning directly from the Executive Session, rather than returning to the Regular Session to adjourn.

Frank Wills moved to enter Executive Session at 9:30 P.M. for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to negotiations with Non-Union Personnel, Terese Nelson seconded and it was so voted unanimously in a roll call vote as follows: Terese Nelson - yes, Dana Berry - yes, Frank Wills - yes, William Rogers - yes, Lois Borgesi - yes.

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These minutes were approved by a vote of the Provincetown School Committee at their meeting on _____, 200__

Respectfully Submitted:

School Committee Signature		Title

Rachel T. Crosby, On-call secretary