

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**SCHOOL COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING**  
**DRAFT MINUTES: Monday, October 7, 2019**  
John Zon Community Center, 35 Pleasant, Greenfield MA  
Approved 10.21.19

**Present:** Katie Caron (KC); Susan Eckstrom (SE); Jordana Harper, Superintendent (JH); Susan Hollins (SH); Glenn Johnson (GJ); Adrienne Nunez (AN); William Martin (WM); Cameron Ward (CW)

**Absent:** None

**Also present:** Stephen Nembirkow, Business Manager; Atty. Peter Smith; Otis Wheeler, City Councilor, Chair of Ways & Means; 35+ GPS staff; and the press.

### **I. Call to Order**

With a quorum present (KC, SE, SH, GJ, AN, WM, CW), Chair Nunez opened the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

### **II. Public Comment**

*(Unit C Instructional Assistants = IAs)*

- Susan Voss, AEL staff, spoke in support of IA contract; lowest pay in region; many IAs need second jobs; underscored IA's love of working with students.
- Tara Cloutier, GEA vice-president and GHS teacher, spoke in support of IA contract; concern that pay is below minimum wage; urged no further delay in ratification.
- Doug Selwyn, resident, pointed out that IAs work with most vulnerable students; looked for ratification to restore trust.
- Tori Croshier, IA at Discovery School at Four Corners, works 3 jobs; raise was promised; urged ratification of contract.
- Luke Martin, GEA treasurer and GHS teacher, spoke in support of IAs as "most important employees in town"; concern that pay is less than minimum wage; praised positive negotiations and unanimous ratification by Unit C members.
- Cassandra Walker, school volunteer and parent, spoke of importance of IAs and in support of good schools that draw families to town which, in turn, supports taxes.
- Anna Walker, IA at GMS, spoke to financial hardships with IA pay; signed on for second year under promise of new contract pay.
- Jean Squires shared challenges to meet household budget on IA pay.
- CW thanked all who attended, expressed School Committee's support for IAs and recognition that IAs are not paid enough; Committee seeks responsible way to pay for raise.

### **III. Business**

#### **A. Interim Appointment: Director of Pupil Services**

JH explained that Matthew Holloway, Director of Pupil Services, is out on family leave for approx. 2 weeks; recommended Janet Dickinson, Assistant Director of Pupil Services, to serve as temporary Director of Pupil Services.

**GJ moved to direct the Superintendent to engage in contract negotiations with Dr. Dickinson to serve as interim Director of Pupil Services. CW 2nd.** Anticipated end date October 18. Details to be discussed in executive session. **Motion passed unanimously.**

#### **B. Contract Stabilization Fund & Funding School Department Collective Bargaining Contracts**

AN explained that City's Contract Stabilization Fund (CSF) is nearly empty (\$454), shared balances of all City stabilization funds.

JH explained past practice to use CSF to pay for first year of new contracts (all City departments, including School Department). How to balance City's financial health and staffing needs? Other City worker contracts have been recently settled.

WM provided background of CSF. Council lacked quorum at July 15 meeting to replenish CSF \$200K; deadline passed; \$ moved to free cash where it's stuck until DOR certifies in November. Possible to use General Stabilization Fund now for contracts. Priority for School Committee to approve FY20 district budget. City/School to collaborate to identify source of \$ for contract increase. If contract ratified now, sent to Council for two readings, Council vote would be in December, when free cash would be available. Current situation (insufficient \$ in CSF) not intentional change in practice.

**SH moved that we investigate short-term borrowing for the amount of money that would have been available in the City's Contract Stabilization Fund. SE 2nd.**

JH called for equitable support of all City department contracts being negotiated.

Nembirkow: Only Council can borrow \$. Anticipate low interest on proposed loan because of City's good bond rating and loan's short duration.

GJ called question SE 2nd. Motion to end debate passed 3-2-2.

**Motion passed 5-1-1** (No: WM; Abstain: KC)

JH thanked Unit C members for giving time to attend tonight's meeting and for their work with students every day.

#### **IV. Executive Session**

**AN announced intent to move into Executive Session in accordance with MGL c 30A, §21, (3): To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares (Units A and C, Cafeteria, Custodial, litigation); and (2): To conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.**

SH moved to enter Executive Session. 2nd. SE 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes – (KC, SE, SH, GJ, AN, WM, CW). Motion passed unanimously. Entered Executive Session at 7:27 p.m.

AN moved to leave Executive Session. WM 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes – (SE, SH, GJ, AN, WM). Returned to public session at 9:12 p.m.

#### **III. Business (continued)**

##### **A. Interim Appointment: Director of Pupil Services**

**GJ moved to approve the appointment of Dr. Janet Dickinson as interim Director of Pupil Services at the additional per diem rate of \$150, anticipating a length of term at two weeks but allowing for extension of this agreement until a maximum of November 1. SE 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.**

#### **VI. Adjournment**

WM moved to adjourn. GJ 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Farber  
Recording Secretary

#### **Meeting Documents**

1. City stabilization fund balances
2. City Collective Bargaining Unit History