

Richmond School Committee Meeting

Wednesday June 23, 2022 - 6:00 P.M. - Hybrid Meeting

PRESENT: Ina Wilhelm, Chair; Kimmie Leeco; Peter Dillon, Superintendent; Erin Hanson, Student Parent

Paraprofessional Contract Vote: Peter offered some context and highlights of the contract, which the paraprofessionals have voted to accept. Salary Increases: 2-½ % the first year; 2.75% the second year and 3% the third year. Changes under compensation included longevity and to stop phasing in holidays, and to provide the Federal holidays to all employees. Juneteenth and Labor Day will be paid if the school is in session on those days. In addition, wording was included to eliminate the practice of adding vacation days either going into or coming out of a long weekend or holiday and, at the request of the town, wording concerning co-pays for insurance. Peter felt the contract was fair and included a nice raise in pay. As there were no questions or comments, Kimmie moved to approve the contract as read. Ina seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous roll-call vote: Kimmie, aye; Ina, aye.

Review of the Minutes of the April 12th and May 10, 2022 meetings: As there was some confusion about the second set of minutes due to the transition from one system to an unfamiliar one, Peter offered to straighten out and resend the minutes for voting in August.

School Improvement Plan Approval: Peter noted that he has added text to the Plan to clarify issues raised at the last meeting. Ina asked what the current Plan is and why there was a need to investigate and perhaps implement a new plan. Kimmie noted that she had spoken to Dan Weston, the School Principal, about that and was told it was a specific Plan that teachers would live with and use for a year in order to be comfortable with implementing it. The plan calls for a code of similar ways to respond to various occurrences in order to make the school's reactions consistent. After the first year with the teachers, the plan would be expanded to the rest of the staff members for a second year and implemented fully by the third year.

Peter said that the school would not wait three years to implement the new approach at the middle school, but would continue to use the existing RCS Cares approach in the meantime. The school has always tried to create one approach school-wide, but the teachers have determined that the correct approach for younger children is markedly different than for the older students. That consideration will be included in the planning.

Kimmie wanted to clarify how committed the School Committee would be to this change, which constitutes a change in culture for the school, if they vote approval of the Plan? Ina suggested considering it a Working Document to be altered on an as-needed basis using input from the teachers as to its effectiveness. Ina moved to improve the School Improvement Plan as written and label it a Working Document. Kimmie seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously by roll-call vote: Kimmie, aye; Ina, aye.

School Committee Vacancy: Peter noted that Adeline's resignation left an open seat on the Committee. He said that one vacancy can be filled for the present by action of the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee. After the Attorney General approves the change in the Town's bylaws to create five seats instead of three on the School Committee a search for candidates can begin. Out of the applications received from the announcements in the parents' communication and the Town Newsletter, interviews for the vacant seat can begin. Peter also suggested that out of the pool of applications received to fill the one vacancy, any leftover candidates can be used to begin the search for the additional two new members.

Public Comment: Erin Hason, a student parent, introduced herself and said she has come from a school that had Class Parents and will send a list of the obligations of that position to the Committee.

Ina reminded the Committee that they had decided to add to all future agendas the subject of Communication; specifically the letters, emails, etc. received by the Committee and how to incorporate them into the minutes without having to read each one, unless the sender specifically requests that. Peter said there will be an Addendum to each set of minutes that will contain those communications. Anonymous communications, however, will not be included in the record.

Transition re Principal: Peter noted that a new Search will begin as soon as a representative Interview Committee is created. He will set a primary deadline for applications on July 26, 2022 and add a rolling deadline for about a week or two later.

There being no further business before the Committee, Ina moved that the meeting be adjourned at 6:25 PM. Kimmie seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous roll-call vote: Kimmie aye, Ina, aye.

Submitted by Phyllis LeBeau