

**TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC RECORD**

**OF**

**THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**BUSINESS SESSION**

**OF**

**AUGUST 22, 2011**

**SUBMITTED FOR THE APPROVAL OF:**

**THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**AND**

**THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

**“AN OPEN MEETING ADVANTAGE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF METHUEN”**

**RECORDED BY:**  
**MICHELLE TURCO, PUBLIC RECORDER**  
**TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC RECORD**  
**METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**BUSINESS SESSION**  
**AUGUST 22, 2011**

This meeting of the Methuen School Committee was held in the Great Hall of Searles Building, City Hall, and was posted for 6:30 PM.

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mayor William Manzi, Chairperson (arrived at 6:51)  
Mr. Robert Vogler, Vice Chairperson  
Mr. Evan Chaisson, Secretary  
Mr. Kenneth Henrick  
Mr. Gary Marcoux  
Mr. Kenneth Willette, Jr.

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs. Judith Scannell, Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Jennifer Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Glenn Fratto, Business Administrator  
Michelle Turco, Public Recorder

**1. \*CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE:**

Mr. Robert Vogler called this meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. with a quorum of members in attendance, and listed above.

**a. Flag Salute**

Mr. Evan Chaisson led the Committee in Opening Exercises of this meeting.

Mr. Vogler asked for a motion to amend under New Business and create 6c New hire for a Kindergarten Teacher at the Timony.

**MOTION:** Mr. Willette motioned to amend under New Business and create item, 6c. New Hire for a Kindergarten Teacher at the Timony; Mr. Chaisson seconded the motion to amend the agenda.

**VOTE:** 5-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

**2. Participation by Others**

**a. Staff**

**1. Newly Hired Administrators' Introductions**

Superintendent Scannell stated that there was three newly hired administrative staff for the school district. First Superintendent Scannell brought Mr. Ian Gosselin to the podium. Mr. Gosselin is the new supervising principal for the

Tenney Middle School. Superintendent Scannell spoke of Mr. Gosselin's experience. Mr. Gosselin said a few words. Mr. Giuca introduced the new administrators at Methuen High School, Richard Barton new assistant principal and Matt Steinberg, Social Studies Department Chair. Mr. Giuca spoke of their background and each individual came to the podium and said a few words.

**b. Public Participation**

No Action

**3. Approval of School Committee Meeting Transcript Workshop June 27, 2011 and Business Meeting Transcript of July 18, 2011**

**MOTION:** Mr. Henrick moved to adopt the Recorded Transcripts as presented and waived the readings; Mr. Marcoux seconded the motion to approve as presented.

**VOTE:** 5-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

**4. Staff Reports**

**a. PEP Grant - Update**

Superintendent Scannell submitted a memo received from Mr. Richard Butterworth dated August 8, 2011, updating and outlining the One Year - MIM Pep Grant. Superintendent Scannell introduced Ms. Mimi Hyde, Community Project Coordinator and Mr. Richard Butterworth, Curriculum Professional Development in Technology for Pep Grant. They both spoke a little about the update of the grant and about what next year would entail.

Mayor William Manzi arrived at 6:51

Mr. Marcoux questioned if there was a copy of the product produced during the summer workshop on the curriculum. Superintendent Scannell said she would get Mr. Marcoux a hard copy.

Superintendent Scannell added that the Phys Ed teachers and Health teachers said they are looking forward to the coming school year and they were showing a lot of excitement. Mr. Butterworth and Ms. Hyde were both at the four K-8's when the equipment in which was purchased through this particular grant started to arrive and Mr. Butterworth and Ms. Hyde were working with Mr. Stella and the principals. Mr. Vogler would like a list of all the materials ordered and purchased from each school for the next School Committee Meeting. Superintendent Scannell said she would provide that to him.

**b. IPAD Pilot Program - Update**

Mr. William Silver, Instructional Technology Teacher at MHS spoke about the hardware purchases for the I-Pad Pilot at the central building. Mr. Silver also explained the current movement toward mobile devices becoming mainstream in

education and how to educate the student and why it is relevant. Mr. Silver spoke of the pilot team and the professional development they have done so they are ready for September. Mr. Silver explained what the students could accomplish with this new technology as opposed to the current technology.

Mr. Hill acknowledged Jane Perrault, Assistant to Director of Grants & Technology got more than \$81,000 this year of e-rate money and Ms. Lyn Griffin, Director of Grants Management and Program Development who found money for the teachers to be trained during the summer. Mr. Hill commended them for an outstanding job and for all their hard work. Mr. Hill gave all the credit for the I-Pad Pilot Program to Mr. William Silver, Instructional Technology Teacher at MHS and stated how much of an outstanding job he has done with this program.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Chaisson stated he supports the program and would like to see it expanded next year to the High School along with wireless. Mr. Chaisson also questioned where Mr. Silver sees the program going within next few years. Mr. Silver explained that as long as there is a solid infrastructure and the money is there, it should not be an issue to expand to the High School, it would be a big expense. Mr. Silver stated the infrastructure that connects all the buildings, desperately needs to be looked at and more bandwidth added. Mr. Chaisson wanted to go on record stating, "I support our technology department here".

Mr. Vogler stated the central school does have an element of wireless technology and Mr. Silver confirmed Mr. Vogler was correct. Mr. Silver went on and explained his idea, which works on paper. Mr. Silver explained the basic set up where every other school is hardwired. Comcast provides each building with a free pipe-in at every building and the teachers would be fed with that internet provider, the wireless would be handled by an Apple Airport Extreme and repeated throughout the building by Apple Airport Express, which are little white boxes that would repeat the signal. Mr. Silver explained he did set up a test run on this procedure in the basement and it did work with full signal strength all the way out to the cafeteria. Mr. Silver stated it is not an enterprise solution it is more of a home solution but it would be effective for that small of a building. It would not be something that could be implemented to the High School. Mr. Vogler touched on what Mr. Chaisson said in regard to the technology department and commended Mr. Hill for working very hard on the high school level. Mr. Vogler would like to see wireless capability throughout the new high school. Mr. Vogler would eventually like a report on the technology that is being looked into for the high school. Mr. Hill explained that wireless would be in all classrooms, the hallways and mostly everywhere in the building.

Mr. Marcoux thanked Mr. Silver for his candor and appreciated his honesty in saying there may be glitches and explaining what they could be. Superintendent Scannell stated Grade 9 teachers are very excited about the I-Pad Program.

Superintendent Scannell asked that item 7h. be moved and heard next.

**MOTION:** Mr. Vogler motioned to move item 7h and make it item 4c., the next item on the agenda; Mr. Marcoux seconded the motion to move item 7h and make it item 4c.

**VOTE:** 6-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

**c. Contract Approval**

1. Hewlett Packard Networking Hardware/Software Lease - Approval

**MOTION:** Mr. Marcoux moved to approve the Hewlett Packard Networking Hardware/Software Lease; Mr. Chaisson seconded the motion to approve as submitted.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Hill thanked Superintendent Scannell for Mr. Scannell's contact information. The IRS donated over 600 computers to the school. The school has not had to buy computers and the current goal is to upgrade the technology, the servers and the infrastructures. The lease would be paid for by e-rate money and it would not cost the school system anything. Mr. Hill thanked Superintendent Scannell for her support.

**VOTE:** 6-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

**c. Methuen High School's AP Scores - Update**

Dr. Smith submitted a packet outlining Methuen High school's AP Scores and their improvements. Dr. Smith spoke on the impressive scores, notated in the report. Dr. Smith did review the 12-page report with the Committee and explained the report in further detail.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Willette commented on the report being outstanding and that he was very happy that the national standards were being exceeded. Mr. Willette questioned if the statewide peers are being matched. Dr. Smith said the results have not been received from the state or the nation in terms of that equity and excellence index but we are getting closer to the state and surpassed the national standard. Mr. Willette asked for a further breakdown of local communities for the AP Equity & Excellence index and would like to compare Methuen to surrounding communities. Dr. Smith was not sure but would look into it and see if it was published anywhere. Mr. Willette stated that Methuen has exceeded the national average of the number of students that are advancing to college, exceeding the national average exceeding of AP Equity & Excellence Index and now matching our statewide peers, tremendous progress is being made. Mr. Willette is very appreciative low-income groups are being targeted and if they wanted to take the AP exam that a subsidy would be available beyond the grant that was highlighted and also the broadening of the AP courses on-line. Mr. Marcoux said the report was excellent and was very pleased

with the amount of minorities that have taken the exam and also the minorities themselves. Mr. Marcoux stated there are about 600 minorities in MHS and that needs to be kept in the forefront and addressed. Mr. Marcoux commented on their test scores being amazing. Mr. Marcoux commented on the MIMSI Grant being one of the best things for Methuen students. Mr. Marcoux stated it would be not possible just with MIMSI and the students, it's the amount of time and effort the teachers put in, beyond their work day, both morning, after school and during vacations, they should be commended for their involvement. If it weren't for the teachers guiding the students through the courses, giving themselves and not getting paid for it, having challenges everyday, having people criticism them with the work they do with students, its unbelievable, so they need to be recognized. Mr. Marcoux felt the program is wonderful and the showing for our students and staff is wonderful. Mayor Manzi said as preparation is being done to reauthorize no child left behind (NCLB) and it appears they can't come to an agreement and there may be a whole series of waivers granted to individual states and it also appears that Massachusetts may be one of them. What kind of impact and what are we talking about for the waiver process? Dr. Smith said it is going to be an interesting evolution over the next couple years. The NCLB law basically stipulated that every student in the United States would achieve proficiency in English, Language Arts and Mathematics by the year 2014 and it is a worthy goal but the system that was put in place to measure that achievement is very very deeply flawed, the adequate yearly process is system as it exists is very deeply flawed, the standards are very variable from each state, Massachusetts has among the highest standards in the US, the US secretary of education has been quoted as saying that more than 80 % of the schools in the US would fail to meet the NCLB goal, the Obama administration is advocating for some changes to be made but congress is in a stuck place right now on many issues so it is not likely that they will reauthorize NCLB any time between now and the election and possibly not afterwards. The Obama administration has put a waiver process that States can apply for which allows them to be exempted from the 2014 mandate as it currently exists and to develop their own assessment systems that use different sorts of measures to achieve increases in proficiency, its not just a free for all type of waiver because in addition to those alternate assessment systems the states need to make sure they are adopting high standards to make sure they are making some changes in educator evaluation procedures, there are a number of different things tied together into the waiver process. Dr. Smith said it looks like Massachusetts is positioning itself for that waiver application. Dr. Smith referred to an article in the Boston Globe and said a number of people where quoted as saying they were leaning in that direction. Dr. Smith said we probably would know within a few weeks what is going to happen. The Obama administration is going to come out with the specifications for the waiver at some point in mid September and Dr. Smith would not be surprised to see Massachusetts act on that quickly. It won't affect Methuen's AYP status for 2011 but it would for 2012 and going forward. Mr. Marcoux commented on the educator evaluation piece, his thoughts were some of the larger unions in the US are leaning towards revamping the evaluation piece, before the Obama administration came

forward with that waiver plan, one of the largest ones is the NEA, Mr. Marcoux believes. Mr. Marcoux felt it is long over due and certainly supports it because if the mandates can't be reached then NCLB it is going to effect everything in 2014 and if there is a way of jumping on the band wagon before it took place and then Mr. Marcoux felt it would be a wonderful opportunity for unions, large and small, to look for some common ground in the workplace. Mr. Marcoux said he could see it really taking off and agreed with Dr. Smith that in a couple of weeks something positive will be received because that is the direction headed for. Mr. Marcoux thanked Dr. Smith for the report and her insight and truly supports the effort.

Mr. Willette would equate the NCLB to the historical equivalency of the articles of confederation. Each day was left to his own devices and if needed to pay down debt more money was printed, so to have Alabama establish different standards than Massachusetts, it automatically puts us behind the curve. Mr. Willette felt the common core standards offer a framework. Mr. Willette would like to learn more about that in an additional meeting and have some background detail. Mr. Willette said Massachusetts has the highest standards and should be the benchmark that everyone across the nation emulates in hope of a uniform approach to this process. The common core standards might be that approach and have some type of testing system in place but I appreciate the update on the NCLB. Mayor Manzi said if Massachusetts is the highest standard and "know its right at the top", the other states are still at 80% failing, if adopted Massachusetts standards, "I really don't see anywhere for them to go except toward the 100% mark," thank you I appreciated the report.

**No Action**

**d. DESE Initiatives: Common Core Curriculum and Educator Evaluation Regulations**

Dr. Smith submitted a memo updating the Committee on the Common Core Curriculum and Educator Evaluation Regulations – see attached.

**DISCUSSION:** Superintendent Scannell told the Committee that Dr. Smith, Ms. Bozek, Ms. Griffin and she attended a three-day seminar on the changes that are going to be happening over the next three years and it is dealing with the teacher's evaluation. Dr. Smith highlighted some key points that were in the memo submitted. Superintendent Scannell said she would keep the Committee updated on this piece with a monthly report because of the importance to keep moving forward. Mr. Marcoux questioned if guidelines would be sent out. Dr. Smith said that some had already been sent out, regulations are out and the DESC also is developing some models that could be used by districts so if at the end of the 2 years and Methuen did not have a developed plan then the DESE materials could be used. Mr. Marcoux said it was a great idea but his concern would be the interest in the support for anyone that deemed the improvement plan was necessary for. Mr. Marcoux said he thinks extra support needs to be bought and would be interested in hearing how it is developing as

well. Mr. Marcoux questioned if Dr. Smith has heard from the association, Dr. Smith said not recently.

**e. Superintendent's Monthly Report**

Superintendent Scannell submitted her monthly report outlining the happenings of Summer, 2011. Superintendent Scannell went over her monthly report with the Committee.

Mr. Vogler had asked a question about GLEC and expenditures at the last meeting and the answers were in the packet but Ms. Bozek was thereto answer any further questions. Mr. Vogler appreciated Ms. Bozek coming. Mr. Vogler's only comment was in years past there use to be annual School Committee Meetings where members were informed about program costs, profit etc... Mr. Vogler said it has not happen for many years and felt it is important since 2.4 million dollars in spending is done. The meetings would give an idea of the programs and success/failure rate and financial status. The Committee should be aware of what they are doing and how money is being spent. Mr. Vogler was happy with the report and appreciated Ms. Bozek coming to the meeting. Mr. Vogler suggested Ms. Bozek take his comments back to the board. Ms. Bozek said she would bring it back and share it at the monthly meeting.

Ms. Lyn Griffin Director of Grants Management and Program Development spoke to the Committee and said she would keep them posted on the grants. Starting September 1, 2011 Ms. Griffin said she would start working with the principals, money is running out Ms. Griffin did a breakdown. Ms. Griffin explained how the stimulus money was temporary and would come to an end and explained that is what they are facing. Ms. Griffin included a chart along with the narrative. Ms. Griffin said that allocations are being released by the state to the districts and an analysis was put in the packet. Ms. Griffin pointed out the analysis only included entitlement funding and stimulus funding, it did not include all grants but it was a big chunk. Ms. Griffin explained how to read the chart and said that last year there was 9.6million dollars available to use, the current year there is 6 million dollars and there would have been less but the money could be carried forward and several grants made up the difference, which would help enormously in FY12. Ms. Griffin said the good news is nobody was laid-off and they were able to work it so the carry forward money would maintain salaries for the current year. Mr. Vogler appreciated the report and was happy to see it. Mr. Vogler had concern with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs and some of the IDEA/SPED. This would hit some of the most vulnerable students in the future. Mr. Vogler thanked Ms. Griffin for her outlook and preparation. Superintendent Scannell told the Committees she would keep them updated on this particular piece and also on the teachers' evaluation piece. Mr. Marcoux asked for a ballpark figure on how much money the district spends on out of district SPED. Mr. Bozek said she would get that figure for the next meeting.

## 5. Old Business and Other Pending Matters

- a. National Association for the Education of Young Children – Marsh Grammar School Kindergarten – The Marsh was recognized for this accomplishment.

## 6. New Business

### a. FY'12 School Committee Calendar Approval

Superintendent Scannell submitted the School Committee Calendar for 2011-2012.

**MOTION:** Mr. Vogler moved to approve the FY'12 School Committee Calendar; Mr. Chaisson seconded the motion to approve as submitted.

**VOTE:** 6-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

### b. New ESE Guidelines for Equity in School Lunch Pricing - Recommendation

Mr. Wayne Vespa, Director of School Nutrition Services submitted a memo with the new ESE guidelines for equity in school lunch pricing. Superintendent Scannell said there would be no increase in the price of school lunches. Mr. Chaisson questioned if it was Methuen who wanted to raise prices for school lunches or if it was the State/Federal Government. Superintendent Scannell confirmed it was the Federal Government. Mr. Willette commented on how the schools try to lower prices for people who can't afford school lunch but now the Federal Government would like to increase the prices.

## 7. Finance and Operations –

### a. Expenditure Report - Monthly

Business Administrator Glenn Fratto submitted the Monthly Expenditure Report to the Committee for the period of June and July 2011.

No Action

### b. Revolving Funds Report – Monthly

Business Administrator Glenn Fratto submitted the Monthly Revolving Report to the Committee for the period of June and July 2011.

No Action

### c. Grants Report – Monthly

Ms. Lyn Griffin, Director of Grants Management and Program Development provided the Monthly Grant Status Report for the period of June and July 2011.

No Action

### d. Student Activity Accounts - Monthly

Business Administrator Glenn Fratto submitted the Monthly Student Activity Accounts to the Committee for the period of June and July 2011.

Mr. Vogler would like an explanation of the accounting figures for the Student Activity Accounts. Mr. Vogler could not understand why so much money has been carried over. Superintendent Scannell said she would have a breakdown for Mr. Vogler at the next meeting. Superintendent Scannell did state that the Student Activity Account just went through an audit. Mr. Fratto spoke about the audit and expressed that the auditor was

very impressed at the process in which takes place on that account. Mr. Vogler would like to know why the money is not being spent on the children when they are the ones who put the money in the accounts. Mr. Marcoux agreed with Mr. Vogler and was particularly interested in the Tenney because some grades there was no money spent on field trips and other grades there was almost \$800 spent.

**e. Supervisor of Food Services – Monthly**

Mr. Wayne Vespa, Supervisor of Food Services submitted the Monthly Status Report for the period ending June 2011.

No Action

**f. Supervisor of Custodians & Maintenance – Monthly**

No Action

**g. Bid Awards**

No Action

**h. Budget Transfers**

No Action

**8. Notification of Appointments and Other Personnel Matters**

**a. Personnel Transactions**

No Action

**b. Professional Staff**

No Action

**c. Support Staff**

No Action

**d. Personnel Matters Requiring Committee Action**

No Action

**e. Notification of Vacancy Postings**

No Action

**9. Superintendent's Reports, Communications & Recommendations on Financial Matters,**

**Old & New Business**

**a. Transportation Monthly Update**

No Action

**b. Residency Monthly Update**

No Action

**c. School Resource Officers Monthly Update**

No Action

**d. Dean of Students Update**

No Action

**10. Business from the Committee**

Mr. Marcoux thanked Mayor Manzi and the people who were involved in painting the stadium, it's wonderful. Mayor Manzi said it was Mr. Stella and the team painted it and

it looked great. Superintendent added she couldn't thank Bruce and the custodians enough that it was truly a combined effort between the city and school departments. Mr. Henrick also wanted to thank Mr. Stella and the custodians for a job well done and saving the school a lot of money. Mr. Henrick stated Mr. Stella is unbelievable.

Mr. Willette would like to see a full-blown lock down at the high school to bring in dogs and check for drugs. "Do we need this in the handbook or as a School Committee Policy?" Superintendent Scannell said they just had a 3-hour seminar with the school lawyer. No policy is needed nor would it have to be in the handbook and the Superintendent could call for a lock down at the Superintendent's discretion. She had spoken with Sgt. Walsh a couple of days before the seminar and he actually brought this up. She is putting a plan together and will do the lockdown when she feels ready. The lockdown is at the Superintendents discretion. Mr. Vogler touched on the lockdown being unannounced and being a good idea and hoped it would be implemented on a staggered basis through out the schools. Mr. Chaisson wanted to take it a step further and maybe incorporate it at an athletic event and into the crowds at the stadium. Mr. Marcoux commented on that being a liability issue. Superintendent Scannell agreed with Mr. Marcoux and stated it would be a liability issue. Mr. Willette stated again, I would like a full-blown lockdown at the high school during school hours.

## **11. Executive Session**

- a. Negotiations**
- b. Litigation**

## **12. Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss at this Business Session, Mayor Manzi entertained a motion to assemble into an Executive Session of the Committee at 8:16 PM, thus concluding this Business Session for the evening.

**MOTION:** Mr. Vogler moved to adjourn this Business Session at 8:16 and Mr. Marcoux seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,  
Michelle Turco, Public Recorder  
Methuen Public Schools