

# EAST LONGMEADOW SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## MINUTES

DATE: April 4, 2016

Time: 7:00 PM

Where: Superintendent's Conference Room

Present: Richard Freccero, William Fonseca, Deirdre Mailloux ; Gregory Thompson, Elizabeth Marsian-Boucher, Gordon Smith, Superintendent of School, Pamela Blair, Assistant Superintendent for Business, Student Rep; Kathy Celetti, Recording Secretary;  
Chair: Is anyone else video or audio taping this meeting - Yes a reporter with the Reminder

### Approval of Minutes

2.1 Deirdre moved to approve the March 21, 2016 regular session meeting minutes, Bill seconded the motion  
Chair: those in favor of the motion say aye (5 ayes), those opposed say nay (0), motion carries (5-0)

### Committee/Sub-committee Communications

Beth: The Art Show was cancelled, but they will be rescheduling that. MV Talent show is this Friday at ELHS at 7pm. and Arbor Day is this Thursday.  
Deirdre: We have an important vote coming up next week for our Charter proposal on April 12<sup>th</sup>, so get out there and vote.  
Bill: This weekend I will be heading to Boston for the National School Board Association annual conference. It seems it's going to be an action packed weekend. One of the keynote speakers is Dan Rather, former news correspondent with CBS news. I'll take notes and put together a report.  
Student Rep: This past Friday the students and faculty wore blue and the student sold bracelets for Autism Awareness. The senior banquet is this Friday at the Delaney House, excited for that. April 12<sup>th</sup> is a half-day for professional development. April 13<sup>th</sup> is the Chamber Music Concert at ELHS from 7-9 pm. and April break is coming up from the 18<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup>.  
Rich: Just wanted to keep everyone updated, the Collaborative Committee met and we are working on the Hall of Fame presentation and teacher recognition which is June 9<sup>th</sup>.  
Mr. Smith: Just wanted to mention last month was Music in our Schools month. Fantastic performance last week of all our music students in grades 6-12<sup>th</sup>, packed house. Everyone left happy.

**Opportunity for visitors to Address the committee** - No one wished to address the committee

### Superintendent's Report:

5.1.1 Discussion with Eric Madison on the proposal for "New Town Charter". I'm here to answer any questions you as a school committee might have regarding the Charter.  
Rich: Let's say the school committee makes a proposal to the town council, and it is rejected, my understanding is that there is some type of recourse that we could do, and bring back to the town council, is there a process.  
Eric: Yes, there are actually several citizen initiatives. You can follow a process, when that process is followed, you can re-submit it to the town council for consideration again. If it's rejected again, you can actually bring it to town vote for ballot question.  
Rich: So what I'm hearing is that town council, yes they do have the majority vote, but there are still measures in place within the Charter for ways to come back to the town council, it isn't one and only, this is a vote, it's done.  
Eric: Absolutely not, ultimately the people still have a voice.  
Rich: Basically, it doesn't stop the school committee from making a proposal and town council voting it down, it's coming back with new information and trying to resubmit that proposal. That's something that can continue correct?  
Eric: In fact that was kind of the way it was written. There are a couple of different measures that can be followed, you as the petitioner can choose whatever that measure would be. To ask the council to reconsider is exactly for that reason. It might then persuade the council the measure would be in the best interest of the community. So rather than having to follow the procedure and bringing it to a town vote, which you don't exempt yourself from that. You would go to town council and ask for reconsideration.  
Beth: What if the MSBA comes back and give us the new school, do we have to go in front of the Charter and ask for money for a study? Is that a town vote or is that something that would happen at a town meeting historically?  
Gordon: It would be town vote/debt exclusion.  
Beth: With the proposed Charter, how does that process happen?  
Eric: Essentially, it gets an affirmative vote from council, it would then move forward to a town-wide vote.  
Beth: If the town council chooses to say they are not sure or are concerned it's a money issues, and the council doesn't put it forward, at that point with in the 60 days period is there time for us to hope that the residents want to petition that.  
Eric: Yes  
Greg: Sitting on the school committee as we are now and with a superintendent, I've heard the relation/correlation between school committee and the superintendent and the proposed form of government, (town council and town manager) would be similar. Do you see a similarity in that and how they might function in a similar way?  
Eric: The structure is very similar. You have a town council that might be like school committee, who then hires a town manager who manages the day to day operation, similar to the superintendent of schools.  
Greg: As a tax payer, I see signs around town vote, NO, keep our taxes low. My understanding, when we briefly talked about the tax levy, can a new form of government in your opinion raise our taxes? Would that make a direct correlation between the propose Charter and higher taxes?  
Eric: There are some added expenses with the Charter. I'm sure they will be offset by some efficiency. Are there additional cost, sure a town manager is paid more than a town administrator.  
Deirdre: One of the changes as I read to the Charter is that we see on the school committee, when our terms end, is being pushed to a different month.  
Bill: No, the elections starting next year would be June 30<sup>th</sup>.  
Greg: If the Charter doesn't pass this time around, would we have an opportunity to put it on the ballot again, if there's a 35% vote in the affirmative within two years based on a petition.  
Eric: Yes, that is correct. My understanding is that it would have to be the same Charter that is in place now, without any alterations.  
Greg: If and when we do pass the Charter, it flushes out the whole system we currently have in terms of Board of Selection, they will be done in June and the current town administrator will be done as soon as they appoint a town manager.  
Eric: Yes  
Beth: Have we looked at other communities/town that have Charter  
Eric: Yes, Palmer, they struggled and made adjustments in the past 7 years.  
5.1.2 Senator Eric Lesser was present and gave the committee a brief overview of what's happening at the State house. My main goal is just to answer any questions you have. There certainly is a lot to talk about. Charter School: we have a bill at the senate being voted on Thursday. I have some skepticism about increasing the cap and the current framework around Charter Schools. It takes money from the town and the school systems. My feeling is unless there is a significant adjustment to that then I will not support a cap increase. Chapter 70, very important concern, slight increase in the governor's proposal. The senate in particular, the entire legislation understand how important Chapter 70. Even though we are approaching budget contractions and cuts, this would be the last thing I would support are cuts. New high school: I had a great tour of the high school with Mr. Smith and his entire team. I stand ready to everything I possibly can to help with that. My role is really a support role. Connecting you to the appropriate people at the state and legislation level. Whatever you need from us, consider me an advocate. Opiate: I represent 9 cities and towns and eight school systems. Every single one is facing this crisis. This is the most important public policy challenge I am facing right now in our schools. We just passed a substance abuse bill that the governor signed three weeks ago. Bill asked the senator how he feels about the Foundation Budget Review Commission. My take on this is that about 3% state public school students are charter school. At most, if they completely lift the cap tomorrow, it would never be in the foreseeable future get close to much more then 6 or 10%. You are talking 90% of students are still your

traditional public school. The real issue is what we should do to strengthen public school systems because that is where the overwhelming populations are. This has my full support. Greg: we have a very important vote coming up next week, have you looked at our Charter proposal on a local level. Senator Lesser, I want to be there to help work on whatever the decision the town makes. Make sure the state is there to provide their support and the advocacy we need. Rich: I say this with great admiration; we are almost a model school system in what we've done with the opiate crisis. With Mr. Smith's leadership, we have a Youth Safety Commission, this committee is made up of staff and administration, and they have done some tremendous outreach. Deirdre: you mentioned about getting narcan in schools, our nursing supervisor had come before us to come up with a policy on narcan in the schools. All of our nurses have already been trained to administer narcan to students and staff if needed. Senator Lesser said that he would like to meet with our nursing supervisor. Deirdre mentioned the Statement of Interest for the new high school saying we have submitted three times. She asked if there is anything Senator Less could do to help, if so that would be great. Senator Lesser said that he could help facilitate a meeting. It's obvious we will need to fix things in the building or get a new school. He also said you need community support. Deirdre: Bill and I are doing Day on the Hill; we can continue this conversation with you when we are there.

**Assistant Superintendent of Business :**

5.2.1 Meadow Brook anonymous gift donation of \$250 was presented.

Deirdre motioned to accept the anonymous gift donation for Meadow Brook in the amount of \$250, Beth seconded the motion.

Chair: those in favor of the motion say aye (5) ayes, those opposed say nay (0), motion carries (5-0).

**Old Business :**

6. East Longmeadow High School Program of Studies revisions for 2016-2017 were presented for a second reading. The chair said there were two things to be considered, the language revision for Course Change Policy in red and the Independent Study. Dr. Flanagan said she did go back to her colleagues with the Policy Sub-committee language and the Independent Study. If a junior takes Independent Study it really doesn't look favorable on the transcript, guidance department is not recommending it. The language in the Course change Policy was discussed and finally agreed to the following: There is no course Add/Drop during the second semester with the exception of IEP changes, level changes and course failures and unique educational circumstances. All changes are subject to the final approval and discretion of the principal. Deirdre said that she is in agreement with Rich and Beth, that if you have an extraordinary junior, he/she should be able to do Independent Study.

Bill motioned to approve the following (5) recommended changes to the Program of Studies: Action Plan 9-12; Class Rank; Final Examinations/Alternative Assessment; Community Action Learning; and Resources for Learning, Inclusion Services, Deirdre seconded the motion.

Chair: those in favor of the motion say aye (5) ayes, those opposed say nay (0), motion carries (5-0)

Greg moved that we accept the revision language for Course Change Policy, Bill seconded the motion.

Chair: those in favor of the motion say aye (5) ayes, those opposed say nay (0), motion carries (5-0)

Deirdre motioned that we accept the Independent Study Program with the following amendments: Grade 11, 2<sup>nd</sup> semester with principal approval and bring it back next year, Bill seconded the motion.

Chair: those in favor of the motion say aye (5) ayes, those opposed say nay (0), motion carries (5-0)

**New Business**

7.1 Participation in School Choice was discussed. Mr. Smith said that this was a discussion at the Leadership Team meeting. The administrators said if the school committee chooses to participate in School Choice they are recommending it to start with the younger grades.

Greg moved to participate in School Choice program, Bill seconded the motion.

Chair: those in favor of the motion say aye (0) ayes, those opposed say nay (5) motion carries (0-5)

The Chair thanked the ELCAT volunteers: Jaime Rooke and Mr. Make, and also thank our student rep: Elena Tilli

Bill moved to adjourn at 8:50 PM, Greg seconded the motion.

Chair: those in favor of the motion say aye (5 ayes), those opposed say nay (0), motion carries (5-0).