

Town Council-Elect/School Committee-Elect
Monday, October 19, 2009

Town Councillors-Elect: Andrew Azer, Richard Brewer, Ken Clifton, Arthur Goldstein, Paul Meoni. The following current selectmen are also Town Councillors-Elect, and they attended only the beginning portion of the meeting: William Alexopoulos, James Burgess and Paul Fernandes. Not present: Maureen Pasquantonio

School Committee-Elect: Ida Gordon, Emmanuel Meccha, Marybeth Nearen, Sharon Swain. Not Present: Larry Azer and Keith Wortzman

Town Counsel: Paul DeRensis

Facilitator: Erline Belton

Mr. Alexopoulos opened the meeting at 7:10. He summarized the meeting of Saturday, October 17th for the Councillors who were not present.

As the former Chair of the School Committee, Mr. Meoni began by saying that the Randolph Public Schools were labeled as "underperforming" by the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Administration put together a two year Turn Around Plan to address the issues, which was approved by the School Committee and the Board of Selectmen. In order for the plan to work, the support and engagement the School Committee and Board of Selectmen is necessary. Evaluations by the DOE occur every six months. A list of action items was created to address Goal III in the Plan, and members of the School Committee and Board of Selectmen broke up into 4 subcommittees. One subcommittee looked at public relations to improve the Town's image. Three PR Firms made presentations, but it is on hold due to funding.

Another subcommittee looked into "Increased Pride and Ownership" in the community. Ms. Swain was on this subcommittee, which held a public forum called "Randolph on the Move." The event was televised and there were 30-40 people in attendance discussing schools, the community and how to move Randolph forward. That group hopes to continue to periodically have forums to engage the community.

The third subcommittee was known as the "Community Partnership Group" Executive Secretary and Superintendent working together to enhance the services that we have so that our children can achieve at higher levels.

The last subcommittee was made up of The Chairs and Mr. Fernandes, who designed a plan where there would be clearer communication between the school department and the Selectmen.

Ms. Belton said that when the assessment was done by the DOE, they felt that the relationships within the School Committee and between the School Committee and the Board of Selectmen were in need of work. Respect, trust, relationships, and communications within and between the Boards needed improvement in order to make the system work.

Ms. Belton is a part of the Turnaround Team that was put together by the Department of Education to help support the Turnaround Plan. Her role has been to act as Facilitator to the Selectmen, School Committee and the Superintendent to in working on Goal III in the Turnaround Plan. There are four people on the team, and each has their own assignment depending on their expertise.

Ms. Belton explained that the Town Council and School Committee will be held accountable for Goal III of the Turnaround Plan. Under the Action Steps, the Town Council and School Committee will regularly meet jointly to work on developing effective communication strategies to rebuild trust and accountability with the greater Randolph Community.

Ms. Belton believes the Selectmen and School Committee have made some progress, but the relationships and roles between the boards still need work. Academically, there is still work to be done. The framework has been set, and there should be a noticeable difference due to the new hires and new curriculum and special education developments. Parent involvement is still an issue, and the MCAS scores still need to improve.

Mr. Clifton raised some concerns with the Turnaround Plan Summary regarding involvement levels of parents of color and the fact that the schools did have an HR Director, but the document states that there was not. Ms. Belton told him that the document is an assessment made by the Department of Education, and that the facts outlined in the Plan are all an accurate representation of the efforts of the Turnaround Plan and the School Department. She said that when the document was written, the HR Director had retired and was working on a temporary, part time basis.

Mr. Meoni asked Ms. Belton to include the New Council President in the next meeting of the Turnaround Team.

A brief discussion about the Cherry Sheet, Teachers' Salaries and Contracts and the Superintendent's Contract took place. Mr. Brewer asked if the Department of Education's Team is paid by the School Committee and Ms. Belton said that the Department of Education paid their salaries, not the Town of Randolph.

Mr. Goldstein stated that the Council intends to choose a President designee at the meeting tomorrow night. It is the hope that the Town Council's School committee representative will also be chosen. Mr. Meoni stated that the Association of School Committees is having training in November, so the Town Council's representative should attend. Mr. Clifton stated that he does not believe the decision should be rushed.

Meeting Adjourned 8:25.

