

## **MINUTES**

### **JOINT LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST**

#### **BARRINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND BARRINGTON TOWN COUNCIL**

**Monday, January 23, 2017**

**8:00 a.m.**

#### **School Committee Meeting Room**

The Barrington School Committee and Barrington Town Council held a Joint Legislative Breakfast with Barrington legislative delegation members Representative Joy Hearn (D-66), Representative Jason Knight (D-67), and Senator Cynthia Armour Coyne (D-32) on Monday, January 23, 2017 at 8:00 a.m. in the School Committee Meeting Room.

Barrington Town Council President Michael W. Carroll called the Town Council meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. Barrington School Committee Chair Kate D. Brody called the School Committee meeting to order at 8:06 a.m. Present were Town Council Vice President Ms. Kate G. Weymouth and members Mr. Steven Boyajian, Mr. Peter Dennehy and Mr. Stephen Primiano, School Committee Vice Chair Ms. Anna Clancy, and members Mr. John Alessandro, Dr. Megan Douglas and Mrs. Gina Pine, Town Manager Mr. James Cunha, Town of Barrington Finance Director Ms. Kathleen Raposa, Superintendent of Schools Mr. Michael B. Messore, III, and Barrington Public Schools Director of Administration and Finance Mr. Ronald D. Tarro.

Mr. Carroll and Ms. Brody offered an overview of the meeting as a collaborative community effort to provide an opportunity for a joint conversation with Barrington's legislative delegation to discuss advocacy priorities for the General Assembly in the 2017 legislative session.

Town Council President Carroll introduced the following three topics as issues of concern for the Town of Barrington: the reduction in municipal revenue as a result of the proposed elimination of the motor vehicle tax, failing bridges on the East Bay Bike Path that are scheduled for replacement in 2025 yet may require acceleration of that intervention, and consideration of assistance from the State to help reach the affordable housing goal.

The Town Council addressed the following topics as additional issues of concern for the Town:

Ms. Kate Weymouth: a redundant source of water per ongoing discussions with the Bristol County Water Authority,

Mr. Stephen Primiano: legislative relief for suburban communities with affordable housing, regionalization of shared resources such as emergency 911 system, marijuana legislation, and the deteriorating condition of Nayatt Road (a state road),

Mr. Peter Dennehy: concerns relative to potential increases in the budget, and concern with the fiscal harm caused by elimination of the motor vehicle tax,

Mr. Steven Boyajian: fee in lieu of taxes as an unrealistic law, and marijuana legislation.

Ms. Brody provided a synopsis of School Committee advocacy issues for 2017 including the Barrington Middle School bond referendum statutory process, with the Special Financial Town Meeting to authorize the Town to request voter approval to exceed the 4 per cent cap on the increase in the Town's tax levy

in order to finance construction of the new BMS through a municipal bond; the Special Financial Town Meeting will be held on March 16, 2017. Ms. Brody thanked the Town Council for its support of the statutory process. The current fiscal year (FY17) is the final year of the School Funding Formula as enacted in 2011 and the School Committee supports the legislation as originally enacted and requests that the General Assembly, as it considers a new plan for school funding, consider specific community challenges and measure community burdens, as Barrington is a community with a high reliance on property taxes absent a significant commercial tax base. Unfunded education mandates that are imposed through legislation have an impact on local school districts.

The School Committee addressed the following as additional issues of concern for the Barrington Public Schools:

Ms. Clancy: the Barrington Middle School building project,

Mr. Alessandro: preservation of State reimbursement for the Barrington Middle School building project, concern relative to local control of marijuana legislation and the need to make responsible decisions for our community, consideration of relief on burden for statutory requirements for transportation for public school districts,

Ms. Pine: concern relative to the impact of the decrease in State Aid on the ability to meet the needs of students who are in need of services (such as Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy), safety of the East Bay Bike Path,

Dr. Douglas: support for recently enacted legislation mandating recess, and feedback as a pediatrician in private practice in Massachusetts relative to the Massachusetts marijuana legislation.

Mr. Messore and Mr. Tarro expressed concern relative to unfunded education mandates that will impact operating budgets at the local district level. They expressed their appreciation for Representative Hearn's support and continued advocacy with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) for safety issues including intersections and sidewalks near schools.

Mr. Cunha expressed concern relative to marine safety issues with the bridges over the East Bay Bike Path, the lack of a funding stream to support meeting affordable housing goals, support for consolidation of emergency services, and consideration of a program for e permits.

The legislative delegation members shared their individual perspectives and collective feedback pertaining to the advocacy issues as identified by the Town Council and School Committee.

Representative Hearn reported that RIDOT cites sidewalks as the most expensive factor in improvement projects due to the challenges with oppositional drainage and she reiterated her focus on Nayatt Road improvements and improvements to the intersections near Primrose Hill School and Barrington Middle School. She noted that the redundant source of water continues to be a vulnerability concern.

Representative Hearn noted that the anticipated increase in municipal solid waste tipping fees at the Central Landfill will incur additional costs for cities and towns; she will continue to monitor the motor vehicle tax legislation. Representative Knight suggested that the Town consider using the services of Daniel Beardsley, former Executive Director of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, who is now a registered lobbyist, to mobilize advocacy on behalf of the Town. Senator Coyne stated that the Bristol Town Council had recently passed an ordinance relative to the permitting process for marijuana and that the process may serve as a template for the State. Members of the legislative delegation requested that the Town Council and the School Committee feel free to continue to reach out to them relative to

emerging and ongoing advocacy issues that are important for our community. The consensus of the group was to schedule a second Joint Legislative Breakfast in late Spring, preferably at the end of April.

Ms. Clancy moved and Mr. Alessandro seconded to adjourn the School Committee meeting at 9:10 a.m. The motion passed 5-0 with Ms. Brody, Ms. Clancy, Mr. Alessandro, Dr. Douglas and Ms. Pine voting in the affirmative for the motion.

The Town Council meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m. by unanimous vote of the Town Council.