

**KING PHILIP REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
February 26, 2018  
King Philip Regional High School - Library  
201 Franklin Street, Wrentham, MA 02093**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mr. Francomano, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

**ROLL CALL OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Members Present:      Norfolk:      Michael Gee,  
                                 Plainville:      Patrick Francomano, Samad Khan,  
                                 Wrentham:      Trevor Knott, Erin DeStefano, Jim Killion

Members Absent:      Norfolk:      Jeff Chalmers, Kenneth Dow  
                                 Wrentham:      Present  
                                 Plainville:      Charlene McEntee

HS Student Council Representative:      Miss Linde

The meeting is being videotaped by Wrentham Cable. Mr. Francomano explained that the public may visit the district's website at [www.kingphilip.org](http://www.kingphilip.org) to review informational documents pertaining to each school committee meeting. Videotaped meetings may be viewed in their entirety at [www.wrenthamcableaccess.com](http://www.wrenthamcableaccess.com) Mr. Francomano also explained the procedure for public comment.

**DELEGATIONS AND VISITORS**

Dr. Mobley, HS Principal, Mr. Azer, Director of Finance, Mr. Hardy, MASC

**Consent Agenda**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

None

**PAYMENT OF BILLS, FINANCIAL REPORT**

Warrants/Budget Report/Budget Transfers

**COMMUNICATION:**

Appointments, Retirements, etc. were presented by Dr. Zielinski in a memorandum dated February 26, 2018.

**AGENDA**

**Communication:**

- 2016/2017 MIAA Sportsmanship Honor Roll
- Murphy, Hesse – Education Alert, January 2018
- Letter from Superintendents of Norfolk, Plainville and Wrentham. This letter was read into the Minutes by Mr. Francomano as it related to the superintendent search.
- Letter from KPRHS Students on Superintendent Search.

**NEW BUSINESS: (Out of Order)**

**Model UN Overnight Field Trip: Mr. O'Connor**

- ✚ A Motion was made by Mr. Killion, Mrs. DeStefano, to approve the attendance at the March 9, 2018 Model UN Conference in Amherst, MA, according to policy IJOA and JJH. All in favor.

### **HS Wrestling Overnight Field Trip:**

Dr. Zielinski explained that each year when the wrestling championships occur the team must qualify in order to move on and proceed to the New England Championships. The next round will be held on March 2-3, 2018.

- ✚ **A Motion was made by Mr. Khan, seconded by Mr. Killion, to approve the attendance of the KPRHS Wrestling student/athletes to attend the championship tournament to be held on March 2-3, 2018 at the Providence Center and Technical Academy in Providence, RI to compete in the New England Championships, according to Policy JJH and IJOA. All in favor.**

### **REPORTS FROM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

- Norfolk School Committee Representative: Mr. Chalmers – None
- Plainville School Committee Representative: Mrs. McEntee – None
- Wrentham School Committee Representative: Mrs. DeStefano – Celebrating Dr. Seuss; crazy sock day and various events throughout the week; and hosting a book fair
- HS Student Council Report: Ms. Linde, presented her report.

### **Unfinished Business:**

#### **Superintendent Search Update – Selection: Mr. Hardy, MASC**

Mr. Francomano stated that each team that did a site visit for the superintendent search will give an overview of their site visit, and as individuals are talking, I will entertain questions from individual members on particular issues and individual discussion at the table on questions, concerns, comments. Audience members will be given an opportunity to comment and ask that they complete a comment card.

#### **Kevin Carney – Site Visit to Uxbridge:**

The first overview will be from the team that had a site visit to Uxbridge for candidate Mr. Kevin Carney. The Team consisted of: Jim Killion and Erin DeStefano and Charlene McEntee on Tuesday, February 13 in which they met with 40 members of the community, former and current school committee members, PTO members, all municipal department heads at town hall and school resource officers who all gave glowingly positive comments across the board according to Mrs. DeStefano. The organizational structure and flow in his office seemed very organized and professional. There was a lot of creativity involved to try to bridge some of the gaps and differences among the community. As an example, the McCloskey Elementary School was closed. This school was named after a former superintendent and with enrollment down it was decided to consolidate schools into one building and looking to revenue streams. In an effort to bring in higher education in there, Mr. Carney needed to bring in revenue to the District which was not brought up thoroughly in the second interview held by the school committee. The biggest piece to this transition was getting the community on board because it was very personal to the town to move forward with the initiative. He is still working to get that property figured out even though he is leaving the district and wants the matter settled before he leaves. He was collaborative in working through the plan.

Mrs. DeStefano continued that they met with members of the administrative team and teachers at the HS and the MS. The administrative team was very dynamic and he brought all of them on board and they spoke very highly and appreciative of everything that he has done in Uxbridge. Met with one former school committee member who was chair for one year and spoke very highly of Mr. Carney in all of her dealings with him and very supportive.

Mrs. DeStefano read some comments made during the site visit which included that he listens and understands, he is a visionary, respectful and always moves forward; the administrative team described him as collaborative, he inspires me, maintains confidentiality, made our building into a school, one of the best, all very positive reviews.

Mr. Killion noted that he talked to membership on grievances and contracts and fought for a common ground to find a compromise and very supportive. He got the impression that prior to Kevin the moral was low and the prior administration was not eye to eye with teachers and students and that changed after Kevin came on board.

Mr. Khan asked that the comments are very positive. Was there anything that gave you cause for concern? Mrs. DeStefano said that one middle school teacher who was a union representative seemed particularly negative, but sensed some moral issues and speed in which contract issues were addressed.

Mrs. McEntee commented on budget issues and asked if there was an open pocketbook, would you still have issues and what would you be able to tell us to improve on? The response was all about the money issues and the constraints that they have been working on.

Mr. Killion indicated that the moral factor was evident and there was no other feedback so we moved on and there have been budget challenges. Town heads work together with Mr. Carney to get it done.

Mr. Khan noted that Uxbridge revenue has been coming in under 2% for the past 8 years.

Mrs. DeStefano: The strength of the team was impressive.

Mr. Knott asked what is his reason for Mr. Carney leaving?

Mrs. DeStefano said that town department heads, 4 out of 5, were leaving, which speaks to the state of the town. He chose to not renew his contract, wanted to look for other opportunities. He said that he wanted to be up front and wanted to explore other options and felt that this opportunity at KP was a good match for his skillset.

#### **Paul Carney– Site Visit to Avon:**

This team consisted of: Michael Gee, Jim Killion and Patrick Francomano.

Mr. Gee indicated that they met with 10 different groups including parent group, chair of the school committee, student group, MS and HS teachers, elementary, central office staff, union president and vice president, community groups and local rotary president. It was evident that Mr. Zinni has a lot of alliances in the community. Comments were all very positive and they have already replaced him. Avon is a tiny choice district that sustains the districts. Seems to be very well liked by all of the groups. Mr. Zinni has been in district for 17 years and is a strong advocate for the budget. Recently settled the teacher contract process in which the union was very complimentary by the way it was handled. It did away with school fees, recommended to the school committee. Mr. Zinni has handled difficult situations that parents brought up and students on cultural issues and other issues that he handled very well.

Mr. Killion said that people are extremely supportive of Mr. Zinni especially the students. It is a smaller D4 district vs D1, school choice, talked about attrition where they lose students. The challenge will be how would you manage keeping those students or getting them back into the district? The students want bigger and better experience it is hard to argue with that and he talked about attrition.

Mr. Killion said that he expressed himself very clearly and makes himself available without skirting his main responsibility of running the district and the teachers. Very impressive on dealing with special education and all of his administrative team have a special education background in one way or another. He seems to work well with the school committee, administrative team and town to get what he needs.

Mr. Francomano said they met with a community group and there was a member of the Rotary Club and also a local business man and indicated how strongly Zinni put himself out there in social organizations and some of the local businesses in reaching out to them. Developed a partnership with the Rotary and brought them into the schools and developed a program with Avon schools which was very impressive. Advocates strongly and respectfully and has a great deal of credibility among the towns people particularly the finance and selectmen.

Mr. Francomano referred to a substance abuse group, when Zinni came on there were a number of students involved with alcohol and tobacco; at that time was twice the state average so he reached out to this group, formed an alliance and brought them into the schools and they are now half the state average and made an impact on the student body and culture. The YMCA and the Library, community group developed a working relationship for the benefit of the district and has placed the school as a true member of the community. The kind of things we have been talking about for an extended period of time.

He also has his own cable television show. And there is some kind of partnership called “Yability” Mr. Francomano was impressed was the group of students. Avon is a small class with a graduating class of 41, the group was mostly seniors and there were 6 students there who were very articulate, the degree to which they shared personal experiences that I was not expecting to hear, in which Zinni demonstrated compassion, intellectual intuition and understanding of a young person’s life says volumes.

Mr. Killion indicated it is proactive and not reactive in dealing with student issues.

Mr. Francomano referenced an incident involving racial issues and students were treated respectfully, intelligently and empowered students and provided support for resolution for the student as well as the district. Referenced choice district, the students coming into Avon are primarily not from affluent towns and that the degree of challenges that they must experience because of the choice system is difficult for some districts to overcome, but yet they are a blended community.

Mr. Killion met with elementary students and as we were walking through the halls, kids were coming from lunch, they greeted Mr. Zinni and his presence is known around in the schools and in the community.

Mr. Gee noted positive input into the community, focus on kids, open and accessible, works in front of the desk, not behind it; positive impact from union president, municipal side they have common goals, acts as gentlemen, budget transparency. Out in the community, he is people oriented, good at validating feelings, administrators open to concepts, surrounds himself with people he knows can help him.

Mr. Francomano indicated that the administrative team gave a clear impression that they were empowered, felt respected, not that the leash was off, but a significant amount of creativity that they were experiencing.

Mr. Killion described that most groups used the term supportive, improvement, lovable, loyal, friendly, approachable, and funny.

Mr. Francomano said that the one question I asked was there a possible negative. I had not met him before and my immediate reaction was this is a really nice guy. My question to all the groups was, and I am afraid that he is going to get chewed up by constituents, and the response was don’t think he is a pushover, when having to make a decision

Miss Linde commented that Avon a very small district. Her concern is that it is simpler to make a connection from 40 to 340 graduates or will that be a difficult step for him to make.

Mr. Francomano answered that it could be a challenge, however, the number of support staff that is here vs Avon is significantly different. They are clearly understaffed and that would be a challenge for anyone coming it.

Mr. Gee indicated that the focus is on communication style.

Mr. Knott asked if there were any remarks that were not glowingly positive.

Mr. Francomano said that he did not hear anything negative as a practical matter; even the union president who was talking about negotiations and how in fact he acted when they negotiated which was without an attorney on the school side or an MTA rep on the union side. Zinni acted as the mediator to a certain extent and bringing the parties together which was met with great success on both sides.

Mrs. DeStefano asked what is the state of the budget in Avon?

Mr. Francomano indicated that it is comparable to what KP is under here and it has been successful. There is still have a lot of financial pressure as well.

Mr. Knott asked what is the quality of the admin team?

Mr. Francomano responded that they all had special education background, very impressed about different initiatives and he hired them all. Very similar to Mr. Carney.

Miss Linde asked how he dealt with student cultural issues and is there any detail about the racial issue.

Mr. Gee indicated that it involved the students that were there re a racial issue at a sporting event.

Mr. Francomano said that a potential negative from the audience there was an incident that I asked about involving a pocket knife that was found on a student and it was reported to the DOE who said protocol was not followed completely because it wasn't report to the DSS and the way they addressed it. The school committee revised their policy to be in accordance with regulations, but the part that was missed by the news coverage was what they did do immediately was bring in the local police to make sure that: a) children were safe; and, b) that it was dealt with appropriately; and, c) public information vs the privacy of the school. It seems to have been handled appropriately other than what DESE said.

Mrs. Wolf commented that she is concerned that a 1/3 of the committee is not available tonight. Did you get any opinions from the missing members and did they review the tapes.

Mr. Francomano replied that this meeting was set back approximately 2 months ago, it was known to all members. 2 members opted to be somewhere else for professional matters or personal matters. Mrs. McEntee had a family emergency. We have a schedule and we stick to it unless it rises to extraordinary circumstances. Additionally, I did offer to Mr. Dow well in advance the opportunity to participate remotely, which he was not going to be able to do. I did indicate to Mr. Dow that if he wanted to provide any input in writing, I would read it into the record, I did not receive anything from Mr. Dow.

The same offer was made to Mrs. McEntee who was en route to the hospital. She was wondering if she could participate remotely via a cell phone and we did not think that would comply.

Mr. Chalmers never approached me.

Mr. Francomano noted that the committee received input from 6 students who met with all of the candidates who provided a letter which Mr. Francomano summarized. The letter from the 3 town administrators was read into the minutes in its entirety as well as a letter from the 3 superintendents from the elementary districts. A letter was also received from Mr. Paul Paulino 1989 Alum endorsing Mr. Carney.

Discussion was held on how the committee would like to choose the candidate one of 2 ways. Ballot method indicate who you favor or simply a motion to appoint. Would you like to have a general discussion?

Mr. Knott said that he was not here for Mr. Carney's interview but he has listened intently with this group and this forum. They are 2 very good candidates. Leadership is the top thing for me in what we need here and building a coalition among the groups. No specific questions re the candidates, I feel safer with Zinni, executive presence with Carney. Strong for both.

Mrs. DeStefano said that they are 2 great candidates. She does have a couple of hesitations re Zinni: one being the size of the district he has been in for 16 years; and the other is that he has been in the district for 16 years, something said for commitment and longevity. We want someone here for the long haul, 16 years is a long time to be in a role and could be potentially a little bit of a shock.

Mr. Francomano said that Zinni has only been a superintendent for 4 or 5 years.

Mrs. DeStefano said that adapting to the scale of KP vs Avon leaves me hesitant. She went to one of the site visits and heard so many things about Mr. Carney that he is very capable in moving the district forward and make those changes and forge those relationships and make positive change a reality.

Mr. Killion said that as a counterpoint, Mr. Zinni's tenure may have been long for a small district, but he has all of that experience that is very beneficial. When you talk with staff and students he can handle social and professional issues and is able to bring in thoughts and ideas.

Mr. Khan said that both are good candidates and thank you to the search committee, but my biggest concern with Mr. Carney is that he looked good and sounded good and I realized he didn't say much of anything. What are the actions and steps to make those big ideas into a big concrete thing? We have big goals, is this

going to be more of the same, what is the result going to be. I also had some concerns with Zinni, he is a visionary, been in Avon for a long time but was always trying to improve it, did research in Avon, he is ready for one last adventure. Is KP going to be his final destination and coast through 3 year contract and then retire and I think from the site visit and comments, I don't think he is that type of person but should be cognizant of that fact.

Mr. Knott said that he also shares that concern.

Mr. Khan said that they both have experience with special education system. Mr. Carney had experience at a private special education school. Mr. Zinni has grant writing experience which is a huge bonus and started kids in Avon coding in Kindergarten.

Mr. Killion thanked Dr. Gilson for chairing the whole search, which was a long process and all the deliberation. I don't think we would lose with either one of these candidates and each brings a different dynamic and looks at what KP is forward thinking, vision at the school and improvement on and whoever that is can step right in and not wait a year and both offer a great amount of educational accountability. Both candidates are extremely strong, I wish we had 2 positions.

Mr. Gee also thanked the committee and said that both are great candidates with high caliber. Pros and con lists, pros are very lengthy for both. I, like Erin, went to one site visit with Mr. Zinni.

Mrs. DeStefano said that she did not think Mr. Carney represented himself very well in the interview.

Mr. Francomano indicated that that is a problem.

Mr. Killion said that we want a very good leader who is going to lead KP. I personally reached out to a lot of feedback from the community, the teachers, the CWG, teachers and students. With the input we received from town administrators, superintendents, ultimately who we chose tonight these are the people they are going to be working with.

Mr. Francomano said that if it is a priority of the district to collaborate with the three towns, both at the town level and the school level, as I read both the documents from the superintendents and the town administrators, they each seem to point out, while they could work with any one, Zinni seems to come out with the more positive attributes.

Mr. Knott: Town administrators, not the superintendents.

Mr. Francomano referring to the superintendent bullets seems to be endorsement of Zinni than Carney that is the impression that I get. What they have pointed out in their descriptions will allow them to form a more collaborative approach among the 4 districts. Zinni is looking for a challenge and KP is that challenge and has the skillset and is the stronger candidate. His interview here, Carney may have just had a bad night, I just felt much more engaged by Zinni when he interviewed than when Carney interviewed. We are looking for someone who is going to tell the story of KP and Zinni did a good job of telling a story with a purpose and brought in a variety of important factors and understood what he was trying to say successfully.

Mrs. DeStefano asked if anyone find it valuable to ask for comments from the search committee members.

Mr. Francomano said that what could be said was done in Executive Session. As a member of the public that includes the search committee, if they would like to comment then we can hear from them.

There was no response.

Mr. Gee said that based upon the reporting from the site visit and the comments made, these all sound great and I trust they are, I just did not see it during the Carney interview on vision. It is so incredibly close for me.



Mr. Francomano suggested that the school committee vote by ballot:

Vote for Superintendent (Mr. Carney or Mr. Zinni)	
Samad Khan	Zinni
Jim Killion	Zinni
Pat Francomano	Zinni
Mike Gee	Zinni
Erin DeStefano	Carney
Trevor Knott	Carney
4 Zinni; 2 Carney.	

Mr. Francomano entertained a motion that Mr. Zinni be appointed as superintendent of schools for the King Philip Regional School District, subject to successful contract negotiations.

- ✦ **A Motion was made by Mr. Gee, seconded by Mr. Killion to appoint Mr. Paul Zinni as superintendent of schools for the King Philip Regional School District, subject to successful contract negotiations. All in favor. Yes (6); No (0); Abstain (0). Motion carried unanimously 6-0.**

Mr. Francomano thanked Mr. Jim Hardy and MASC for all of their hard work. Mr. Francomano announced a 10 minute recess at 8:38pm.

The School Committee came back to order at 8:48pm. Mr. Francomano called Mr. Zinni and announced that he has accepted the offer of superintendent of KP.

### LATE COMMUNICATIONS

### REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

### RECOMMENDATIONS OR QUESTIONS FROM INDIVIDUAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### ADJOURNMENT INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- ✦ **At 8:48pm, a Motion was made by Mr. Killion, Mr. Khan roll call vote to adjourn into Executive Session for the following purposes: #2 To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; and, #3 To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares; and to return to open session solely for the purpose of adjournment. All in favor by roll call vote. Yes (6); No (0). Motion carried.**

### ADJOURNMENT

- ✦ **At 9:30pm, a Motion was made by Mr. Gee, seconded by Mr. Khan to adjourn. All in favor by roll call vote. Yes (6); No (0). Motion carried.**

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Lisa Barrett Witkus  
Secretary to the School Committee*

### List of documents presented to the School Committee on February 26, 2018:

Appointments, Retirements, Resignations, etc.  
2016/2017 MIAA Sportsmanship Honor Roll  
Murphy, Hesse, Toomey & Lehane, LLP – Education Alert, January 2018  
Letter from the Superintendents of Norfolk, Plainville and Wrentham  
Letter from KPRHS Students on the Superintendent Search

Superintendent Search Update - Selection: Mr. Hardy (Resumes of Mr. Carney and Mr. Zinni)

High Overnight Field Trips:

1. Model UN – Mr. O'Connor
2. Wrestling Division II Competitions – Coach Adams
  - February 23, 2018
  - March 2, 2018

Email from Mr. Paulino (Late communications)