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**Methuen Public Schools
Office of the Superintendent**



MEMORANDUM

TO: Methuen School Committee

FROM: Mrs. Judith Scannell, Superintendent of Schools

DATE: February 10, 2017

RE: Declassified (make public) 1/23/17 Executive Session Minutes - Approval



Per Committee Members DiNatale and DiZoglio, I have placed the Executive Session Minutes of January 23, 2017 in the packet to be declassified and approved.

TRANSCRIPT of RECORDED MINUTES
METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
EXECUTIVE SESSION - DECLASSIFIED
JANUARY 23, 2017

This Executive meeting of the Methuen School Committee was held in the Superintendent's Office at Central School. Mayor Zanni called this Executive Session to order at 9:12 pm for the purpose to hear a complaint and discuss litigation with a quorum of members in attendance.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Stephen N. Zanni, Chairperson
Ms. Lynne Hajjar Kumm, Vice Chairperson
Ms. Joyce Campagnone
Ms. Jana DiNatale
Mr. Nicholas DiZoglio, Secretary
Mr. Robert F. Vogler

MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Dennis D.J. Deeb

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms. Judith Scannell, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Gina Bozek, Director of Student Services
Ms. Deidre Runge, Public Recorder

SUBJECT WAS AN UNAUTHORIZED SURVEY / REGISTRATION PROCESS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Superintendent Scannell – spoke to the Committee about how the registration process was not broken in any way. Social media is out of control. The survey that Ms. DiNatale put up on the website about Methuen Public Schools was not authorized by the Superintendent or the School Committee.

Mr. DiZoglio – Ms. DiNatale is the survey still up?

Ms. DiNatale – Yes it is.

Superintendent – That is a School Committee Survey.

Ms. DiNatale – It is a communication between me and the community. It is no different than Mr. DiZoglio meeting with the teachers union or Mr. Vogler going to the Senior Center.

Mr. DiZoglio – I mentioned my meeting with the union to Committee Members and the Superintendent before I went. I was asked by the union to come to a meeting and listen to their thoughts. I will talk about this in open session. Your survey is on facebook and being taken by people who don't live in Methuen or have children in the Methuen schools. I feel these questions are misleading and the answers are misleading. This is a Committee and you are acting as an individual.

Ms. DiNatale – This survey is for me. I am going to reach out to people and you don't have to like it. This is for me not the Committee.

Mayor – The discussion here should be if you have a question or issue you should sit with the Superintendent. If we are doing things like Mr. Deeb did using words like scam, I will have to come after you.

Superintendent passed out the survey and all the facebook blogs. Again she stated the system is not broken. It is not the registration process it is when students move during the school year and don't let the schools know. She said she is very transparent in reports every month to School Committee. The blogs hurt the entire school district.

Superintendent passed out the kindergarten registration packets next.

Ms. DiNatale – How can I trust what you are telling me. Teachers come to me and tell me there are kids in the schools that don't live here. I have to see it for myself. I wanted the survey so I can ask questions and see their responses. I have got them from parents and teachers.

Superintendent- Can we see them?

Ms. DiNatale – No I need to block the names.

Superintendent - You do not have trust in my leadership. The teachers that complained to you, do they have backup? You believe them and what they say.

Ms. Kumm – we have been talking about this for the past three business meetings. We talked about it as a Committee. Bottom line I don't remember any conversation coming up about a survey.

Ms. DiNatale – I didn't know about the blogs. The Superintendent called me. When I saw it the Superintendent called me and asked me to look at them. I told Mr. Gillis it was despicable. I have asked this Committee to do a different survey and you didn't let me.

Superintendent – Yes I did.

Ms. DiNatale exited the meeting and the meeting immediately adjourned.

MOTION TO ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION:

With no further business to discuss in Executive Session, Mayor Zanni entertained a motion to adjourn this Executive Session at 9:58 p.m.

MOTION: Mr. Vogler motioned to adjourn the executive session at 9:58 p.m.

Ms. Campagnone seconded the motion

VOTE: 6-0-0 APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,
Deidre Runge, Public Recorder
Methuen Public Schools

2/27/17 comments re 1/23/17 Executive Session Minutes / Jana DiNatale

There was only one stated purpose for entering executive session, and that purpose was litigation. On January 23rd, I specifically inquired as to the reason for entering executive session and the only answer was "litigation". At no time during the executive session was litigation discussed.

I do not agree that these recorded minutes in any meaningful way accurately reflect my comments or the comments of others during the session. Within minutes of the session's start, it was immediately apparent that the purpose of the session was to raise objection to my posting an online survey to gather community input on the issue of proof of residency. I made specific comments in the session that are nowhere in this record, explaining that due to the issue being raised in the community and also due to my own prior concerns, I was seeking to gather community input on the issue to inform my decision as to whether or not to pursue changes to our policy. I stressed multiple times that the survey was intended as a communication between myself and the people of Methuen, and that I would continue to reach out to the taxpayers for their input. The recorded minutes are further misleading, making it seem as if I did not share the results of the survey with this committee, when in fact I came to the meeting with a copy of the survey results and made them available. While the survey itself was anonymous, I did redact individual teacher's and parent's names when they appeared in the comments, to protect their privacy.

Further, as there was no matter of "trust" I take particular issue with any such comment attributed to me. My actions were absolutely not an attack on the integrity of the administration or other committee members – rather, posting the survey was merely an act of communication...an evidence-based inquiry to determine if the concerns of our teachers and community matched my own. We cannot be effective leaders if we are not listening to the people we are serving.

The entire conversation should have been in open session, recorded and televised. I would not have voted to enter executive session for this purpose as this conversation should have been public - this is why I requested that the minutes be made public.