



Pawtucket School Committee Meeting
Tuesday, January 7, 2025

Jenks/JMW Complex
350 Division Street
Pawtucket, RI 02860

Meeting Minutes

I. Open Call- Public Session

Committee Member James Chellel called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

a. Roll Call

Pawtucket School Committee members present:

Juan Pablo Barrera
Joanne Bonollo
James T. Chellel Jr.
Kimberly Grant
Omar Reyes
Angeliz Rosa
Matt Wildenhain

Pawtucket School Department members present:

Patricia Royal, Superintendent
Hersh Cristino, Chief Information and Innovations Officer

b. Pledge of Allegiance

James Chellel led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Election of Officers

1. Election of Clerk

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James Chellel called for nominations for the Pawtucket School Committee clerk. Omar Reyes put forth a nomination for Jill Olson-Crowley. Joanne Bonollo seconded the motion. Member Reyes gave a brief overview of Jill's professional experience and shared Jill's resume for the group to review.

James Chellel then called for a motion to close the nominations. The motion carried.

On a motion made by Omar Reyes and seconded by Joanne Bonollo, it was:

VOTED: THAT Jill Olson-Crowley be appointed as the School Committee Clerk.

VOTE: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Juan Pablo Barrera, Joanne Bonollo, James T. Chellel, Kimberly Grant, Omar Reyes, Angeliz Rosa, and Matt Wildenhain.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Jill Olson-Crowley expressed her gratitude to the Committee and emphasized the significance of their efforts in supporting the city of Pawtucket and its students.

2. Election of Chairperson

James Chellel called for nominations for the Pawtucket School Committee Chairperson and put forth Omar Reyes for Chairperson. Juan Pablo Barerra and Joanne Bonollo seconded this.

Member Chellel spoke highly of Omar Reyes, expressing how fortunate he felt to have gotten to know him personally. He described Omar as dynamic, bright, and possessing remarkable leadership skills, making him an outstanding candidate for Chairperson of the Pawtucket School Committee.

Member Chellel then called for a motion to close the nominations. The motion carried.

On a motion made by James Chellel and seconded by Juan Pablo Barrera and Joanne Bonollo, it was:

VOTED: THAT Omar Reyes be appointed as the School Committee Chairperson.

VOTE: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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YEAS: Juan Pablo Barrera, Joanne Bonollo, James T. Chellel, Kimberly Grant, Omar Reyes, Angeliz Rosa, and Matt Wildenhain.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Chair Omar Reyes shared his personal story and journey, highlighting his family's academic achievements and his deep connection to the community. He spoke about his involvement with RI Reconnect and prison programs, emphasizing his belief in education systems that empower students to learn and thrive.

Chair Reyes reflected on his own academic struggles, noting that while he was not initially a strong student, teachers and social workers recognized his potential. Their belief in him inspired him to pursue higher education, serve on a school committee, and ultimately become its chair. He credited a social worker for making a significant difference in his life.

As the first person of color appointed as Chair of the Pawtucket School Committee, Chair Reyes expressed his commitment to paving the way for future generations. He emphasized the importance of holding himself accountable, fostering collaboration, and creating opportunities for children.

He expressed gratitude to the Pawtucket community for embracing and believing in him, noting that the city has always supported him and provided a sense of belonging and healing. Proudly identifying Woodlawn as his home, Chair Reyes reaffirmed the importance of community and placing children's needs first.

3. Election of Deputy Chairperson

Chair Omar Reyes called for nominations for the Pawtucket School Committee Deputy Chairperson. Juan Pablo Berrera put forth Joanne Bonollo for Deputy Chairperson. Kimberly Grant seconded this.

Member Barerra highlighted Joanne's unwavering dedication and commitment to children. He emphasized her passion for education and noted that she is the longest-serving active member of the Pawtucket School Committee. Joanne's wealth of expertise and experience will continue to be invaluable assets to the committee.

Chair Reyes then called for a motion to close the nominations. The motion carried.

On a motion made by Juan Pablo Berrera and seconded by Kimberly Grant, it was:

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VOTED: THAT Joanne Bonollo be appointed as the School Committee Deputy Chairperson.

VOTE: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Juan Pablo Barrera, Joanne Bonollo, James T. Chellel, Kimberly Grant, Omar Reyes, Angeliz Rosa, and Matt Wildenhain.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Deputy Chair Joanne Bonollo shared that she is deeply honored to have held a position on the Pawtucket School Committee for 18 years. She stated that although she never actively pursued a leadership role, she recognizes the importance of the responsibilities it entails. When she first met Omar, she immediately knew he was the perfect fit for the role of Chairperson. As Deputy Chair, she is eager to continue her work for the district, with a strong commitment to always putting children first. Her focus remains on enhancing facilities, promoting social-emotional learning, and supporting overall wellness. Joanne has been passionately engaged in this important work for years, and she is determined to carry it forward, ensuring that the needs of students and the community remain a top priority.

III. Public Participation

Mr. Camron Segala congratulated the Committee members, expressing enthusiasm for collaborating toward a common goal: improving schools for students. He highlighted the work of an advocacy group aimed at working together to find solutions and generate positive outcomes, particularly for parents who have concerns. He shared that the group will serve as a powerful voice for those issues. Mr. Segala also emphasized the value of accessible meetings, noting that they are available on YouTube for broader access. Lastly, he took a moment to recognize outgoing Clerk, Dianna Liss, for her unwavering commitment and dedication to the schools.

IV. Adjournment

James Chellel presented flowers on behalf of the Committee to outgoing Clerk Dianna Liss, honoring her years of dedicated service to the Pawtucket School Committee. The Committee expressed heartfelt appreciation for her remarkable commitment and hard work.

Deputy Chair Bonollo made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Kimberly Grant seconded this.

On a motion made by Joanne Bonollo and seconded by Kimberly Grant, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Pawtucket School Committee adjourn the meeting of January 7, 2025.

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VOTE: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Juan Pablo Barrera, Joanne Bonollo, James T. Chellel, Kimberly Grant, Omar Reyes, Angeliz Rosa, and Matt Wildenhain.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 6:34 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jill Olson-Crowley
Clerk