

Joint session

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children well and work toward bringing out their full potential, board member Julia Held pointed out as strengths.

On areas for improvement, "We need to do a better job of differentiating our instruction," Kallfelz said, adding that an increasing number of resources were avail-

able to strengthen this area.

The district needed to maintain a high focus on mathematics, board member William "Bucky" Brennan noted. "We are well performing, but we need to keep everyone on their toes," he said. "We're still not beating East Greenwich and Barrington, and there's no reason

for that," he added.

Brennan went on to praise the performance of students from the island. "We had the salutatorian (at North Kingstown High School) last year, and valedictorian the year before that," he pointed out.

In an update on the South County school districts' feasibility study of shared services, Committee Chairwoman Cathy Kaiser reported points of recommendation from the advisory committee. Included in the recommendations was support of legislative efforts to permit the use of vans for regional and special education transportation. She said the advisory committee supported a study on regional transportation, which found that vans were more economical than smaller buses.

Kaiser also said that legislative efforts were recommended to require private and parochial schools to coordinate book orders and distribution, and invoice the public school districts for the cost of the textbooks. According to current law, public school districts order, pay for, and distribute the books.

Another recommendation was to continue pursuing the collection of data to determine the feasibility of food services program collaboration with other districts. "Through feasibility studies, we are looking for savings outside our walls," Kaiser said.

Councilman DiGiando urged the school board to continue exploring possibilities of collaboration with other districts. But Superintendent Robert Power warned about shared services, saying that it was important to understand all benefits and

drawbacks before making agreements with other districts.

After a discussion with the council about installation and maintenance costs for a new generator, the School Committee voted 3-0 to share 50 percent of the installation cost, \$8,145. Brennan recused himself. The panel agreed to locate the generator, to be used for emergency management purposes, on the Melrose Avenue School property.

Kaiser noted that maintenance costs would be between \$500 and \$1,000 per year.

In a discussion of pre-budget concerns, the School Committee addressed:

- Food service costs: Kaiser noted that the district was asked to share administrative food service costs, an unbudgeted expense, under the one-year renewable contract with North Kingstown, "somewhere between \$20,000 and \$25,000." She noted that the committee would continue to explore alternative lunch program options.

- Playing fields: Kallfelz told the council that over the past year and a half a grass roots movement, from the Jamestown Soccer

Association, PTO, and other groups, has emerged, to gather funding, look at the conditions of recreational areas around the school, engage a land-use planner, and to put together a land-use plan. Kallfelz noted that they hope to have results from a facilities-use study by late spring, and a request for financial support would be submitted for the 2007-08 town and school budgets. Kelly offered to participate in the effort and keep the council informed of its progress.

- Costs associated with North Kingstown use of buses contracted by Jamestown. Brennan said that North Kingstown struggles with the number of buses they have to allow the high school to start later, but not push back the younger grades so far that they get home late in the day. He told the council that Jamestown was considering offering buses to allay the burden, but more discussion was needed. Kelly suggested looking at Rhode Island Public Transport Association. "You could possibly find some capable professionals who are able to look at your program and give some advice," he said.

Tenant

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shouldn't apply to him," Keiser said.

"In 2005 the Town Council reviewed the availability policy of the caretaker's apartment at the Beavertail Lighthouse," Keiser continued.

"They determined that it was in the best interests of the community to achieve several objectives regarding the available housing. The primary objective was to assure that the person occupying the rent-free apartment adequately maintained the lighthouse grounds and facility. The second consideration was to try to offer it to a person or family that was eligible for affordable housing," he added.

"So they must qualify on two fronts," the administrator said. "First, they are required to prove that they have the needed skills and time to uphold a well-defined maintenance program and schedule, and they need to meet the requirements for affordable housing. The town also decided that the facility should only be made available as affordable housing for a limited amount of time, perhaps three to five years at the most. The idea is to give tenants a few years to save some cash from the rent-free housing, and apply their savings to buying or renting on their own, without assistance. In other words, the next step up. Then we can give the lighthouse accommodations to another deserving family, and give them an opportunity to do the same thing."

The U.S. Coast Guard owns the lighthouse at Beavertail State Park and leases it to the town to manage and maintain. According to Keiser, the town has every right to determine the rules under which they manage the facility as long as they are in compliance with the agreement with the Coast Guard.

When Shutt was called, he was polite, but refused to answer any questions about his position because "my attorney told me not to discuss the case until after the hearing on the 23rd," he said.

When asked to name his attorney, he said, "I'd rather not do that."

Keiser said that he had not been contacted by an attorney, nor had the town. "We've had tenants lined up to move in ever since April 30. "The situation has caused them tremendous inconvenience," Keiser said.

"If it wasn't for our patient and understanding landlord, John Kelly, I don't know what we'd do," said Cynthia Turillo, 29, the prospective tenant waiting to move in.

"My husband Mike, 45, and I have four kids ranging in age from two months to seven years old. Mike works two jobs as it is. He's in the Air Force Reserve and he's been a supervisor at the Newport Bridge for over eight years. We really need the apartment," she said. "We meet the criteria to maintain the grounds and lighthouse, and we are eligible for affordable housing. Mike has even taken courses from the state on working with lead and lead safety, which is necessary to properly care for a place as old as the lighthouse."

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