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School Committee Minutes 02/28/2013

Approved by the Arlington School Committee, March 28, 2013

*Arlington School Committee
Regular School Committee Meeting
Public Hearing on FY 2014 Budget Review
Thursday, February 28, 2013
6:30 p.m.
Arlington High School
School Committee Room – Sixth Floor
869 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476*

Present: Dr. Kirsi Allison-Ampe, Chair, Mr. Jeff Thielman, Ms. Cindy Starks, Mr. William Hayner and Mr. Paul Schlichtman.

Dr. Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent, Dr. Laura Chesson, Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Robert Spiegel, Human Resource Officer, Ms. Kathleen Lockyer, Interim Special Education Director Ms. Siobhan Foley AEA Vice President, Ms. Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant.

Absent: Mr. Judson Pierce, Vice Chair, Ms. Leba Heigham, Secretary, Student Representatives, and AAA Representative.

Open Regular Meeting

Dr. Allison-Ampe opened the regular meeting at 6:30 p.m. and then entered into the FY 14 Public Budget Hearing.

Public Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2014 Arlington Public Schools Budget

Mr. Len Kardon, agreed that the budget should be reviewed in May/June, as Mr. Thielman suggested at our last School Committee meeting so we do not get into a fiscal jam again. He also suggested that the School Committee prepare a yearly strategic plan, when they do the budget. He commended Ms. Johnson on her progress with preparing a detailed budget and spoke of his concerns with reducing Teaching Assistants, Special Education Funding, and the new model in place for Special Education district wide next year.

Dr. Allison-Ampe concluded the FY 14 Public Budget Hearing at 6:41 p.m. and welcomed comments from viewers at home.

Opening Remarks

Dr. Allison-Ampe welcomed Siobhan Foley to the meeting and said Mr. Pierce was away, and Ms. Heigham was ill, then quoted Annie LaCourt, "a budget is an expression of our values."

Public Participation

None

Discussion of FY 14 Budget

Ms. Kathleen Lockyer wanted to clarify the concerns of Mr. Kardon and others about the reduction of teaching assistants at the elementary level. The budget for next year proposes several changes to expand the number of special education teams in each building, improving communication and student needs at all buildings. The changes include increasing the number of learning specialist teachers from one to two at the Bishop, Bracket Dallin, Hardy, Stratton and Thompson. One learning specialist will

support K-2 students and the other learning specialist will support Grade 3-5. Ms. Lockyer also said a teaching assistant will work with each learning specialist and have one teaching assistant to work under the Principal to support all students in every grade. We will also hiring Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) which will support the entire school and have a few teaching assistants available to support some short term assignments within the district as well. Dr. Bodie and Ms. Lockyer agree that this plan will be the best for student instruction and achievement.

The committee was concerned on special education staffing at each of the schools and were informed that the new model will have two less teaching assistants and one added learning specialist as well .5 physical therapist, .5 team chair, 1 social worker, and 1 occupational therapist, and would increase the specialist if needed per school. Professional development will continue for each teaching assistant to support student social cognitive and thinking. The plan is that we always are looking at the needs for the students and improving services at all elementary and middle school and will continue to review the budget. As things change we will do whatever we can to support students and staff and Dr. Bodie did say that the budget is a blue print and it can change. Dr. Bodie said the new special education plan is located in the Superintendent's Budget message of the Budget book.

Dr. Bodie acknowledged the administrative staff present tonight, Stephanie Zerchykov, Brackett, Sheri Donovan, Thompson, Deb D'Amico Hardy, Larry Weathers, Director of Science and Mary Villano, Arlington High School and said she appreciates all the hard work each of them do for Arlington students.

Dr. Allison-Ampe asked Ms. Johnson to provide a pull out sheet of all expenditures for each of the schools, and Ms. Johnson agreed to do it next year and will provide it to the committee for this year too.

Warrant 2013 Town Meeting Articles

Dr. Allison-Ampe had informed the committee that the Board of Selectmen wanted their comments on the following warrant articles, therefore, the following motion was made:

Mr. Hayner moved that the Arlington School Committee supports Warrant Article 9 Grant of Easements/Thompson School as present, seconded by Ms. Starks.

Voted: 5-0

Mr. Thielman moves that the chair is directed to sign the letters supporting Warrant Article 9, Grant of Easements/Thompson School, seconded by Mr. Schlichtman.

Voted: 5-0

After a brief discussion on Article 11 Bylaw Amendment/Use Regulations Public Land/Property and Article 32 Appropriation/Creation of Special Education Stabilization Fund the committee agreed to no action, and wait until Town Meeting begins to forward any comments.

Update on Thompson Rebuild

Dr. Bodie invited Ms. Sheri Donovan to speak on the Thompson Rebuild. Ms. Donovan said she walked through the Thompson School today with about ten teachers, and was impressed that they had already begun painting, testing restrooms on the third floor and said the school looks beautiful. Mr. Hayner noted to Dr. Bodie that he would be very interested in touring the school too.

Superintendent Report

Dr. Bodie mentioned that Ms. Deb D'Amico sent a letter of notice of her retirement at the end of the school year, and wishes her a happy retirement. The search for the Hardy Principals has begun and will hope to have a decision before April vacation. Dr. Bodie informed the committee she had hired Dr. Matthew Janger, Principal of Arlington High School. The high school had Jerry Leone, Middlesex District Attorney here today to discuss the consequences of texting and driving. Mr. Mike Covell won the Division II assistant wrestling coach of the year, Ms. Jessi Kirchner, junior from high school, won the Lions Club Speech Contest, and also noted Arlington High School and Ottoson Middle School students won awards in the 2013 Scholastic Art Awards competition. The Summer Fun brochure went out and has already registered over 860 students Grade 1-9. The boys basketball team and girls hockey are still in the state tournament and are playing well. The Superintendent newsletter will be available tomorrow and posted to our website. Dr. Bodie mentioned our obligation of completing 180 schools days and surveyed the staff on the possibility of working a half day on Good Friday, a Saturday or even during April vacation.

Subcommittee & Liaison Reports

Policies & Procedures, Second Reading

**Ms. Starks moved to approve the second reading of the following health policies: JLCA Physical Examinations of Students, JLCB Immunization of Students, JLCC Communicable Diseases and JLCD Administering Medicines to Students, seconded by Mr. Hayner.
Voted: 5-0**

*Budget C. Starks will hold a meeting before the committee presents to the Finance Committee and Town Meeting.
Community Relations L. Heigham – absent.*

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment & Accountability J. Thielman will hold a meeting on Monday, March 11, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. and discuss Assessments, Tools of the Minds and Inclusion of Diversity into our Goals.

Facilities W. Hayner spoke on space needs for preschool and will hold a meeting and said he has been attending the EDCO meetings.

Legal Services Review Chair, met on Wednesday and continues to review legal documents and will meet and bring recommendations forward .

Chair K. Allison-Ampe wanted to inform all School Committee members of policy BDAA Election of School Committee members and encouraged anyone interested in serving on the board to inform the chair and the administrative assistant in writing now.

Consent Agenda

**Ms. Starks moved the approval of the Consent Agenda, *Approval of Warrant # 13119 Dated, February 14, 2013, Total Warrant Amount \$325,224.91 and *Minutes for Approval: January 10, 2013 and January 24, 2013, seconded by Mr. Thielman.
Voted: 5-0**

Secretary's Report

None

Executive Session

None

Adjourn

**Mr. Thielman moved to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. seconded by Mr. Hayner.
Voted: 5-0**

*Respectfully submitted by
Karen M. Fitzgerald
Administrative Assistant
Arlington School Committee*